

Kilowatter

The voice of the KW Amateur Radio Club
Since 1922

Kitchener-Waterloo Amateur Radio Club

Box 34012 Highland Hills Postal Station;
Kitchener, Ontario N2N 3G2

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MONDAY'S MEETING

Date : Monday March 3rd 2003

Time : 7:30pm

Place: RCAF Wing 404 Club. End of Dutton Dr. Waterloo. Off Weber St. N

Topic: **Last Plane Out of Montserrat as Volcano destroys the Capital**

Bob VE3IKM / VP2MAM

1995...the Soufriere Hills volcano on the island of Montserrat BWI awoke from a 300-year hibernation period. Operating as VP2MAM, our speaker spent

approximately 10 months teaching on the island during the peak of volcanic activity and was on the last airplane to leave the island, witnessing the airport destruction as the twin

otter's wheels left the runway.

**This is a MUST ATTEND meeting.
Be sure to bring a friend.**

Your clubs Meeting Line Up till April

April 7

Our annual Show-n-Tell evening. Have a show and tell item you would like to share with the membership?

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In This issue

- **Message From The President**
- **Beginners Classes**
- **The Search Continues**
- **Tech Report**
- **New Automated IRLP Features**
- **First Shuttle/School Contact since Columbia disaster**
- **Used To Interconnect N.E US For Snow/Blizzard**
- **ARES Report**
- **Membership Report**
- **How To Succeed At QSLing 'Without Really Trying**
- **VE3ENK's Moving sale**

KWARC Directors 2002-03

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------|----------|
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| Director | Tedd Doda | VE3TJD | 634-5949 |

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| | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------|----------|
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| Membership Chairman | Ben Sasiela | VA3BNY | 748-0445 |
| Technical | Tedd Doda | VE3TJD | 634-5949 |
| Packet Users | Larry Gorman | VE3LGN | 884-6782 |
| Database Mgr | Dave Schwartz | VA3DGS | 884-3594 |
| Bulletin Editor | Paul Cassel | VE3SY | 634-5139 |
| Edu. Co-Ord | Ron Gimbel | VE3DBD | 584-2009 |
| Chief Examiner | Vern Stroud | VE3RVS | 743-9342 |
| ARES Manager | Larry Gorman | VE3LGN | 884-6782 |
| CANWARN Mgr. | Larry Gorman | VE3LGN | 884-6782 |
| QSL Manager | Gord Gibson | VE3NOK | 893-5148 |
| Virtual Swap-Shop | Dave Schwartz | VA3DGS | 884-3594 |
| Bereavement | Marg Cassel | VE3RE | 634-5139 |

KWARC Owned Repeaters/Nodes

| Mode | Call | Freq. | PL | patch | Location |
|--------|----------|---------|----|-----------|------------|
| Voice | VE3KSR | 146.970 | Y | member | Baden Hill |
| Voice | VE3RCK | 146.865 | Y | member | Kitchener |
| Packet | VE3KSR-0 | 145.010 | | | Baden Hill |
| Packet | VE3KWQ | 145.090 | | | Waterloo |
| Voice | VE3IXY | 224.340 | | | Kitchener |
| Voice | VE3SED | 52.370 | Y | | Baden |
| Voice | VE3RBM | 444.875 | y | Kitchener | IRLP |

Tone Frequencies (PL) for above are all 131.8

Other Area Repeaters/Nodes

| Mode | Call | Freq. | PL | patch | Location |
|--------|--------|---------|----|----------|-----------------|
| Voice | VE3SY | 147.570 | Y | SIMPLE X | Petersburg IRLP |
| Voice | VE3ERC | 444.700 | N | | Elmira |
| Voice | VE3KFM | 442.000 | Y | open | Kitchener |
| Voice | VE3RND | 145.330 | Y | | Plattsville |
| Voice | VE3SWR | 146.790 | N | | Cambridge |
| Voice | VE3WFM | 147.090 | N | private | Waterloo IRLP |
| Voice | VE3WWW | 146.835 | N | | U of W |
| Voice | VE3RSS | 147.030 | N | members | Acton |
| Voice | VE3BAY | 442.350 | N | | Kitchener |
| Voice | VE3ZMG | 145.210 | N | Open | Guelph |
| Packet | VE3VIQ | 145.570 | | | Guelph |
| TCP/IP | VE3MKY | 145.570 | | | Guelph |
| TCP/IP | VE3UOW | 145.570 | | | U of W BBS |

The Kilowatter is published 10 times a year (Sept-June) by the Kitchener-Waterloo Amateur Radio Club (KWARC). Opinions expressed or implied herein are those of the authors. KWARC assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or content of any information. Material for inclusion in the next Kilowatter must be in the hands of the editor by the 20th of the month prior to publication. The Kilowatter newsletter is also available on-line at <http://www.kwarc.org>.

