

The LongPath

December 2023 — Volume 47 Issue 12

A North Alabama DX Club Publication



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From the President

By Bruce Smith, AC4G

I look forward to seeing you at our Holiday Get-Together on December 12, 2023 at 6:30 P.M. at the Amerigo Italian Restaurant, 9020 Memorial Parkway SW, Huntsville, AL 35802. We have a menu prepared allowing each attendee the opportunity to select a delicious meal and place an order. We will install our officers for 2024 and we will present a NADXC DXer of the Year to one deserving member. I'm sure we all have DX stories that we will share with one another. As an active member of the NADXC club, you will not want to miss this event. We all look forward to visiting with each of you and your guest(s) during this event.

This year has passed by so fast and its already nearing the end of the year. My wife, Suzy and I are getting ready for the holiday season. She has been decorating the house putting up Christmas decorations, lights, and musical boxes that have quickly got me in the mood to think about Christmas and the holiday season. We are buying gifts for our family like many of you are doing. This is one time of the year where we can get our family together and reminisce back through 2023. We always share our memories with one another of things we did throughout the year, make excuses for the honey-do jobs we

failed to accomplish, reflect on our immediate and not so immediate family members, and finally share the good times we had with the family members we lost this year. I hope each of you will get that Christmas present(s) that you ask Santa for this year. Perhaps it is a new rig such as a Flex or a new Yaesu or Icom, etc. or a new antenna that will keep you busy in the upcoming year installed on perhaps a new tower. Whatever you receive, I trust that you will be grateful for whatever you receive.

I have heard many NADXC members on the amateur bands since the last meeting. There have been so many DXpeditions, that I lost track of which QSOs I have made. I have been going back and making myself a table of the bands & modes where I need to make a contact with each of the many DXpeditions. As I write this article, many of the "exotic" DXpeditions have wound down. I am currently chasing Cocos Keeling (VK9CY) on the low bands, but conditions are preventing me from getting in their logbook at the current time. The DX calendar shows more DXpeditions coming up. I received a note from Ken, LA7GIA via K4NA (NADXC member who communicates with Ken) requesting funding for

From the President (continued)

the upcoming DXpedition to Bouvet Island (3Y0K) in 2025 with a budget of \$440,000. Ken thanked our club for supporting his recent DXpedition to Yemen (Y08AD). This is major DXpedition that we will need to discuss in early 2024, but will be a good one to support. I believe many of us made at least one QSO with all of those DXpeditions we supported this past year and look forward to supporting many more in '24.

Our first meeting of 2024 (next regular club meeting) will be held on Tuesday, 9 January 2024 at 6:30 P.M. at the Signals Museum of Information Explosion, 1806 University Drive, Huntsville, Alabama. I look forward to seeing all of our members in person or via ZOOM and listening to

the DX worked over the past months or hearing some stories how you worked a new one or how you made DXCC. I will send out the ZOOM information prior to the meeting.

Our program for January 2024 will be presented by Steve Werner, AG4W discussing his recent DXpedition to Cameroon, Africa as part of the Mediterranean DX Team, TJ9MD. The NADX club made many QSOs with this DXpedition; therefore, we all will want to hear what Steve went through to get there, and the things the team had to do in order to make this DXpedition a reality. None of us will want to miss this one.

On behalf of Suzy and myself, we want to wish every NADXC member a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you at our Holiday event on 12 December.

Ham Station - Chapter 2

By Mark Brown, N4BCD

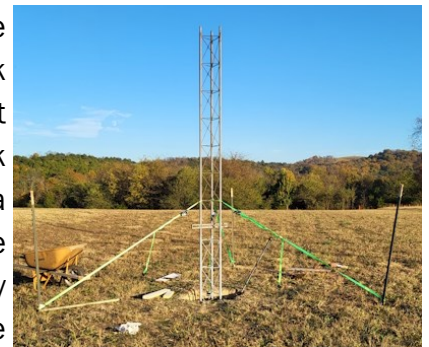
In the last issue I covered the construction of the ham shack interior and hinted at the work ahead to get the tower installed. Until digging, one never really knows if rocks will get in the way of progress. Or stop it in its tracks.

I was most fortunate to get the 30 x 30 x 36 tower hole dug without any show stopping rock. The last time I poured a tower hole, I mixed the concrete by hand - all 21 bags. Vowing never again, I ordered a minimum load from a local firm.



Measurements were made to set the tower legs at compass directions 0 deg (North), 120 deg, and 240 deg.

It was expensive but my back thanked me. That early in the week order also set a schedule to be ready by Thursday afternoon for the pour. All was proceeding on schedule until the company called, wanting to deliver early Thursday morning. That put a rush on getting the hole finished, the tower set, and the sloping concrete form built around the base. After sunset



The tower base and one section installed and secured with ratcheting tie-downs.

Cutting the rebar after sunset.



