



January
Madison County Amateur Radio Club

QSO

www.w9vcf.org

January 2018



The Next meeting will be at 7 PM on Monday , Jan, 1 2018 at the EOC at 200 N. Delaware Street, Anderson

President's Message

Greetings to everyone, and I hope all have a prosperous New Year! It doesn't seem like we could have gone through a whole year already. But, with all of the things that the club have gotten done this year, maybe the year just flew by. It depends on how you look at it, I guess. First off, I'd like to thank those that came to the Christmas party on December 9th. I believe there were about 19 members, and family that came. I know I didn't go home hungry!

You, as a club have gotten many things done this year. The HF side of the Com room looks pretty good. We've still got to run some coax, and rotor control cable across the parking lot, and, we've still have to finish the van. It's coming right along. There is counter space in it, there are 3 ways to mount antennas on the outside. The club recently acquired 10 sections of military tent posts, and a 3 section push up pole for our use with the van. I'd like to thank Don, KC9AKJ, and his son, Steve for donating those items, along with several antennas, to the club. Its very much appreciated!

I would like to thank those former officers for a job well done, also. And, I'd like to welcome Lew, K9LBB as your new Vice President! We've still got several things to do, and, I think you, the club members will surpass what we've gotten done this year!

For those of you who can't make the meetings, if you want to mail in your dues, mail them to the address, MCARC, P.O. box 2033, Anderson, In., 46018, and that will get you set up as paid members.

We've had a pretty good turnout on Wednesday nite at 8 pm for our net on the 145.390 repeater. I've still got a few questions to ask, but, I'd be glad to take on some more, if anyone has something they think would work.

The Saturday morning breakfast has been picking up a little bit too. We gather at Eva's on Broadway at 9 am. We even talk about radios sometimes!

The first meeting of the new year, will be on January 1st, at 7pm. Let's start the new year out with a good turn out. And, I almost forgot to mention about the gathering on Thursday morning, at the EOC, at 9am. The donuts have been outstanding this past year. Good job, Terry! It's much appreciated.

I know there are other things to mention, but, I'll wrap this up, and send it to our newsletter editor, Mike, KD9CDO, who always does a great job of keeping the for sale list up to date, and does a great job. I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

"73" Mike, KC9DJU

Events

Every Wednesday	MCARC 2M Net 8:00 PM - 145.390 pl 151.4 Followed by an informal ragchew on 28.465
Every Thursday	Donut Meeting 09:00 AM at the EOC
Every Saturday	Breakfast at Eva's 09:00 AM at 832 Broadway St, Anderson
Jan 1	Straight Key Night
Jan 6	Kid's Day (Jan and June)
Jan 6-7	RTTY Roundup
Jan 20-22	VHF Contest
Jan 27-28	Winter Field Day
Feb 12-16	School Club Roundup (Winter/Spring Term)
Feb 17-18	DX Contest - CW
Feb 27-25	North American QSO Party (RTTY)

**MCARC – Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, December 4, 2017
Location: EOC, 200 N. Delaware St., Anderson, IN**

7:00 Mike-KC9DJU called the meeting to order.

Show and Tell: Mike-KC9DJU, Mike-KD9CDO, and Dale-KV9W told about their work installing countertops in the communications van. After the meeting, all are welcome to see the work first hand.

Visitor: Dave Sumner-K9FYI came in for a visit. Dave has been a ham for a long time, but been away from the hobby for awhile. Dave is a CW-guy. Dave was welcomed and encouraged to be part of the group.

Minutes: Motion to accept minutes of the November 2, 2017 meeting by Tim-KC9GBL/Dave-KB9NTG - passed.

Secretary Report: No correspondence

Treasurer, Jeff-K9DYZ:

Beginning balance	\$2,451.11
Income from interest	\$.79
Income from Hardline sale	\$780.00
Income from Antenna sale	\$ 2.00
Income from dues	\$200.00
Ending balance	\$3,435.90

Motion to accept by Dennis-N9OWN/Tim-KC0GBL – Passed

Officer Reports:

Trustee, Alan-KC9JWO: No report.

V-President, Mike-K9MI: No report.

Awards, Mike-KC9DJU: Mike will be tracking the points for this coming year.

Newsletter, Mike-KD9CDO: Nothing new.

Tech Committee, Doug-N9DR: Nothing new.

