



The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

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- Program Announcement
- DX Contests for October
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- Solar Prediction

How to Join

- * Come to a club meeting;
- * or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)
- * or call Jason Amos at (256)963-6833

Welcome New Members

By Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Over the past few months the NADXC has received several new members into the fold. I hope none have been overlooked in this list, if so, we welcome you along with

Mark Brown, N4BCD

Al Bacon, W6BG

Charles Boley, KI4VFW

Steve Conklin, AI4QR

Among these are newly-licensed hams, re-licensed after an extended lapse, and long-term hams just new to the DX Club. New blood is a great thing for our club: we're glad to have each and every one of you.

Al began his membership with a bang—a program on generators on his very first meeting night. And this was after serving as Field Day Power and Light for K4BFT. How's that for stepping up to the plate! Thanks, Al.

Charles' call is an indicator of his brief tenure as a ham, but don't let that fool you. He already has WAS on 80m SSB low-power, and who knows what else by the time this LongPath hits the street.

Steve has been a ham for a while, and doesn't keep it to himself. He shares his knowledge and

enthusiasm with Boy Scouts. Keep that in mind as Jamboree-on-the-Air rolls around October 18th and 19th.

Mark rediscovered ham radio after a few decades off the air. He's back into DXing with a growing homebrew antenna farm. Ask Mark to tell you about his mobile tower and quad some time.

These new members give the club the opportunity to help reinforce the DX bug which has apparently bitten each of these fellows. I'm sure we all can remember back to when we were newcomers to DX, whether that was a year or half a century ago. Those early contacts were both mystifying and exhilarating. We didn't really know what made a QSO over a 5000 mile path possible, but whatever it was,, we wanted more, and still do. Let's help that DX bug sink its teeth into these four.

New members — I beg the indulgence of old members with this — don't be afraid to stick your noses into DX conversations. The Old Guard is just as ready and willing to teach as you are to learn. We'll all be better for it.

73, Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

K4TD Skimmer Project

Program by Rick Walker, K4TD

Skimmer continues to generate controversy in the contesting community, and Rick chimed in on that in the April 2008 LongPath. Now hear about what's behind this tool. If you missed Rick's hamfest forum, you have another chance. Get to Ryan's around 6:15 pm for dinner, 7:00 for the business meeting, and 7:30 for Rick's program.



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EU AUTUMN SPRINT, (SSB), 80-20 meters

Oct. 11, 1600Z to 1959Z

Call, S.N., Name, Other Call

See page 82, Oct. QST and
www.eusprint.com**Worked All Britain HF Contest, (SSB), 20-10 meters**

Oct 11, 1200Z to Oct 12, 1200Z

Exchange RS plus serial number plus
DXCC entity or WAB areaSee page 82, Oct. QST and
www.rsgbhfcc.org**OCEANIA DX CONTEST (CW), 160-10 meters**

Oct. 11, 0800Z to Oct 12, 0800Z

Exchange: RS plus serial number

See page 82, Oct. QST and
www.oceaniadxcontest.com**JARTS WW RTTY Contest, (RTTY), 80-10 meters**

Oct. 18, 0000Z to Oct. 19, 2400Z

Exchange: RS(T) & age; multi: 99; YL:
00See page 82, Oct. QST and
www.edsoftz.com/JARTS**Asia-Pacific Fall Sprint, (CW), 15 & 20 meters**

Oct. 19, 0000Z-0200Z,

Exchange: RST plus serial number

See page 82, Oct QST and
www.jsfc.org/apsprint**Worked All Germany Contest, (CW/SSB), 80-10 meters**

Oct. 18, 1500Z to Oct. 19, 1459Z

Exchange: RS(T) & serial number or
DOK codeSee page 82, Oct. QST and
www.darc.de/referate/dx/fedcg.htm**CQ WW SSB, (SSB), 80-10 meters**

Oct. 25, 0000Z to Oct 26, 2359Z

Exchange: RS & CQ zone

See page 82, Oct. QST and
www.cqww.com**OTHERS:****RSGB 80m Club Sprint, CW**

1900Z-2030Z, Oct 9

FISTS Fall Sprint

1700Z-2100Z Oct 11

UBA ON Contest, SSB

0600Z-1000Z, Oct 12

ARCI Fall QSO Party

1200Z, Oct 18 to 2400Z, Oct 19

Stew Perry Topband Challenge

1500Z, Oct 18 to 1500Z, Oct 19

W/VE Islands QSO Party

1600Z, Oct 18 to 2359Z, Oct 19

RSGB 80m Club Sprint, SSB

1900Z-2030Z, Oct 22

IPARC Contest, CW0600Z-1000Z, Nov 1 and 1400Z-
1800Z, Nov 1**IPARC Contest, SSB**0600Z-1000Z, Nov 2 and 1400Z-
1800Z, Nov 2**DARC 10-Meter Digital Contest**

1100Z-1700Z, Nov 2

Ukrainian DX Contest

1200Z, Nov 1 to 1200Z, Nov 2

WAE DX Contest, RTTY

0000Z, Nov 8 to 2359Z, Nov 9

JIDX Phone Contest

0700Z, Nov 8 to 1300Z, Nov 9

OK/OM DX Contest, CW

1200Z, Nov 8 to 1200Z, Nov 9

Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals; beware. Also, check the cluster: "sh/contest". Have fun!

