



Newsletter of the
Twin City DX Association
www.tcdxa.org

Volume 6, Issue 4
December, 2009



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The YS4U Story

<http://www.ys4u.netai.net/>



by Ron Dohmen, NØAT, Bill Dean, WØOR and Tom Menas, K3WT



(l-r): Ron, NØAT; Gregor, DF7OGO; Bill, WØOR; Vlad, NØSTL and Tom, K3WT

Planning

YS4U was the fourth contest DXpedition our core group (NØAT, WØOR, NØSTL and, more recently, K3WT) has completed. We started doing this in 2003 with Guatemala (TGØAA), then went to Bolivia (CP6CW) in 2004 and San Andrés (5JØA) in 2007. After the first one, working CQWW from a DX location got into our collective blood streams. If the contest were not held Thanksgiving week, we would probably do it every year!

As a result, planning for the next contest DXpedition began immediately after the previous trip. We talked about various possibilities and, once again, looked at going somewhere in Central or South America.

(continued on page 2)

Since that first experience, several criteria have driven our decisions when considering the question, “where do we go next?” Some of these are:

- Is it a somewhat rare multiplier in CQWW CW contests?
- Is it reasonably easy to get to? In other words, is there regular air service at a price we can justify?
- Can we do the whole thing without breaking the bank? A rule of thumb has been something around \$1500 to \$1700 apiece, which, as it has turned out, has been close to actual costs per person.
- Do we have a local contact or somebody who can help us with licensing, station location, etc?
- Last, but not least, is it warmer than Minnesota at the end of November?

Why El Salvador?

In the case of El Salvador, the criteria were all met. In addition, Bill had a longtime Salvadoran friend, Maggie Bojorquez, now residing in Miami, who offered her beach house as a location. When she was planning a business trip to San Salvador (the capital) last March, Bill spent a frequent flyer credit that was about to expire, and went down with her to look it over. Her house didn't seem like it would work well, as it had no air conditioning and too few bedrooms. But, with Maggie's help, Bill found several others that could be rented and looked good. Bill also made contact with the national radio club of El Salvador, and inquired about licensing. In doing so, he met with the president José Molina, **YS1MS**, who agreed to sponsor our operation. In order to obtain a special call for a contest, one needs a Salvadoran sponsor.

This early in the planning, it was thought some of the ops may bring their XYLs. But, we received reports of crime in the area, so we settled on using a new beach hotel as our operating location instead of a house. It was a place that Maggie had shown to Bill as a possible option: the Comfort Inn Bahia Dorada. After much ne-



gotiation, we were able to settle on an all-inclusive price, and use of the roof area to install our antennas (they originally wanted us to rent the roof area).

E-mail was our primary method of planning this contest DXpedition. In all, we exchanged 858 e-mail messages - over 93mb of files. We also held periodic face to face planning meetings. The first meeting was held on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2009.

Enter Cisco, YS1CF

Cisco Call, a Salvadoran ham, heard about our pending operation, and made contact with the team. Cisco had lived in Minnesota for some time. He became our translator and chief negotiator.

We felt we needed some more information about the hotel (the Comfort Inn), especially to answer questions about how the antennas were going to be mounted on the roof. We sent him back twice to take pictures that he could e-mail to us. That was a good move, since most of the roof was asphalt covered steel which we couldn't walk on. All that was available for our antennas was a section 10 feet by 12 feet. Clearly, that wouldn't work. So we cancelled our reservations at the Comfort Inn.

Disheartened, it seemed too late to try to find

another house, but Cisco found a beach house for us to rent. Our spirits were buoyed. He took some pictures, and although there was a power line running down the length of the yard area next to the beach, we thought we could make it work. We wired down a \$500 deposit. We were on our way.

Arrival in El Salvador

Because we knew we had way too many unknowns and concerns, it was decided Bill and Ron would make the trip three days before Vlad, Gregor and Tom. This would allow them to evaluate the situation, and provide a list of materials for the rest of the team to bring down.

Packing suitcases for a trip such as this is a lesson in priorities. Airline baggage restrictions make it difficult to pack. Your suitcase weighs 50 pounds. If you want to put something in your suitcase, you have to take something out. The plan was for Bill and Ron to give information back to the rest of the team to help prioritize their packing.

Bill and Ron arrived on Friday, November 20. Cisco and his neighbor, a cab driver, met us at the sweltering (to us) airport. We drove to the QTH, dropped off our equipment, and then it was off to San Salvador where we had a scheduled meeting with José Molina, **YS1MS**, the president of the national radio club (Club de Radio Aficionados de El Salvador, CRAS). As with most Latin American countries, the national radio club is responsible for issuance of temporary ham licenses. The club location is a carbon



Cisco, **YS1CF** and his van.

copy of others we have visited in Central/South America: a large secured building, with lots of meeting rooms and a resident secretary. We gave José \$140 for the licenses, and got the tour of the station. From there you can see **YS1RR**'s QTH. Quite impressive.

Along the way, we stopped at Cisco's place of work, an auto body shop. He told us that the last month he had made only \$79, a reflection of how the economic recession has affected countries like El Salvador.

One of our concerns was whether we were going to be able to get on the internet from our beach house. Cisco found a solution for us, and took us to a cell phone store. There, we were able to pick up an internet USB air card good for a month for \$56. It became our internet for the trip. It allowed us to communicate with the rest of the team, before they arrived. It also worked with Skype, giving us excellent phone coverage back into the states.

Then, we were off to the *supermercado* to shop for groceries, where we had to purchase everything, since the beach house had no food whatsoever: no salt, no soap (all the dishes were dirty), no drinking water, and so forth. This was not the most auspicious start. As it turned out, most of the stuff we purchased was never used. More about that later... Cab fare for these trips came to \$170, wow!

Setup at the Beach House – A Disappointing False Start

The next morning, Bill and Ron began setup at the beach house. The house was in a fenced area, with a yard, perhaps 100 yards long, between the house and the beach. It looked like it would be a good place to erect our antennas.

We built the HF2V and HF9V. Cisco and his friend, Hugo, showed up with his tower sections. (We paid \$75 for the truck to bring it from San Salvador). By evening, the HF9V was up, the tower was up, as was the wire for the 160 antenna. Hugo climbed the tower, and with his extraordinary strength, put the top section on. That was quite impressive.



Hugo assembles the last tower section at the beach house. “Gin pole? What’s a gin pole??”

Because of the possibility of crime in the area, we had arranged with Cisco to hire a guard. Our “guard” turned out to be an 85-year old man who sported a machete, and was prone to frequent naps. He certainly did not inspire confidence in his abilities.

Then the trouble started. What we didn’t know was that our setup was in a commons area for a homeowner’s association. The owner of the house we were staying in had not paid his dues in some time, so he had bad relations with the rest of the members. After we had actually put a station on the air, representatives of the association showed up and told us we had to take down our antennas, or they would call the police -- unless we gave them \$1600. There was no



Ron and Bill prepare to check out the bands from the beach house QTH.

way we were going to pay that kind of money, so we began to take down the antennas. After a short time, they reappeared and said they had reconsidered; we could stay if we would pay them “only” \$750. Cisco put his foot down and we packed up for our move, privately having absolutely no idea what we would do next.

Since we already paid \$1000 to rent this beach house, some delicate negotiations were required to try to get our money back. In the end we got back all but \$350, which could have turned out much worse.

So, we scrambled to find a new QTH. Bill called Maggie to see if there was any possibility of renting the house that we had originally considered. After a few hours, she called back and told us it had been rendered unusable by the flood that had hit El Salvador only 10 days earlier. She said we could stay at her house, but it has only 3 bedrooms, no a/c, no security, etc. The flood, with 14 inches of rain, was very destructive. Some whole villages washed down out of the mountains. We were told stories about the dead cattle and human bodies that were washed into the ocean and subsequently washed up on shore.

Enter the Tesoro Beach Hotel

As Ron and Bill agonized over our situation, (as did Vlad, Tom and Gregor in Minnesota), Cisco and Hugo went out during the night, looking for a new QTH. And, they struck pay dirt. Early in the morning, they found a nearby beach hotel, where we ultimately settled in: The Tesoro Beach Hotel (www.tesorobeachhotel.com).

Cisco drove us over to the hotel so we could have a look. Almost immediately, we decided this would work. The hotel manager was thrilled to have us show up. The 200-room resort was virtually empty, and located on 5 acres of beach-front property.

Plus, we could set up the station in one of their thatched-roof outdoor bars called a cabaña, (equipped with both 110 and 220 volts AC power). It was adjacent to a several acre field running to the Pacific Ocean beach. On the op-

posite side was the hotel pool. And best of all, we had free reign over how we set up.

