

February 1, 2003 - Volume 40, Number 20 - Edition 1277 - ISSN 899-9733

Publishers Note

Welcome to new member **Robert Steadman** in Milwaukee, WI! -RT

Elections are Coming

From now thru March 1, 2003 nominations are open for President, Secretary-Treasurer, and the seven members of the Board of Directors.

Only one nomination each for President, Secretary-Treasurer, and only seven nominations for the Board shall be allowed each IRCA member. An eligible member may nominate him/herself. All nominations must be submitted in written form (letter, fax or e-mail) to the Election Committee Chairman, **Reid Wheeler**, by March 1, 2003. His address is 5910 Boulevard Loop SE, Olympia, WA 98501-8408. Telephone 360-786-6756, fax 360-753-3824 and e-mail wma001@attbi.com.

If you have any questions on the election process, please contact Reid or **Lee Freshwater**, IRCA president.

Seattle DXers Gathering

Bruce and **Evelyn Portzer's** annual all-band DX gathering will take place at their home, 6546 19th Avenue N.E., Seattle WA, Saturday, February 15, beginning at 2 pm. Bring radios, logbooks, and munchies. For more information, call Bruce at 206-522-2521.

DX Tests

PLEASE NOTE: Even if you don't hear a test, be sure to contact the station, and thank them for going to the trouble to run a test! Please remember, what's listed as being on, say, Monday morning "may" be what you think of as Sunday night! (Test times are in the station's LOCAL time.)

Beginning Sunday, January 26, 2003 - CFAN-790, Miramichi-Newcastle NB will be conducting a DX test using a 1 minute tape played several times through the night from midnight to 6 am Atlantic Standard Time (ET+1) and repeated through the following week. IRCA/NRC member **Brent Taylor** has created a 60 second tape that contains full legal ID, frequency, three Morse code IDs, a statement that the test has been scheduled on behalf of the NRC, and the station's e-mail address. CFAN will be running full daytime power and pattern. Reception reports may be sent to:

cfan@nb.sympatico.ca

Test scheduled by **Brent Taylor, VE1JH** on behalf of the National Radio Club CPC.



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Sunday, February 2, 2003 - WBMJ-1190, San Juan, PR and WIVV-1370, Vieques, PR will conduct a DX test from 12:00-2:00 am AST (11:00pm-1am EST). This test will be run simultaneously on both stations. At 11:59 pm AST, the stations will come out of a youth program - "Life on the Edge" - and then run a minute of DX information, including Morse code IDs. Then the stations will return to their regular programming from the Moody Broadcasting Network. The same procedure will be repeated at 12:59 am AST and 1:59 am AST. WBMJ will be broadcasting at 5 kW; WIVV at 1 kW. Reception reports (with return postage) may be sent to:

Bert Johnson
Operations Manager
WBMJ Radio/WIVV Radio
P.O. Box 367000
San Juan, PR 00936-7000

E-MAIL: bjohnson@cem-wbmj.org

(Arranged for the IRCA CPC)

Sunday, February 2, 2003 - CHWO-740, Toronto, ON, Canada will conduct a DX test from 12:30 - 01:30 am EST [0530 to 0630 UTC]. At 12:30 am EST, the station will have a voice and Morse code ID and will repeat each every 15 minutes until 0130 am EST. The station will have continuous music between each ID. Songs that will be played include:

Colonel Bogey March - Mitch Miller
Beer Barrel Polka - Andrew Sisters
Spin, Spin - Gordon Lightfoot
California Here I Come - Al Jolson

St. Louis Blues March - Glenn Miller
Ricochet Romance - Teresa Brewer
Something To Sing About - The Travellers
The Battle of New Orleans - Jimmy Driftwood

Reception reports and / or tapes may be sent to:

Brian Smith
QSL Manager AM 740
Box 161, Willowdale Stn A
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M2N 5S8
E-MAIL: am740@rogers.com

(All reports will be passed onto the station engineer.)



Sunday, February 16, 2003 - WRCR-1300, Spring Valley, NY will conduct an equipment test from 12:00-01:00 am ELT. The station will broadcast Morse code IDs, station promos, and AC music. Power will be 500 watts, mostly NW, protecting WAVZ - New Haven, CT. Reception reports may be sent to:



Alex Medakovic, Owner
WRCR-AM
Nanuet Mall, Suite 2126
75 West Route 59
Nanuet, NY 10954

(Arranged by the NRC CPC)

If you try for (or hear) any of these tests, PLEASE post a message letting me know, and please, drop the station personnel a note, via e-mail or snail mail, thanking them for running the test!

Lynn (ircamember@ircaonline.org)

Web Sites for AM DX Stuff

IRCA member **Craig Healy** has created the website <http://www.am-dx.com>. Devoted to the "distant AM radio reception hobby" from 150 to 1800 kHz, the site covers various facets such as receivers, antennas, QSLs, clubs (IRCA has a link), IBOC, station lists and more. Colorful subjects covered in the site are links to EKKO stamps, the history of WLW, Marconi, and Fessenden. There's also a link to the WWV Solar Report, and other resources. Craig indicates it's a work in progress, and more is planned. Check it out!

WESTERN DX ROUNDUP

Editor: Nancy Johnson -265 Waterton Way- Billings, MT 59102-7755

E-mail: NancyJohnson@prodigy.net

WDXR DEADLINES: Each Friday. Please use Eastern Time.

