

# ROADS REPORT

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## The Prez Sez.....

By KX5W



I'd like to welcome our newest member to the club !! He's Mike Nolan, KE6ZFL. I understand he lives in the same part of town as does Bob K7QXG.

The Hamfair is coming up two days after our meeting. The Hamfair is Saturday February 19 so if you have equipment for our TWO tables coordinate that with Jim, Bob and the usual members participating in the activity. We didn't get the four tables requested. Contact Abe if you need him to pick up some equipment on the way that Saturday morning.

In our February meeting, we need to discuss further if the club will have a Field Day site again or if we want to join another club for that or what. Some members have indicated to me they are losing interest and others are there every year.

### 2011 OFFICERS:

KX5W - Doc - President  
N7WWH - Jim - Vice President  
K7IJK - Irene - Secretary/Treasurer

The 10 -- 10 local net is chugging along nicely. The core group is ROADS members. It's a fun net, you don't have to be a 10 -- 10 member to participate. Just show up at noon local time Sundays and check in on 28.590. We'd be glad to have you do so.

We really thank Bob K7QXG for giving is a short presentation on propagation and the phenomenon called the Maunder Minimum. It was very interesting and if propagation doesn't pick up in another year or so, making it 14 years, we may very well be in that slump. Keep your fingers crossed. Yet we are working some DX every week.....see my DX report below, and our Editor usually has more comments on the subject too. As far as I'm concerned Bob's report functioned as our program.

At our next meeting we should find out from Jim, N7WWH our Vice-

President, which of two restaurants we will have our March meeting in, a dinner meeting, hopefully with an Irish theme along the lines of St Patrick's Day.

I've been hoping we'd have a program I've asked for along with Jim but haven't heard if it's on yet for our meeting; so come and find out. Our next meeting is Thursday February 17, at 7pm at the Courthouse and they assured me that we won't be locked out again. A big thanks to Irene for getting us in there last time !!

See you all at the meeting.

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## **Odds and Ends**

Here are a few tidbits that you can amuse yourself with in your spare time, or in between all those DX contacts you are making.

When you are on the internet, go to QRZ.com and check out **JA2GSD** for some interesting antennas shown in a photo. The photo of his station shows more computers than radios.

Next, check out **BD6JJX** – he is on 15 and 20 PSK every day – a young man with a simple station, but he sure puts a big signal into the USA on 20 meter PSK.

For a look at a nice station, operated by a 12 year old boy, take a look at **KDOHGY**. He also favors PSK, but on 15 meters.

I found the **KD5QLM** web site had an interesting feature. You can view it at [www.kd5qlm.com](http://www.kd5qlm.com). He has set up a slide show of the QSLs that he has received, and they offer some great entertainment.

**Next ROADS Meeting:** Yes, this information appears elsewhere, but I want to make sure you have marked your calendar and will be there. **Thursday February 17<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM at the courthouse.**

**Treasurer's Report:** Hey folks, we are doing okay. Our bank account has \$4,577 and some loose change.

**March Meeting is dine out time.** At the January 20th meeting the club selected two possible locations for our March dinner meeting. They are: 1. Farroll's at Rickreall; and 2. Café 22 on Hwy 22 going towards Salem. Both have separate rooms that would work nicely for us. Our Vice President, **N7WWH**, will be exploring these two to see what kind of arrangements can be made. Remember that the March meeting falls on top of St. Patrick's Day.

**Sick and Lame:** Nearly everyone fits into this category. I am beginning to think we buy more medicine than QSL cards and postage. I do not wish to embarrass anyone by mentioning their name and their ailment, but I do wish to thank and commend **KE7JNT** for transporting me when I had the tear ducts in my eyes cauterized (that really stung folks). Remember, if you need to see a doctor, and have run out of transportation options, call some of the members of ROADS and enlist their aid. We need to look after our own.

