



Bulletin



October 2019

From the Prez



Dick K5TF

A few words from the President

The past few weeks have been so extraordinarily taxing for me and my family as we travel the journey of hospice care with my aged mother. In addition, I was struck down in my tracks last month with a vicious late summer cold from which I have just recovered. My heartfelt thanks go to Mike, Norm, Chaz, Clark and others for picking up the reins in my absence. Mary and I look forward to being with everyone next weekend at the home of Paul (W4KLY) and Eileen Kelley.

73,

Dick K5TF ❖

This Month's Meeting

There will be **no meeting** at the Rich Auditorium this month. Instead, please plan to attend the SEDXC BBQ at the home of Paul (W4KLY) and Eileen Kelly on Saturday, October 19 from 6PM to 8:30PM.



VP's Corner



Mike ND4V

Hope to see everyone at the SEDXC BBQ Saturday October 19. Come prepared hungry!

Mike ND4V ❖

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 From the Prez; VP's Corner
- 2 Treasurer's Journal; Announcements; *Around the Shack*
- 3 Club Officers
- 5 TX7T, Marquesas Island DXpedition
- 6 25 Years Ago in SEDXC

Treasurer's Journal

Current checkbook balance: \$13,864.20

Payments made during Sept:

- 1 - \$100 to ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund in memory of Larry Price, W4RA
- 2 - \$100 to 5KØK DXpedition
- 3 - \$250 to TX7T DXpedition. Please note article by K4UEE elsewhere in the Bulletin.

73,

Jeff K1ZN ❖

Announcements

Nov 2/3: Lawrenceville Hamfest;

Info: <http://stonemountainhamfest.com>

Around the Shack de N4GG



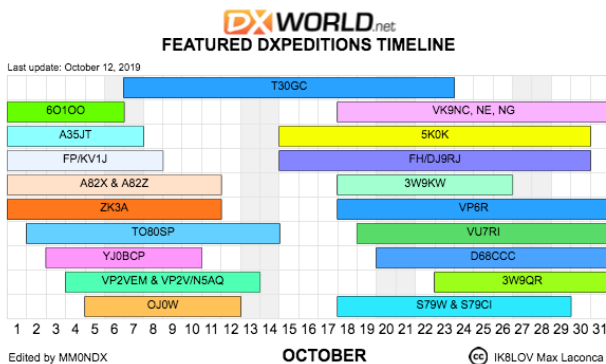
BCB DXing and 160 Meters

In my experience (1961-present) propagation is at an all-time low. Hard-core DXers meanwhile simply focus on where DX can be found. Band dead? Drop down one band and see if it's open. It's not? Repeat the process. During the day I am finding 20 and 30 meters to be the best DX bands. At night, 40 is open to all areas in darkness as is 80. 160 is open as well but is a challenge to one's tenacity. DXing on 160 requires attention to antenna design and the desire to work DX the old-fashioned way. The old-fashioned way is to tune the band and see what's on.

Most rare DX on 160 is never spotted on the CC-Cluster system. I recently asked a proponent of the radio-without-knobs variety how he works DX on 160. "Just click the spots" was his reply. On 160, that will cause you to miss most of the available DX. Meanwhile, there are internet-based chat rooms where DX tips are passed – a non-automated spotting network. A lot more than just "spots" are passed around in those chat rooms. Where the DX is listening, where the band is open, etc. is passed around. The chat-rooms are typically ad-hoc and joined by invitation. If you are serious about working 160, and/or our new bands of 630 meters and 2,200 meters, you will find those chat-rooms or they will find you. Or you will start one of your own.

When I started out (pre-internet), the "chat rooms" were on 2 meter simplex, and the mode was AM. A Gonset Communicator could be found in the shack of a lot of DXers.

Continued on p. 4



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SEDXC Webpage: www.sedxc.org

SEDXC Chat Room: details on webpage

SEDXC Reflector: details on webpage

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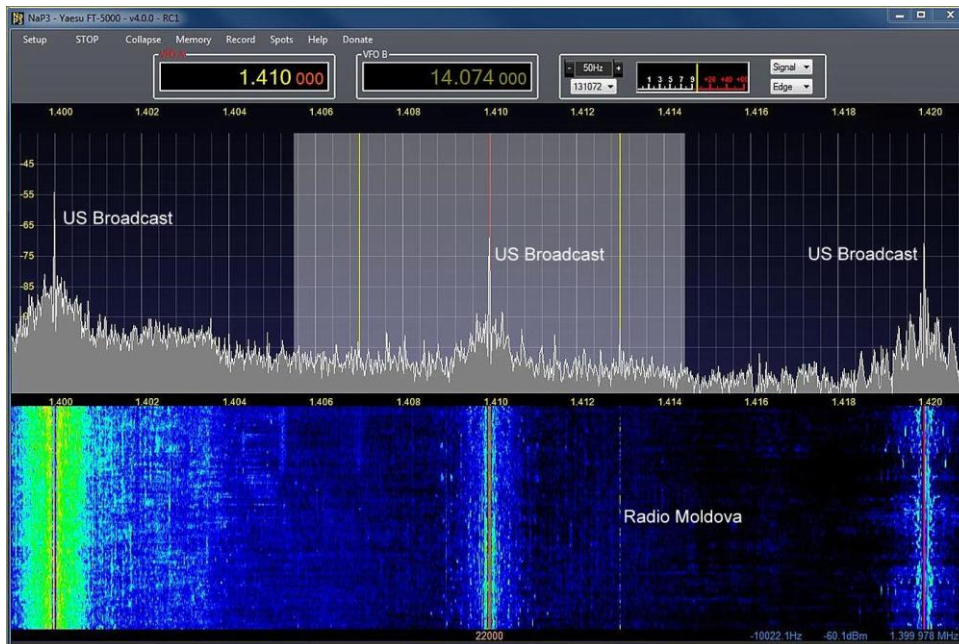
Around the Shack (cont.)