REPORTERS FOR THIS ISSUE:

- (GJ) Gary Jackson-7735 Center Parkway-Sacramento, CA 95823
(GL) Gary Larson-2806 Lincoln-Burbank, CA 91504
Aiwa stereo system
(DP) Doug Pifer-3410 Marion St. SE-Albany, OR 97321 oregon4wd@attbi.com
Drake R8B, Kiwa loop
(PT) Pete Taylor-6002 Bayview Dr. NE-Tacoma, WA 98422 ptdx@att.net
Sony ICF-2010 & Kiwa air core loop

- *****
- 620 KIGS CA, Hanford 1/22 0510 fair under KTLK with talk in Portuguese. (DP-OR)
CKRM SK, Regina 1/22 0418 fair under KTLK. Finally faded in good enough to
hear several ID's. Into George Strait song. (DP-OR)
- 630 KPIT NV, Reno 1/18 2300 carrying Lakers & Houston Basketball game. Good
signal at times with a little fading. (GJ-CA)
- 760 KKZN CO, Thornton 1/24 0950 "The Zone" at excellent level with "Business for
Breakfast" program. (PT-WA)
- 790 ?KOOR? CA, Clovis 1/20 1957-2002 in with ads and Spanish music at fine level.
Totally on top. Switched pattern at 2001, pre-ID. (PT-WA)
- 880 KCMX OR, Phoenix 1/22 0629 good for 30 seconds with the Jim Bohannon show,
"News without the hype" then singing ID. New. (DP-OR)
- 950 KAHI CA, Auburn 1/22 0730 borderline fair. "Great music without all that
annoying stereo separation, Foothill Radio AM 950, K-High." Programming
was talk, with music probably during the daytime. (DP-OR)
- 1560 KIQS CA, Willows 1/20 2300-2345 tune-out on at night, in & out of KNZR. ID
2341 with no mention of "Platinum" or KBLF, with which it is affiliated.
EZL/NOS music from the 70's. (PT-WA)
- 1570 KPRO CA, Riverside 1/24 1958 out of nowhere with a quick ID and into CNN news.
Dissipated quickly into KCVR with apparent power drop at 2000. (PT-WA)
- 1640 KDIA CA, Vallejo 1/18 basketball game at 1200 and music at 0810. ID at 0730
"The Light at Top of Dial." Music is Christian format. Appears to have
changed formats. (GJ-CA)
- 1650 KBJD CO, Denver in at good level 1/22 and 1/23 0950-1000 with news format.
(PT-WA)
- 1670 KHPY CA, Moreno Valley according to phone call to station, they are on 1000 until
0100. Heard 1/16 at 0830 with ID and oldies music, mixing with Redding,
CA then faded out as Redding took over. According to station they will be
on till 0100 on a temporary basis. (GJ-CA)
+1/18 2214 in fair with fading, song "Seasons in the Sun," called DJ at toll
free 800-959-1670 and was told 1530 is silent. Thanks to RW in Azusa for
tip that they're on. Daytime is poor, too much 1650 slop. Good to hear this,
now a favorite with wide variety of rock oldies. Not sure of air date. Gave
local request number 909-247-1530 as well as 800 one. It's the only
directional X-band station I've heard about. I think most of signal was from
skywave. (GL-CA)

Where are all our WDXR reporters this week? Thanks to Doug, Pete and two Garys for our
column! Nancy 1/24 2100

CENTRAL DX ROUNDUP

Editor: John C. Johnson

E-mail: John_Johnson@prodigy.net CDXR reports ONLY: cdxr@prodigy.net

RIDING GAIN

- [NJ-MT] **Nancy Johnson**, Billings, MT
NancyJohnson@prodigy.net
Drake R8B, Kiwa loop.
- [PAL-MN] **Paul A. LaFreniere**, Grand Marais, MN
Plafren@boreal.org
McKay Dymek DR-22, DA-100, Superadio III
- [TN-WI] **Tim Noonan**, Madison, WI
DXing2@aol.com
<http://www.angelfire.com/wi/dxing>
Kenwood R-1000, Radio West Loop.
- [JJR-WI] **John J. Rieger**, South Milwaukee, WI
JohnJRieger@webtv.net
<http://DX-midAMerica.com>
<http://DXMW.com>
Icom IC-R75, Kiwa loop, GE Superadio III, Terk AM 1000 loop.

DOWN THE DIAL

- 580 WIBW KS, Topeka. 1-17 fair. 07:05 with weather and beef prices talk. [JJR-WI]
- 590 WJMS MI, Ironwood. 1-17 poor. 07:36 with ID and a very long list of lost dogs
and cats. Rare here. [JJR-WI]
- 760 WCIS NC, Morgantown. 1-17 poor. 07:30 with detailed sign on. No SSB.
Relitigious program followed. "Power House 76." New! [JJR-WI]
- 900 CKBI SK, Prince Albert. 1-25 poor over others in fade. 07:34 with "Country 900
CKBI." Waited through 3 songs for the ID. [JJR-WI]
- 910 KLCN AR, Blytheville. 1-21 poor, alone. 06:59 "Classic Country 910 AM KLCN
Blytheville." Old country music. Format change from AP news. [JJR-WI]
- 1270 KBZZ NV, Sparks. 1-20 good with CHAT nulled. 19:00 with "This is 12-70 The
Buzz, KBZZ Sparks, Reno." Into network news. [NJ-MT]
- WLIK TN, Newport. 1-21 poor, but over WKBF. 06:45 with weather, request line
information. "19 degrees at Radio Station Hill." [JJR-WI]
- 1280 KIT WA, Yakima. 1-23 clear over 2 or 3 others. 19:00 "KIT Yakima." [NJ-MT]
- KXEG AZ, Phoenix. 1-22 poor through unID in SS. 20:01 with "KXEG Phoenix,
Arizona." [NJ-MT]
- KZNS UT, Salt Lake City. 1-22. 19:00 with multi-station ID including "...960
KOVO Provo, 12-80 KZNS..." [NJ-MT]
- 1490 KBUR IA, 1-19 fair in fade up. 21:18 with lively announcer, not off satellite. Call
ID, Stevie Wonder "Superstition" oldie. Seems to have changed from
their NOS format. [JJR-WI]
- KXLQ IA, Indianola. 1-19 fair. 20:00 with legal ID in ESPN sports format with
"Jock" slogan. My last needed 1490 from IA. [TN-WI]
- 1540 WPTR NY, Albany. 1-22 fair mixing with KXEL. 23:11 with NOS format and ID.
"The station that plays great music. Legends 15-40 WPTR." [PAL-MN]

25 YEARS AGO

January 28, 1978 issue of IRCA's "DX Monitor" ... **Ernest R. Cooper** of Provincetown, MA
gave his reasons for counting call letter changes as new stations ... **Neil Wolfish** of Toronto,
ON logged 42 new stations between December 24th and 31st ... **Dan Sys** of Vancouver, BC
told about Vancouver's 8 inches of snow. The first measurable snow in 4 years ... **Bill Harms**
of Provo, UT compared conditions at Provo with his old Spokane location ... **Nick Hall-Patch**
of Victoria, BC told about listening to USSR-647 mixing with BBC-647 in November 1976.