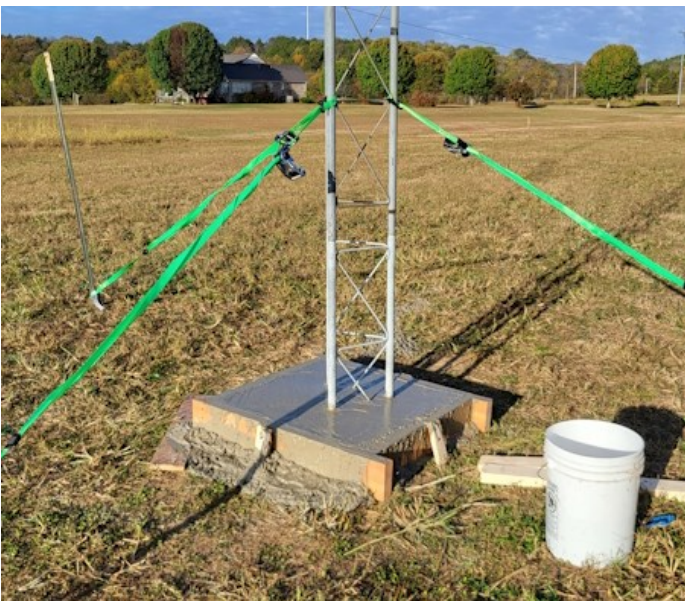
Ham Station - Chapter 2 (continued)

Wednesday I was cutting and placing rebar in the hole.



Above: The sloped form for the concrete base.

Below: The concrete was poured at 8 AM on Thursday.



While the concrete was curing I set about getting the earth anchors (4' long with a 4" screw) installed. This turned into quite the ordeal when I

encountered extremely dry soil – and rocks.

Fayetteville Public Utilities, the company responsible for installing and securing power poles with guy anchors / wires declined my request to bring a truck over to help, so I was consigned to use a cheater bar. Even with this, it was a tough go.

All this outside work was exhausting so I used the evenings to enjoy getting the ham shack operational. I installed WSJT-X and with phone help from friends was able to make my first QSO using FT-8. It's turned into a nice and relaxing way to recover in the evening from the outside chores.

I also encountered a priority interrupt from my XYL Julie, KK4CLG to get the barn stalls, latching gates, and fencing built and ready for



Rohn tower specs allow only 5 degrees off-axis so a 4' metal T-square was used to precisely set the anchor locations.



A wooden jig was used to aid screwing the anchors at the correct angle. Rocks were encountered in 2 out of 3 holes.



A pressure washer was used to drill a pilot hole and loosen the soil. Yes, it covered me in mud.

Ham Station - Chapter 2 (continued)

her three horses. We also stacked 150 bales of hay.

With the horses in place, I resumed on the tower project—installing the ground system.

The first 8' ground rod was driven successfully with a T-post driver and finished with a sledge hammer. The photo at the lower left of this page shows the second rod, bent after encountering a rock.

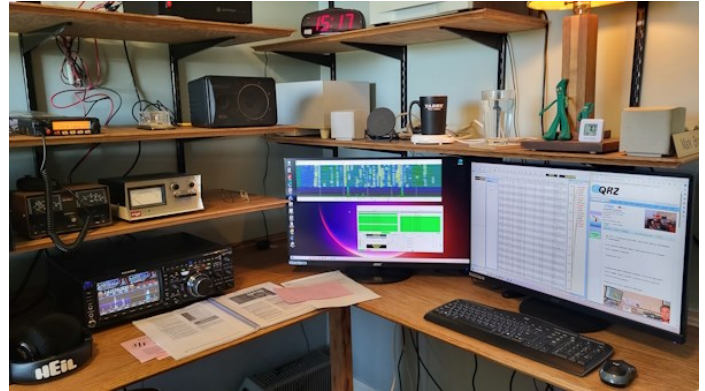
The tower project will continue in Chapter 3, next month.

Photo collage: Tower construction was paused to finish constructing the barn stalls and fence.



Above: The three anchors were successfully screwed into hard, rocky soil.

Below: Mark, N4BCD took a break to go inside and make his first FT-8 QSO.



A Quick Comparison of Amateur Radio Digital Modes: FT8 versus RTTY

By Bruce Smith, AC4G

The newest fad in the amateur radio community is a new digital mode called FT8, part of the WSJT-X software package developed and tested by Joe Taylor, K1JT, Steve Franke, K9AN, and a team of a few other hams. It may not be new now since this software has been out since 2017. The ham community has been using the Franke & Taylor 8 (FT8) mode for a few years. Some hams love it, while others dislike it. I routinely call CQ and log QSO after QSO when I have time or are searching for something to do in my spare-time. For a long while and after hearing positive and negative comments from various amateur radio operators, I've wanted to touch on some similar traits both exhibits.

As previously mentioned, in June 2017, the new digital frequency shift keying (FSK) mode was introduced and released called FT8. FT8 has made such a major impact on the amateur radio community throughout the world. As hams, everywhere we tune in the digital portion of the bands we can hear the FT8 tones and decode transmissions being made from one ham to another all day and all night when propagation permits. Even some of the old timers around the world that have become complacent with amateur radio and the common modes CW, SSB, and RTTY, have wiped off the cob webs in their shacks and perhaps on their equipment and have seen an awakening that goes unnoticed. The FT8 digital mode has created a spark that has renewed their interest in amateur radio like we have never seen before in ham radio. This mode has allowed old timers to get on the air again with a new sense of being and making new acquaintances.