Members On-Line are urged to use this medium so as to minimize mailing costs.

Message from the President Bill Graham VE3ETK President KWARC



Just a brief column from me this month. We're repainting, wallpapering, putting down new rug, etc. for a big part of the house, so I have to balance out all of my commitments.

Larry Gorman had 'booked' some time at the last meeting to tell you all about the re-organization of KWARC's Emergency Services, but as you know, the weather did not co-operate. I expect you may well be hearing about this at the upcoming meeting.

Memberships are still coming in, but any leads or help about potential 'hams' or someone who has just moved into the area would be appreciated by Ben (New call = VE3ST), our VP and Membership Chairman.

I'm going to repeat my comments from last month about jobs we need volunteers for. I'm repeating them because these matters are getting URGENT. The club keeps running because YOU volunteer to do something, otherwise it falls apart. KWARC provides it members with a lot of services. Speak up and keep them all going.

1 - URGENT! URGENT!: Fred Louwe VE3OQB has had to drop the coffee duty starting with March until the end of the season due to health matters. I again thank Fred for his service to the club. I've said it before, "This is simple; no volunteer, no coffee and doughnuts!" ACT NOW!

2 - Of vital importance to the club is the need for a new Kilowatter Editor! Paul, ably assisted by Marg, have done yeoman service, and the members can be proud of their newsletter. It isn't just the 'putting together', it's the folding, addressing and

mailing that the club must thank them for. However, all good things change. The time has come that they want a little more free time and have said they will 'retire' from this service with the end of the season. There is still time for Paul to train the new volunteer if you act now! KWARC has a standard of excellence to live up to. Be the one to keep the Kilowatter excellent!

3 - Field Day will soon be here! A coordinator is required. It's a fun weekend and there are lots of people who can fill you in on what needs to be done - most of it ahead of time.

So, there you are: E-mail me or any of the Executive, talk to us at the next meeting, contact us in any way that suits you, BUT DO VOLUNTEER

73 Bill VE3ETK

BEGINNERS CLASSES

Please pass the word on our 2003 Course . Contact Vern VE3RVS for info at 743-9342

| | |
|------------------|--|
| DATE: | The next Basic Class will commence April 8 th , 2003 |
| SCHEDULE: | Classes are held two evening a week (Tuesday and Thursday) The Industry Canada Licence Exam being held on the final class day |
| TIME: | 19:30 - 22:00 (7:30pm - 10:00pm) |
| PLACE: | PWL at 266 Marsland Drive Waterloo |

PLEASE PASS THE WORD TO ANY PROSPECT

The Search Continues

In another attempt to retrieve information on the early days of **KWARC**, we ask anyone who can fill in the blanks or offer corrections on the adjacent list of Past Presidents. We have a complete list from 1960 forward, thanks to **Harold VE3DWH** and would like fill at filling in the blanks between 1946 and 1959. Any memorabilia that our members may have that we could copy or photograph such as copies of early Kilowatters, photographs, slides or newspaper articles involving the club would be appreciated.

You can contact the editor by phone at (519) 634-5139 or by email to: editor@kwarc.org.

de Paul VE3SY

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| 1946-1947 | N.A. Friedman VE3HM First President |
| 1947-1948 | N.A. (Newt) Good VE3CY |
| 1948-1949 | Andy McIntosh VE3AOH |
| 1949-1950 | |
| 1950-1951 | |
| 1951-1952 | |
| 1952-1953 | Jack Fortune VE3VO |
| 1953-1954 | |
| 1954-1955 | Bruce Underwood VE3ANU |
| 1955-1956 | Gord Mogk VE3DPB |
| 1956-1957 | Russ Anderson VE3EHV |
| 1957-1958 | Jim Anderson VE3EHY |
| 1958-1959 | |

Thinking of Selling or Buying a home?

Dave Johnson VA3MRJ recently joined Peter Benninger Realty and would be glad to assist you with any real estate transaction.

