

DX News

• Serving DX'ers since 1933



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Omaha 2011: The joint NRC/WTFDA Convention in Omaha from October 13 to 16 is almost here! Members on e-dxn.com will receive this issue just in time to meet the registration deadline of October 1. Details on page 6.

NRC Member Survey: The member survey was included as an insert in the October 3 issue. Please return by October 28 to Debra S. Vobbe, 706 Mackenzie Drive, Lima OH 45805. Your participation will help the Club better meet members' needs.

Contest 2011: The first "sprint" of the 2011 NRC Contest will be three consecutive days of your choice from October 6 to October 18. Details on page 34 of the September 19 issue.

From the Publisher: Well, we normally see a slow start to the weekly issues as members get back into the swing of the DX season. But this is ridiculous! Neither Bruce Conti nor Mike Brooker received any loggings this week for publication in IDXD or DDXD East, respectively. Since it's been doing nothing but rain here in the East, there ain't nothing to do but to DX! So get your loggings into your editors and let's see a nice big *DX News* next time around.

We do have a nice article this week that emerged from conversations between last year's NRC contest winner in the Ultra-Light division, Ron Bailey, and contest manager Wayne Heinen. Ron and Wayne have put together a bunch of helpful suggestions not just for contestants, but for DXers generally. Check it out, starting on page 7. (And no, the radio pictured on page 7 is not an Ultra-Light!)

Addresses: Just a gentle reminder that anything that involves a check (subscription renewals, publication orders, etc.) goes to the NRC HQ PO Box in Aurora, CO, not to the publisher in Harpers Ferry! Thanks.

VOL. 79 DX NEWS PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

No	In By	Date	No	In By	Date
3	Oct. 7	Oct. 17	17	Jan. 20	Jan. 30
4	Oct. 14	Oct. 24	18	Jan. 27	Feb. 6
5	Oct. 21	Oct. 31	19	Feb. 3	Feb. 13
6	Oct. 28	Nov. 7	20	Feb. 10	Feb. 20
7	Nov. 4	Nov. 14	21	Feb. 17	Feb. 27
8	Nov. 11	Nov. 21	22	Feb. 24	Mar. 5
9	Nov. 18	Nov. 28	23	Mar. 2	Mar. 12
10	Nov. 25	Dec. 5	24	Mar. 16	Mar. 26
11	Dec. 2	Dec. 12	25	Mar. 30	Apr. 9
12	Dec. 9	Dec. 19	26	Apr. 27	May 7
13	Dec. 23	Jan. 2	27	May 25	June 4
14	Dec. 30	Jan. 9	28	June 30	July 9
15	Jan. 6	Jan. 16	29	Aug. 3	Aug. 13
16	Jan. 13	Jan. 23	30	Sept. 7	Sept. 17

THE DX TIME MACHINE

75 years ago: From the Oct. 7, 1936 *DX News*: The FCC held a major hearing on October 5 to discuss a possible reallocation of AM broadcast band frequencies.

50 years ago: From the Oct. 7, 1961 *DX News*: IDXD switched to ordering tips in frequency order rather than by country; the FCC announced that new Western stations would be allowed on the heretofore clear channels of WMAQ-670, WGN-720, WSB-750, WJR-760, WBBM-780, WCBS-880, WLS-890, KDKA-1020, WBZ-1030, KYW-1100, KMOX-1120, WHAM-1180, and WCAU-1210.

25 years ago: From the Oct. 13, 1986 *DX News*: AM Switch reported that the legacy 3-letter call WIS (560 kHz in Columbia SC) disappeared from the AM dial with the station's call letter change to WVOC.

10 years ago: From the Oct. 15, 2001 *DX News*: DXAS editor Mark Durenberger was inducted into the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting Hall of Fame in Bloomington, MN.

NRC AM Radio Log, 32nd Edition

The Log is unbound and three-hole punched for standard binders.
Price: To the United States, \$19.95 to members, \$25.95 to non-members; add \$3.50 for Priority Mail.
 To Canada, \$26 to members, \$30 to non-members.
Airmail to all outside US/Canada: \$34.00.
 Canadian orders: PayPal or postal money order only, please. U.S. funds only!
Order from: NRC, P.O. Box 473251, Aurora CO 80047-3251 or www.nrcdxas.org
 CO residents add 3.5% sales tax.



AM Switch



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North Richland Hills, TX 76180-5552

Status changes in AM stations, supplied by the FCC, CRTC, listeners

CALL LETTER CHANGES

Old Call	New Call
1270 KOZQ MO Waynesville	KIHK
1270 WUCO OH Marysville	WQTT
1340 KCFR CO Denver	KVOQ
1600 WMHZ DE Dover	WAMS



[This is the fourth time this station has changed to these calls!]

CONSTRUCTION PERMITS ON THE AIR

1370 WVIE MD Pikesville – Is now on with U4 50000/24000, upgrading the night facilities.

ACTIONS

1380 KRCM TX Shenandoah – Licensed for U1 250/69, KRCM has a CP for U1 2800/60. They were on the air for about two weeks after erecting a temporary test site (a trailer-mounted 110' tower) to **operate on 1680 kHz with D1 1000/0 CH 1000** in order to conduct field strength measurements for their new facility. Anyone in the area (between Houston and Bryan-College Station who heard a strange signal on 1680, this may have been them.

1410 WIZM WI La Crosse – Coordinate correction to 43-50-49/91-13-07.

1420 WVJS KY Owensboro – Licensed for U4 5000/1000, WVJS is **operating under a Special Temporary Authorization (STA) with U1 200/20** while they conduct testing for a possible application to operate non-directional during the day.



1430 WPNI MA Amherst – Licensed for U4 5000/11, WPNI is operating under an STA with U1 1250/11. On September 18, tower #2 of their 2-tower array collapsed. They expect to be operating with this configuration for six months.

CONSTRUCTION PERMIT AMENDMENTS

1160 WCXI MI Fenton – Licensed for U3 1000/1000, WCXI applied for U4 15000/1000. They then applied for, and was granted a CP for U4 15000/1000 staying in Fenton. Now, they have applied for U4 15000/215 in Fenton.

APPLICATIONS

1190 WVUS WV Grafton – Applies for U1 12000/22 CH 12000.

APPLICATION AMENDMENTS

540 WKFN TN Clarksville – Licensed for U1 1000/55, WKFN applied for U1 4000/55. They have amended the application to read U1 4000/55 CH 4000.

1550 KWBC TX Navasota – Licensed for U1 250/26, KWBC applied to move to College Station with U5 1500/24. They then amended the application to U4 1500/45. The original application has been dismissed in favor of the amended request.

DISMISSALS AND DELETIONS

590 WREN AL Carrollton – License cancelled; call deleted by request of licensee.

790 WPNN FL Pensacola – Licensed for U1 1000/66, WPNN first applied to move to 780 kHz with D3 3000/0. Then they applied to move to 770 kHz with D3 50000/0 after KJCB-770's license was deleted. But when KJCB was reinstated, the application for 770 was dismissed due to what would have been co-channel interference. But, the application for 780 lives.