Activities, Dale-KV9W: Dale prepared a document containing suggested upcoming events for the year and encouraged members to make additional suggestions as well as express the level of interest in the activities listed. Summary of the document:

1/27-28	Winter Field Day
2/24-25	North American QSO Party (RTTY)
3/3-4	ARRL International DX Contest (SSB)
3/24-25	WW WPX Contest (SSB)
4/21-22	Michigan QSO Party
5/5-6	Indiana QSO Party
5/5-6	Delaware QSO Party
5/5-6	New England QSO Party

Sick report: Dave-KB9NTG reports that his son is back cleared to go to work with restrictions. Rick-N9XQX is back, Dick-WA9STB has checked into the net, and Kevin-KB9NTH has been encouraged to make it to a meeting.

Old Business: Van committee: See show & tell.

Slate of officers for 2018:

President:	Mike Cook – KC9DJU
V-President:	Lew Baker – K9LBB
Sec/Treasurer	Jeff Dyer – K9DYR
Trustee	Allen Webber – KC9JWO
Activities	Dale Bales – KV9W
Newsletter	Mike Hoggett – KD9CDO
Tech chair	Doug Rose – N9DR
Tech Cmte	Dennis Owen – N9OWN
Tech Cmte	Terry Zivney – N4TZ

Motion to accept slate as presented by Dave-KB9NTG/Rick-N9XQX - passed

Motion to adjourn – Dennis-N9OWN/Terry-N4TZ - Passed

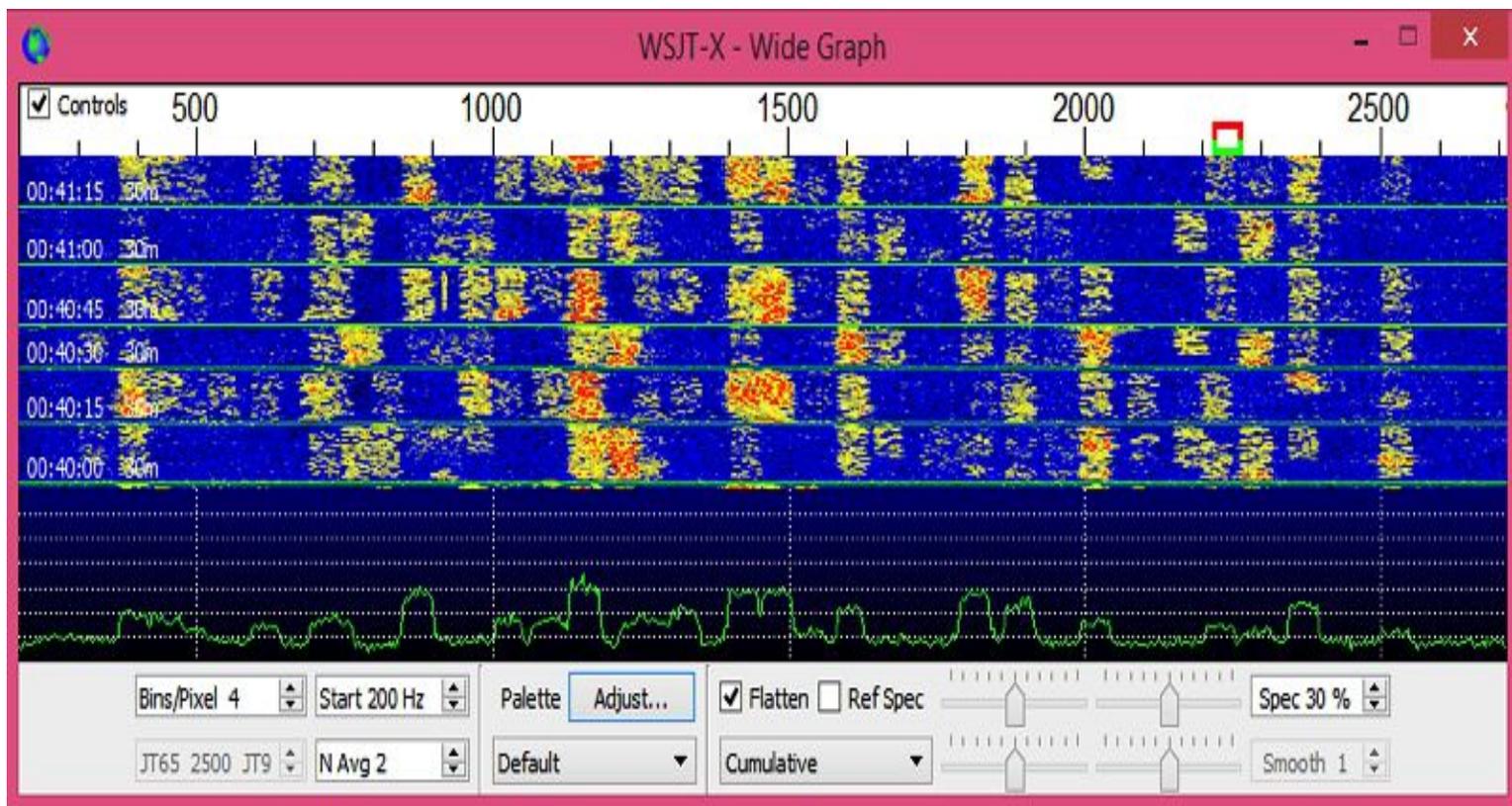
NEXT MEETING: January 1, 2018 at the EOC, 200 North Delaware St, Anderson, IN @ 7:00.

