

Long Path



Volume 24 Issue 8

SEMDXA NEWSLETTER

May 2007



President's Report

The April meeting put on by **KK8I** featured a video of **5A7A** and also a look at CW contesting software. For those of you that missed it, the CW sounded like RTTY. I have seen Uli operate and I assure you he does as good a job at contesting as he did at putting on our presentation. Not only does he have a handle on CW but he does a great job with PowerPoint. Thanks Uli for a job well done and by the way, we owe you dinner.

Our May meeting will feature Ward Silver **N0AX** and he is going to do a presentation on **K7C**. If you are not on your way to Dayton don't miss this one. The meeting has been moved from the normal 2d Friday to Wednesday May 16th so please mark that on your calendar.

It is that time of year again. Yep, elections and May is the month we nominate our new candidates. As you know I will not be running for President this term and I have been told that Stand and Ken will not as well. The job of President has gotten much better now that the club owns our own projector, DVD/VHS player and carrying cases. I have you the members to thank for that and I am sure the next

President will appreciate it as well. None of these jobs are demanding so please do consider running for one of the open positions.

I'll see you all at the May meeting and once again it will be on Wednesday May 16th.

K8SIX, President

BS7 (Scarborough Reef)

Ranking #1 on the North America DX Entity need list, the long-awaited operation from BS7 is likely to take place towards the end of April. The exact timing of this DX-pedition has been kept on the QT for any number of reasons. The call sign is likely to be **BS7H**. As Bernie - Editor of the Weekly DX- noted, only three operations from this very rare DX entity have ever occurred (June, 1994, April, 1995 and May, 1997). The first operation was not approved and did not count for DXCC.

This issue of the *Long Path* contains a propagation study with a date centered on April 30. A solar flux of 70 and a K Index of 2 is assumed. These numbers are based on predictions from NOAA. This will be a very difficult ride for most of us in the 8th call area and even tougher for 1s 2s and 3s. Obviously 20 Meter Short Path is your best bet with 17 Meters a close second. But, do not overlook the possibility of a Long Path opening on 15, 17 or 20 Meters. Also, if your station is endowed with a good 40-Meter antenna system and high power, you may have a shot there too. 80-Meter prospects are dim as are 15 Meters. A regular path beam heading of 337°

this is a Polar Path which compounds the problem for low-band propagation. Path length is approximately 8200 miles.

Let's hope for some real cracker-jack operators. Good luck on this one, you'll need it!

W8GF

SEMDXA CLUB OFFICERS

President: Al Bailey, **K8SIX**

Vice-president: Ken Schang, **W8LU**

Treasurer: Brad Nowak, **N8SNM**

Secretary: Stan Arnett, **AC8W**

Director: Ted Pauck, **K8NA**

Web Site Editor: Ken Schang, **W8LU**

DXCC Checker: Bill Jones, **N8KF**

DXCC Checker: S.Arnett, **AC8W**

VUCC Checker: Al Bailey, **K8SIX**

CQ Checker: Mike Rudzki, **N8MR**

CQ Checker: Al Bailey, **K8SIX**

Program Chair: Sean Fleming,
K8KHZ

LP Publisher: Chet Sprinkle, **K8YTO**

April Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by our President **K8SIX**. Twenty-seven members and guests present.

Treasurer **N8SNM** reports a February ending balance of \$1,094.28. This total does not reflect \$50.00 sent to the **N8S** DX-pedition and \$50.00 sent to the BS7 group.

March minutes were as printed as in the *Long Path*. Please sign the attendance sheet.

AC8W and **N8KF** are both DXCC card checkers. The ten-year rule was eliminated so cards can be checked for current entities back to November 1, 1945. Card checkers still cannot check cards for 160 or deleted countries. In addition, DXCC checkers can, at their option, check cards for WAS and VUCC. Check the ARRL.ORG web site for details.

K8SIX will not for President again. **W8GF** will not continue as *Long Path* Editor and **AC8W** does not want to continue as Secretary. Please consider running for club office. Step up and be counted.

A reminder that the May *SEMDXA* meeting will be on Wednesday, May 16..... Mark your calendar.

K8DD reminded us of the Michigan QSO Party on April 21. Starts noon local and ends at midnight. If you get on be sure to turn your score in for *SEMDXA*. Who knows, your Wayne, Oakland or Macomb operation may be the multiplier folks are looking for. This year a special certificate will be issued for working enough stations whose first letter of their suffix allows you to spell "Mackinaw" in honor of Big Mac's 50th.

