2022-11-01 Hamlet Net

Announcements:

- Test Session Info
    - The results from the October 22 test session were 8 candidates tested, all passed. The new licenses earned were 2 Technicians, 5 Generals, and one Extra class.
    - Next scheduled test session is Sunday, November 13th at 350 Terry Street
        - Patriot VE Team session, so no testing fee.
    - To test before this (or online), go to hamstudy.org -> Find a Session (make sure you search for online sessions!

- LARC's SotA (Santa on the Air) coming up - Nov 27th - Dec 4th - On repeaters (LARC and NCARC) and Echolink. Kids will get QSL card from Santa.

- Ed - WA7EM - announced that he is going to run another activity involving studying, designing, and building low-level circuits such as those that make up a modern radio. The activity is probably going to start in November. Send him an email to join - his address is in QRZ.

  Session is starting now - Ed sent out study sheets, but not too late to get in on this session!

- RMHAM has published details of their upcoming Tech Talks and 2022-2023 RMHAM University presentations. Topics include Using the Incident Command System for events, Chinese DMR programming, Ham Radio instrumentation and others. For more information, or to sign up for these free presentations, go to the RMHAM web site at rmham.org and click on the RMHAM UNIVERSITY menu item near the top of the page.

- The northern Colorado Amateur Radio CLUB, NCARC, is hosting a Rosin Corps event on Saturday, November 5th from 9-11 am in the CSU Chemistry lab. Each participant will build their own 2m Yagi antenna - perfect for working satellites or fox hunts! There is no cost for the class. For more information and to sign up, see their web site at: ncarc.net (november-charlie-alpha-romeo-charlie dot net)

- The Nashua Area Radio Society has opened registration for their FREE Fall 2022 Online Ham Bootcamp, which is being held Saturday, November 5th from 10am to 6pm Eastern via Zoom. The Bootcamp is a series of demonstrations and tutorials designed to help newly-licensed hams to get on the air and use their licenses.

  The morning session will focus on Technician level activities, while the afternoon session will focus on HF activities for General and above licenses.

  For more info, see their web site at: n1fd.org (november-one-foxtrot-delta dot org) and

select the "HAM BOOTCAMP" menu item under the "OUR ACTIVITIES" menu drop-down.

While there is no charge for the camp, you must pre-register.

Links:
Info & Schedule:
https://forums.qrz.com/index.php?threads/nashua-area-radio-society%E2%80%99s-fall-2022-ham-boot-camp-registration-is-open.833357/
Bootcamp info: https://www.n1fd.org/ham-bootcamp/
Registration: https://www.n1fd.org/register-ham-bootcamp/

- There is still plenty of time to earn a free year of LARC membership by acting as NCS for at least 5 nets this year. You can run either this Tuesday night net or the Thursday night net (or both). We have scripts available for both, so all you need is a good connection into the repeater, and somewhere to keep track of names and call signs as people check in. If you're going to be on the net anyway, why not save some dough at the same time!

- If there are any newly-licensed hams listening, QRZ and GigaParts have announced a New Ham Jumpstart program, which will provide new hams with a welcome package containing a dual-band HT and programming cable.

  If you obtained your first license within the last 30 days, then you are eligible! The program runs through October 31st. To sign up, go to www.qrz.com/jumpstart, that's www-dot-quebec-romeo-zulu-dot-com-slash-jumpstart

- The LARC Christmas Party will be held on December 14. We are planning to hold it at the Niwot Grange. If we can get at least 75 people to attend, we can get the cost per person down to $11. Members and spouses/family members are welcome! (Dick - KE0VT)

- All club activities are open to anyone - members and non-members. ~~If you have questions, ask them on a net or~~ **send email to elmer@w0eno.org**

- Club breakfast Saturday mornings at 8am at the Hidden Cafe in Longmont
    - Come meet other Club members and discuss amateur radio

