The Eastern Iowa DXer

The Official Newsletter of the Eastern Iowa DX Association







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From the President

Gary, K0GT President, EIDXA

Recent Dxpeditions have been having a rough time. The Peter I group had difficulties with the transportation people they were dealing with. The Andaman Is. Group was challenged by the tsunami destruction and turned their effort into an emergency communication operation. The Swains Is. Operation was delayed by weather and plagued with poor propagation. The propagation will probably not markedly improve for the next several years. I recently saw a prediction for the next cycle to be a very weak one. All this means it is not going to get easier to improve DXCC totals or contest scores in the near future. We certainly have our work cut out for us. It might be a good time to improve antenna systems to make up for the lack of propagation. Actually we are in the middle of good times. We have the choice of the best equipment that has ever been available. Most of us have antennas that exceed what a lot of early

DXers struggled with. There are more DX stations active from more areas now than ever and more DXpeditions coming on with fair regularity. We have a variety sources for information about DX activity. One of the most important factors in working the rare ones is being on the bands when they are. Keep the finals warm, the coax dry and stay active.

73's Gary, K0GT

Editor's Corner

By Tom KØYA Vice President, EIDXA

Well, there is quite a lot to report on since our last meeting as you can see from the articles in the newsletter this time! And, there have been a number of significant world events to boot! I'm sure the Peter 1 group is very disappointed and it looks like they are not the only ones having challenges.

Our program will be interesting this month. There is a glimpse of some of our

featured speakers activities in an article below. But, I'm a bit confused about Dxpeditions. Rick, NOYY, was trying, a few years ago, to get me interested in joining him on a Dxpedition. I don't remember sunny warm beaches with inviting ocean views in his description of the opportunity. All I remember is barren rocks that were essentially inaccessible by any means except hiking or a helicopter, cold weather and other uninviting environmental concerns. Am I missing something here or is it that all the good spots are already taken!!

Well, all we can do is make sure we are ready for the next opportunities. I'm finally working on my tower project. Hopefully we will pour concrete within a month or so and it will be up for next winter. It is looking like 64 feet of Trylon T500 with a Force 12 XR-5 on it with possibly a 30 meter rotable dipole on top. I'm sure I'll find a few other things to attach to the tower as well. As I'm working on the project I've been thinking it would be nice to have a collection of experiences/best practices to help me make sure I am making the right choices, setting up my grounding scheme properly and getting the best performance I can for the budget I have for the project. Anybody have any thoughts?

I'm looking forward to getting back into the Dxing mode for sure and getting into a few of the contests this coming winter. Of course I've hit the peak of the sun spot cycle as usual!!! Oh well, just makes it more challenging.

Good Dxing, see you at the meeting.

73's Tom, K0YA

Thoughts from the Director

By Wade Walstrom W0EJ Director, ARRL Midwest Division

Dayton is fast approaching and this year is also the ARRL National Convention. We are trying some different things for this convention, which we hope, will make this convention a memorable one and not just another Dayton Hamvention. One major difference is that the ARRL presence will be in two separate venues. In addition to the usual ARRL booth there will also be an area for both formal and informal presentations, and an opportunity to meet HQ staff plus the usual group of ARRL officers, directors and vice directors. This new area will be where the contest and DX forums had been held for years until a couple of years ago. (To me this is a good news/bad news thing. It is good that ARRL will have an opportunity to try something new at the convention, but a bit of a bummer since it appears the Hamvention organizers are content to hold the DX and contest forums in the existing (smaller) forum rooms. I have not been able to attend a contest or DX forum since these forums were moved to the smaller rooms.)

The hamfest season is upon us and April is a busy month for me. I will be out of town for 4 of the 5 weekends in April doing ARRL business. Despite April being a busy month, I have noticed some previously healthy hamfests have disappeared. Kearney, NE, has not had an ARRL sanctioned hamfest in many years, I have heard nothing from the guys in Lebanon, MO, (they have hosted the Midwest Division Convention the past 2 years), and I fear the Norfolk, NE, club is folding the Nebraska State Convention after a disappointing year last year. There was no W0DXCC last year because no one stepped forward to host

it and I have heard of no one stepping forward this year. This is something EIDXA, as an active DX club, should strongly consider hosting. Then again, maybe we are just an aging ham club like most of the others, which are losing members faster than enthusiasm for Amateur Radio.