K8GT also mentioned the Georgia QSO Party April 17 - 18. President **K8SIX** introduced our own

KK8I who had two programs. The first was a Power-Point presentation titled "Who Needs Sunspots" which highlighted various CW training/practice software through the years. Why use a CW generating program? Several reasons come to mind including the fact that you can use it anytime and anywhere, you don't need to have a "big gun" station, they provide training for various on-the-air competitions, you will probably score better in the Kansas City Pile Up Contest at Dayton, and finally, many modern programs have sites to enter your score to see how you compete against others worldwide.

Several "historical" programs were shown including Dr DX, PED and VPED by **JE3MAS** for CW and voice respectively. Newer programs running on Windows platforms such as Pile-UP! by **G4ZFE**, CW Freak by **J10VWL**, Rufz & RufzXP (Rufz is "call sign" in German) by **DL4MM**, CyberCW Contest by **N5RR** and Morse Runner by **VE3NEA** were shown and sound bytes provided by **KK8I**. A very informative glimpse is a way to boost your CW proficiency.

The second program was a video of the November, 2006 DX-pedition to Libya (**5A7A**) by and international team. Thirty operators from eleven countries put this rare one in a lot of logs. The team made over 112,000 QSOs including the big presence in the CQWW DX CW test. All bands and modes were used and they even made contacts via EME. The local radio society, AASAKR, was instrumental in the success of this effort. This was a better than average video and, if you missed it, try to see it. It was produced by **DK7PE**.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

AC8W, Secretary

Signal Electric

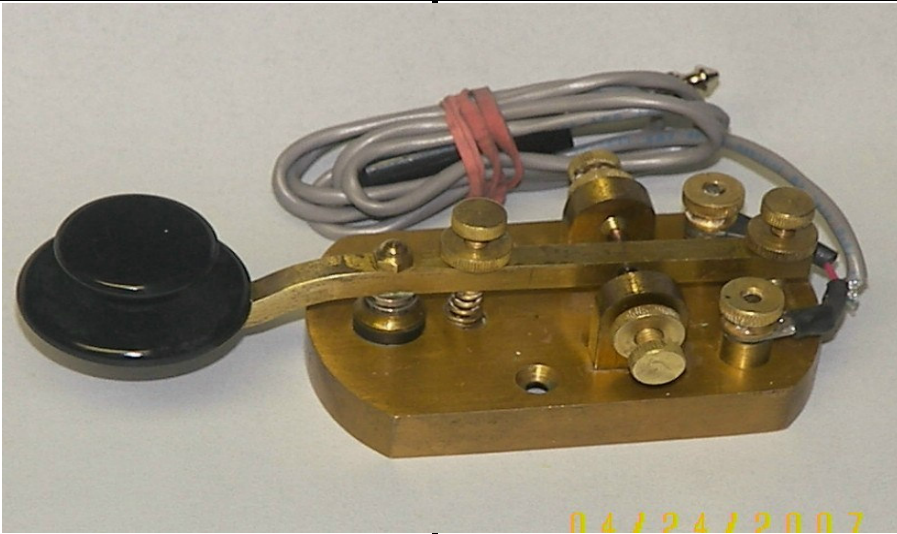
In the distant past, a small company bearing the name Menominee Electric and Mechanical Company opened for business in the northern Michigan community of Menominee. If you were to check on a Michigan map, you would find that Menominee is located at the southern-most tip of the Western Upper Peninsula directly across from Marinette Wisconsin.

Early on, their product line included battery chargers, small motors, telegraph sounders, telegraph relays, bells and bell transformers among other items

Sometime in 1919, Menominee Electric changed their name to Signal Electric Manufacturing Company with an expanded product line which included crystal detectors, telegraph keys, code practice sets, buzzers and a bug known as the Sematic which could be used as a bug or side-swiper.

The photo depicts Model R-64, one of their solid brass telegraph keys equipped with a Navy-style knob and large 3/8" diameter, coined silver contacts which was intended for spark-gap transmitters and is in use to this day at **W8GF**. Various contact diameters were offered with this product e.g., Model R-63 is equipped with 1/4" diameter contacts and Model R-62 is equipped with 3/16" contacts. This particular unit was manufactured sometime in 1922.

