



Newsletter of the  
Twin City DX Association

Volume 2, Issue 4  
December, 2005



*Propagation* 2  
*160m Mystery*

*Member Profile* 4  
*WØWG*

*TF/NØHJZ* 7  
*2005 CQWW SSB*

*Romeo,* 11  
*Where Art Ye?*

*Stew Perry 160m* 14  
*Distance Challenge*

*QRQ to SUQ* 15  
*KØHB*

*A Look Back* 18  
*with WØEKS*

**TCDXA Officers**

President

**Bob Bruner, WØEK**

Secretary

**Dennis Johnson, KFØQR**

Treasurer

**Jim Junkert, KØJUH**

**Gray Line Staff**

**KØIEA, KØJUH, & WØBV**



Season's Greetings to all of our DX friends around the world. May all the warmth and peace of the holiday season be with you now, and throughout 2006.

Wishing you good DX in the coming year, and may that rare one that you need finally make it into your log!

73, from the members of TCDXA.

**From the President's Desk – Looking back at 2005**

Sometimes, things just don't go as planned. That was the case for 3YØX. Despite months of planning, some last minute snafus with the transportation forced the group to postpone their operation until 2006. In March, the FT5XO group put Kurguelen Island on the air. Later, in October, K7C was active from Kure Island. So, DXers, worldwide, had something to smile about.

Look for Peter I to be on the air, early in 2006. The French group has announced that their on-again, off-again Glorioso Island plans are back on for the March/April timeframe. And, a rumor persists that another major operation may be in the works. All of this should be good news for DXers!

We all love surprises, but not like the one we received last January. The restaurant that hosted our monthly meetings suddenly closed their doors, and left us out in the cold. We went into hurry-up mode, searching for a new home. After checking several options, the Sunshine Factory in New Hope was selected to host our monthly meetings.

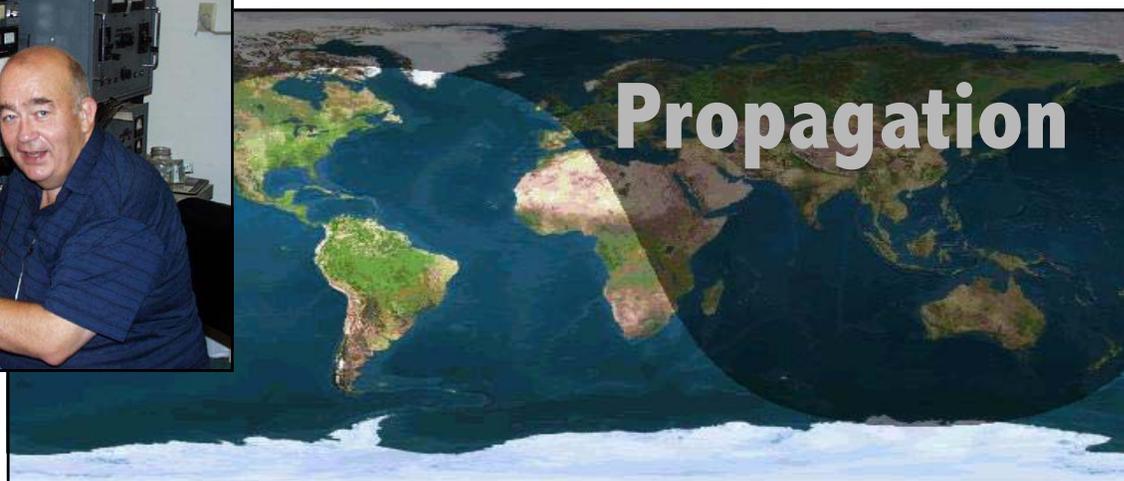
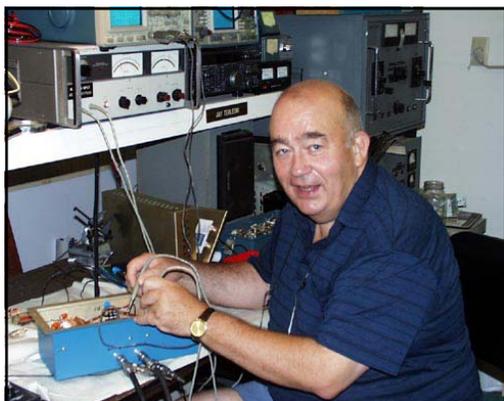
The highlight of the year was the appearance by long-standing member Jules Freundlich, W2JGR, at the November meeting to receive a special award from the ARRL, celebrating his 70 years in amateur radio. And, Ralph Fedor, KØIR, stopped by the meeting to update members on plans for his Peter I operation. It was an evening to remember.

The TCDXA roster continues to grow. We now number 90 members - a new, all-time high for the club. Will 2006 be the year we see 100 names on the roster? Many think it's a realistic goal.

We can't thank our current members enough for everything that you've done to help make the TCDXA what it is today. Your membership is greatly appreciated. Please join us in 2006 and help us continue growing our ranks and **Raising Dollars for DX**.

Season's Greetings to you and your family, and may the New Year bring you peace, happiness, and good health.

73, Bob Bruner, WØEK, TCDXA President



## The 160 Meter Mystery

by John Devoldere, ON4UN

*ed. - The snow is beginning to fall, and ice is forming on the lakes. The days are much shorter, and the D-layer is much thinner. It's time to throw another log on the fire and head for the shack to check the gray line on the low bands.*

*We know that high K- and A-indices, and the resulting polar cap absorption will limit our luck on the lowbands. But, is that always the case for 160 meters? And, does the converse (low A & K) assure good conditions on Topband? According to lowband guru **ON4UN**, the correlation between the solar indices and 160m propagation is not so clear.*

*Note: In future issues, we will elaborate on a few propagation events, which might explain some observed 160 meter anomalies. In the meantime, as you tune the lowbands, expect the worst and hope for an anomaly.*

“Understanding and predicting propagation on 40 meters is pretty straightforward, and 80 meters is as well. One-sixty is a totally different ball game. The more I have been active on 160 meters, the more I am convinced of how little we really know about propagation on the band. True, we know a few of the parameters that influence propagation, but far from all. For a long time I have kept daily records of the K and A indices, sunspot numbers, etc., together with my observations of conditions on 160 meters, in order to try to find a correlation between the data and the propagation. But, I have found very little or none; only negative correlations. We know more or less when it definitely will *not* work, but not for sure when it *will* work!

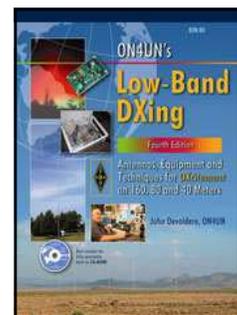
Of course, we must realize that on Topband we are in a gray area, where things are sometimes possible, but often not. There are dozens of parameters that make things happen or not happen. They all seem to influence a delicate mechanism that makes really long-haul propagation on 160 meters work every now and then. Understanding all of the parameters and being able to quantify them and feed

them into a computer that will tell exactly when we can work that evasive DX station halfway around the globe will probably be an illusion, forever.

There is no interest from the broadcasters in this subject. Broadcasters and utility traffic operators are interested in knowing the frequency that will give them best, most reliable propagation. They are not interested in studying the subject of ‘marginal propagation,’ just on the edge of what is possible.

Therefore, long-haul DXing on 160 meters will probably always remain a real hunting game, where limited understanding, feeling, expertise, and luck will be determining factors for success. Don't forget your hunting weapons – the antennas and the equipment.”

