Northwest Indiana DX CLUB

Volume 2, Issue 1 January 2014

President's Corner

I hope everyone had a nice holiday and received any ham items you asked Santa for. Hi Hi!

As I write this the weather has given us a small break, and it is suppose to be nice again tomorrow, Saturday. It was warm enough this afternoon for me to fix my 40 meter dipole, which only took about 30 minutes to get done. Now maybe I can hear something on there and be able to go back to them.

Please think about writing an article for the newsletter on something you are interested in, good at or an item that you think everyone would like. It doesn't have to be long and don't worry about any mistakes, I will be glad to fix them. Sometimes it pays to be an English teacher, hi hi.

Enjoy the winter, 80 meters has been opening more and more.

73
John, W3ML

Inside This Issue

DXCC CARD CHECKING

Doctor Richard Lochner, K9CIV has been appointed an Official ARRL DXCC Card Checker. Contact Rich to schedule an appointment for card checking.

You may email him at k9civ@arrl.net for details on how to mail your cards to him, if you desire to go that route.

Member News

If you have any news to tell, please send it to me so I can send it to the group.

Subject: [dx-check:1523] Handling WAS "Hybrid" applications and 5B WAS

From: "Moore, Bill, NC1L (ARRL Awards Branch)" <bmoore@arrl.org>

Hi All:

Just want to clarify how WAS Hybrid applications should be handled and also a page set up to help applicants use LoTW to apply for 5B WAS.

I've been getting the older paper forms with references to LoTW. Please note that with Hybrid applications the old WAS paperwork and record sheet are totally useless.

The system is designed to make hybrid applications simple and easy and the ONLY form needed (required) is the one sheet that is generated by LoTW.

After completing the application (parts 1 through 4) when the applicants clicks to submit the application, another screen pops up and prompts applicants to:

"Print Field Check List"

This is the ONLY form required for hybrid applications. On Part two the applicant is shown the remaining states needed and they type in the callsign of each state in the box provided right next to each state and bring this form to you (or sends all to me) along with the cards. All you need to do is verify the cards against the states noted and you, not the applicant, forward this form to me.

This is the only verification method where I know all 50 states have been validated. If applicants use the old forms I have no way to know what states are confirmed 100% via LoTW.

If they ask they should be directed to this page:

http://www.arrl.org/was-forms

Right at the opening they will see >>>>>>> Special Instructions <<<<<<< which will guide them easily step-by-step

Also, for 5B WAS since this award has not been set up for preparation via LoTW I have created this link on the WAS web page that will guide them through this process so that they can still use LoTW for 5B WAS 100%:

http://www.arrl.org/applying-for-5b-was

Any questions please let me know

Regards

Bill

Bill Moore NC1L

Awards Branch Manager

ARRL - The national association for Amateur Radio™

ED: If you still have questions contact Bill at ARRL or Rich locally since he is our card checker.

Also, be sure to contact Rich, K9CIV when you want cards checked. Then you two can set up a time and date for doing the checking.

A Short History of the Expression “73”

The following is from Louise Ramsey Moreau, W3WRE (SK) :

"The traditional expression "**73**" goes right back to the beginning of the landline telegraph days. It is found in some of the earliest editions of the numerical codes, each with a different definition, but each with the same idea in mind - it indicated that the end, or signature, was coming up. But there are no data to prove that any of these were used.

The first authentic use of 73 is in the publication “The National Telegraphic Review and Operators’ Guide”, first published in April 1857. At that time, 73 meant "My love to you"! Succeeding issues of this publication continued to use this definition of the term. Curiously enough, some of the other numerals used then had the same definition as they have now, but within a short time, the use of 73 began to change. In the “National Telegraph Convention”, the numeral was changed from the Valentine-type sentiment to a vague sign of fraternalism. Here, 73 was a greeting, a friendly "word" between operators and it was so used on all wires.

In 1859, the Western Union Company set up the standard "92 Code". A list of numerals from one to 92 was compiled to indicate a series of prepared phrases for use by the operators on the wires. Here, in the 92 Code, 73 changes from a fraternal sign to a very flowery "accept my compliments" which was in keeping with the florid language of that era. "Over the years from 1859 to 1900, the many manuals of telegraphy show variations of this meaning. Dodge's “The Telegraph Instructor” shows it merely as "compliments." “The Twentieth Century Manual of Railways and Commercial Telegraphy” defines it two ways, one listing as "my compliments to you"; but in the glossary of abbreviations it is merely "compliments".

