



April/May

Editor: Tim O'Sullivan KE8OC

NEW EDITOR

With the departure of Ted Rachwal K8AQM to JA-land, comes the requirement to replace him as editor of "The Flash". Well, for the time being anyway, I'm it. I will endeavor to fill Ted's ample shoes (no small feat! Hi Hi) as best as I can. If you have any suggestions and/or articles send them to:

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or drop them in the MBX on K8CC's Packet Cluster.

GO MAD RIVER!!!

WHATS INSIDE!

We got an update on the suite and a treasurers report from WD9INF, an article about the audits the FCC is doing in the Detroit area and in two other cities from N8CXX, the latest installment of Piciene Philosophy from the Big Fish, all the latest scores and more. So check it out!!!

SAY WHAT?

The MRRC net runs every monday evening at 8:30pm local time on 3825mhz. +/- QRM. It's good to hear from you!

HAMS NARROWLY MISS MIDDLE EAST DUTY

From K8MR

DAYTRAHN, APRIL 1- Although all Americans have good cause to rejoice at the quick and relatively safe end to hostilities in the Persian Gulf region, contesters and DXers may have particular reason to be happy. According to reliable sources close to the military, plans had been drawn up to send several thousand DX and contest oriented hams to the Middle East to assist in Operation Desert Storm. These plans, known as "Operation Desert QRM", were based on the assumption that with much of Saddam Hussein's normal communications facilities destroyed, Iraqi forces would have been forced to fall back on HF radio communications links. The role of the hams was to provide semi-intelligent jamming of these links.

Contesters and DXers were to be called up not under a formal military draft, but rather under a determination that such service was in the "Public Interest, Convenience, or Necessity", a long standing purpose of the Amateur Service. The amateur's signed agreement (on his most recent 610 form) to abide by all amateur regulations was considered to be sufficient authority.

'QRM' (continued)

Government planners had been studying numerous sources for the names of those to be called up, including published contest results, contest club membership lists, NCJ subscribers, and tapes of recent DX pileups (i.e. 3Y5X) that had been sent to the FCC by disgruntled hams.

Operation Desert QRM had two distinct operational modes. The first, by the contesters, was to provide a general level of QRM by running continuous contests. Contest formats to be used included CQWW, WPX, SS, NA Sprint, WAE, and Field Day. Instead of the normal amateur bands used in contests, each one megahertz segment was to be considered as a separate band (3-3.999, 4-4.999, etc.).

Only those frequencies with useful propagation within the Iraq-Kuwait area would be used.

The second mode of Desert QRM involved DXers tuning for possible Iraqi communications, and then jamming them when found. A complete multi-node Packetcluster system was ready to be sent to the gulf to ensure instant jamming once suspected Iraqi activity was found. Long calls, partial calls, burping, frequency policing, overprocessing, and requests for CW contacts or contacts on other frequencies were all to be encouraged to make the poor Iraqi "DX" go away in frustration.

To speed the deployment of those in Operation Desert QRM, callsigns would not have been specially issued, but rather stateside calls with certain modifications would have been used. K prefixes would append a "9" to the front: K8MR would have become

9K8MR. W prefixes would add a "4": W8FN would turn into 4W8FN. Others could rearrange characters: N8ET could become ET8N. If all else failed, a portable anywhere could be tacked on (i.e. KW8N/ZA).

Operation Desert QRM was not to have been all work and no play for the hams involved. Free time could have been used for real contacts on the normal ham bands. Permission for these regular ham QSOs had been secured from all the coalition countries in the region, plus Israel. Third party traffic agreements for communications with family members at home had also been approved by most of the countries.

While the war was thankfully over before this operation went into effect, it's always good to know that hams are able to assist their country in time of need by doing what they do best.

DE K8MR

Treasurer's Report

The Mad River Roster is at 61 paid members. The current balance in the checkbook is \$706.55. As of this writing, we spent \$250.39 for the "Flash" and postage last year (since April). We have also received \$19.48 in interest from the bank. Just a reminder that dues (\$7.00) for the 1991 fiscal year are due at the Dayton meeting.

DE WD9INF.

MRRC Shirt Orders

John Tymensky N8CXX has placed our order for MRRC T-shirts, sweatshirts, and jackets. All items should be available by Dayton, so get

your money in soon.
DE KE8OC.