*Reprinted, with permission from the ARRL, from ON4UN's book “**Low-Band DXing**”, available at Radio City or directly from ARRL [www.arrl.org/shop](http://www.arrl.org/shop).*



# TCXDA Treasurer's Report - YTD Jan 1 thru Dec 10, 2005

reported by Jim, KØJUH

## Income

Balance Jan. 1, 2005	\$	444.63
Annual dues collected-2005		2,064.00
Above/beyond the call of duty		675.00
Door prize raffle ticket sales		271.00
WØDXCC profits		102.38
TCDXA shirt order		280.50
WØIR 2006 dues		<u>24.00</u>

Total income \$ 3,861.51

## Expenses - YTD

MWA donation	\$ -75.00
3YØX donation	-750.00
NCDXF donation	-250.00
K7C donation	-250.00
ARRL Frequency Defense Fund	-150.00
Materials - member certificates	-7.00
Postage/envelopes	-18.00
Check written/ deposit fee	-2.00
Monthly checks and service fee	-33.00
Check order	-19.95
Door prize - MFJ watch	- 32.00
TCDXA banner	-75.00
TCDXA Shirt Order	-277.00
TCDXA domain renewal - 1 yr	-19.00
TCDXA website hosting expense	<u>-63.32</u>
Total 2005 expenses	\$ -2,021.27

Current balance, December 10, 2005:  
\$ 1,840.24

## Projected Expenses for 2005

Monthly check service fee	3.00
Unexpected expenses	<u>100.00</u>
Total projected expenses	\$103.00

## Packet Cluster Escrow Account

Balance Jan. 1, 2004	\$1,070.56
ACØX node repairs	-85.00
Node call chg - ACØX to WØTDX	-50.00
New antenna and hardware	<u>-298.40</u>
Current escrow balance	\$ 637.16

## Checking Account Balance - YTD

TCDXA fund balance	\$1,840.24
Packet Cluster escrow balance	<u>637.16</u>
Checking account balance	\$2,477.40

## Who Owns this Shack ? (Answer on page 16)



**FOR SALE:** Acom 1000 Amp, 1000 watts on 160-6 Meters. Will handle a 3:1 SWR without an antenna tuner. I'm the original owner, and amp has seen very little use in the 3 years I have owned it.

This is a terrific kilowatt amplifier, QSK capable, and extremely quiet. I've owned many transceivers that have more fan noise than this amp! I have been in the process of downsizing, and this is the last piece to go.

Price is \$2,500. Original shipping carton and manual included. Condition is like new, and it works great.

73 de Don, WØDJC -- w0djc@arrl.net

**M**ike, **WØWG**, is one of Minnesota's premier ham radio boat anchor gurus. In fact, Mike is addressed by his fellow vintage radio ham friends as "Dr. Warren," because they bring a steady flow of vintage amateur radio equipment to his basement workshop for Mike to repair and restore.

Mike grew up in Albuquerque, until he moved with his family to Salt Lake City at age 14. One day, he bought a *Popular Electronics* magazine to get the plans for building an electronic whistle for his model railroad. He also read the ham radio column in that issue. That column really caught his interest. During the following summer, Mike studied with one of his school buddies for the Novice exam. In 1955, he received callsign **WN7CXZ**. And, in 1956, Mike became **W7CXZ**, after passing the General exam.

In 1958, Mike joined the USN. During his 20-year Navy career, he worked in Electronic Maintenance. His work involved shipboard radar and shore-based high-power transmitters (10- and 40-KW HF and 100-KW LF). He was a voice and TTY CRYPTO Maintenance Technician and Instructor. And, he was a Test Equipment Repair and Calibration Lab Supervisor. Mike retired from the Navy in 1978 as E-9, Master Chief Petty Officer.

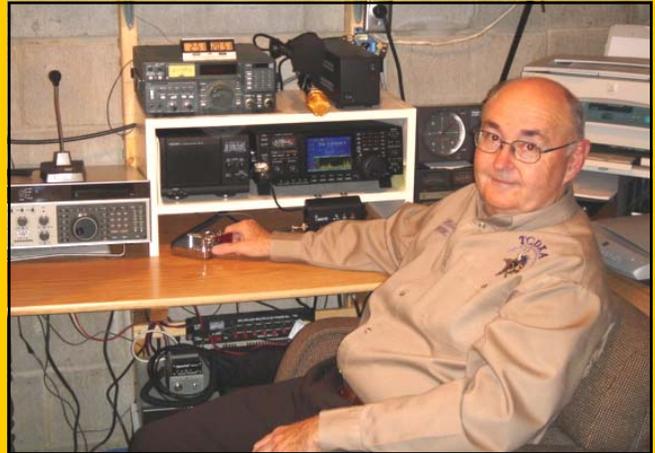
In 1961, Mike's parents moved back to New Mexico, and the FCC changed Mike's callsign to **W5MAZ**. While Mike was in the Navy, his dad was licensed as **W5DFY**, and was very active on 6 meters and on the 40 meter Lions Eye Bank Net.

In 1979, Mike and his XYL Margaret moved to his current home in Eden Prairie, and Mike took a job with Control Data. He worked at CDC for 15 years, where he held the positions of Repair Depot Manager, Field Maintenance Planner, and IT/LAN Manager. After the demise of CDC, Mike worked for 9 years at a local MRP software company called

Fourth Shift, doing pre-sales demos, salesman PC training, and post-sales customer support. At Fourth Shift, Mike was also the BETA manager for three years.

Mike's first rig (in 1955) was a military ARC-5 receiver (40 meters) and a homebrew 6L6 transmitter. He used a folded dipole made from TV twinlead. He made homebrew power supplies for both the receiver and transmitter, using old parts from radios purchased at second-hand stores. Mike financed his hobby bagging groceries.

## Mike Warren, WØWG



On top of the world near the top of the cycle, 1956.



Mike operates 1957 Sweepstakes with school buddy.

When Mike passed his General in 1956, he purchased his first commercial rig: a Hallicrafters SX-99 and Heathkit DX-35. He went to work as a janitor at a local auto parts store in 1957, and was able to upgrade to a National NC-183D and Heathkit DX-100. As you OTs remember, 1957/58 was the peak of the best sunspot cycle. And, Mike was able to be very active during that peak.

Mike purchased a National NCX-3 for his first SSB rig, which he primarily used mobile, while in the Navy. While stationed at the Navy transmitter site on Adak in the Aleutians, Mike built an entire Heathkit SB line: SB-301 tx, SB-401 rx, SB-200 amp, and all of the accessories. On Adak, he had the very best selection of antennas that you could ever hope for: rhombics at every 30 degrees, a half-dozen 3 to 30 mHz rotatable log periodic arrays on 120-foot towers, etc. Mike says “You wouldn’t believe the QRM from JAs on 15 meters at Adak!”

Mike sold all of his equipment in 1967, and went QRT to concentrate on his career and marriage. He started up, again, in 1997, with an E.F. Johnson Viking Valiant, a Hallicrafters SX-101, and a JRC-245 transceiver. In the spirit and M.O. of a true boat anchor collector, “Dr. Warren” has briefly

owned (or worked on) most of the tube-type SSB rigs of the 60s and 70s (Drake, Collins, etc.), as well as some of the earlier “hybrids” (TS-520, FT-101, etc.).

Mike’s current active rig is an Icom 756 Pro-III, with an Icom IC-4KL amp. His antennas include a Tennydyne T-6 log periodic at 35 feet for 20 through 6 meters, and a 125-foot wire dipole, up 30 feet, fed using an E.F. Johnson KW Matchbox for 80, 60, 40 and 30 meters.