Theodore A. Edison's “Telegraphy Self-Taught” shows a return of "accept my compliments." By 1908, however, a later edition of the Dodge Manual gives us today's definition of "best regards" with a backward look at the older meaning in another part of the work where it also lists it as "compliments".

"Best regards" has remained ever since as the "put-it-down-in-black-and-white" meaning of 73 but it has acquired overtones of much warmer meaning. Today, amateurs use it more in the manner that James Reid had intended that it be used - a "friendly word between operators".

73’s de NWIDX Club

KD9HL
Steve Mollman

A Web Site of Interest

While most Dxers are not contesters, the contest operators face many of the same challenges that we do. During the 2013 Dayton Hamfest there was a program called "Contest University" that had presentations on a number of subjects including propagation, low band antennas, rotators, transmission lines and radio performance. These are all subjects that challenge Dxers. The presenters have made videos of these presentations available on the Internet. Several are worth looking at.

http://www.contestuniversity.com/main/page_videos.html

KD9HL
Steve Mollman

It is Snowing and Blowing

and My Yagi is in Trouble!

It is midwinter and that always seems to be the time we must climb a tower to do an unplanned antenna repair. All of us would prefer to avoid those chores in the winter., Think about doing some maintenance when the weather turns better that will help avoid that bitter cold and hazardous winter climb.

Most Yagi antennas share commonalties in their general construction, design and things to be watching for, so one size fits all.

1. Dark aluminum on exposed surfaces is not a problem. Likely it is just normal oxidation.

2. When you take the antenna apart, clean the mating surfaces (inside and out) with a Scotch-Brite™ pad or other type of light abrasive. Steel wool is not recommended because tiny fragments of the wool break off, imbed into the softer aluminum and then dissimilar metal corrosion occurs. Stainless steel non-soap scouring pads are okay. Some good tools for cleaning the inside diameters are firearm barrel cleaning brushes or a plumber's copper pipe joint cleaner. Be sure the brush part of the plumber's tool is either stainless or brass.

3. Use Pentrox A™ or another type of anti-oxidant on the joint's surfaces when reinstalling. Menards sells a brand called "Ox-Gard™" in their electrical section that seems to work okay.

4. Today, most manufacturers only use stainless steel fasteners. However there were some that used to supply cadmium plated hardware (Hy-Gain® until the mid 1980's). If you have some non-stainless fasteners on your antenna consider replacing them. Some sources are Kabelin Ace Hardware in Michigan City and La Porte (www.kabelinacehardware.com), marine supply stores such as West Marine (www.WestMarine.com) and McMaster-Carr (www.McMaster.com) .

5. To prevent galling use an "anti-seize compound" on the threads of any fastener. Permatex® makes one that works well and is available in small quantities at most auto parts stores. A little dab will do it!

6. Over time, some fasteners may loosen because of wind-induced vibrations or other issues. Be sure to use fresh lock washers under all nuts. Used lock washers have flattened out and lost most of their "bite". If you can find them in stainless steel, a one-time use self-locking machine nut called "Ny-Loc" might be used. I have no experience with that product though. In extreme cases it may be advisable to use two nuts jam-locked against each other or even safety wiring the fastener.

7. Inspect the plastic parts. If this is an older antenna with long time exposure to our Northwest Indiana acidic atmosphere and the Sun's UV rays, some pieces probably need replacing. Besides a visual inspection put some moderate physical pressure on the item. Some may call this "destructive testing" but it is better to locate an impending failure now rather than later. Element end caps, trap caps, insulators, standoffs and other plastic hardware will deteriorate. Guaranteed! Replacement parts are available for many antennas including older ones. For example, Hy-Gain® and M2® (KLM) carry most parts for all their antennas. Others may also.

8. Worm drive stainless steel hose clamps are the most common item used to secure element tubing. Avoid the no-name Chinese clamps. These clamps often have worm drives that are sloppily constructed and don't have a good mesh with the band. They can't be tightened sufficiently and strip. Some so-called stainless clamps are really hybrids having stainless bands but with a corrosion prone plated worm drive. That's okay for automotive use but bad for outdoors. Try to find clamps that conform to minimum ASE 400 specs with all stainless metal components. Ideal and Murray make domestic produced clamps that will meet that qualification. Buy American!

9. To verify that you have stainless steel test it with a magnet. Real stainless steel has little or no magnetic properties.

10. Use good quality PL-259 coax connectors. The Chinese made connectors have a bad reputation for failure and poor fit. Don't use the nickel-plated variety. Silver-plated is the best both for corrosion resistance and soldering. The Amphenol® brand, while slightly more costly, if properly installed, will last forever.