We negotiated a rate of \$70 a night per person for our stay, which was all inclusive. Visions of DX danced through our heads. We were literally giddy after our prior travails. The hotel manager had a friend with a pickup truck who, for \$20, agreed to haul our gear from the ill-fated beach house to the hotel. So, we loaded the tower sections, all the antennas, along with Hugo into the back of the truck, and made the 2-mile trip to the new QTH.



Our final QTH: The Tesoro Beach Hotel.
We had the place almost to ourselves!



What began as a nightmare, turned out, 24 hours later, to be much better than we could ever have dreamed: the next afternoon we were drinking beer under gently swaying palm trees, ensconced in clean, air conditioned rooms, and setting up an operating position next to a beautiful emerald swimming pool.

The rest of the crew was coming out the next day, and we e-mailed them the good news that everything was arranged. Sending the advance team sure paid off. On Monday, the rest of the team arrived (Vlad, Gregor and Tom). Now, the entire team was on-site to make decisions and help with the work.

After a couple of days, the staff at the hotel got to know us pretty well. After all, we were about the only guests that week. They bent over backwards to make us feel welcome. Just about anything we asked for, we got. Once in awhile, they ran out of beer, but Cisco would take them to task and beer would appear shortly thereafter! Because there were so few people there, we ordered our meals from a menu, and we soon learned that sometimes some of the items were in short supply. But, nobody ever went hungry.

The Station

It was a tough decision, but we had to operate outside, where the humidity and temperature were the same -- in the 90s. We did this because the coax runs to the hotel rooms would have been too long. We had two operating stations at opposite sides of the octagonal-shaped cabaña. Each had an Elecraft K3. The multiplier station had Ron's Acom 1010 amp and the run station had the Tokyo Hy-Power-loaned HL-1.1K.



This would become our outdoor shack.
It's the cabaña, normally used as the poolside bar.

We ran barefoot for the first few days of setup. Each station had an Elecraft K3. Then, we powered up the amps: a Tokyo Hi-Power HL-1.1K and an Acom 1010. We were appreciative of Tokyo Hy-Power's Tom, **W5RUM** for arranging the loan of this great, DX-friendly (30 pounds in a carry-on suit case) 600 watt amp.

The Antennas

- ◆ Butternut HF2V with a top hat, about 30 feet from the ocean high tide
- ◆ Butternut HF9V about 70 feet from the ocean.
- ◆ Inverted L for 160 meters, about 30 feet from the ocean high tide
- ◆ HyGain TH6 on 30-foot tower
- ◆ SpiderBeam (5-band version) on 24-foot fiberglass mast sections.

The TH6 was rebuilt just before the contest, after being stored for 20 years at Cisco's QTH. He had been unable to obtain parts for it, and so it sat. Our offer to him was that we would bring down the parts he needed to repair the beam, as well as some rotor cable. He then would supply us with a tower, rotor and TH6 to use in the contest. Everybody won. Cisco finally got a serviceable TH6, and we had a second beam (in addition to the SpiderBeam) for the contest. 15 meters had high SWR (9:1) and 20 meters reso-



Hugo muscles the TH6 up and onto the mast.



The TH6 is almost ready for action.



An outdoor amphitheater (complete with Greco-Roman columns) was a great spot to build antennas.



The Butternut HF9V at 70 ft. from the ocean.



The Butternut HF2V at about 30 ft. from high tide.



The crew inspects the SpiderBeam installation.



One of the Greco-Roman columns was put to work supporting the mast for the 160 meter inverted L.

nated at the bottom of the band. We used the TH6 for the multiplier station, because the ACOM tolerates the high SWR better than the Tokyo.

The HF2V had a top-hat, and covered the entire bands on 80 and 40. The HF9V was somewhat narrow on 80 meters.

CQWW Contest

Our strategy was to be on the band that was open to Europe. If no band was open to Europe, then be on the band open to JA. The JAs were strong and easy to work. Europe was more of a stretch, but we worked plenty. If we sounded weak at times, it was because our beams were pointed at either Europe or JA. We probably could have had more QSOs, if we tried for more stateside, but they would have been 2 pointers. Ron set up the operating schedule: two hours on the multiplier station, followed by two hours on the run station, then 2 hours of maintenance, followed by 4 hours of sleep. The schedule rotated, so everyone got a chance at all the different band openings.

Vlad was elected to start the contest. Since he is our expert at picking JAs out of the ether, he began on 20 meters logging JAs. After the JAs petered out, it was off to 40 meters to work Europe throughout the night, with occasional jaunts to 80 and 160 meters.

Sunrise was the best time for propagation. 80 and 40 were open to the west, including long path to Europe on 40. 20 was opening up to Europe, and 15 was about to open to Europe. Since the days are a bit longer than in the states, our best European runs were on the high bands, before Europe opened to the States.

Our goal for the contest was 6,000 QSOs and 600 multipliers. We fell just a bit short, but we are satisfied with the results. After all, we made only 113 QSOs on 10 meters. During our TGØAA trip, we made 6,000 QSOs. But, 1,500 QSOs were on 10 meters.

**Box Score
YS4U
2009 CQWW DX CW
Multi-single**

	QSOs	Points	Zones	Ctrys
160m:	184	411	11	35
80m:	512	1,145	23	85
40m:	1,353	3,213	34	115
20m:	2,079	4,813	36	117
15m:	1,343	2,847	26	81
10m:	113	244	12	20
Totals:	5,584	12,673	140	453

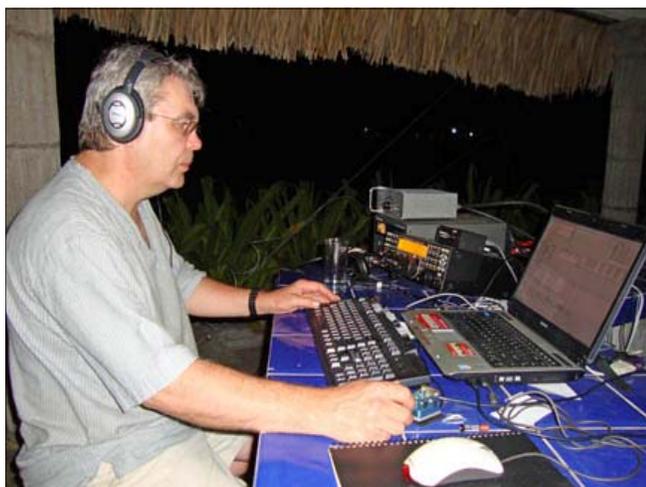
Score: 7,454,973



Bill, WØOR on an evening shift.



Tom, K3WT stands at the bar to operate his shift. Over-the-ear noise cancelling headphones were an absolute necessity in this outdoor operating environment.



Vlad, NØSTL begins the contest on the run station by logging JAs on 20 meters.



Ron, NØAT is runnin' 'em, while Gregor listens in.



Gregor, DF7OGO tunes for multipliers. Notice the stacked chairs need to reach bar height.



Logistics

We kept a spreadsheet to keep track of expenses. Ron can send you a copy, if you like. The entire trip expenses were \$8.5k, or about \$1700, each. Our air travel was on Continental, which offered some reasonable fares when purchased in advance. For others contemplating such a DXpedition, it definitely pays to book in advance. As noted elsewhere, it is important to plan as far ahead as possible, particularly now that the airlines have instituted so many fees, and made it more difficult to transport heavy equipment. It may pay to have one member of a team fly first class, as most airlines allow up to 70 pounds, and up to three bags for first or business class travelers. Finally, we learned that it is best to send an advance team, if that can be arranged. It saved our skin.

No doubt, as we packed up and headed to the San Salvador airport for our return to the USA, we were already thinking about the next time. Where will we go? Well, we have been to the Caribbean, Central America (twice) and to South America. How about somewhere in the Pacific? American Samoa, Wake Island, and a few other spots have been mentioned. We'll start working on those ideas and others, soon.

Regardless, there is something very personally rewarding about participating in a contest DXpedition. It's like Field Day on steroids. And, it goes well beyond the thrill of working down pileups. Making new friends -- both hams and others, learning about a different culture and language, tasting new foods and drinks, seeing new and unusual sights (read some of "*The Other Side of the YS4U Story*" narratives, beginning on the next page). These are a big part of the adventure.

Last, but not least, we thank all of the members of TCDXA for their support, both moral and financial. If you needed El Salvador on any band, we hope we were able to give it to you. 73 until the next time (hasta la proxima vez).

