

THE BLACK HOLE



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Adventures in SO2R Land - Part 12

By Bill Axelrod ND9E

Prolog. So there I was on New Years Eve, drinking and think about the next year's contests. RTTY Round Up the first weekend and the CW NAQP shortly afterwards. Would I get any better at SO2R? Will there be world peace? (Well, that one really didn't enter my mind. I really gotta get a life.)

News Flash. ND9E No Longer. That's right. ND9E is history. I have reverted to my old call that I held since 1976 – K3WA. Why, you ask? Have I given up the black hole spirit of nine-ness? No, not that.

Since the day I moved to the black hole and got the ND9E call, I have heard only two reactions to my new call from my fellow hams. One was, Boy, are YOU crazy? The other was BOY, are you crazy! Between those overwhelming statements of support from the well-meaning crowd, my certifiable insanity, and my growing feelings of identity loss, I am now K3WA again.

The RTTY Round Up came and went. I had a fair result operating the full allowed time – 1307 QSOs, 58 states and provinces, and 55 countries. Had the longest single run I've ever had anywhere, in any contest, on any mode – 7 hours and 20 minutes on 80 meters. Got lots of SO2R practice during that run. My SO2R count was about 12% of total QSOs. I was happy with that result.

Then came the NAQP. I was able to get in 10 solid hours with 822 QSOs. About 12% of my Qs were on the second radio. I'm seeing a trend here.

(Continued on page 3)

Fall Contest Schedule

North American Sprint CW	00Z-04Z, Sep 12
North American Sprint SSB	00Z-04Z, Sep 19
Iowa QSO Party	14Z-23Z, Oct 16
Illinois QSO Party	17Z Oct 17-01Z Oct 18
CQWW DX SSB	00Z Oct 30-24Z Oct 31
ARRL EME Contest	00Z Oct 30-24Z Oct 31
ARRL SS CW	21Z Nov 6-03Z Nov 8
ARRL SS SSB	21Z Nov 20-03Z Nov 22
CQWW DX CW	00Z Nov 27-24Z Nov 28
ARRL 160-Meter Contest	22Z Dec 3-1600Z Dec 5
ARRL 10-Meter Contest	00Z Dec 11-24Z Dec 12
Stew Perry Topband Challenge	15Z Dec 18-15Z Dec 19

Getting Back on the Air

By Greg, K9ZM

I have been off the air for several years and I am just putting the station back together. I will never be a big gun, (unless I hit the Lotto) so I do the best I can from a couple city lots. I have been listening to 2 meters most of the past winter and this year I decided hot and humid wasn't stopping me. I got a jump start with a bit of lightning damage that got into the shack — just my luck. I took the opportunity and replaced the 2 meter rig with dual band, and bought a Yaesu FT-2000D with all the Mu tuning units and a 300Hz filter. More on the rig later. I need the ability to work DX and do some contesting for fun.

First antenna to go up was a ZeroFive 1/4 wave heavy duty verti-

(Continued on page 4)

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EDITOR

Brian Maves, K9QQ

Material for **The Black Hole** should be forwarded to:

k9qq@arrl.net

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Dues are \$10 a year, but may be waived based on the fulfillment of participation requirements:

In the SMC SS circle: Make 100 total Sweepstakes QSOs over the two weekends and submit your score(s) for "Society of Midwest Contesters." In addition, submit one other score for an SMC club competition in one of the following contests: ARRL VHF, 160m, or 10m, NAQP, CQWW, ARRL DX, etc.

Outside of the SMC SS circle: Submit two scores per year for SMC club or team competition in any of the six NAQPS and four Sprints.

Qualifying scores are those submitted during the calendar year prior to January 1.

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Zig Markowski - KM9M
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Callsign of Society of Midwest Contesters

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To get your SMC stuff, see the last page of the newsletter or visit the SMC website, <http://www.w9smc.com/merchandise.htm>



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Shirts

(Continued from page 1)

I had missed most of the 160 meter season this winter. I finally got my inverted L and switching circuits working but only after the final 160 meter contest of this season. Well rats. But I was in time for the ARRL CW DX contest. That went fairly well for me. 1831 Qs in 37 hours. Some really good JA runs this year. And really super 15 meter EU runs.

I sure need to work on my butt-in-chair stamina. I need to get much closer to the 48 hour max to do as well as I want to. I didn't do nearly as much SO2R as I would have liked. My runs were very productive with rates too high to allow much second radio S&P. I also really need to work on my ability to do SO2R at higher run rates. Practice, practice, practice.

In previous articles I've yapped about putting up a second tower with more gain antennas so I can have a full set of gain antennas on each radio to do SO2R better. My relatively low beam, at 45 ft, has been fairly effective for 20 through 10 meters. My only other antenna for those bands is a vertical. That allowed me to do SO2R on these higher bands, on those rare contest days when 15 (or even 10) was open. Now that the sunspots are returning, however slowly, that is really not good enough. To be able to both run and S&P effectively, I really need two gain antennas. I have the low one now. The other should be higher, to also allow me to switch between antennas with different take off angles as well. Finally, that is happening - right now!

I decided that I wanted an 80 foot tall tower and that my antenna of choice was a SteppIR DB-18E. That antenna would give me 2 elements on 40 meters and 3 elements on 30 through 6 meters. Out came the check book, away went the orders.