I was saddened to see that Rush Drake, W7RM, recently became a silent key. Many of you will remember the huge signal from W7RM call in all the DX contests and may have seen the Dayton presentations of the W7RM shack and antennas. Some may also recall that Rush, for a brief time was an ARRL Director. I never met Rush but I have missed hearing him or at least his call in the pileups. 73 Rush!

It is great to have a high HF band antenna up again. A couple of new radios did not hurt either! I did work the ARRL DX contests and took a few swipes at Sweepstakes and the 160-meter contest. I have even worked some new band countries.

The April EIDXA meeting is one of those weekends I will be doing the ARRL's business.

73's Wade, W0EJ

EIDXA Packet Cluster

By Tom Vavra, WB8ZRL

When I spoke about the new cluster software, DXSpider, at the club meeting I talked a bit about the problems I was having with the system crashing with I/O interrupt problems from the TNC's. I was able to manage the problem a bit by shutting down every two days, and then reconnecting the users (but not with 100% success). The operating system I

was using was the Linux package RedHat 9.0, which was a bit out of date but was the first one I could make packet and NetRom play correctly. I heard of other sysops having good luck with Mandrake version 10.1. Since the install of Linux is not trivial I decided to obtain another computer as the cluster backup.

Let me digress a bit to plug a local business. Midwest Computer Brokers is in Walford (between CR and the Amanas). www.mcbia.com is their web site. They sell older, previously used computers, but with the hard drive essentially wiped. I got a Compaq 400 MHz Pentium II with 128Mb ram, 10Gb HD, sound card, floppy drive, CD-ROM drive, video card, mouse and keyboard for \$50. It also had two ISA slots, which I wanted for the serial card. I got a 4Gb HD for the cluster data for another \$10. The main HD is formatted and all it has on it is enough DOS to give the command prompt and the DIR command. For Linux it is perfect, but for Windows (or as a friend says, Windoz) it will take a bit of work to identify the drivers needed, and find/download them. For my purpose it was perfect. End of digression.

On 13 March I put on-line a Mandrake system with the most recent release of the DXSpider software. K1XX has had this system on-line for almost a month with zero problems. Mine hung after about 40 hours. The reboot lasted 22 hours. At this point, following a hunch, I turned off the power saving option in the BIOS and rebooted. It has been running since.

The newest build of DXSpider has one new command, SHOW/GRAYLINE (I will show command with capital letters, but they are case insensitive). The grayline period is defined as the period between sunset/rise and when the sun is 6 degrees below the horizon. With no

argument the grayline times will be for your QTH -- assuming you have set lat/lon. You can use anyone's call as an argument if their lat/lon is in the user database, or you can use a country prefix. Multiple calls/prefixes can be in one command. You can ask for plus or minus 366 days from the current day. Some examples:

SH/GRAY for my grayline today SH/GRAY K0JGH SH/GRAY VK9 VK0 SH/GRAY -1 for my grayline yesterday SH/GRAY 7 for my grayline next week SH/GRAY 7 VK9 for vk9 next week

For those of us that have trouble spelling SHOW/GREYLILNE is an alias.

One DXSpider command that I did not spend much time on at the club meeting is APROPOS. This command scans the HELP database for keywords and returns all the commands that might apply.

will return

ap wwv ACCEPT/WWV [0-9] <pattern> set an 'accept' WWV filter CLEAR/WWV [1|all] Clear a WWV filter REJECT/WWV [0-9] <pattern> set a 'reject' WWV filter SET/WWV Allow WWV messages to come out on your terminal SHOW/WWV Show last 10 WWV broadcasts SHOW/WWV <n> Show last <n> WWV broadcasts UNSET/WWV Stop WWV messages

To find more about show/wwv, HELP SHOW/WWV

coming out on your terminal

ap dx will return a pretty long list, as you might expect.

If you want to see what DXSpider looks like but cannot connect locally, the go to your favorite web browser and telnet://dxc.k1xx.com:7300 You can ignore the requests to set name, QTH etc. Maybe some day, there will be telnet access to the cluster locally. That is where we (NA0IA and I) are headed.