920 WGNU IL Granite City – Application for U4 2000/600. WGNU remains U4 450/500.

950 KSEW AK Seward – Application for U1 500/300. KSEW remains U1 1000/1000.

1150 KWDO CA Easton – License cancelled; call deleted by request of licensee.

AM ON FM

570 WNAX SD Yankton – K259BW (99.7) Yankton [has a CP to move to 99.9]
 630 WMAL DC Washington – WMAL-FM (105.9) Woodbridge, Virginia
 740 WRNR WV Martinsburg – W293AM (106.5) Martinsburg
 960 WSBT IN South Bend – W241AD (96.1) South Bend
 1220 KJAN IA Atlantic – K266AN (100.1) Audubon
 1530 WCTR MD Chestertown – W272BJ (102.3) Fairlee
 1620 WDND IN South Bend – WNDV-FM (92.9) South Bend

HEAR AND THAR

- ✿ Now that we back to the weekly schedule, AM Switch will be noticeably smaller. The FCC has put much of its emphasis in dealings on the FM band with over twice as many stations (full-power, low-power and translators) to deal with.
- ✿ Reported as Silent: WHGS-1270 Hampton, South Carolina; WBYU-1450 New Orleans, Louisiana and WOBX-1530 Wanchese, North Carolina.
- ✿ Thanks to: Shawn Axelrod, Wayne Heinen, and Tim Noonan.

Domestic DX Jim Tedford Radio_Enthusiast@hotmail.com
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U.S./Canadian Loggings from Pacific/Mtn/Central Time Zones. All times ELT.

Fall has officially fell. The weather is cooler, the QRN is lower and we're thinking about football, colorful leaves, and banana cream pie. (Well, I am anyway.)

Reporters

BD-WI Bill Dvorak, Madison, WI Drake R8B, Quantum QX Pro loop
 JDS-MN Jeff Steffes, Watertown, MN Drake R8, Kenwood R-2000, Quantum QX Loop
 JEL-MO J.E. Lewis, Kansas City, MO Honda Odyssey Car Radio
 JW-CO John Wilkins, Wheat Ridge, CO Drake R-8, 4-foot box loop
 SMA-MB Shawn M. Axelrod VE4DX1SMA Winnipeg, MB ICOM ICR-70 / Drake R8, 3 Foot un-amplified box loop / Quantum QX LOOP v2.0/ 155 Foot "U" shaped outdoor wire / 100 Foot indoor wire run around the basement walls / MFJ 1026 phasing unit
 WH-CO Wayne Heinen, Aurora, CO Drake R8B, E/W Flag, N/S Flag, Dual TG-1 Termination Gizmo and Mini DXP5.

Station News

870 KJMP CO Pierce – 9/15 2000 – This ID actually heard on KRAE-1480 Cheyenne "ESPN Radio is KRAE Cheyenne, KREO Pine Bluff, KJMP Pierce, and translator K268BX Cheyenne." Add KJMP to the KRAE Group in your Log. (WH-CO)
 1320 KOLT NE Scottsbluff – 9/12 2100 – Out of Dave Ramsey to string of spots "News & Talk AM 1320 KOLT Scottsbluff." If they're using C&W music it must be for filler. <http://www.koltam.com/> shows talk days and ESPN SPT overnight. (WH-CO)

DX Loggings (All Times ELT)

540 KNMX NM Las Vegas – 9/24 0802 – Legal ID, followed by CNN news two minutes late. Fair in XE QRM. (JW-CO)
 750 WSB GA Atlanta – 9/24 0653 – Out of commercials for The Shane Company Jewelers, McDonalds, and Georgia Power, "News Talk Seven-Fifty WSB." Followed by weather report. (JDS-MN)
 760 WJR MI Detroit – 9/24 0645 – Commercials for Sterling Insurance Group, Quicken Loans, Sam Adams, Home Depot, Kohls, and Fingerle Lumber in Ann Arbor. Followed by ID: "News Talk Seven-Sixty WJR." Into, can you believe more commercials! (JDS-MN)

- 780 WBBM IL **Chicago** – 9/24 0636 – Out of news story, “WBBM news time Five Thirty-Six, we’ll have a look at traffic and weather together next,” into commercials. (JDS-MN)
- 800 WVAL MN **Sauk Rapids** – 9/24 0626 – Out of song: “If You’re Thinkin’ You Want A Stranger,” George Strait; “Minnesota’s number one country music station Eight-Hundred WVAL.” (JDS-MN)
- 870 WWL LA **New Orleans** – 9/24 0559 – Top of bour “The news, talk, and sports leader, The Big Eight-Seventy WWL,” into CBS news. (JDS-MN)
- 880 CKLQ MB **Brandon** – 9/24 0550 – Out of unknown country song “Q-Country Radio, Eight-Eighty CKLQ.” Into song: Put Yourself In My Shoes, Clint Black. (JDS-MN)
- 890 WLS IL **Chicago** – 9/24 0706 – Weather report ending with: “I’m Michael Palmer on Eight-Ninety WLS.” Followed by *The Jake Hartford Show*. (JDS-MN)
- 900 CKBI SK **Prince Albert** – 9/24 0714 – Song: “I Hope You Dance,” Lee Ann Womack, into “All hits, all the time on kickin’ country CKBI.” (JDS-MN)
- 930 WTAD IL **Quincy** – 9/24 0728 – Small talk about the fall season and local farmers’ market, into “WTAD, twenty-eight past the hour.” (JDS-MN)
- WKY OK **Oklahoma City** – 9/27 2145 – Commercials in Spanish with references to Chevrolet and Oklahoma, into Spanish music. (JDS-MN)
- 1030 KCTA TX **Corpus Christi** – 9/25 0759 – In EE with an ad for substance abuse website, a quote from Romans 5, then legal ID by male voice: “This is your Christian Companion KCTA Corpus Christi,” followed by IRN/USA news. Heard a SS religious station a few minutes earlier that I think was also KCTA. Good overall with KTWQ mostly nulled. (JW-CO)
- 1040 WHO IA **Des Moines** – 9/24 0808 – Out of weather report: “That’s the news radio Ten-Forty WHO forecast,” into “Live from Des Moines, it’s *The Dick and Cheryl Show*.” (JDS-MN)
- 1220 KLBB MN **Stillwater** – 9/28 0747 – Guy said “You’re listening to the Music of Your Life AM 1220 KLBB,” followed by a NOS tune; local spots at 0750 and then faded. Fair peaks but long fades. (JW-CO)
- 1250 KHIL AZ **Willcox** – 9/4 2300 – Out of C&W music, “KHIL 1250 AM serving Wilcox, Arizona since 1961,” and straight to more C&W. Later in the evening they were still around and still using the “K-Hill” slogan. (WH-CO)
- KBRF MN **Fergus Falls** – 9/5 0500 – Out of network spot, “KBRF AM 1250 Fergus Falls” to CNN news, overpowering KIKZ for a bit. (WH-CO)
- KIKZ TX **Seminole** – 9/5 0000 – Out of C&W music, “You’re listening to Real Country KIKZ and KSEM Seminole” to more music. Battling it out with KHIL. (WH-CO)
- KNEU UT **Roosevelt** – 9/5 0900 – Out of C&W music, “We’re KNEU AM 1250 Roosevelt-Vernal ...” to ABC News. (WH-CO)
- 1260 KTRP ID **Weiser** – 9/6 0500 – Out of C&W music “... 1260 KTRP Weiser...” to CBS News. Needed call change mixing with KTRC and KPOW. Taped for the collection. (WH-CO)
- KDLF IA **Boone** – 9/28 0801 – Out of SS tune with EE ID: “KDLF 1260 AM Boone-Des Moines ... La Reina 1260 AM,” and back to music. Fair but fadey. Last heard here as KFFF (never heard the KTIA calls). Growing up in central Iowa in the 60’s, I remember this station as KFGQ with a religious format. I don’t think there were any Spanish-language stations in Iowa, nor most other Midwest states, at that time. How things change! (JW-CO)
- KTRC NM **Santa Fe** – 9/5 2100 – Out of DG’s *Ed Schultz Show*, “News and Progressive Talk for Santa Fe, Talk 1260 KTRC AM Santa Fe,” to CNN News. (WH-CO)
- KPOW WY **Powell** – 9/6 0105 – Out of ABC News to KPOW 1260 weather mixing with KTRC. (WH-CO)
- 1270 KDJI AZ **Holbrook** – 9/7 0805 – Ending local announcements, “KVWM 970 and KDJI 1270 and on the internet...” last time logged here was 2006. (WH-CO)
- KSCB KS **Liberal** – 9/7 0900 – Ending local talk on Kansas HS football brief ID and faded under KIML. (WH-CO)
- KFAN MN **Rochester** – 9/29 0724 – Good signals on top with sports talk programming. ID as “The Fan.” They were // the audio feed on their web site but site was about 3-5 seconds behind. Finally got this one off my targets list. Ex-KWEB. NEW!