**PUSTEP, Edi**, was on 40 meter CW practicing his sending, which was about 15 wpm, and he had quite a pile up. I had worked Edi on PSK in the fall of 2009, and decided to see if I could break the pileup. It took many calls, but Edi finally replied, and then said, "Hello my good friend Bob! How are you?" Wow! I thought. Right in the middle of a big pile up. I suddenly felt very famous. Edi was a member of the 2009 8R1PY Dxpedition, and if you check out Edi's call on QRZ.com you will be treated to some fantastic photos of SA hams, antennas, and Edi's family and home. It is a real worthwhile visit.

**W7KVT**, Roger, reports that the beam he put up does not want to rotate because the mast is binding in the top of the tower. He will need help this summer to take it all down and find a solution.

### **QSL CARDS .... Problem solved!**

Some members use them, and others do not. So, if you get a request for one during a QSO, and you don't have any, there is a very simple solution. Buy a postcard of Oregon. Just jot down all the particulars of the QSO and be sure to sign it. Then mail it off to the eager recipient. If you have any questions about what or how to do it, there are many of us who can put your fears to rest with a short phone call.

**Field Day** was briefly discussed at the January meeting, and 7 or 8 members indicated they would participate this year if ROADS decides to set up a Field Day site. If the members want a team in the field, the plans must be set in motion by April, and earlier if possible. Attendance at Field Day has been declining for two or three years now, and some feel we

may be better off if we abandon the event.

**Ham Fair** at Rickreall will be February 19<sup>th</sup>. Once again we will have two tables. We had requested four, and had a great concept for using all of them, but we have been limited to the usual two.

**Welcome KE6ZFL, Mike Nolan**, who just moved to Dallas from the San Francisco area. His new location is on Walnut street, a few blocks from K7QXG and W7TDN.

**Why the "numbers" don't mean a thing when it comes to propagation....** Recently the ARRL RTTY contest took place, and a quick check of the flux and sunspot numbers before the event cast a dark foreboding shadow over the contest. The flux hovered around 78, with an A that was peaking around 12 or more. The number of sunspots were few and became fewer as the weekend progressed. However, I made the most contacts I have ever made in any RTTY contest, and many came from 15 meters. DX was at every spot on the dial and I finally quit because I was too tired to keep up with the pace !

Today, January 22, was the big BARTG RTTY contest. The numbers looked great: Flux at 88, A at 4, and about 30 or more sunspots. But it proved to be a very disappointing day for me, and I finally quit part way through to wash the car - that's how bad it was. In the morning I found several Europe DX stations, but could only get two to answer me. USA stations that are perennial contesters that I had worked numerous times in the past turned a deaf ear to me. My ego was really deflated in the afternoon when I had trouble working stations in Japan!

## CARP, CARP, CARP

So, the predictions and the numbers may be nice to look at, but the true test is casting your signal into the ether and seeing what you can catch. Today my net was mostly empty. But I did work NI5F.

**NI5F**, Dr. Echols in MS....look this one up on QRZ.com. Clean, neat, and as sharp as an operating room describes his radio room.

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## Reserve Feb. 5 & 6

This is the weekend of the **10-10 International Winter Phone QSO Party**. It is 48 hours long, and begins at 4 PM Friday, local time, and ends on Sunday at 4 PM local time. If 28 MHz opens, there will be lots of action.

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## You Are Going To Love This

eQSL has just finished implementing a great new user interface when you search a call. It shows the bands and modes used by the station you are researching, and the amount of use...all nicely done with graphs. It also shows the awards they have earned and the credits for those awards. To get a glimpse of this new feature, just open eQSL, and, on the left border of the page, near the top, is an area to enter a call and then click on search. Enter my call, K7QXG, to get a good look at the new features. I entered the call **K9DIG**, a **North Dakota** station, and was pleased with the abundance of information available. It also displays the QSL card being used by the station.

Or, you could say, "Here comes another one of Bob's sermons!" No, this time its just a tip.

For those who are timid about getting your feet wet with PSK or RTTY, please contact me and I'll assist you with setting up the macros on your software. Then, when the next PSK or RTTY contest takes place, you should be able to make 50 or 100 contacts, and by the end of the day you won't be intimidated by these modes anymore.