OPEN MIKE

Winter hit us heavy this past week with about 9" of snow here in Billings. It's been years since we've seen that amount. This column was typed 1-25-03. 73, John

DX WORLDWIDE – WEST / TROPICAL BAND DX

Editor: Patrick Martin – P.O. Box 843 – Seaside OR 97138
E-mail: mwdxer@webtv.net all times UTC

A short one this week with reports from Nick Hall-Patch & Doug Pifer.

TRANS-ATLANTIC DX ROUNDUP

1314 **TA???**, Unid carrier here 1/18 1528 also Jan 25 1523. I normally don't report carriers (though that's all that's been heard for some time!) but these were in the 40 to 50 degree range as evening signals from Norway are usually. Unlikely to be Australia off the back as cx favoured Asiatics, yet these faded out before the usual Asiatics peaked 1545 UTC and following. (NHP-BC)

PAN-AMERICAN DX ROUNDUP

950 **MEXICO**, BCN, Tijuana 1/22 1210 UTC. Fair. Would fade in occasionally under KJR. Real laid back talk between man and woman (boring). Kicked into gear at 1254 with several Radio Formula slogans and some music. (DP-OR)

TRANS-PACIFIC DX ROUNDUP

774 **JAPAN**, Akita JOUB 1/18 1552. Woman talking, poor in splash. 1558 recheck had man talking, faded down, but...came back up to fair at 1600 for woman talking in JJ, a snatch of inst. mx, then pips on the hour. (NHP-BC)

THANKS TO THESE REPORTERS

NHP-BC **NICK HALL-PATCH**, Victoria BC <nhp@ieee.org>
DXing with Drake R8 (homebrew being tuned up) 3' box loop
DP-OR **DOUG PIFER**, Albany, OR <oregon4wd@attbi.com>
DXing with Drake R8B, KIWA Loop

NEW 2002 VERSION! The IRCA Mexican Log 8th Edition



lists all AM stations in Mexico by frequency, including call letters, state, city, day/night power, slogans, schedule in UTC/GMT, formats, networks and notes. The call letter index gives call, frequency, city and state. The city index (listed by state, then city) includes frequency, call and day/night power. The log has been completely updated from the 2001 edition and carefully cross-checked by several IRCA members. **This is an indispensable reference for anyone who hears Mexican radio stations.** Size is 8 1/2" x 11" and three hole punched for easy binding. **Prices:** IRCA/NRC members - \$9.50 (US/Canada/Mexico/sea mail), \$10.50 (rest of the Americas airmail), \$11.00 (Europe/Asia airmail), \$11.50 (Australia/New Zealand airmail). Non-members: add \$2.50 to the above prices.



To order the **IRCA Mexican Log** from the **IRCA Bookstore**, send the correct amount (in US funds payable to **Phil Bytheway**) to:

IRCA BOOKSTORE, 9705 MARY NW, SEATTLE WA 98117-2334

WESTERN DX FORUM

Reid Wheeler – 5910 Boulevard Loop SE – Olympia, WA 98501-8408
E-mail: WMA001@attbi.com Phone 360-786-6756 Fax 360-753-3824

Mike Sanburn KG6LJU, P.O. Box 1256, Bellflower CA 90707-1256

Greetings – the 40th annual IRCA Convention will be held at the Best Western Merry Manor Inn, 700 Main Street, South Portland, Maine 04106. Phone number for reservations is 207-774-6151 (mention IRCA Convention rate of \$69 per night.) Convention dates are June 27-29, 2003. The hotel is situated near the Jetport, Maine Mall, several radio stations, and tourist attractions. Registration fee of \$35 payable to Mike Sanburn, will cover meeting room rental, banquet + refreshment costs, prizes, etc... The hotel can be viewed at www.seenewengland.com/merrymanor. For tourism info go to www.visitportland.com. We will be officially welcoming the Decalomania Club as well, in fact all DXers and radio fans are invited! More details will appear soon. Write or e-mail me with any specific questions. Locally, the ESPN + Radio Disney swap did take place on Jan 1st. Also, I am enjoying KLACs nostalgia-lounge music format. One of my new most-wanted is still 1400 AM in Parowan, Utah. I do have KSRR-1400 in Provo verified. If I aim east on 1400 to try to get a good report on KSUN-AZ or KTNM-NM, I get way too much splash from very local KLTZ. I recently read about the website for Collins owners such as myself: www.collinsra.com. If there are any BCB DXers who are also hams and would like to make a QSO contact, I can often be found on the 80 meter Century Club late net Friday mornings at 0600 UTC. Frequency is 3.904 MHz lower side band. Call sign is KG6LJU. There was once a net on 3.75 MHz exclusively for BCB DXers. Does anyone know if this still exists? Let me know the who and when and where. This coming baseball season Angels will be on KSPN and Dodgers will be on KFWB. New flagships for everybody! Good to see Bob Wien as part of the SoCal contingency. 73 and hot DX.

