

ROADS Report



Editor: K7QXG, Bob Peschka

April 2011 Vol 4 No. 4



The Prez Sez....

Spring has sprung and we have actually started to see the sun and 60 degree days again. It won't be long and there will be new antenna parties going on.

The St Patrick's Day meeting/dinner at Farroll's went well with most of us wearing green , so we were issued an extra ticket for the drawing. Speaking of the drawing, (K7CIE)Mike's wife Emily was the winner of a \$50 bill and a box full of candy. Congratulations !!!

It's that time of the year again where we need to come up with a Nominating Committee so that we can have a tentative slate presented at the May and June meetings with the voting in the June meeting. To be on this illustrious committee, you should contact me if you are not attending the April meeting or show up and volunteer when we reach that item on our agenda in the business meeting portion. We could have some move up the ladder of officers or have

some new blood for a change. So if you don't want to be on this committee you'd better show up and say so or we'll put you on it.

Since the club voted to not participate in Field Day as a club this time, we do have time in our June meeting for a program. Jim could use your help in finding one for May and June now.

Our next meeting is Thursday April 21, 7 pm at the Courthouse. I am looking forward to seeing all your smiling faces there.

Editorial:

Time after time we all find organizations with a common problem – finding persons who are willing to be an officer for a year or two.

KX5W has certainly fulfilled his obligation. W7LOU has done more than his share. I know some feel that they are not “officer” material. However, it is hard to believe that out of a roster of 40, no one else will step up to the plate.

10-10 Winter Phone Contest Results

The results of the 10-10 Winter Phone QSO Party are in, and two ROADS members did quite well. **K7QXG** placed **2nd** in 7 Land and **N7WWH** placed **7th** in 7 Land. Others from this area that did well in 7 Land were **K7KTP** in a tie with **N7WWH** for 7th place, **KD7ZLF** who placed 5th in 7 Land, **W7CAR** who was 4th and **K7PRZ** who finished in 3rd place in 7 Land. This is a good showing considering that there were 21 logs submitted from 7 Land – and keep in mind that all contacts had to be on 10 meters!

K7QXG finished in the Top Ten World Wide in **a tie for 9th in the world**, just 8 points behind **W7DXC**, who is a perennial favorite to sweep 7 Land. All the big scores came from GA and TX, yet they were not too far ahead of W7DXC and K7QXG. You may want to try this event yourself during the first week of August when 10-10 holds their annual Summer Phone QSO Party.

The standings show a very large number of logs from 4 Land and 5 Land, and logs from 8 DX countries. Our own *Oregon Trail chapter finished 9th among Chapter scores*. This was a very good showing, with the chapter finishing ahead of City Of Roses and Portland 500 chapters.

A Few Things Worth Remembering

The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Little things affect little minds.

Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.

I hope all of you feel slightly enlightened now. de The Editor

March 12 VE Session

W7TDN, Mike - K7CIE, Alesa - KA7UGQ and Davis - KT7H were the VEs on March 12th. Wyatt Baker from Dallas, OR arrived, took about 20 minutes, and earned himself a new Tech License. We then spent some time talking to him about coming to the next ROADS meeting at the Courthouse, and what radio he should get first.