11. Be sure to waterproof your coax connectors. PL-259's are NOT waterproof! Water will eventually infiltrate and ruin your coax. A method that seems to work is to put heat shrink tubing over the connection and then put an overlap of 3M Scotch 130C™ splicing tape or a similar product over that. This results in a watertight connection that can be easily and cleanly removed and doesn't leave a gooey mess like Coax-Seal®. Hint: While it seems counter intuitive, the Scotch splicing tape should be applied

with the sticky side OUT. Do it that way and if it has to be cut off, the underlying coax connector will be nice and clean.

12. Inspect and clean any drain holes. Make sure that they are properly aligned and facing down. Water freezing inside tubing can split the tubing.

13. Inspect the interior of the elements and traps for insects and their nests. Try blowing out any contamination with compressed air. Insect nests are very corrosive, weakening elements and destroying the interior of traps. If this happens replace the bad piece.

14. If the manufacturer has not already done this, insert a length of nylon rope into each element. This will help dampen vibrations from the wind. Vibrations cause metal fatigue. We all know what happens when paper clip is bent back and forth. Sooner or later it will break. An antenna element snapping is far more serious and more work than a broken paper clip.

15. When the antenna is undergoing maintenance it may be a good time to consider upgrading the balun for higher power. Two good high power units to consider are the Balun Designs® and Comtek® baluns. They are of similar design and will handle 4KW or better. All DXers dream of having that full legal limit amplifier. It may happen some day so be prepared. The cost is minimal for the balun.

16. Safety first. Climbing a tower can be dangerous. This is not the time to take flying lessons. Minimize the risk. Don't climb alone. Have a safetyman/spotter on the ground. Use of a "climbing harness" with double lanyards is strongly advised. They are much safer and comfortable than the single belt/single lanyard rigs that were in common use for many years. With double lanyards you can alternate them and can climb/descend with at least one secured to the tower.

17. Plan your climb before going up a tower. Take extra nuts, bolts and washers with you when you go up. Don't be in a rush. Don't go up in bad or windy weather. If needed make multiple climbs so you don't get too tired. The guy on the tower is in charge and calls the shots.

18. A great alternative to climbing is to contract for a bucket truck. This assumes that your property allows access and the ground is firm enough to support the vehicle. A possible source of a bucket truck is a tree trimming service. They may be willing to contract their services on an hourly basis. If you were good this year and Santa gave you a bucket truck for Christmas, every Ham within 50 miles is your friend!

Remember that Mother Nature is bigger than any of us and she can be kind or mean. Good maintenance will avoid much of the trouble she can dish out. To paraphrase the old oil filter ad: You can pay me now or pay me latter. Later always costs more!

KD9HL
Steve Mollman

Dear Dxcoffe,

Thanks for your interest in South Sudan.

While we (Z81B & Z81D) are doing well, our thoughts go to those who lost their life in the recent crisis. They are many. More are suffering as we write you on Christmas' eve 2013.

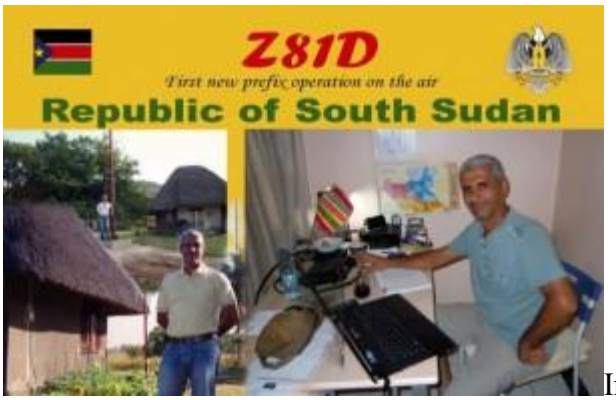
On the night of the 15 December 2013, people in Juba heard several gunshots. In the hours and days that followed, the gunshots became mortar explosions and movement of tanks. Our professional positions do not allow us to provide details, or comments on the causes of the clashes. As a matter of fact, the fighting caused the displacement of thousands of harmless civilians.

In Juba, 20.000 people (UN's statistics as of 24/12/2013) sought protection in UN bases alone. The clashes continued for days and civilians resumed some movements only around 19/12/2013, in search of food and water. While the situation is now normalizing in the capital, fighting is breaking out in other states of South Sudan.

From the very first moments of the crisis, exchanging information was key. South Sudan has no telephone land-lines and the voice/text GSM networks were soon overwhelmed. Broadcast radios still struggle to keep information up to date. The main information flew through Twitter and WhatsApp via GPRS. Most offices circulated the first information via satellite telephones and VHF/HF networks.