An exhaustive treatment of 160 meter propagation and how to check it on any given night is beyond the scope of this article. I would, however, like to highlight one method not in widespread use: the use of the AM broadcast band (BCB) to check propagation. Not the US broadcast band: the worldwide broadcast band.

Fortunately, European medium wave broadcast transmitters are on 9 KHz spacing, different than the 10 KHz spacing used in the US. This results in many European stations not being buried by US stations since they are on frequencies in between the US stations. An example is Radio Moldova, which transmits on 1413 KHz - with 500 KW.

Can you “hear” Radio Moldova? No, never. The modulation of US BC band stations covers +/- 5 KHz from the carrier frequency – so 1413 KHz is covered over by the modulation of the US stations on 1410 KHz. Yes, that’s plural. BUT, you can “see” Radio Moldova on a spectrum scope.

The figure below shows Radio Moldova at N4GG on a night with poor conditions on 160. Radio Moldova is barely above the noise – not a good sign. With 500 KW and an antenna system much bigger than any ham can manage, Radio Moldova will need to be many dB above the noise before European amateur signals can be heard. The night I made this image I quickly moved up to 80 and 40 meters – conditions didn’t warrant spending time tuning 160.



A list of European medium-wave BC stations can be found on Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_medium_wave_transmitters

As a side benefit - looking at the broadcast band as an indicator of propagation got me restarted on broadcast band (BCB) DXing. It’s easy and fun to hear US stations on every 10 KHz allocation at night, particularly with a simple directional antenna like a K9AY loop. But, there are stations on the AM BCB around the world. Many can be seen with a decent spectrum scope – and the no-knobs radios typically have excellent spectrum scopes.

When was the last time you went BCB DXing or used the broadcast band to check propagation?

What are you seeing on your spectrum scope? How many of the European BCB stations on 9 KHz spacing can you see tonight?

73, Hal N4GG❖



The CanAm DX Group is a loose association of primarily US and VE ops who have banded together to go on DXpeditions. We have a lawyer in the group (egad!) but have generally eschewed too much formality.

Long boat rides, parkas, tents and generators? Nah. We prefer scheduled air, commercial establishments for lodging, and electricity from the wall. But we'll take long flights, pay excess baggage charges, and stay in modest quarters for good pileups!

Operators for this adventure include F6BCW, K4UEE, K5PI, W5MJ, W5RF, W5SJ, VA7DX, and VE7KW. All are experienced DXpeditioners and/or contesters.

The biggest challenging in planning a DXpedition is choosing the destination. We first look at what's required to get there. Then we identify and evaluate possible accommodations. We prefer places that have hosted DXpeditions before. There's much less negotiation required, and we can often get some technical details on terrain, etc. from the previous operators. This year, we're very fortunate to have F6BCW on the team. He lived in French Polynesia for several years and did a DXpedition from our selected location a few years ago. Of course, having a native French speaker is a great boon as well.

We plan to set up three high power stations (500W maximum, by regulation) with two hex beams (one of which does 40M), a homebrew moxon for 15 and 30, a wire beam for 80, and a vertical for 160. Each station will have three bands "hard wired" to it. One station will do 10, 17, and 40. Another will cover 12, 20, and 80. The third will work 15, 30, and 160. This system worked quite well in the Australs (TX5T) last year.

We have several low band enthusiasts on the team who urged for a winter date for best conditions. We settled on November 6-17.

Hiva Oa, Marquesas is about the same distance from the US as Oahu, Hawaii. While our expectations are tempered by the low sunspot numbers, we do expect good conditions to the North America and Asia. We know Europe will be difficult, but we plan to do our best to put a good many EU stations in the log.

While we love CW, we can't ignore the growing popularity of FT8. We plan to have a solid presence on FT8 and expect that we'll give a lot of newer operators an all-time new country that way. One spotter for our last year's Austral operation commented that we must have forgotten to bring microphones. We did ultimately figure out how to plug them in last time, and plan to do so early on this trip.

At this writing, we've finished our travel and lodging arrangements. We had hoped to ship some items in advance with the help of a contact in Tahiti, but this is proving more complicated than we thought. So, it looks like we'll take everything as checked baggage. We will likely use an airfreight service to ship some items to the Marquesas as soon as we arrive in Tahiti. This includes several sports equipment containers (e.g., for golf clubs or skis). As you might imagine, the list of things to take is quite long, but of course we must remember *everything!* Next we'll work to balance the weight among team members, probably shipping a few items domestically.

Please visit our web site <http://www.marquesas2019.com/> for updates. Please note our generous vendor sponsors and if you're able, please contribute a bit to help offset the substantial logistics and other costs. We look forward to hearing you in the pileups in November!

Bob K4UEE ❖