The boat anchor side of the shack currently has the following rigs: a Collins 75A-1 and 32V-2 combo, a TMC GPT-750 and GPR-90 combo, a military BC-348 and ART-13 combo and a TEN-TEC Paragon. For the past few years, Mike has been diligently gathering parts from EBay and many other sources to build a completely-from-scratch homebrew AM transmitter, using a pair of 813s in push-pull (*ed. – this is an incredibly impressive project!*). When completed, the homebrew AM transmitter will be paired with a Hammarlund SP-600 receiver. For a really good view of Mike’s shack and workshop, just take a look at the *CQ Amateur Radio Calendar* for this month!!



Mike’s new homebrew AM transmitter.

In addition to his main pastime of repairing/refurbishing/building tube-type radios, Mike and Margaret enjoy traveling the byways in his motorhome. And, this year, he took up the game of golf – at the age of 65!

When Mike requested permission to put up his tower, he discovered that he lived in a ham-friendly community. At the time his request was processed, there were 7 hams working in the Eden Prairie City offices! TCDXA member Tom, **WØZX**, lives about a block away from Mike. So, there’s often some mutual receiver overload going on, during pileups on rare DX.



Here's Mike contemplating if it's cold enough to put up a new antenna.

Mike began serious DXing in 2001, with encouragement from Jeff, **WØXV** and Ken, **WØSX**. Tom, **WØZR**; Larry, **NØXB**; and Larry, **WØFLY** also were very helpful in getting Mike started in DXing. These guys also all share Mike's passion for vintage radios. Mike notes that his most memorable DX contact was a vintage QSO with worked **KC4USA**, back when he was in high school.



Dr. Warren in action in his very well-equipped shop.

In addition to DXing and AM ragchewing, Mike enjoys MARS, net operations, and he is currently working steadily towards his goal of 5BDXCC.



WØWG AM op position #1:  
Military BC-348/ART-13



WØWG AM op position #2:  
Collins 75A-1 and 32V-2

Mike wants to let TCDXA members know that he is always willing to help other hams with radio parts and/or repairs. He can also provide the rare service of testing and matching transmitter tubes. This is possible, using his homebrew transmitting tube tester! Tubes he can test include: 572B/T160L, 807, 810, 811A, 813, 3-500Z, 4-125/4D21/PL177, 4-250/5D22, 4-400/PL175, PL172, & 6146.



Mike's homebrew transmitting tube tester.



# TF/NØHJZ

## 2005 CQWW SSB Contest

On Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, I got up at 1:00 am to pack, and went to work. I headed to the airport in the evening, and was on my flight and asleep by 7:30 pm.

The flight to Reykjavik (we land just outside the city) went smoothly. Then, there was a half-hour cab ride to the domestic airport (actually located in Reykjavik). After two hours, I took the 40-minute flight to the tiny town of Bildudalur. Bildudalur is located in the very north-west part of Iceland, in the "western fjords."

I was met by Thor, TM4F, and his dog Godi. Thor doesn't have a car, so we walked the mile from the airport to his house. I'm walking down the road with my laptop case and suitcase. It's 32 F with a 20 mph wind. There are hills and mountains all around, and the road winds by the fjord.

The scenery is unbelievable, but my body is not used to the cold yet! After dropping my gear in Thor's house, we set off to view the property and antennas. Thor owns about ten square miles of property, so there are no houses to see, and there's only one light (a faint light-house several miles over the fjord).



Photo by TF4M

We viewed the JA rhombic and the EU rhombic, then walk to the US rhombic. This rhombic is located about 3,000 feet from the station. The US rhombic is 350 feet on each leg, and is situated at about 85 feet high. Thor tells me that my initiation is to climb to the top, to get a real view of the antenna. But, I've barely slept and have been up for a long time, and I'm cold and.....well, I got to the top, fastened my belt to the pole and looked at a breath-taking view. The rhombic looks down into a valley, right at the US. There is not much to get in the way of the signal!

After viewing some of Thor's other projects - he just planted over 20,000 trees on his property for a forestry project, and is also adding a nesting area by the fjord for native ducks - we headed inside to view the station. Thor has two FT1000 MK V rigs, and two nice amplifiers. The rhombics can be switched with a push of a button. You can transmit on one, two or all three. My mouth was watering, as we spent the next hour setting up the laptop, moving keyers and microphones and getting familiar with the station.

At 1430z on the 26<sup>th</sup>, I was on the air! I began on 20m, and quickly had a run of US and EU going. I moved around the bands over the next couple days to get used to propagation, and to check out the antennas. 15m was dead before the contest, so I was mainly on 20m, and lower. I did manage to work some MWAers before the contest and even got **NØKK** and **WØZQ** on 40m. Thor had a 80/160m V Beam pointed at the US, but this did not load well, so my US work on 80 was with the rhombic. The contest was



The view towards North America

Photo by TF4M

only a few hours away, and the bands were looking good, so I headed off to bed for a nap.

The contest started at midnight, and 20m had already closed down on Friday night. I started on the lower bands, and just couldn't get anything going. I went to bed at 0400z, with only 172 Q's in the log. The low bands turned out to be my biggest challenge. The rhombics radiate very low on 15 & 20 (15 or 16 degrees, I believe) but on 40M the angle of radiation is about 26 degrees, and it is higher on 80M. It is tough to get attention in the states!

I noticed a couple things early on. I had forgotten about how small the band is in Europe on 40m, and I forgot how wide everyone is in Europe. The QRM is horrible. If you wondered why no one can hear you on 40m (and sometimes 20 & 80) it is because of the QRM from Europe. Most of the time I would find a frequency, start calling CQ, and let the pile-up move others away from my freq. It is amazing what a few hundred people (all calling at the same time) can do to clear a freq.

I got back on the air at 0700z, and started low again. At 0900 I went to 20m for an hour, and then went to 15m. 15m opened to EU for the next four hours and I ran station after station. I had my best three hour period on 15m into EU from 1100-1400z, with hours of 196, 201 and 175 Q's! The rate meter sat over 200 for a long time, and the 10 QSO rate was over 300 at times. Fun, fun, fun!

At 1400z, I went to 20m to work EU and US, and kept a good rate. I had a nine-hour stretch from 0900-1800z where I had at least 115 Q's per hour. I went to the low bands after 1800z, and they were slower and signals were a bit watery. At 0100z, I called it quits for the night.

Thor took me outside and it was beautiful! The wind was completely gone (the only time all trip), and there was a huge band of aurora directly overhead. Usually, we see a band of aurora on the horizon, and you can watch the curtain of aurora shift and move. With the aurora directly overhead, you could see the individual curtains vertically, and watch them each move. It was bright and green, and the most impressive aurora I have ever seen! After



Impressive green aurora overhead.

watching this for a half hour, I settled off to bed. I ended Day 1 with 1,942 Q's in the log and a score of 800k. My goal of 2,000 Q's and a million points might just happen!

I got up, showered, and ate quickly. Having slept more than I planned, and did not get on the air until 0900z. I got on 40m, and worked state-side (and some EU). I made 237 Q's on 40m into the states until 1117z (that's 11:17 am in Iceland). I couldn't believe how long 40m was open, after sunrise. Signals were loud, and then went dead. The furthest west I worked on 40m was **WØAIH** and **NØNI**. I went to 15m, and had hours of 159 and 117, before going to 20m. I went low in the band on 20m, and really fought the stateside and European QRM. I had QRM on both sides of me, and hundreds of stations calling. It was the only time I had US, EU and JA all calling at one time. I ended up working each direction for 15 minutes then opened it up to everyone.