Give Dave a call at 742-5800 or e-mail him at va3mrj@rac.ca



David Johnson
Sales Representative

Coldwell Banker Peter Benninger Realty
508 Riverbend Drive
Kitchener, ON
Canada N2K 3S2

tel: (519) 742-5800
fax: (519) 742-5808
email: david-johnson@coldwellbanker.ca
web: realtors.coldwellbanker.ca/david-johnson



Our Last Meeting by Wafik Ajoor VA3WOA

There was no February meeting due to bad ice storm

TECH REPORT by Tedd VE3TJD Technical Chairman



On Saturday, February 8, 2003 it was reported that our IRLP node, VE3RBM has lost most of its output power or has gone QRP. The repeater was removed 3 times by the tech

committee trying to find the problem. The funny thing was that every time it was removed, it would work well on the bench, and for a short period once reinstalled.

The repeater finally stopped this erratic behaviour, and stayed QRP long enough

to run some meaningful tests. After all was said and done, it turned out that the final RF transistor in the PA (Power Amp) had a partial short from the collector to the emitter. Due to the fact that we didn't have a replacement transistor, the tech committee replaced the entire PA deck with a slightly lower powered unit from a UHF Exec II mobile. The original will be repaired and either used as a spare, or will be placed back into RBM.

The power has only been reduced by 3 dB, so the users should not notice any difference in coverage.

Next month will be a feature rich "Tech Corner", covering one of my favourite Integrated Circuits.....the famous 555 timer. Also, I will be giving a primer on a rapidly growing program for Hams..... EchoLink. This program allows any ham running Windows, the ability to connect to many other hams, links and repeaters around the world using VOIP (Voice Over IP) WITHOUT a radio! Don't miss it :)

Tedd, VE3TJD

Technical Chairman of the KWARC

DXpeditions approved for DXCC credit



(Feb 21, 2003) -- The ARRL DXCC Desk has announced that the following operations have been approved for

DXCC credit: VK0MQI (Macquairie Island), January 1, 2002, through March 15, 2003; 3C2MV (Equatorial Guinea), November 11 through

December 12, 2002. For more information, contact DXCC Branch Manager Bill Moore, NC1L, bmoore@arrl.org.

New Automated IRLP Features

by Erich VA3XTO host of Node 2430 on VE3WFM

It was summer 2001. My family and I were visiting Signal Hill, Newfoundland. It had been almost exactly hundred years since Marconi had made his famous transatlantic QSO, and here we were standing on the very spot where this piece of history was enacted. A few months earlier I had gotten my ham licence in the mail, just in time to benefit in this nostalgic moment.

So, I tuned into the repeater, and bless my socks off, it's an IRLP node! But, do I remember the node numbers of the stations back home? In my departure haste, I had neglected to write 'em down. Oh, why can I not just key in the name of the city on the DTMF pad on my mike?

That thought remained with me until one day a year later when Paul/ve3sy needed to move the location of node 2430 and was looking for a host. Having worked with Linux since 1993 meant that having an extra box hanging off my LAN would not likely be much of a liability, and it would give me a chance to do a little

engineering of my own.

So nowadays, when you use VE3WFM, or VE3RBM, you will notice that you do not need to be near a web browser to lookup that node in California, Florida, or Newfoundland. Simply key in *4, followed by the DTMF tones which spell the city name you wish to lookup. The automated responder will read back the node numbers for repeaters in that city.

Whether preparing for a trip, or just wondering how cold it is outside, current conditions and forecasts are as close as your nearest ham radio. To use the weather feature, simply key in *9 and the system will read off a list of regions for which weather is available. Each region is associated with a two-digit code.

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Algonquin, 01 | London, 08 |
| Barrie, 02 | Simcoe, 09 |
| Fort Erie, 03 | Stratford, 10 |
| Goderich, 04 | Tobermory, 11 |
| Hamilton, 05 | Toronto, 12 |
| Kingston, 06 | Windsor, 13 |
| Kitch-Wat, 07 | Woodstock, 14 |

For example, you can retrieve current conditions and the 24hr forecast for Kitchener-Waterloo by keying in, *907.

Pre-recorded instructions on using features of this node are available using DTMF 411.

As I create new functionality, node 2430 VE3WFM will always have my newest stuff. As my code becomes stable it gets installed onto 2410 VE3RBM. I encourage you to give these features a try and report any misbehaving code to me via e-mail: va3xto at rac.ca.

As every good cell phone user knows, it is best to pull over to the side of the road when keying in DTMF sequences.

