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QST Issue: Feb 1972

Title: WA3GUL 5BWAS No. 38 and WA3FGS 5BWAS No. 28

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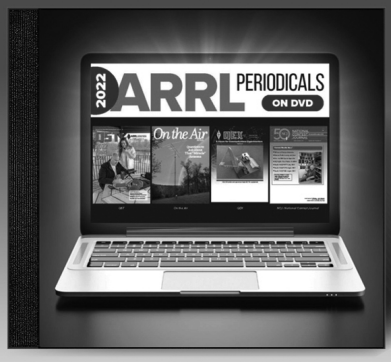

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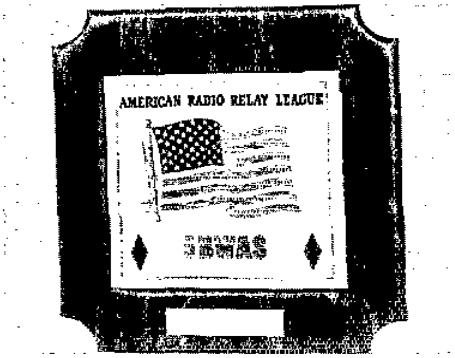
How to Catch 5BWAS

BY JOE RATKIEWICZ,* WØIS

The author, holder of 5BWAS No. 20, was the third WØ and first Iowa station to qualify. He furnishes those just starting the chase a useful modus operandi.



MANY OF us have little trouble working all states, but to do it on 5 bands is quite a chore! Here are a few tips which, hopefully, will save you some time and grief.

THE STATION

The rig should be capable of at least 100 watts on all bands and with rapid band switching. Both cw and ssb should be used. Your antenna system should also be capable of being band switched with no involved tap changing.

PRIORITY OF BANDS

Ten meters should *always* be checked first. This was a mistake I made while working cw. Many times no cw was heard while 10-meter fone was jumping. As you contact states you need, you can "walk them" up the bands. Don't hesitate to ask a station in a state you need, to QSY to another band. The "spots" in the band where WAS hunters hide out is about 50 kHz "in." When you first start out you can sit in one spot and call CQ WAS. This usually results in a gang of W6s.

QSLs

After you have a card from a state on a particular band, you can quit working that state and only then. W/K hams are bad news when QSLs are at stake. The system I used for getting QSLs was as follows: I sent a card to a station. I then waited 2 weeks and if no reply was received I sent the following: a QSL card as before, and also a blank QSL stamped, addressed and all filled out. This was stapled to the regular card with its stamp side inside. The other station need only sign and drop it in the mail. (Some fellows didn't even do that.)

THE ROUGH ONES

The missing states can be found by reading *QST* and looking for state QSO parties, Field Day events, CD parties and 80-meter nets. These nets are fantastic. The boys are helpful and will go to great lengths to give you their state. *A word of caution*, avoid QRMing the net operation. I usually was on frequency before the net started and called a quick CQ ND and if no result I waited until the net was closed. Keep your *Callbook* handy and well marked. Since most states have active 40-meter ops, you can also do all your looking on 40 when you need a state on another band! Once you QSO them you can ask them to QSY or set up a sked for 10 at another time. Weekends are best for 10 meters.

RECORDS

Keep good up-to-date records so you can know at a glance whom you need. It's really a heart breaker to wait 40 minutes for a state you already have confirmed.

As you address the first QSL card to a state, copy the address on a 3 x 5 card. This will save you from looking it up again when you have to send a second card. I have found that more than two never paid off. Some people just won't play the game. You also need a neat and clean copy of the states/band[1] for submission to ARRL.

Good Hunting! QST

*2622 Avalon Drive, Bettendorf, IA 52722.

[1]5BWAS application forms carry a $10 processing fee (and an ARRL membership requirement for W/VEs) which includes return of the cards by registered mail and a handsome personalized plaque. This form must be used when applying.

Strays



WA3GUL (left), 5BWAS No. 38 and WA3FGS, 5BWAS No. 28 congratulate each other as winners of their own personal 5BWAS race. Prior to that time they were mainly 20-meter DXers. After considerable antenna work, they discovered low-frequency DXing and are now well on the way to their race No. 2 — 58DXCC!