One of the nice things about the rhombics is their directionality. If I only have the JA rhombic on, I only heard JA. You may have heard my signal go from loud to nothing. That was me switching the US rhombic on and off. Incredible! Well, I wasn't getting anywhere on the low end of the band, so I looked higher. I decided to go really high. I found the top of the band and figured no one should be calling above me. I called CQ at 1500z on 14.346. **WØZQ** came right back. He said the frequency was good in the US, so I started to run. I sat on that freq for the next 5 hours, and had hourly rates of 171, 182, 168, 142 and 75. I switched between NA and EU, and also worked JA early.

The rhombics help hear really well (and it is soooooo quiet at Thor's QTH). This really helped me work all the layers of stations that were calling. I'd work the BIG guys, then the big guys, then the 100 watt guys, then the mobile and QRP. It was unreal. I even worked a friend in Chicago, who worked me with a mag mount on his balcony! 20m was closing down, so I went to 40m at about 2000z. I worked EU and watched the grayline, as it headed to the US. I worked a few US stations between 2000 and 2300z. I worked **KØKX** at 2215z, and I figured the grayline was just hitting Michigan. The last US was **N5XR** at 2302z. I think the QRM from EU and the higher angle of radiation kept people from hearing me at this time. I needed a bunch of Q's, so I headed back to 20m. I know that a bunch of people needed TF on 40m, but I didn't think it would work. I spent over a half hour calling without success, so that was my reason to go back to 20m. 20m was open to JA, some US and some Caribbean/South America. I called on 20m, while looking all directions, and had 64 Q's in the last hour. The JA's were LOUD at the end and it was fun to run them, plus I picked up a few mults that I needed.

One thing I really noticed was pile-up behavior. The Europeans were the worst. There are great op's in EU but a lot of stations continue to call and call and call in a pile-up. They'll call when you ask for another station and they'll call when you are working someone. The US guys are better behaved but still call occasionally out of turn or over a QSO. The JA's are the best and call one at a time. It was interesting to hear all the styles at the same time.

My totals far exceeded anything I ever thought I could do. The station worked flawlessly on 15 & 20. I gave Thor some ideas for the lowbands. Thor thinks big on everything. He will have a large antenna for the lowbands, very quickly, and this could make TF4M a really world-class station for single or multi-ops. Thor will be hosting a multi-multi for CQWW CW, so you all should be able to catch TF on the low bands.

Thanks to everyone who listened for me, called me and spotted me. There is nothing more fun than working your friends from the other side of the world!

With all of that said, here are my totals:

Band	Q's	Zones	Countries
10m	2	2	2
15m	1,157	14	58
20m	1,572	26	80
40m	509	16	55
80m	229	11	46
160m	17	5	10
Totals	3,486	74	251

= **2,030,275** points

I'm doubtful that my two million points will hold up after log checking. I am sure I busted a few calls and got some typos. We shall see. I entered as assisted, although I really only watched the cluster to see when I was spotted. Last year, you needed 2.9 million to make the Top Ten. With 10m being a bust in EU, there is a chance of a Top Ten.

73 & thanks to all! The QSLs will be on the way soon! Where should I go next year?

Rich, TF/NØHJZ



Rhombic hardware at TF4M.

*Photo by TF4M*

# The November Meeting - an Extra Special Evening

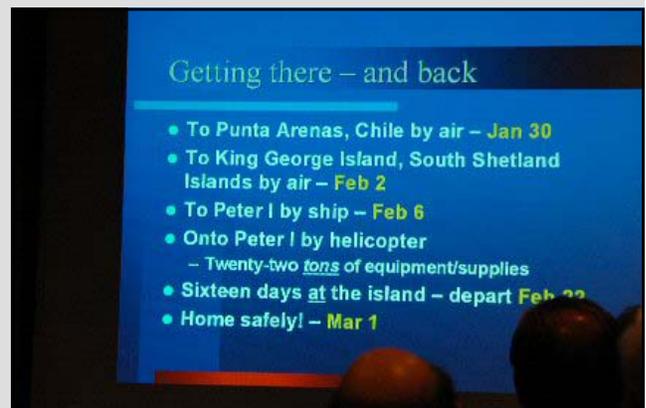
The recent TCDXA meeting on Monday night, November 21<sup>st</sup>, was in direct competition with the Viking/Packer game on ABC Monday Night Football. In spite of the stiff competition, 35 members packed the meeting room at the Sunshine Factory to hear Ralph Fedor, **KØIR**, talk about the upcoming journey to Peter I Island.

An additional highlight was the appearance by member Jules Freundlich, **W2JGR**, accompanied by his son-in-law Philipp Muessig. Jay Bellows, **KØQB**, Dakota Division Director, presented the ARRL Lifetime Service award to Jules, acknowledging his **70 years** in amateur radio. Of the many meetings the TCDXA has had over the years, this one will go down as “extra special.”

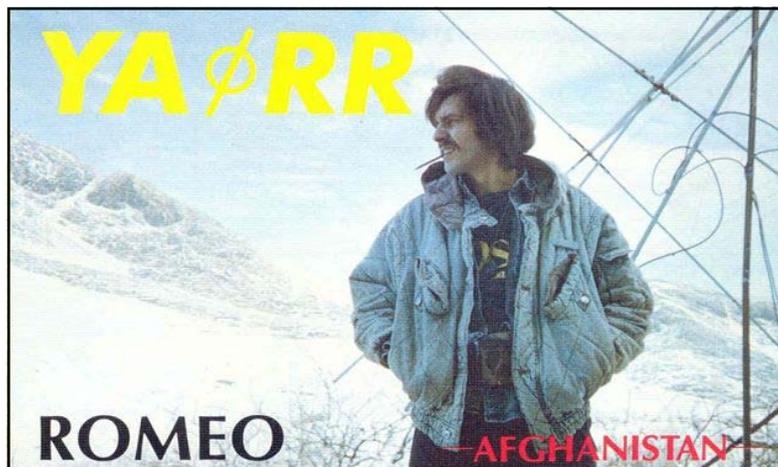
Evening bonus: the Viking’s traveled to Lambeau Field at Green Bay and beat the Packers 20-17.



Jay, **KØQB**, presented fellow TCDXA member Jules Freundlich, **W2JGR**, with the ARRL Lifetime Service Award. Jules has been in Amateur Radio for **70 years**, and was instrumental in persuading the ARRL to establish the RTTY Honor Roll. Jules is the only TCDXA member (and one of a very small group, world-wide) to achieve RTTY Honor Roll. Congratulations Jules!



Ralph Fedor **KØIR** gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation to a packed meeting room on the upcoming DXpedition to Peter I Island. As co-leader of the DXpedition, Ralph filled us in on the history of past operations on the island, the trials and tribulations of last year’s attempt, and the current activities for the operation in Feb 2006. This will be the most expensive DXpedition in history. **PLEASE consider contributing.** See [www.peterone.com](http://www.peterone.com) for information and schedule updates.



## Romeo, I Hardly Knew Ye

by Sean Kutzko, KX9X  
from the K9CU DX-CHAT Reflector 21 Oct 2005

searching on Google. I found an article online about ham radio in Afghanistan that mentioned him in passing, and a site that had several of Romeo's QSL's (including WX9X's fake **P5/RØMEO** card he handed out at Dayton one year). I printed the articles and stuck them in my notebook I keep for writing lyrics, where they have sat for a while, collecting dust. I forgot about it and moved on to other projects.