Presenter: Bryan, AF0W

Topic: DXLab Software Suite

- One of the presentations we attended at the recent ARRL Rocky Mountain convention in Cheyenne was on the How and Why of DXing and Confirming contacts

- In it, Robert Carter, WR7Q, mentioned the usefulness of the DXLab software suite for tracking contacts
- I've played around with this suite a bit previously, and thought others might be interested in some of its functionality

Overview

- DXLab is not just a single program - it's a collection of freeware programs that all work together to help you run your station
- It's goal is to allow you to focus on the contact itself, and automate everything else as much as possible
- There are eight individual applications, which can be used individually or together

Launcher

- The first is called Launcher
- Its primary purpose is to allow you to start (or stop) one or more DXLab applications with a single mouse click
- It is also used to check for and install updates the the DXLab Suite of applications
- It saves the settings of all DXLab applications to a workspace so they can be backed up or transferred to another PC easily

Transceiver Control

- The next application is called Commander and is used for controlling your radio via computer-aided transceiver or CAT control
- It can simultaneously control up to 4 transceivers and even select a transceiver based on the frequency used
- It can direct a secondary transceiver, receiver, or panadapter to follow or lead the primary transceiver's frequency and mode
    a. An example of this would be if you have a SDR receiver such as the RTL-SDR USB device hooked up to its own antenna - you can have it automatically change frequency whenever you change the frequency of your main radio so you can use it as a bandscope
- It provides 10 banks of 10 memories and can continuously scan a bank's frequencies

- It provides user-defined transceiver control sequences initiated by up to 32 buttons and 16 sliders

    a. You could use this to set the output power level on a slider, or have buttons to toggle noise reduction or data modes

- When controlling certain ICOM radios (such as the IC-705, IC-7300, IC-7610 and IC-9700), it can provide a spectrum waterfall display directly from the radio and adds callsigns of active DX stations and allows direct clicking on the waterfall to set radio frequency

- It also interoperates with SatPC32 (http://www.dk1tb.de/indexeng.htm) and the S.A.T or Self-contained Antenna Tracker (http://www.igatemini.com/sat) device, which allows the satellite name, mode, and frequency information to be pulled into DXLab

- It can also come in handy if you find the display or controls of your radio too small to operate easily - you can control everything from your PC with big monitor and keyboard

- The exact functionality of Commander will depend on the CAT control functions provided by your radios - for example, my old Kenwood TS-440S does not allow the output power to be adjusted via CAT, but does allow frequency and mode to be read and set

DXView

- The next application is DXView, which displays DXCC (ARRL DX Century Club award), location information and country maps, and can utilize Google Earth

- Locates stations based on their callsign and FCC location information for US stations

- Identify stations participating in ARRL's Logbook of the World, eQSL, as well as configured clubs

- Plots spots, QSOs, antenna headings, solar position and greyline in realtime on a world map

- Can display translations for common amateur radio phrases (such as "hello," "my name is," and "thanks" in the language typically used at the remote stations' location)

- Updates the DXCC, station location, IOTA, and LoTW databases with a single mouse click

- Can control various antenna rotors

- Plots spots captured by other DXLab applications

- Provides spot frequency and mode to Commander with one mouse click

- Enables the PropView application to rotate your antenna to monitor specified NCDXF propagation beacons