Conditions have been poor here lately but did snag a new one this morning at sunrise. **(SA-MB)**

- KRVT OK Claremore** – 9/6 2200 – Out of SS music KRVT "La Qué Buena" ID and more SS:MEX programming. **(WH-CO)**
- KFLC TX Fort Worth** – 9/7 0100 – Out of SS TLK, "KFLC Fort Worth-Dallas 1270 AM La Voz del Pueblo" on top at this hour. **(WH-CO)**
- KIML WY Gillette** – 9/7 0000 – Out of The Dennis Miller Show, "You're listening to KIML Gillette." **(WH-CO)**
- 1290 KMMM KS Pratt** – 9/8 0902 – Out of OLD "Serving South Central and Western Kansas, the greatest hits of the 60's and 70's Super Hits 1290 KMMM Pratt" to Fox News. **(WH-CO)**
- KIVY TX Crockett** – 9/7 2300 – Ending oldies song "Lady Godiva," "This is your home for Americas Best Music 1290 AM KIVY Crockett, Texas," to ABC News. **(WH-CO)**
- KWFS TX Wichita Falls** – 9/8 0805 – Finishing up local spots "NewsTalk 1290 weather," "Wichita Falls News Talk 1290 KWFS," mixing with KIVY and XEAP. **(WH-CO)**
- 1300 KROP CA Brawley** – 9/9 0000 – "You're tuned to KROP Southern California's choice for..." and covered by KGLO's CBS News. **(WH-CO)**
- KGLO IA Mason City** – 9/9 0000 – Out of spot for local dentist, "AM 1300 KGLO Mason City," to CBS News. **(WH-CO)**
- 1310 KLIX ID Twin Falls** – 9/26 0757 – "AM Idaho" program in progress; legal ID at 0759:50: "News and talk on the radio, this is NewsRadio 1310 KLIX Twin Falls, Idaho;" Fox News was up next, then back to "AM Idaho" (area news, weather, sports, ads, etc.) at 0805. Generally fair, giving KFKA a run for their money. **(JW-CO)**
- 1320 KRDD NM Roswell** – 9/12 2100 – Brief shouted accented EE ID over SS music KRDD Roswell, New Mexico" well under KOLT... Last heard here in 1984! **(WH-CO)**
- KXYZ TX Houston** – 9/12 2200 – Out of Oriental language. Time pips to ToH "KXYZ Houston. a multicultural broadcasting station," then mention in EE of China Radio International. **(WH-CO)**
- 1330 KNSS KS Wichita** – 9/11 2300 – Out of TLK, KNSS ID, to ABC news. KCFC-1340 IBOC phased. **(WH-CO)**
- KINE TX Kingsville** – 9/12 1046 – Out of a jumble of nondescript music, "KINE Kingsville-Corpus Christi one station" and followed by SS music. Quickly covered by KNSS and KCKM. KCFR IBOC phased. My first new one of the season and taped. **(WH-CO)**
- KCKM TX Monahans** – 9/11 2305 – String of local spots including oil field servicing and bail bondsmen, KCKM jingle, to C&W music. KCFR IBOC phased. **(WH-CO)**
- 1350 KABQ NM Albuquerque** – 9/11 0800 – Out of a string of PSA's, "KABQ Albuquerque" and CNN News, fair with KDZA and KCFR's IBOC. **(WH-CO)**
- KCAR TX Clarksville** – 9/9 0200 – Out of C&W music, "The Voice of KCAR," mixed with KDZA and KCFC-1340 IBOC. **(WH-CO)**
- 1410 KGSO KS Wichita** – 9/13 2300 – Out of FSR program, "This is Wichita's home for Fox Sports Radio, SportsRadio 1410 Wichita. Listen on line at KGSO.com." Rare here in the evening. **(WH-CO)**
- KNTX TX Bowie** – 9/13 2358 – Out of "Kool Jerk" OLD "... right here on Oldies 1410 KNTX..." **(WH-CO)**
- 1430 KRGI NE Grand Island** – 9/26 2039 – Good to fair over/under KZQZ with mention of NE and Grand Island, then into clip of football game. **(JEL-MO)**
- 1440 KMAJ KS Topeka** – 9/17 2200 – Out of talk program, "Your talk radio authority The Big Talker 1440 KMAJ Topeka" to ABC News. **(WH-CO)**
- KPUR TX Amarillo** – 9/17 2209 – Out of play by play action with Amarillo Gold hockey, "ESPN Radio 1440 AM KPUR Amarillo," mixing with KMAJ and KRZD. **(WH-CO)**
- 1450 KVSI ID Montpelier** – 9/2 2300 – Out of NOS type music, "KVSI Montpelier" up briefly. **(WH-CO)**
- KSEL NM Portales** – 9/3 0100 – Out of C&W music, "KSEL Portales" briefly and faded. **(WH-CO)**
- WMOH OH Hamilton** – 9/29 0059 – Poor but remarkably clear with legal ID: "Your ticket to Miami University sports, WMOH Hamilton ..." (plus other cities, rest of ID



inaudible) into sports, probably from Yahoo Sports Radio. NEW; first of the 2011-12 season, 357-mile graveyarder. **(BD-WI)**

- 1460 KXNO IA **Des Moines** – 9/16 2055 – Coverage of HS football games "... right here on KXNO," well atop at this hour. **(WH-CO)**
- KXPB NE **Kearney** – 9/17 0900 – Up briefly over KZNT, "KICS Hasting KXPB Kearney," to ESPN Sports Center. **(WH-CO)**
- KCLE TX **Burleson** – 9/17 0302 – Out of C&W music, "You're listening to Big Country Radio AM 1460 KCLE Burleson-Dallas-Fort Worth and 99.1 FM Cleburne K226BM," straight back to music. Mixing with KXNO. **(WH-CO)**
- KUTI WA **Yakima** – 9/17 0800 – Out of C&W music "Yakima's County Legend AM 1460 KUTI and on line at KUTI.com," and CBS News. Taped for the collection and new station #2 for the season. **(WH-CO)**
- 1470 WMBD IL **Peoria** – 9/16 0300 – Faded up over XERCN, "Peoria's News and Talk Station 1470 WMBD," to Fox news. **(WH-CO)**
- KYYW TX **Abilene** – 9/16 0805 – "... weather on KYYW..." up briefly over KKTY. **(WH-CO)**
- KKTY WY **Douglas** – 9/15 2100 – "Let's take a break for stations to identify, you're on the Rockies Radio Network," "KKTY Douglas" jingle, and back to play by play. **(WH-CO)**
- 1480 KQAM KS **Wichita** – 9/14 2103 – Program note "...Phil Hendrie Show weekdays at midnight on Wichita's Big Station, the Big Talker 1480 KQAM," to network spots. **(WH-CO)**
- KLMS NE **Lincoln** – 9/14 2359 – Out of weather, "That's your Capital City forecast from SportsRadio 1480 KLMS" then covered by KQAM. **(WH-CO)**
- 1490 KQTY TX **Borger** – 9/1 0400 – Big time on top with Smokey Bear PSA, "AM 1490 Talk Radio KQTY Borger, Texas," to CBS News. **(WH-CO)**

Lots of interesting loggings this time. Thank you, gentlemen.
See you next time. **(JDT-WA)**

NRC/WTFDA Joint Convention 2011

Comfort Inn & Suites, 7007 Grover Street, Omaha NE

October 13-16, 2011

This year's convention will be dedicated to the late Bruce Elving.

