



Bulletin



May 2018

From the Pres

Mike ND4V

It's time for the annual pilgrimage up I-75 to Xenia Ohio. Just imagine, you and 25,000 other geeks rummaging through the treasures in the bone yard. Oh, what a bone yard! I've seen everything from an autopsy table to a genuine Enigma machine there. You'll get in your 10,000 steps with no problem. Keeping the calories below 2k may be a challenge. My observation from last year was that the food choices were greatly improved from what we were used to at Hara. I don't think I made it around to all of the commercial vendors last year and I hear that I missed a couple of great forums. It's a lot to take in and I always enjoy bumping into some big-name DXers.

Don't forget to check out the club night (Thursday after the Amber Rose) at Four Days in May (FDIM). The NoGaNauts (Atlanta QRP) always have something interesting on display. And although we are better known for QRO, the QRP guys will let us in. You might have to listen to a why less is more lecture, but they always have something interesting going on. More info about their proceedings is at www.qrparci.org/fdim.

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** From the Pres/Veep's Report
- 1** Around the Shack
- 2** Treasurer's Journal
- 3** Club Officers
- 6** DXpedition Funding Requests

Veep's Report

Dick K5TF

This Month's Meeting

Date/Time: **Thursday May 17th** @ 7:30 PM
Location: Rich Auditorium, Piedmont Hospital
Details at www.sedxc.org

Program Title: **TBD**

Many of us will be at Xenia (aka Dayton)...but not all of us! Come join what promises to be a smaller group but still a lot of fun.

73,

Dick K5TF ♦

Around the Shack

Hal N4GG/4



Insulators - a necessary but pretty boring piece of the hobby, yes? Well, there are a few things to consider. At the ends of dipoles, inverted Ls and most any wire antenna we find the lowly insulator. Properties? Yes, right, it must have good properties. These include:

- Mechanical strength. A dipole with a tree on one end, or on both ends puts tremendous tension on the antenna wire and the insulators as the wind blows. If the wire is really strong (read: heavy copperweld), the weak link mechanically may be

continued on page 3

From the Pres (cont.)

Take your camera to Xenia for sure and capture an image or two that says "Dayton Hamfest". Take a selfie with a new or old friend. Send a couple of your favorite pictures to me with a few comments and I'll put them in the slide show for the June Meeting. My email is nd4v@comcast.net.

Speaking of food, don't forget our annual gathering at the Amber Rose Restaurant. The sign-up sheet is on the Club's website www.sedxc.org. Good food and fellowship Thursday evening beginning at 6PM.

If you aren't going to Dayton, K5TF, Dick Baxter will conduct a regular meeting at the Rich Auditorium. Speaking of Rich Auditorium, Jim (Dr. Kauten) W4TE has double-checked with administration and SEDXC has the auditorium reserved for the rest of the year. I know that the last-minute room changes for the last two meeting were an inconvenience for our speakers as well as the audience; the alternate classroom that we were allowed to use was totally adequate! We are indeed grateful to have such a nice meeting facility.

It's the beginning of six-meter season. It is going to be interesting to see how all of the FT8 signals are going to fit in the 2 Khz above 50.313. Will 50 watts out overcome the signal loss of a multi-hop path to Europe? Will folks come back to the CW and SSB portions of the band? Will we get an opening to Hawaii or Japan? It isn't called the "magic" band for nothing. June could be an interesting month. Give six a try. And if you hear it open, a note to the reflector would be appreciated.

Atlanta Hamfest is right around the corner – Norm still needs DXers to man the table. Contact him at wa4zxv@arri.net to schedule a time.

Current Officers terms expire June 30. Step up and become a nominee for one of the slots! Just contact me or Dick to let us know of your interest.

Finally, renew your membership before June 30! Build the treasury for the next year so that we can continue supporting Dxpeditions.

73 es gud DX,

Mike ND4V❖

Treasurer's Journal

Jeff K1ZN

Checkbook Balance as of April 30, 2018: \$7,276.53.

73,

Jeff K1ZN❖



Go to <http://dues.sedxc.org/>. **Do it today!**

From the Editor

Clark WU4B

Can I ask you a question: *Do you have an article in you where you could share your years of ham experience with the rest of us?*

SEDXC is one of the premier DX clubs in America, right? A comparison with the newsletters of other DX clubs with the Bulletin shows we have a lot of "white space" that could be used to inform our membership. Hal N4GG has stepped up to the plate and I, for one, am enjoying learning from him.

This membership is loaded with experience with share. Would you be willing a write an article or two on subjects such as
-How I Got Started in Ham Radio
-How's DX?
-My Rarest QSO

Send me what you have and I'll make both of us look good.

