

# Northwest Indiana DX CLUB

Volume 8, Issue 7

July 2020

## President's Corner

**Hello everyone,**

**I hope all are well.**

**6, 10, and 12 have been opened quite a bit lately. I lucked out and picked up three new countries on 6. Seems I have been spending my time on 6 and 12.**

**Please be safe and stay well.**

73

John W3ML

**Good DXing!**

## NWI DX Club Website

<http://nwidxclub.weebly.com/>



**Don't forget Steve is our new QSL Card Checker.**

DXCC Card Checking is available by appointment and may be available at meetings. E-Mail [kd9hl@arrl.net](mailto:kd9hl@arrl.net) for an appointment or to make other arrangements.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President Speaks
- 2- Member News/DX News

**Reminder, the NWIDX Club has a club call W9NWI.**

The call is available to members for use during contests, special events, Field Day, etc. To schedule dates for its use, contact the trustee, Steve Mollman – KD9HL. [kd9hl@arrl.net](mailto:kd9hl@arrl.net)

QSL cards are available.

## **Notice:**

**Articles in the Northwest Indiana DX Club Newsletter (except for those separately copyrighted) may be reprinted, provided proper credit is given.**

---

### **NWIDX Club Members DXCC Challenge Award Scorecard (as of June 28, 2020)**

1	AG9S	JIM SJOBERG, JR	2984
2	N9FN	DAVE CHASEY	2401
3	K9FN	DAVID BUNTE	2249
4	AJ9C	MIKE KASRICH	2092
5	W8FIB	TOM RUGGLES	1721
6	KD9HL	STEVE MOLLMAN	1485
7	W3ML	JOHN POINDEXTER	1401
8	N9RD	JUERGEN NITTNER	1399
9	W9UM	NICHOLAS COMINOS	1385
10	K9SUH	KEN REISING	1356
11	N9DA	JOHN SIKORA	1149
12	N9DD	THOMAS FRISZ	1084

The above totals were abstracted the ARRL DXCC Standings Lists. <http://www.arrl.org/dxcc-standings>

The ARRL DXCC Challenge award is available to applicants who reach 1,000 band points on the bands of 160 through 6-Meters. This includes only current entities. Deleted entities do not count towards this award. All contacts must be made after November 15, 1945. Once you reach the 1,000-entity/band point level, you are entered into the Challenge listing automatically. An application to request the DXCC Challenge listing is not required. This award is endorseable in levels of 500. There is no certificate for this award but a special plaque is available from the ARRL.

The maximum possible points as of June 28, 2020 was 3390 points (10 bands X 339 eligible entities). The current world high point holder is EA8AK with 3251 points and the current USA high point holder is W4DR with 3185 points.



---

## JULY DX LISTINGS

BY

Jerry Hess, W9KTP

SB DX ARL ARLD026  
ARLD026 DX news

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by The Daily DX, the OPDX Bulletin, 425 DX News, DXNL, Contest Corral from QST and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM web sites. Thanks to all.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, DA. Special event station DL0SOP will be QRV from July 1 to 31 to commemorate the 62nd edition of the Sea Of Peace Award. QSL direct to DL4SVA.

BALEARIC ISLANDS, EA6. Andy, DK5ON will be QRV as EA6/DK5ON from Mallorca Island, IOTA EU-004, from July 1 to 11. Activity will be holiday style on 40 to 6 meters using CW, SSB, RTTY, PSK31, FT8 and FT4 using QRP power, with some possible EAFF and SOTA/GMA activities as well. QSL to home call.

UK Various. Members of the Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society will be QRV with special event call GB100RS from June 28 to the end of October to mark the society's 100th anniversary. QSL via bureau.

WALES, GW. Members of the North Wales Amateur Radio Group are QRV with special event call GB0WMZ until July 17 to support the work of the Welsh Mountain Zoo. QSL via MW0JWP.

SVALBARD, JW. Peter, LA7QIA will be QRV as JW7QIA from Spitsbergen, IOTA EU-026, from June 27 to July 4. Activity will be on 4 and 6 meters. QSL to home call.

DENMARK, OZ. Carsten, OZ4CG will be QRV as OZ4SOP from Bornholm Island, IOTA EU-030, from July 1 to 31 for the Sea Of Peace Award. Activity will be on the HF bands using only CW. QSL via LoTW.