In looking over other Signal Electric hand key products, one looks very similar to the military J-38 -that ubiquitous model that seems to be part of nearly every amateur radio station. Signal Electric (SEMCO) manufactured the J-38 for military use during the World-War II era. At least eight other firms manufactured J-38s including Lionel Corporation. Also noted is



similarity between the Sematic Bug and WWII speed keys.

Menominee is the home of Jim Callow, **K8IR**. Jim has a web page devoted to the history of Signal Electric. Fascinating reading for anyone interested in early radio history.

In 1952 King Seeley Thermos Products purchased Signal Electric. Still later Vernco Corp buys the Signal Electric product line and later Emerson Electric purchased this from Vernco. During that time the product line included vacuums, solder guns and humidifiers. In 2005, all manufacturing was transferred to Mexico.

What follows is a sketch of the early goings of Signal Electric as noted on K8IR's web page.

At the time the Signal factory was founded almost sixty years ago, Telegraph Instruments played a major part in the early success of the company. Telegraph at that time was the most widely used method of swift and accurate communications throughout the world. Then came Wireless, forerunner of today's Radio, and wireless Transmitting Keys were added to the Signal line of communications products. With the discovery and development of the vacuum tube came the

rapid growth of Radio, used today all over the world through code and voice transmission as the most extensive means of communication ever known to man.

Telegraph still plays a very important part in the communication field. Signal Keys, Sounders and Relays have been continually improved in design and today Signal Telegraph Instruments may be found in service all over the world.

In the marine field, Radio is still often called Wireless, and through code transmission is the backbone of a very extensive merchant marine communications system. Signal Wireless Transmitting Keys are widely used in this all important branch of Radio.

The Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard all place one factor, dependability above all other requirements the products connected with communications. Signal equipment is in constant use on land, at sea, and in the air in all branches of our Armed Forces.

The Radio Amateur all over the world knows of Signal as a reliable source of accurately constructed and sturdily built transmitting or practice equipment.

We mention these things because we want you to know when you buy Signal,

you receive equipment built in the most exacting engineering specifications. Throughout the years of our development and growth, the same high degree of Signal quality has always been maintained.

W8GF

Vanity Call Signs

The FCC has proposed reducing the regulatory fee to obtain or retain an Amateur Radio Vanity call sign by more than 40% starting later this year. In a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) released April 18, "Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2007," in MD Docket 07-81, the Commission is proposing to cut the fee from its current \$20.80 to \$11.70. If ultimately adopted, that would mark the lowest fee in the history of current vanity call sign program. The FCC proposed to collect nearly \$290.3 million in FY 2007 regulatory fees.

The vanity call sign fee has fluctuated over the 11 years of the current vanity call sign program, from a low of \$12.00 to a high of \$50.00. The FCC says it anticipates some 14,700 Amateur Radio vanity call sign "payment units" or applications during the next fiscal year.

Those holding vanity call signs issued prior to 1996 are exempt from having to pay the vanity call sign regulatory fee at renewal, however. That's because Congress did not authorize the FCC to collect regulatory fees until 1993. Such "heritage" vanity call sign holders do not appear as vanity licensees in the FCC Amateur Radio database.

Above from a recent ARRL Bulletin.

May 2007

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																	
<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="7">April</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		April							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						1	2  Full Moon	3	4	5 10-10 Test 7Th Area QSO ARI Int'l Test Indiana QSO IPA (Police) Test NE QSO
April																																																							
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27	28  Memorial Day	29	30	31	<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="7">June</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1 2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr> </table>		June							S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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W6ELProp Short-Path Prediction for 04/30/2007

TERMINAL A: 42.50 N 83.00 W SE Mich Sunrise/Set: 1034/0025 UTC Bearing to B: 336.9 deg
 TERMINAL B: 15.12 N 117.75 E Scarborough Reef Sunrise/Set: 2150/1023 UTC Bearing to A: 17.4 deg
 SSN: 9.9 Flux: 70.0 K: 2 THIS IS A POLAR PATH Path Length: 13266 km