Respectfully Jeff-K9DYR

FT-8: I'm not really feeling the magic

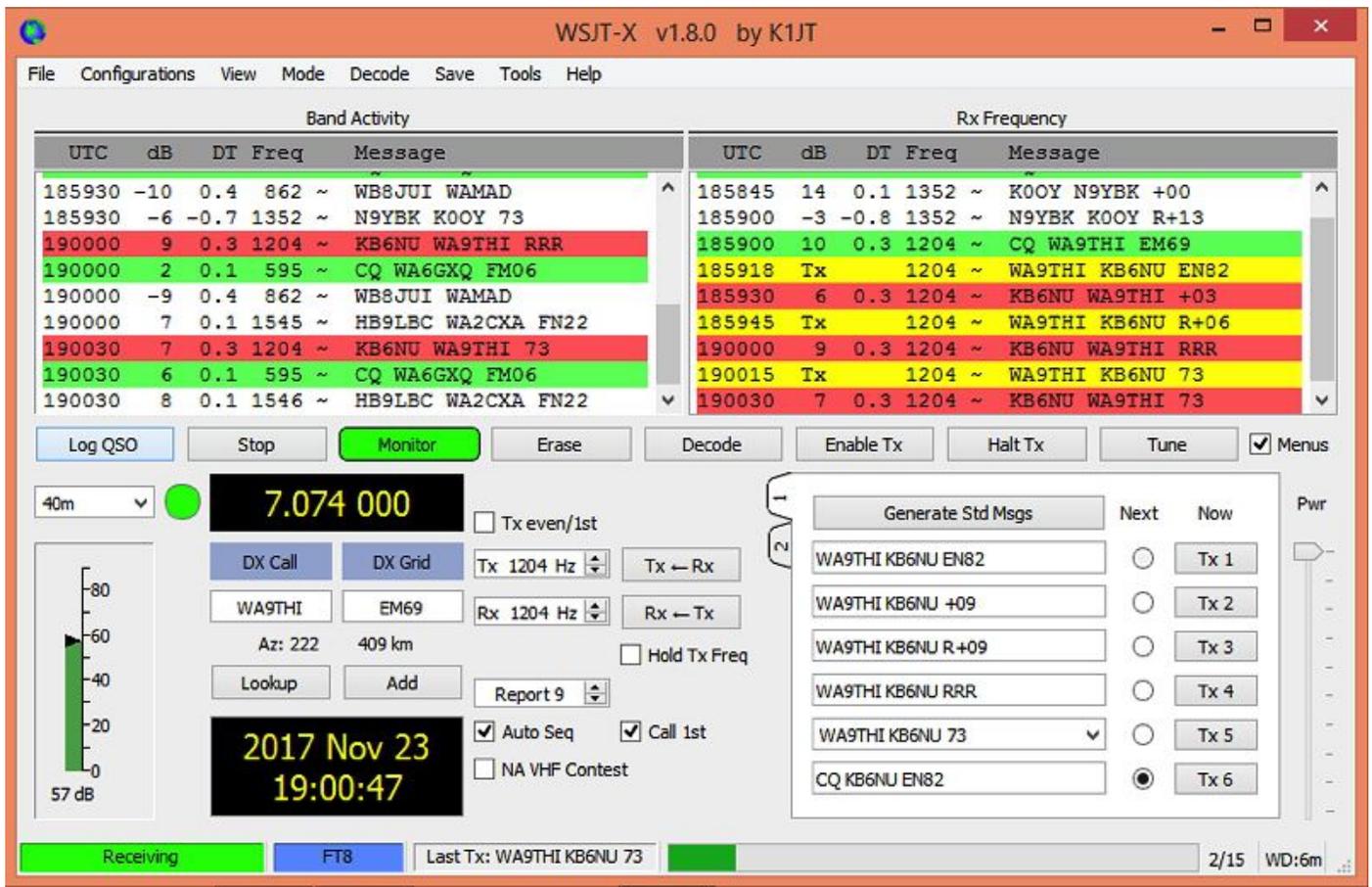
By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Partly out of curiosity and partly because Jeff, KE9V, shamed me into it, I setup my Signalink interface, downloaded WSJT-X from <https://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/wsjsx.html>, and started operating FT-8, the latest "shiny object" (as the ARRL dubbed it) from the K1JT team. As you probably know, this mode has really caught on with the digital crowd, and the waterfall is chock full of FT-8 signals. Part of the reason for this is that it has some of the characteristics of JT-65, but is not as excruciatingly slow.