He walked out of the room a very happy camper and new Tech. **info via W7HO**

ROADS St. Patrick's Day Dinner



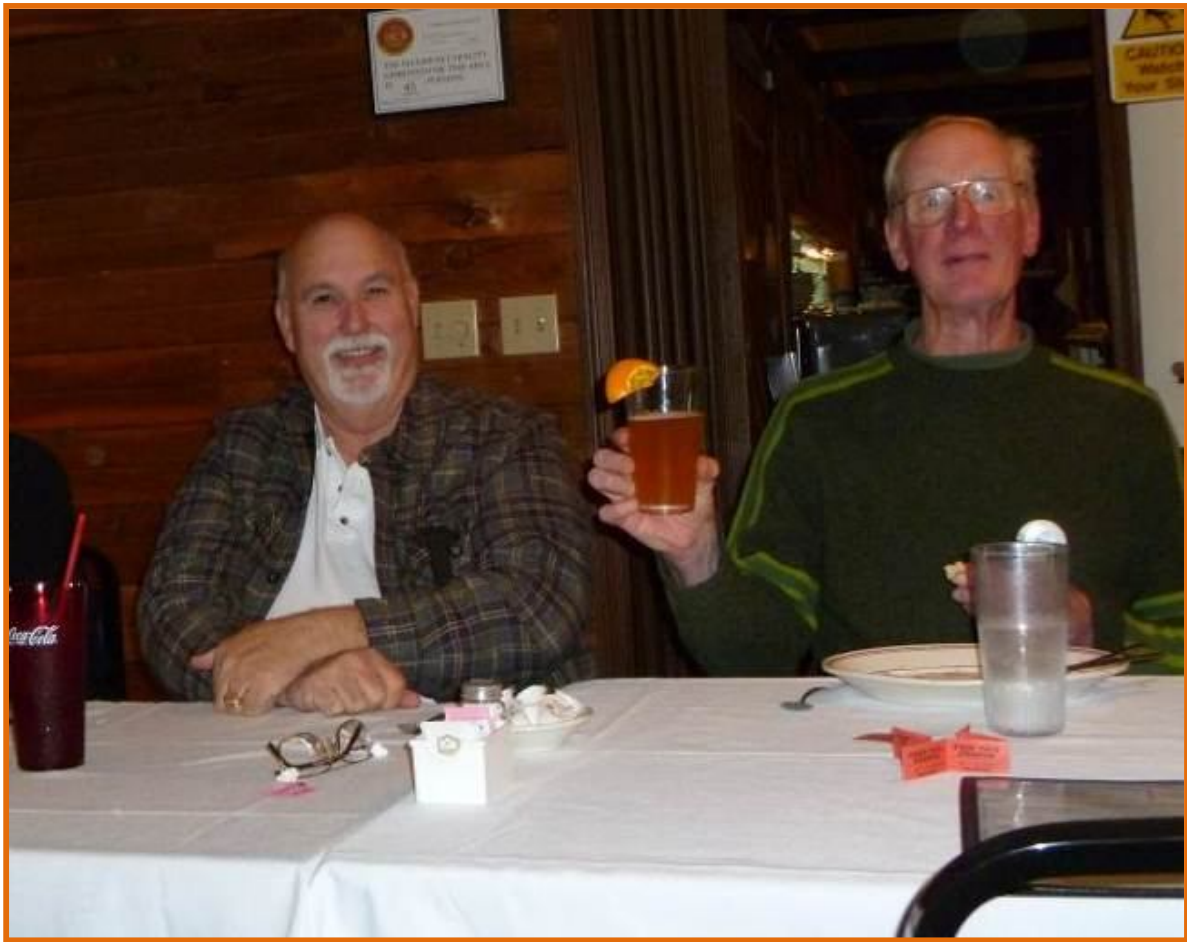
ROADS held one of their dinner "meetings"...actually it was dinner out with spouses and significant others... at Farroll's restaurant on Hwy 99 W. A total of 27 persons attended.

In this photo: Bonnie, AB7ZQ, our ARRL representative, Bob Boswell, W7LOU, founder of ROADS and a past President, and Irene Boswell, K7IJK, who is the current Secretary/Treasurer.

In the photo at the right is Jim Campbell, N7WWH, our Vice President, and then his wife Ruth. Next is Linda Holmbo and husband Dave, WA7MZM.



This is a part of the group: KW7DSP is in the foreground (green shirt), along with W7RIS, W7NAT, W7TDN, W7NLI, and others. Hidden on the far left is K7CIE, Mike, and his wife Emily. Emily is the XYL that the famous antenna aesthetics test is named after – I am sure you have all heard of the *Emily Test*?



Now here is a pair to draw to! Mike Nolan, KE6ZFL and Kelly Wilson, KG7G seem to be having a very good time. Mike is a new club member and is in the process of moving to Dallas from California. In fact, the big moving truck was at his home today unloading furniture.



Shirley Peschka, wife of K7QXG, seems to be giving Barbara Nolan the "what-for"! Barbara, the wife of KE6ZFL, is a very gracious and pleasant person and she and Mike are a welcome addition to Dallas.

Everyone seemed to have a good time, despite the fact that the restaurant service was disorganized and lacking.

The food was good in most instances, but some folks waited more than an hour for their order. Will I ever return to Farroll's? When pigs fly!

CW Stuff.....



This new K8RA key adorns the shack of K7QXG. The paddles are Rosewood, and the rest is solid brass. It weighs nearly 3 pounds and is very smooth to operate.

The rig behind it is the FT-2000, which is an excellent CW rig, and is outstanding on RTTY.

K7CIE has some excellent keys and they provide solid performance.

Here n' There.....

W7HO and **K7QXG** got on the air and worked **Bangladesh** just an hour apart. **W7NAT** plans to visit Croatia among other countries during a cruise. Maybe he can operate as a 9A. **KE7JNT** and **W7LOU** nail **VU4PB** on 20 SSB.



