



## EIDXA 1975 - 2010 • 35<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary

October 2010

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### Club Officers

President:	Joe Hetrick	KCØVKN	<b>Packet Cluster</b>	<b>WB8ZRL</b>
Vice President:	Tom Vinson	NYØV	147.51, 144.91, 223.40, CRNETROM	
Secretary Treasurer:	Richard Haendel	W3ACO		
Repeater Committee:	Al Groff	KØVM	<b>Repeater:</b>	<b>NØDX/R</b>
	Joe Finkstein	WØMJN	144.59 / 145.19 (tone 192.8)	
Membership Committee:	Jim Spencer	WØSR		
	Tom Vavra	WB8ZRL		
	Nelson Moyer	KUØA		

**EIDXA Meeting – Friday, October 22, 2010, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Room 219C of Linn Hall on the campus of Kirkwood Comm. College.**  
**Program on EIDXA Marathon**

### **President's Propagation, Pronouncements & Pontifications**

- Joe Hetrick KCØVKN



Hi everyone! First I should thank everyone for understanding my absence for the July meeting. It's been a long summer, but, now that fall is here I can get some relaxation finishing up some antenna duties before fall contesting season.

Maybe the big DX news is the split up of the Antilles into 4 entities. This should prove to be a fun fall for snagging some easy ones from NA.

The VKN shack is on the verge of an overhaul. The addition of the K3 this past winter as well as a new baby necessitates changing things around a little bit. Now that Betty is crawling, she's really good at going under things and tugging on cables!

A few weeks ago I also added an SB221 to the shack. I've been running 100W and simple antennas long enough. I was aided by big DXpeditions and patience, but, all those short-term operations of some guy on a business trip operating 2 nights out of a week seems to require less fussing around and some QRO to get the job done. Along those lines, Rod,

KØDAS has contributed the manifesto of a new club! QCI. Look for the article to see if you qualify for membership!

The EIDXА Picnic was at NRØX fine QTH on September 11. I understand attendance was quite low. I must admit, I was unable to attend. As a club, we need to decide if such a gathering is something we wish to continue. If it is something you'd like to do, speak up for times, dates, locations that work out for you so we can make it a large event. I've seen photos of events past, and the attendance looked to be quite good. It's **your** club, get excited about it!

Jim, WØSR and I have traded some emails about an intra-club type competition along the lines of CQ Marathon. If you can, familiarize yourself with the CQ rules and see if you have any ideas for the next meeting on how you'd like to see something like this happen within EIDXА. I think it would be quite a lot of fun to compete inside of the club, and I think it'd be worth doing if there would be participation from club members. If there isn't a lot of interest, it'd be good to sort out before any work is done!

DX news, which shouldn't be much news at all considering the time! The break up of the Netherlands Antilles should bring on some new entities this fall, and that should be a riot. No doubt it's an easy vacation spot for NA and it should provide some good opportunities for pileups without having to fly in a rickety Gulfstream for 18 hours and land on a seashell strip. Hopefully you can get Victoria Bitter at PJ2, though.

If anyone has purchased club lettered clothing from Queensboro, or, a coffee cup from the source located by WWØE, share your experiences at the meeting!

Finally, it appears that this is my final Pontification, as my term as an EIDXА officer will be over at the Oct. 22 meeting (remember, vote early, vote often). As many of you have noticed, I'm not one for public speaking or Roberts Rules of Order. I'm glad that NYØV, Tom, W3ACO, Rich, and WØSR, Jim, were available to help me guide my way through and answer questions about the club. I enjoyed getting to know everyone in the club and hopefully I kept the meetings quick and to the point so we could get on to the program!

Dit Dit, Joe KCØVKN

## **Veep Ramblings – Tom Vinson NYØV**

Greetings from Minnesota! The weather is definitely turning into Fall and I have been busy working towards getting all of the antenna work done before the snow flies. And being across the border to the north of CR, it may come a bit earlier this year! I have included a short set of pictures in this newsletter to let the gang know how that project is coming along.



The main goal to getting the antenna work done ASP is that I want to be ready for all of the new PJ activity arising out of the Caribbean. It sounds like Craig, K9CT is on top of it as

he is going down there to activate one of the ‘new ones.’ As you may recall, he came to the club last Fall to show us the K4M Midway presentation.