On the evening of October 19, 2005, I received a phone call from an inspector with the U.S Postal Service based in St. Louis. He said he needed to meet with me concerning an investigation of "...one of my associates." I obviously made myself available at his earliest convenience, which was the next day's lunch hour.

I ran over to my friend Matt, **NM9H**'s place. Was he trading endangered animals over the Internet? Circumnavigating customs laws by importing fresh fruit from Venezuela? Ripping tags off of mattresses and mailing them to Botswana? He assured me he was doing nothing of the sort, as he was "...an old man with a house full of kids, with neither the time nor energy to be surreptitious."

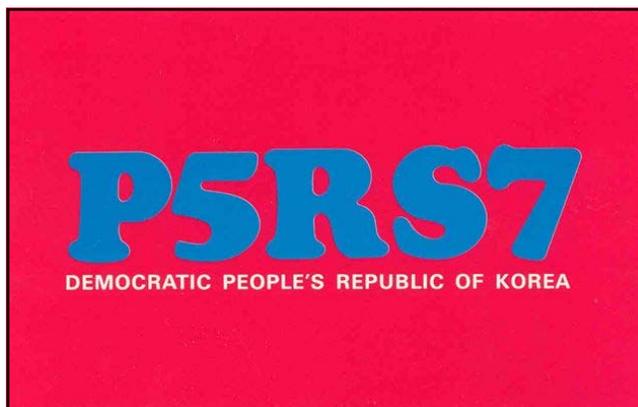
A night of fitful sleep ensued. We jazz and folk musicians have a sordid history in America, often lumped together with other unsavories like gangsters, communists, and bootleggers. Which

**G**ather 'round the campfire, boys and girls...

A few months back, I posted a note on the Society of Midwest Contesters reflector asking if anybody knew the whereabouts of our dear old friend Romeo Stepanenko, **3W3RR**. As many will recall, Romeo had a habit in the late 1980's and early 1990's of popping up with his gear from some of the rarest countries in the world of ham radio, make tens of thousands of contacts, and then getting us armchair DX'ers to flood him with requests for QSL cards (which included "green stamps") that often came very late or not at all. There was also that minor issue of him not being able to provide the DXCC administrators with the proper documentation from some of his adventures, proving he was indeed where he said he was. In the parlance of DX'ing, Romeo was the ultimate Slim, a pirate.

I'm a musician, and I figured if ever there was somebody that was worthy of a scurvy-dog, sea-shanty kind of song, ol' Romeo was that person. There were rumors he was a shady character, who showed up at the Dayton Hamvention in 1999, years after being expelled from DXCC, and then disappeared from the face of the Earth. He is the sort that is perfect for song and story. I needed factual material for the tune, so I started to do my homework. The note to the SMC reflector was the beginning of that homework.

I didn't get much response other than a couple of notes that said, "Yeah, whatever happened to that guy?" So, In July 2005, I posted a note on eham.com in their DX forum, entitled "*Wherefore Art Thou, Romeo?*" Again, no info. So, I started



of my compadres had warranted constabulatory intervention, and how did the Postal Service get involved? Besides, my youthful indiscretions are long over, as I have nothing to be discrete about any longer and I'm closer to middle-aged than youthful. In short, like my friend NM9H, I'm boring and getting old.

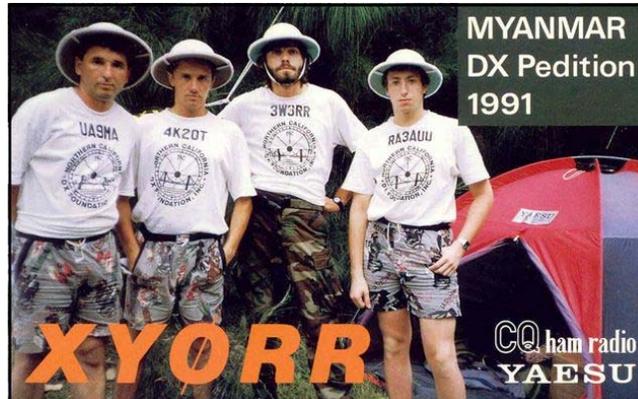
The Inspector came to my place today (20 October 2005), and after some pleasantries, asked if the name Roman Vega meant anything to me; I truthfully answered no. He then asked if I was a ham operator, to which I said yes. He then asked if the name Romeo Stepanenko meant anything to me, and I nodded uncertainly. The Inspector then produced a printout of my Romeo inquiry.

I gave him a Reader's Digest version of ham radio, DX'ing, and an overview of the DXCC program. I explained how Romeo pretended to operate from various exceptionally rare places, duped tens of thousands of us into sending him SASE's with green stamps included, and was then caught and expelled from the DXCC program for these fraudulent ham activities. I explained why this caused such a scandal to a program that has had an exceedingly high level of ethics and scrutiny associated with it over the years. He was quite interested in people sending dollars along with QSL requests. I explained it was customary to help pay for the QSL you're going to receive, especially when dealing with an operation from a place as rare as Myanmar or North Korea.

I then had to explain to him why I'd want to write a song about such an unsavory character. As I explained, every hobby or pastime has some level of folklore or legend attached to it, and Romeo is one of the most infamous characters in the history of DX'ing. In baseball, people wrote songs about Jackie Robinson and Joltin' Joe.

Bob Dylan wrote about Emmett Till. Heck, Frank Zappa wrote about a wacko dubbed by the press as The Illinois Enema Bandit. Numerous ballads have been written about pirates, oddballs, do-gooders and ne'er-do-wells in all cultures all around the globe. Ham Radio DX'ing may be a small culture in the grand scheme of things, but it is a culture nonetheless. It stands to reason that, just like any other culture, the heroes are glorified and the villains are reviled. To me, writing a song about Romeo seemed logical and fun.

After an hour of questioning by the Inspector (nice guy, by the way), he said it was quite obvious I wasn't involved in any of Romeo's current shenanigans, and proceeded to tell me **The Story**:



Roman Vega, aka Romeo Stepanenko, was arrested and extradited from Cyprus to the United States in March of 2004, and has been charged with 40 counts of wire fraud and trafficking in stolen credit card numbers. He is alleged to have done this in online chat rooms. The Inspector I spoke with indicated that he allegedly bilked over \$3 million out of this scheme. Romeo has pleaded not guilty to all charges. He has been held in northern California, as he is considered a flight risk. His trial is scheduled to begin in San Francisco on Monday, November 28.

Here is a link to the US Department Of Justice press release:  
[http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/html/2004\\_06\\_04\\_vega.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/html/2004_06_04_vega.html)

Here is a link to the actual indictment filed in Federal Court:  
[http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/assets/applets/2004\\_06\\_04\\_Vega\\_ind.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/can/press/assets/applets/2004_06_04_Vega_ind.pdf)

As Paul Harvey would say, "Now you know the rest of the story."

The Inspector never informed me that I was not allowed to discuss this, so I'm posting it here for all to see. He indicated the case against Romeo looked quite good indeed, and that they were following up on all leads they had concerning him. I was "lucky" enough to have been considered a Person Of Interest; I got to see a copy of my Federal subpoena, where I was "commanded" to appear in Federal court on November 28 at 8:30am. The Inspector indicated this would probably not be needed. He did mention that San Francisco is quite nice this time of year, though, and it was almost a pity I wouldn't get to take the Government up on their free "vacation." I gave him one of those nervous smiles and waited for him to move on.