In the BARTG RTTY contest, it was only necessary to tune in the signal of a station calling CQ, and then use the F4 key on the keyboard OR click on the macro that said "Call". That sent your call twice. After he returned to you and gave you his serial number, which most software records automatically, you would then push F2, or click on "contest" to send the following: "W9XXX TU 599 012 012 K7QXG". The software automatically sends the correct serial number.

So, in a PSK or RTTY contest you merely tune in the station, and then with two mouse clicks you have made a contact.

Yes, there are a few stumbling blocks, but this method works for more than 95% of the QSOs. If you are working on an award of any kind, this is a quick easy way to accomplish it. In the ARRL RTTY Round Up I managed over 200 QSOs on that Saturday. By Monday I had already received about 30 QSLs through eQSL. I had worked 48 states and numerous countries on that one day.

The invitation is there, and the rest is up to you.

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## VE Test Session Results

We have a very quiet and productive VE testing session for our first session of the new year on January 8th.

We had one brave soul that joined us to test for an upgrade.

Daniel Exstrom from Independence is now the owner of a new General License. It took Dan all of 10 minutes to finish the test and pass it, missing only 1 question.

I want to thank the VE team for all their help which included Bob W7LOU, Wendall AK2OR, Mike K7CIE, John KE7JNT, Trent W7TDN and Dave KT7H.

Our next VE session will be March 12th, 2011 at 9:00 at the Polk County Courthouse. If you know of someone that is looking to get their license or upgrade please let them know about your next session. We will be happy to have them.

Thanks and 73s

Ron W7HO  
ROADS VE Team Liaison

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## Station Of The Month

We don't have one. No one came forward. We had this feature for 13 issues, but no one was willing to have their station featured for February, and none have stepped forward for future issues.

No work required on your part. Just pose and look pretty when I take your photo. Yes, I go to your station and take the photos and gather the information. So, any volunteers out there? If not, this feature will be dropped from the newsletter.

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## Propagation Poll Results

A poll on the cause of the poor propagation was sent out via email and here are the listed possible causes:

1. This cycle is taking its time emerging.
2. We have entered a Maunder Minimum.
3. Cycles always start this slow.
4. Actually, propagation is great if you believe what you read.

The following is the result based upon the responses received:

Everyone, except for two persons, selected #2, Maunder Minimum, as the likely cause of our misfortune. One person selected number 1 - "This cycle is taking its time emerging." One person selected all four responses.

## Pacific Northwest Minimum

It sure looks like we are having our own "Minimum" here in the Pacific Northwest. Each day I take a look at DX Summit and view the stations being worked by the folks on the East coast and down South. I also receive reports from stations in AZ and FL during PSK QSOs about the wonderful propagation they are having as Cycle 24 is slowly creeping into position. A station in Kingman, AZ said he loves this boom in propagation. He works Europe in the morning, South America at lunch time, and finishes the day by working stations in Asia. His station? A modest rig running 50 to 100 watts and an 80 meter four square loop that is just 15 feet high! His QSOs are on PSK and CW.

Meanwhile, here in the Pacific Northwest, which is suffering from a terminal malaise of propagation, I feel darn lucky to work someone in TN, or OH, or even Kingman, AZ!

I am not alone in this "Dark Hole Of Calcutta." Other members of ROADS are experiencing the same disheartening lack of contacts and propagation that does not provide even a little 10 meter activity. I am presently listening to 28.400. I hear only the rushing sound of "nothingness" - not even a neighbor's lawnmower breaks the silence.

I predict the Pacific Northwest Minimum will continue into 2012, and then peak in 2013 with a top flux number of 97 for the Pacific Northwest. So, that being the case, its time to look for innovative ways to keep the ether heated up in our little corner of the world. We could have a race to see who can be first to work 10 counties in California. Or we could see how many ROADS members can work each other using just 1/2 watt.... on any band.

Time to get down off my soapbox and turn off the radio. Its just a waste of time and electricity to turn it on.