From the 'BIG FISH'
By Dave Pruett, K8CC

Well, it's that time of year again. Dayton is just around the corner, and usually the 'Big Fish' takes this opportunity to reflect on the year gone by for Mad River. However, I have the feeling that I've done enough of that over the past few months so that we KNOW where we are at. The members have probably had enough of me preaching...it's time now to look ahead.

ARRL DX 1991

One event from the past year that I DO want to look back upon is the recent 1991 ARRL DX Contests. I am tremendously proud of our club's efforts on both modes. There were quite a few stations that got on, some on a mode or in a category that traditionally they had not participated in before. An unofficial count by the 'Big Fish' totaled around 21 meg on CW, and 13 meg on SSB, for around 34 MILLION POINTS. Conditions were better this year (particularly on CW), but no matter how you cut it, going from 7 meg to 34 meg is a mighty big improvement. Congratulations Mad River, a job well done.

Time out for a paid, political announcement - DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR LOGS FROM ARRL DX! Our hard work will be for nought, entries. By the time you read this, the deadline will probably be past. If you're late, send your logs in anyway. The ARRL Contest Desk will cut you some small margin of slack on submission date if you are humble, particularly if you send your entry on disk. DON'T FORGET!

DAYTON 1991

Now that the 1990/91 contest season is over, we're ready to

look ahead to Dayton. It ought to be a bang-up time - I have seen the programs for the Antenna and Contest Forums, and they will be very interesting again this year. Hopefully, your ham radio "mad money" fund is up to spec, ready to attack the flea market.

There are two MRRRC events that I would ask you put on your Dayton 1991 schedule. The first is our annual Dayton meeting, which will be held at 12 noon on Saturday, in the Hara Arena stands above the Cushcraft booth. Our group is usually hard to miss - we're the ones talking real loud and carrying used prop pitch motors...

People ask "why do we meet in the stands?" The main reason is that getting a room at the Hamvention is near impossible. N8ET was successful at it for a couple of years while he was the 'Big Fish', but these days, unless you know somebody on the Hamvention committee, and ask for it six months in advance, you're out of luck. Getting a room doesn't seem to be worth the bother, particularly since we will have the suite both nights. It has been suggested having the meeting at the suite, prior to opening. Again, member consensus that the convenience of having it at the Hamvention was a better deal.

Dayton is the one meeting a year where there is a fair amount of official business to perform. This year, we will establish the meeting schedule for the next year's six MRRRC meetings, to be held over the next twelve months. K8CC will make a proposal to move our club circle, to better reflect the realities of our membership geography. Then of course,

'BIG FISH'' (continued)

there is the annual MRRRC Officer Election railroad...

By now you have realized that MRRRC is a fairly loose run organization, which reflects the far reaching nature of our club, and perhaps the overall preference of the membership. We have three officers: President, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor. The Editor job is perhaps not so much an office, as it is a willingness to serve. With the departure of Ted Rachwal, K8AQM, to Jaland, we are fortunate to have Tim O'Sullivan, KE8OC, step up to the task. Tim and myself will be working together to improve the appearance and content of the 'Flash'. Everyone needs to be sending Tim articles and stuff of interest. It's your newsletter people, and it will only be as good as the articles and news that is submitted.

For President and Treasurer, the floor is open for nominations. If you would like to serve, or would like to nominate someone else in the best MRRRC railroad tradition, make it known to K8CC prior to the meeting. If you want to nominate someone anonymously, I can approach the individual to determine their interest. To the best of my knowledge, the MRRRC Election railroad carries no unwilling passengers.

The second big MRRRC event at Dayton is our Contester's Hospitality Suite at the Stouffer's hotel. We are fortunate that Ken Rogner, WD9INF, has stepped forward to run the suite again this year, with the assistance of several other MRRRC members. Elsewhere in this newsletter is an article from Ken about what he needs, and tasks to be done. In years past, K8CC has run the suite, so I know that best

thing we can do for him is to sign up, and do it early. It is very easy to procrastinate, but please be sure to get with Ken and pitch in to help with the suite.

PROPOSED 1991 MRRRC MEETINGS

It is very important that we decide upon a MRRRC meeting schedule for 1991/92. Our goal is to have six meetings, and to try to cover the entire MRRRC area as equally as possible. Three dates are fixed to go along with established events, but the others are open for adjustment:

June 1991 - ???
Sept 1991 - Findlay Hamfest
Nov 1991 - ???
Jan 1992 - K8MR Christmas Party
Feb 1992 - ???
April 1992 - Dayton Hamvention

Of the three open dates, I would propose having two in Michigan, and the third in the Columbus area. Under this plan, most of the MRRRC membership would have least two meetings in their general area. This is not to say that we could not have more meetings, should there be sufficient interest.