ANTARCTICA. Alexander, RX3ABI is QRV as RI1ANM from the Mirny Antarctica Base Station, IOTA AN-016, and is here until early 2021.

---

Activity is limited to his spare time on various HF bands, most likely on 40 and 20 meters using FT8 between 0200 to 1530z.

INDIA, VU. Operator VU2TUO is QRV with special call AT2ARA until September 23 during the COVID-19 pandemic. QSL via operator's instructions.

INDONESIA, YB. Special event station 8A343CJR is active to draw attention to the 343rd anniversary of the Cianjur District on Java. QSL direct.

VANUATU, YJ. Operators Colin, YJ8CW, Estelle, YJ8ED and Rod, YJ8RN will be QRV as YJ40IND from July 1 to 30 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Independence of Vanuatu. Activity will be mainly on 40, 20 and 15 meters using CW, SSB and FT8, mostly during their weekends. QSL via operators' instructions.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. ARRL Field Day, QRP 20-Meter CW Fox Hunt, NCCC RTTY Sprint, NCCC CW Sprint, RSGB Hope RTTY QSO Party, UFT CW QRP Contest, Ukrainian DX DIGI Contest, His Majesty King of Spain SSB Contest, RTTYOPS Weekend Sprint and the 10-10 International Spirit of 76 QSO Party will certainly keep contesters busy this upcoming weekend.

The QCX CW Challenge is scheduled for June 29.

The Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest and RTTYOPS Weeksprint are scheduled for June 30.

The RAC Canada Day Contest, VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest, CWops Mini-CWT Test and Phone Fray are scheduled for July 1.

Please see June 2020 QST, page 69, July 2020 QST, page 69, and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM Contest Web Sites for details.

---

## PRE-AMPLIFIER TRIALS

### ROUND TWO

By Jerry Hess-W9KTP

As I mentioned in my previous article (April 2020 NWIDXC Newsletter) on the performance of three pre-amplifiers, it was my intention to evaluate them “on-the-air” with actual station signals as well as the bench tests reported previously. This was a lot more difficult to do than I expected. Between lack of available signals and band conditions I ultimately used two kinds of “on-the-air” tests. I expected to get a clear answer to which pre-amplifier performed best by simply using S-Meter readings. Unfortunately, I found there are many more variables that could not be expressed in simple S-Meter readings.

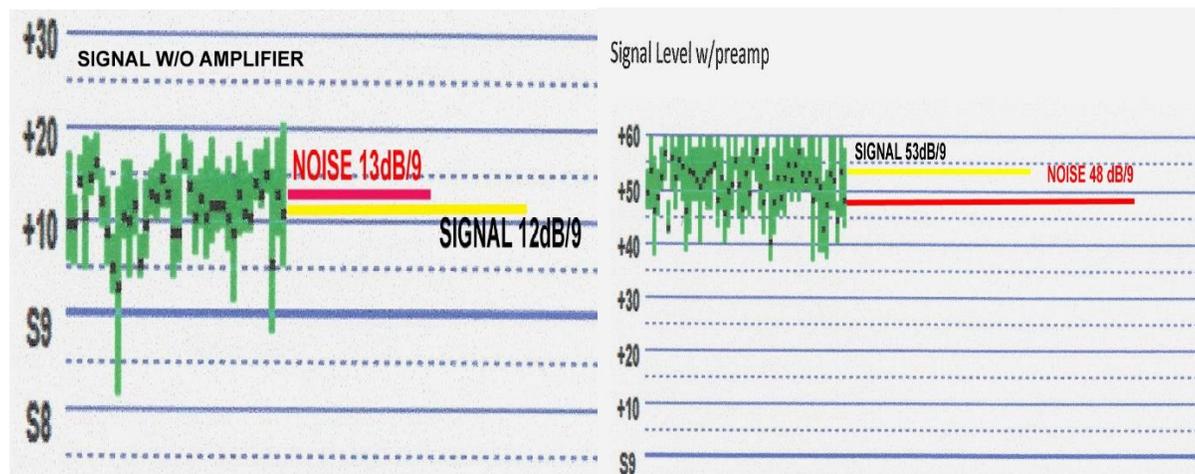
---

In any case, I feel compelled to report the results of my three months of trials. Some results were rejected for a variety of reasons. The remaining data set is small but it is what I consider as representative of how the pre-amplifiers performed. First, an explanation of how my measurements were taken.