73's Tom, WB8ZRL

NODX Repeater Upgrade

The EIDXA repeater, N0DX/R, was recently upgraded. The most dramatic part of the upgrade occurred at the transmit site where a complete change out of the ground equipment was accomplished. At the receive site, a change in functionality was accomplished. Some physical changes at the receive site remain to be cocoordinated with the other users at that site. I feel a description of the current system would be useful.

The System

The repeater is a split site system. The receive site is locate several miles from the transmit site. This configuration is used by most amateur 2-meter repeaters in the Cedar Rapids area due to a unique situation. We have a 600 KHz AM radio station (WMT) in town. Nearly any rusty joint in the near field of that repeater transmitter will mix the 600 KHZ AM with the repeater transmit and produce a signal on the repeater input frequency. This makes it difficult to operate single site 2-meter repeaters in Cedar Rapids.

The Receive Site

The receive site is located on the KCRG standby tower just north of Hiawatha. The antenna on this site is located on the east side of the tower, 390 feet above ground

level. This antenna is shared with 4 other amateur 2-meter repeater receivers. The other repeaters are; 1) CVARC 146.145, 2) CRRA 147.690, 3) CRRA 144.550 and 4) Benton Co. ARC 144.630. The sharing is accomplished by means of a six pole whole 2 meter band band-pass filter, a low noise, high dynamic pre-amp and an 8 port splitter. Cabinet space, power supply and remoter control functions are also shared.

The EIDXA equipment at the receive site consists of a Motorola Micor VHF receiver; an interface card containing receive squelch, audio processing, link signaling, link timing and link ID functions; a Hamtronics link transmitter and 5 watt PA.

The Transmit Site

The transmit site is located at the southeast Marion water tower. It is shared with a Civil Air Patrol repeater. In this case, the repeated equipment is separately housed but the transmit antenna is shared by means of a duplexer. The transmit antenna is located 140 feet above ground level.

The EIDXA equipment at the receive site consists of a Motorola Micor UHF receiver, VHF transmitter, 100 Watt PA and power supply; UHF remote control receiver and control logic; a MicroComputerConcepts repeater controller; and miscellaneous interface circuits.

The receive and transmit sites are interconnected by means of a UHF amateur band link.



The Upgrade

The upgrade accomplished the following:

- 1) Increase in transmit power (35 -> 100 watts).
- 2) Increased reliability of transmitter.
- 3) Moved repeater controller function from receive site to transmit site.
- 4) Repeater controller is a bit more flexible.
- 5) Link signaling method changed from sub-audible tone to hyper tone.
- 6) Now has ability to require subaudible tone (192.8 Hz) for repeater access.

What has not changed?

- No antennas where changed.
- The prime receiver was not changed.

- The buzzy, temperature sensitive signal that drifts through the input frequency has not
 - Been located.
 - Does not require subaudible tone (yet).

73's AL, K0VM

Bahamas Adventure February 2005

By Steve Sutterer AK0M, C6ASB

Sandy and I took another mid-winter respite from Iowa weather from Feb. 13-22 to visit the Bahamas again. We've been there twice before recently (July '03 and Feb '04) and go there for sun, a beach, R&R, exploring, fishing, and ham radio. I usually pick the dates to coincide with some significant contest or another to make it more interesting.

Instead of the tourist-trap locations like Nassau and Freeport, we go to the relatively quiet and undeveloped out islands. Our first two trips we stayed on Abaco Island at Treasure Cay, at the "rental QTH" Sand Dollar Villa (http://www.sanddollarvilla.com/). We really enjoyed that location and the amenities there. You can read about those trips at http://pages.cfu.net/~sjs/c6asb.htm.

This year the Sand Dollar Villa was being rented by a "snowbird" from Jan-March, so we had to find a different location. I started looking at the island of Eleuthera, and found the Island Breeze Cottage there

(http://www.islandbreezebahamas.com/). It's right on the Atlantic Ocean, and the inshore and flats fishing there sounded very good.



Most of the Bahamas out islands are only served by small aircraft, typically 19-passenger models. That limits the luggage and equipment you can take. My ham interests are CW operating and QRP, so that's what I packed for. I ended up taking my FT-857, my FT-817 for use right on the beach and as backup, two LDG automatic antenna tuners, a 12V power supply, paddles, a keyer, an HP200LX palmtop computer for "beach operation" logging, and my laptop for logging in the cottage.