By the way, for a picture of my 'shack' on Signal Hill point your web browsers to: <http://genema.org/va3xto.html>
73 Erich

IRLP used to Interconnect N.E US for Snow/Blizzard.

by Ray KA1JJM

Well in reality, inland this storm didn't stack up to for instance the blizzard in 1978. Next day all was well inland. Roads all passable.

The coastal areas on the other hand had some nasty stuff.

This is a densely populated area with many highways, and therefore cars. Cars and 12 or more inches of snow, or visibility less than 1/8 mile don't do very well. New York, Providence RI, Hartford Ct, and Boston are all in this area do not forget.

We had 20+ inland, but little winds. During the 1978 blizzard, we had 17 inches, but for 5 hours, winds of 50+ mph. That blew snow everywhere, and drifts of 15 ft. or so of snow clogged roads as soon as they were cleared. That sound like an emergency yet??? The governor ordered all roads closed state-wide the next day so cars stranded (over 3000) could be removed, and the snow cleared. 73 people died, over 4000 were injured. Over 500 million in property

damage in MA alone. Its a question of how much snow in how much time, and how much wind. That is what spells how much of a problem it is.

Several people in our area literally got lost going to the mailbox and died outside their homes, being unable to find the way back. This time, we had no real wind inland, so the emergency conditions were confined to the coast. They got up to 3 ft there with winds to 50+ mph. Winds over hurricane force occurred on the coast in 1978, with major structural damage occurring from storm induced coastal flooding. In 1978, only large military 4wd's could cut the 10 to 15 ft snowdrifts common on the roads here. Others were ordered off the road anyway, since many dozen were stuck in snowdrifts all over the roads.

Yep Colorado gets lots and lots of snow, but the density of population isn't as great. Plus add the blizzard winds that are the worst danger.

The weather models forecasted winds a

bit over what actually occurred inland. They hit right on along the coast however. The weather service played it cautious and utilized hams to keep constantly informed of the rate of snowfall etc. Because of the ham input received, they only posted blizzard warnings along the coast, which verified.

We are relatively equipped here for snow, but blizzard conditions fill roads within a short time after they are ploughed. Snow isn't real unusual in New England to say the least. 4wd vehicles are common.

The historical nature of this event was the regional coordination that occurred via IRLP. As a weather event, its not really in the top 10 for New England. IRLP worked very well. We wished for a couple of other possibilities, but that is being worked on off list. The reflector worked like a champ. Thanks again Vic.

Ray KA1JJM



Heard about EchoLink?

See next months feature article by Tedd VE3TJD





ARES operators were very involved after the shuttle Columbia disaster. Here is an edited excerpt from the ARRL Bulletin of February 3, 2003. Having wide range repeater facilities, designated radio frequencies, and a willingness to help, made these volunteers indispensable to the search effort.

Amateurs aid in shuttle debris recovery, cataloguing



Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and SKYWARN volunteers in Texas, have been assisting local

emergency management officials of the Environmental Protection Agency and NASA to locate and catalogue debris from the Columbia shuttle. ARES and SKYWARN volunteers from the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club accompanied officials from both NASA and the EPA, are surveying the area looking for shuttle debris. These volunteers are also following up on NASA-provided telemetry and radar information that indicated where more debris might be found.

Another article in the ARRL bulletin went on to point out that of the ill fated Columbia crew, the 3 Specialists Kalpana Chawla, KD5ESI, David Brown, KC5ZTC and Laurel Clark, KC5ZSU were all licensed Radio Amateurs.

CANWARN Refresher Course

The Weather Office presenters were confirmed this week, for our annual Severe Weather Spotting refresher held at the University of Waterloo Engineering lecture theatre. The presentation will include a new, just released weather spotters video. Everyone is invited to attend this most informative event. Mark your calendar CANWARN-UoW- Wed.9 April.

Regional Waterloo Emergency Planning

By the time that you read this I will have attended the first Regional Waterloo Social Services Emergency Planning Advisory Committee meeting. A catchy acronym could be in order here! The Region seems to be vamping up its emergency readiness programs. And not too soon.

When it comes to Amateur involvement, one of the most pressing areas will be that of direct public needs. This means that various social agencies, including the Red Cross, will need communications assistance in allocating materials, and in locating family members at the designated shelters.