They are out folks! The long awaited Kermadec QSLs began arriving in the mail on March 21. This is a view of the front of the three piece folding card. Inside are the QSO stickers that contain the log information for the QSOs. Someone is going to be unhappy... I was credited with 3 QSOs that I never made! I think someone with a call similar to mine made the

contacts, and now they will not be getting the card. That happened to me many long years ago when I needed Albania. Oh well, these things happen.

Coming in Future Articles.....

VHF – The Good, The Bad, The Ugly of ham radio.

Building a 30 Meter ground mounted vertical. Construction article with photos.

Using eQSL The Easy Way.

Anything else you would like to see featured? I have enough material to last until October. Articles are accepted and we will make room for them.

Beginning Digital Part 2 of 5

In this issue you will learn how to get your station up and running on PSK31 using **Digipan**. What Part 2 *does not cover* is your choice of interface and tuning your transceiver, although several tips and hints will be given as we move along.

The interface you select may be a small homebrew unit that you assembled using plans found on the internet, or it may be a commercial unit. Many hams use the Signalink unit with the USB connection for the computer. You will likely find with Signalink that you must unplug your microphone to use it, but that is merely a minor inconvenience. You may also choose to use RigBlaster, which allows you to leave the microphone connected. There are many other commercial units available, so I will not be describing the characteristics of each one. The instructions that come with each one are rather simple and should not present any problem for anyone holding an amateur radio license.

Before I walk you through some of the configuration steps with **Digipan**, I need to give you a few tips pertaining to configuring your rig so it puts out a clean signal.

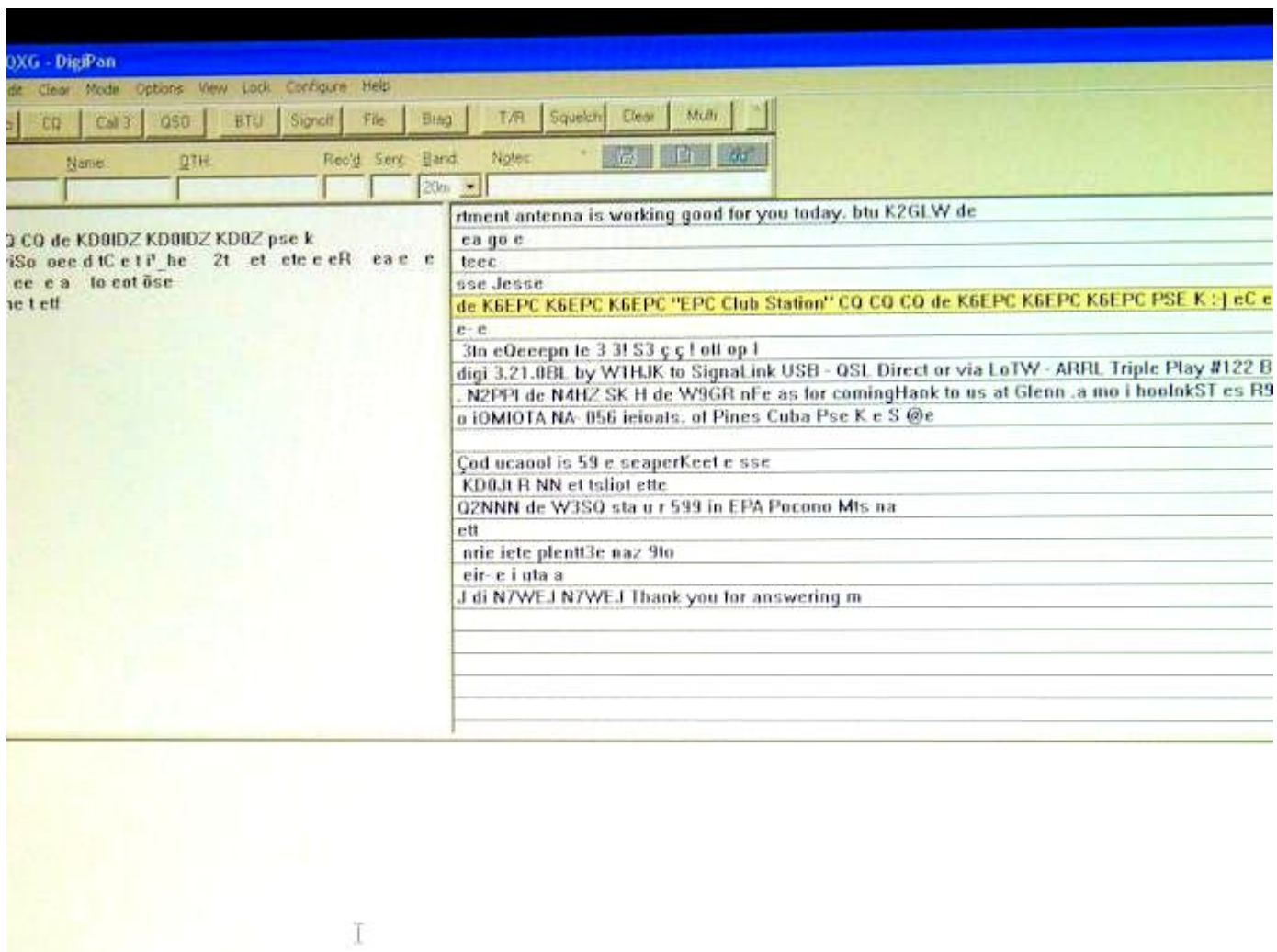
Set the transceiver for USB. Adjust the mic gain so that you do NOT exceed the ALC limit on your meter. Too much mic gain will create a distorted signal with unwanted sidebands. DO NOT use the audio processor! Some hams will certainly advise you in blunt terms if you begin transmitting a dirty PSK signal.