DXKeeper

- DXKeeper is the logging application for DXSuite
- In addition to recording and managing your QSOs, it:
    a. Tracks progress towards various DX objectives, such as DXCC, IOTA, VUCC, WAC, WAS, etc.
    b. Extracts station address information from various services such as HamCall and QRZ
    c. Prints QSL cards and labels as well as envelopes
    d. Provides real-time uploads to eQSL and batched uploads to Logbook of the World and updates logged QSOs to reflect confirmation status
        - Ed and I had a discussion on this regarding the QRZ logbook and Logbook of the World. I found info stating that QRZ would upload log entries to LoTW, but Ed then found info stating that it would not download confirmation status from LoTW
        - Downloading confirmation status from a site such as LoTW means that your local logging program would show you whether each of your logged QSOs had been confirmed or not
            - During the convention presentation, Robert mentioned that sometimes it takes a long time to get a QSO confirmed (I think he said his longest took about 2 years for a paper QSL card), and sometimes you never get a confirmation
            - Say you are trying to get Worked All States, and you see a spot from someone from Arizona. You look in your log and see that you've made a contact with Arizona, but if that contact has not been confirmed, then it will not count toward the award, so you might want to contact the station you just heard to see if you can get a confirmation from them.
    e. It can log contacts made with other programs, such as DXSuite's WinWarbler, or fldigi, MultiPSK and others
    f. It uses Commander for transceiver control, DXView for progress reporting and plotting, and Pathfinder for QSL route lookup

WinWarbler

- Nowadays, the majority of HF digital contacts are probably being made with FT8 and FT4, but there are a number of other digital modes out there
- The WinWarbler application:
    a. Can conduct PSK31, PSK63, and PSK125, and RTTY QSOs
    b. Can monitor all PSK digital QSOs in a 3.5 kHz band
    c. Includes a voice memory keyer
    d. Includes macro and GPS position reporting capabilities
    e. Can plot QSOs on DXView's world map
    f. Can log QSOs to ADIF files or to DXKeeper
    g. Uses Pathfinder for QSL route lookup, Commander for radio control, and SpotCollector to post RTTY and PSK spots

Pathfinder

- The next application, Pathfinder, provides QSL information gathered from over 80 web-based sources
- Provides DXKeeper with direct access to callbook info from QRZ.com
- Some stations have QSL managers - individuals who handle all QSL activities for that station
- Some also request that you use a bureau for their QSL

SpotCollector

- SpotCollector does more than just collect and aggregate spots from multiple sources
- It consults DXKeeper and highlights active stations with whom you need a QSO to advance your award status
- It displays band openings in realtime and computes spot statistics by band and by continent
- It plots active DX stations on DXView's world map
- It supplies frequency and mode to Commander for 1-click QSY (clicking on spot tunes your radio to its frequency)

- It supplies the solar flux and geomagnetic K-index to PropView
- It uses PathFinder for QSL route lookup

PropView

- PropView uses propagation prediction engines to predict minimum and maximum usable frequencies between specified locations
- Locations can be selected by point-and-click from the DXView world map
- It can also create schedules for monitoring NCDXF propagation beacons
- It uses SFI and K-index values from SpotCollector, and can use Commander to monitor beacons per their schedule, including using DXView to rotate your antenna along with the beacon schedule

Requirements / Comments

- One limitation of the DXLab suite of applications is that they run under Windows only, but appear to support being run in Windows virtual machines on Linux and Mac
- They've been around for a long time - the requirements mention a minimum 1 Ghz Pentium with 500 mb of RAM and a display with a resolution of 800x600 or greater
- The applications look "dated" - they look like older Windows applications
    a. This does not mean that they don't work well!
- They also appear to be getting support - the latest release of the Commander application is dated September 1 2022, and DXKeeper is dated September 28, 2022
- You don't have to install or use all the DXLab applications, but you may miss out on some functionality, depending on what you have
- You first install the DXLab Launcher and then use it to install whichever other applications you want
- DXLabs applications can be configured to work with WSJT-X as well as a number of other applications (http://www.dxlabsuite.com/download.htm#Bridges,%20Gateways,%20%20and%20Extenders and https://www.dxlabsuite.com/dxlabwiki/GettingStartedwithK1JTModes)
- If this sounds interesting at all, head over to dxlabsuite.com and give it a try!

Questions:

- **The question for the week is:** Do you use any sort of rig control, spotting, or propagation prediction software or web sites when operating?
- **In my case,** I've used a contest logging program called N1MM (november-one-mike-mike) which has some of the same functionality as DXKeeper.