Your last chance to register for the National Radio Club/WTFDA Convention! The convention will be held at the Comfort Inn and Suites at 7007 Grover Street, Omaha Nebraska 68106. The Inn is located north east of I-80 at the 72nd Street exit number 449.

Activities will begin at 3 P.M. on Thursday, October 13. Tours and demonstrations are scheduled all day Friday. There will also be the business meeting, the Quiz, a speaker of interest, and the banquet – all included in your registration fee. October 13 is the average frost date in Omaha – so the trees will still be green! Mark Durenberger will have a slide program following the banquet on Saturday evening, and Matt Sittel is planning a patio party at his home and a TV demonstration one day at the hotel. Everything ends after breakfast on Sunday morning. Come join us!

Please register by October 1 – the convention fee is US\$45 per person; children (age 11 and under) US\$13. Please make checks payable to: National Radio Club and mail them to Ernest J. Wesolowski, 13312 Westwood Lane, Omaha, NE 68144-3543. You may also register on line, *using Pay Pal Only*, at the National Radio Club website <http://www.nrcdxas.org>. Bring auction items, or send them to Ernie at the address above.

Make your reservations directly with the hotel at *Area Code 402 934-4900; this is the ONLY number to receive our convention rate!* You *MUST mention the NRC/WTFDA Convention Rate* of \$75 plus tax = \$88.62 per night which is for 1 to 4 persons per room.

We have Ballroom "C," a hospitality room on the 3rd floor, an airport and bus shuttle, deluxe continental breakfast, guest laundry, 24 hour fitness room and business center, and a large indoor pool.



DXing and Contest Tips

For BCB Listeners in General and Ultra-Light Users in Particular

By Ron Bailey

Ron has been medium wave DX'ing since 1951, when he was 11. As an amateur radio operator he has worked and confirmed all entities and holds DXCC awards for 6 meters and 160 meters. He has also logged over 700 non-directional beacons on long wave from North Carolina and has been a National Radio Club member since 1992.

With Wayne Heinen

An SWL DX'er since 1963 starting at the age of 13 moving on to BCB DX in 1964 and joining the NRC in 1965. Wayne's QSL collection has over 1500 cards and letters and his loggings over the years have topped 2000 from his various locations. As an avid amateur radio contester he's consistently been the top scorer the ARRL VHF contests from Colorado.

Throughout last season's NRC Contest I corresponded with Wayne Heinen. I recently offered to write something for publication in *DX News* describing how I've been so successful using an Ultra-Light radio.

Let's begin by discussing the important requisites for success. Among them are our choice of equipment such as the radio and antennas. We'll also look at the various operating aids that we use, how and when to listen for ID's, and the propagation characteristics that make DX possible.

The Radio. Some of us have decided to try our hand at using Ultra-Light radios. See the December 20, 2010 issue of *DX News* (Vol. 78 No. 12), page 12, for the definition of an Ultra-Light radio. I am using the Sony SRF-39FP which has an analog dial and uses thumb wheel tuning. The first thing I did was to calibrate the 0 to 10 scale provided on the front of the radio by making a chart showing exactly where both my local daytime stations and my strongest nighttime stations are on the dial. This chart helps me locate a desired frequency quickly. It then took some practice with the thumbwheel to enable me to navigate up and down the dial; but now I literally can do this in the dark.

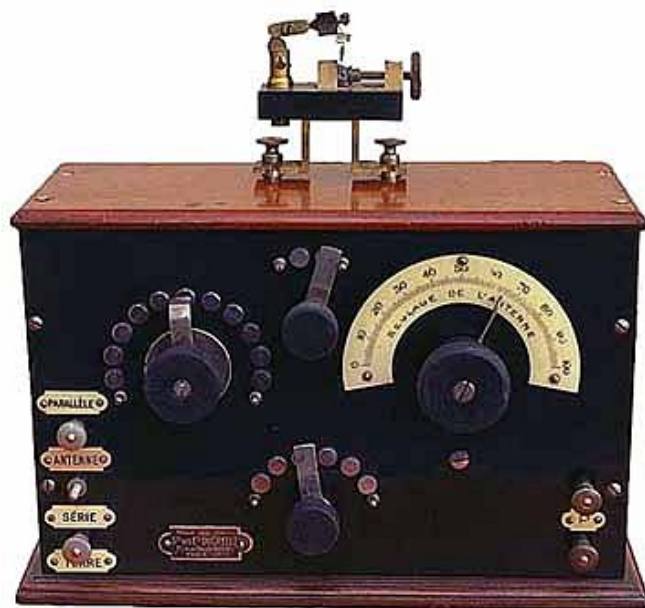
The Antenna. I'm not using an external antenna, just the one provided in the radio. If you are able to use an external antenna such as an indoor loop, long wire, or Beverage antenna, all the better.

Location. Within the confines of your home, try to find a location that is as free of man-made electrical noise as possible. Your height above average terrain is not as important at medium frequencies as it would be at VHF if you were doing FM DX. An ideal QTH is one with as little man-made noise as possible. Another great location would be seaside on either coast, as close to the ocean as possible. You'll note that fact when reviewing the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific DX in the *DX News* IDXD column!

Hearing. I don't believe that you can tune your ears, but you can have them tested to determine your hearing characteristics. This would be the response in decibels vs. the frequency of the audio signal. Once you are aware of the peculiarities of your ears' response to various audio signals you can tune your receiver's audio to accommodate your hearing, if such a feature is available. Some other alternatives for tailoring your audio would be to obtain a set of headphones that cater to the ranges where your hearing is the best or use an audio equalizer or audio filter to tailor the audio to suit your best ranges.

Time. The goals and expectations that you set for yourself will determine what you put into the hobby and what you get out of it. Are you trying to win, or at least, be competitive in contests? Are you trying to build your stations heard and/or stations confirmed totals to a higher level? Are you spending time with your radio as a form of relaxation and leisure just to see what stations you are able to hear and identify?

The amount of listening and DX chasing you do is determined by what you set as your goal. You already know where I stand; I usually spend two to three hours every afternoon and evening and weekend mornings at the dials and, I probably shouldn't admit this; I sleep with the radio on and the headphones plugged into my ears every night while burning up at least one AA battery per week. But when setting goals for your hobby, be realistic keeping in mind the amount of quality



time you wish to spend with your family, friends, and other activities compared with your radio listening.

Patience. Chasing DX is a lot like fishing; some days they just aren't biting. There will be times when you will listen to a frequency for an hour or more without ever hearing an ID. Remember, this isn't always an "instant gratification" endeavor. You have to develop the patience to try again the next hour or even the next day to achieve your goal!