I have been plugging in a bit with the DXers up here in SE MN. There is no DX club in the area, so the TCDXA is the closest venue for rubbing shoulders with fellow DXers and testers. I have met a few DXers here in the Rochester area. Some of them meet every Saturday for breakfast at Brothers Bar and Grill and I have availed myself to that opportunity. A couple of weeks ago I went over to Scott’s, KØMD helping raise his new antennas. Scott is a cardiologist at Mayo and travels quite extensively in that vocation. He is ‘into’ DXing and contesting and is now building his station. That Saturday, our goal was to install a 2 ele KLM 40m beam at 110’ followed by the Force 12 C39 something that has 23 elements on a 39’ boom. At 52’ we installed a C31 Force 12 with a TIC ring rotor. (31ft boom with 13 elements, I think) He is phasing the two Force 12’s for upper, lower, both.

The interesting thing was he was having Paul, WØAIH do the tower work along with Glen, WØGJ. Paul is 78 years old and is HIGH energy. His XYL runs the winch to tow him to the top of the tower. But, when he once dropped his main pulley, he climbed down and went back up lickety split without being towed up! I didn’t see him stop climbing until he reached the top. He is in amazing shape.

I guess this is my last VEEP Ramblings as it is time to step down from my two-year reign of terror as VP. It has been a pleasure all along and I wish the next batch of club officers all the best in running the club. I do get back to CR once in a while as I teach a class for Rockwell Collins once in a while there at the Marriott. So, I may catch some of you on 5.19 sometime. Otherwise, I will see you in the pileups!

73, Gud DX – Tom, NYØV

## ***Announcing: QRO Club International – Rod Blocksome KØDAS***

At the Dayton Hamvention, I explored many of the lesser known “nooks and crannies” of ham radio. We are all familiar with the various QRP organizations ... well, I discovered something at the opposite end of the power spectrum – the QCI.

What in thunder is the QCI all about? Well here are a few factoids I picked up.

First of all its charter members seem to be exclusively Italian and Russian with a few aging hams from California. By the way, QRO is right at 1.5 kW output – nothing less. The QCI elite members brag about taking it to the next level - to QRO-plus. Their stated mottos: “Life’s too short for legal power!” and “QRO+: Dedicated to helping hams use more than legal power in your country”

QCI membership dues are interesting. They are on a sliding scale – the more power you run, the lower the dues. This provides an economic stimulus for the utility companies and helps the ham pay his bill – a win-win for everyone.

I picked up some QCI promotional literature with a Q & A for prospective new members. Some of the highlights are:

Q. Doesn't the FCC rules require using the minimum amount of power for reliable communications?

A. Yes, but remember the key is "reliability of communications." For example, if you are in a pile-up for Scarborough Rocks and you are running QRO+, will you not be the first to break the pile-up and thereby establish the most reliable communications?

Q. But how do I know if I'm running enough power?

A. There are many tried and true techniques. My favorite is to keep turning up the power until I can light the florescent bulbs in my neighbor's bathroom. Another member recommends building your dipole antenna with AWG #12 soft drawn copper wire. Then keep turning up the power on your transmitter until the ends melt off. Your SWR meter will indicate when this occurs. Finally, Joe a QRO++ practitioner, likes to run enough power that he can see the power lines into his QTH "jump" in sync with his CW.

Q. Are there any indications when I'm running too much power?

A. Well yes, there are a few indicators QRO+ operators have noted over the years (but seldom talk about). The most common indicators are:

- Vehicles stall in front of you house with damaged computer modules
- You get TVI complaints from residents in neighboring states
- No babies in the neighborhood for over 5 years

Q. My friend is an avid QRP'er and he says I'm missing out on the "challenge of QRP QSOs." How should I respond without p\*\*\*\*\* him off?

A. Tell your friend he doesn't begin to know the meaning of the word "challenge" until he has de-installed a surplus Voice of America transmitter, restored it, and then called "CQ DX" on 3885 kHz (AM rag-chew net).

Q. What tube should a beginner QRO+ ham consider for his linear amplifier?

A. A popular tube would be the 4CX15000A. This baby requires right at 1,000 watts just to light the filament – well within the 1500-watt amateur power limit (you could claim if caught).

Q. Is there really a place for QRO+ in ham radio today?

A. Yes sir. It's more important now than ever. In years gone by you could reasonably expect to win contests and make the DXCC honor roll with 1.5 kW to stacked monobanders. But today, hams everywhere face unreasonable zoning ordinances, restrictive covenants, and even BPL. So QRO+ power is required to overcome these issues and maintain the same EIRP!