Chuck, N4NM

Short Skip

By Tom Homsley, N4WBS

Willis Island

Check your station, build a new beverage or ewe to improve your listening abilities on the lowbands, inspect your antennas and radios and blow the dust out of your amplifiers. VK9DWX is on the air Oct 9 - Oct 27 <http://www.vk9dwx.de>

VU4 and VU7

VU4 and VU7 will be activated again this year as part of NIAR Silver Jubilee Celebrations in October 2008. The Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Indian Radio Club (NIAR) at Hyderabad will be during 18-20 October, 2008. There is now the good news about the amateur radio activity after the event from the 24th of October to November 3, 2008. NIAR had informed us today about the successful licenses and operation permits for VU4 or VU7 activations. There

are two callsigns for the VU4-DXpedition: VU4MY will be the call for the Indian Team. VU4RG will be the call for the two German HAMS operating with two stations from Port Blair/Andaman Island (IOTA: AS-001; WLOTA: L-0562; ITU: 49 ; WAZ: 26 (Ohio/Penn DX Special Bulletin No. 878.2).

Solar Update

NEW SUNSPOT: For the first time in months, a significant sunspot is emerging on the sun. It is a fast-growing active region with two dark cores, each larger than Earth. The magnetic polarity of the sunspot identifies it as a member of new Sunspot Cycle 24. Because the year 2008 has brought so many blank suns, some observers have wondered if we are ever going to climb out of the ongoing deep solar minimum. Today's new sunspot is an encouraging sign that the 11-year solar cycle is indeed

progressing, albeit slowly. Visit <http://spaceweather.com> for sunspot photos and updates.

October Contests

Information concerning upcoming contests is provided in the current issue of QST in the new Contest Corral section. This section is also available in pdf format at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/months/oct.pdf>. Also see the WA7BNM contest calendar at <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/weeklycont.php>

So long 'til next time



de N4WBS

DXpedition Web Sites

Several web sites are covering the news regarding their respective DXpeditions.

KP5 (Navassa)

www.kp5.us - Bob Allphin's crew.

VK9D (Willis Island)

www.vk9dwx.de, as reported in Short Skip.

VU2/VU4/VU7 (India)

NIAR Silver Jubilee www.niar.org/sj/

3X (Guinea)

3X5A for the CQ WW DX CW contest—voodoocontestgroup.com

Check DailyDX, Ohio/Penn DX Bulletin, 425 DX, and others for more links.

Boatanchor of the Month

Allen B. DuMont Labs Model 164E Oscilloscope

Having nothing better to do, the LongPath research staff was looking for information about TV picture tubes, hoping to enrich its knowledge of these soon-to-be-scarce devices before they pass into the pages of history. One researcher became entangled in a web of stories dealing with the development of the Sony Trinitron. Paths pointed to two places: E.O. Lawrence at Autometrics Laboratories, and Allen B. DuMont Laboratories.

Ernest Lawrence won the 1939 Nobel Prize in Physics for developing the cyclotron. He founded the University of California Radiation Laboratory, one of the major research institutions involved with the Manhattan project, now known as Lawrence Berkeley Labs. Lawrence Livermore Labs are also named in his honor.

The entire LongPath research staff

was now spending all its time ferreting out the relationship between Sony, Autometrics, and DuMont, and has so far drawn only a blank, except to say that the tube was developed by Lawrence, under a subcontract from Sony.

Is all this another useless digression aimed at filling space in the LongPath? Judge for yourselves. The name DuMont sparked the interest of the LongPath Broadcast History department. Before establishing a TV network, manufacturing top-of-the-line sets "back in the day", or becoming tangled in the Trinitron web, Allen B. DuMont pushed Ferdinand Braun's cathode ray tube from a laboratory curiosity into the its role as the display for the oscillograph—later renamed oscilloscope.

The web site of an ancient oscilloscope aficionado (these apparently ex-

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Boatanchor of the Month

(continued from p. 3)

ist) produced this relic of cathode ray technology: a DuMont 164 or 164E oscilloscope, circa 1940. The editor procured one just like this as a junior high school student, based on a deal made with the school's electronics instructor. The scope didn't work, and the instructor agreed that if it could be fixed, thereby demonstrating some sort of technical prowess, the eager student could cart it home and in the bargain free up space at the school for some more junk.

My scope was in considerably better shape than this one, but it was a good bit newer back then. I distinctly remember the CRT didn't have aquadag near the faceplate, just like this one. This was an advantage, because one could see the trace from the back when working on the thing with the case removed, frequently the operating mode when coaxing that last Hz of bandwidth from the vertical amplifier.

Note what appears to be rust on the corner of the vertical piece that holds the CRT socket. In my 'scope's case, that was blood: those corners were quite sharp.



The tube count (including the two missing ones) indicates a fairly simple circuit, and indeed that was the case. Thyatron-based synchronized sweep was the rule of the day—Tektronix would not develop triggering until 1946 — and an easy-to-use volume control for vertical sensitivity got rid of all that constant impedance attenuator switch stuff.

Performance? Well, that's another story. The high-class 5" version of this scope with a few extra doodads, the model 304, claimed 50 kHz vertical bandwidth. For a junior high kid, stuff like that didn't matter. And for the price, I couldn't very well complain. I was the only kid on the block with his very own 164E.

Solar Prediction

Here are the latest sunspot number forecasts from the NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center for cycle 24. One recent look at the rate of new cycle spot development and spans of spotless days likened it to the end of cycle 18/beginning of cycle 19, but even the rosiest (magenta-est in this case) NOAA predictions don't reach cycle 19 numbers.

There have been four days with spots in the past month, and our daily average sunspot number for September is slightly less than two. It seems these curves show the uptake in cycle 24 earlier than supported by actual data.