FT8 enables radio contacts under very poor conditions to occur, such as low sun spot

numbers, high RF noise, or low power operations. Unfortunately, poor conditions can occur many days of every week both at the top of the sunspot cycle and also in the bottom of the cycle. Advances in signal processing such as FT8, allow signals to be decoded with a signal to noise ratio as low as -21 dB in a 3000 Hz bandwidth. This is significantly lower than a ham can copy using CW, SSB, or RTTY. FT8 also allows for hundreds of QSOs to be made within a few kilo-hertz of an amateur band. I must add that because of FT8, I have been able to make QSOs to add to my missing DXCC band slots using FT8, when CW or SSB could have not been possible.

FT8 sends 77 information bits in a 15 second interval. Within this cycle of time, 12.64 seconds is "transmission" time and 2.36 seconds is "decoding" time. This equates to a data rate of 6.09 bits per second. The effective throughput is approximately 5 words per minute. One key factor in achieving successful communications requires the sending and receiving station personal computers (PC) to be synchronized. Many radio amateurs use an external time application that continuously keeps their PC time accurate. These applications, such as Dimension, constantly receive signals from the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST), which are forwarded to the amateurs' computer.

FT8 supports up to 13 text characters using forward error correction to ensure accurate transmission and decoding. The mode sends and receives only enough pre-programmed memory text information messages to make a QSO or contact.

RTTY, better known as radio teletype, is a method that uses tones to send digital messages

A Quick Comparison of Amateur Radio Digital Modes: FT8 versus RTTY (continued)

between radio amateurs in the amateur HF bands. It involves a computer, a soundcard, and modulation/demodulation software to send and receive communication messages. A ham can send message using RTTY using many coding methods such as Baudot, Amtor, ASCII, etc. To transmit these tones requires modulating characters using audio frequency shift keying (AFSK) or frequency shift keying (FSK).

An HF transceiver transmitting RTTY sends out a carrier that shifts back and forth between two frequencies. There is no amplitude modulation, only a pure carrier that shifts frequency. The lower frequency is the SPACE frequency and the upper frequency is known as the MARK frequency (operating frequency). The difference in the two frequencies is known as the SHIFT typically 170 Hz. For example, if you transmit on 14.095 kHz, this means your MARK frequency is 14.095 kHz, while your SPACE frequency is 170 Hz lower, or 14.094.83. Your transceiver will use either FSK or AFSK to transmit data depending how you have it set up. RTTY setup requires the use of a PTT keying circuit to be used to key the transceiver. Let us look further into this discussion.

Naysayer hams say that FT8 is not real ham radio because the computer is making the contact. To them, FT8 is an excellent example of “a technology creating negative impacts on daily ham radio operations”. I would argue that these assertions are very much incorrect and these hams are only prohibiting themselves from enjoying the hobby. There are many similarities between FT8 and RTTY that I intend to show in this article. Today, most QSOs are made via FT8 mode and I hope to show it.

I have observed that during VHF contests, most QSOs were made with FT8 when the bands are nearly dead. In many VHF Contests, there have been very good sporadic-e propagation on 6 meters, but at other times, the band is nearly dead. During contests and on 6 meters, I take advantage of “running” by using either one or both SSB and CW modes. If you follow me, you will see me on CW first, then SSB trying to scrape up points. My strategy is to operate SSB or CW until the band dies. At that point, I always switch to FT8, while keeping an eye on the SSB/CW portion of the band. If signals are present on SSB or CW, I am always there as top priority to make QSOs. When using SSB or CW, I typically operate in “SEARCH & POUNCE” (S&P) mode and then switch to “RUN” to increase my rate. This is my preferred way to tackle VHF contest QSOs. There are many times where I am able to “run” on a frequency, calling CQ and have many stations to work. At other times, I switch to S&P mode. I then begin to tune around the band to find a new station to work to keep my score increasing. However, when things became slow or if the band has died, I switch to the digital mode, FT8 and my QSO count increases. Instead of losing QSOs, FT8 allows me consistent contacts and new stations to work. Obviously, these are at a slower rate. I do observe that FT8 operators tend to stay on FT8, even if signals are strong. My contest goal is to maximize my score. Every ham operator has to pick and choose when and whether to switch to another mode in order to maximize contacts. Typically, this decision can increase my rate or jeopardize it. I can continue to use FT8 which is a slower method to make additional contest QSOs. Whatever I decide to do always affects my final score.

Likewise, during the State QSO parties, some states have allowed FT8/FT4 contacts to be made. From my observation, there are only a

A Quick Comparison of Amateur Radio Digital Modes: FT8 versus RTTY (continued)

small amount of FT8 QSOs made using the FT8/FT4 modes versus hams using either CW, SSB, or both in the “Mixed Mode” category. Most QSOs made are using CW and SSB. It appears that for contests, the FT8/FT4 modes have not caught on.

Today, aside from VHF contests and state QSO parties, “most QSOs are made via FT8” and logged to Logbook of the World (LOTW). This fact comes from the ARRL LOTW web site [www.arrl.org]. My observation is that almost all DXpeditions use FT8. DXpeditions are all about numbers of QSOs to be made. Many times, propagation is not able to allow CW/SSB/RTTY QSOs. During these periods of time, FT8 QSOs can still be made. It is a fact that DXpeditions hardly use RTTY, but instead have switched to FT8. In FT8, the DXpedition can work as many as 6-8 QSOs in “Fox-Hound” mode with a couple of transmissions and multiple streams. Table 1 below shows data I derived from the ClubLog web site for a few DXpeditions and the QSOs made via FT8 in comparison to RTTY modes. Data below shows that it is obvi-

ous that FT8 is used more than any mode.

