



# The FLASH



## The Official Newsletter of the Mad River Radio Club

February - March 1998

Volume 27 Issue 4

### From the MRRC 'Big Fish'

By Jeff Clarke, KU8E  
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Greetings from the Fish.... just back from those turquoise blue waters of the Caribbean !! I tell you there is nothing like combination of big pileups and tropical WX to get you excited about contesting again. That DXpedition bug has also bit K8CC, W8AV, and others and there are rumors floating around some of the guys looking for real estate down south!

We did pretty good at VP5FXB... about 8000 QSOs and 8 million points. Unfortunately, we were just a little too close to the States. V26B really waxed us on 10 meters and we were a respectable number #2 in multi-multi. K8CC/C6A could really relate to us as they suffered much of the same conditions and some antenna problems to put in a nice score. They made up for it a couple weekends later helping WP3X put in the number #1 score in multi-multi in the world. Congratulations!

Now that a few of us have caught the DXpedition bug there is some serious talk about a future MRRC DXpedition this fall. Stay tuned.

Something that was very apparent to me during my stay in the Caribbean and during the contest was the lack of activity in the club. I really can't recall working anyone besides K8MR and KT8X. Those of us that are active in the club are somewhat at a loss as what to do to increase activity. If anyone has any suggestions... Please voice your opinion.

I think we need to have more club activities besides the four meetings we have every year. I think a club Field Day, using the club call K8MAD, would be a good start.

I have heard a few excuses that we are all to spread out to do this. I disagree, We could easily find a point on the map where we are within a couple hours driving distance. How about a VHF contest mountaintop operation? I know quite a few guys in the club have the interest and the equipment to pull this off. These are just a couple of my ideas..... the ball is in your court.

73 de Jeff KU8E

### Product Review: RITTY by K6STI

By Tim Mitchell, K9TM  
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RTTY with just a PC and a radio? This is possible with RITTY by K6STI. At first I was skeptical about the product. After a lot of testing at the station of another amateur who already owned RITTY, an order was placed.

The program is normally delivered by e-mail on the internet. A call to Brian and minutes later, it showed up in my mailbox. The program is also available on N1RCT's home page for updates or a demo program. When you download the program you do not get a license file. This is how the program decides to operate in demo mode or work indefinitely. The demo period is about 5 minutes then it shuts down and does not preserve your settings. This provided me enough time to test various computers and sound cards before ordering the product.

Although the program is capable of operating in RTTY or PACTOR mode, I have only used the RTTY mode. The advertisements for the program say that one needs a Creative Labs Sound Card. This was a problem as my notebook only has a "Sound Blaster compatible"

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The *FLASH* is the official newsletter of the **Mad River Radio Club**, and is published six times per year in even-numbered months. Submissions of material for the *FLASH* are welcome, and may be sent to the editor at the address of the last page.

The Mad River Radio Club is an ARRL-affiliated club of amateur radio contesting enthusiasts. The club area is centered on Findlay, OH, and serves the surrounding states. Membership in the MRRC is open to anyone. Dues are \$12 per year, payable to club treasurer **KE8OC**. Please make checks out to **Tim O'Sullivan**.

In addition to six in-person meetings per year, MRRC has an informal net every Monday evening at 8:30 PM Eastern time on 3825 KHz ± QRM. Everyone is welcome to check in for the latest club news and information.

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★ **DON'T FORGET!** ★

★ We need YOUR contributions for ★

★ the next MRRC Flash - start working ★

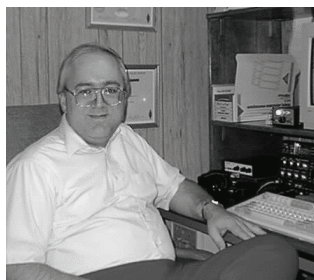
★ NOW on an article! ★

★ Deadline for publication: ★

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# The Editor's Keyboard

By Dave Pruett, K8CC  
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There have been good reasons for the lateness of this issue of the FLASH. Although it seems like the K8MR meeting was not too long ago, a lot of water has flowed down the Mad River since then. For me personally, the ARRL DX contests were a hectic time with CW in the Bahamas and SSB in Puerto Rico. In retrospect, two contest expeditions in three weeks was a bit much, but sometimes you have to grab the opportunities when they arise.

Have you joined the MRRC e-mail reflector yet? If not, you're missing out on a valuable medium for keeping in touch with other MRRC members. Activity is starting to pick up as more people join.

To subscribe to the the MRRC reflector send an Internet e-mail message to **MRRC-REQUEST @ contesting.com..** The body of the message should say "subscribe MRRC yourcall". For example: "subscribe MRRC K8MAD". After a few hours, your subscription will take effect. To utilize the MRRC Reflector, address your e-mail to **MRRC @ contesting.com.** You should see your message reflect back in a short time.

The term "subscribe" might be misleading, for there is no cost or obligation associated with the reflector. It is provided as a free service to Mad River by **Bill Fisher, W4AN and Akorn Net.** Everyone in the club should give Bill one free win in the next frequency battle for his generosity. Note that I said ONE free win...