Plan. I can't say enough about having a strategy or at least a list of target stations. It is interesting to me that my contest strategy and Wayne's were completely opposite each other. This becomes obvious if you calculate the points per logging (His = 2.47 and Mine = 2.09) and miles per logging (His = 560, Mine = 298) represented by our scores through December 2010. Some of this has to do with the relative density of stations around us. Nevertheless, Wayne apparently went immediately for the five point graveyarders and more distant stations, Mexicans perhaps?

Wayne interjects. One thing that my correspondence with Ron brought to light is the absence of IBOC stations in close proximity to his DX location. Here in the Denver Metro area the following frequencies are useless for all but one or possibly two stations unless I happen to catch the rare occasion when the primary IBOC interference is off for the night. Frequencies affected are 550-560-570 910 920 950 960 1330 1350 1380 all worth 3 points and one 5 point frequency 1400. The one point channels 830 840 850 860 and 870 are very poor having yielded only 2 points because of 50 kW IBOC giant KOA on 850 located only 7 miles from my QTH. A few nuisance frequencies where the IBOC is somewhat nullable on the adjacent channels are 670, 760, 810, 1220 and 1600 which are difficult listening at best.

Frequency Range	Wayne's Points	Ron's Points
550-570	3	27
830-870	3	18
910-920	6	18
950-960	12	39
1330-1350	30	51

1330-1350 isn't so bad since the IBOC emanates from KCFR which is easily nullable at 13 miles due west of me. With so many unusable and marginally usable frequencies my strategy places me on the frequencies with the history of amassing the most loggings with the most points.



Plan
Be a part of it.

I, on the other hand, quickly chose to build a solid base of 1, 2, and some 3 point stations intending to go for mostly 3 and 5 pointers later. My initial objective was to try to log first one, then two, stations on all 118 frequencies which would be 236 stations yielding 468 points. Last season's scores indicated that I might need at least 510 points to win the ULR category meaning I would need either an additional fourteen 3 pointers or nine more graveyarders.

Wayne interjects: My strategy was similar to Ron's, but the mix is different and the contest competition category is different. With the unlimited category I'm running the Drake R8B and a variety of exterior antennas and have another advantage of being able to tape over the top of the hour all night long. I actually concentrated on creating a base of easy to log 3 and 5 point stations on those channels that have historically done well in the past years, years that I have records for that reflect the "post IBOC" era. We'll have more on record

keeping later. I ignored many easy 1 point clear channels because I still have adjacent channel IBOC at some distance on the clear channels.

The NRC's contest is 273 days long, 242 days for me because I didn't start until October 2. I wanted to be consistent and try to average two loggings per day. Through April 30 I had managed to average 2.18 loggings per day.

By way of further analysis, the chart shows a breakdown by point distribution of my first 500 loggings since June 2009 compared with the theoretical distribution. I've logged 606 total stations but only 465 in this season's contest. By the end of the contest I had average loggings of 1.92/day. This was due to plenty of QRN filled days in the month of May.

Theoretical

Point Value	No of Freqs	%	Equiv Pts	% of Score
1	61	51.7	61	26.1
2	10	8.5	20	8.5
3	41	34.7	123	52.6
5	6	5.1	30	12.8
Totals	118	100.0	234	100.0

Points / Logging = 234/118 = 1.92

Extended through 1st 500 Loggings

Point Value	First 500 Logs	%	Equiv Pts	% of Score
1	222	44.4	222	20.8
2	31	6.2	62	5.8
3	227	45.4	681	64.0
5	20	4.0	100	9.4
Totals	500	100.0	1065	100.0

Points / Logging = 1065/500 = 2.13

You may think this is overkill, but from it you can see how I worked out my plan. In truth, I expected more competition in the Ultra-Light category, but I also wanted to show I could compete with the unlimited category entrants even without the Internet or recording capability.

Useful DX Aids

This section may look like a rehash and in some ways it is. For those newer members it may shed some light on the useful tools we have available through the National Radio Club and other radio-oriented sources plus handy tools that are not from clubs or radio oriented organizations.

Printed References

National Radio Club AM Radio Log

Our Club's excellent economical listing of US and Canadian station information

International Radio Club of America's Mexican Station List

IRCA's excellent list of Mexican stations

World Radio TV Handbook

Information on other worldwide AM broadcasters

Bruce Elving's FM Atlas

For identifying FM parallel, "sister" stations, and FM translators when mentioned

National Radio Club Antenna Pattern Book

Helps, to some degree, in determining your chances of hearing a station

National Radio Club County Cross Reference Book

Convenient listing of County names and States that contain them

National Radio Club Sunrise/Sunset Maps

Book of USA Zip Codes (also online look-up)

Your Location Expressed as Degrees, Minutes and Seconds

Your station log kept year by year on paper or on the computer

Computer Applications and Internet resources:

GeoClock™ Convenient Map program showing sunrise and sunset in real time

<http://www.mygeoclock.com/geoclock/>

Listing of Telephone Area Codes in the USA and Canada

<http://www.mmiworld.com/codelist.htm>

Zip Code Lookup – Finds Cities in a Zip Code

http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/citytown_zip.jsp

Canadian Postal Code Find a City from a code

<http://www.canadapost.ca/cpotools/apps/fpc/personal/findAnAddress?execution=e2s1>

On Line Distance and Bearing lookup between two points

<http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/bickel/distance.html>

FCC AM Query – contains FCC information on stations including Lat/Lon

<http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/amq.html>

Fred Cantu's Mexican List

<http://www.mexicoradiotv.com/>

Other services and lookups on line that are too numerous to list here.

Station Identification and Getting the Call Letters

As I understand it, the FCC requires medium wave stations to "Legally" identify (ID) themselves once an hour in English (EE), as close as reasonably practical to the top of the hour (ToH) by giving their call letters and their City of License (CoL). If other cities are mentioned for promotional purposes the CoL must be said first. For example "This is AM 1440 WGVL Greenville (CoL), Spartanburg, Graycourt." The mention of the frequency and/or the state is optional, but it sure helps especially when using an analog Ultra-Light receiver!

You can ID a station with a high degree of certainty from clues such as hearing an announcer give a local area code and phone number, a city name, a slogan or, perhaps a reference to a local sports team or school. However, in order to ID a station definitely, as well as to be able to take

credit for it in last season's National Radio Club contest, you must have heard the call letters assigned to the station on the frequency to which you were tuned.

There have been several instances in which I have been positively sure of a station but, I have not taken contest credit for it. On 1600 I've heard "News Talk WVHU" at least three times, but this is WZZW's parallel station's ID which is on 800, and I know it's not a harmonic! Naturally, they've always faded away before the ToH.

Wayne comments: This is a point that needs to be addressed both here and in future contest rules. So many operations are now running parallel and are relying on the reputation and/or branding of one call sign. Hearing a truly legal ID with that allocation's call sign is nearly impossible and, in many cases, doesn't occur as it should according to the FCC's rules.

Similarly, I can't accept hearing only "Radio Gusta" from WGUS-1480 in Augusta, GA, a Spanish language station, but who else could it be? WSEV Sevierville, TN on 930 gives only "You're listening to Pigeon Forge Radio" and I've never heard anything but Japanese (JJ) spoken on WPBS-1040 in Conyers GA even when signing on and off the air. What do you do when you hear the calls spoken as a word? "Chow" could be CIAO-530 or CHOU-1450; "Word" could be WYRD-1330 or WORD-950.