Gary Larson, 2806 Lincoln, Burbank CA 91504

[1/23] Back again. Missed SCADS meeting last Sat. Good to see John Tudenham send in a forum. This friend in Hollister keeps me up to date on changes and what he hears, as well as sending a lot of clippings and occasional cassettes. Just called owner of 1670 KHPY, D. L. Van Voorhes and reported reception of a couple nites ago. Said airdate was 1/16 @ 7 AM and was told to use Box 909, Moreno Valley CA 92556. They're still on Sunnymead Bl. And use 2 numbers of 909-247-1530 and 800-959-1670 for requests. Called air per. WD a nite or two ago to comment on oldies music. I asked where towers are and he said Redlands; I mentioned San Timoteo Cyn. Rd and was told yes, its there. I figure its near that road and Frontage Rd. Was also told of possible sale of stn. DXM is looking good everyone. Good to see Mike Sanburn is hosting this year's convention. In Br Info I saw a typo of KXTA, San Diego (actvaley [???], L.A.) In OC Register a mention was in radio column of passing of Jim O'Neal (KEZY 1190 mid 70s) in Sparks, NV on 1/11. I sort of recall his name in 70s since I was really into T40 then. Just realized I have a 2nd rx, going up to 1710. It's a portable APX CD-cassette AM/FM AC/DC and KHPY is in fair now at 6:57 PM as I write, w/oldies. Spoke to Robby, dj on air and asked for an add. Hollies song to play plus something by Gary Lewis & The Playboys from 60s. Present number here is 818-845-3737 but in near future it will be one I used to have in Sept. '02. Hope to see R. Wien in DXM in future reporting dx and comments on locals. 73 for now.

IRCA Stationery

Black/red masthead with the IRCA logo and name. Great for using when writing for verifications. 100 sheets, \$5.00 (US and Canada), \$7.50 (rest of the world).

Order (in US funds payable to **Phil Bytheway**) from:

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VERIFICATION SIGNERS

Stephen S. Howe – 8 Dutch Village, Apt. DL – Menands, NY 12204-2930
E-mail: showe@csc.albany.edu

**Emerging Techniques of High-Tech Expeditioning
Part 3**

Guy Atkins John H. Bryant Nick Hall-Patch Don Nelson
Puyallup, WA Eastsound, WA Victoria, BC Beaverton, OR

January 2003

My deadline is the last Monday of the month.

CONTRIBUTORS

PM Patrick Martin, P O Box 843, Seaside OR 97138-0843; mwdxer@webtv.net
HN Herbert Newberry, 405 JH Whitaker Rd, Newborn GA 30056-3033
MS Mike Sanburn, P O Box 1256, Bellflower CA 90707-1256;
mikesanburn@hotmail.com

FREQ CALL NAME, TITLE; ADDRESS; WHAT; WHEN; WHO

890 KLFF* Jon Fugler, GM; jon.fugler@klife.org; E; 1f; PM [Station in Arroyo Grande CA]
1020 KAXX** Matt Sherman, PD; 2509 Eide St, Suite 6, Anchorage AK 99503; Pbc; 320ff; PM
1040 WPBS Lynn Battles, GM; 1381 Rockbridge Road, Conyers GA 30012; L; 10; HN
1060 KTNS Larry W Gamble, O/GM and Wayne DuBois, Eng/Ann; 40356 Oak Park Way, Oakhurst CA 93644; L; 34; MS
Same signers; P O Box 2020, Oakhurst CA 93644; L; 70; PM
1110 KSPN [None]; espnradio1110@listenerclub.com; E; 90f; PM
1440 WZYX Mary Lou Garner, O/OffMgr; Box 398, Cowan TN 37318; L; 61; HN
1660 WWRU George D Butch, CE; Radio Unica, 8400 NW 52nd St, Suite 101, Miami FL 33316; Fbc; 1369; PM***

WHAT was received: L = Letter with personalized statement; F = Form letter; Q = QSL card, commercially printed; C = Postcard or similar card supplied by station; P = Prepared card or form supplied by DXer; R = DXer's report returned with statement; cf = Certificate; E = Verification by e-mail; fx = Verification by FAX; M = Coverage map; B = Bumper or other sticker; bc = Business card; + = Extra goodies

WHEN the reply came: Number of days elapsed; f = Follow-up, by mail, FAX, e-mail, or visit; n = Return postage not used; r = Return postage returned

NOTES: * [For this column] = See comment below; ** [For this column] = Station off the air and in process of being sold; *** [For this column] = See comment below

Thanks for the sticker, Herb! Thanks for the long letter and Portland info, Mike! Patrick notes that his e-mail verie from KLFF-890 came in a few hours after he sent an e-mail follow-up to his written report of 11/23/02. The GM said he has been too busy to reply to written reports, so Patrick recommends sending e-mail reports instead. Patrick also reports that his verie from WWRU-1660 took nearly 4 years! "Apparently WWRU is still U1 10/1 KW according to the QSL. They broadcast from one of the towers in the WLXE array in Carlstadt, NJ. The letterhead states WNMA-1210 and WJCC-1700, Miami Springs FL, and WWRU-1660 Jersey City NJ." This column was prepared on 1/27/03. 73, SSH.

Sunrise/Sunset Maps 12 maps showing 15 minute sunset and sunrise times for the US and 12 maps showing hourly sunset and sunrise times for the World. Explanation includes use of the maps and examples of DX made possible by knowledge of SR/SS times. Prices: IRCA/NRC members - \$2.25 (US/Canada/Mexico/sea mail), \$2.75 (rest of the Americas airmail), \$3.00 (Europe/Asia airmail), \$3.50 (Australia/New Zealand airmail). Non-members: add \$1.00 to the above prices.

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(ed. note: this article was first published at : www.dxing.info/articles/hitech_dx and www.hard-core-dx.com/nordicdx/dxlab/hitechdx/hitechdx.html Possibly better graphic reproduction as well as sound files may be found at those sites. A small portion of this article is repeated from last week in the interests of better continuity)

There are also quite a number of operating programs that have been developed by computer-literate hobbyists for their own particular receiver and which are not widely available to others. Some of these programs, like the one developed by our own Chuck Hutton for his Drake R-8A, are quite sophisticated.