Over the past couple of days, I've made 32 QSOs, including a couple of DX contacts. It's been fun to try something new, but to be honest, I'm not really feeling the magic.

Part of it is that I don't feel like I'm really doing anything. I downloaded the software, plugged in my digital interface, fooled around with the settings a bit, and then, the computer started making contacts. I have to click a few on-screen controls to make contacts, but even that's a step that could be easily programmed in by the WSJT-X developers. (In fact, I wonder why they haven't done that already!)



Take a look at the screenshot above to see how a typical contact happens. When a CQ appears in the “Band Activity” window, you double click on it. When you do this, the software begins listening for signals on that frequency. In this case, I double-clicked on the CQ by WA9THI. When I double-clicked on the CQ, the program began decoding signals on that frequency and display the transmissions in the “Rx Frequency” window.

Then, I clicked on “Enable TX” and the program began the contact sequence, sending “WA9THI KB6NU EN82.” EN82 is my grid designator. This is shown as the first yellow line in the Rx Frequency window. The transmissions that I sent are highlighted in yellow. The transmissions sent by WA9THI are highlighted in red.

The sequence of transmissions shown there comprise a complete contact, and that whole process takes less than two minutes. And, once WA9THI received my first transmission, the sequence is all automatic. You just sit there and watch the two computers talk to one another.

While I can certainly appreciate the thought and the work that went into the design of the protocol and programming to implement it, sitting and watching the computers talk to one another just doesn’t excite me. On the other hand, if you’re one of those guys who wants to make contacts, but doesn’t really want to talk to anyone, than this is the mode for you!

Here are a few more notes about FT-8 operation:

- Not surprisingly, synchronizing your computer with the other stations computer is very important. To do that, you need to get your computer to use the network time protocol (NTP). I failed to do this when I first installed WSJT-X, and while my waterfall was full of FT-8 signals, WSJT-X just wouldn't decode them.
- I got my PC laptop to talk ntp by installing Meinberg NTP software (<http://www.ntp.org/ntpfaq/NTP-s-def.htm>). Once I did that, WSJT-X magically started decoding transmissions.
- Most of the cool guys seem to be using Meinberg NTP, but there are other options. One of the guys in our club is using a program called Dimension 4, for example.
- Apparently, you don't have to limit your power output as you would with PSK-31. At first, I set my output power to 10 W. I had a bit of success at 10 W, but I expected more. When I asked on Twitter how much power other guys were using, most of them said that they were using more than that.
- For the last couple of sessions, I've been setting my output power to 25 W, and I've been having more success. I've now worked several Europeans on 30m.
- Even at 25 W, my signal reports are more often than not not as good as the signal reports I'm handing out. I haven't figured this one out yet. This doesn't happen to me when I'm operating CW, so I don't think it's my antenna.
- When I'm operating, I write down the calls of stations I've contacted. The reason for this is that while WSJT-X does have a logging function, it doesn't have a log window, so unless you have a great memory, you could end up working guys two or three times a session. That's probably not a big deal since contacts are so quick, but I'd rather avoid doing that if I can.
- WSJT-X works "split." While most contacts take place on the same frequency, a station can call you anywhere in the passband of your receiver and WSJT-X will decode the signal and begin a contact. This threw me the first time or two that this happened, and I tried to change my transmit frequency to match the other station's. In doing so, I messed up the sequence. I now just let the contact proceed normally, and it works out great.
- When I work the other digital modes, I set my IC-746PRO to the USB-D mode. In this mode, the receive passband is narrower than for working phone. When operating FT-8, however, you don't want to limit that passband. Signals will appear across the entire 2.6 kHz of the USB signal, and if you narrow the passband, you won't be able to work those stations.
- WSJT-X checks the validity of call signs. This afternoon, there was a guy who had typed in his call as "WAMAD" and was calling CQ. WSJT-X wouldn't let me answer that CQ.
- Operating this mode opens up the possibility of working more stations whose call signs spell words and adding those QSL cards to my collection. I have, for example, already worked K1GUY, N4HER, and N5SLY. I'm guessing that these guys don't operate CW.