On 23/12/2013, Eng. Virginio Kenyi Lemena (Deputy Director for Telecommunications, Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services) gave us a good account of the situation: -We live in fear. I came back to the office yesterday, in order to transmit a sense of normality. Now the situation is peaceful in Juba, but we hear worrying news from Unity and Jonglei states. We are left with praying that Christmas brings peace and that the international community helps us-.

Humanitarian responses and diplomatic efforts are ongoing. However, the situation remains difficult, with accounts of UN personnel killed while serving the civilians.



In these conditions, the Dxcoffe readers won't be surprised if we won't transmit on the amateur radio bands for a while. Diya is still in South Sudan, while Massimo is in Europe. Our radio equipment have been shipped away in order to avoid misunderstandings with the parties involved in the conflict.

We hope that the days of dialogue come soon.

We know that some time will pass before friends like OH2BH, OH0XX, DL3DXX, K4ZW, N7NG, OH2PM, OH6KN, PB2T, Z81A, will come back to South Sudan to play the radio, or support the Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services.

In line with the spirit of our friends who visited South Sudan, we wish the Country tolerance, collaboration and understanding among diverse people. These are things that radio amateurs practice every day on the airwaves.

Massimo Z81B & Diya Z81D

From: http://www.dxcoffee.com/eng/2013/12/24/crisis-south-sudan-voices-z81b-z81d/

DX NEWS

OPs wanted:

A team of three operators is looking for another 2 operators to join them on a dxpedition to Starbuck Island (OC-280) and Flint Island (OC-282) in March 2014. Projected cost for the necessary boat-trip (20 days) and stays of 1-2 days on Starbuck and 3 days on Flint are estimated at about $50000. Interested parties should avail themselves of the Contact form on dx-world.net, whose editors will get you into contact with the team.

1A, SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA (Update). An "international team" of operators led by Francesco, IK0FVC, will be active as 1A0KM from the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM) between January 2-7th (2014). At present time, operators will be Francesco/IK0FVC, Luciano/I0JBL,

Sergio/IK0FTA, Roberto/IK0PRG, Michele/IW0BYL, Gianfranco/I0ZY, Antonio/I0GOJ, Fabrizio/I0HCJ, Marco/IK0DWN, Giordano/IK0XFD, Gianluca/IK5HHA, Cristiano/IZ0IEN, Andrea/IZ0NRG, Rudi/DK7PE, Franz/DJ9ZB, Seppo/OH1VR, Robert/S53R and Sandro/VE7NY. QSL via Sergio, IK0FTA, and also LoTW. 1A0KM operation supports the DX-Code of conduct. Online log facility will be also available. Look for more details to be forthcoming. Also, a Web page is now up and running, but with limited info at: http://www.1a0km.org

FT5Z, AMSTERDAM ISLAND (Press Release: Dec. 21, 2013): "Amsterdam Island DXpedition - All the equipment the Amsterdam Island DXpedition team shipped to New Zealand is now aboard the MV Braveheart. All our documentation –sanitation inspections, hull inspections, de-ratting certification, and bio-security clearance – has been completed. The vessel will be fueled for its voyage to Australia on December 23rd. On December 24th, fresh produce for the initial voyage will be taken aboard. The crew will celebrate Christmas Day at home with their families and then on December 26th, at 1400 local time, during high slack water, the vessel will sail for Fremantle, Australia.

The Braveheart will sail around the north cape of New Zealand's north island, across the Tasman Sea, across the Great Australian Bight, and up the west coast of Australia to the port of Fremantle. Additional pro-visions will be taken aboard in Australia and the vessel will be re-fueled for the voyage to Amsterdam Island and back.

FT5ZM team members will begin arriving in Fremantle on January 9th. There will be team meetings, toasts, and shopping trips. Our good VK6 friends have acquired some additional supplies for us and we will take these aboard. The team will board the Braveheart on January 14th, configure our maritime mobile station, and sail for Amsterdam Island on January 15th.

You will likely hear from us one more time before we leave our respective countries and fly to Australia. However, as always, thank you to the amateur and DX community for your support and interest. Visit our website frequently for late breaking news and updates. We've not yet reached our financial goals, but with your continued support, that goal is in sight.

73 – Ralph – K0IR"

Note: The team has been granted an 18 day access to the island to occur between the dates of January 15 and February 20 of 2014.

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

Don't forget to send in any information you would like to share with the Club members.

Until Next Time,
73
John
W3ML