*Ron Dohmen, NØAT; Bill Dean, WØOR
Tom Menas, K3WT; Vlad Michtchenko,
NØSTL and Gregor Paris, DF7OGO.*



El Salvador, Central America

YS4U CQ-07 ITU-11
GRID: EK53mh

YS4 **K3WT NØAT WØOR DF7OGO NØSTL**
Tom Ron Bill Greg Vlad

CQWW CW 2009

88°57'W
13°19'N

MEXICO GUATEMALA HONDURAS NICARAGUA COSTA RICA
PACIFIC OCEAN CARIBBEAN

TCDXA Minnesota
TOKYO HY-POWER

Special thanks to: Cisco, YS1CF and his friend Hugo for on site help, the TCDXA and MWA members for their support, José Arturo Molina, YS1MS for licensing, K3UJH, WØAW, WØOM, WØPR for equipment donations, and the staff of the Tesoro Beach resort. Visit our web site <http://www.ys4u.netai.net>. Thanks for all the QSOs: 73 and DX!

Confirming QSO with:

Date	UTC	MHz	Mode	RS/T

Equipment:
Elecraft K3,
Tokyo Hy-Power
HL-1 2Mx,
JCDM 1510
Antennas:
Inv. L - 160m
Spiderbeam, TH6,
Balswood Verticals
HF2V and HF1V.

Design by NØSTL



<http://www.ys4u.netai.net/>



The Other Side of the YS4U Story

by Ron Dohmen, NØAT, Bill Dean, WØOR and Tom Menas, K3WT

Thanksgiving – El Salvadoran Style

On the Thursday morning before the contest, we were informed that there would be something special in our honor that night. When we arrived in the dining area we found a beautifully set table with fine wines, including a deliciously-made turkey, with all the trimmings. As we sat down, the wait staff began serving. The staff then joined us to share our first Thanksgiving in El Salvador. What a welcome treat, as we toasted each other. It was a superb gesture on the part of the hotel, and made for a memorable eve before the CQWW.



YS4/DF7OGO – A DXpedition Within a DXpedition

Gregor, **DF7OGO** joined us from Germany. Our linkage to him was through Vlad. The two of them were inseparable boyhood friends in the Ukraine, before they moved away. While they kept in close contact with each other over the years, they had not seen each other in several years, so they felt that the DXpedition would be an excellent opportunity to see each other, again.

Because Gregor had not had extensive prior experience as a serious contester, his role would be that of a team member, but without an assigned time slot, during the contest. (As it turned out, he got plenty of rig time at the multiplier station, along with time before and after the contest.)

In addition, Vlad brought an extra backup rig, which he teamed up with a G5RV antenna, strung between two coconut trees outside his hotel room. This established a separate station inside his room (read air conditioned). Running barefoot, with that modest antenna, Gregor snagged over 600 QSOs...so, he actually had his own mini-DXpedition. Since Gregor travels to exotic countries such as Armenia, Kurdistan, Mongolia and other countries in Asia, we're trying to convince him to bring the G5RV and a small rig to hand out QSOs to the deserving. We're hoping he's been bitten by the DX bug.

The Case of the Amorous Bull

Some strange things happened on the way to the contest. After getting the tower up and guyed, we discovered that our field was an occasional grazing area for some cattle that roam the area. Something one learns about Central America is that animals are pretty much allowed to go wherever they wish. The night after Cisco and Hugo finished the installation, a herd



of cows (and we discovered two or three bulls) meandered into the field in hopes of grazing. Just as one of the cows ambled to munch on some vegetation near the tower, a bull began having romantic thoughts and he translated those thoughts into action. However, the frolicking couple soon found themselves entwined in one of the guy cables, causing the end clamps to be nearly pulled off the cable. The tower was listing at a 25 degree angle, when Hugo (see next page), sprang into action. With ease, he guided the entire herd away, saving the tower from falling. Cisco and Hugo then stayed up the entire night, bringing the tower to its full upright position... Also, Hugo put long pieces of white plastic PVC pipe over all guys to serve as a warning to future bovine forays near the tower (see photo).



Beach Wedding

During the contest weekend, the hotel hosted a wedding. The plan was for the band to play on the large, raised stage that we had taken over as a base to support our 160m inverted L. Also, that stage was close to our station, and would have been too noisy, with the revelry and hoopla for us, as we tried to dig out those weak stations during the contest. We recalled our experience in Guatemala, when fireworks going off in the churchyard next door to our QTH caused some anxious moments. Fortunately, Hugo managed to convince the hotel to change the venue to the opposite side of the property from our station so there was no disruption. It was a surreal experience to be running stations on 40 and 80 to the pulsating sound of Latin music in the background. It was a memorable experience. The only real problem occurred at the end of the contest, when it was discovered that the wedding guests drank up all the beer!



Cisco, YS1CF – Our Man In El Salvador – The Cisco Kid

Without Cisco offering support before and during our visit, the trip would not have had the happy ending that it did. He provided guidance, physical help and served as our agent while there to “get ‘er done.” He sacrificed time from both his business, as well as his family, to stay with us both day and night, to ensure that our operation went as smoothly as it did. For that we can’t thank him enough. Three cheers for him!



We’ll always have a friend there, and we’re looking forward to hearing him, as he reassembles his 20-year old TH6, with the hardware we provided.



Hugo – The “Other” Hurricane

The story of our set up wouldn't be complete without a word about Hugo. He had worked at a business next door to Cisco's in San Salvador, and Cisco knew that Hugo would have the time to spend the entire 10 days with us, and that he was a dependable and willing worker. His home was over 50 miles from San Salvador, near the border with Guatemala, and he travelled all the way to the city to make a living. Cisco knew that we would need security during the week, even at the hotel. Hugo was perfect for the job, as he

is physically imposing. He literally slept with our equipment, and shooed away anyone who came near. Day and night he provided much needed protection for both us and the gear. Anything we needed, Hugo was there with a smile. Most of us can't speak Spanish that well, but that was no problem for Hugo, even though he spoke no English. With high fives and thumbs up, we got along just fine. In retrospect, we couldn't have done this DXpedition successfully without Cisco and his friend Hugo. Gracias, Hugo!

Coconut Man

When Gregor wanted to put up his G5RV antenna, he knew he had to get it attached to two 40-foot high coconut trees. It turns out that all well-appointed hotels in the tropics have their own “coconut” man to climb those trees to proactively cut ripe coconuts before they fall on unsuspecting guests.

Hugo originally wanted to help, and brought the hotel's extension ladder. Just about that time “Coco-Man” came and shooed Hugo and



the ladder away, kicked off his sandals, tied one end of the antenna to his pants and “walked” up the tree where he attached the antenna. Our Coco-Man has the physique of a horse racing jockey, and seemed to revel in his relationship with the coconut trees, where he was seen daily with a plastic garbage can full of ripe coconuts, freshly gathered for his grove of coconut trees.

Solved: The Mystery of the Non-working Beverage

On our previous DXpedition to San Andrés, we made do with a K9AY receiving antenna for 160, primarily because we didn't have sufficient space for a beverage. It worked fairly well, but this time, with that expansive and inviting cow pasture adjacent to our operating position, we decided a beverage would do the job best. Ron had packed a transformer, and thanks to a donation from Gary, **WØAW**, we had plenty of wire. Best of all, there was almost 500 feet of open space in the direction of Europe. Bill took the reel, and in 95 degree heat, tramped through the burr-infested grass, laying about 480 feet on the ground. We were completely out of coax, but we managed to scrounge up some 75 ohm TV cable, which we used to feed the separate receive antenna input on the K-3. We thought we were all set.

Ron especially likes to work 160, and had made some promises to operate. But, when, in the



wee hours, he switched to topband, the beverage didn't seem to be working. We reportedly had a good signal on transmit (using an inverted L at about 65 feet), but the transmit antenna was significantly better than the beverage on receive.

Sometime the next day, we discovered that the beverage wire had been pulled so hard that it broke loose from its connection to the transformer. It could have been one of the cows or one of the "night people" who occasionally trekked across the field, returning from their search for turtle eggs along the



beach. We'll never know. Anyhow, case solved. Just before we discovered the break at the transformer, we had sent Hugo out to examine the entire line. Unfortunately he misunderstood what we wanted, and just about the time we found the break at the transformer, Hugo proudly showed up with the entire beverage, all neatly coiled onto its reel. At that point, we simply gave up on the beverage. It was too hot to reset it, and nobody wanted to make Hugo the chump. In any case, we did OK on 160 with the transmit antenna.