One of the topics that has been raised on the reflector concerns recent levels of activity out of MRRC. We're just now coming out of a sunspot minimum which historically has been a period of low activity for many contesters. The guys with big stations can somehow find enough fun to stay interested in a DX contest with low sunspots, but its grueling to operate with a tribander and wires under those same conditions.

MRRC counts among its ranks some of the best contesters in W8. However, without activity our club is nothing. Nine years ago when NCC split off, our club decided that mandating participation was not what we are about but the club grew and thrived anyways.

Maybe it IS just the lack of sunspots, but it will be interesting to see how the club members support our activities at Dayton.

73, de **Dave, K8CC**

## MRRC Scores

Collected by Jim Stahl, K8MR  
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### NAQP CW

K8MAD 278-114 31,692 K4LT K8GT K8MR K9TM  
W8RZ AC8E KU8E KF8UN

### NAQP SSB

KW8N 805-227 182,735  
K8MR 89- 58 5,162

### JANUARY VHF SS

K8MR 187- 63 14,049  
K8CC 58- 14 1,624 50 MHz  
WA8WZG 601,210 +WA8RJF,N2CEI

### CQ 160 CW

K8MK 961-57-56 383,748 +K8LR,K8ZD,KU8E,WR8C  
N8TR 260-52-40 90,712 +PKT  
N8KR 264-62 40,362  
K8MR 143-44- 3 15,181

### FEBRUARY CW SPRINT

KW8N 279-44 12,276  
K8MM 225-44 9,900  
K8DD 100-39 3,900  
K8CC 56-21 1,176

### FEBRUARY SSB SPRINT

KW8N 248-45 11,160

### ARRL DX CW

KT8X 1639-261 1,283,337  
K8MR 591-207 367,011  
AF8A 300-159 143,100 100W  
N8KR 223-157 105,033  
KE8OC 118- 93 31,860  
AC8E 136- 81 33,048 +PKT  
VE3ZTH 82- 68 16,728 +PKT  
WQ8RP 831-313 780,309 QRP M/2 @K8CC +K8DD,  
AC8W,N8CQA,K8GT,WD8S

### K8CC/C6A

5344-331 5,306,592 M/2 +W8UA K9TM KR8V

### VP5FXB

8002-341 8,186,046 M/M +K4LT,KU8E,W8AV,  
K8RF & others

### CQ 160 SSB

N8KR 641-70 102,270  
K8MR 204-41 10,204  
WR8C 1165-92 279,220 +K8MK K8LR K8ZD KU8E  
N8TR 1083-57-28 225,420+W8BIN WB8K KF8UN  
NI8Z N8DMM

### ARRL DX SSB

N8TR 1499-413 1,854,783 +Packet  
KU8E 420-193 243,180  
K8GT 406-179 218,022  
N8KR 317-160 152,160 100W  
K8MR 247-142 105,222  
KT8X 150- 64 28,800  
WP3X 11821-356 12,624,828 M/M K8CC W8MJ & others

## RITTY (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

card. As it turns out, for RTTY a compatible card is fine, it is only the PACTOR mode that requires a real Creative Labs Sound Blaster.

Received audio from your radio goes into either the line input or microphone input of the sound card. For transmit you have the option of running AFSK

using audio from the line output or speaker jack, or you can run true FSK using a simple interface circuit built from some garden variety transistors and a couple of resistors connected to the computer serial port.

RITTY has two main ways of being used, as a standalone program or as a TSR. The standalone program allows making RTTY QSOs, but then a second computer is necessary to log. In TSR mode, RITTY fills the role of the

RTTY terminal unit that interfaces to your logging program. The most popular program that uses RITTY in this way is the WF1B RTTY contesting program. Thanks to N8JF I had the opportunity to play with the WF1B program and RITTY together. I was not too impressed with the WF1B program but RITTY seemed to work really well. Armed with this information I twisted K8CC's arm and NA support for RITTY will be available by Dayton.

## Cool Stuff: Great Circle Map Software

Great Circle maps centered on your location have been available from several sources. A note in the FRC newsletter alerted me to a shareware program called Azimuth by Tony Field, VE6YP. Azimuth is a Windows application that allows you to create Great Circle maps for any location. The map can be printed on almost any Windows printer, even large plotters. Shown below is a map centered on K8CC which I captured as a bit map and then pasted into this newsletter. You can download Azimuth off the

Internet from:

[www.logicnet.tony.field/azimuth](http://www.logicnet.tony.field/azimuth)