Lastly, the so-called "commercial" receiver control programs are also well represented at Grayland. In the past several years, both Guy Atkins and Don Nelson have adopted ERGO, developed by radio enthusiast and computer professional John Fallows. Don is the most adept at using ERGO, usually orchestrating 8 top-of-the-line receivers (four different models from two different manufacturers) and numerous databases with ERGO mounted on a single mid-capability laptop. The following are Don Nelson's observations:

ERGO 3 and ERGO4 as Receiver Controls

All of us have quite a bit of reference material at our fingertips while we DX – WRTH, Passport, ILG database, various inputs from clubs ranging from written material to searchable databases. Who wouldn't want to tune directly to a selected frequency listed in that mass of data and find the station there? How about checking hundreds of such frequencies rapidly? Before the advent of good software receiver control, the frequency entry buttons on my receivers were wearing and the tuning knob got a good workout. Even with the introduction of receivers with 100 or 1000 memories, the best I could do was insert the frequency but not the hours of expected operation, nor days of the week. And when I twirled the knob—landing on a station's frequency I wasn't familiar with—it took a lot of searching through all the references to find the possibilities.

All of this has changed with the advent of good receiver control programs. If you have a receiver with an RS-232 port (or a CI-V port), you can link your listening with databases for tuning and identification. This section introduces one of the best, reasonably priced receiver programs available—ERGO3 and ERGO4.

Since ERGO3 has been available for several years, it is the program I am most familiar with. Even so, I don't use all the features, and this discussion isn't intended to be a manual, so I'll limit my discussion to the elements of ERGO that are most helpful to me.

Initializing the controls for the very first time is very easy – you'll need to enter a location name and latitude/longitude, time zone, as well as some local antenna information. (I generally ignore this, as I switch frequently between several antenna types, affecting the propagation analysis very little.) You'll need a serial cable to connect your Windows-based computer and your radio. If your computer lacks a serial port, I have found the Belkin FSU103 works well as a USB to Serial port converter. Other DXers have reported problems on some other vendors' USB-Serial products. In some cases, you'll need an easily available null modem, or a serial cable configured as a null modem cable. The setup using ERGO4 is

similar, except that ERGO4 can control two receivers simultaneously (but you must have two serial ports).

Hint: There is an excellent radio-oriented on-line review of USB/Serial adapters at: <http://www.aa5au.com/usb>

Tip: Have multiple receivers of the same type? Use a Belkin data switch between the PC and the receivers. You'll have to remember which one you are using, and may have to refresh the connection via the remote/local switch on ERGO4 or Locked/Unlocked on ERGO3.

Tip: At least on the WJ series, ERGO4 provides the capability of locking the receiver so that neither front panel nor ERGO can change the controls (except of course to turn this feature off)

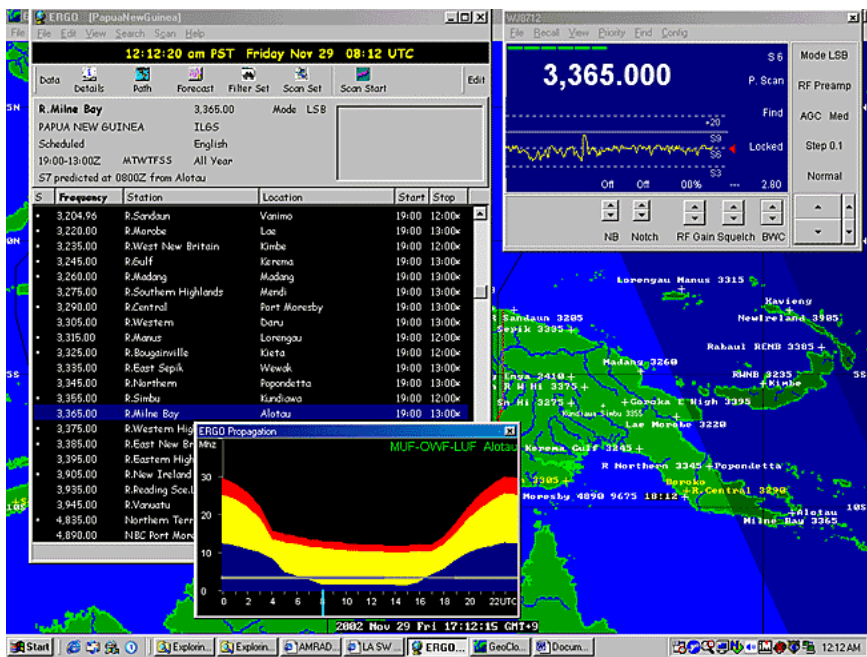


Figure 9. ERGO3: Listening in to Radio Milne Bay at transmitter sunset with a good S6 signal. The upper right-hand window is Receiver Control. It gives all pertinent information on the current status of the receiver and shows (via the moving yellow line) the signal strength being received currently and over the past several minutes. The left window shows a database (ERGO's special DA3 file format) of all of the PNG SWBC stations, with information on the currently tuned station in the gray area at the top of that window. The colorful Propagation Prediction window is in the lower center with a full day shown from left to right (note the 24 UTC hours along the bottom, with the blue line at the current time.) The gray horizontal line indicates the frequency to which the receiver is tuned and the line's thickness relates to scheduled on/off-air hours. The lower edge of the yellow zone is the predicted Lowest Useable Frequency for the path from my location to Milne Bay. As you can see, the propagation prediction shows Milne Bay should be audible. A Geoclock map (separate program, not part of ERGO) of New Guinea is open in the background. Note that it has been modified (easy) to show the locations and frequencies of all SWBC stations in Papua New Guinea. Note also Geoclock indicates (by the darker areas) that the sun has already set at Alotau, Milne Bay, the location of the station currently being received.