SIGNAL LEVELS IN dB ABOVE 0.5 μ V

UTC	MUF	3.6 MHz	7.1 MHz	14.1 MHz	21.2 MHz	28.3 MHz
0000	17.0			0 A	19 D	
0030	17.1			0 A	19 D	
0100	17.0			-8 B	19 D	
0130	16.8			-8 B	19 D	
0200	16.6			-8 B	19 D	
0230	16.4			-7 B	19 D	
0300	15.9			-7 C	20 D	
0330	15.4			-7 C	20 D	
0400	15.0			-6 C	20 D	
0430	14.7			-5 C	20 D	
0500	14.3			-4 D	21 D	
0530	13.9			-3 D		
0600	13.3			-2 D		
0630	12.6			-1 D		
0700	12.1			1 D		
0730	11.6			11 D		
0800	11.1					
0830	10.6					
0900	10.5					
0930	11.6			26 D		
1000	12.3		3 A	27 D		
1030	12.9		13 A	28 D		
1100	13.4		9 A	29 C		
1130	13.9		6 A	29 C		
1200	14.5		1 A	28 B		
1230	14.9		-8 A	28 B		
1300	15.4			27 B		
1330	15.7			15 B	26 D	
1400	16.1			14 B	26 D	
1430	16.4			14 B	25 D	
1500	16.7			13 B	25 D	
1530	16.8			12 A	25 D	
1600	17.0			14 A	24 D	
1630	17.3			13 A	24 D	
1700	17.4			12 A	24 D	
1730	16.6			11 A	24 D	
1800	15.7			11 A	23 D	
1830	14.8			10 B		
1900	13.8			1 D		
1930	13.3			0 D		
2000	13.2			0 D		
2030	13.6			6 D		
2100	14.6			5 D		
2130	16.1			4 C	21 D	
2200	17.2			3 A	21 D	
2230	17.1			2 A	20 D	
2300	17.1			1 A	20 D	
2330	17.0			0 A	20 D	

Availabilities A: 75 - 100% B: 50 - 75% C: 25 - 50% D: 1 - 25%
 Signal levels suppressed if below -10 dB relative to 0.5 μ V or if predicted availability is zero

W6ELProp Long-Path Prediction for 04/30/2007

TERMINAL A: 42.50 N 83.00 W SE Mich Sunrise/Set: 1034/0025 UTC Bearing to B: 156.9 deg
 TERMINAL B: 15.12 N 117.75 E Scarborough Reef Sunrise/Set: 2150/1023 UTC Bearing to A: 197.4 deg
 SSN: 9.9 Flux: 70.0 K: 2 THIS IS A POLAR PATH Path Length: 26765 km

SIGNAL LEVELS IN dB ABOVE 0.5 µV

UTC	MUF	3.6 MHz	7.1 MHz	14.1 MHz	21.2 MHz	28.3 MHz
0000	21.0			-1 A	2 C	-1 D
0030	20.7			-3 B	1 C	-1 D
0100	21.4			-7 A	0 B	-1 D
0130	21.0				0 C	-2 D
0200	20.7				-1 C	-2 D
0230	20.3				-2 C	-2 D
0300	19.8				-2 C	-3 D
0330	19.2				-2 D	
0400	18.4				-3 D	
0430	17.1				-3 D	
0500	16.0				-3 D	
0530	14.9					
0600	13.7					
0630	12.6					
0700	11.7					
0730	10.9					
0800	10.6					
0830	11.4			-5 D		
0900	12.4			0 D		
0930	13.4			2 C		
1000	14.6			2 B		
1030	15.9			1 A	0 D	
1100	17.2			0 A	0 D	
1130	17.4			-2 A	-1 D	
1200	18.1			-4 A	-2 D	
1230	18.6				-3 D	
1300	19.1				-4 D	
1330	19.6				-4 D	
1400	19.9				-5 C	
1430	20.1				-6 C	
1500	20.5				-6 C	
1530	20.8				-7 C	
1600	21.0				-7 C	
1630	21.0				-7 C	
1700	19.9				-6 C	
1730	18.7				-6 D	
1800	17.2				-6 D	
1830	16.2				-5 D	
1900	14.4				-4 D	
1930	12.2					
2000	10.3					
2030	8.8					
2100	8.1					
2130	8.3					
2200	9.3			3 D		
2230	13.8			4 C		
2300	19.5			4 A	2 D	
2330	21.3			4 A	2 B	0 D

Availabilities A: 75 - 100% B: 50 - 75% C: 25 - 50% D: 1 - 25%
 Signal levels suppressed if below -10 dB relative to 0.5 µV or if predicted availability is zero