He left me his card, said he'd file his report, and told me I'd probably never hear from him again. He did give me the case number (Northern District Of California CR04-0101 CRD), since it's a matter of public record. The fact that I was sitting on the edge of my seat as he was telling me this, slack-jawed and with my eyes as wide as saucers, might have had something to do with him giving me the info as well.

How did I get associated with Romeo? I'm just a ham operator who had one QSO with him when he was in Vietnam (still my only 3W QSO), spent probably hundreds of hours listening for him from his other far-flung locales, but never worked him anywhere other than 3W. I just happened to ask the right question at the wrong time.

It certainly is interesting what bites sometimes when you go fishing, eh? I'm finally recording my solo CD now. I'll be sure to let everybody know when it's done. I could use a lead player, though; maybe I should give WB6ACU a call...

73,

Sean Kutzko, KX9X



## NØTB Achieves DXCC #1 Honor Roll!



Tim Blank, NØTB of Byron, MN proudly displays his #1 Honor Roll plaque for both Mixed and Phone modes.

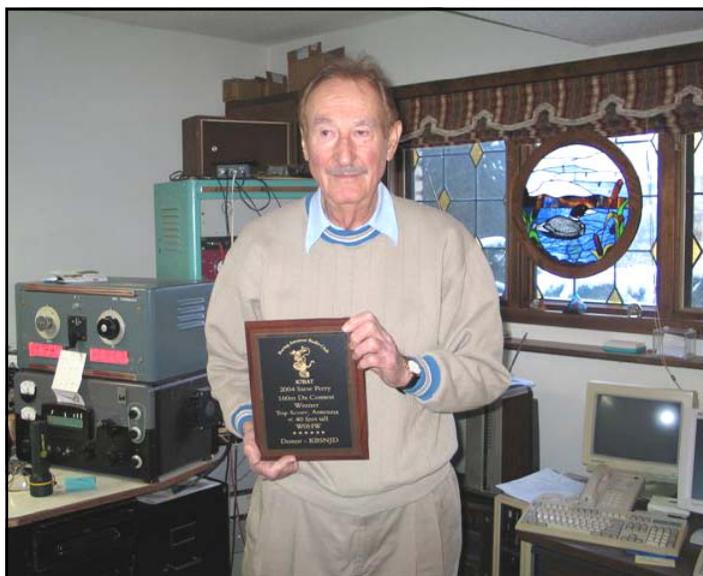
The award is dated June, 2005, and is a result of Tim working the VU4NRO/VU4RBI Andaman and Nicobar Islands DXpedition for his "last one" in December of 2004.

Congratulations, Tim, on your *outstanding* DXing achievement!



On Saturday morning, October 22, 2005, local hams gathered at Radio City in Moundsview to see a special unveiling of the Yaesu FT DX-9000D. Store owner and TCDXA member, Dan Fish, **KBØXC** and Chip Margelli, **K7JA** from Yaesu hosted the event. Chip demonstrated the various features of the elite-class HF/50MHz transceiver. This rig is loaded with impressive technology and new features that will definitely motivate many of us to become an owner. Contact Dan at Radio City to place your order.

# Stew Perry Topband Distance Challenge



Charlie, **W0HW**, said:

“The nail was in the Radio Room wall 5 minutes after going to the mail box and receiving the 2004 Stew Perry Plaque.

The award is for “**Top Score, Vertical < 40' tall.**” The antenna I used was two sections of a RS mast, loading coil and a 7' stinger. No loading wires or other attachments.

My thanks to plaque donor **KB5NJD**, the Boring Amateur Radio Club, Tree **N6TR** and Lew **W7EW**.”

The Stew Perry Topband Distance Challenge is a unique contest - held on 160 meters - which occurs near the solstice in December. This contest uses grid squares for the exchange and a QSO point system which awards points in proportion to the distance between the stations making the QSO. There is also a generous power multiplier (X2 for 100 watts and X4 for 5 watts) and a multi-operator category. There is even a multiplier for those who work QRP stations (x4) - making it worth the extra effort to pull them out of the noise.

The number of QSO points for each contact depends on the distance between the two stations. This is computed by taking the distance between the centers of the two grid squares. Count a minimum of one point per QSO and an additional point for every 500 kilometers distance. For example, a QSO with a station 1750 kilometers away will count for 4 QSO points. No additional distance for long path is allowed. There is no need to worry if your logging software does not compute the QSO points. The sponsor's automated log checking software does that, after you send in your score.

The SP Challenge is sponsored by The Boring Amateur Radio Club (Boring, Oregon) and the NCJ, and many individuals sponsor the awards. This will be the tenth year for this event, which is named in honor of the late Stew Perry, W1BB, who pioneered DXing on Topband, and who held 160m DXCC #1.

This year, the contest period runs from 1500z December 17th to 1500z December 18th, 2005. Operate for a maximum of 14 hours. For full rules and information, see:

<http://web.jzap.com/k7rat/stew.html>.



# The Day I Learned Some Humility or "Don't Ever Send QRQ To SUQ"

by Hans Brakob, KØHB

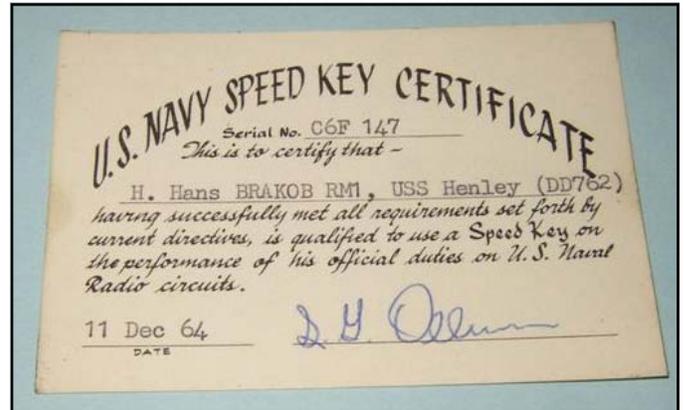
Uncle Sam kept me busy in my youth as a Navy radioman, sending me on many expense-paid cruises to all manner of exciting places, including several cruises to the Mediterranean Sea as part of the 6th Fleet. After a few years at sea, I fancied myself a pretty hotshot Morse operator.

If any of you out there sailed in the 6th Fleet during the late 50's/early 60's, you may remember the famous "Task Group Commanders Circuit," commonly called "SIXES-ALFA." This was a high-speed Morse net, which routinely clipped along at 40WPM, with busy spurts somewhat faster. It was a matter of some pride that only holders of an official "Speed Key Certificate" were allowed on the circuit, and only the best of those were qualified as NCS. (Yes, before you could use a Vibroplex on a Navy circuit, you had to pass a speed key examination and obtain a certificate).

Anyhow, as a qualified NCS on SIXES-ALFA, there was no doubt in my inflated ego that I was one of the hottest seagoing ops to ever key up a TBL. (TBL was a big black 100W MF/HF CW transmitter fitted in WW-II/Cold War era destroyers.) Certainly, there was no mere civilian radioman out there to challenge my skills.

In those days, the US Navy maintained a small presence in the Red Sea/Persian Gulf called the "Mid East Force." The Commander of this force was a Rear Admiral, who maintained his flag not on a warship, but on a seaplane tender USS Duxbury Bay AVP-38 (mother ship for seaplanes, which the Navy no longer even flew) docked at the Brit base on Bahrain. (As an aside, at one time --- later than this story --- that command was held by a contender of some note, Admiral Scott Redd, KØDQ).