Next, I wanted to look at my own logbook for all QSOs made this year by me to determine if this was the case for me. I have 130,000 QSOs in my logbook, with 9339 QSOs logged to date. I wanted to see the percentage of FT8 QSOs I made, mainly QSOs made this year in 2023. I parsed through my logbook beginning with 1 January 2023 through 2 December 2023 and compiled the following data to show how many QSOs I made in 2023 versus each mode of operation. See the picture of the table below that I imported into Microsoft Excel.

My logbook data in Table 2 shows I have logged the following QSOs per each mode in 2023:

RTTY	741
FT8/FT4	2396
CW	4540
SSB	1662

Table 2: AC4G Total QSOs Made per Mode

As one can see, in my case, I operate more CW than FT8/FT4 and less SSB than both CW and FT8 modes. Looking at my logbook, 8% of my

DXpedition	Location	CW QSOs	SSB QSOs	FT8 QSOs	RTTY QSOs	Other	Total QSO's
W8S	Swains	34599	12136	44717	398	2	91852
TO8FH	Mayotte	30998	13422	36955	3085	2439	86899
ZD9W	Tristan D	7886	2888	59338	0	0	70112
E6AM	Niue	8041	612	33299	0	0	41952
T22T	Tuvalu	2290	1102	10066	0	18677	102248
5X3K	Uganda	13857	10377	35207	751	0	60192
Mode Totals:		97,671	40,537	219,582	4,234	21,118	

Table 1: Comparison of FT8 and RTTY Mode during Major DXpeditions in 2023 (Data compiled from Clublog's database for a few random DXpeditions)

A Quick Comparison of Amateur Radio Digital Modes: FT8 versus RTTY (continued)

QSOs in 2023 were RTTY; 25.7% were FT8/FT4; 48.6% were CW QSOs; and 17.8% were SSB QSOs. However, there are other hams that log only FT8 QSOs. Also, another observation I made

is that there are hams that used to operate strictly SSB, but now take advantage of FT8. If you do not believe this, ask a SSB operator. Now these ham operators have another mode to make QSOs to add to their portfolio. The FT8 pileups show this is a fact. There are other hams who operate 100% FT8. I am glad that many hams have found another niche that has renewed many radio ama-

	I	L	T	V	AU	CI	CJ	CY	CZ
1	BAND	CALL	COUNTRY	DISTANCE	MODE	RST_RCVD	RST_SENT	TIME_OFF	TIME_ON
4534	80m	K1IB	United States	1057.894	CW	599	599	2023-02-05-013654	2023-02-05-013654
4535	80m	JH1HDT	Japan	10978.401	CW	559	559	2023-02-02-115829	2023-02-02-120704
4536	80m	VP5/DK6AS	Turks & Caicos	2033.551	CW	599	599	2023-01-31-011906	2023-01-31-012921
4537	80m	LZ0WRTC	Bulgaria	8972.734	CW	599	599	2023-01-16-224756	2023-01-16-010414
4538	80m	PJ2ND	Curacao Is.	3164.343	CW	599	599	2023-01-15-224756	2023-01-15-234138
4539	80m	TN8K	Republic of th	11175.159	CW	599	599	2023-01-09-010019	2023-01-09-010022
4540	80m	N9W	United States	1057.894	CW	599	599	2023-01-06-004845	2023-01-06-004854
4541	80m	W2P	United States	1057.894	CW	599	599	2023-01-06-004817	2023-01-06-004820
4542	80m	N1W	United States	1057.894	CW	599	599	2023-01-06-004655	2023-01-06-004656
4543	10m	SV1YH	Greece	9115.532	FT8	-04	-09	2023-11-30-124945	2023-11-30-124915
4544	10m	G0LUH	England	6687.613	FT8	-13	-17	2023-11-30-124815	2023-11-30-124700
4545	10m	TO9W	Saint Martin	3001.642	FT8	+08	-09	2023-11-27-133741	2023-11-27-133645
4546	10m	H44WA	Solomon Is.	12811.300	FT8	+03	-10	2023-11-19-230111	2023-11-19-230015
4547	10m	7O73T	Yemen	12634.717	FT8	+00	-03	2023-11-14-124941	2023-11-14-124815
4548	10m	TJ9MD	Cameroon	10455.006	FT8	+18	+20	2023-11-12-130211	2023-11-12-130115
4549	10m	7O8AD	Yemen	12634.717	FT8	-12	-10	2023-11-07-125911	2023-11-07-125911
4550	10m	BG2ENW	China	10453.751	FT8	-16	-14	2023-11-05-015330	2023-11-05-015245
4551	10m	JA2LMA	Japan	10978.401	FT8	-09	-06	2023-11-05-015230	2023-11-05-015130
4552	10m	3W9A	Vietnam	14596.979	FT8	-10	-16	2023-11-05-015117	2023-11-05-014915
4553	10m	XU7GNY	Cambodia	14614.423	FT8	-02	-12	2023-11-05-013511	2023-11-05-013415
4554	10m	JA2MAX/P	Japan	10978.401	FT8	-07	-12	2023-10-23-233602	2023-10-23-233602
4555	10m	JH5CHY	Japan	10978.401	FT8	-21	-12	2023-10-23-233532	2023-10-23-233345
4556	10m	BD4UN	China	11982.896	FT8	-17	-14	2023-10-23-233230	2023-10-23-233145
4557	10m	JH2BUF	Japan	11061.687	FT8	-04	-10	2023-10-23-233130	2023-10-23-233100
4558	10m	BH7GUL	China	12618.230	FT8	-14	-05	2023-10-23-233030	2023-10-23-232945
4559	10m	DV1K	Philippines	13796.079	FT8	-16	-23	2023-10-23-232930	2023-10-23-232830
4560	10m	JE2TLZ	Japan	11061.687	FT8	-12	-07	2023-10-20-011100	2023-10-20-011015
4561	10m	JA2IXS	Japan	10978.401	FT8	-14	-11	2023-10-20-010800	2023-10-20-010700
4562	10m	JG1XUZ	Japan	10864.982	FT8	+12	+04	2023-10-20-010700	2023-10-20-010630
4563	10m	JK1DDQ	Japan	10864.982	FT8	-08	-10	2023-10-20-010500	2023-10-20-010430
4564	10m	JJ1VIY	Japan	10978.401	FT8	-13	+10	2023-10-20-010300	2023-10-20-010215
4565	10m	JR1WCT	Japan	10864.982	FT8	-02	+01	2023-10-20-005700	2023-10-20-005615
4566	10m	JM1XBD	Japan	10978.401	FT8	-06	-01	2023-10-20-005600	2023-10-20-005515
4567	10m	JN1NNN	Japan	10978.401	FT8	-08	-03	2023-10-20-005500	2023-10-20-005330
4568	10m	YB1HR	Indonesia	16565.233	FT8	-13	-02	2023-10-20-005330	2023-10-20-005245
4569	10m	JR1WCS	Japan	10864.982	FT8	+01	+03	2023-10-20-005230	2023-10-20-005145
4570	10m	JH2CXE	Japan	10954.699	FT8	-17	-11	2023-10-20-004930	2023-10-20-004715