Now just in case you think I'm pulling your leg, in the Dayton Flea Market, I saw WB8WJU with homebrew amplifiers for sale that used a 4CX5000A tube. Price was just under \$9,000!

### ***Joining the EIDX Reflecto*** – Joe Hetrick KCØVKN

Jim, WØSR has recently done some work cleaning up the mailing list, and I thought it'd be a good idea to put a bit in the newsletter on how to join the list yourself, or manage your settings.

It is quite easy to do: just open a web browser and go on over to <http://mailman.qth.net>.

- Choose "Directory of Lists" from the left hand menu. Once you've clicked that, the center area of the page will display a very large list of mailing lists hosted by qth.net.
- They're all alphabetical, so, you should just have to scroll down a bit to EIDX. Click on it, and you'll be presented with a page you can use to subscribe.
- Simply put in your email address and choose a password to manage your list options with.
- The list is so low traffic you'll likely want to leave the default setting for "Would you like to receive list mail batched in a daily digest?" to "No".
- Click subscribe and wait for a confirmation email to arrive in your email.
- Once that arrives, simply click the link as instructed, and you are subscribed!

73,  
KCØVKN

### ***NYØV Antenna Work in MN*** – Tom Vinson NYØV

I have been working fairly steadily on my antenna system here in Chatfield, MN in order to beat the cold weather that is surely to come down upon us in short order. Here is a synopsis of the system:

Phased Verticals: I installed 2 phased verticals in the leech field of the new house. One vertical is a Big IR MK III SteppIR with the 80m coil built in. This requires an additional 4 control wires that switch the 80m coil in and out. So it covers 80-6m. I have laid 32 radials for that system. The other vertical is a DX Engineering fast taper 33' 40m vertical cut to 7100. I place 17 33' radials on that vertical. To phase them, I purchased the Comtek phase switch from DXE. The idea is that when I want to phase them, I tune the SteppIR to 7100. For the other bands, I still need to see if I dump power out the phase switch port when I match the SteppIR to whatever band I am on. Ie resonant. I may need to add a switch to switch out the phasing unit when operating other bands other than 40m. We'll see.

4 ele SteppIR: Some of you may have read about K9LTN's 2 x 3 array of 4 ele SteppIR's. When LTN became a SK, I contacted our friend, Roger Hoffman, N4RR over in Illinois and made inquiries. Sure enough, they were for sale. So, I picked up one of the six. Since then I purchased the 40/30m loop add-on kit and the new connector box for the antenna. I

did not like the little PVC tube that SteppIR was using for the control wires. This connector box is done right. Pricey, but right. I also got the truss kit for the 40/30 loop. They say that it is not needed, but once I saw the droop on the elements, I thought otherwise. The main thing is to keep the loops a bit lower so the condensation drips out.

I did have some issues from SteppIR. The 40/30 fiberglass poles were not the unplugged poles but had the sponge plugs like the rest of the elements. I must say that SteppIR quickly sent me the correct ones along with a prepaid UPS tag to return the incorrect poles. Secondly, there are plastic connectors for the end of the elements on the sweep tubes of the 40/30 loop. After I had them installed for a week, I found cracks in the black plastic. True to their support, SteppIR UPS'ed new sweep tubes with the connectors that same day.

2m/440: I purchased a Cushcraft 2m/440 antenna with 4 elements on each. I have that mounted above the 4 ele SteppIR. If I can get some good propagation, I hope to be able to hit the 5.19 and 443.8 machines there in CR.

For the antenna switching I purchased the DXE 8 pole RRH model. This thing is built very well, as is most of the DXE products are. They are kind of proud of it, but the port to port isolation is excellent compared to the MFJ type switches.

