

MOUNTAIN SPARK GAPS



NPARC-The Radio Club for the Watchung Mountain Area

Website: <http://www.qsl.net/nparc>

**N2XJ
Club Callsign**

VOLUME 44	February 2009	NO.1
------------------	----------------------	-------------

UNCOMING EVENTS

AUCTION

Friday February 20,2009

(snow date March 13)

Doors open 6:30 p.m.

Auction starts at 7:00 p.m.

New Providence Municipal Center Gym

Academy St. (at Springfield Ave.)

New Providence NJ

**Regular Meeting on Monday Feb. 23, 7:30 pm at
the Salt Brook School**

**Project night: bring in your "show and tells" and other topics you
have been working on; Auction recap; digital net news.**

President's Column by Jim, K2UI

NPARC at the ARRL Hudson Division Cabinet and Club Presidents' Meeting

The Hudson Division Director, Frank Fallon (N2FF), has expanded the cabinet meeting to include club presidents and representatives. The most recent meeting was held on Feb 7, and NPARC was represented in healthy numbers by Jim (K2UI), Paul (N2KDK) and Bill (W2UDT).

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to brief reports from each of the clubs regarding activities and outreach efforts to increase the ranks of our hobby, our clubs and the ARRL. Recurring themes were: line up interesting speakers, reach out to visitors, and keep the business part of the meeting short and focused. To help, the Div will help by distributing a list of speakers. A lot of good ideas were shared among the attendees.

NPARC made a bit of a splash with a report (by Paul) on our efforts to get kids interested in ham radio, including Kid's Day, summer camp, QSOs with the ISS, Sunday night Kids-Net., etc. Barry (K2JV) is the driving force behind these efforts -- he prepared the handouts and personally trained us to deliver the message effectively!!

Editor's note

This is a "hurry up" edition of Spark Gaps put together for the auction, please excuse the lack of polish. Hopefully it will look better next time.

Speaking of next time—if anyone has any of the original artwork from previous editions, please send it to me. Also, any and all contributions are appreciated.

K2EZR

Climatological Data for New Providence for January 2009

The following information is provided by Rick, WB2QOQ, who has been recording daily weather events at his station for the past 27 years.

TEMPERATURE -

Maximum temperature this January, 45 deg. F (January 23)

Last January(2008) maximum was 63 deg. F.

Average Maximum temperature this January, 31.2 deg. F

Minimum temperature for this January, 0 deg. F (January 17)

Last January(2008) minimum was 11 deg. F.

Average Minimum temperature this January, 18.7 deg. F

Minimum diurnal temperature range, 5 deg.(35-30 deg.) 1/7; (29-24 deg.) 1/27

Maximum diurnal temperature range, 25 deg.(41-16 deg.) 1/24

Average temperature this January, 25.0 deg. F

Average temperature last January, 32.7 deg. F

Number of days, this January, with temperatures 32 deg. or above - 18

Number of days, last January, with temperatures 32 deg. or above - 27

Number of days, this January, with temperatures of 31 degs. or lower - 11

Number of days, last January, with temperatures of 31 degs. or lower - 4

PRECIPITATION -

Total precipitation this January - 2.45" rain/melted snow, 9.375" snow

Total precipitation last January - 2.31" rain/melted snow, 1.5" snow

Maximum one day precip. event this January - January 7, 1.05" rain;

Jan.19,3.25" snow

Measurable snow fell on 5 days this January; 1 day last January

The Easy-DX Method

By Jim Stekas, K2UI (ex NJ2F)

Copyright 2001 – All rights reserved.

Amateur radio's greatest strength is the endless variety of challenges and pleasures it provides. The most exciting, competitive, and frustrating aspect of the hobby for most of us is chasing DX. If you're an avid DXer who just retired to a new QTH on a saltwater marsh and operate kilowatt into a stacked 20m yagis on a 300ft. tower this article isn't for you. But, if you've been chasing DX unsuccessfully from your apartment with a barefoot rig feeding an indoor antenna, read on, because this article is guaranteed to change your ham radio life.

The Easy-DX Method is a discovery I made by pure chance that will enable just about anyone to work more DX without any additional investment in time or money. About now you're probably thinking that what follows is just a teaser and you'll have to order some Easy-DX instructional cassettes for three payments of \$49.95 to find out what it's all about. The only investment you need to make is the time it takes to read this article and you'll know everything you need to start working all the DX you ever wanted.

As a novice I received the call WN2IAA, which was about as good a CW call as a novice could hope for. My paper route financed a station that served well for rag chewing on 40m CW but W4's and W9's were my best DX for quite a while. After upgrading to Advanced Class, WA2IAA, I learned that getting on 40m just before sunrise provided my best shot at DX - a few VEs and a KL7. Several DX chasing forays on the 10m and 15m bands produced only signal reports from irate neighbors unintentionally monitoring my transmissions on their television sets.