Antennas were a challenge. I enjoy experimenting with portable wire antenna designs, so I came up with several antennas that I didn't get to try out until I got there (hmmm... bad idea?). For operating on the beach, I took a vertical wire doublet, about 9ft per side, with 7ft of linear loading at the feedpoint. This was supported by a telescoping 20ft crappie fishing pole. For operation at the cottage, I built a 38ft wire vertical with 25ft of linear loading at the base, supported by my 32ft Telepole mounted on the second floor deck of the cottage. This antenna was fed at the base, and had two stubtuned-radials (per the Butternut design) elevated "gull-wing style" to about 6ft high. All antennas were fed with 300-ohm twinlead through one of my tuners.

Outside of the contest, I worked about 200 QSOs on 80m-15m, all CW, and most of them at 10w. I was interested in seeing how future trips would be using an even smaller station at that power level; I found that generally I couldn't work them at 75-100w if I couldn't work them with 10w. About 2/3 of my Q's were US, and the rest were various DX. Pileups were fair but steady. 80m Europeans were LOUD! It's just too hard to believe, given what I hear from home with my wire lowband antennas! They are generally louder than US and VE stations!

I did operate some from right on the beach. This is great! Sandy likes to sun and read on the beach, so I take advantage of the time to get some operating in. The best bands for me during daylight hours were 17m and 15m, but you have to watch the propagation and the time of day in Europe to be able to work much EU in the afternoon. Generally, EU was best in the late morning.

tone for about 5 seconds each time I finished a contact! I was stunned! So I'd wait for things to die down enough that I could get at least a couple letters of a call, then would work that contact. This continued for at least 30 minutes, and was really an experience I'll not forget! The rest of the contest the pileups were steady though not so intense, with 20m being the most productive band for me, followed by 15m. I did make contacts on all bands 80m-10m though. Final score after 8 hours was a little over 130K, with 435 QSO's. Not too bad with 5w. I think I could have been competitive had I put in a full effort, but I know I was beat for the North America QRP All Band award by someone presumably operating at the TI5M "superstation". The most frustrating part of the contest was hearing all the LOUD European signals on 40m, 80m, and 160m, and knowing they were "offlimits"... I think a worldwide contest like CQ WW or WPX or even IARU would be more fun from that perspective.





I operated the ARRL DX CW contest for about 8 hours. This was a QRP entry, 5w output, and mostly using the cottage vertical. When I first got on the air midafternoon on Saturday, after calling CQ and making one QSO on 20m, the pileup was immediate! I'm sure I was spotted on the cluster network; within a couple more Q's, the pileup became just one steady

Overall, it was a great trip! There are many radio as well as non-radio elements and adventures of the trip I could share sometime later; I'm putting together a slide show for my Bahamas trips that'll see its first use at the Washington, IA club meeting on April 21. And for anyone else contemplating a contest/Dxpedition trip to the Caribbean, let me know if

you're interested in putting together a group! - 73, Steve Sutterer AK0M

Adventure Radio

If you enjoy including ham radio as a secondary aspect of some outdoor activity like hiking, bicycling, camping, traveling, or vacation, check out the Adventure Radio Society at www.arsqrp.com (particularly the Archives section). These folks promote such activity, and for you contesters out there that want a more frequent contesting "fix" during the warm weather months, there are a number of events that you as well as casual operators would likely enjoy.

Adventure radio does place a lot of emphasis on QRP operation just due to its portable nature, but you can work a surprising amount of DX toward your QRP DXCC award while enjoying the outdoors. And there are lots of opportunities for portable antenna experimentation that can often carry over into improvements in your home station antennas.

Enjoy! Contact me at *sspub1 @cfu.net* if you have any questions.