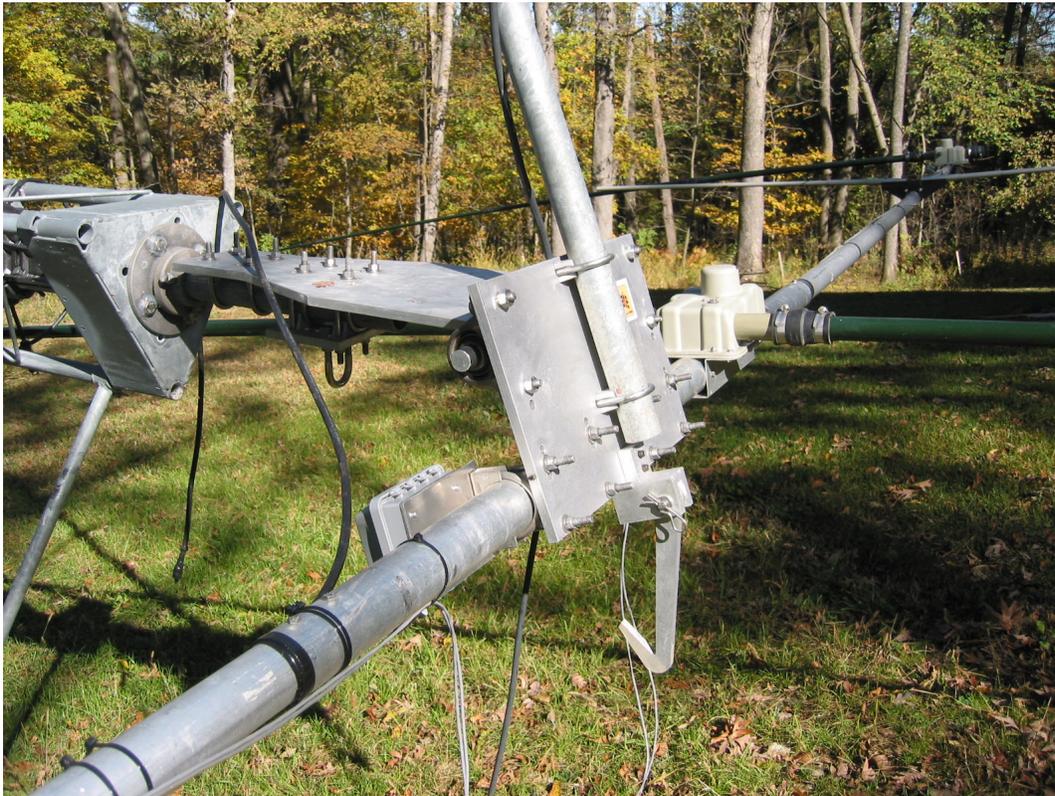
What follows are a few pictures of the new set up with some captions:



**#1:** Phased verticals aimed 30 degrees for EU, broadside to Asia. The DXE 40m is left while the 80-6m BigIR MK3 is on the right. Note the phase switch in-between the two



**#2:** SteppIR on the LM470 tilt over tower. Shown in foreground is the 40/30 loop without the truss assembly.



**#3:** Note also the NN4ZZ tilt plate. This allows work to be done on the antenna at waist level. It sure is handy when you drop a washer or nut and just bend down to pick it up.