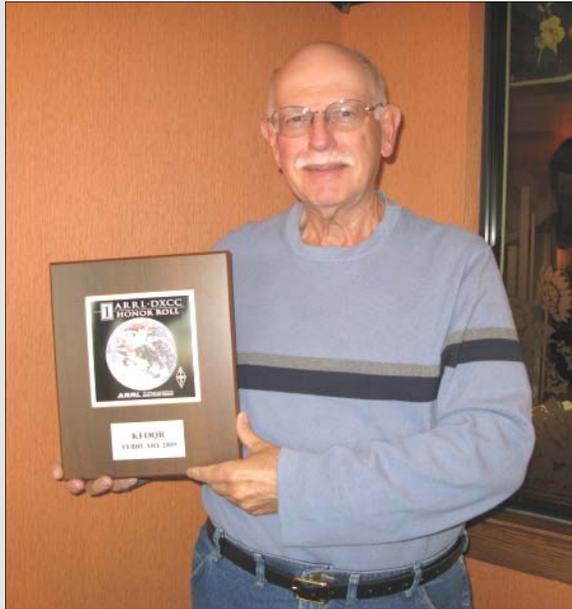
The Fishermen – Old Style

The day we were packing up, we were treated to a live demonstration of a traditional and very effective fishing technique. A seasoned Salvadoran fisherman showed us the easy way to bag a meal from the sea. The pictures tell the whole story. First, he wades out about shin deep. He spots the fish, casts his net, and, presto! This old salt suddenly had 19 fish. They were later sold as bait for the big ones further out to sea.

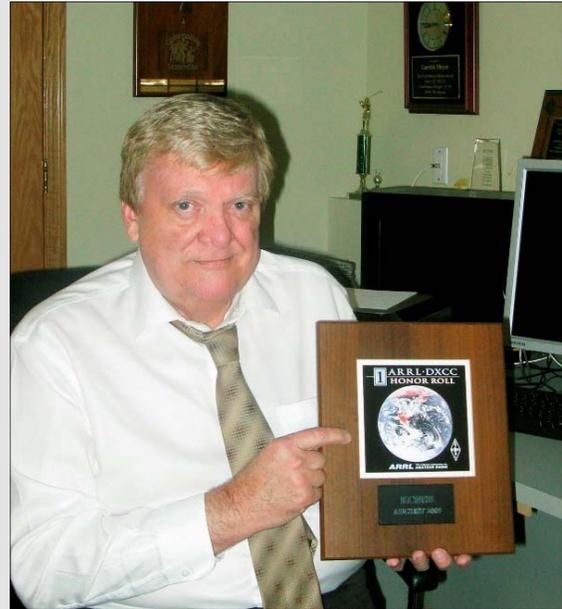


Member News

Two TCDXA Members Achieve #1 Honor Roll!!!



Dennis Johnson, KFØQR



Gary Meyer, KCØSB

When the DXCC Desk didn't accredit the **701YGF** operation from Yemen back in 2000, most who had worked that DXpedition gave up on it counting for a new one.

Much to the surprise and amazement of the DX community, and over 8 years after 701YGF took place, the DXCC desk announced on August 12, 2009 that they had resolved the issues with documentation, and were accrediting the operation.

That news was especially meaningful for two TCDXA members, because 70 was their last DXCC entity! Congratulations to Dennis, KFØQR and Gary, KCØSB on their accomplishment!

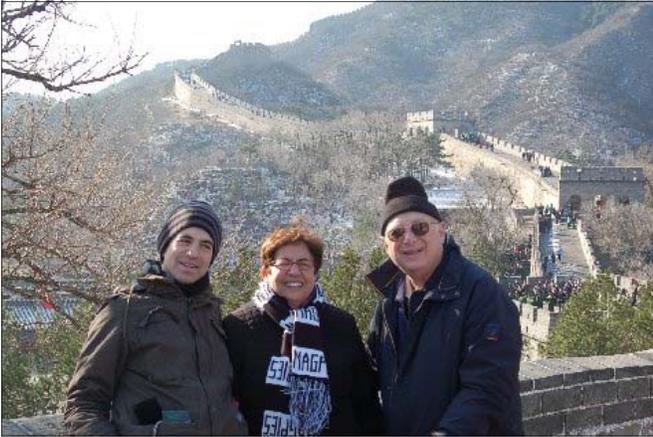


WØWG QSL Card Featured on 2010 ARRL Calendar!



Member News

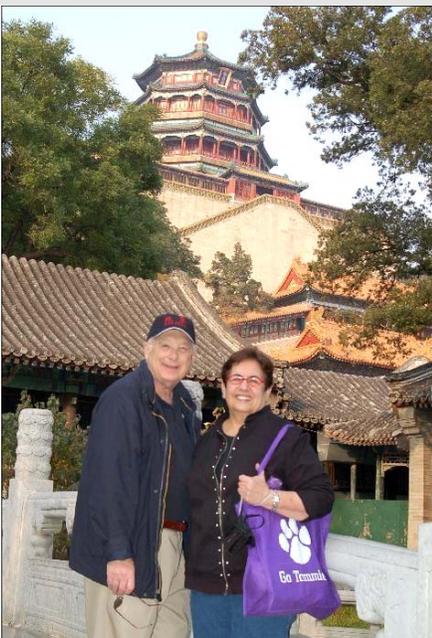
KØBUD and NØOEL Travel to BY-land



Mike, **KØBUD** and Judy, **NØOEL** were shocked when son Danny (left) announced last April that he was agreeing to a one-year announcing contract at China Radio International (CRI). Danny's excitement and enthusiasm for the modern city of Beijing grabbed Judy and Mike, who responded this October and November by visiting Danny, and touring the incredible city with famous sites such as **The Great Wall**. The Wall, which stretches into Russia and across China would stretch from New York to LA and took slave labor 25 years to build! Mike says "it was cold up there but impressive."

This giant building is the National Center for the Performing Arts. It's a \$300 million music complex of three music facilities (Opera House, Concert Hall and Chinese Theater). Even with his limited interest in classical music, Mike couldn't resist the majestic beauty and size of "The Egg!"

The facility is over 46 meters in height above ground, and is built to a depth of 32.5 meters below ground. And, it is surrounded by a man-made lake. The French-designed hall is known in China as their entry into world class music. Mike and Judy attended a classical music concert. And, later, Judy went back to see Yo Yo Ma, celebrity cellist, perform.



Mike and Judy found the Emperor's Summer Palace a touch of beauty and history, as they surveyed the huge grounds of the historic Beijing site. The Emperor Qianlong commissioned the Palace in 1749 on Longevity Hill, and used it as his summer escape for his family, his extended family and government officials.

The Tower of Buddhist Incense is approximately 125 feet high. China maintains this facility as a tourist attraction to keep the memories of the country alive, and to collect Sigelman's cash! Mike says that the tower would make a great location for a "beam on 20." It is a building of beauty, and an identifying symbol of the famous park and China's largest recreational facility.



Member News

KFØQR Sinks Hole-in-one!!

In 1999, *Golf Digest* reported, "One insurance company puts a PGA Tour pro's chances at 1 in 3,756 and an amateur's at 1 in 12,750."

When Dennis Johnson, **KFØQR**, hit his trusty #4 wood off the tee on the par 3, 155 yard, 16th hole at Chicago Lakes Golf course, he didn't know he was about to join an elite group of golfers who could claim a hole-in-one.

Playing with Dave Wester, **KØIEA**, and Tom Kieran on September 18th, the three golfers watched Dennis' tee shot hit the green short of the pin, run up to the hole, and roll in. It was high five time! Dave and Tom are still waiting for the "nineteenth hole" celebration beverage.



Meet Your 2010 TCDXA Board of Directors



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k0juh@comcast.net

NØTB: Several Hobbies MANY Talents

In the March, 2004 edition of the GrayLine, we profiled Tim Blank, NØTB. Then, we learned that, in addition to being a highly-accomplished DXer, Tim has other hobbies, including the “serious” hobbies of flying and astro photography. To checkout some of the stellar images that Tim and his friend Terry Stewart have captured in the clear skies over Byron, MN see:

<http://webpages.charter.net/djstewart/Astronomy/> .

Tim recently added the hobby of aviation photography. A small sampling of some of his work is shown, below. To see many more stunning images of aircraft, go to <http://n0tb.smugmug.com/> .

Tim’s current photography equipment includes a Canon 7D, with a 100 to 400mm L-series Canon lens. This camera boasts an image capture speed of 8 frames per second, and high-performance auto focus.



National Wildlife Refuge Week
 on the air with
HAM RADIO
 Visitors Welcome!



On Wednesday, October 12, Mike, **NØODK**, and Jim, **KØJUH**, headed up Highway 65 to the Rice Lake Refuge to operate portable during National Wildlife Refuge Week.

They operated as a Special Event station, and helped spread the word about the National Wildlife Refuge System, which is celebrating 106 years of conservation and quality recreation. The refuge system, including **K5D**, Desecheo Island, and **K4M**, Midway Island, is managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Rice Lake is an 18,000 acre refuge located 140 miles north of the Twin Cities, and is host each fall to thousands of migrating waterfowl that stage (heavy feeding) on the lake, just prior to migrating.