Over time my ham radio interests evolved to include QRP operation, homebrewing, packet radio, antenna experiments, 2m FM rag chewing and some light contesting. My interest in DX was reborn when my Extra Class license, NJ2F, allowed me into the lower 25kHz of the CW bands where all the choice DX was to be found. But the choice DX frequencies are also where the competition is fiercest and I had no greater success at making contacts. The new 2-by-1 call also seemed to be more of a handicap than a help. NJ2F took longer to send than my 2-by-3 call and about half the stations I called came back to "N1??".

My interest in DX waned again until my first CQ-WPX prefix contest as NJ2F. Being one of only 26 NJ2 stations in the world made me something of a "rare-one" and I actually had DX stations chasing me! I didn't appreciate the profound impact that the NJ2F call had until months after the contest when QSLs started arriving from the DX bureau. Checking my logs I discovered that most of the QSLs I received were from stations I never worked. In fact, thanks to my confusing 2-by-1 call, I "worked" more DX when my transmitter was off than when I was actually operating!

The average contact in a DX contest takes place in less than three seconds under conditions of horrendous QRM. It's not surprising that errors occur. What is surprising is that *any* QSOs are ever completed correctly. Rather than fighting to eliminate this confusion and error the Easy-DX Method strives to exploit it. The Easy-DX Method makes Murphy's law work for you, not against you, and with a little luck and a lot of patience it may be possible to ride it all the way to Five Band DXCC without ever setting foot in the shack.

A good rig with a strong signal isn't really essential, but it does help to pass the time between the arrival of thick envelopes from the QSL bureau. The one thing that you absolutely must have to use the Easy-DX Method is a confusing call sign. Fortunately, the FCC has opened up all unused calls for reassignment so it

there are lot's of confusing calls available for the Easy-DXer. The following tips are designed to help you pick a call that is optimally confusing.

1. *Have at least one L, F, Y or Q in your call.* These are the letters that are most often confused by CW beginners. Of course, good CW operators never confuse these letters, but during a contest there are plenty of operators spending their only day of the year in the CW bands just to pick up a few multipliers. Some of these operators will also be renting expensive QTH's on remote islands by the hour and they certainly won't want to waste their investment asking others to QRS or repeat their call.

2. *Use phonetically confusing letters.* During your next SSB rag chew try identifying the letters B, D, E, G, P, T, V, and Z spoken quickly. You won't be able to do it without at least one mistake. Now imagine how much harder it must be for a non-native English speaker trying to copy these letters through QRM from a weak station that's 300Hz off frequency. If you're thinking that the phonetic alphabet will prevent these errors you are spending too much time reading the Operator's Manual and not enough listening on the bands. The truth is that WX9BDP would never be calling "Whiskey-Xray-Nine-Bravo-Delta-Papa" through the pileup. What he'll be doing is tail-ending with "BDP ... BDP", and if the DX station mistakenly copies "BDT" into the log and then adds the prefix when the exchange completes it will be WX9BDT that gets the QSL.

3. *Pick a call similar to a champion DXer.* If you've been paying the slightest attention at all the rationale for this tip should be obvious. But be sure not to pick a call that is too famous. WE9TW may be very similar to W1AW in terms of *dits* and *dahs* but no ham in the world is going work W1AW and send a QSL to WE9TW.

4. *Go for a 2-by-1 or 2-by-2 call.* The theory here is to exploit confusion between letters and numbers, either on CW (e.g. 1 and J) or phone (e.g. two and

U). But 2-by-1 and 2-by-2 calls have proved to be more profoundly confusing in practice than theory predicts and they generate as much head scratching today as they did when first introduced over twenty years ago. If you already have a 1-by-3 call, say N4XYZ, consider the 2-by-2 equivalent NX4YZ.

5. *Pick a call that end in K.* Every CW exchange from ARRL HQ ends with "... W1AW K" so it stands to reason that W1AWK might be a profitable Easy-DX call. Of course, W1AWK is not the best call to pick for the end-in-a-K strategy but you get the idea. (If you don't, reread tip #3.)

The Easy-DX Method really works, but does have it's down side. Having a call of WQ2UQ might produce all the Easy-DX QSL cards you can handle but it's not going to be much help when you try to work DX the old fashioned way. By far the toughest issue the Easy-DXer will have to face is maintaining his integrity when applying for awards. The DXCC award is now given with all manner of qualifications: QRP, single band, CW, Phone, maritime-mobile, and probably hundreds more. That's why I suggest that Easy-DXers apply for the DXCC award with a QRT qualification. So get on the Easy-DX bandwagon and let's see who gets DXCC/QRT serial #001.