72 Hour Emergency Needs

The ARESONTARIO e-net is an ongoing source of comments on what is happening around Ontario. It also sends along worthwhile info from other sources. Here is an interesting web site with lots of tips. Cut and Paste for three pages of good ideas. Definitely worth a printout. <http://home.earthlink.net/~w0ipl/emerg-sup.htm>

73 Larry VE3LGN

Mystery Person

Sign of the times

Now at Rogers Video



Got a good funny? Email to editor@kwarc.org

Membership Report

by Ben VE3ST Membership Chairman and VP

For the first time in many years, our February meeting had to be cancelled due to weather. As freezing rain and blowing conditions descended on the Kitchener Waterloo area, causing numerous accidents through out the supper hours, a decision was made to cancel the meeting with the safety of our members in mind. An announcement message was broadcasted on our clubs repeater VE3KSR, notifying members of the cancellation, and e-mail was sent to those that were listed with an Internet address.

Members are encouraged to listen to the clubs repeater and/or check their e-mail prior to meeting in the event of changes or updates to club's activities.

The club continues to add value to your membership through the introduction of

a new method of communications called Echo Link. This is free ware software available to hams through an Internet download. Only hams can be validated to use the software, which will enable you to use your computer to communicate with over 65,000 other registered hams through out the world. The software has the ability to link hams on a one to one conversation, or to connect several hams together, called conferencing. This software can also be interfaced allowing a connection to local repeaters. It works equally well on either dial up or high-speed Internet connections. A more detailed description and a club demonstration will be provided in a tech report to the members and at a future club meeting.

KWARC is always striving to provide its members with innovative and new experiences in ham radio and features

for its members. If you are not a member of KWARC we would be delighted to have you join us. Please fill in an application using our Internet on line form, or mail the membership form located on the back page of our monthly Kilowatt. If your membership dues have elapsed, please send in your renewal now and take advantage of the many offering that KWARC is providing the members. We need your support to enable connections such as Echo Link and the IRLP that the club provides, while at the same time, striving to bring you the very best in meeting presentations monthly. CU on Echo Link.

Ben Sasiela
VE3ST
VP KWARC

How to Succeed At QSLing 'Without Really Trying': by Ron Notarius (WN3VAW)

(Author's Note: This article is based on a post to the DX QSL reflector in May 2002. It was updated for publication in the June 2002 issue of The WASHRag, the newsletter of the Wireless Association of South Hills, Inc. N3SH/WA3SH of Pittsburgh, PA. This update was done at the request of a QSL Manager who wanted to pass these tips on to individuals who needed assistance in sending and receiving QSL cards. Permission is granted to anyone who would like to reprint this for their own use or in their club newsletter providing the author [WN3VAW] and sources [DX QSL Reflector, WASHRag, and eHam.net] are properly credited.)

In recent years I've had very good success in getting my DX QSL cards answered, both from domestic and overseas managers and from the DX stations direct. High return QSL rates are sometimes difficult to achieve, especially amongst those amateurs who are just starting out and haven't learned all of the "tricks" that sometimes help get one that rare or wanted QSL card when others fail at the task.

Several new amateurs asked for advice on how to succeed. While I don't pretend to know all of the answers, here's what I tell them:

1. Learn patience. Cards do not return overnight. Expect a minimum of 10 - 14 days for domestic cards and 4 - 6 weeks for overseas cards. 6 weeks for a

domestic card and 3 months for overseas is not uncommon. In the cases of a major DXpedition, expect 4 to 6 to 9 months for a return, since most of the time (and there are exceptions) cards are not printed until after the DXpedition returns and the managers literally have tens of thousands of QSL requests to check through.

2. Listen, listen, and listen some more. Listen to the DX station when you work him/her, and before and after. With the exception of contest environments when serious contesters are trying to maximize QSO rates, take a few moments before and after your QSO. Listen specifically for any instructions the DX has regarding QSL'ing. Sometimes different managers handle different modes or bands (such as 6 meters). Sometimes a guest operator (for example, the 2002-03 4U1ITU operations by K1ZZ) will QSL direct or have his/her own manager.

a. Also, if you have packet or can check an Internet packet node, check the cluster to see if anything has been posted.

2. Subscribe to some of the free (OPDX, 425 DX, etc) or pay (Daily DX, Weekly DX, QRZ DX?) DX e-mail information services as they usually have complete and detailed QSL information.

3. Learn where the Internet search engines for QSL information are and use them. (I highly recommend PATHFINDER, located on the

www.qsl.net servers.) But keep in mind that sometimes the wrong information or out of date information gets listed even in the best of them.