Once you open the ERGO Receiver Window on your computer screen, you'll want to set up the display options (S-Meter as bar, scope or both) as well as selecting a step size for tuning. Setting a few other options allows additional customizing to suit your taste. See Fig 9 in the upper right to see the Receiver Window configured as I like it for the WJ8712P, HF1000A and/or 8711A.

You'll also want to set up the ERGO Map Window (which allows Azimuthal map from your location or Mercator, with short path shown), and the Propagation Window. Both of these are open on the bottom of Fig. 10. Again, changing frequencies on the receiver automatically resets the propagation forecast and the map. Propagation data (K, A, Solar Flux indices) can be automatically updated via the internet by ERGONET, which allows you to automatically synch the PC time to a number of time-server sites. I've found the propagation software works well– it accurately predicted within 10 minutes the time that R St Helena would fade-in locally at this site, but I note that it does not work well below 3 MHz.

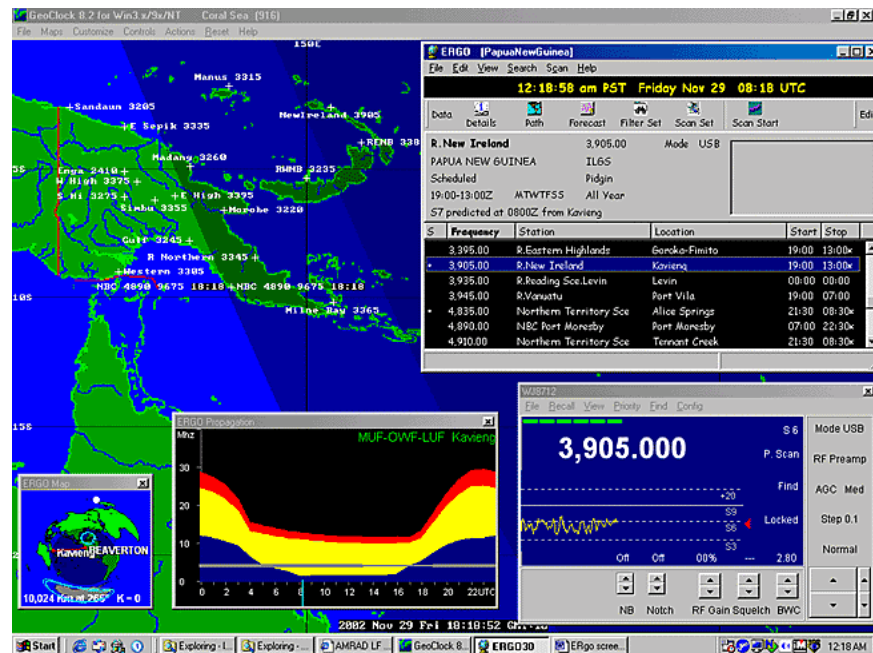


Figure 10. ERGO3: Listening in to Radio New Ireland on 3905 kHz. Note the addition of the ERGO map window – here in Azimuthal view with transmitter location (Kavieng) and the receiver location (Beaverton, Oregon) listed, and the distance between given. Location of Sun (white dot), current areas of planetary light and darkness and typical aurora belts for the current solar conditions are also shown, along with the red line which indicates the short-path propagation route of this signal.

Note: ERGO4 setup is similar but allows up to two receivers to be set up.

Note: ERGO4 reportedly uses a more advanced propagation model for predictions down to 1 MHz, but this has not been verified.

Tip: left clicking with the mouse on the frequency in the database will retune the receiver and update map and propagation, if open. Left clicking on the station name just updates the map and propagation without changing the receiver frequency. This is handy while listening to DX/SWL while looking for what else might be of interest.

DATABASES

Databases are key to getting the most out of most modern receiver control programs – you can never have enough databases. I use ILG downloads, as well as custom databases from data in Mohrman's LADX page for Central and South America (<http://www.sover.net/~hackmohr/sw.htm>) and a number of other more specialized databases from various sources including Cumbre Lite. Whereas ERGO3 permitted me only to have ILG and one other database active in the program at a time, ERGO4 supports opening a number of databases concurrently. Now, once I have located an interesting frequency, I can ask ERGO to FIND the frequency in the database (regrettably this works only to the exact frequency, so if you are tuned off a bit due to a varying frequency, then this does not work).

TIP: Personalized databases can reflect local geographical areas of interest, say all RRI or PNG stations, or can be used to keep current target lists or even the latest tips from various online sources. You'll have to figure out a way to automate the creation of the databases (those of you skilled in PERL or RUBY will find this a breeze. C++, Visual Basic, etc would also work but take more programming effort). An alternative is manual entry, but this is much more time consuming.

In ERGO3, DSI databases could be created by opening files from ILG, Fineware or by creating a custom file. I found the latter quite difficult to make work well – it's far improved in ERGO4. It is far simpler to create a DA3 file—for example, Fig. 9 shows a custom DA3 file created specifically to listen to the PNG stations. An advantage to either the DA3 or the DSI database is that you can click on the frequency and it will tune the receiver (and you can use up/down arrows on the keyboard to move through frequencies).

USING ERGO

I try to keep GEOCLOCK open on my desktop with various windows of ERGO open and positioned over GEOCLOCK map areas I'm not interested in. (Unfortunately, GEOCLOCK will not update its terminator display when in the background; it needs to be clicked and made "active" showing correct terminator position.) I'll open databases and either use them to direct-tune the receiver, as well as to tune around and then query the database. Typical ERGO3 desktops are shown in Fig 9, 10 and ERGO4 in Fig 11.

REMOTE RECEIVER CAPABILITY

One of the most interesting features of ERGO4 is the ability to allow others to both control, and listen to your receiver, over the Internet. There are two great uses– the first allows you to set up a receiver (and antenna) at a remote location better suited for listening than your home shack might be. I've not yet done this, but having a receiver down at the Coast appeals greatly. Running a more stable operating system would be an advantage (I use both Red Hat Linux and Win98/XP on my systems, but ERGO only runs on Windows platforms. In the future, I foresee DXpeditioning from the comfort of ones own home using remote receivers and antennas, shared with friends across the Internet (not supported yet by ERGO). A second good use of ERGO is to allow the software vendor to debug a problem remotely from his home but on your receiver and system – ERGO author John Fallows did this with several of our receivers during the beta testing of ERGO4.