Contrasting to today, "the Gulf" was a pretty low-key military backwater when this story unfolds. The "force" usually consisted of a couple of destroyers on loan from the 6th Fleet in



the Mediterranean. These destroyers rotated to this duty for about 2 months by a transit of the Suez Canal.

Vessels transited the canal in convoys, northbound and southbound, which were coordinated to meet and pass at a "wide spot in the road" at the Great Bitter Lake. If there were any warships in the convoy, they were the lead ship, and the lead ship carried a UAR canal pilot.

Communications between the pilot and the Suez Canal Authority was via an MF 420 Kc/s (this was before KHz had been invented) Morse circuit between the lead ship and the UAR station SUQ at Ismailia.

In early October of 1961, my ship, USS Henley DD762, drew the short straw, and was sent off on Red Sea patrol. After a last liberty port at Piraeus, Greece (remember "Fix" beer) we transited to Port Said and embarked our pilot for the trip through the canal.



The pilot had me file a departure report to SUQ, and promptly at 0700 we started our transit. Periodically, (at passing El Ferdan and Deversoir, if I recall correctly), he issued short progress reports, which I sent to SUQ.

In due time, the convoy entered Great Bitter Lake, and anchored to allow passage of the north-bound convoy coming up from Port Suez. Prior to weighing anchor for the remainder

of the passage, the pilot was required to obtain updated instructions from the Canal Authority. Turned out this happened just as I was due to be relieved on watch for noon chow.

Wanting to turn over a "clean" log to my relief, I was somewhat impatient that the operator at SUQ was operating at a rather leisurely pace (perhaps "only" 25WPM). Surely this lowly civilian operator could send just a bit faster? So, I slid the weights back to the rear stop on my Vibroplex. and sent:

**"SUQ DE NHXW QRV QRQ K"**

What happened next still causes me shame and regret every time I contemplate that short cocky transmission. Oh, that I could have called those electrons back! An image comes to mind of a swarthy-complexioned mustachioed Egyptian, with a wicked gleam in his eye, chomping an unlit cigar, pulling the weights completely off his key, and muttering "I'll show this gob some real QRQ!"

The crisp Morse transmission which came back to me was utterly off the chart in terms of speed. No operator on the vaunted SIXES-ALFA had ever even caused me to even really concentrate, but here I was missing nearly every other character this fellow sent. In embarrassment, I sheepishly unplugged my speed key, broke in, and on the pump handle, and sent: **"SUQ DE NHXW QRX OPERATOR CHANGE QRS"** ...and turned the circuit over to my relief.

Never again, and I mean **NEVER** again, has the opsig "QRQ" ever passed my fingertips.

73, de Hans, KØHB  
Master Chief Radioman, US Navy



**USS Henley DD762 - 1961**

## OJØB/OJØJ & R1MVW/R1MVC

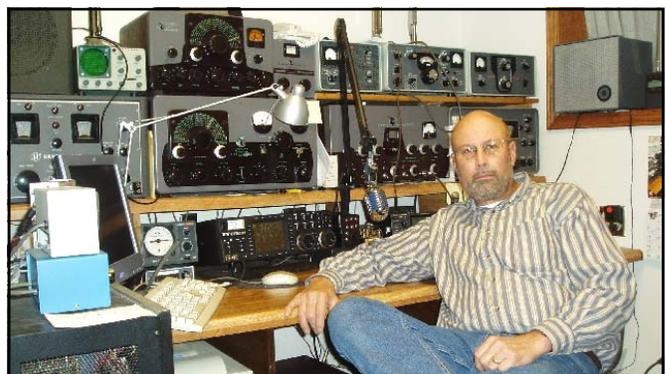
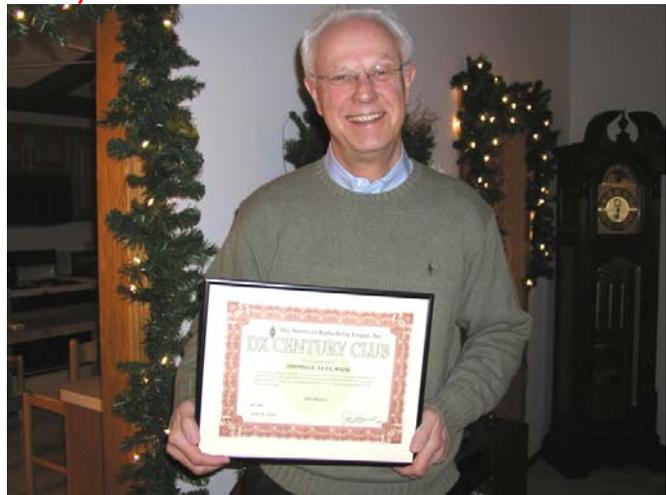


If you were fortunate to work either of these DXpeditions and have not sent your cards yet, please remember to include something extra for the efforts these guys made for us. Both teams had to endure extremely cold weather and other hardships. Take a look at the pictures on these two websites, in case you have not seen them:

<http://www.kolumbus.fi/oh2bn/pagemarket.htm>  
<http://www.r1mvw.ra6lbs.ru/eng/index.php>

*ed. - **BIG** congrats to TCDXA member Ted, W1GL, who bagged R1MVW on both 80 and 160 meters!!!*

## Tom, WØZR Receives 160 meter DXCC!



Who Owns this Shack?? It's Larry Menzel, NØXB!

# DX Quiz

## Testing Your Knowledge of CQ Zones

When you look at the TCDXA website, it's interesting to note that many of our members have operated from locations outside the USA. Some of these entities are considered garden variety, while a few of them are (were) very rare, and ranked near the top of the Most Wanted List. In total, they number 45 Entities in 19 CQ Zones. See if you can identify the CQ Zone associated with each of these entities.