Picture: Snapshot of AC4G's logbook.

A Quick Comparison of Amateur Radio Digital Modes: FT8 versus RTTY (continued)

teurs' interests and allows hams to be active on the ham bands once again.

Next, I want to list some similarities (and

differences) between FT8 and RTTY digital modes that I see. Reference Table 3 below.

From the table, one can see that there are not many differences in the two digital modes under consideration.

But we have to address one other point to the naysayer ham. The naysayer ham says that

Item	FT8	RTTY
Computer-controlled	Yes	Yes
Connects modem or soundcard to HF Transceiver	Yes	Yes (requires PTT circuit for rig keying)
Transmit type	Eight-tone FSK keying	Uses 5-bit Baudot code FSK or AFSK
Mode	Time-synchronized mode required precise time	Continuous Wave Mode w/ carrier
Bandwidth	Wide bandwidth	Narrow bandwidth
Use of Macros	Limited protocols (callsign, signal report, and 73)	Memories allow callsign, signal report, and other info [More data can be transmitted]
User input (keyboard or mouse)	Operator clicks mouse	Operator clicks mouse on memories, pushes function key on keyboard, or types data to be transmitted
Software	WSJT-X or MHSV	Many packages (MMTTY, etc.)
Fully Automated	No, requires operator intervention (more automated than RTTY)	No, requires operator intervention
Frequencies	Limited by pre-defined frequencies (However, can be used anywhere within digital band plan)	Any frequency in RTTY (digital) band plan
Signal strength permitting QSO	-10 to -22 (weaker signals that RTTY cannot decode)	-06 to -09
Bad propagation	Can make QSOs	Forget making QSOs
Frequency of use	Popular - fills the bands daily	Used mainly for RTTY contests, few DXpeditions, ARRL Bulletins
DXCC Awards	Increased DXCC award count	DXCC RTTY converted to Digital Award

Table 3: Some Similarities and Differences in Digital Modes

A Quick Comparison of Amateur Radio Digital Modes: FT8 versus RTTY (continued)

FT8 does not address the spirit of ham radio because QSO data does not allow for enough data to make a valid QSO. One has to ask next, what makes a valid QSO. The IARU defines a valid QSO as follows: "...one where both operators during the contact have:

1. Mutually identified each other
2. Received a report, and
3. Received a confirmation of the successful identification and the reception of the report (signal report or some other information (grid locator, contest exchange, etc.)"

WSJT-X software allows for each of the information requirements shown above allowing valid QSO information to be passed. Likewise, for all of my CW, SSB, and RTTY QSOs in the past, I have followed the same guidelines defined by the IARU for a legitimate QSO.

Again, what is all of the NEGATIVE hype about using FT8? FT8 allows the passing of valid QSO information. I believe some people do not accept change well. I have heard some say that ham radio is all about exchanging more information than signal report and 73. It is getting to know the other ham operator. I believe this to be only personal opinion. Read the IARU definition again. Hams that make an attempt to invalidate FT8 must NOT enter contests or CHASE DXpeditions, because all you get is a callsign, signal report and "TU" during most contests. I have to say that some contests do allow for name, QTH, signal report, etc.