OTHER ERGO FEATURES THAT MAY INTEREST YOU:

- 1) Help: a fairly comprehensive help capability is provided from the pull down help menu
- 2) ERGO4 offers audio recording, DSP filtering, and built-in logbook feature (similar to B-Log) albeit with a greater learning curve.

- 3) The Scan capabilities of ERGO4 (Beta) have just been augmented:
 - * You can select a range of frequencies to Profile
 - * You can create Scanlist of specific stations - manually, inserted from the radio or dragged from a database
 - * You can Profile or Scan continuously on Radio 2 and tune Radio 1 from the graphs.
 - * The Parameters for Scanning are very flexible, including gaze time, dwell time, dead time and signal threshold.
- 4) John Fallows plans to further augment ERGO4 with a capability quite similar to the Hall-Patch "DX Radar" discussed elsewhere in this article.

IMPROVING ERGO4

John Fallows takes suggestions for improvements seriously – he's done remarkably well with improvements on the new ERGO4 through the Beta testing process. Yet, according to John, his work on improving future versions of ERGO4 will remain ongoing – there is more to be accomplished.

Don't expect ERGO to look like the front panel of your receiver. With support of so many receivers, it wasn't possible to do this. Also, there are features of some receivers that aren't fully supported – for example on the WJ8712P the noise blanker has more controls than are typically accessible from the 8711A/HF1000A.

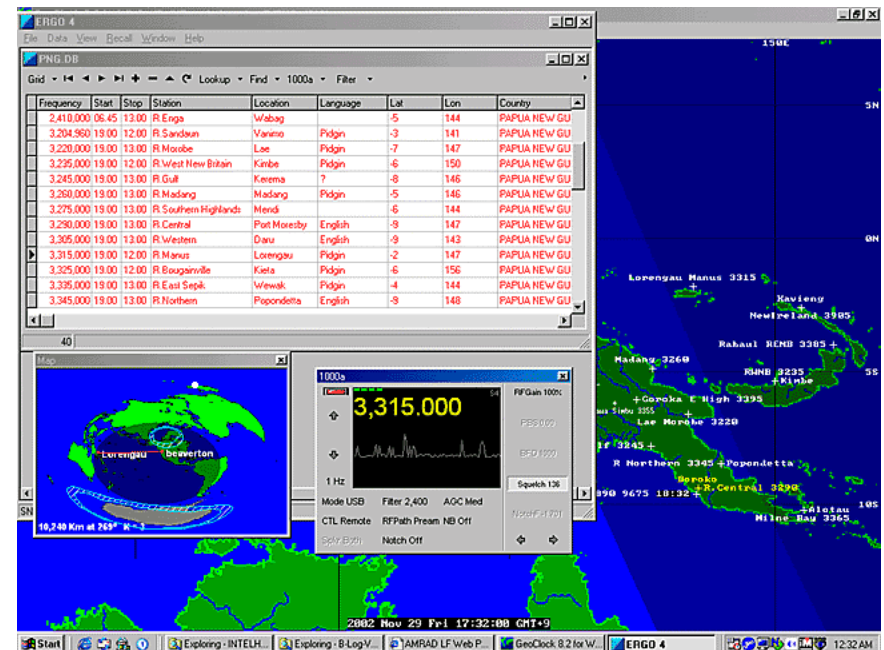


Figure 11. ERGO4: Listening to R Manus just after actual sunset. A database file is open, and the azimuth map is shown (ERGO4 has a strange squashed-appearing map that, currently, cannot be corrected)

Users of ERGO4 will likely miss the prominent display of the current time and date that was highly visible in the ERGO3 Receiver Window. I know I do.

CONCLUSION

All in all, I feel that the ERGO software is the most powerful and comprehensive receiver control package currently available to the radio hobby community. Like all powerful software, there is a learning curve to go through as you become familiar with the software. However, the ERGO user is rewarded with an incredibly nimble receiver control and the ability to orchestrate a large amount of reference data and real time information in support of high-tech DXing.

Note: ERGO3 supports AOR7030, NRD535/D, HF1000A/8711A/8712P, RX320, R8A/B. ERGO4 supports all of these plus RX340, R75, RX350, and NRD545. Currently in beta & alpha tests are software drivers for the R8500, RX331, NRD-525, JST-245, TS-570, TS-870, TS2000, RA6790, R8, and HF-2050.

ERGO3/4 is available from Universal Radio (<http://www.universal-radio.com/catalog/comrxvr/44743396.html>), or as a 30 day free Demo Version of ERGO4 download at <http://swldx.com/>. Also, a complete list of features, receivers supported and future developments may be found at <http://swldx.com/ergo42.htm> and <http://swldx.com/ergo4.htm> (Please also note – I have no financial ties with either firm. I'm just a satisfied customer)

Finally, I'd like to thank John Fallows for his continued efforts on this labor of love. The price for this software isn't cheap but revenue does little to compensate for the total cost of the software in terms of the numbers of hours he and the beta testers have put into ERGO3 and ERGO4.

OTHER LAPTOP APPLICATIONS

There are a number of other computer applications that we have or could invoke through our laptops while on DXpedition, and most are probably obvious to the reader. Several of us prepare reception reports during the hours that aren't DXable, including both the text report and burning a CD of the reception itself. Very occasionally, we have DXpeditioned with access to the Internet. That capability opens up many possibilities, of course, from background research and communication with other hobbyists to actually matching program content of a reception (while it is occurring) with audio from the 'Net which is being streamed "live" by the station. Four years ago, no one lugged a laptop to Grayland, now some participants bring two or three!