## TEST PROCEDURE

I limited my tests to only 160 and 80 meters and used my 160 meter dipole for both bands. The transceiver was a Yaesu FT-5000 with the RF Gain set wide open and roofing filter at 3 kilohertz. To record each test, the output from “S Meter Lite” software (1) was printed after each test.

The basic concept behind the test is “How much does the pre-amplifier improve the signal?”. This involves measuring the noise level with and without the pre-amplifier and measuring a signal with and without the pre-amplifier. To better understand this, the following picture illustrates a trial of the W1FB pre-amplifier in early April. As noted on the left side of the picture, the signal is one decibel below the noise level. Only the signal graph is shown, a red line represents the results from the noise level graph. When the pre-amplifier is activated, the signal increases to five decibels above the noise level. Hence a six dB gain. Most trials did not gain this much.



“Plan A” was to do all my trials with live “on-the-air” CW station signals. Since it was difficult to gather large numbers of valid data this way, I created a “Plan B” which was to locate a signal generator about  $\frac{1}{2}$  wavelength from the antenna and make my measurements using its signal. At least this gave a steady signal and the only variable was the noise level.

## RESULTS

Averaging the results from both Plans yielded the following numbers.

<b>PREAMPLIFIER</b>	<b>80 METERS</b>	<b>160 METERS</b>
SV1AFN (2)	3 dB	1.5 dB
W1FB (3)	4 dB	2 dB
KO6BB (4)	2 dB	1.5 dB

This does seem to favor the W1FB unit but I want to caution the reader that it does not tell the whole story. All three pre-amplifiers raise the signal and noise level which I feel makes it easier to copy the signal. If the station being copied were some rare DX, a ham would most likely crank back the RF Gain and add RF/IF filters and possibly an Audio filter as well. The choice then becomes a personal preference. The SV1AFN unit comes completely assembled. The W1FB unit uses an available PC board and the user has to insert the components. The KO6BB unit requires complete assembly by the user.

### SUMMARY

This was a challenging project and took much longer than I anticipated. I am sure there are people out there with more talent and equipment that could improve on my results. On the other hand, I feel satisfied with my efforts. At least this might encourage other DXers to add a Low Noise pre-amplifier to their station.

73's,

Jerry Hess, W9KTP

(1) – You can find the “S Meter Lite” program at the following web address.

<http://www.seed-solutions.com/gregordy/Software/SMeterLite.htm>

You can find more information on the pre-amplifiers at the following sites.

(2) - <https://www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?from=R40&trksid=m570.l1313&nkw=SV1AFN+pre-amp&sacat=0>

(3) - QST-August 1988. <http://www.farcircuits.net/RECEIVERS%20AND%20RECEIVER%20PERAMP.htm>