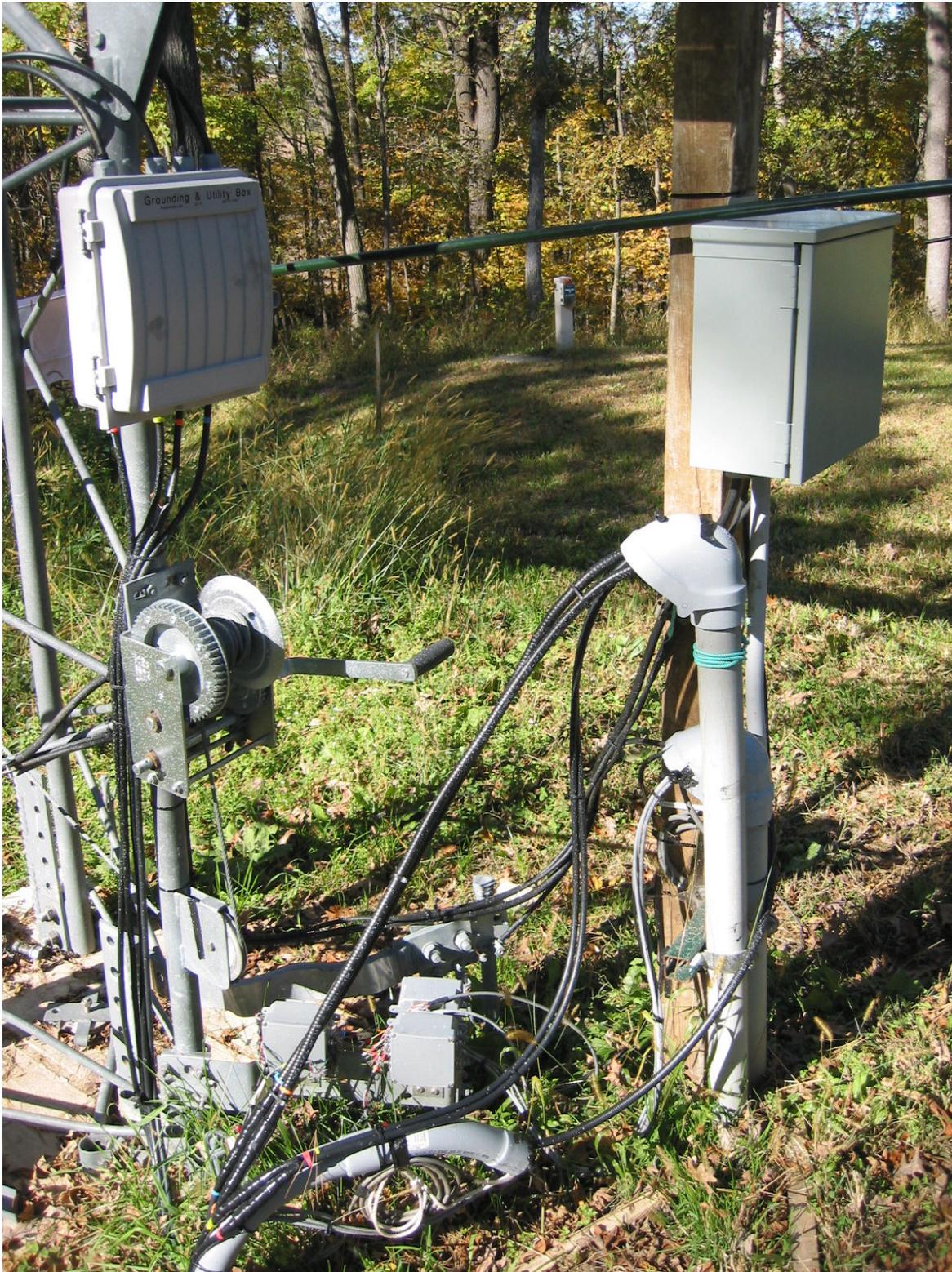


**#4:** The 2m/440 Cushcraft Yagi shown on top of the 4 ele SteppIR.



**#5:** This shows the grounding system at the base of the tower. The thick strap runs to that vertical 1" copper pipe. From that there is a #2 copper wire running under ground in a loop to 3 other copper stakes. There is also a #2 copper wire running from here to the house mains and the station ground.

The three gray boxes are Array Solutions transorbs for the control lines for the SteppIR's, phase switcher, antenna switcher, and rotator. All of these are grounded to the common ground on a 3/8" copper bar.



**#6:** The NEMA box on the left contains 4 Polyphasors for each of the 4 runs of coax/Heliac. The box on the right contains the LM470 motor control to raise/lower the tower. The two vertical PVC pipes are split into two: The tall one for the RF/coaxes and the lower one for the 40 control lines. The curved PVC at the bottom runs over to the base of the vertical phased array...about 50'.



**#7:** The station in the basement shows the FT-2000 and G2800 rotor control. To the right of that is the VL-1000 PA deck. Note the VP-1000 PS for it is below it on the 'computer' stand. I found that the SteppIR controllers fit perfectly into the 'keyboard' nook! Next to the vertical controller is the Comtek phase switch. To the far right is the DXE antenna selector. Note the common bus bar for the coaxes and transceiver/amp.

## **WØSSR, Chuck SK – Tom Vavra WB8ZRL**

Chuck Dennis, WØSSR, became a silent key on 3 October 2010, at age 68. Chuck was originally licensed as WBØZKG with a Technician License. He was very active on 6 meters, and worked all 50 states when is fairly difficult. He owned a CB sales and repair shop for a time. When the FCC gave Techs 10 meter SSB privileges, Chuck discovered DX. If the DX was on 28300-28500 then Chuck worked it. He had a dedicated 2-meter antenna aimed at Cedar Rapids to hit the NØDX repeater from his Toledo QTH and keep in touch with the EIDX members. He monitored the repeater 24/7. Again the FCC changed things. Chuck upgraded to Advanced, and obtained a vanity call, WØSSR. With new bands available, his DXCC total climbed, and he reached 318 mixed and SSB, with 5 deletions. CW was something Chuck very rarely used. He surprised WØEJ when he called Wade during a 160 CW contest. His DXCC standings show he received credit for a Heard Island CW contact.

