



# The QUARAE



Volume 17 Issue 12

December 2016

## November 2016 General Meeting Minutes

Meeting began at 7 PM

Board Members and Officers Present: Doug Sweet, AD4UL via Skype, Frank Etzler N8WXQ, Richard Quinn KB3ZVH, Ed Barlow, K1ZIK, Gene Brinig, KB3JZL, Craig Hill, K3PLV, John Lindvay, WB3IFD

Program: Arduino Morse Code Generator by WA3MKT

New hams: None

Silent Keys: None

Visitors: John Szymecki

Treasurer's report: \$586.41

Membership report: 59 members

Facilities Report: Started to replace light fixtures

Repeater Report: None

Contesting Report: None

Old Business: Wood part of ramp is done. Can we get some money back on excess material?

New Business: A motion was made and seconded to give WWA \$100 for the Christmas Party. A motion was made and seconded to replace lights in the club house for \$350.00 Both motions were passed by the membership.

Meeting end at :7:44 PM

Respectfully submitted by

John J Lindvay WB3IFD

Secretary

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Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.

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## MileStone

BY K3PLV

I've been DXing for a number of years. Over the years I've managed to work all 339 countries on the current DXCC list. I also have well over 300 countries on all 8 bands, 80 - 10.

Just recently I hit another milestone when I worked my hundredth country on the top band – 160 meters. I wasn't sure this would ever happen as 160 meters is usually a winter, nighttime band, and as I've aged I can no longer stay up late enough or get up early enough to work new ones.

The best propagation to Europe/Africa is at their



**Radio Association of Erie  
Club Meeting at the Red  
Cross on Pittsburgh Ave.  
Thursday December 1 at  
7 PM**

**Program: Software demo on making  
meter faces.**

sunrise, which is five, six, or seven hours ahead of us. That means I would need to stay up until midnight or one o'clock. For South Pacific QSOs the best propagation would be just before our sunrise, maybe six in the morning.

About 20:00 (8 pm EST), I saw a DX spot for FJ/KO8SCA on 160. I figured I had worked all the Caribbean countries years ago. But when I clicked on the DX spot I saw I still needed St. Barthelemy on top band. He wasn't very strong and I certainly don't have a killer signal on that band, as all I use for an antenna is an Alpha-Delta 160/80/40 vee, with an apex of about 30 feet. There were a number of stations calling him. But after about five minutes I managed to work him.

With 160 meter DXCC, I now have DXCC on nine bands. The moral of the story is you do not need a huge signal to work DX. When I've operated from Jersey (MJ/K3PLV) I have worked many United States QRP (five watts or less) stations using simple wire antennas. These people do not have big signals. But with some timing and operating skill they make it into the log. Now, if six meters ever opens up maybe I can work four new ones and have 10 band DXCC. Time will tell.

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I intend to live forever... So far, so good...

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## Is there a market for a \$400 "prepper" radio?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A couple of days ago, a reader wrote:

"I would like to know if it would be feasible to build a radio with the following features:

- \* SSB operation (only SSB is required, CW would be an additional benefit)

- \* 20 – 50W of power

- \* Portable-friendly (lightweight, capable of operating at lower voltages from small portable batteries)

- \* Low receiver current drain

- \* Coverage of 40m and 80m bands. Very limited coverage is acceptable. Even channelized coverage of a few select frequencies would be acceptable.

- \* S-meter

"It strikes me that there is a large market for ham radio products for "preppers," and there has been a lot of interest in the Baofeng line of radios from that market. I think there would be a LOT of interest in a radio that could go far beyond line-of-sight and contact friends or family hundreds of miles away. Preppers would have little interest in contacts more than a state or two away, and no interest at all in novel operating modes. I wonder if a radio that trims away excess features (all-mode operation, wide frequency coverage, high power output, sophisticated audio filtering) could be produced for a lot less cost than currently available HF rigs. If so, and it was paired with a decent NVIS dipole and some General-class study materials and sold as a package deal, it could be a huge hit – Something you could tuck in a bug-out-bag, set up in the field, and use to make contacts in a reasonably local area, or set up in your backyard at home and use minimal power to operate.

"Is there a reason why I don't see radios like this on the market, some kind of technological limitation that would make this sort of thing impractical? If something like this was built, what kind of cost and performance would you expect? I'm certainly not expecting any kind of detailed analysis, but even just a speculation about if such a project could be feasible would be appreciated."

I replied:

"I think one of the reasons you don't see radios with the feature set you describe is that more full-featured radios are already pretty inexpensive. The Yaesu FT-450D, for example, costs less than \$800 and offers 100W output. The FT-817ND, which is designed for portable operation, costs less than \$700. Is that too much for preppers?"

"While it might seem like you could sell a radio with fewer features for less, I think that you hit the law of diminishing returns. At some point, removing features, doesn't reduce the cost all that much. For example, removing the CW capabilities from a transceiver capable of SSB operation really doesn't save that much because in a way CW operation is really just a subset of SSB operation. You'll save the cost of a key jack, but how much is that? Maybe a buck or two. Having said that, it could be that the big amateur radio manufacturers are overlooking an opportunity here."

We swapped a couple more e-mails about this. He noted, "Most preppers would probably rather buy a high-end AR-15 or several months worth of storage food for \$800 than a radio." I suggested, "If there was a catastrophic event, and you really needed to communicate, wouldn't it seem silly to have not spent the extra \$400 on a really decent radio?"

What do you think? Is my analysis a little too simplistic perhaps? Are amateur radio manufacturers ignoring a potential market?

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Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides, and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. You can contact him by e-mailing [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).

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**Why do I have to press one for English when you're just gonna transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?**

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## Christmas Party

Christmas Party at the Skyline Restaurant, located 1301 E. Grandview Ave., Erie off Route 8, will be December 10<sup>th</sup> 3 PM to 7 PM. Cost is \$15.00 a person. The menu is as follows:

### Main Course

- Cowboy Salad
- Garden Salad
- Meat Loaf
- Honey Glazed Ham
- Rosemary Chicken
- Parsley Potatoes
- Green Beans with Almonds
- Honey Tarragon Carrots
- Rolls and Butter

### Dessert

- Brownies
- Pies
- Chocolate Mousse
- Coffee, Tea, Pop

### hors d'oeuvres

- Vegetable Tray
- Cheese and Cracker Tray

Must RSVP by December 1, 2016. Call Sue Seyboldt at 456-0500 or Craig Hill at 825-3438

If you RSVP and do not show you still have to pay.

## Amateur Calendar

There is no Wattsburg Meeting in December

December 1 – RAE club meeting at Red Cross

December 4 - 10-Meter RTTY Contest. See [www.rttycontesting.com](http://www.rttycontesting.com)

December 6 – Corry Club Meeting

December 8 – Union City Wire Association Club  
meetin.

December 10 – Christmas Party. See this issue.

December 10 - ARRL 10-Meter Contest. See  
[www.arrl.org/10-meter](http://www.arrl.org/10-meter)

December 10 - SKCC Weekend Sprintathon. See  
[www.skccgroup.com](http://www.skccgroup.com)

December 14 - NAQCC CW Sprint. See [naqcc.info](http://naqcc.info)

December 17 – VE Session at Greene Township  
Bldg.

December 18 - ARRL Rookie Roundup. See  
[www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup](http://www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup)

December 22 - NAQCC CW Sprint. See [naqcc.info](http://naqcc.info)

December 25 – Christmas

December 28 - SKCC Sprint. See  
[www.skccgroup.com](http://www.skccgroup.com)

December 31 – New Year’s Eve