(4) - <http://www.i1wqrlinkradio.com/antype/ch53/chiave32.htm>

# Where Have all the Flowers Gone?

or

## Where Have all the QSL Cards Gone?

By Steve Mollman-KD9HL

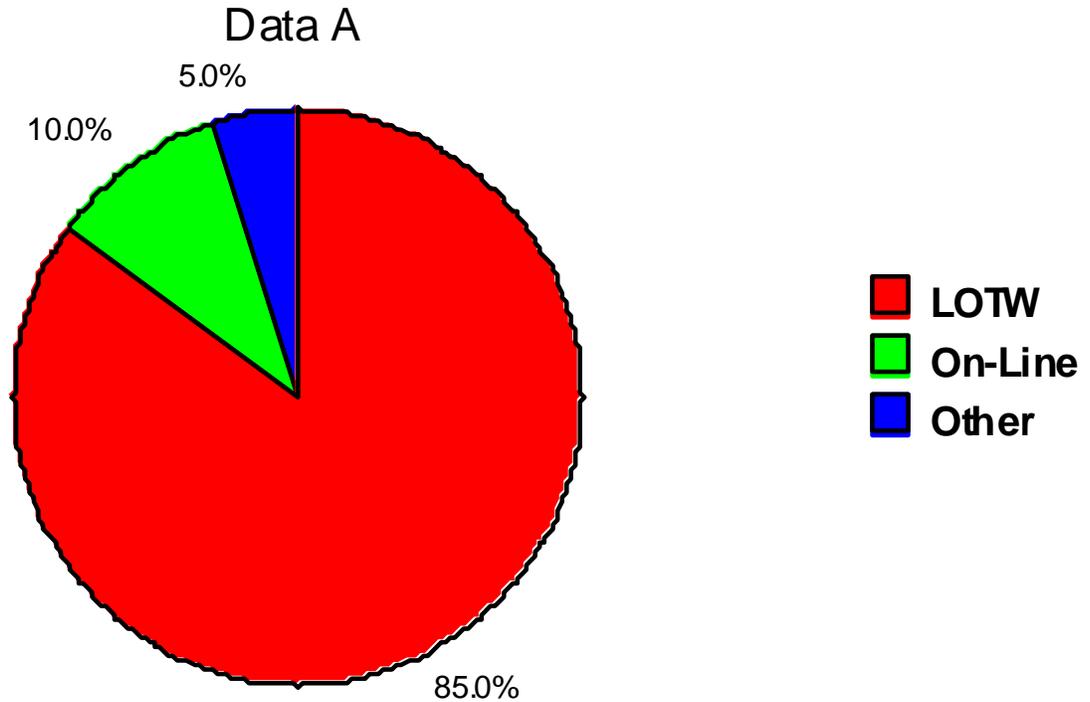
Where have all the QSL cards gone....gone to graveyards everyone. Paraphrasing Pete Seeger's song<sup>1</sup> we have noticed a steep decline in the usage of QSL cards to acknowledge a contact. Many of us have shoe boxes filled with cards and the memories they bring. There is nothing like the joy that comes with the arrival in the mail of the confirmation of an "all time new one" with a QSL card.

As an ARRL Volunteer Card Checker I get to see a lot of cards and try to do my part in assisting DX'ers apply for awards. Having said that, I have noticed a steady decline in the number of applications for card checking. The Logbook of the World (LOTW) has taken over the QSL business. Cost, convenience and speed are probably the drivers of the LOTW dominance.

According to Norm Fusaro-W3IZ, ARRL Director of Operations, LOTW applications account for 85% of the QSO's submitted for DXCC awards. Online DXCC applications through a card checker account for about 10% and the remainder is via the traditional paper application.

For Worked All States awards, LOTW handles almost all of the applications. It is rare for the ARRL to see a paper application for those awards.

# ARRL DXCC Applications



The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the ARRL to make some changes in the card checker application process. State of Connecticut COVID-19 restrictions forced the ARRL to close their building and have many of the staff work from home. In the meantime, no mail was being picked up, so mailed applications were left sitting at the building. Nothing was being processed. About two weeks into the shut down the ARRL modified its award process to allow card checkers to e-mail, rather than use the US Mail, completed applications. Except for the embargoed applications sitting in the ARRL Headquarters the process was back up and applications were processed in a timely manner (usually three business days). LOTW applications were not affected and continued to be processed in three business days.<sup>ii</sup>

About June 1<sup>st</sup>, the ARRL Staff was able to access the building and retrieve the mail. There were literally hundreds of unopened applications! Because of this backlog the ARRL is now quoting ten weeks or more to process these DXCC applications and endorsements. LOTW applications are not affected-expect three business days.

Meanwhile the Visalia International DX & Contesting Convention (IDXCC) <sup>iii</sup> has announced that next year's (2021) convention will be "virtual" and in lieu of on-site card checkers they will have "Creative QSL Card Checking". No details have been released as to how this would work but informed speculation is that it will be a Zoom session where the applicant emails the form to the card checker, then presents the cards on screen to the card checker.

Norm Fusaro's reaction was "That is not legit. If that happens we will reject the application and fire the card checker."



---

## ***Handy Hint***

**By Steve Mollman-KD9HL**

### ***SWR Meter and Power Levels***

Dr. Gianfranco Scasciafratti I-I0YZ/K8OQ, the founder and President of **the manufacturer of SPE Expert Amps**, offers this advice on SWR Meters:

*"Each SWR meter has a minimum power level below which the measurement obtained is false.*

*This is due to the threshold of the reflected power diode; the aim is to reduce this power as much as possible. Below the diode threshold the meter does not see any reflected power and thinks that the match is perfect, but increasing the power (during transmission) one will notice that the match is not correct. So, with low power be careful!*

*I tell you this because a customer blew the MOSFET on his remoted SPE Expert 1.5K amplifier three times in one week blaming the ATU, but we found that he matched using 5W while 30W is recommended in the manual."*

This is one reason that when initially tuning an antenna with very low power the match looks perfect but when you increase to operating power the SWR increases. Since most SWR meters and antenna tuners don't specify what power to use, try increasing the set-up power in **SMALL INCREMENTS** until the "sweet" spot is found.