  The main issue I had was that I could not hear most of the DX spots with my HF setup, so I spent a lot of time trying to find someone to contact - I eventually just started "spinning the dial" across the band to see what I could hear.

  I use the rig control functionality of software like WSJT-X, but I don't use something like Commander or Ham Radio Deluxe for my day-to-day operating

  I primarily use web sites such as dxheat.com and hamspots.net for spotting

More Info:

- https://stationproject.blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/dxlab-intro-v3.pdf

Notes:

- If you have ideas for net topics or general meeting topics / presenters, please let us know! Tell us on a net, or send email to k0itp@w0eno.org

Email to elmer@w0eno.org

K0ITP - Chuck - Firestone - Uses WSJT-X to control radio and log, but haven't been doing much HF lately

WB4FAS - Don - Mead - Good to hear new hams on the net! Use Ham Radio Deluxe to control rig, but not too much. Like that it flags going outside of band privileges. Also use for PSK31 via a SignaLink USB, Use QRZ.com for logging and upload from HRD to LoTW. Uses PSKReporter to see if he's getting out.

WA7EM - Ed - Erie - Bob Carter was his instructor at CW Academy. Lives in Utah and ran via Zoom. Over 350 countries confirmed. Uses Log4OM for logging and spotting.

AE0DO - John - N of Longmont - Listening is much more informative than a couple of hours on YouTube. Not using any software in his shack. Right now, just use radios when needing to relax, so no additional hassle needed.

KM6SJA - Steve - N Longmont - Only played with some of it. **What language they use to write the software in (DXSuite).**

KF0KQP - Mike - SW of Longmont - At test on 22nd. Appreciate all the help he got. Was General and active back in 60's, then fell out for a while. Was mainly on 10, 15, and 20m DX

and have 1000's of contacts around the world back then. No experience with the software. Only have UHF/VHF handheld at this point - just getting back in to amateur radio.

KF0KFJ - Lora - Downtown Loveland on EchoLink - Just got license at end of Aug with us. Been on HF - 4 contacts! Excited about getting Echolink working.

N0ZFV - Bob - Broomfield Echolink - Awesome presentation, Google Docs and MS Word have speech to text capabilities, can record it with EchoLink. **Been looking for presentation on fldigi**, Al and Lora were at Oskar Blues. Played with HRD. Downloaded DXLabs but seemed pretty complicated. Focusing on antenna situation. GridTracker used with FT8 shows where you're talking (with FT8) on a world map

WT0RJ - Trevor - Boulder - Don't have a permanent shack set up in his house yet. Most of his operation has been portable, so use radio directly. Also doesn't have a Windows computer.

K0IPH - Al - Loveland on EchoLink - Wonderful presentation. Logging on paper - just turned first page, so not many contacts. Tried to get on LoTW, but seemed complicated for amount of time he had. Had ICOM-7300 on end-fed halfwave on roof. Still pretty new to things.

AF0W - Bryan - Longmont -

KV0N - Raman - Lafayette - Uses WSJT-X and PSKReporter.

WB4FAS - Put up new antenna - square loop replacing end-fed long wire. This weekend was CQWW contest, so got on there on SSB on 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters got bunch of new countries. With old antenna, could not get countries to the south. Last Friday, drove over to Ed's and saw his new rig and DX spotting software.

KV0N - Today was KE0SI's funeral - he will be missed. Dinner at Oskar Blues was really fun - wondering when we'll do something like that again.

Wanted to thank Bob, N0ZFV, for his suggestion to cover fldigi. As I've mentioned before, the hardest part of doing this is coming up with topics, so if anyone, especially the newer people, have any ideas, please do not hesitate to let me know. **Could also just put the presentation part on the recording.**

Chuck - will be voting in elections in November. Board meeting tomorrow night.

Planning to try to organize a 24-hour POTA at Craters on the Moon in Idaho for members to attend. Proposing more stuff at Board meeting tomorrow night, and asked for input/suggestions for activities.