All told, I've found this to be an interesting foray into a new digital mode. While I'm not feeling the magic that some others seem to be feeling when operating FT-8, it certainly will be a change of pace to operate this mode from time to time. Give it a shot and tell me what you think.

Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. When he's not working FT-8, he teaches ham radio classes and operates CW on the HF bands. You can email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

For Sale List

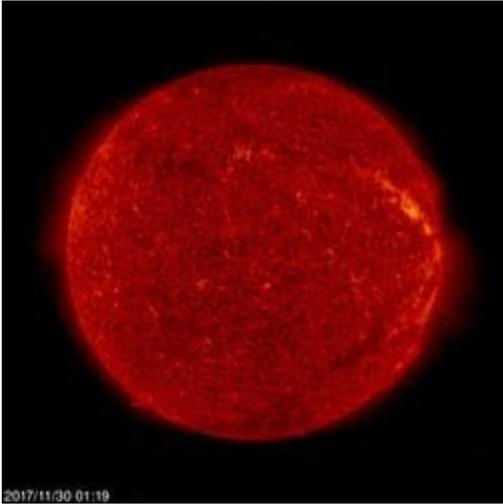
40 ft. Tower with Tri Band Beam (all items already down (ground level)) - Steve Arvin 317-847-6448

For more information contact/text Terry Zivney (N4TZ) N4TZ@arrl.net 1-765-520-1766, or Mike Hoggatt (KD9CDO) hoggattm@hotmail.com 765-621-7319.

Note Bob Cox (N9BMW) has decided to stay in the hobby, he has withdrawn his For Sale Items.

The K7RA Solar Update

Tad Cook, K7RA, Seattle, reports: Over the past 2 weeks, the average planetary A index increased from 6.7 to 11.6, while the average mid-latitude A index rose from 5 to 8.1.



Predicted solar flux is 68 on December 7-10; 70 on December 11-14; 75 on December 15-16; 74 on December 17; 73 on December 18-20; 74 on December 21-22; 76, 74, 72, 73, and 72 on December 23-27; 70 on December 28-January 8; 72 on January 9; 75 on January 10-12; 74 on January 13; 73 on January 14-16, and 74, 74, 76, and 74 on January 17-20.

Predicted planetary A index is 12 and 8 on December 7-8; 5 on December 9-10; 12 on December 11-12; 8 on December 13; 5 on December 14-16; 8, 25, and 10 on December 17-19; 8 on December 20-21; 5 on December 22-26; 10 and 8 on December 27-28; 5 on December 29-30; 32, 48, 18, 12, and 8 on December 31-January 4; 5 on January 5-6; 12, 15, 12, and 8 on January 7-10; 5 on January 11-12; 8, 25, and 10 on January 13-15; 8 on January 16-17, and 5 on January 18-20.

A new sunspot group (AR2690) emerged on December 6, after a period of no sunspots, but Spaceweather.com reports that, early on December 7, it was already fading.

This weekend is the [ARRL 10-Meter Contest](#). There is a good chance for sporadic-E propagation.

Tamitha Skov released "[A Mini-Storm Launch & a Fast Wind Chaser](#): Solar Storm Forecast 11-29-2017" last week.

From ARRL Indiana Newsletter dated 12/7/2017

Madison County Amateur Radio Club Contact Information

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**Meetings are at the Madison County EOC
200 Delaware Street
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