A note from the editor: **!!! CAUTION !!!** High power along with high SWR can cause arcing across a tuner's variable capacitor' plates and damage to other circuitry in the system. Therefore, it is incumbent to **ALWAYS** start this process at a low power.

**◀73's and Good DX ▶**

**Do you have a Handy Hint that you would like to share? Contact Steve Mollman at [KD9HL@ARRL.net](mailto:KD9HL@ARRL.net)**

Editor Note: It is a good thing to make sure the meter is set to the correct power setting. Mine quit working when I hit it with 1000 watts on the 300 watt setting. Way to go John!

---

## Securing PowerPole connectors

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

In preparation for this year's Field Day, I made a bunch of cables with PowerPole connectors to connect the solar panel, charge controller and batteries that I used. If you're not familiar with PowerPoles, you might want to [check out this YouTube video](#). They're really great connectors, and have become the DC connector of choice for many hams.

When I make up PowerPole cables, I normally don't bother trying to secure the two halves together, especially if you're using some decently heavy gauge wire. They fit together pretty tightly, and don't come apart easily. Even so, I think securing them together is a good idea. You can buy a little roll pin to insert between the red and black housings that is supposed to prevent them from coming apart, but many folks complain that the pin has a tendency to fall out. This not only defeats the purpose, but could also damage your equipment.

Securing them is the right thing to do, though, and I recently came across some great suggestions on how to do this in the daily digest that I receive from the [Elecraft-KX mailing list](#). Here are the best tips from the thread, [Securing Anderson Power Poles](#):

- Rudy K8SWD: You can thermally bond the red and black housings with a soldering iron like you are making little welds on both sides. Permanent (mostly) but it works better than the roll pins. Just clean the tip really good before soldering!
- Dave K0CDA: [Anderson] also make connectors that are thermally bonded together in pairs. They do NOT come apart.
- Don W3FPR: I use a drop of Super Glue on the junction of the plastic pieces. Warning – that glue grabs quickly, so slide the 2 pieces only enough to start the assembly, then apply the drop of glue and quickly finish sliding them together. I have never had ones prepared like that come apart, and I don't use roll pins. I will say one more thing – use only the genuine APPs. I have seen some knockoffs that do not mate well.
- Greg KC9NRO: Take a hot soldering iron. Wipe the tip with sponge. Run the tip down both side of APP bonding the black and red sides together. Clean soldering iron tip and apply some solder to tip. That's how I roll. Never comes apart
- Mike AI4NS: PVC cement will soften the plastic enough to bond them together. You can also get plastic welding rods, such as [Daindy Plastic Welding Rods](#). Chuck a rod in a Dremel and weld them together. I have made plastic boxes and panels using this method.



- Jack WD4E: Snip the cotton end off a Q-tip, cutting at an angle. Insert into hole made for roll pin, cut off excess, save remainder of Q-tip for next requirement.
- Troy K4JDA: 2.5mm screws work well, stay in, and are easily removable.

I posted these suggestions to [my blog](#) and got a few more great suggestions:

- Tom KB8UUZ: Fat tooth picks also work great. Jam it in, break it off.
- Bruce N0NHP: I use MEK (Methyl Ethyl Ketone) replacement to clean my circuit boards after soldering. A single drop of MEK on the junction between the two halves of the PowerPole shell will fuse them. It can be broken with a sharp tap but not accidentally. It will set and dry in seconds and should be applied after the shell pieces are put together.

I think these are all great suggestions. I think that I'm going to try the cotton swab method. While reading them, another thought occurred to me. I haven't tried this yet, but I'm thinking a little drop of hot glue on the roll-pin hole might work, too.

=====

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the author of the KB6NU amateur radio blog (KB6NU.Com), the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (KB6NU.Com/study-guides/), and often appears on the ICQPodcast (icqpodcast.com). When he's not thinking up new ways to keep his PowerPoles together, he likes to teach ham radio classes and operate CW on the HF bands.