Mike and Jim set up overlooking the lake (wild rice marsh), and watched the flocks of waterfowl feasting on the rice, in preparation for the trip south. The flight south requires vast amounts of energy, and staging is how the ducks, geese and swans prepare. Jim, **KØJUH**, the Old Duck Hunter, now retired from hunting, was in his glory.



Due to a snafu with the 80/40 antenna, Mike and Jim were restricted to operating on 20 SSB, which eliminated any chance of working the locals. The majority of stations worked were on the east coast and in the south. They apologize to our members who looked for them on 40 meters.

Jim and Mike often acted as play-by-play announcers, describing the refuge and NWR week to the stations that stopped by and worked them.

Earlier in the week, on Sunday, October 11th, Glenn, **WØGJ**, operated from the Rydell National Wildlife Refuge at Erskine, MN. He divided his time between the 20 and 17 meter bands, using CW most of the time.

These were special days for Glenn, Mike and Jim. Their contribution to the National Wildlife Refuge Week through Ham Radio left them with a good feeling: you know - that warm and fuzzy feeling we all get when we do something worthwhile.



Jim, **KØJUH** with Walt the Rice Lake Refuge Manager



KØJUH and **NØODK** at Rice Lake Wildlife Refuge



WØGJ at Rydell Wildlife Refuge

A Sharp Stick in the Eye: The 5BDXCC Award

by Lou Sica, ACØX

ed. - This is a story about the trials and tribulations associated with chasing the 5-Band DXCC Award with 100 watts and simple wire low band antennas. For many of us, Lou's experience will remind us of our own stories and the DX awards we've pursued.

Question: Why did the fool keep poking his eye with a stick?

Answer: Because it felt good when he stopped.



I am a DXer. The idea that RF energy created from my ham radio station can bounce around the upper atmosphere and wind up at someone else's station in some remote or not-so-remote place anywhere in the world has an irresistible romance to me. No matter how many times I'm told about the physics behind it, the idea that I can talk to someone thousands of miles away without any wires or any sort of relay is just magic. It's even more magic when the place I'm talking to is someplace so exotic that I can only dream about visiting there, and EVEN MORE SO, when the place is so remote and foreboding that I would never visit it in my worst nightmares.

The appeal of this minor sorcery of sorts has kept me DXing for over 25 years, now. In those 25 years, I've made contact with hundreds of countries in every region of the world. I'm at a point now in my DXing hobby that the DXCC entities I still need can be counted on one hand.

Being so close to the pinnacle of DXing, fewer challenges remain. Although still in love with DXing in general, I began to miss how often that new entities were available to me when I was more of a neophyte in the hobby. I began to look at other DXing awards to chase. Although there are hundreds, I found the goals of most, either too obscure or too specific for my tastes. The one I decided to aim for, and the one many aim for, is the coveted FIVE-BAND DXCC (5BDXCC); an award where an operator has to contact not just 100 entities total, but 100 entities on *each* of the five traditional DXing ham bands.

A look over the contacts in my logbook showed well over 10,000 contacts, total, over the last two decades, and DXCC was already reached on 20, 15, and 10 meters. It was on 40 and 80 meters that I was lacking, and that was to be expected. Those bands are simply more difficult to work DX on. Lightning static and other forms of electrical noise are more prevalent, making weaker stations more difficult or even impossible to hear. The longer wavelengths mean antennas have to stretch longer and reach higher to be as efficient as shorter antennas on the smaller wavelength bands. In most situations, we use compromise aerials on these bands; relatively much lower or much smaller than those used on 20, 15, and 10 meters. Still, I had several dozen entities on 40 meters, and just around a couple dozen on 80 meters. I expected my goal of 100 on each band to not only be possible, but not even all too difficult. I was going to find out how naively wrong I was.

I first concentrated my efforts on 40 meters, believing that the shorter wavelength band of my two remaining cliffs to conquer would be the easier one. Although I was correct, the band wasn't without its difficulties. First was a disturbance of my normal sleeping schedule, but I had expected that. 80 and 40 meters are "darkness bands," and any long distance done on them is usually done between sunset and sunrise, often well into darkness. The 40 meter band is also populated by high-powered International Broadcast stations, but the skills I had learned (plus judicious use of CW) got me past that hurdle.

But, my station was what many other DXers would call "limited" in the first place. Being unable to produce my maximum allowed 1500 watts from my transmitter was due to a combination of financial reasons, electrical capacity of my radio room, and the potential of causing interference in every electronic device in the house. I was limited to only 100 watts. Although such a limitation is extremely common in the amateur radio world, it was unusual for DXers at my level.

My antennas for 40 and 80 meters were also shorter and lower than typically used by DXers attempting to reach the goals I was aiming for. This made my signal harder to hear over the increased noise levels, and made my signal weaker at other stations with their own, often compromised, antenna situations. This gave me my first real experience of "being CQ'd in your face." Still, I persevered, and with some time, effort, frustration and lack of sleep, I reached my goal of 100 entities on 40 meters.

One more band to go, and I was sure it wouldn't be very difficult at all, especially with the skills gained and honed on 40 meters. I look back at that bravado, and I hear myself saying to that person "you stupid, stupid child!"

I had made several contacts on 80 meters before, mostly local and stateside, but also enough DX contacts to accumulate the previously mentioned couple of dozen entities. But these couple dozen were the "easy ones," mostly Caribbean, Central American, or other North American places.



My antenna farm: A 50-foot tower with Tennadyne T-8 and 1/4 wave slopers for 40 and 80 meters.

My goal of 100 entities forced me to look past those places and those stations, and looking past them forced me to look at a painful reality. First, my "compromise station" was far more of a hindrance on 80 meters than it ever was on 40 meters. I discovered that, although hams with such a limited station could do some DXing on 80 meters, it was EXTREMELY rare for them to even think of actual GOALS on that band. Full power was the norm for those with such aspirations, and antenna compromises were as little as possible. My location in almost dead center of the continent, hindered me even more. (*ed. - Lou moved to Minnesota from the East Coast. He has experienced DX culture shock!*)

Although the extra 1000 miles my signal needed to travel over land versus water did cause me slight difficulties in my DXing efforts on other bands, the compromises in my station made that extra distance seem as if it were the flight path of a moon mission. Stations heard outside of the North American area were few and far between. Add to that, the "mountains" of difficulties I had encountered on 40 meters seemed as if they were sheer vertical drops on 80 meters.

Noise levels were immense, even in the supposedly electrically quiet months of winter. The amateur metaphors describing it as "muck," "mud," "crap" and many much more colorful and non-family-appropriate-epithets were

FULLY understandable now. (Side issue: 80 meter DXing with a compromised station WILL teach you to swear. And, even if you happen to have the faith, composure, and self-respect to avoid such language, you will find your G-rated replacements of “darn” and even “oh SUGAR” will come out of your voice with such pointed daggers and deep darkness that anyone will wonder if they’re not listening to you rehearse a performance of *The Sopranos*). And, noise sources not even at MY end of the contact limited my ability to even be heard by the distant station.

Radio amateurs have always been the “canaries in a coal mine,” when it comes to electrically noisy overhead power lines here in the States, often being the one to call the local utilities when they hear the first staticky hints of a failing transformer or degrading cable, long before either of these actually collapse. Hams in other parts of the world have very limited or no control over the condition of the power lines, and because of that are often trying to hear stations over a cacophony of EXTREME noise, noise that is even MORE intense on 80 meters than the shorter wavelength bands, noise that covers a limited signal completely and totally.

This experience made me the recipient of an 18-credit-semester in the University of DXing Humility: a place where you learn that the dreaded “CQ In Your Face” you were introduced to on 40 meters becomes par for the course on 80 meters. This is made even MORE painful by the fact that many of the stations doing this are often VERY loud at your station.

It’s made even MORE difficult, while you listen to other, less compromised stations make EASY contacts with the CQing station, with the added injury of hearing them discuss how this is the 39th contact with them this week (note that the hyperbole used here, although obvious, is often not very far from reality). This all ends in the final fatal blow of hearing the CQing station say, “I guess not many stations are on tonight, I think I’ll sign off,” while you send your last desperate calls with your voice hoarse from calling or hand wringing in pain from desperate Morse

Code calling, and your whole body just drawn from a lack of sleep.

Your late night contacts on 40 meters have become multi-hour, early morning, desperation sessions on 80 meters. Your coworkers whisper behind your back about your lack of sleep and their imagined reasons behind it, and you’re just too tired to explain the real reason to them. And the only reason your spouse doesn’t wonder herself why your side of the bed is empty all night is that she’s woken up several times by a small but distinct interference of rhythmic buzzing or garbled voice coming out of the clock radio every time you make your desperate calls.