3. Make sure the DX station has your call correct, which can sometimes be difficult in a big pileup. It's been suggested that if you are in doubt, log the calls of the stations worked before and after you so that you have some "proof" you made the Q & the call in the log is busted. Obviously, you can't QSL the station if you're not in the log!

a. And it should go without saying, make sure you have the DX call correct also! Too often, someone sees a spot for a rare DX, jumps on the frequency, beats the pileup, and logs the call wrong because the call posted on the cluster has a typo or some other error. Go back to rule 2: listen, listen, & listen some more!

4. Use "security" envelopes, even domestically. Or wrap the contents of the envelope in a thin blank sheet of paper. Or both. Cuts down on potential theft, and the sheet of paper "smooths" the envelope out a little so that there's less chance of postal machinery snagging on and destroying an envelope.

a. I have begun in recent months to use computer-generated QSL cards, usually taking my contest logs and manipulating the data (beats writing out 500 cards by hand.) Most of the pre-perforated, 4 to a sheet card stock you

can buy (Avery 8387 Ink Jet Postcards) will not fit a #10 envelope. I recently "discovered" that Staples carries the slightly larger #12 Business Envelope, 100 to a box. It may cost a little more than buying two boxes of 40 or 50 #10 Security envelopes, but it's well worth it - and they are usually manila, so they are security envelopes to boot. And unlike the 6 x 9 or larger clasp envelopes, or the "bubble pack" envelopes, the #12's run through a standard ink jet printer with little or no problems, so you can make them look professional.

5. Minimize use of call letters on the envelope. You're usually OK on envelopes going to stations or managers in the US, Canada, and most of Europe. But the sad fact is that there are way too many areas of the world where people handling the envelopes covet cash, and have learned that call letters indicate an amateur radio related piece of mail, like a QSL card request with dollars and/or IRCs.

a. Consider having your envelopes printed professionally with a return address, or use a good quality laser or ink jet printer to print them on the fly. Consider strongly making them look like a professional letter, not a personal one. Some people have gone so far as to make them appear to be "junk" mail (as in "congratulations! You may have won 2 IRCs by opening this letter!" - ok, only Ed McMahon could get away with that one.)

b. If you're not going to fake a company name and you're married, use your spouse's name (as in "John & Jane Smithe" not "John Smithe"). Again, makes it appear to be something other than a QSL request.

c. Use your home printer to print the mailing address right on the envelope. Hand-written addresses do not look professional. Mailing labels sometimes look like junk mail, but do not look professional.

d. Tape envelopes shut. Prevents humidity and other factors from "accidentally" opening sealed envelopes.

e. Some people recommend cutting a corner off the envelope so that the contents of the envelope can be inspected. That one has never done much for me, but many swear by it.

4. Learn patience.

5. Make sure your address is complete on your enclosed SAE or SASE. If sent domestically, make sure you have

enough postage on the SASE. If sent internationally, don't forget to include "USA" as some DX get quite annoyed having to add that.

a. If you have them, affix a USPS Label 19B sticker to the SAE (that's the current official Air Mail label). You can get them free for the asking at most post offices, assuming the clerk isn't in a bad mood.

6. If you print your SAEs, and your software permits it, include the mailing bar code. Use the ZIP+4 number if you know it (and you should). Also, check your mail -- especially bulk mail or commercial mail. Seems to be an extra 2 digits added on to the bar codes that the USPS doesn't advertise (for example, mine is 15234-2317+71). Anything that helps route that envelope back to you, use! (See also 5b above)

7. To IRC or not IRC, that is the question? Most DX will either not respond to your direct request, or will reply only via the bureau, unless you include something to help cover the cost of postage. Sometimes they request more than is absolutely necessary for return postage; in some cases, this helps cover miscellaneous costs including power and food. There have always been rumors about certain managers getting "rich," which is beyond the scope of this article. Be so as it may, follow the DX's instructions if any as to IRC or Green Stamp (US Dollars) quantities or preferences.

a. Some areas of the world prohibit their citizens to possess US or other foreign currency. It is usually a bad idea to send Green Stamps to these areas.

b. Banks in some areas of the world charge large fees to convert US or other currency to theirs. So the DX may have to wait until s/he has enough on hand to make the conversion and related costs worthwhile.