Mike ND4V❖

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SEDXC Webpage: www.sedxc.org

SEDXC Chat Room: details on webpage

SEDXC Reflector: details on webpage

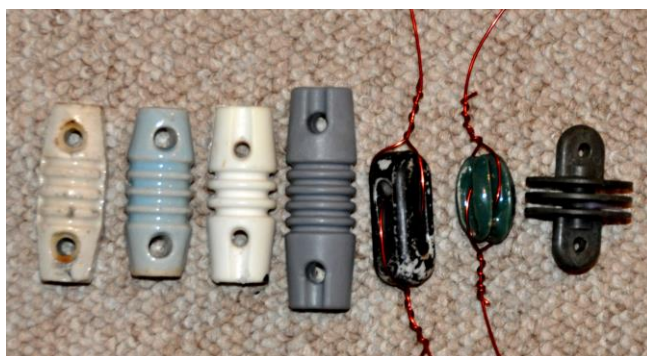
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the insulator(s).

- Dielectric strength. As we discussed two months ago, there can be several thousand volts at the end of a dipole, half-wave wire and other configurations, if we are running QRO. The insulator has to stand off that voltage without arcing over. Including when it is wet.
- Resistance to temperature swings. Water can seep into cracks in ceramic insulators and will cause expansion when it freezes. Over time, the expansion can make the insulator fail - this does happen.
- Finish of the holes on each end. If the holes have rough edges, the constant motion of the antenna wire, under tension against the hole in the insulator, will abrade the wire. This is a particular problem with copperweld. Wearing at the insulator eventually wears away the copper, exposing the steel core. At that point the steel quickly rusts and the antenna fails mechanically...as in, on the ground. I have had this happen several times at N4GG.

Color and size matter sometimes. In my deed restricted neighborhood, my stealth wire antennas either have their insulators painted flat black or, lately, I've been buying and using dark grey ones. The white ones draw too much attention.

The picture below shows a variety of insulators. All of these types (except the one on the far right) can be had for \$1 at hamfests, and all are adequate for ham radio use. But some ARE better than others depending on the application. Let's take a look, left to right.



(cont. on next page)

Around the Shack (cont.)

- The first four are all “dog bone” type – aptly named for what they resemble. The ribs in dog bone insulators are there to increase the path length an arc would have to travel from one hole to the other. Also, the ribs are good at shedding water. For reference, the first three insulators are 2.5 inches long. The fourth one is 3 inches.
- The white one on the left is my least favorite. It’s an old style ceramic type and has very rough hole edges. You may be able to see the copper color around the holes on this example – that’s copper that has worn off copperweld wire plus some rust when the underlying steel wire started to rust. The ribs are small too and don’t add much to the design. I keep this insulator handy to show people what not to use.
- The second from the left is a “modern style” ceramic insulator. It’s okay in most applications. These are strong and are usually white or pastel blue. The hole edges can be sharp however – this varies a lot – inspect them when you buy them.
- The third from the left (white) and fourth one (grey, larger) are plastic insulators. The plastic used varies, but typically it’s polyethylene. These are strong, lightweight, and the holes are soft enough that they will not abrade the wire. The holes are also slightly chamfered and the wire lays in a slot as it passes through the hole. The three inch grey one is now the go-to insulator at N4GG.
- The small black and even smaller dark green ones (5th and 6th over) are “egg” insulators. These are also called “strain” insulators and “Johnny Ball” insulators in the power industry. The loops the wires create going through an egg insulator interlock – so should the insulator fail, the wire will stay up – or in place. This style insulator is very strong, since the ceramic is in compression rather than tension. These are always used where mechanical failure is not an option. Some examples: tower guy wires, sailboat mast stays and utility pole guy wires. They are fine for less stressful applications too of course. I use the small green ones to hold the corners of my K9AY receiving loop.
- The insulator on the far right is another winner. It is a Budwig model HQ-2. These are made from a 20% glass filled copolymer and they are VERY strong and nearly indestructible. The deep ribbing provides the same dielectric standoff as a much longer insulator. This is the only insulator shown that can’t be had for \$1 at any hamfest. These are \$3 and worth the money. The black color is helpful too.

So, people ask: “What’s the best insulator?” For the ultimate in strength, it’s an egg insulator, but you may not need that much strength and you will be getting ceramic - which can abrade wire. For an everyday dipole plastic insulators are fine. When using copperweld antenna wire, I think plastic insulators are a must - the plastic will not wear the copper off the wire. The ultimate “everyday” insulator is probably the Budwig. They are not, however, in bargain barrels at the hamfests. Places like HRO carry them and unlike the 6 for \$5 hamfest specials, you know exactly what you are getting. Budwig has made fine products for many years.

73,

Hal N4GG/4❖

DXpedition Funding Requests

None at this time.