You also learn about things limiting your ability to make contacts you never even had to think about on the other bands. You learn that, for many, even for many very strong stations, 80 meters is a band they go to avoid DXing. They go there for casual chats. So, while they may clamp their headphones to their ears and try to hear that weak station calling them (yup, that’s you) on the other bands, on 80 meters they’re only interested in stations strong enough that they can have a ragchew, the long respected amateur tradition of long conversations that interlace technical discussions and bravado with mundane small talk. Your weak attempt at a simple “I hear you, can you hear me?” contact (“DE ACØX UR 599 R?”) get ignored.

Even the tools you used on the higher frequency/longer wavelength bands to make contacts prove inadequate to the task on 80 meters. The various Internet sources to what frequencies stations from rare DX locales are heard and worked, along with their poster’s comments of “Easy Contact” and “Strong Signal” and even “Begging For Contacts” might as well be maps to Bigfoot sightings. You go to the listed frequencies at the listed times, and you often hear nothing but noise and local stations making a contact with the DX station you just can’t hear. Or, you find yourself in another “CQing in your face” situation, another night of desperately calling a station who just can’t hear you. Radio DXing contests that used to be wonderful ways

of getting unusual and rare entities to be on the air only prove to fill the whole 80 meter band with local stations calling specters of DX stations you simply cannot hear, or just more sleepless nights of desperate calling from you to unhearing distant radio receivers.

But...

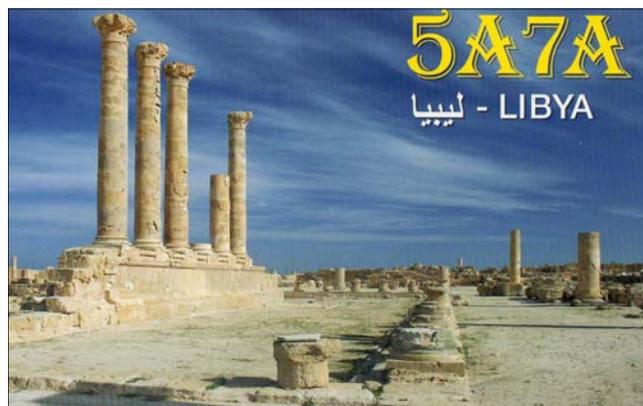
Sometimes, you get a contact. You hear a voice or the tones of a CW station in your headphones saying “ACØX UR 599 QSL?” Often, you’re so tired you almost miss it. Sometimes, you’ve been calling desperately for so long you forget for a moment how you’re even supposed to react when a station DOES hear you. These are the times when you see the magic in DXing again, when EVERYTHING is telling you the contact is impossible. Computer programs are telling you there’s no propagation between you and the other station. With noise levels higher than ever, and dozens of other stations calling, you STILL make a contact. And, better than magic, sometimes it’s your experience that rewards you. There are times when the skills of a timed call, off frequency calls, and other tricks you learned on the other bands actually WORK.

And, these things happen just enough to keep you going after your goal. It’s no longer the “relatively easy” task you’ll accomplish in a few months. You stretch out your goal to a year, then two, then more. Eventually, somehow, some day, you make that contact with **Entity Number One Hundred on the Amateur Radio Eighty Meter Band**. And, after some waiting and wrangling with international post offices and the Rules of Return Postage (something for another story), you get your QSL verification card back for that contact.

And, with all 100 cards in hand, you FINALLY fill out your long-awaited application for Five Band DXCC. In a few weeks, your personalized plaque comes back. You hang it high in a place of esteem. You look at your radio, and swear you’ll never turn it on again. And it does sit idle for quite a while. But, then, the DXing bug that’s been nibbling at you for 25 years starts biting again. And, you find yourself say-

ing to yourself, “You know, there IS also a 160 meter band...”

Lou, ACØX



5A7A
LIBYA
International DXpedition 2006
www.5a7a.gmxhome.de
CQ: 34
ITU: 38
LOC: JM62MU
QTH:
Janzour Tourist Village, Libya

OPs:
5A1HA, DF2SS, DF6QV, DJ2VO,
DJ7EO, DJ7IK, DJ8NK, DJ9CB,
DK1BT, DK1II, DK2DO, DK7PE,
DK7YY, DK8FO, DL1BDF,
DL1EJA, DL5CW, DL8YHR,
DL9USA, HB9DTE, IT9ESZ,
K1LZ, K3LP, N2OW, ON5GA,
PA0R, VE6OH

TRX:
6 x IC-746 Pro
IC-735
FT-857D

PA:
7 x ACOM 1000
Sequencer PA

ANT:
3 x 5B Spiderbeam 20, 17, 14m, 10m
1 x 3B Spiderbeam 40, 30, 20 m
4square 80 m, 4square 40 m
Titanex V160E; Butternut HF9V
different Wire Antennas

IS CONFIRMING OUR QSO:

To Radio:	ACØX			
Date	UTC	MHz	2way	RST
21-Nov-2006	05:37	3.5	SSB	59
23-Nov-2006	16:43	14	SSB	59
27-Nov-2006	17:03	14	CW	599
23-Nov-2006	16:56	18	CW	599

Mei text for the QSOd Vy 73 de And, DL9USA

TXN QSO!
QSL Manager DL9USA
(WWW.0RZ.COM)

www.QSLSHOP.com
#10.Best 77 1022.Best 1022

WIMO, ICOM, microHAM, spiderbeam, AlfaSpid Rotators

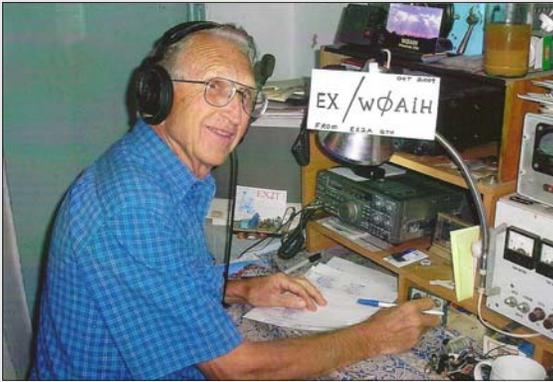
Photo © DL9UW - Old name in Sabratha, Libya. Thanks to our host, the ASSAHER Club in Tripoli, Libya for his great hospitality. ...and other sponsors



EX/WØAIH

October 2009

Photos and narrative by Paul, WØAIH



Both Ivan, **EX2A** and his son Vlad, **EX2T** met me at the airport at 3 am, and assured me that I could operate from their station. They took me to my hotel in Bishkek. The following evening, George Galki, who we employ at our Church Medical van, (his daughter also works for us), took me 15 miles out of the city to EX2A's QTH, where I was presented with my EX license. (Ivan is the licensing authority for his country.) I operated several hours from his QTH. He has no running water and an outdoor facility. On an earlier visit, I brought Ivan an "AIH footswitch," to replace the one he had, that was difficult for a foot to find. This year, I wrote the date of my visit on the footswitch!

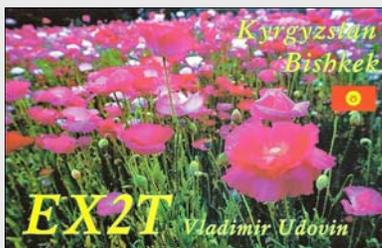
This is Ivan, EX2A. He and his son Vlad, EX2T are both CW ops. They gave me a Russian amplifier tube for my collection. Ivan proudly showed me their back yard with apple trees and grapevines. They have a solar panel that charges batteries that sit in their kitchen. The power often goes off. So, they have small 12V lights in their house for backup.

Vlad is the strongest English speaker, followed by his dad. They learned English via amateur radio.



On my second night, I was taken to Georgie, **EX7MAT**'s QTH. I operated with an electronic keyer that was "AIH friendly." After 20 meters died, his wife served dinner. They live on the edge of Bishkek, and also have an outhouse. He has a Flex computer-controlled radio (in addition to the IC-756 Pro you see in this photo). He really likes his Flex, and has high praise for the company.

From left to right:
Vlad, EX2T; Ivan, EX2A; and Georgie, EX7MAT.



EX/WØAIH

This is our Medical Van, which was dedicated 10 years ago. This unit was built in the U.S. One-half of the van serves pregnant mothers. It has ultrasound equipment. Doctors from America have volunteered to train the native doctors in the use of the equipment. Now, women are given all of the tips about what to expect, and given proper prenatal care.



This is Tamara, who is a great asset. She knows English well. Tamara gave me two days of her time to show me around. She took me to some remote areas, where the Medical Van has helped orphanages. One orphanage has perhaps 20 beds in a single large room. When Americans say they are poor, they do not know what poverty is like over there.