73's Steve Sutterer, AK0M

[Currently Active Operations as reported at http://www.ng3k.com/Misc/adxod.html]

April						
2005 Apr01	2005 Apr09	Cayman Islands	ZF2UJ	K4UJ	<u>OPDX</u> 20050321	By K4UJ fm Grand Cayman Is; 80 40 20 17 12 10m; CW SSB; 100 watts; wire antenna; fm north side of island
2005 Apr01	2005 Apr15	Bolivia	CP6	DF9GR	DXMB 20050324	By DF9GR as CP6/DF9GR fm southern Bolivia; 80-10m; mainly CW RTTY PSK; QSL OK via DARC Buro
2005 Apr03	2005 May05	Dominican Republic	HI8	IK2DUW	425DXN 20050226	By IW2OAZ fm Sto Domingo and Bayahibe; QSL OK via Buro or direct
2005 Apr04	2005 Apr10	Svalbard	JW	F8DVD	<u>F5NQL</u> 20050221	By F8DVD as JW/F8DVD fm Longyearbyen; all HF bands; mainly SSB; QSL OK via REF Buro or direct
2005 Apr04	2005 Apr12	South Cook Islands	ZK1APX	AI5P	DXMB 20050324	By Al5P; 40-10m; CW
2005 Apr06	2005 Apr20	Botswana	<u>A25</u>	Home Call	DL7CM 20050111	By DL7CM DM2AYO as A25/homecall (perhaps A25CM); 160-6m; CW SSB RTTY PSK; 2 stns w/ amps; 27m GP, 3el-5bd- yagi, HF9V, 4el on 6m
2005 Apr07	2005 Apr11	Масао	XX9	JA0SC	OPDX 20050321	By JA0SC; 20 15 10m; SSTV RTTY; QRV for NVCG SSTV Contest
2005 Apr15	2005 Apr29	Bahamas	<u>C6AWF</u>	See Info	<u>VA3RJ</u> 20041114	By G4WFQ fm Treasure Cay, Abaco Is (NA-080); 80-10m; CW, RTTY, some SSB; QSL via G3SWH or LotW
2005 Apr18	2005 Apr25	Ghana	9G5 NEW	DL7DF	DL7DF 20050326	By DL7DF; 160-10m; CW, some SSTV; yagi + dipole; 700w
2005 Apr19	2005 Apr29	Kyrghyzstan	EX NEW	See Info	ES1RA 20050329	By ES1FB as EX/ES1FB; holiday style operation; QSL: Jaak Meier, Box 2907, 13102, Tallinn, Estonia
2005 Apr19	2005 May17	Kyrghyzstan	EX NEW	See Info	ES1RA 20050329	By ES1RA as EX/ES1RA; holiday style operation; QSL: Oleg Mir, Box 806, 11702, Tallinn, Estonia
2005 Apr20	2005 May08	Mongolia	JT1Y	IOSNY	425DXN 20050205	By I0SNY; Apr 25-26 as JT2Y from Choybalsan, Khosbayar; QSL OK via Buro or direct
2005 Apr22	2005 Apr25	Liechtenstein	НВ0	Home Call	425DXN 20050226	By IZ1DSH IK1WEG IZ1GDB as HB0/homecall; 80-10m; CW SSB; QSL OK via ARI Buro or direct
2005 Apr22	2005 Apr25	Luxembourg	LX	Home Call	425DXN 20050212	By ON4BAG ON4LO ON6QX ON6UM as LX/homecall; 160-10m; SSB CW Digital; QSL OK via Buro or direct
2005	2005	Liechtenstein	HB0	Home	IZ1DSH	By IZ1DSH IZ1GDB as