CYBIKUS, CYBIKO, CYBIKI: Inter-DXer Communication While DXing

One of the most difficult aspects of DXpeditioning, particularly if the group is larger than two DXers, is finding a means to communicate hot DX tips to each other without either disturbing people in the next motel room or continually having to pull out headphones off in the middle of a catch and say rather grumpily "What did you say???" With seven or eight DXers at a typical Grayland DXpedition, this became a difficult problem, especially if we are scattered in two or more rooms. For years, we tried some version of passing around written notes, but that really never worked. Then we scrawled things in our logs and held them up for other people to read. That worked, sometimes, but rather poorly. It is hard to decipher a hasty pencil scrawl from across the room. We day-dreamed for years about a computer-based LAN network, but the expense was a problem as well as forcing everyone to bring a computer capable of attaching to a LAN. Now, of course, there are possibilities of wireless networking our laptops, but again, expense and compatibility issues abound. We needed to find a mechanism that would be both inexpensive and inclusive of everyone on the DXpedition.

Guy Atkins led our search, but we all pitched in with various ideas. Our next idea was using hand-held "white-board" chalkboards and broad water-based markers. The boards were about 10" x 15" and a brief note written in marker was easily legible from across the room. The boards and markers were under \$7.00 per DXer and hence, very affordable. They

worked wonderfully, as long as everyone was in the same room. Unfortunately, the second time that we used them, there were enough DXers present to require two rooms. We found, of course, that it was next to impossible to tear yourself away from a super catch to walk even a few steps to show a note to the troops in the other room. And, also of course, on the second morning, the DXers in the back room stumbled on to the catch of the DXpedition, a brief opening to coastal New Guinea on MW. The troops in the front room heard about that catch at breakfast... after the band had faded out. Obviously, the white-boards had to go!

Well prior to our next DXpedition, super-shopper Guy Atkins discovered CYBIKO hand-held PDA units from Asia and the problem was solved. Cybiko were developed originally for the East Asian youth market where they were briefly "all the rage." Although these units can perform most of the functions of normal "PDAs, their most attractive aspect was that each Cybiko unit can communicate wirelessly, **in text form**, with other Cybiko units. They can communicate with all other units (up to 100) within their 150 foot range or they can address individual units, with no one else receiving the message. At the time that we adopted these units (early 2001) they were selling for about \$20.00 each, new-in-the-box on ebay. Today, there are two different models of Cybiki available: the so-called Cybiki Classic that we adopted and the newer Cybiko XTREME



Figure 12

These two units are excellent as DXpeditioning tools. One of the handiest aspects of the Cybiki are the fact that each unit can be set to vibrate briefly when it receives a message. We usually just leave them sitting on our DXing desks and, when a message arrives, we are able to feel the vibrations through the table. That way, we can pay maximum attention to our own DXing, but never miss a message.

Messages must be typed into original Cybiko Classic with a small pencil-like stylus. We understand that the button placement on the Cybiko Xtreme is such that one can type with a careful finger. Chuck Hutton recently purchased an Xtreme model and has tested the communications between Classics and Xtremes. It works fine! As you might guess, we have all learned to abbreviate our messages.

At the first DXpedition where we had Cybiki running in two separate rooms, the Cybiki paid for themselves in one catch. Nick Hall-Patch (nhp) was in the back room and Guy(guy), Don (don) and John. (bjohn) were in the front room. Nick had spotted something very unusual appearing on his DX Radar. The on-screen Cybiko messages looked about like this over the next 5 minutes:

nhp: strange DX on 909 whalang?
bjohn: not CC or JJ
The signal slowly built in strength.
don: indo!!
guy: yes, indo!!
bjohn: rri sorong!
don: ments sorong just now!

The Cybiko unit (and DX Radar) was directly responsible for our first-ever reception of Indonesia on MW from Grayland. Not only had Nick been able to alert every one, but Don and Guy, as long-time DXers of Indonesia were able to recognize the language with great confidence. All that was accomplished without any of us having to take our headphones off or even look up, EXCELLENT!

The Cybiko units have many other capabilities. Both models are quite good game playing machines, with many games and other applications being downloadable from www.cybiko.com. The Xtreme model is quite a bit more capable than the Classic as a PDA unit, with many of the functions of much more expensive PDAs. Though only Chuck Hutton has any experience yet with these newer models, manufacturer literature speaks of wireless web surfing in the Bluetooth platform, its use as a scientific calculator, a text editor and note taker, a translator and a number of other functions. There is also an attachment available for the Xtreme model which enables it to act as a mpeg music machine. We have not investigated the DX-applicability of this latest gadget (yet!)

The easiest method of obtaining Cybiko units right now is through the **ebay** auction site on the internet. Both models are still available in late 2002, with the obsolescent Classic units selling for \$12 to \$15, new in the box and the Xtreme units going for from \$25 to \$40, new in the box.

Publisher's note: this article continues next week

An Introduction to Broadcast Band DXing

This tri-folded brochure is ideal for explaining the Broadcast Band DXing hobby and the IRCA. It can be included with reception reports and given to other interested folks. Sub topics include: What is DXing?, Broadcasting's early years, The first DXers, Clubs helped listeners share, Our hobby today and DX clubs still unite listeners. It is two color printed on heavy stock. Price is \$0.35/brochure (US and Canada), \$1.00 (rest of the world). Minimum order is 10. To order, send the correct amount (in US funds payable to **Phil Bytheway**) to:

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The IRCA is a non-profit organization devoted to the hobby of hearing distant stations on the Broadcast Band (510-1720 kHz). **DX Monitor**, the official publication of the IRCA, is published in "soft" form 40 times a year (weekly from September to April, twice monthly from May to August) and in printed form 35 times a year (weekly September to April, monthly May to August). **DX Monitor** contains members' loggings, articles on radio stations, receiver reviews, technical articles, DX tips, and other material of interest to Broadcast Band DX hobbyists. IRCA is a member of ANARC, the Association of North American Radio Clubs.



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