Of course, there are rich people in Kyrgyzstan. But, the rich are often not the ones who are helpful. You have got to have a heart for people. And, that is where our Lutheran Church does well in their country. Islamic people don't get help like we give. And, I'm sure that the leaders give praise, but feel differently in their hearts. Women and girls are considered unimportant.



I saw this power tower at the orphanage, and I had to climb a few feet. Tamara was having a bird, fearing for my safety.

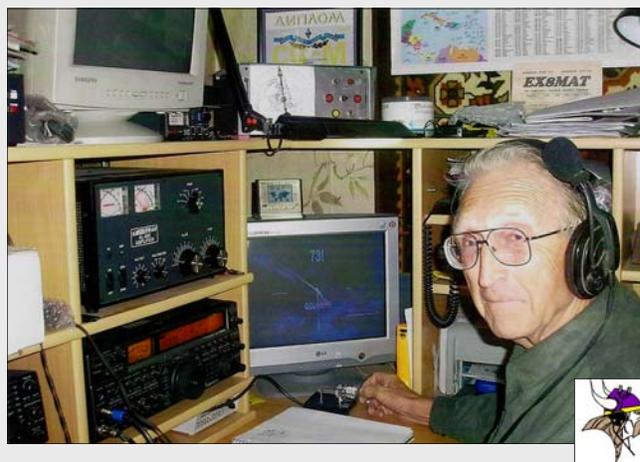


EX8MAT's quad on top of his 5-story apartment building. It covers 40 through 10 meters and uses a Russian Military rotor.

My last 2 nights of operation were from Georgie, EX8MAT's QTH. On the second night, I had to be at the airport by midnight to check in for my 3am flight to Istanbul. Georgie was kind enough to pick me up at our Medical Mission office, take me to his home to operate, until I could no longer hear a North American station.

I was on for about 4 1/2 hours. There were many telephone calls...I suspect TVI...but, he let me continue to operate with whatever the amp delivered! The transceiver is an Icom 775.

Then, about 10pm, he took me to the airport. He saw me go through security, and we waved goodbye.



Is Paper QSLing Becoming a Thing of the Past??

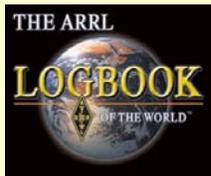
by Mike Paskeuric, NØODK

Some claim it is. They attribute the change to rising postal rates and LoTW. Others think paper QSLing will be a major part of DXing for a long time to come. Where do you stand on the issue?

One thing is for sure. If one of your goals in DXing is earning awards, you will need confirmation of your QSOs. Whether you do it with paper QSLs, electronic confirmations through LoTW, or a combination of both, welcome to the QSL chase!



In this article, we'll be covering the options available for QSLing through the mail. But first, let's take a look at its electronic counterpart, LoTW.



Logbook of The World

(LoTW) is the ARRL electronic QSL system introduced in 2003. It recently had 23,287 registered users and 234 million QSO records in the database.

The program requires some computer savvy because of its complexity. Don't let this scare you off. There is plenty of good help available on the LoTW website, and by networking with other users.

Most logging software in use today has menu options that make uploading your logs a simple task.

LoTW matches contacts from your log with contacts in other logs. The matches result in confirmations that can be used for awards.

The cost of applying for awards and endorsements is similar to making a written application to the DXCC desk:

Cost of submission: \$12 per application, plus cost of QSL endorsement credits.

The cost of endorsement credits is based on quantity purchased. Endorsement credits may be purchased at any time in the following quantities:

500 credits = \$0.15/credit; 250 credits = 0.175/credit; 100 credits = 0.20/credit; or 50 credits = 0.225/credit.

Here is an example of the cost for a submission of 100 QSL endorsements:

\$12 + 100 QSL endorsements x \$0.15 = \$27.00

\$12 + 100 QSL endorsements x .175 = \$29.50

\$12 + 100 QSL endorsements x .20 = \$32

\$12 + 100 QSL endorsements x .225 = \$34.50

(continued on next page)

Costs associated with printing, mailing, tracking, filing, and then packaging and sending QSLs to award sponsors go away with LoTW.

DXpeditions are using LoTW as a way to promote financial support by telling DXers the first logs uploaded to LoTW will be those containing the QSOs of operators who make donations.

Full details are available at <http://www.arrl.org/lotw/>

QSLing via the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service (QSL Bureau)

Sending QSLs via the bureau is still the best bang for your buck, and while the turn around time is long, the service will generate returns.

Return rates vary from 40% to 60%, and may take months (even years) before the QSL you sent for finds its way back through the system and ends up in your mailbox.

Cost: \$5.00 per half pound (approximately 75 cards), 10 cards or less \$1.50, 11 to 20 \$2.50, 21 to 30 \$3.75

Service is available only to ARRL members.

225 Countries are served by the Outgoing QSL Service. 73 are not served, and 14 restrict service to members of their country's national radio society.

If you're not in a rush to get QSLs, the Outgoing Bureau is a good way to go. Full details are available at <http://www.arrl.org/qs/qsout.html>.

For complete information on how to receive your incoming bureau QSLs, see:

<http://www.zeroburo.org/>.



The Zero Incoming QSL Bureau
WQSL Bureau

P.O. Box 907
Florissant, MO 63032
info@zeroburo.org

QSLing Direct

Excellent return rate (99%), versus cards sent.

Sender pays postage rate to DX country plus return postage back to the U.S.

Cost: \$3 to \$4 per mailing. Overseas postage is 98¢ for the first ounce. Return postage to U.S. runs \$2 to \$3+, depending on the country mailed from.

Return postage can be covered with IRCs, USD (green stamps), or foreign postage stamps (two sources of foreign postage are listed on the next page).

A few countries are still prone to mail theft. DX stations get around this by setting up QSL managers and P.O. boxes in locations that don't have problems with bad boys in the post office.

DX stations with a stateside manager are popular with the DX crowd, because QSLs are easy to obtain. The postage rates are a fraction of the overseas costs, the mail is secure, and the turn around time is short.

If you're not 100% sure the QSO was good, send the operator an email, and make sure you made the log before sending off your (\$\$\$) QSL. Most DX stations have an email address on QRZ.com, and have responded to requests for info. <http://www.qrz.com>

Rule of thumb: If you really need/want the QSL, always go direct.

(continued on next page)

Foreign postage stamps and air mail envelopes are available from the following sources:

William J. Plum DX Supplies
12 Glenn Road
Flemington, NJ 08822-3322
(908) 788-1020; fax (908) 782-2612
email info: plumdx@msn.com

James E Mackey, K3FN
PO Box 270569
West Hartford, CT 06127-0569
(860) 521-7254
<http://users.net1plus.com/ryoung/>

Air mail envelopes are available in two sizes :

Outgoing 4 3/4" x 6 1/2"

Return 4 1/2" x 6 1/4"

The return envelope is smaller so it fits in the outgoing envelope, without having to fold it.

QSLing via QSL service (WF5E)

Service forwards QSLs to managers and bureaus world-wide, and takes the work out of QSLing!

Good return rate – some say as high as 80%.

Turn around time 3 to 18 months.

QSLs are returned via the ARRL incoming bureau.

Cost: 2 QSLs per \$1.00.

Eliminates the need to stock envelopes, stamps, IRCs, and track QSL routes and managers.

Full details at <http://www.qsl.net/wf5e/>

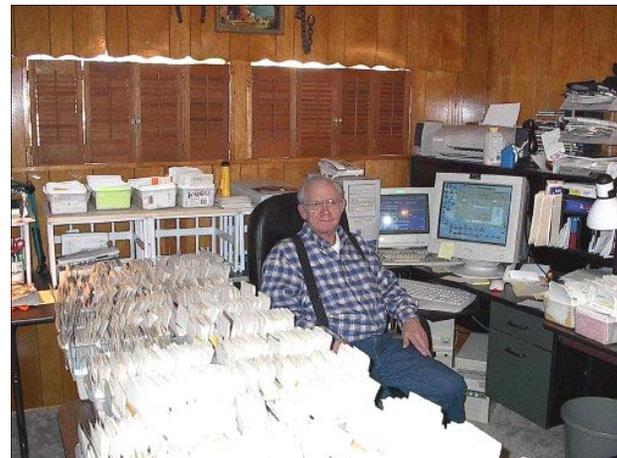
Global QSL Service

Global QSLing is the new kid on the block and offers a very unique program for sending and receiving paper QSLs.

The service prints a custom QSL designed by you, and mails them via QSL bureaus to all stations indicated in your ADIF Log file.

Cost: surprisingly affordable by today's standards.