Once the winter weather broke and I could venture outdoors again, I took receipt of an 80 foot AN-Wireless self-supporting tower. A couple weeks of wrenching and it was ready to go up. Fortunately, I had lots of help. Even my two neighbors came over, unasked, and helped build the tower. They think it is cool.

Then my new SteppIR DB-18E showed up. A week of working in the heat of the last half of May, and it is ready to go up. Of course, that meant missing one of my favorite contests, the CW WPX, to be ready. But, everything has its price.

By the first of June the tower and antenna were built, ready for erection. The heliax and control cables were run from the tower to the shack, and everything was ready for the installation, except the weather.

So, here I sit on Wednesday 2 June, stressing out with the weather forecast for tomorrow. Because tomorrow the crane arrives, the new tower and beam go up, and I take the next step in my SO2R adventures. Or, if it does rain tomorrow, NOT. June third dawned clear – for about a half hour.

Then the rain returned, pouring down buckets. Just as we were about to call of the tower raising party, the rain stopped, the sun came out, and the crane arrived. We were GO for the mission.

If you want the job done right, hire the very best. I was very lucky and was able to snag W2GD, John Crovelli, for my tower project. Under his direction up went the tower. Up flew the antenna. John made the requisite trips up and down the tower. And, as the sun set over the Illinois river, the job was done.

After a quick dinner with the XYL and a run down the steps to my lower level (basement in crass terms) radio room, I was working DX with my new beam and doing a happy dance. Exhaustion after a long day's efforts hit and off to bed. But who can sleep with a new tower and beam? Not me. Went back downstairs at 3 AM. 20 meters was dead until a few CQs stirred up a decent run of VKs. Went back to bed early.

Up early the next morning to really try out the new antenna. Rig on. Rotor on. Antenna... not so fast. The control box for the SteppIR had no control. OH CRAP! Or words to that effect.

Epilog. So there I was, my brand new antenna worked for 5 hours and now it is dead. W2GD is on a plane heading home, crane back in its home, and me with a broken antenna. What do to? What to do?



SMCer Eric, K9GY, was a spectator at WRTC 2010, and had a chance to operate during the contest as R3/K9GY, from RM3A. Here he is with SP4Z at one of the venues.

(Continued from page 1)

cal. Well, not counting the Arrow dual band J pole. I do not have room to put radials equally in all directions, so I did what I could. Shaved the lawn down and put in twenty 32ft radials east and west. I will add a bunch of shorter



ZeroFive 1/4 wave heavy duty vertical for 40mtrs

length radials this fall in the other directions when the grass slows down. I added a crude coax choke and a small coil of magnet wire across the feed to bleed static charges. Needed to cure some RFI because the main entertainment center is

just a few feet away. The choke does a fine job. But I will need to get a form, rewind it, and clean that up a bit. The antenna works well. I do like the DX Engineering radial plate and relaxed radial wire. I bought the DX Engineering coax tools also. Wish I had had those the past 30 years.

In the back yard is a Rohn 25 tower. About 58ft tall. With an H4 Hazer on it. Top of the 2 inch mast is about 70 feet. This is the same tower and Hazer that some of you



Vertical feed point, including choke to prevent RFI

know when cranking down the Hazer the last time, the wet winch handle got away from me and smacked me on the left wrist, breaking my arm. The safety catch on a Hazer works great! That was with a 2 meter antenna, a Cushcraft 40m rotatable dipole, and a Telrex TB6EM on it. This time I changed the standard winch out for a brake winch. I assembled a Force 12 C3E that I had for years new in the box. Added a DX Engineering 5kw balun and mounted it right under the Arrow. It plays very well. I did some strategic wrapping with electrical tape on the fed elements because of talk of them hitting in winds and kicking out the amp. We shall see how that works out.

About 6 feet under the Force 12 I mounted a M2 6M7. I am

(Continued on page 5)

SMC Stuff

SMC Clip-on Badge

by NV5A

The SMC logo appears at the top-center of the badge in black and white. Your call sign, first name and city & state appear in dark blue. The SMC name badge as shown with the slot & strap with swivel alligator clip, but there are other choices.



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KC9FD

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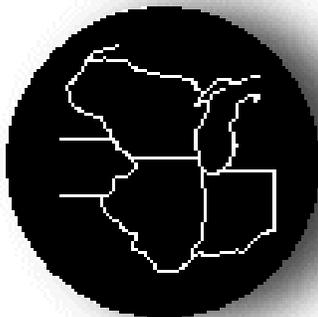
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hoping that will give me enough gain with the FT-2000D to be able to work plenty of stations. I had also picked up a 6m loop which I managed to work a handful of guys back in June with it just a few feet off the ground. I was going to use it to monitor with a Yaesu FT-650. Hoping the band improves with some more solar activity.

Equal importance has been the work done to get the computer logs updated. My last log save was on 3 1/2in floppy in a format that need the original logging program to convert. That took me an entire weekend to get done.

I still need to get 75/80m and 160m antennas up. I also have a couple short towers to put to use. A Force 12 Tango 34 for 6m and 10m. I need to build something as a receive antenna for the low bands. That's a real challenge for a city lot station, and a necessity. I have used low inverted v's and inverted L's and neither hears that well.



58 foot Rohn 25 tower with an H4 Hazer; the 2 inch mast is about 70 feet. It supports a Force 12 C3E and a M2 6M7.

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Brian Maves, K9QQ
1322 Engle Creek Dr.
O'Fallon, IL 62269

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