IN CONCLUSION

I think it has been a great year for Mad River. The ARRL DX 1991 contests showed what can be done when our members focus on a goal. Also, the Michigan and Columbus meetings prior to the contests showed the importance of regular club get-togethers. These are lessons we will carry into the 1991/92 season, which I am optimistic will be even better!

See you at Dayton!

73, Dave, K8CC

The MRRRC Suite

From Ken Rogner WD9INF

The MRRRC hospitality suite (425 at Stouffers) will be open from 8pm to 2am(??). Beer, pop, hard stuff, and munchies will be served. We'll need bartenders to cover both nights. I would suggest 2 per shift with the shifts running about an hour and a half. Either find someone to work with or volunteer for a particular time and I'll match you up with someone. The shifts are:

8:00 - 9:30
9:30 - 11:00
11:00 - 12:30
12:30 - 2:00

To volunteer, drop me a line or check in to the Monday night net. My schedule will now allow me to be around on Monday nights so I'll be available.

Once again it would be good to decorate the suite with pictures of our stations. I would suggest a minimum size of 8x10. The larger the better. Whether you have a meager station, or a huge multi-multi contest station, your picture will be equally important and I would hope you'll take the time and bring one along. If you're so motivated, send it to me and I'll be able to put it up before the suite opens; if not, just bring it along, we'll make room. Also, we need a sign-in poster that we can hang on the wall. It should include a short welcome message. Anyone with a little artistic ability willing to take this responsibility? Let me know soon.

Any other ideas you may have to add to the suite are most welcome. Most of all, any help you can give in assuring its success is

needed. I'm going to spend much of my time making beer, pop, and ice runs. An extra hand is always helpful.

A letter was sent to DARA asking them to include our suite in their Unofficial Evening Functions section of the program booklet. Good PR will insure a good turn-out. Spread the word!

DE WD9INF

Why an Audit?

From John Tymensky N8CXX

On Tuesday, 2/26/91, the FCC stopped at my house to conduct an audit. This audit/test was to determine how much power was required to carry on a qso. I was not home at this time & they were told to return at a later time.

After being informed by my son that they were over, I called the FCC offices in Farmington Hills to verify this audit project. It is legit!! They are covering a large area to get a good sampling. They are using a computer listing of licensees and are looking for the obvious stations.

A little history to try an explain why the audit. The number of TVI complaints have increased in recent years. The FCC echelon thinks we are using "TOO MUCH POWER" to carry on qso's. The prime objective is to find (catch) a station in QSO, then knock on his/her door. The operator would then be asked to recontact the station or start a new qso. The signal reports would be recorded. The operator would then reduce power by 50% and reports would be exchanged again. If there is no serious degradation in the signal & the qso can be maintained at reduce power,

YOU are in violation of FCC

'AUDIT' (continued)

rules! You can be issued a "notice of violation". Now whether or not they are issuing notices for this audit, I do not know.

The 2 agents arrived about 5:00 pm. I met them at the entrance of the garage and started to ask many questions. After I was assured that there were no TVI or other type of complaints against me or my station, we proceeded to the operating area. Prior to conducting the audit, I ask them about problem that I was experiencing. After much conversation, they may have identified my unique problem. For the audit, I made a contact with VK1AK on 10 meters. After exchanging signal reports, I reduced power by 50% (100 watts to 50 watts). We exchanged reports again. There was sufficient reduction in the signal that further continuation of the qso could not be maintained. That was the end of the audit. The form was filled out, I was not privy to what was written.

The men were very professional and quite social considering that they are in the enforcement branch of the FCC. They gave me a view of their monitor/tracking station setup inside of their vehicle. Very interesting. I asked them if the results would be available to the public. Their comment was, "it should be in QST".

DE N8CXX

ADDENDUM - Similar audits are also being conducted by the Baltimore Field office. The following is an excerpt from a letter written by K3ZO after a visit to K3ZZ had been brought to his attention, and is questioning "as to what the FCC's Field Office Bureau is up to."

"1) for some purposes, the FOB's notion of a QSO seem to be rather archaic, as though the QSO's were taking place in the 1920's rather than in today's communications environment.