c. Some areas of the world do not accept IRCs or no longer accept the older IRCs (including the green "no expiration" ones we've used for years), a list that has been growing in recent months, Universal Postal Union rules not withstanding (some countries do not belong to the UPU). In these cases, US \$ makes more sense.

d. In some areas, a dollar buys more air mail postage than an IRC. In other areas, the opposite is true. And some places want more than one IRC to cover air mail back to the US. How do you find out? Ask questions on one of the

many DX & QSL reflectors. Also check out the fine IRC chart that Bill W9OL has at <http://www.qsl.net/w9ol/ircchart.txt>

e. Where do you get an IRC? You can buy them at the Post Office, currently for \$1.75 each -- if you can find a Post Office that knows what to do with them and a clerk who can be bothered (IRC's are a little arcane and many don't know how to deal with them, another matter outside the scope of this article). DON'T. Instead, contact a domestic QSL manager (I usually get mine from Steve KU9C, occasionally from others including Joe W3HNC and Bernie W3UR) and buy them from him. Why? Because they can only redeem them for an \$.80 stamp. So buy them for about a buck each -- saves you \$.75 per, and lets them buy those stamps with a little extra. (What happens to that little extra? Pays for the QSL card printing, covers bureau postage for the manager, covers other misc. costs and essentials for the DX. Ask the manager in question what he does with it, he'll tell you.)

e-1. New or old IRC? The new ones are huge (they won't fit into a #10 envelope with folding!), so in the past I recommended not using them unless absolutely necessary. But since more and more administrations no longer will accept the older "green" ones, you may have no choice. But don't fold them unless absolutely necessary. Check into #12 envelopes since the new IRCs don't fit the #10's.

e-2. Don't use the (older still) brown "surface" IRCs. They were officially phased out years ago, and their redemption value to the post office(s) are minimal if anything. So what to do with them? Believe it or not... sell them to a collector on eBay for top dollar!

f. If you're going to send a green stamp, try and get "fresh" ones from your local bank branch. Again, some foreign administrations or banks can be funny about that, they dislike handling older bills. If two GSs are needed, get a \$2 bill; same value, less bulk, less weight, and very rarely in circulation so they're almost always in good shape.

g. Have you considered using an outgoing QSL service? Les WF5E runs a very successful one (and there are others, but I've used Les a lot lately). He charges a flat fee of \$.25 per outgoing card, which can add up to a significant savings when you're dealing with a lot of cards - and he takes checks, too. The

only "catch" is that you have to have envelopes on file at your local Incoming QSL bureau - Les sends out the cards to the DX stations in bulk, gets them back, and then distributes them through the bureau system. Keeps everyone's costs reasonable, and as long as you're not in a super great hurry to get the card back, you will get it, eventually. Expect a 4 to 6 month turn around when using a service like this.

8. Learn some more patience.

9. If possible, try not to use commemorative stamps internationally. (Even though the current \$.60 & \$.80 air mail stamps are a little "flashy," they're also pretty common). Some of the envelopes stolen in transit are swiped for the stamps, especially the "rarer" domestic stamps sent domestically.

10. Reality is that there are some DX that either have most of their mail intercepted or are IRC/GS collectors. So don't be afraid to ask first. But don't be disappointed if some of these never come through, or if they reply years later through the bureau. Some have reasons; they might be good ones (which is no excuse, though). Some are just... what they are.

11. Learn yet more patience.

12. If I make a mistake on the QSL card I'm printing or writing, I destroy it and make a new one. Some people will mark it up and send it anyway. Most cards that are saved for awards purposes

can't be used if they appear to be "altered" so they're not worth the bother.

13. Keep your log in UTC time (AND DATE) not local time. Today, 99%+ of all amateurs who QSL keep their logs in UTC (GMT to the old fashioned!). If the DX has to spend a lot of time looking for your call and confirming the data, you may go to the bottom of the pile or the "hospital" pile. It does no good to get your card in first if it has a problem causing the DX to deal with it last!

a. Don't forget to keep the year straight come the first of January! Some DX understand, but others will be very strict. Wrong year = No QSL card!

14. Don't give up. Things happen. It took me 12 years, for example, but I finally tracked down and got my EL7X card -- the original request had been lost during civil disturbances, and it was a long time until I found that the amateur had escaped and was still alive AND still had his logs. Some Silent Key logs are lost, but others are put in a family member's or a QSL manager's hands and cards can still be obtained. ASK if in doubt.