I have heard naysayer hams say that FT8 is

fully automated and requires no ham operator intervention. This is 100% false. Any ham who has operated using FT8 knows that the ham operator must initiate a QSO like CW, SSB, or RTTY when answering a CQ or transmitting "CQ". We also know that the ham operator must intervene and "click" the mouse to log the FT8 QSOs just like we do when logging CW, SSB, or RTTY QSOs into a logbook. A ham that makes these negative comments is merely spouting out unjustified myths or something they read or heard about from another FT8 naysayer.

On another note, it is my belief that FT8 is synonymous to AM when SSB began years ago. AM hams "had a burr" against SSB hams. But now we see that SSB is used daily and is more widely used than AM, although the AM hams are still true to their mode and keep AM alive. Another example is a similar discussion that occurred when the Morse Code requirement was dropped from the U.S. FCC test many years ago. Many stated that code would disappear within a few years and the hobby would be destroyed. As we know, this is very untrue. Look at most DXpeditions today, their CW operating is still alive, even drawing newcomers to learn CW and making almost as many QSOs as FT8. Data shows that FT8 is used more than any mode on a daily basis, including with DXpedition teams. Today and in the future, some SSB/CW/RTTY hams will continue to have a burr against FT8 hams using this widely popular mode of today. The cycle continues on this subject. What will it be next?

One positive note, I heard a ham say in a blog that FT8 is boring and puts them to sleep. This ham operator found a good use for FT8. If this ham operator is in bed tossing and turning, they get up in the middle of the night and make a few FT8 QSOs. After a short while, they get bored so much, they jump in bed and go to sleep. FT8 helps insomnia.

It is a fact that many hams are using FT8. It has even jumped into the EME and VHF communities. The primary mode for EME is JT65 or Q65, both modes within the WSJT-X software package. Why would a ham condone the use WSJT-X for EME, but reject and disapprove WSJT-X FT8 use for HF communications? This is illogical.

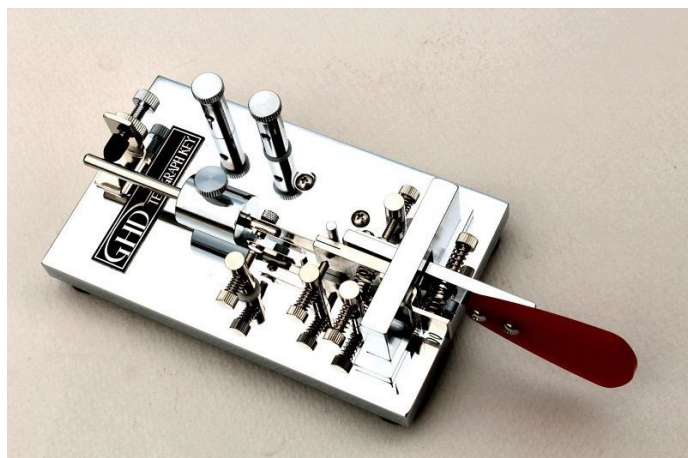
In summary, I sought out to compare similarities with FT8 and RTTY. I know that this article will not change the mind of the FT8 naysayer, but I

trust it has indeed shown similarities with FT8 and RTTY. With so many ham operators utilizing WSJT-X and FT8 these days to make QSOs, it is apparent that this mode dominates daily HF communications within the amateur radio bands. FT8 is just another tool worth trying out. If you haven't tried it, perhaps one might be curious to find out for themselves that FT8 can allow one to make QSOs during bad propagation and add new DXCC entities to their DXCC or CQ award.

This Old Key: Call for Contributions

by Fred Kepner, K3FRK

A new serial column was introduced in the October 2023 *LongPath*, called "This Old Key". Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI, provided the idea and the first installment. The vision was for contributors to share about a favorite key from their collection. The featured keys could have personal or historic significance. The column would be a great way to try writing something for the *LongPath*, if you've never tried. If you are interested in contributing to this new series or providing an article on another amateur radio topic, please contact Fred, K3FRK. Very few article submissions have been received over the past few months. I know many of our members have knowledge, experience, and stories to share. Please consider contributing in the new year.



Club Business and Announcements

November 2023 Meeting Minutes and Financial Report by Barry Barton, WA4HR

November 2023 Meeting Minutes

Club President Bruce Smith, AC4G called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

- Bruce spoke about the various DX he's worked and wanted to make sure that nobody misses a once in a lifetime opportunity to work some great DX.
- Bruce spoke about various excellent articles in the Longpath.
- A call for dues went out for the upcoming calendar year.
- The minutes from the September meeting were approved.
- A head count was taken for the upcoming annual Christmas party. Approximately 25 were counted. Amerigo's stated there would be room enough for 32 people. Amerigo's is located along the South Parkway.
- Barry Johnson mentioned that Amerigo's has a special going on. A gift card worth 20% off with no expiration date.
- Bruce spoke about the various DX fellow club members have worked.
- Barry, WA4HR, gave the monthly treasury report for October.
- A discussion was brought up about funds that have been spent on DXpeditions that we have supported this year.
- The Election Committee had been formed and the election was held during the meeting. The following candidates were nominated and elected to office for the 2024 calendar year:

President, Bruce Smith/AC4G

Vice President, Fred Kepner/K3FRK

Secretary/Treasurer, Barry Barton/WA4HR

Directors, Bob DePierre/K8KI and Mick Bell/N8AU

- Following the elections, voting occurred for DX'er of the Year. The Plaque will be presented to the winner at the Christmas Party.
- Bruce asked members to please continue writing articles for the Longpath.
- There will be no meeting for December in lieu of the annual Christmas party, which will be held on December 12th at 6:30pm at Amerigo's.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm

Following the meeting, the club observed an excellent demonstration by Barry Johnson/W4WB on various Magnetic Loop Antennas.