For example, some DX contest operators will work over 3000 QSO's in a single weekend, sometimes as many as four per minute. How is the operator to determine instantaneously what is the minimum power necessary to work each of those stations, some close, some far away, some in the direction his beam is heading and others off to the side or rear?

2) Why all the secrecy? Is the FOB afraid to have the light of public scrutiny shine on their little project?

3) Is this part of an effort to put the onus on amateurs for RFI which is really the fault of the FCC itself for not having enforced the terms of the Goldwater bill thanks to EIA lobbying? And if there is no problem, as the EIA constantly insists, then why is the FOB moved to take actions such as these?"

Fun Stuff! -Ed.-

SCORES

ARRL DX CW

K8CC	17/15	
	82/42	
	400/63	
	751/70	
	728/75	
	784/78	
	<u>2762/343</u>	2,842,098
NA8V	2767/346	2,872,146
KW8N(KU8E)	2301/335	2,312,505
W8UA	1760/260	1,372,800
K8MR+pkt	706/213	451,134
WD8IXE+pkt	528/151	239,184
N8ET	326/128	125,184
WD9INF	163/105	50,400
KE8OC	100/56	16,800
W8IQ 20M QRP	35/21	2,205
K8MJZ M/S	1415/226	975,336
WI8L	1217/255	976,905
WD8LLD M/2	43/27	
	95/47	
	370/61	
	906/84	
	658/84	
	508/82	
	<u>2580/385</u>	2,977,590
K8AQM M/M	21/17	
	100/48	
	304/68	
	1255/99	
	900/77	
	625/75	
	<u>3205/384</u>	3,692,160

ARRL DX SSB

NA8V	2429/369	2,688,903
N8CXX+pkt	1801/315	1,701,945
K8MJZ	1830/261	1,432,890
K8MR+pkt	1190/286	1,021,020
NU8Z+pkt	480/215	309,600
AC8W	319/98	114,954
W8FN 15m	333/85	84,915
W8IQ QRP	159/159	75,843
WD9INF	125/78	29,250
KT8X	26/15	1,170
K8CC M/M	16/15	
	151/55	
	386/79	
	1232/123	
	1268/123	
	1356/124	
	<u>4409/519</u>	6,864,813

CQ 160 SSB

KC8EK	800/64	117,000
K8MR	309/51	34,986
KW8N	143/46	16,698
K8CC	150/42	15,246
N8CXX	143/40	12,480
N8CQA	131/36	10,404
K8DD	138/30	9,090
WD9INF M/O	758/67	116,714

NA PHONE SPRINT

KW8N 323/49

NOVICE ROUND-UP

N8MSF 1411/154

WPX SSB

W8FN M/S	1770/721	3,360,000
NE8T(N8CXX) 15M	1120/550	1,250,000
K8DD	382/260	257,400
N8CQA QRP	141/134	53,466
K8MR	25/25	0
WD8IXE	17/17	714

FCC Approves special prefixes

By Jim Stahl K8MR

In what has been described as the "Mother of ALL Special Prefix Authorizations", the FCC has granted permission for the U.S. amateurs to substitute their Social Security number for the digit in their normal callsigns. This move has delighted prefix aficionados, although some traditionalists at ARRL have expressed concern that the FCC may be planning to allow, or even require, amateurs to substitute their Social Security number for their entire callsign! Anyway, look for the rare K278503899 prefix in the WPX contests!

DE K278503899MR

The 1991 Charlotte Hamfest

By Dave Pruett, K8CC

Last winter, prior to the ARRL Ten Meter contest. I received a call from Robert, N4GVF, about the NA program which he would be using at the N4ZC multi-op effort. In the course of our conversation, he asked if I would be interested in talking about NA at the Charlotte Hamfest. I said sure, and figured that was that.

Some days later, I received a call from Roger Burt, N4ZC, who asked again if I would come to speak. The sponsoring club, the Mecklinburg Amateur Radio Society (W4BFB, a well known call to those of us who operate VHF contests), would pay my air fare and motel accommodations for the weekend. It sounded like a good deal to me, since I would also get to visit the N4ZC contest station. Roger put me on the schedule to speak twice - once on NA, and once on antennas. I guess they wanted to get their money's worth...

With the flurry of activity from MRRC in the ARRL DX contests, arrangements for the trip to Charlotte slipped my mind until it was almost too late. The hamfest was to be held on the weekend after ARRL SSB, and \$355 got me a seat on a USAir non-stop flight from Detroit to Charlotte.