IMD – What is this critter? I think that 90% of the hams who use PSK31 do not understand that IMD can only be measured - properly – when the transmitter is idling. It will be a minus number, and you should strive for Minus 23 at a minimum. Minus 28 is preferable. You must have someone else tell you what your IMD is when you are in contact with them, since you cannot measure it yourself....unless you own the KK7UQ IMD meter. I have one of these and have used it in other ROADS member's stations to help them fine tune their PSK signal. My own station has a Minus 30 to Minus 34 IMD, yet I constantly have other hams tell me it is Minus 16 or

Minus 18. Of course, they are measuring my IMD when I am sending information, rather than when my signal is idling.

OK, by now you should have an interface between the rig and the computer, and the Rig should be adjusted for 50% of its normal full output – or less. That means that if the full output from your rig is 100 watts, you should run it at 50 watts or less. Most hams set their rigs for 25 to 45 watts output. The mic gain should be adjusted for a zero ALC reading when transmitting PSK.

We are now ready to open the **Digipan** application, which is a free download. You don't need to be a computer guru to download and install the program, and should have no trouble adjusting it to fit your monitor.



Digipan

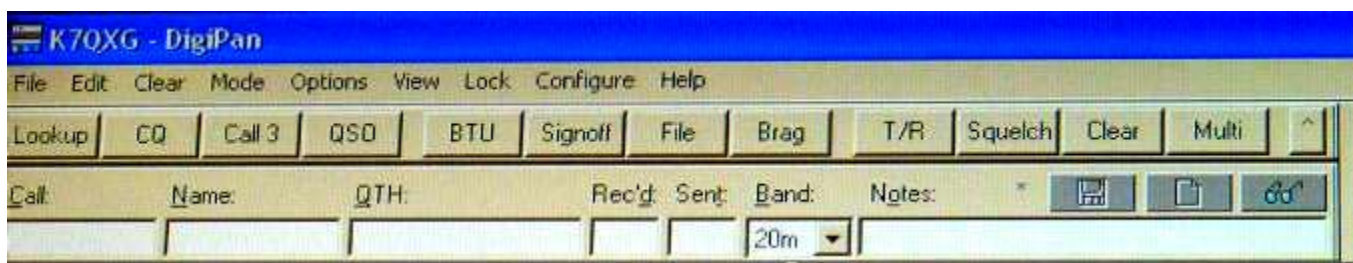
Digipan is shown above in an open and operational state. The lower portion, that contains the waterfall, is not shown. Later, a photo of the waterfall with all its signals will be found in this lesson. The yellow line with K6EPC calling CQ is the station in which you have an interest. If the waterfall were shown, you would see that your

frequency selector, or diamond, was resting on this particular station's yellow line on the waterfall. You place it there with your mouse – you point and left click once.

All the other lines show the QSOs or information that is associated with all the other signals on the waterfall.