NO DECEMBER MEETING

NADXC Christmas Dinner

Tuesday, December 12th, 2023

6:30PM

Amerigo Restaurant

9020 Memorial Pkwy SW



2023 NADXC Financial Status		11/30/23	October
Budget Category	Targets	Year Totals	Subtotal
Year Start	8,365.65	8,365.65	9,577.46
Dues In	1,000	1,123.87	
Huntsville Hamfest Donation		500.00	
Recurring Exp	-683.00		
repeater elect	-160	-160	
web hosting/domain service	-73	-16.88	
repeater maintenance	-100		
to HARC for Zoom	-50		
use of museum	-300	-300	
Bank checks		-22.5	
Donation of equipment to sell		1,535.00	
Dxpeditons	-1,000	1,159.99	-446.11
Picnic	-160	-140.05	
DX Banquet	380.00		
venue	-600	-600.00	
food	-2,350	-2,305.97	
speaker	-400	-400.00	
tickets	3,800	3,559.41	
raffle	700	270.00	
grand prize	-390	-400.00	
beer/wine	-250	-157.39	
soft drinks/glasses		-78.69	
insurance	-130	-105.00	
EOY Bank Delta	-463		
Year End Bank Balance	7,903	9,131.35	9,131.35

2024 NADXC Officers and Directors

President Bruce Smith, AC4G
 Vice-President Fred Kepner, K3FRK
 Sec./Treasurer Barry Barton, WA4HR
 Directors: Mick Bell, N8AU
 Bob De Pierre, K8KI
 (Ex-Officio)

How to Join

Come to a club meeting or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)

Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held at the Museum of Information Explosion at 6:30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Participants can also join the meeting virtually via [Zoom](https://zoom.us).

This edition of The LongPath published by:
 Fred Kepner, K3FRK

Announcement: It's time to pay 2024 membership dues

Dues can be paid electronically at the [NADXC website](http://www.NADXC.org). Contact Barry, WA4HR (treasurer@nadxc.org) for information about other payment options.

2024 Monthly Meeting Topics and Programs Needed

Do you have a suggestion for an upcoming program topic?

or

Are you able to conduct a presentation at a club meeting? Presentations can be in person or conducted remotely via the club's Zoom connection.

Please contact Fred, K3FRK (dxK3FRK at gmail.com) with ideas or to sign up for a meeting in 2024.

Upcoming DX Contests

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

ARRL Ten Meter Contest, (SSB & CW), 10 meters



Dec. 9, 0000Z to Dec. 10, 2359Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus State/Province; DX:

RS(T) + Ser. #

See page 66, Dec. QST and

www.arrl.org/10-meter



Russian 160 Meter Contest (CW/SSB) 160 meters only

Dec.15, 1100Z to 2100Z

Exchange: RS(T)+ Serial #; Russian Stns: RST + Oblast

See page 66, Dec. QST and www.topband.ru/rules



RAEM Contest (CW), 80-10 meters

Dec. 23, 0000Z to 1159Z

Exchange: Serial # plus Lat/Long, (e.g., 57N 85E)

See www.raem.srr.ru/rules



DARC Christmas Contest, (CW & SSB), 75/80 & 40 meters

Dec. 26, 0830Z to 1059Z

Exchange: RS(T), [+DOK or special code for DL or "NM" if not DOK member], plus Serial#

See page 66, Dec. QST or www.darc.de

RAC Winter Contest (CW & PHONE), 160-2 meters

Dec 30, 0000Z to 2359Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus Serial No.; VEs send RS(T) plus Province

See page 66, Dec. QST and www.rac.ca/contesting



Stew Perry Topband Distance Challenge, (CW), 160 meters

Dec. 30, 1500Z to Dec. 31, 1500Z

Exchange: 4 Char. Grid square

See page 66, Dec. QST and

www.kkn.net/stew



OK DX RTTY Contest, (RTTY), 80 – 10 meters

Dec 16, 0000Z to Dec. 16, 2359Z

Exchange: RST plus CQ Zone

See page 66, Dec. QST and okrtty.crk.cz



Croatian CW Contest, (CW), 160 – 10 meters

Dec. 16, 1400Z to Dec. 17 1400Z

Exchange: RST + ITU zone

See page 66, Dec. QST and www.hamradio.hr

OTHERS

EUCW 160m Contest

2000Z-2300Z, Jan 6 and 0400Z-0700Z, Jan 7

Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals; beware. See also: <http://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html>