<u>Entity</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>DX Call</u>	<u>CQ Zone</u>	<u>Entity</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>DX Call</u>	<u>CQ Zone</u>
1	3W	NØODK	3W6DK	26	OHØ	WØGYH	OHØ/WØGYH
2	3Y	KØIR	3YØPI	27	PY	WØBV	PY1/WAØHVR
3	4X	KØBUD	4X/KØBUD	28	SM	NDØM	SM5/WAØONK
4	6Y	WØAW	6Y5/KNØZ	29	TG	NØAT	TG9/NØAT
"	6Y	WØBV	6Y5/NØBG	"	TG	NØSTL	TG9/NØSTL
"	6Y	NDØM	6Y5/WAØONK	"	TG	WØOR	TG9/WØOR
5	A5	WØGJ	A51B	"	TG	W2JGR	TG9/W2JGR
6	C6	WØBV	VP7/WAØHVR	30	TI	NØAT	TI5/NØAT
7	CEØYKØIR		XRØY	31	UR	NØSTL	UB5IMJ
8	CP	NØAT	CP6/NØAT	32	VE	WØGJ	VO2GJ
"	CP	NØSTL	CP6/NØSTL	33	VK	KØIEA	VK3DEA
"	CP	WØOR	CP6/WØOR	"	VK	WØAW	VK2DGH
"	CP	WØZR	CP6/WØZR	"	VK	KØTT	VK2AOW
9	CT	WØZX	CT2DP	"	VK	KØIR	VK6DIR
10	DL	KØJUH	DL4WN	34	VKØ	KØIR	VKØIR
"	DL	WØZX	DA1ZX	"	VKØ	WØGJ	VKØIR
11	FG	WØBV	FG7XL	35	VP2E	NØAT	VP2ERD
12	FO	WØZX	FOØZKX	"	VP2E	WØGJ	VP2EZ
13	FP	WØXV	FP8BF	36	VP2M	W2JGR	VP2M/W2JGR
14	FR	KØIR	TOØR	"	VP2M	NDØM	VP2M/WAØONK
"	FR	WØGJ	TOØR	"	VP2M	WØBV	VP2MK
15	G	WØAW	G5DEK	37	VP2V	KØGX	VP2V/KØGX
"	G	WØJX	G5CLR	"	VP2V	NØIJ	VP2VHI
16	GM	WØGJ	GM5A	38	VP5	KØKX	VP5/KØKX
"	GM	WØJX	GM5CLR	"	VP5	NØAT	VP5R
"	GM	WØZX	GM5ASJ	"	VP5	WØGJ	VP5H
17	GW	WØJX	GW3CLR	"	VP5	WØBV	VP5/NØBG
"	GW	WØXV	GW5CBK	39	VP8	KØIR	VP8CAA
18	HC	W2JGR	HC5/W2JGR	40	VP8	KØIR	VP8GEO
19	J3	NØAT	J38AT	41	VP8	KØIR	VP8SSI
20	KH2	KØHB	KG6AQI	42	YN	WØIR	YN1CO
21	KH6	NØAT	KH6UL	43	ZF	KØKO	ZF2HH
"	KH6	WØXV	KH6/K4RSD	"	ZF	WØBV	ZF2TF
22	KP2	WØGJ	KP2A	"	ZF	WØGJ	ZF2RT
"	KP2	WØBV	KP2/WØBV	44	ZK1	NØIJ	ZK1XN
23	KP4	WØAW	KP4/KNØZ	"	ZK1	NDØM	ZK1XV
24	OA	WØBV	OA4/WAØHVR	45	ZL	KØIEA	ZLØAAI
25	OH	W2JGR	OH2/W2JGR	"	ZL	WØGYH	ZLØAAD
"	OH	WØGYH	OH2/WØGYH				

1 = 26, 2 = 12, 3 = 20, 4 = 08, 5 = 22, 6 = 08, 7 = 12, 8 = 10, 9 = 14, 10 = 14, 11 = 08, 12 = 32, 13 = 05,  
 14 = 39, 15 = 14, 16 = 14, 17 = 14, 18 = 10, 19 = 08, 20 = 27, 21 = 31, 22 = 08, 23 = 08, 24 = 10, 25 = 15,  
 26 = 15, 27 = 11, 28 = 14, 29 = 07, 30 = 07, 31 = 16, 32 = 05, 33 = 29 & 30, 34 = 39, 35 = 08, 36 = 08,  
 37 = 08, 38 = 08, 39 = 13, 40 = 13, 41 = 13, 42 = 07, 43 = 08, 44 = 32, 45 = 32.

Answers to DX Quiz:

# A LOOK BACK

An interview with John Bravis, WØEKS

by Dave Wester, KØIEA



**B**orn in Northeast Minneapolis in 1926, John became interested in ham radio at the age of 12, after he saw an Andy Hardy movie. During the movie, there was a ham radio scene where they called a Canadian station using a bread board rig with a big knife switch to change from receive to transmit.

John's sister knew a local ham, Emerson "Em," WØQMC who lived only 4 blocks away. John would often ask Em, "How far can you talk?" Em told him on 160 meters he could get as far away as St. Paul. John was amazed. At age 13, John heard that Lew Bonn Electronics, down on 12<sup>th</sup> and La-Salle, was holding code classes. He learned the code and passed the FCC exam in June, 1941. But, because John's father was not a U.S. citizen, the FCC only issued an operator's license. So, John had an operator's license, but no callsign. He could not legally operate, until this matter was resolved. In the meantime, WWII started, and all U.S. hams ceased transmitting.

In 1944, John graduated from high school, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He was sent to a Navy boot camp in Idaho. After basic training, he was assigned to radio school on Goat Island, which lies between SFO and Oakland. Just about the time he was graduating from radio school, he contracted rheumatic fever (along with several other recruits).

He was supposed to be assigned to an aircraft carrier. While John recuperated, the carrier was sent to Okinawa. John later found out that carrier sustained several kamikaze attacks. The war ended, and John got out of the Navy in 1946.

John came back to Minneapolis, and in 1946, he attended National Radio School and received his FCC first class commercial radiotelephone license. With license in hand, he went to work for WDGY AM radio. John and several other technicians were hired to set up WDGY's 50kw station, located near 104<sup>th</sup> and Lyndale Avenue South. They tuned the antennas, set up all the transmitting equipment, got the station up and running and then were told their services were no longer required. John was hoping to become part of the permanent staff. Instead, WDGY brought in all the engineers from their 5kw station to take over. John's "career" at WDGY lasted only 6 months.

In 1947, John accepted a job with the Philco Corporation installing and servicing televisions for their dealers. This was television in its infancy. Stan Hubbard's KSTP was the only TV station in town. John remembers getting a call from a Ms. O'Brien to come and fix her TV. She came to the door wearing a fancy riding outfit. While servicing the set, KSTP went off the air. Ms. O'Brien picked up the telephone and called Mr. Hubbard. "Stan," she said, "put the station back on. The TV guys are here to repair my set." A moment later, KSTP was back on.

With the G.I. bill being offered, John used the opportunity to attend the Minneapolis College of Music. Later, this college became the well known MacPhail School of Music. John's music career began in 1952. For over 50 years, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, John played the tenor sax in dance bands at the Marigold and Prom ballrooms and with quartets and trios at various country clubs.

At this same time, in 1952, a high school classmate told John that his cousin, Earl Bakken, was seeking a technician for his fledgling company. John was hired in 1952 as Medtronic's first employee. John built the first cardiac pacemaker for the company. John said they grossed \$20,000 their first year. As a global leader in medical technol-

ogy today, Medtronic had over 10 billion dollars in revenues their last fiscal year. After 33 years, and “wearing several hats” during his employment, John retired from Medtronic in 1985.

As you can see from the photos, John has several nice pieces of vintage ham gear. Recently, I visited the Pavek Museum, where John volunteers his services each Wednesday. He showed me an early Collins 4A transmitter that he and Jon, **KØFQA** restored (see the before and after pictures, at right)..

John has used many antennas through the years, ranging from long wires, zepps, and dipoles, to bi-squares, 8JKs, quads, and beams. DX-wise, John still needs VU4, Andaman Islands. He was down at his Florida home when the VU4 was last on. He could hear us zeros working the VU4, but he could not hear the VU4. With a more favorable treatment of ham radio, maybe the Indian government will allow more activity from there. Let’s hope so.

Thanks for the enjoyable visit, John. I enjoyed looking at all your gear and your pictures.

73 de Dave, KØIEA



Collins model 4A shown before restoration. The model 4A was introduced in October of 1933, one month after the company was incorporated.



Collins model 4A shown after restoration by John, **WØEKS** and Jon Lieberg, **KØFQA**. Beautiful! It resides at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting.



The top radio is a Hallicrafters model SX-25, ca. 1942. In the lower right is a National NC HRO 5TA1 with 13 plug-in coils, ca. 1938.



This is John’s National SW-3. It’s a three-tube regenerative receiver, ca. 1934.



Top left is a National FB-7 (first superhet ham rcvr), ca. 1934. Top right is a National NC-240, ca. 1944.