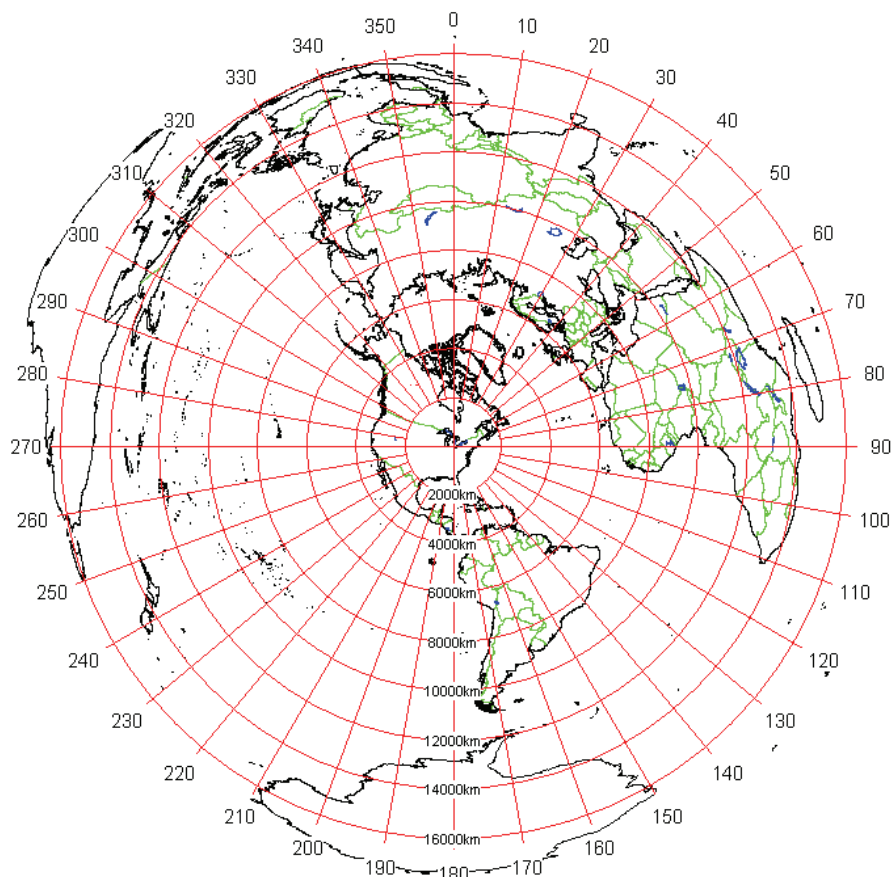
The program is shareware, but I could not find any request for money on the web site or in the downloaded files. In any case, the program is really slick and I wish I had found out about this a month ago - it would have been real useful for determining directions from C6A and KP4.

I ran RITTY during our recent venture to C6 using a preliminary version of RITTY-enabled NA. I was really pleased with the performance of RITTY under demanding pileup conditions. (It turns out that C6 is somewhat rare on RTTY to Europe and very rare to JA.) I had so much fun making RTTY contacts that almost all of my non-contest contacts were on RTTY.

RITTY is a DOS (not Windows) program. I have not had any major problems running it under DOS 6.2, DOS window in Win95 and DOS window in Win3.1. The advertisement says 486DX required, which I've found really means 486DX-66 or faster. A faster machine would be recommended for running RITTY as a TSR along with a contest logging program.

There are only two negative things that I have to offer in regards to the program. The documentation is weak at telling you how to hook things up and get it working. The other item is that I wish he would make the RTTY and PACTOR programs separate in hopes that the RTTY program TSR would be smaller. I have had no problem loading it in high memory on my computers so it really isn't a big problem for me.

All things considered I am very happy with RITTY and recommend it to anyone who wants to get on RTTY. Next contest season I will be giving RTTY contesting a try and RITTY is the modem that I plan to use and of course NA to log all of those QSOs.



## Treasurer's Report

By Tim O'Sullivan, KE8OC  
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Not much fiscal activity this month, just the minimum stuff that keeps MRRC rolling along. Good to see a few new members and some old faces re-upping their dues. We're solvent, and all our bills are paid so we're looking good heading into Dayton.

<b><u>Balance from 9/97</u></b>	\$432.42
<b><u>Income</u></b>	
Dues received	\$60.00
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>	
Checking Acct Maintenance	\$ 12.00
FLASH Printing	\$ 87.00
<b><u>Balance 11/97</u></b>	\$393.42

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tim O'Sullivan, KE8OC

## A Way to Run Logging Programs Under Windows 95

By Dave Pruett, K8CC  
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My new Dell laptop came with Windows 95 as the operating system. Most DOS logging programs cause occasional problems under Win95, so I've been booting DOS 6.22 from a floppy for contesting. During the WP3X expedition I learned a simple technique that allows booting to either DOS or Win95 and appears to run NA or CT perfectly.

The technique is to put a batch file called WIN.BAT in the root directory of your hard disk. This can be a null file, or in my case it had one single line which read "c:". When the computer boots it executes this file instead of WIN.EXE then exits to a DOS prompt. If you execute the VER command it says you're in Windows, but if you type EXIT nothing happens.

The only trick to this is that you must have a PATH statement in AUTOEXEC.BAT that has c:\ as the first entry. As a final touch I added a pair of other batch files which can be run from the DOS prompt. GODOS.BAT executes commands to run my DOS logging program. GOWIN.BAT has a single line "\WINDOWS\WIN.EXE" which invokes Win95.



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