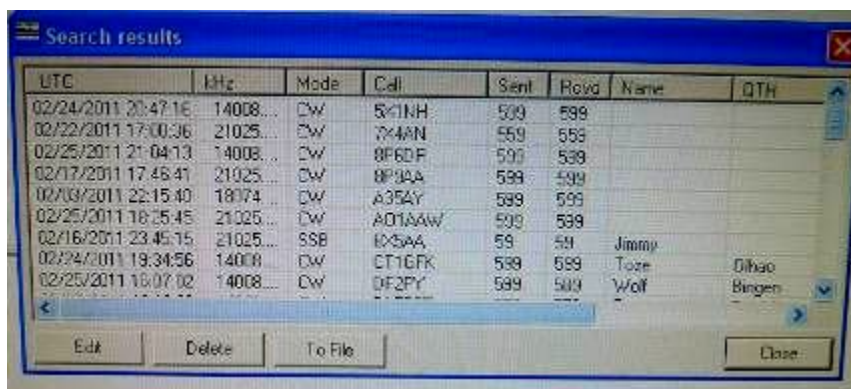
To the left of the lines is a large pane that will display your QSO as it unfolds. The blank area below these two panes, and which is located just above the waterfall, will display the information you are transmitting.

At this point we need to look at that area in the photo that is just below the radio buttons and above the two primary panes. Note that these blanks are labeled "Name", "QTH", etc. To the left and just out of sight is a blank for the call letters of the station you are working. You do not need to manually type in the call or name. When you receive that information from the other station, position your mouse pointer over his call and left click twice. His call will automatically appear in the box for "Call", and then you can do the same with his name. As you can see, with two mouse clicks it is easy to enter two parts of the basic QSO information without the need to type it. Now it's time to look at some more photos.

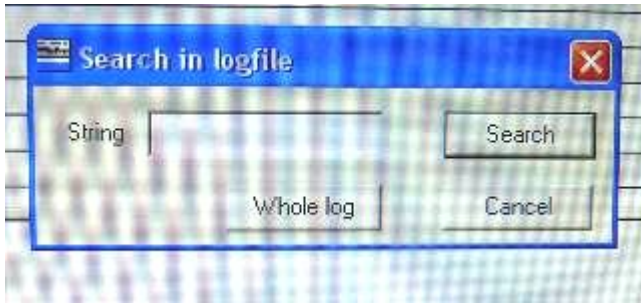


Control Portion of DigiPan

This is a closer view of the top of the DigiPan program. Note the radio buttons across the top. These are "Macro" buttons and each contains a message that you may wish to use instead of typing everything. More about these later. Just below that you can see the blank spaces for Call, Name, QTH, etc. Please note that the band selected is 20m. Make sure you have it set for the band you are operating on. You can always edit a logged QSO later, but it becomes a pain in the neck if you have entered 5 or 6 QSOs and the band was set to 20 M and you were actually on 15 meters! It won't affect your signal, but it sure messes up your log.



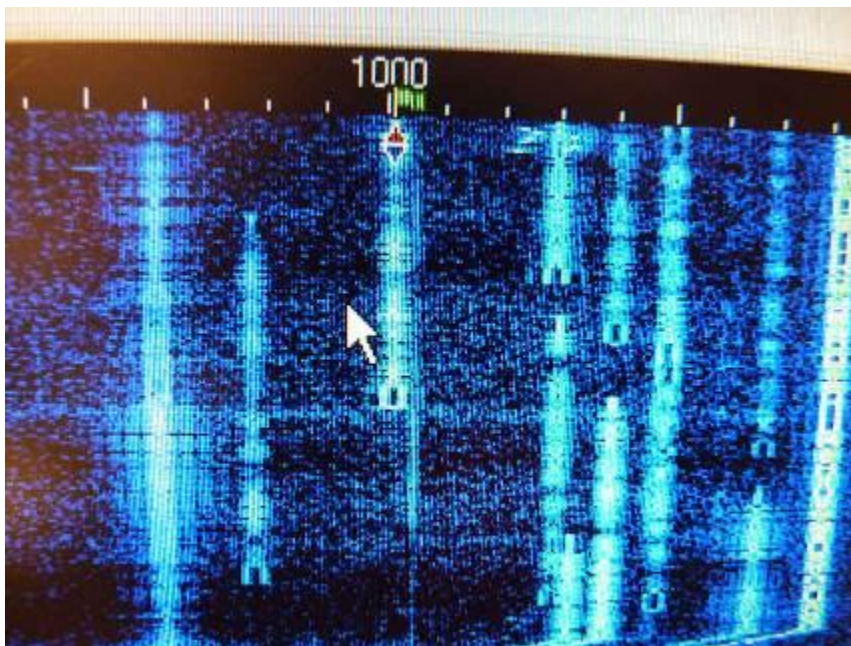
Note the little pair of blue glasses on the right side. If you click on this button with the mouse it will open the log and you can display the QSOs you have made.



