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# The 52nd W9DXCC Convention —Not Just For DXers

Howard Huntington, K9KM

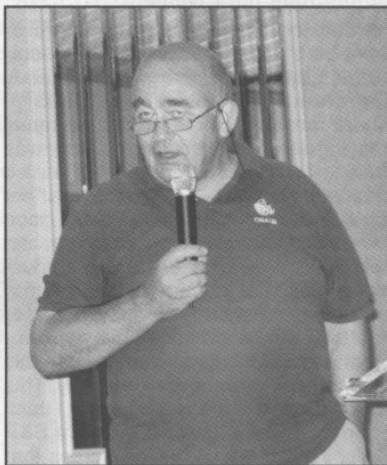
W9DXCC is the place to be for DXers and contesters on a weekend in September near Chicago. The 52nd W9DXCC DX Convention assembled in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, hosted by the Northern Illinois DX Association on the weekend of September 17 to 19, 2004, with 220 enthusiastic DXers present. As many of us know, a DX convention also brings many contesters as well, since DXers and contesters are inseparable to a great extent. W9DXCC is probably the largest annual gathering of contesters in the Midwest, second only to the Dayton Hamvention.

The first W9DXCC met in Chicago on December 5, 1953, organized by chairman Bob Baird, W9NN. All W9 DXCC holders were invited and 33 attended. Over the years, it has become an international event with visitors and speakers from throughout the world. The Northern Illinois DX Association has been the host since 1976.

The 2004 event was the best yet. Along with all the DXers were well known contesters representing contest clubs, including Kentucky Contest Group, North Texas Contest Club, PVRC, Tennessee Contest Group, YCCC and, of course, Society of Midwest Contesters. Present from outside the usual domain of SMC were K1TN, K2PLF, K3NA, K4ZW, N4GN, W4PA, KY7M, N7NG, WB8RFB, W0NB, WX0B and ON4UN (OTxT), along with about 35 SMCers, some traveling more than 200 miles. For contesters this is probably the best part—an opportunity to get to know each other. Next year, hopefully, most will return and there will be new faces joining the event.

The weekend started Friday evening with the SMC dinner at a local restaurant. SMCers and guests from outside the area enjoyed good food and a chance to meet each other and exchange strategies for upcoming contests. SMC President Paul Gentry, K9PG, set up the arrangements and added significantly to the enjoyment. Carl Smith, N4AA, of DX Publications opened a Welcome Reception at 7:30 PM and later the Northern Illinois DX Association hospitality suite was the place to be late into the night.

Emcee Jim O'Connell, W9WU, opened the program Saturday at 9 AM. First up was Lee Finkel, KY7M, reporting on the Niger Republic African Adventure to 5U5Z. Next was the ARRL Forum led by Central Division Director Dick Isely,



Contester and DXer ON4UN giving his presentation

W9GIG, with Vice Director Howard Huntington, K9KM, DXAC Chairman W9WU, Membership Services Manager Wayne Mills, N7NG, and RF Safety Committee Chairman Greg Lapin, N9GL. The group discussed Logbook of the World, the threat of BPL and the proposal for regulation by bandwidth. A surprise then followed as Ed Garman, K9TX, brought to the stage a group of much admired DXers from the '30s and '40s for some well-deserved recognition. Next, Jim Cain, K1TN, author of *YASME-The Danny Weil and Colvin Radio Expeditions*, spoke of the fascinating lives of Danny and the Colvins and the many contributions they brought to amateur radio. Jim showed a large assortment of photographs spanning that time of history. The last morning program was IOTA Update by Mike McGirr, K9AJ, Gordon Bazzali, WB9EEE, and Jim Model, K9PPY.

Starting the afternoon programs was a very special W9DXCC guest speaker, John Devoldere, ON4UN. John is a well-known DXer and contesteer, author of *Low-Band DXing*, and a super person to meet in person. Along with John Battin, K9DX, and Jerry Rosalius, WB9Z, the team fascinated the group with their experiences on 160 meters and with plenty of answers to questions about how to get started on top band and some good advice on choosing times to operate knowing the unusual propagation on the band.

Jay Terleski, WX0B, followed with a

presentation of his massive design and installation of antenna systems at the Fort Bragg North Carolina Special Services HF station, including phased log periodics and long wire antennas. Next, Ten-Tec's Scott Robbins, W4PA, spoke about receiver performance of their Orion transceiver, including the advantages of the roofing filter and third order intercept performance and customizable parameters like AGC so that signals can pop out of the noise. Scott believes receivers will just keep getting better with advances in more powerful DSPs that can ultimately implement spurious free receivers with 180 dB dynamic range.

Next was NCJ editor Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, to speak about Cycle 23 and propagation for the 2004/2005 DX and contest season which he expects to be good for 160 to 40 meter operations and recommends sunrise and sunset as target operating times. Based on historical data, it looks like Cycle 24 will be an average or lower solar cycle.

The final afternoon program was by Eric Scace, K3NA, about the 3B9C Rodrigues Island DXpedition. Eric did a great presentation on the DXpedition, but most fascinating was an animated display of 3B9C QSOs with the US on 160 meters. As sunrise progressed across the map of the US in fast forward, each QSO appeared as a bright spot on the map and slowly dimmed to a dark dot showing graphically a distribution of the QSOs as the gray line progressed across the US map.

Immediately following the last program was the CW Pileup Contest arranged by K9AJ. The winners, announced at the banquet, were W4PA in first, N7NG in second, and W9XY in third.

NIDXA President Don Backys, K9UQN, welcomed the banquet. Emcee W9WU kept things moving along with the All Time countries countdown, a donation to NCDXF accepted by Director Tim Totten, N4GN, with generous support from ICOM and a Special Award for Excellence presented to Glenn Johnson, W0GJ.

Following an enjoyable meal, John Devoldere, ON4UN, was again introduced and took the podium as the banquet speaker. John captivated the audience with his experiences in contesting and DXing as a young amateur to the present. John is a member of CQ Contest Hall of Fame and showed photos of his wall of many contest plaques and certificates.

The 2004 W9DXCC Hog of the Year

was awarded to Don Backys, K9UQN. As the worthy recipient, Don was obligated to turn the piggy upside down and circulate through the crowd as green bills accumulated inside the inverted lid. Proceeds of more than \$600 were presented to Director Isely in support of the ARRL's BPL Fund. Next was the hospitality suite hosted by the Greater Milwaukee DX Association, and it continued into the morning hours.

Thanks to the Northern Illinois DX Association and the members who made this event possible, especially Chairman Bill Smith, W9VA, and Emcee Jim O'Connell, W9WU, for their years of service. Thanks to the QSL checkers and to Rent Com for providing the AV equipment and to the many commercial suppliers for their support.

The next W9DXCC is September 17, 2005. DXers and contesters worldwide are welcome to join NIDXA for another great weekend. Check **[www.w9dxcc.com](http://www.w9dxcc.com)** for more details of the 2004 event and for developing details of the 2005 event. We hope to see you here next year. As the title of this article stated, the W9DXCC is not just for DXers.

**NCJ**