Stations outlined in the paragraphs above, while missing the mark for positive contesting ID's, are certainly valid in your station log. Slogans of many stations both foreign and domestic are very good for ID'ing these stations for your own purposes!

Wayne comments: As with the parallel operations this is another "stretch and bend" by many stations that should be addressed in the contest rules. In these situations, I heartily agree with Ron, your personal logbook will reflect the feelings and parameters that you set up for yourself. As the current National Radio Club contest manager, I see room for better clarification within the contest rules given the state of IDing on the Medium Wave band.

So, as you can see, things aren't as simple as we'd like! In an effort to assist you with when and how to obtain these precious call letters, I plotted the times at which I've heard the calls of my 400+ loggings by format. This turned out to be disappointing as it seems call letters can either be heard at any time or maybe not at all!

Basically, station ID's for all formats are, in fact, given around the top of the hour from HR: 57 through HR: 07 meaning three minutes before though 7 minutes after the hour. They are more prevalent at the ends of the news or weather reports such as "...from the WGTK weather desk..." Also, make use of our *DX News* "Domestic DX Digest" reports for specific information on your target stations. You have made a target station list, haven't you? Unfortunately, I can't overstate the fact that "luck" plays a large part in the endeavor as well!

FORMAT	WHEN CALLS ARE LIKELY TO BE GIVEN
SPT – ESPN	Usually 15 seconds or so before the top of the hour; occasionally at other times when they break for local ads or news.
SPT – Fox	Similar to ESPN but a bit more liberal with the ID breaks. If you hear the directive "Go... Now!" at the ToH, you've missed it!
SPT – Others	Sports or Sports talk program stations are often discussing local sports teams and tend to give their call letters more frequently, especially if they carry the team's games. Many times the content of the programming will tip you off as to what station you're listening to. Also listen closely for local slogans such as WNML Knoxville's "990 the Sports Animal".
SPT – Events	Stations running sporting events including network national (such as ESPN, Westwood One and Fox Sports) and local or regional teams take breaks near the top of the hour "We pause now for our stations to identify on the Rockies Radio Network..." Hopefully you'll get the call ID but sometimes you'll hear dead air when no one is there for the cue! Many times there will be a break in the action for spots. Pay close attention when the breaks feature local spots with town names, addresses and phone numbers. Note the teams and be sure to keep your <i>DX News</i> Professional Sports Networks and College Sports Networks columns close at hand.
NWS & BIZ	Business and News stations tend to give very frequent call signs. They want to remind the listener who they are "KYW News Time is 8:05".
TLK	Talk programs, often with listener's phone participation, can be frustrating to listen to, especially with the attitudes of the hosts and the subject matter, not to mention throwing in Infomercials! Generally they'll come through with a call sign ID around the top of the hour.
REL	Stations with religious programming including sermonizing preachers who don't worry about running overtime can ID at almost any time. Sometimes an

	announcer will break in with the ID; this usually occurs with prerecorded and syndicated shows. Also check at fifteen and thirty minutes after the hour; shows tend to run in 15, 30 and 60 minute segments. Overall, I find that Sunday is a poor day for DX'ing because many stations break from their normal formats in favor of religious programs, especially in smaller markets.
GOS	Stations that are mostly gospel music seem to throw ID's in at almost any time, same as most other types of music formats. Those that mix the music with religious preaching vary widely and may ID more along the lines of the REL stations.
REL- EWTN	These Roman Catholic Network stations appear to be very reliable with ToH ID's and full data sign on and sign off information.
SS (all types)	Spanish language stations featuring most any type of programming always provide a challenge. It is a MUST to know the Spanish alphabet pronunciations! Some US stations, such as WONQ-1030, and virtually all of your Mexican stations ID with Spanish alphabetical call signs. Many other US Spanish language stations use English and are much easier to ID.
ETH	Careful listening to stations using programming directed towards various ethnic groups, such as the Chinese oriented Canadian stations, CHKT-1430, CHIN-1540 and CINA-1630 and others will usually yield an English call ID during the programming or at the ToH.
KID	Primarily "Radio Disney", usually a teen or preteen girl will give a legal ID between HR:55 and HR:00. Usually at HR:57.
Music	There are certainly fewer and fewer stations broadcasting nothing but music on AM these days, but in most cases they're easier to ID because the announcers tend to give call signs between songs.
Mexicans	Many Mexican stations give long elaborate ID's near the top of the hour. Pay close attention to slogans that may appear during the station's programming. The IRCA Mexican list and Fred Cantu's website have fairly up-to-date slogans listed for the stations. Mexican stations also play their National Anthem at their Midnight and at their sign on or 5 AM. This is invariably followed by a full data ID. Remember to check the NRC's International DX Digest Pan American listing when trying to ID stations and when compiling a possible target list.

Record Keeping

Wayne amplifies on the subject: *An invaluable aid is a logbook; a logbook should give you at bare minimum the frequency, station, date, and time of reception, quality of reception compared to on-channel interference and any clues that would allow future receptions to be possible. Many times noting High School Sports games will be a clue that the station may stay on late for these events or possibly "cheat" some with the amount of power that they run during the event in order to insure that they reach their audience. Logs can be as simple as paper logs kept in frequency and chronological order or as complicated as multi-table database or spreadsheets that are kept on a home computer and contain tons of information. Check out DX Toolbox (Vol. 76 Nos. 23 and 25) for some info on Shawn Axelrod's log sheets, they can be downloaded from www.nrcdxas.org under the Pics/Media table in the articles section. You can also order the National Radio Club preprinted, three hole punched log sheets in packages of 110 with additional sheets available in packs of 20. Don't worry if you have been DX'ing for years and never started one! I've been in Aurora since 1984 and I only started my Aurora Colorado heard log when I began seriously listening again in 2003!*

Logging Rules? We don't need no Stinking Rules!

Wayne elaborates: *Your log can follow your rules; loggings of stations are based on the criteria that you set. Whether you copy the call and city of license or the logging is "presumed" to be a specific station based on details of programming, mentions of the city without calls, prevalent slogan or slogans as listed in the "AM Radio Log" or in a recent logging in a DDXD column. It can even be a split frequency TA or TP based solely on the language that was heard and the listing in WRTH. The log is for you and for your future review and DX planning...*

The Target List

Wayne Comments: *Ron mentions the Target list in the Station Identification section. A target list is another tool that is what you want it to be. Shawn also mentions Target sheets in his first DX Toolbox columns and the samples can be downloaded from www.nrcdxas.org also. A target sheet is a great reminder about the stations you need to add to your log. I have targets based on listening times.*

Ron interjects: For contesting you can target the stations to look for from year to year using the times that you previously heard them, I found this extremely valuable for increasing my loggings in this past season's contest.

Wayne continues: *Overnight, Sunset skip and Sunrise skip. For many years the top listing on my Sunrise skip target list was 1YA in Wellington New Zealand on 756 KHz. It was there for two years before I finally bagged them near local sunrise June 23, 1986. The reminder to check that split for a het was always there and eventually it paid off. In contesting the targets are broader but just as important in keeping track of what possible stations can be added on each frequency for additional points. For day to day logging, I track the call letter changes that I need to log and tape, as well as the most likely new stations that I need to try to hear.*

Propagation at the Medium Frequencies

The study of radio wave propagation is what makes DX'ing one of the most fascinating hobbies on planet Earth. This is the part where I try to make everyone believe I understand it! Rather than attempt to explain the physics involved, I think it will be better to cite examples of my observations and let you try to figure out what happened.