You will see that it has opened a pane that says, "Search in Log file". If you click on the button that says "Whole log", it will display the entire contents of the log. If you are looking for just one call in particular, then type the call in the "String" box and click on "Search".

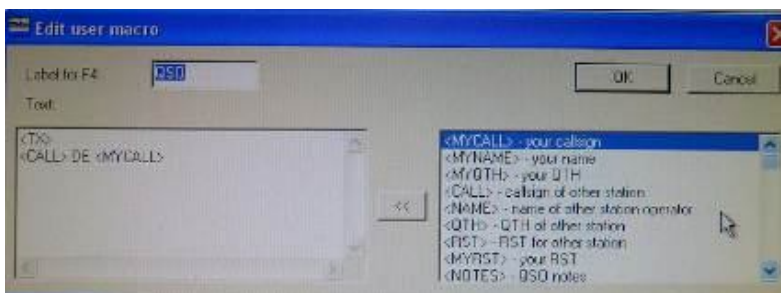
This is an example of a log search. Ignore the fact that most of the QSOs in the photo display are on CW – I just used a CW ADIF log file for the photo.

Now it's time to look at the waterfall before we return to programming the Macro buttons.



This is a close up of a portion of the waterfall. The vertical lines appear white in the photo, but will often be yellow on the monitor's screen. Notice the red and blue diamond directly beneath the number 1000. It is your "selection" pointer and you have selected this signal as the one that you wish to contact. You selected it by placing your mouse pointer here and left clicking once.

Now let's talk about programming the macros so you can carry on a QSO that doesn't require full use of the keyboard. Look at the photo below.



When you right click on one of the macro buttons (radio buttons) at the top of the Digipan page, it will open the dialogue box and you can insert a name for the macro (see upper left corner where it says "Label for F4"). Down below in the white pane

you can type in the information that you want this macro to contain. In this case it says : <TX> <CALL> DE <MYCALL> This means that when you use your mouse to click on this macro button (once, with the left mouse button), it will cause the transceiver to send the call of the station you are working and your call.

Since the end of the transmission code does not have a "close" it means your signal remains on the air so you can click on another macro message, or manually type a message.

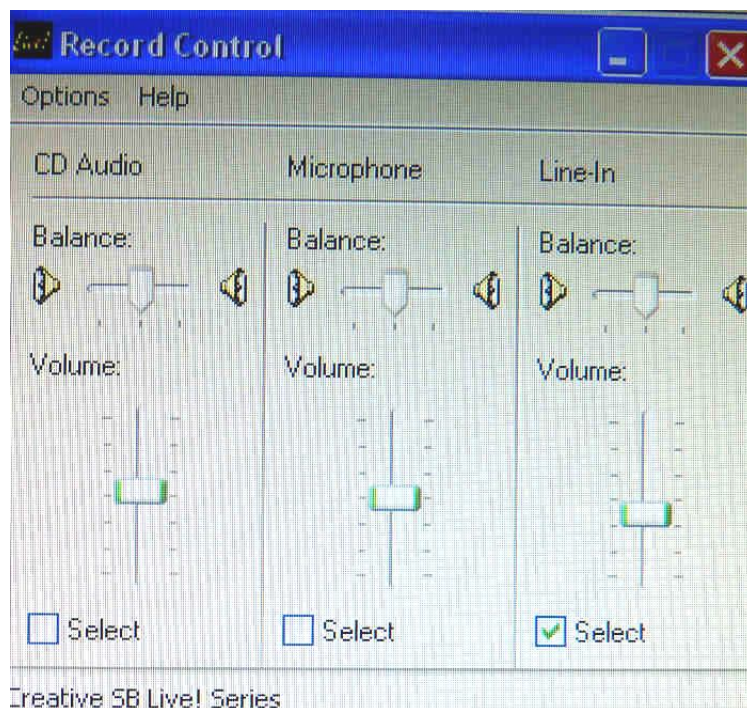
On the right side of the photo above is another pane with a scroll bar on the right. It contains numerous codes that you can use to compose the message in each macro. A typical "close" for a message would be <RXANDCLEAR>. This will end the message and automatically put your transceiver in standby so you can begin receiving the other station's next transmission.

CONFIGURATION ADJUSTMENT SUGGESTIONS

In Digipan you have two adjustments to make and these can be found under the word "Configuration" shown on the menu bar near the top of the program interface.