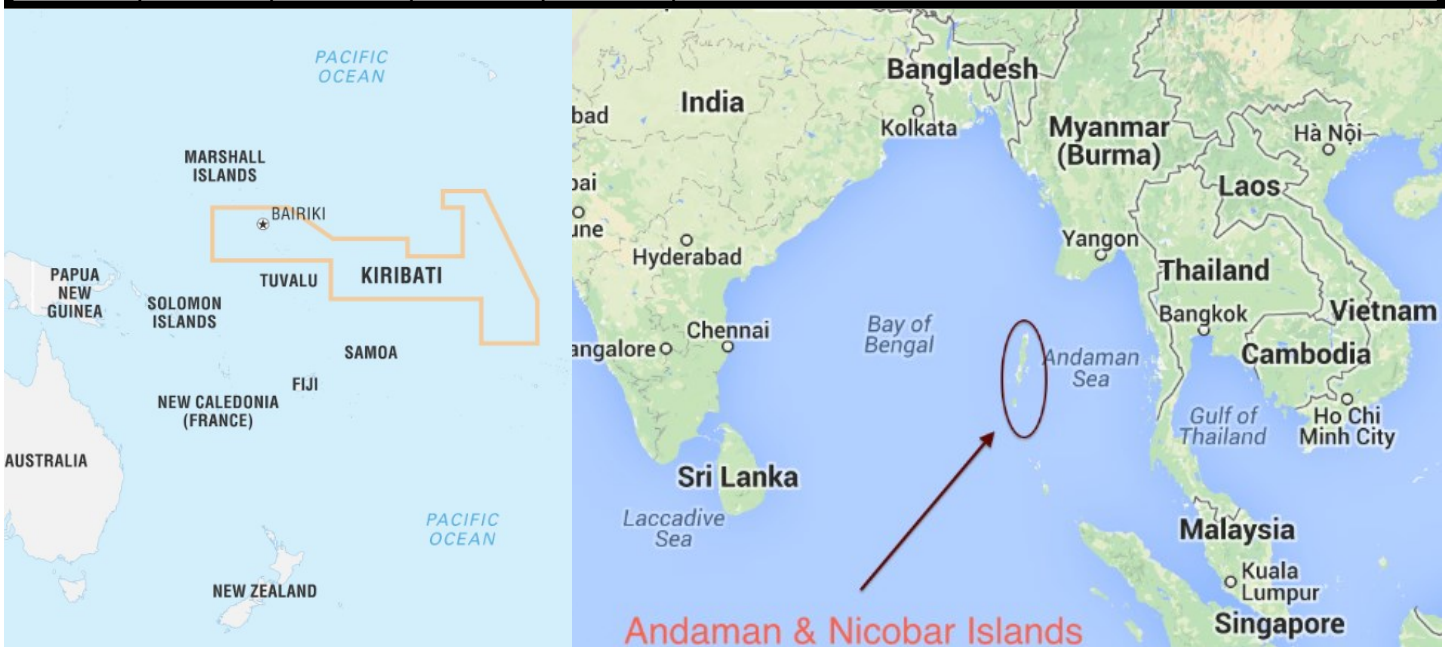


DXpeditions in December 2023

Reprinted by permission of Bill Feidt, NG3K



2023 Dec04	2023 Dec12	British Virgin Is	VP2VMM	LoTW	By Team Vertical; mainly 20-10m; CW SSB + digital; QRV for ARRL 10m Contest
2023 Dec04	2023 Dec16	Micronesia	V6EU	LoTW	By DL2AWG DK2AMM DL2AMD DF4GV fm Chuuk I (IOTA OC-011); 160-10m, perhaps 6m; SSB CW RTTY FT8; QSL via Club Log
2023 Dec05	2023 Dec10	Lakshadweep	VU7A	W4VKU	By W4VKU fm IOTA AS-106; 160-6m; SSB FT8
2023 Dec06	2023 Dec19	Burkina Faso	XT2AW	M00XO OQRS	By DF2WO fm Ouagadougou; HF; CW SSB FT4 FT8; 100w
2023 Dec06	2023 Dec28	East Kiribati	T32TT	LoTW	By Rebel DX Group; 160-6m; focus on FT8 FT4 some CW SSB
2023 Dec07	2023 Dec14	Surinam	PZ5NH	LoTW	By JA0JHQ; HF; CW SSB FT8; QSL via JA0JHQ direct
2023 Dec08	2023 Dec18	Barbados	8P9BH	eQSL	By GM0PWS; 40 20 10m; SSB
2023 Dec09	2023 Dec18	St Kitts & Nevis	V47JA	LoTW	By W5JON fm Calypso Bay; 160-6m; SSB FT8; yagi, verticals; QSL also OK via W5JON direct
2023 Dec09	2023 Dec19	Ogasawara	JD1YCE	LoTW	By Kansai Okinawa Ham Club ops; HF + 6m; QSL via Club Log OQRS or JA3AVO direct
2023 Dec11	2023 Dec22	Cape Verde Is	D44MCS	LoTW	By OE3MCS fm Sal I (IOTA AF-068); 40-10m, perhaps 6m; SSB CW, perhaps FT8 and RTTY; QSL via OE3MCS
2023 Dec16	2023 Dec26	Andaman & Nicobar	VU4N	W4VKU	By W4VKU; 160-6m; SSB FT8
2023 Dec26	2024 Jan05	St Vincent	J8TT	LoTW	By PA2LO fm Ratho Mill (IOTA NA-109 (IOTA NA-109)); 40-10m; SSB CW FT8; QSL via PA2LO Buro or Club Log OQRS
2023 Dec27	2024 Jan06	Rodrigues I	3B9AT	LoTW	By IK3ZAQ IV3JVJ fm IOTA AF-017; 40-10m; CW SSB FT8; QSL via IV3JVJ
2023 Dec29	2024 Jan16	French Guiana	TO2FY	eQSL	By F4GPK fm Korou; @FY5KE; HF; SSB; holiday style operation



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