Apr22	Apr26			Call	20050207	HB0/homecall fm Gaflei Malbun; 80 40 20 30m; CW SSB; QSL OK via	
						Buro or direct	
2005 Apr23	2005 May01	Egypt	SU8IOTA	SU1SK Direct	425DXN 20050220	By SU1HM SU1SK SU2TA SU1SA fm Disuqi Is (AF-NEW) in the Nile Delta and Sinai Region Group: QSL: Said Kamel, PO Box 190, New Ramsis Center, Cairo 11794, Egypt	
Ma	ay						
2005 May01	2005 May05	Algeria	7X		<u>F5NQL</u> 20050322	By OM3CGN + 7X ops fm Sanja Is	
2005 May02	2005 May21	Vanuatu	YJ	VK3DYL	<u>VK3DYL</u> 20041203	By VE7YL VK3DYL fm Port Vila and Aore Is; CW SSB; 100w; QSL direct with SAE, US\$2 or new IRC or via VK3 Buro	
2005 May03	2005 May10	Albania	ZA2		<u>IZ8CCW</u> 20050209	By MDXC + Salento DX Team members; QRV for ARI contest; perhaps also fm Sazan Is (EU-169); new ZA2 pfx	
2005 May15	2005 Jun01	Glorioso	FR/g	F5OGL	<u>GazDX</u> 20041011	By F5OGL F5CW F5IRO F5PTM; dates tentative; subject to last minute change or cancellation	
2005 May23	2005 Jun08	Tonga	A35	VK3DYL	VK3DYL 20041203	By VE7YL VK3DYL fm Nuku'alofa and Vava'u; CW SSB; 100w; QSL direct with SAE, US\$2 or new IRC or via VK3 Buro	
2005 May26	2005 May30	Bahamas	C6A	EA5ON	EA5ON 20050318	By EA5ON as GM7CXM/C6A fm Grand Bahama (NA-080); 80-10m; mainly SSB, some digital; QSL OK via Buro or direct	
	CQ	WPX CW Conte	est (May 28-	29, 2005)	Check here f	or pericontest activity too.	
Ju	ne						
2005 Jun07	2005 Jul07	St Paul Island	<u>CY9SS</u>		OPDX 20050124	By VY2SS VY2RO W1AIM VE9WH VY2LI K9MU VE1PZ VE9GJ VY2OX VE2TKH VA2DV	
Ju	ıly						
2005 Jul08	2005 Jul18	Swaziland	3DA0		<u>K5LBU</u> 20050318	By K5LBU + others; seeking 3 CW ops	
2005 Jul26	2005 Aug01	Sable Island	CY0	K8LEE	425DXN 20050226	By W8GEX K8LEE W9IXX; 160-6m; CW SSB PSK RTTY; QRV for RSGB IOTA Contest	
2005 Jul29	2005 Aug07	St Pierre & Miquelon	<u>FP</u>	Home Call	<u>K9OT</u> 20050227	By K9OT KB9LIE as FP/homecall fm Maxotel, Miquelon (NA-132); focus on 80 40 30m CW + 40 20 17m SSB; QRV for RSGB IOTA Contest and as FP/K9OT in NA QSO Party; QSL OK via Buro or direct	
RSGB IOTA Contest (July 30-31, 2005) Check here for pericontest activity too.							
Aug	just						

2005 Aug02	2005 Aug05	Greenland	ох	EA3EKS Direct	EA3EKS 20050210	By EA3EKS as OX/EA3EKS; 20 15 10m; QSL: PO Box 729, 43080 Tarragona, Spain (include \$1)
2005 Aug06	2005 Aug13	Iceland	TF	EA3EKS Direct	EA3EKS 20050210	By EA3EKS as TF/EA3EKS; 20 15 10m; QSL: PO Box 729, 43080 Tarragona, Spain (include \$1)
September						
2005 Sep23	2005 Oct08	Kure Atoll	<u>K7C</u>	N4XP	KK6EK 20050303	By KK6EK NI6T AD6E N6MZ N0AX N7CQQ W6KK DJ9ZB I8NHJ K6SRZ K6DZL; all bands and modes; begin/end dates tentative
October						
2005 Oct23	2005 Oct31	Reunion	FR	F5SGI	425DXN 20050312	By F5SGI as FR/F5SGI fm AF-016; mainly CW; 100w, dipoles; QSL OK via REF Buro or direct
2005 Oct25	2005 Nov06	Christmas Island	VK9XD	VK6NE	<u>VK2CZ</u> 20050214	By VK2CZ; 12 10m
2005 Oct25	2005 Nov06	Christmas Island	VK9XG	W0YG Direct	<u>VK2CZ</u> 20050214	By W0YG; 160 80 20m
CQ WW DX SSB Contest (October 29-30, 2005) Check here for pericontest activity too.						
Nove	mber					
2005 Nov07	2005 Nov21	Cocos Keeling	VK9CG	W0YG Direct	<u>W0YG</u> 20050307	By W0YG; 160 80 40 30 20 15m; special effort on RTTY

Bill/NG3K

Bill@ng3k.com (Corrections, additions, suggestions are welcomed)
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Meeting Notice

The next meeting of the Eastern Iowa DX Association will be on Friday April 15th, 2005 at 7:30 in Room 219C Linn Hall on the Kirkwood Community College campus. Doors open at 6:30 pm for eyeball QSOs. Monitor 145.19 for directions if needed. See you there!