One says "Waterfall" and it adjusts the intensity of the waterfall signals and color. The other one allows adjustment of the signal output so that you maintain a power level of 50%. Once these are set there should be no need to ever adjust them again.

Below are two photos that show the adjustment panes (Found on Windows XP, Home version, with a Creative SoundBlaster sound card).

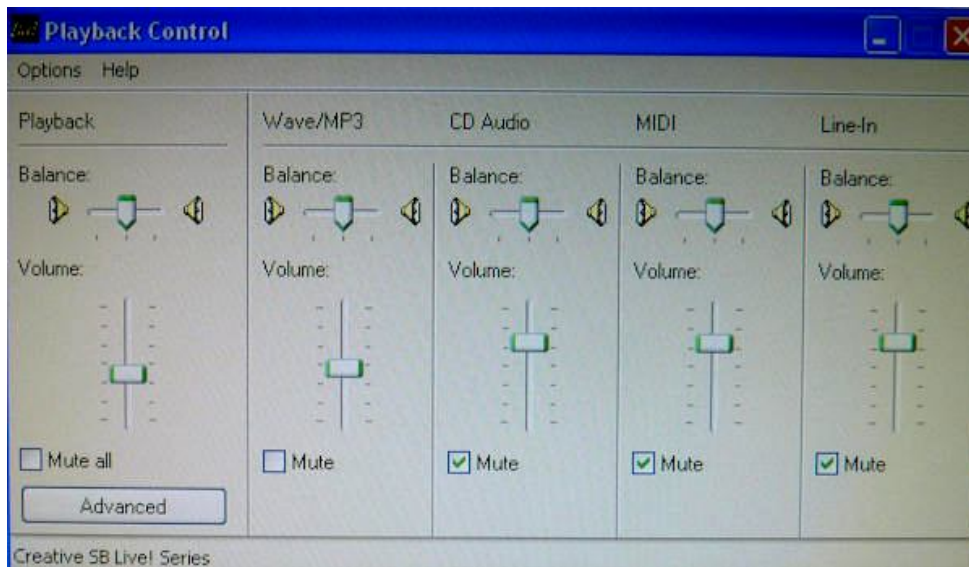


Waterfall adjust. Note the slider in the "Line-In" column. Note too, the check mark below in the "Select" box.

The other two check boxes are left blank.

By moving the slider up or down in the "Line-In" column you can vary the intensity of the waterfall.

Practise with this a bit. Stations that are not too strong may not show if you use a light adjustment.



This panel allows you to set the **output**. Notice that three of the columns have been muted. Only use Playback and Wave. They will affect each other. Set them at midrange to begin. Settings on the other three don't matter because they have been muted.

Final comments on Digipan.

There are many other things that can be adjusted, configured, tinkered with and screwed up in general. Don't worry! Play with the program. You cannot break it. Remember, it is a free download, so if you really botch it up, just remove the bad one and install a new one.

Hint: Under "Options" you will find a means to adjust the squelch. If you want to work only strong stations, and no DX, then set the squelch at nearly maximum. If you would like to work some DX, or pull out a weak one, reduce the squelch setting to zero.

Hint: You can clear the QSO pane at any time by right clicking it with the mouse and selecting "Clear" on the menu. However, once the information is gone, it is gone forever. Better that you wait until you are finished for the day before clearing the pane.

So, Here We Go..... with your first PSK31 QSO...

You are all connected and you have configured everything. Find a good signal – a station that is calling CQ. Position your mouse pointer on the yellow signal line for that station as it is found on the waterfall. Left click once. Now a diamond is there.

Next, when the other station's CQ ends, click on your macro titled "Call". You should have set it up to send the other station's call once and your call three times. Inserted between his call and your call (3 times) is the word "de". It is used in CW all the time, and it is Latin for "from". He should reply to you with your call, his call, the RST report for you, his name and his location. Then he turns it back to you. Now you have just three macro buttons to click in a sequence. First you click on QSO. That sends his call "de" your call. You are still in transmit mode, so you click the "Info" macro. It will send 599 (or whatever you choose), followed by your name (twice) and

your location (twice – town and state). Next send your Grid Locator. Mine is CN84iw. You can obtain yours on the internet. Next you click on the “BTU” macro button. It will send his call, “de” and your call and then K. That will take you out of transmit.

He will reply, usually with station information, and then its your turn to do the same. Use the macro buttons as much as possible.

There you are! You have just had your first PSK31 QSO!

Part 3 next Month – Mix W.