See you in Cycle 25, if we don't have another Pacific Northwest Minimum. If we do, it will confirm my theory that we are definitely entering another small Ice Age. Think I'll start selling warm coats and fur lined boots.

de K7QXG



## *Editorial*

Finding candidates for officer positions in a club is always a challenge, and has been ever since the Greeks became the first democracy. Perhaps it is time to take a close look at the health of ROADS.

Over the years I have held numerous leadership and managerial positions for a variety of organizations dating back to 1960. Yes, I felt intimidated by the tasks at times, but I always had lots of support from members of the organization. *Most members overlook the fact that there are others who will always lend a helping hand when needed.*

I know of several very personable members of ROADS who would appear to be good candidates to lead us forward into the next year. When these members say, "I don't know how, and I don't have the talent to do it", they are being very honest, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to run a club. Yes, some people naturally have the skills, talents, and ability to "git 'er done!" However, saying "I don't know how" means the leadership role is left to someone else... again, and again, and again.

So, does ROADS have a dilemma? Yes it does. We cannot expect officers who have served us well to be "President-For-Life" or "Secretary-For-Life". Our founder, W7LOU, has put in his 150% share, and Irene continues in her role to keep us above board with the legal requirements that we must meet each year. KX5W, Doc, is on his second term, and would welcome some relief this June at election time.

I will continue to publish this newsletter for another year, even though I also serve as a state Assistant Director for Oregon Good Sam and am also the Chapter Head for the Oregon Trail Chapter of 10-10 International. I am at my limit. I am also getting on in years, and its difficult to burn the candle at both ends.

So who will step up to the plate?

Don't everybody speak up at once.

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## DX by Doc KX5W

As I said on the first page about the discussion on the Maunder Minimum, even though the propagation is poor, we still are working pretty good DX weekly.

I heard Bob W7LOU work Jimmy with his special call sign, BV100, in Taiwan the other day. Bob k7QXG told me via email awhile ago that he has received his QSL cards for the four new entities of the Netherland Antilles; so I sent mine off two weeks ago and have three back already.

VQ9LA, Larry, left Diego Garcia for good. He has been there a long time and has given out thousands of QSO's and QSL's.

Monk Apollo SV2ASP/A in the extremely rare Mt Athos is back on the air but still with his dipole. The good news is he now has a 3 element SteppIR and he will put it up with help this summer on a tubular tower. Maybe we will finally hear the guy!!

There's a new DX book out called the New DXer's Handbook by K7UA; just 44 pages but might be worth looking into. It can be downloaded from the Utah DX Assoc web site <http://www.udxa.org> It's only 44 pages long.

If you need South Orkney Is, VP8ORK is on and their web site is <http://vp8o.com/vp8freqs.html> lists their operating frequencies. I worked them the other day.

With 100 watts to the windom I worked in January a VK4 in Australia on 75 meter SSB at 5pm local; Guam on 15M; Greenland on 17M; S Africa; Lesotho; VP8LP in the Falklands again; Victor E21CG for about the 10th time over the years in the S Cooks in Roratonga; and two Malaysian stations on 20 M, mostly SSB.

So there is some DX on if we look for it that's workable even barefoot. My most fun contact was a few days ago at the mobile home in Dallas where I have an insulated wire dipole hanging on the wall from the living room down the hall. It's up 7 feet above the floor and I worked UA0KBU in Russia on it and he gave me a 57; (think he lied a bit on the signal strength); but was tickled to see I could get out of Dallas on that sorry antenna.

So just keep plugging along and we'll work some good ones, Maunder Minimum or not. Good hunting !!

Ed. Note: A posting on Yahoo 10 Meters stated that a couple of scientists have now announced that Cycle 24 will be the weakest in 2 centuries. Even so, it is as Doc mentions in his article – we can find good QSOs in the USA, Canada, and abroad if we are at the right place at the right time and remain persistent and optimistic.

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That is it for this issue. Please note that there are extra blank pages. I have not found a way to get rid of them. If you know how, PLEASE let me know. Also, I have tried to use some variation in font and columns. If you prefer I just keep it real simple and forget the fancy stuff, please let me know.

Thanks, K7QXG, Editor