Weather. Whenever the subject of radio in general or medium wave DX'ing in particular is discussed at a club meeting or a hamfest someone will invariably ask, "I guess the weather pretty much affects your reception, doesn't it?" My initial reaction is to say, "No, it's just quieter with less atmospheric noise (QRN) in the winter because you don't have to deal with the static crashes which go along with frequent thunder storms."

But wait a minute! There have been times when reception phenomena seem to be related to a weather event. I distinctly remember one spring evening during which I logged five new graveyard stations on 1490 within the space of about three hours. Later that night, I learned that a line of rather violent thunderstorms, complete with tornado watches and warnings, had ripped through Georgia, South Carolina and then North Carolina to the south and southeast of my location. I was fortunate that they were not near me! A check of my atlas quickly revealed that the stations I had logged not only lay within the affected areas, but also were logged in a sequence which tracked the line of the storms! Coincidence? Not bloody likely; what's your thought on this occurrence?

Wayne interjects: *Here in the West we always look North into Canada when a Canadian low pressure front and the accompanying frigid arctic temperatures move down into the United States, I have had some very interesting loggings of stations from the northern United States and up into Canada during these conditions, loggings that were never duplicated or, if duplicated, occurred with very similar meteorological conditions.*

Ground Wave. One of the first things that any serious medium wave DX'er does after moving to a new location or, perhaps, after buying a new Ultra-light radio is run a daytime bandscan. This generates a list of those stations normally heard from approximately 10 AM until 2 PM. My list evolved between June 2009 and September 2010 and included WPEK-880, WYSE-970 and WTZQ-1600. However, so far this season I have yet to hear them! Furthermore, it took several weeks and dozens of attempts before I was able to log nearby WSJS-600 and WAIZ-630 again for the National Radio Club contest. What changed? All I have been able to determine is during the initial periods of my daytime band scan we experienced very wet weather. This DX season has been mostly dry possibly adversely affecting ground wave propagation.

Speaking of which, I've only heard WGMA-1530 in nearby Spindale, NC twice. Both times there were at least three inches of snow on the ground. Now a Pop Quiz! Pick all that you feel might best complete this sentence. "The snow that was on the ground..."

1. Either reduced ground losses or improved ground path conductivity between WGMA and my location.
2. Improved the station's antenna ground system efficiency
3. Caused a subtle change in the directivity in WGMA's antenna pattern which favored my location
4. Did most or all of the above
5. Did nothing; something else must have happened

Here's my hint! I changed nothing; I'm limited to my Ultra-Light radio and its built-in antenna.

Regardless of what you have chosen for an answer to the above, make use of these phenomena to log your semi-local stations. Make a target list of semi-local stations that just might sneak into your logbook when different conditions exist between you and the target.

Sky Wave Propagation. Radio waves travel at the same speed as light and in some ways have optical-like characteristics. You already know that during the day the "D" layer of the ionosphere



absorbs medium frequency wavelengths much the same way that clouds block sunlight. After sunset the "D" layer dissipates allowing signals to continue up into the higher layers of the ionosphere where they are reflected back to earth. Ionization is a process that occurs to Hydrogen, Nitrogen, Oxygen, and other gasses that are in our atmosphere. Dissipation is the reverse of the ionization process.

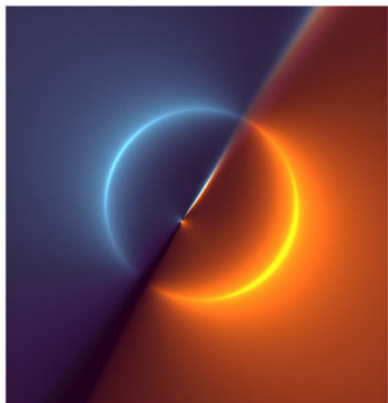
Ionization Unmasked!

H_2 --- subject to solar radiation \rightarrow -2 electrons = $2H^+$ (Hydrogen Ion)

Dissipation Unmasked!

$2H^+$ (Ion) – no more solar radiation \rightarrow +2 electrons = H_2 (Hydrogen Molecule)

Gray line Propagation. There is a phenomenon that occurs during twilight time that we refer to as gray line propagation. This occurs where regions of the Earth are in transition from daylight to dark and vice versa. These are by far my favorite times to DX. I begin listening as early as one and a half hours before my local sunset. This is where your completed NRC Sunrise/Sunset maps or your Geoclock™ program, both mentioned under Useful DX aids, are a real must. I first check the strength of my daytime stations to see if things appear normal, if they aren't "business as usual", I know something unusual in the way of propagation might be occurring. This may be either, enhanced propagation (a GOOD thing) or degraded propagation (a BAD thing). For those who have signal strength indicators or S-meters, keeping a record of the typical signal levels for your local and semi local stations under normal propagation conditions can be very helpful!



Next, I listen on certain key frequencies that I have identified as directional indicators for my location. On 1060 do I hear KYW in Philadelphia first or WIXC in Titusville FL? On 1110 am I hearing WBT in Charlotte NC or WTOF in Bay Minette AL? This gives me an indication of the direction that is predominant for the listening period and many times an idea of the distances that are being supported by the current skip conditions. This is where my target list comes in. I take the time to analyze each frequency using the National Radio Club [AM Radio Log](#) to give me a list of available stations that I can see at a glance are not in my logbook. I also refer to the National Radio Club [Antenna Book](#) to see which stations, based on their antenna patterns, may be the most likely to be heard. But remember; don't be surprised at whatever might pop in! By checking each and every day you may frequently find a different set of conditions and challenges.

A really fun thing to experience is the way in which many distant signals become as loud as locals just as they are going through their local sunset. This is where the Geoclock™ software is useful for watching this happen in real time. The trick is to catch their ID just before they sign off for the day or switch to their required nighttime power. Similar things happen during local sunrises except in the reverse with the stations signing on or powering up to their full daytime power.

Sunrises can bring surprises in addition to the normal sign on and power-up activities. One morning years ago on 680, I caught KNBR San Francisco mixing with WCNN Atlanta just before local sunrise. I watched through my window as the sun rose and KNBR's signal faded completely away.

Wayne Interjects: This is where it can be very important to take note of those stations that may be authorized to broadcast with their daytime facility at a power of up to 500 watts with a pre-sunrise authority (PSRA in the NRC AM Radio Log). They can usually sign on as early as 6 AM local time. Also a Post Sunset Authority (PSSA) may allow a station to stay on with a power that is reduced from its full daytime power but still somewhat higher than a low flea power night authorization. These powers can be used as late as two hours after local sunset, depending on the authorization.

So, if your DX'ing time is limited, try to at least hit the gray line periods!

The Graveyard Frequencies. The gray line periods are also the best times to DX the graveyard frequencies. Begin listening about an hour before your local sunset because not long after dark so many stations become audible it's extremely difficult to sort them out, let alone pick out call letters. This is why these stations are worth more points in the National Radio Club contests and where the luck I spoke of earlier plays a large part. The trick here is to try to catch stations east of you up until your local sunset before the stations to your west start skipping in on top of them. The opposite, of course, is true at your local sunrise when stations to your east fade out, hopefully, leaving you with some identifiable stations to log to the west of your location. This is where directional antennas are helpful.

One thing that makes it harder to identify stations with formats like ESPN and Fox Sports is the fact they only ID once an hour near the top of the hour. It is rare for their signals to rise out of the mess just at the right time for you to hear their ID! I have found it much easier to log stations having

music formats because they tend to give their call sign ID's much more frequently during their programming.