In the next issue we will take a brief look at MixW, which costs \$50. It offers PSK31, PSK63, RTTY, CW, Feld Hell, MFSK, Amtor, and more. I will not address it in the same depth that I have covered Digipan. That is because it is assumed that you have already cut your teeth on digital before embarking on the MixW ship.

I will not be covering HRD+DM780. It is a combination of two programs and is free. Play with it if you like. Then there is MultiPSK and WinLink. Try them if you wish.

Part 4 will show you how to link MMTTY, a RTTY program, with the N1MM logger for a super duper RTTY contest program.

Part 5 is reserved for questions that are sent to me. If no questions, there will be no part 5.

Wow Stations From Digital QSOs

When making digital QSOs, it is a lot of fun to check out each station on QRZ.com after your PSK session has ended for the day. Some have the usual photos of their stations, but others have elaborate postings.

On Saturday and Sunday, March 26 & 27, the 15 meter PSK band was open to Europe with many strong signals from Italy. Yes, I know, Italy isn't a “rare” country, so many of you would not be interested. For me, it was a gold mine of information. Most of the contacts gave their age – many were over 60 – and the year they were licensed – most have been hams for at least 10 years. Of the many, many stations I worked in Italy, France, Germany, Russia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic, the majority were using dipole or vertical antennas! Very few used yagis, and those that did were using 2 element antennas. Since we were all using 50 watts or less – 40 on average – it demonstrated a simple fact: On PSK you can use a dipole or vertical with just 50 watts and work around the globe.

I highly recommend you visit QRZ.com and look up **DK8CX**. He has displayed a large collection of certificates and interesting photos on his bio page on QRZ. I also suggest a peek at **IZ5KDD** if you want to see someone who owns as much gear as KE7JNT.

John, KE7JNT, would enjoy a visit with **IW2BV**, a retired engineer who really enjoys home brewing much of the equipment in his shack. Not many of those home brew folks are around anymore, except perhaps Roger, **W7KVT**.

Just making the contacts are a lot of fun, but the QRZ search afterwards provides the greater reward.

de K7QXG

DX by KX5W

The recent ARRL DX contest had some good DX on it along with a ton of QRM as usual with most large contests. All four of the new countries from the Netherland Antilles were on again for those who still needed them.

The DX Pediton to Revilla Gigedo, 4A4A has been on a lot and during the contest too. I was able to snag them on several bands, plus John ON4UN, the author of the book on Low Band DXing; along with 7X4AN, Dodecanese, and Taiwan on 10 meters.

The several fairly rare DX Peditons this month have stirred up a lot of excitement and participation on the bands. Of note has been CY0 Sable Is; VU4PB Andaman & Nicobar Is; Bangladesh S21YZ; SX5P and J45PO both of Dodecanese (SV5--a Greek Island); Cocos-Keeling VK9CF; and Timor Leste 4W3A.

A few more DX Peditons have been announced during this month of April:

Nepal 9N7DX April 13 to 30;

Corsica TK/F8DZY Now to April 17;

Seychelles S79UFT Now to April 15; and

American Samoa KH8/AI5P.

Although the peak winter DX months have just passed it's still beneficial to tune the bands and there will be some DX on and workable. Just waiting for someone to report it on the cluster may not always happen so doing both is better.

I heard Nate W7NAT work UT8LN at 1631 Z on 3/9/11 on 15 meters--Congrats !! I'm sure the rest of you have some stories to tell to. Best of DXing to you all !!!

Solve This Mystery..... Win a reward!

Last fall, a ham contacted me and said he heard me working someone on CW. He was certain the call was K7QXG. I was out of town on that date so it wasn't me.

Yesterday I was on 15 meter PSK and had just finished working a DX station. As I tuned across the water fall to see who else was in QSO, I got the surprise of my life when I found K3ROJ working K7QXG on PSK!!! I stared at the screen and could not believe it. I could see only the text from K3ROJ, but a later email exchange with him confirmed that he was working someone using the call letters "K7QXG".

I even took several photos of the PC monitor screen that clearly shows my call letters in a QSO with K3ROJ. All we know about the K7QXG pirate is that he was in the Phoenix area.

I have now received an email from W7HO, Ron, who said he heard K7QXG in QSO with someone on 10 meter CW at about 2 PM yesterday (Wed. the 30th). Well, it sure wasn't me! I was busy working on this newsletter.

Your thoughts? Suggestions?

de K7QXG

See you next month. Don't forget....June elections AND June is dues month.

If you wish to continue receiving this newsletter, you've got to pay your dues.