---

## Links that were Submitted from Tom, W8FIB and others picked up in emails.

<http://www.dzkit.com/literature.html>

DZKit Is Bringing Back The Tradition And Fun Of Building Complex Kits

Changing a light bulb on a 1500-foot tower.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1BgzIZRfT8&feature=youtu.be>

Amateur Radio Guide to Digital Mobile Radio 2nd Edition

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eiaYNR65RJanxnVbXdrWBS4cNG50mqn1/view>

AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE MAP There is a cool little tool that was recently pointed out to me that lets you search for ham radio operators. You can search by callsign, grid square, zip code, or street address. It's handy to see where other hams are in your area, or if you drive by a house that has a big antenna farm, and wonder who it is. Point your browser to <https://haminfo.tetranz.com/map> to give it a try.

---

# Be Our Guest on July 11, 2020 - 9 to 3

## The Northeastern Indiana Amateur Radio Assoc.



# AUBURN HAMFEST

*In recognition and appreciation  
of your sacrifices during the  
Covid 19 crisis.*

**2nd Annual**  
**AUBURN "Classic City" HAMFEST**  
Saturday, July 11, 2020 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
*Setup 7 to 9*

**AUBURN CORD DUESENBERG MUSEUM**  
1600 S. WAYNE ST. • AUBURN, IN 46706  
Interstate 69 • Exit 326 or 328 • Follow "Museum" Signs  
Talk-In 147.015+ No Tone

➔ **MUSEUM EXHIBITS and FREE Parking included with \$5 raffle ticket purchase.** Enjoy the Hamfest and the beautiful ACD Museum with your family. Children under age 12, accompanied by a parent are admitted FREE!

➔ **INDOOR TABLES \$10 – advance reservations required.** We listened to you last year when you said: "You need more space." We've tripled our floorspace this year for your added comfort- with no increase in table cost!

➔ **TRUNK SALES – one \$5 raffle ticket per parking space.** Nice paved FREE parking lot and additional parking on the Plaza, just across the street.

➔ **GRAND PRIZE AWARDS – (Need not be present)** Grand prizes TBA. You can be sure of top-notch equipment for your Ham Radio hobby!

➔ **ATTENDANCE PRIZES – drawn each hour.**

*Your 2020 Destination Hamfest!*  
Visit [www.w9ou.org](http://www.w9ou.org) for more info  
or  
Email: [w9ou@arri.net](mailto:w9ou@arri.net)

This event is not affiliated with nor sponsored by the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum.



**FREE** Admission

6,000 SQ. FT. INDOOR DISPLAY SPACE (Not counting the huge Museum Area!)

**FREE** Parking

Supervised by the DeKalb County ARES Team.

**FREE** AUBURN CORD DUESENBERG Museum

View an amazing collection of classic motor vehicles.

**1600 S WAYNE ST.  
AUBURN, IN 46706**

**Hourly Door Prize Drawings**

**Indoor Vendor Tables: \$10**  
*Advance reservations guaranteed.*

**Outdoor Sales - Raffle ticket**  
*purchase for each parking space.*

**Contact: [W9OU@ARRL.NET](mailto:W9OU@ARRL.NET)**

### Raffle Prizes:

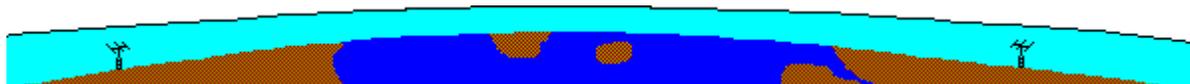
- 1st- ICOM 2730A dual band xcvr and MFJ-281 external speaker
- 2nd- MFJ-4225MV 25A power supply
- 3rd- PowerpoleBag with crimp tool and 150 pcs.

**Ticket Prices \$5.00 - Buy 2, get 1 Free!**

*COVID 19 precautions: Please bring and use hand sanitizer. Facial covering is encouraged. Maintain social distancing. Personal responsibility is the key- a common trait of radio amateurs. Thank you for your support!*

If you have ham items for sale, email me a list along with prices and contact information. I will put it in the next newsletter.

I want to thank those that have been sending in articles for the newsletter. All items are appreciated.



Until Next Time,

73

*John*

W3ML

<http://nwidclub.weebly.com/>



**DX**



<sup>i</sup> "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" is a modern folk-style song. The melody and the first three verses were written by Pete Seeger in 1955. Additional verses were added in May 1960 by Joe Hickerson. Some of the many artists who recorded the song include The Kingston Trio, Peter Paul and Mary, and Joan Baez.

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.arrl.org/dxcc-applications-received>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.dxconvention.com/>