Chuck was interested in and involved in many things. He restored a vintage Chevy, maintained a large fish tank, numerous woodworking projects and was very active in the

local Masonic Lodge. After he and XYL Mary, KAØCWR, retired, they often traveled. Antenna and transceiver problems served to focus his efforts on other things, and he was inactive on HF the last several years. He continued his local activity in the Tama/Toledo and Marshalltown ham clubs. We had many good days chasing DX together. I have and will miss that.

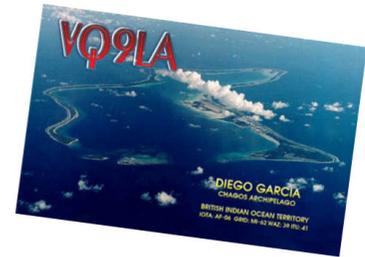
While his key was never really active, it is now forever silent.

## ***DXCC Card Checking Is As Close as EIDXA***



EIDXA members can get their DX QSL cards checked for DXCC credit from the following club members:

- ARRL Midwest Division Vice Director, and EIDXA member, Cliff Ahrens KØCA attends EIDXA meetings as his schedule permits. You may also send your cards to him by surface mail. Contact Cliff via e-mail for more information and/or to make arrangements to check your cards: [cahrens@mywdo.com](mailto:cahrens@mywdo.com).
- EIDXA member Tom Vavra WB8ZRL. Please note that Tom is unable to check cards from deleted entities or cards for 160 meters. Contact Tom via e-mail for more information and/or to make arrangements to check your cards: [wb8zrl@arrrl.net](mailto:wb8zrl@arrrl.net).

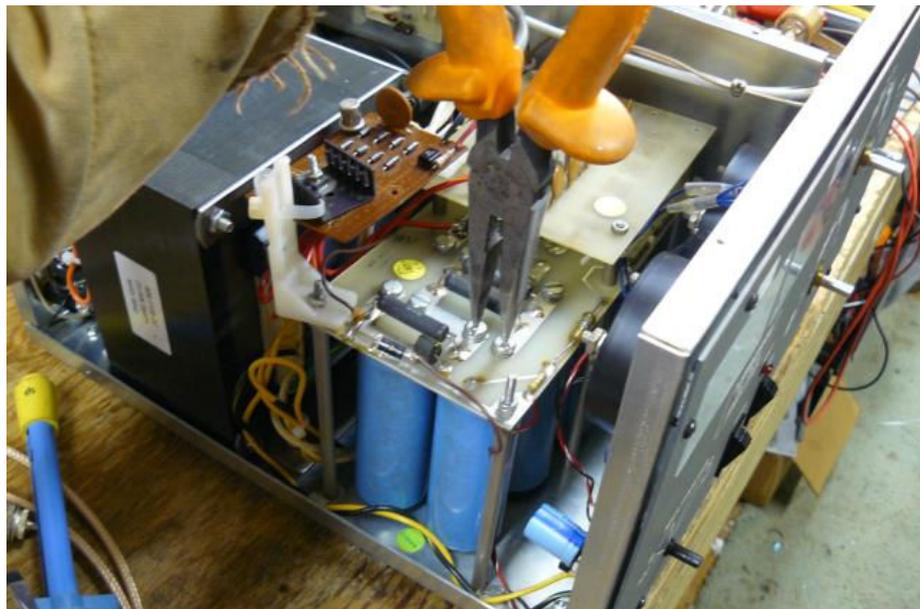


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## ***Safety First – Keep One Hand Behind Your Back!***

It's best to play it safe around high voltage power supplies. You may not get a second chance with high voltage gear such as a linear amplifier. Some hams keep one hand behind their back to avoid getting a shock across their chest.

What is this operator doing? Do you know the make and model of this linear amplifier?



## **2010 EIDXA Meeting & Events Schedule**

Look for this information on the club web-page [www.eidxa.org](http://www.eidxa.org). Meeting information on the web site is up to date to ensure everyone has timely access to the information between newsletters.

### **Next Meeting**

**Friday, October 22, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.,  
Room 219C, Linn Hall on KCC campus.  
Program: EIDXA Marathon**



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The MFJ 1796 40 through 2M antenna has been around for about 20 years in various models. The photo shows a 1796 recently deployed for portable HF by an EIDXA member.