15. Patience!

Some things that I know others do that I don't:

1. I have hardly ever bothered with the flimsy lightweight airmail envelopes. They made sense when airmail was weighed by the pound and sometimes the cost of

buying the envelopes and handling them is more than the cost of postage. Those who swear by them will no doubt disagree with me on that!

2. I also do not bother trying to buy foreign postage to send on an SASE. You pay a premium for it, and you may not always send the right amount or the right stamps (some countries use different stamps for domestic and international mail). Especially with the (2002) conversion to Euros in much of Western Europe, again it strikes me as more hassle than it's worth.

3. I also rarely bother trying to get foreign currency to mail with my QSL requests; again, trying to find it is a hassle, and then there are costs above and beyond the value of the currency itself. However, when I have received local currency from a DX station, I save it and use it for the next envelope & request I send to that entity.

4. Some people have success with 6 x 9 manila envelopes. I used to use them for a particular QSL card I generate from my computer that won't fit a #10. Also, some people get odd sized envelopes from the card stores (usually leftovers after a big holiday). Nice idea -- but they don't fit my printer. I have also been hassled at the Post Office by ill-informed clerks that equate the 6 x 9 envelope with a "package" that has to be screened by Customs before leaving the country.

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Al has several boxes of CQ magazines from early 80s as well as a bunch of earlier QST magazines. (\$5 OBO) There are also about 6 ARRL Handbooks from the 50s thru to the 80s. (\$10 OBO) He also has some nice B&W inductors (see photo) along with some tuning capacitors. (\$10 OBO)



On right side you see a nice soldering kit for a beginner that includes a soldering pencil, solder sucker for removing solder from a pc board connection as well as solder wick and some nice solder. (\$20 OBO). On next page you will see a VIC20 set-up for automated CW and RTTY capability. There is a spare VIC 20 as well as a spare cassette recorder. (\$50 OBO)

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ARISS CONTACT WITH JAPANESE SCHOOL FIRST SINCE COLUMBIA TRAGEDY

Pupils at an elementary school in Japan have been the first youngsters to speak to the astronauts aboard the International Space Station since the shuttle Columbia tragedy. The contact took place February 18 between 8N3HES at the Hirano Elementary School and astronaut Don Pettit, KD5MDT, at the controls of NA1SS. The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program arranged the direct 2-meter contact, which has been on hold since the shuttle catastrophe.

No one asked any questions about the Columbia tragedy during the approximately 10-minute contact that was marred by some communication difficulty. An audience of approximately 180 people--essentially the entire school plus several reporters--was on hand for the ARISS contact. Pettit managed to answer eight of the nine questions put to him by the fifth and sixth graders

One student wanted to know what Pettit would bring with him if he had to live in space for the rest of his life. "I would hope to bring my whole family," Pettit responded. "I would bring my wife and my children and we would live in space together."

Because of the Columbia disaster, the mission of the Expedition 6 crewmembers already has been extended until at least June. It had been scheduled to end next month.

Other students asked questions relating to everyday life aboard the space station, including how the crew gets rid of its trash. Pettit explained that after putting the trash into airtight bags, it's loaded on an empty Progress cargo supply rocket and sent back into Earth's atmosphere. "It's the ultimate means of recycling your garbage," he said.

Pettit told the youngsters that it's "nice and warm" aboard the space station--about 22 degrees Centigrade--but that the crew could set the temperature to whatever they desired.

One student asked what the crew would do if someone became ill. "Fortunately no one has become sick on our mission, so we haven't had to worry about that," Pettit replied. He said that in the case of sickness among the crew, the crew would contact flight surgeons on Earth to get advice. He also explained that the crew has a medical kit on board for those kinds of situation.

ARISS is an international project with participation by ARRL, AMSAT and NASA.

(from The ARRL Letter)

Membership Form Please pass on to a non-member

One month prior to expiring the top line on your label will read **"Expires soon mm/yy. Please renew"** where mm/yy is the month/year of expiry. If you miss the first reminder the next month's label will read. **"Expired mm/yy. Last bulletin"**. Those members who receive their Kilowatter via the clubs Web site will receive and e-mail reminder when their membership gets close to expiring. Members who do not renew at the meeting in which their membership expires will receive a personal follow-up mailing reminding them of what they are missing.

This will be the first year of renewals on the new system so a few glitches may occur. Please notify your treasurer of any discrepancies that may occur.

Please cut out the following renewal form and enclose it with your payment as your renewal date comes due.

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