Have you ever had a "station" with a strong perfectly-readable signal seem to fade away just at identification time? What may have happened is that you were actually hearing two, three, or more stations with identical programming on that frequency which went their separate ways to ID at the top of the hour. As a result you heard no ID at all! I have this happen on 1340 with WCMI, WSTV, and WEPM all running ESPN programming.

If you recall, my contest plan was to go for the five point graveyard stations later on. Well, the month of March, 2011 was dedicated to DXing only the six graveyard frequencies with a goal of logging at least 6 stations on each frequency ($6 \times 6 \times 5 = 180$ points). I cycled through them doing each one for a consecutive 48 hour period. This gave me two sunsets, two sunrises, plus two full nights. (I don't sleep during contests!) As an operating aid I made a list of stations I thought I might hear on each frequency and familiarized myself with their calls, cities, and formats. This list contained stations in North and South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Ohio. This plan worked well as I achieved my goal, a total of 42 loggings for 210 points.

Nighttime Propagation. As the evening progresses there will be countless opportunities to hear eastern stations reduce power or sign off revealing stations further west which may do likewise revealing still other stations. This is also when the 50 kilowatt clear channel powerhouses begin to dominate their frequencies. Some of these become audible as early as 60 to 90 minutes before my local sunset. This is also a good time (between 1900 and 2300 ELT) for me to start looking for Cubans and Wayne to start looking for Mexicans and when you need to grab your WRTH, your IRCA Mexican Log and also to start referring to the "International DX Digest" column in "DX News"!

Nighttime Bandscan. This is the prime time for doing your nighttime bandscan but as skip conditions keep changing this becomes a never-ending challenge. Those of you on the East coast will want to pursue any trans-Atlantic stations you may be fortunate enough to hear before their sunrise times. Meanwhile those of us more inland will be going after the stations located farther to our west. As the evening progresses Radio Rebelde in Cuba begins to compete with Chicago's WSCR on 670; 740 finds KRMG in Tulsa challenging Toronto's CFZM; on 1010 CFRB, also in Toronto, is over/under WINS in New York.

Wayne comments: It is very important to recognize the "usual suspects" on each channel. Once you know who they are and when they tend to dominate, then as more unusual conditions occur you'll be more inclined to recognize the stations that haven't hit your logbook before.

To me, the period between approximately 3:30 AM and 5:30 AM local time is magical as some of the more distant stations often become stronger than those closer in as the skip lengthens. From my previous location in North Carolina, I was able to log CBW-990 in Manitoba and CBK-540 in Saskatchewan in just this way and here one night last year KAAZ-1090 Little Rock, AR literally awakened me with an ID well over my usual WBAL.

DX'ing Month by Month. Remember that each month brings with it a completely different set of circumstances imposed by the FCC because of the changes in local sunrise and sunset times. To coincide with these changes, many stations must change either their operating times, power levels, and/or antenna configurations. Consequently, on some frequencies you will hear different stations coming on or powering up at sunrise or signing off or powering down at sunset in fifteen minute increments as dictated by the FCC's "average sunrise" and "average sunset" times. In the mornings many stations still use the Star Spangled Banner at sign on and follow it with a sign on announcement. In the evenings, if you hear our National Anthem it usually means "Oops you just missed us!" Tune in tomorrow night five minutes earlier.

Seasonal Variations. As much fun as the day to day and month to month variations are, don't ignore the DX seasonal variations and year-to-year changes. Over the last two seasons, for example, I've logged 23 Alabama stations. In this season's contest so far I've only logged 13 including 5 new ones making an overall total of 28 stations from Alabama. In contrast, I've logged 39 of my 40 Ohio stations during this season, of which 20 are new. Overall I have only logged 70% of my 469 pre-contest stations, but have heard an amazing 137 new ones so far!

Auroral Conditions. One afternoon several years ago I turned on my receiver just before sunset and literally could not find an English language station. There was nothing but Spanish across the dial. That evening I was able to log several Colombian and Venezuelan stations in addition to many Cubans. The conditions lasted about two hours and the next morning just before sunrise I logged my only Nicaraguan.

You never know when an eruption on the sun will generate a solar wind intense enough to affect the ionosphere such that medium wave signals in the northern latitudes will be absorbed allowing many of those signals from the southern latitudes to be heard. Be prepared and take full advantage of this phenomenon when it occurs.

Conclusions:

The two major conclusions I've drawn from the preceding observations are that: (1) There is really no "DX Season" per se; and (2) Preparedness, technique, patience, and experience are your best tools for success, not necessarily the class of radio (Ultra-light or Unlimited) that you are using.

If reading this has either provided a helpful hint or two, piqued your curiosity about items we've mentioned, or possibly made you consider participating in future contests, then we've accomplished what we set out to do. We sincerely hope all of your DX sessions will be more productive and enjoyable whether you are a newcomer to the BCB DX hobby or a grizzled veteran such as we are.

Geomagnetic Indices (From Phil Bytheway)

Geomagnetic summary tabulated from daily e-mail data.

Date	Flux	A	K	Space Wx	Date	Flux	A	K	Space Wx	Date	Flux	A	K	Space Wx
9/ 1	112	2	1	no storms	11	121	10	3	no storms	21	144	5	2	minor
2	115	4	1	no storms	12	124	24	4	no storms	22	151	4	2	strong
3	119	11	2	no storms	13	129	15	2	no storms	23	158	3	1	minor
4	119	7	1	minor	14	142	6	2	no storms	24	190	4	2	strong
5	119	5	2	minor	15	141	7	2	no storms	25	169	6	2	moderate
6	112	8	2	strong	16	143	3	1	no storms	26	148	27	4	moderate
7	113	7	2	strong	17	145	21	2	minor	27	139	29	4	moderate
8	110	5	0	moderate	18	150	6	3	no storms	28	133	27	2	minor
9	112	24	4	moderate	19	141	2	1	no storms	29	137	25	2	moderate
10	116	34	5	minor	20	144	7	1	no storms	9/30	138	5	3	minor

NOAA Space Weather Outlook

Issued September 27 – For the period September 28-October 24, 2011

Solar activity is expected to be at moderate to high levels with more major flare activity from Region 1302 until it crosses the west limb on October 3. Activity is expected to decrease to low levels during October 4-19. On October 20, activity is expected to increase to low-moderate levels with the return of Region 1302 for the remainder of the forecast period.

There will be a chance for another proton flare from Region 1302 until it departs the visible disk on October 4. No proton events are expected at geosynchronous orbit for the remainder of the period.

The greater than 2 MeV electron flux at geosynchronous orbit is expected to be at normal to moderate levels during September 28- October 3. An increase to normal to high flux levels is expected during October 4-5 due to CH HSS effects. Normal to moderate

fluxes are expected during October 6-10 as coronal hole high-speed stream (CH HSS) effects subside. Fluxes are expected to rise to normal to high levels from October 11-15 due to CH HSS effects. A return to normal to moderate background levels is expected from October 16-24.

Geomagnetic activity is expected to be at unsettled to active levels on September 28 as CME effects subside. A decrease to quiet levels is expected on September 29-30. Activity is expected to increase to quiet to unsettled levels during October 1-2 due to a CH HSS. A return to quiet levels is expected during October 2-7. Activity is expected to increase to quiet to active levels during October 8-11 as another CH HSS disturbs the field. A return to predominantly quiet levels is expected for the remainder of the period.

(From <http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/ftpdir/weekly/WKHF.txt>)

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