I flew to Charlotte on the Friday of the Hamfest weekend. Contrary to forecast, it was cold and rainy and we had to wrap my luggage in garbage bags to keep the rain off of it in the pickup bed. We drove to the convention center where the hamfest would take place. Yaesu and Icom were both present, and setting up major exhibits. I asked Roger how big the hamfest was, and was

surprised to hear that the previous year, they had over 12,000 people attend! I think W8's are spoiled, but this was to be the biggest hamfest I have ever attended other than Dayton.

Roger dropped me at my motel, which turned out to be less than a five minute walk from the convention center - we should have it so good at Dayton. He had other business to attend to, so I was stuck at the motel without a car. I spent the rest of the evening with ShowTime and CNN, and I lost count of how many times I saw our first batch of soldiers return from the Gulf.

Saturday dawned clear and sunny, but in the low 50's. The walk to the hamvention was quick, and I was pleased to see that the entire show was indoors. My speaker's badge got me inside before the doors opened, and I located Roger at the W4 QSL Bureau booth. It was fun to watch the stampede from the inside for a change.

The center filled up quickly, so I hit the flea market. Ever notice how after a few flea markets, it seems like you are looking at the same junk over and over? At Charlotte, I seemed to be looking at different junk than usual, which made me optimistic for finding some good deals.

Moving through the flea market, I came upon a table full of big air variables and RF parts from the estate of the late DXer Gus Browning, W4BPD. Standing at the table making a purchase was Yaesu VP and contester Chip, K7JA. He and I were both in the same boat - trying to figure out how we could get this stuff to fit into our luggage for the airline trip home.

At noon, I attended a forum by

CHARLOTTE HAMFEST (continued)

Dick Frey, WA2AAU, about VHF contesting with the W2SZ/1 group on Mt. Greylock. These guys erect stations for all amateur bands from 50 to 5600 MHz, Field Day style, on top of one of the highest points in WMA. Being a closet VHF contester myself, I found it all very interesting.

The next forum speaker was Ed Kritsky, NT2X, who is one of the INDXA guys, and North America liaison for many of the recent DXpeditions made by Romeo, UB5JRR, such as IS0XV and YA0RR. Unfortunately, promised slides of the Afghanistan trip did not arrive, but Ed spoke at some length about the problems faced during the expedition. One interesting statistic is that over the 21 day trip, the group had to operate from 14 different QTHs! It's a wonder they made any QSOs at all...

At 3 PM, Will, AA4NC spoke about his trip to Seattle and participation in the World Radio Team Championship last summer. He had a rough cut video that the organizers sent for him to show. The quality was terrible, and made me pessimistic that the final product will be ready for us to show at Dayton.

At 4 PM, I gave a one hour talk about NA, and techniques for interfacing either NA or CT into your station. Not many people attended, but the group was enthusiastic and seemed to enjoy the presentation. Once I finished at 5 PM, the hamfest closed for the day.

Later that evening, I was invited to attend a dinner sponsored by the Carolina DX Association, where I discovered something. Most places I go for radio (Michigan, Ohio, Texas, etc.)

I know quite a few people, but the realization struck me that I know very few people in NC! Fortunately, I met John, W4XJ and Ron, AA4S at the dinner. Both are avid contesters, and we had a good time talking antennas and contests.

The next day, Sunday, it was time to hit the hamfest again. It appeared that since NC is in the middle of the "Bible Belt", the crowd was a lot smaller than on Saturday. I started to get serious in the flea market, buying items noted the previous day, and keeping in mind the restrictions of my suitcase.

At 11 AM, I spoke on "Advanced Antenna Techniques", focusing on many of the unusual methods we take for granted (CATV hardline, sidemounted rotators, etc.). There was a good turnout for this talk, and led to many questions afterwards.

After a last trip through the flea market, the hamfest was over at 2 PM. Roger, NT2X and I piled into his little Mazda pickup and rode out to the N4ZC QTH. The station has five towers with several monobanders for each band. Roger had some real horror stories about the damage inflicted on his station by Hurricane Hugo. One very interesting antenna was Roger's 80M wire log periodic, which we are going to copy and try this summer at K8CC.

After dinner cooked by Roger's wife, we headed to the airport. On the trip home, I mused that although Charlotte is a long way from MRRC territory, you could do a lot worse if looking for a way to spend some radio time. It was a lot of fun, and I hope that someday, they may invite me again.

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