Check out all the details at www.globalqsl.com



(continued on next page)

eQSL

eQSLs are not accepted for DXCC awards. *“Photocopies and electronically transmitted confirmations (including, but not limited to fax and email) are not currently acceptable for DXCC purposes. Exception: Confirmations created and delivered by ARRL’s Logbook of the World program are acceptable for DXCC credit.” (from the DXCC rules.)*

If you’re not chasing ARRL awards, and are only interested in e-mail confirmations, take a look at this service.

Website claims 120,000 membership base.

Currently, CQ Magazine uses eQSL for some of its awards.

Full details at <http://www.eqsl.cc/qslcard/Index.cfm>



Some final thoughts on the question: Is paper QSLing becoming a thing of the past?

LoTW and electronic QSLing are popular, and add a new dimension to confirming QSOs for awards. Will it replace paper QSLing some day? The answer from a local polling of DXers is a resounding “NO.”

As good as this amazing program may be, LoTW can’t match the excitement and sense of accomplishment you get from receiving a QSL card via the mail.

DX Awards and QSLing have been around for years. Remember the early QSLs? Two sided, black and white, and for the most part boring. They confirmed a QSO, and not much more. Today’s QSL card is the product of digital photography, computer driven graphics, and state-of-the-art printing techniques. More often than not, DXpedition QSLs are a multi-paneled photo image card in vivid colors, loaded with details on the operators, equipment, and QTH.

Many DXers proudly display QSLs in plastic sleeves that hang on the wall of their shack. Others have mounted their prize QSLs in 3 ring (photo) binders.



QSL cards bring back memories – memories that are unique and very special to every one of us. More reasons why paper QSLing will be around for a long, long time!



Gray Line Staff

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Audio Video Electronic Repair

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**Ron
Dohmen**

NØAT

Ron grew up in New Prague, Minnesota, where he first became aware of amateur radio when his cousin told him about a local priest who talked to hams in Australia. At the time, he was in junior highschool, and it left a lasting impression on him.

Later, he met Ed McGee, **WØRAL** (SK), who was a salesman that called on his father's radio/TV repair business. Ed gave Ron his novice exam in November of 1964, which netted him his first call sign: **WNØKQU**. When Ron upgraded and passed his General test, Ed rewarded him with a bug. Back then, bugs were a big step up from the straight key, and in the hands of a skilled operator, could produce some high speed CW.

Remember how exciting it was to put your first station on the air? It was no different for Ron. His first station was a Hallicrafters S-40 receiver and a home brew xtal-controlled two-tube transmitter, with an oscillator and single-sweep tube final. Compare this to Ron's current station, and you realize technology has moved a long ways in this hobby.

Here's a look at the different rigs Ron has owned over the years:

- ◇ EICO 753, Heathkit SB301/401
- ◇ Yeasu FR101/FL101
- ◇ Kenwood 930
- ◇ ICOM 765
- ◇ ICOM 775
- ◇ ICOM Pro II

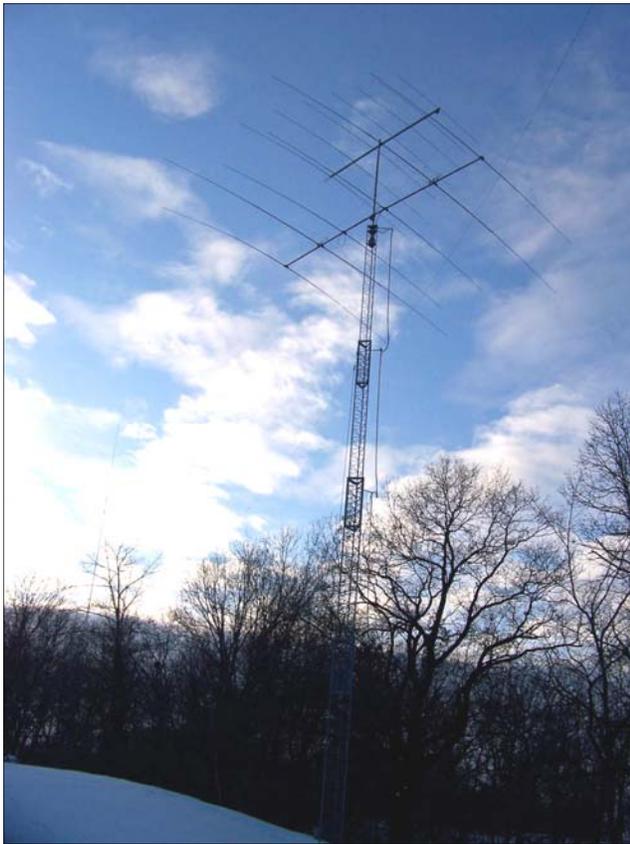
Ronald Dohmen, 14, Receives FCC License As Amateur Radio Operator



This is how it began.....
From 1965 New Prague newspaper.

His current station consists of an IC-7600, IC-756 Pro III, and an ACOM 2000A amplifier. The backup amp is an ACOM 1010, and is primarily used on DXpeditions.

The antenna system is a Force 12 4el/20m & 2el/40m combo, and a Tennadyne LP covering 17m – 6m. On the low bands, Ron uses two Hy-gain Hy-towers phased for 80m, and a matching network on 160m. Two reversible beverages help capture the weak signals.



It was when Ron lived in St Louis Park in 1980 that he became serious about DXing. Since his tower was only 40 feet high, he decided to put up a 5 element 15 meter monobander. He remembers being at the top of a sun spot cycle, and working lots of DX on 15 meters. After the band went out in the evening, it would come back to life after about 45 minutes with good openings to Africa, and Long Path openings to Japan and SE Asia.

Ron's impressive collection of DX Awards attest to the fact he's an accomplished DXer and an avid Contester:

- ◆ DXCC #1 Honor Roll
- ◆ 5BDXCC with 160, 30, 17, and 12 meter endorsements
- ◆ 5 Band WAZ
- ◆ 160 DXCC, with 225 confirmed

In recent years, he was a team member on three operations that were QRV during the CQ World Wide CW contest weekend:

- * CP6CW November 27-28, 2004
- * 5JØA November 24-25, 2007
- * YS4U November 28-29, 2009

These are some additional locations Ron has operated from:

- J3 Grenada
- VP5 Turks Caicos
- TG Guatemala
- VP2E Anguilla
- TI Costa Rica
- HR Honduras
- OA Peru

Today, Ron and Faith (xyl), reside on 2.5 acres in Plymouth, MN where they've lived since buying the property back in 1981, and where they raised their children Bob (KBØGII), Melanie, and Anne.

*ed.—Ron's QTH is on top of a hill, located at the second highest point in Hennepin County. The view to the northwest, through north, to the northeast is fantastic. Ron knew **exactly** what he was doing, when he bought his house!*

The Dohmen's love to travel, and now with the kids grown and gone, they will have more time to pursue their interests. Last year they traveled to Machu Picchu, Peru. Where will they head this year? Maybe it will be somewhere rare, and Ron will take a radio along. How about P5 and a CW operation?



<http://n0at.home.comcast.net/~n0at/>





The MWA Contest Corner

by Bob Chudek, KØRC

2009 CQWW RTTY at KØIR

The QTH of Ralph Fedor in Waite Park, MN is punctuated with blocks of granite jutting out of the ground. These outcrops provide major obstacles for his amateur radio tower installations. The rock would need to be “dealt with” when cables were trenched from the remote towers back to the radio room. In other instances, they provide a convenient built-in anchor for guy wires!

In contrast, his wife Sandy converted this rocky “menace” into a park-like setting with flower gardens, pathways, and outdoor seating areas. This was my impression as I took a break from the RTTY contest and walked around their property over the weekend.

The CQWW RTTY contest is the first major contest each season. It begins at 7:00 pm local time on the last full weekend of September, and runs for 48-hours, continuous.

A small team of operators were gathered to operate the 2009 contest from Ralph’s station. He was making final adjustments and connections when I arrived at about noon on Friday. There were three operating positions and four computer systems connected by a network. The N1MM Logger software was already installed and my task was to get all the stations talking to each other and using a common log before the contest started.

The decision had been made to enter this contest in the M/2 category. This category allows multiple operators to operate two independent stations simultaneously from one QTH, using one callsign. Ralph’s station lent itself perfectly to this category. Two Yaesu transceivers and two Icom transceivers were used during the contest.

(continued on next page)



Charlie, KØSV (left) at Station 1 and Scott, NØUV (right) at Station 2.



Mark, WAØMHJ operating station 1, using a Yaesu and Ameritron AL-1500.



That’s me, KØRC, at Station 2, with a pair of Icom 756 Pro 3s, an Alpha 9500 and an Acom 2000.

Steel and Aluminum at KØIR



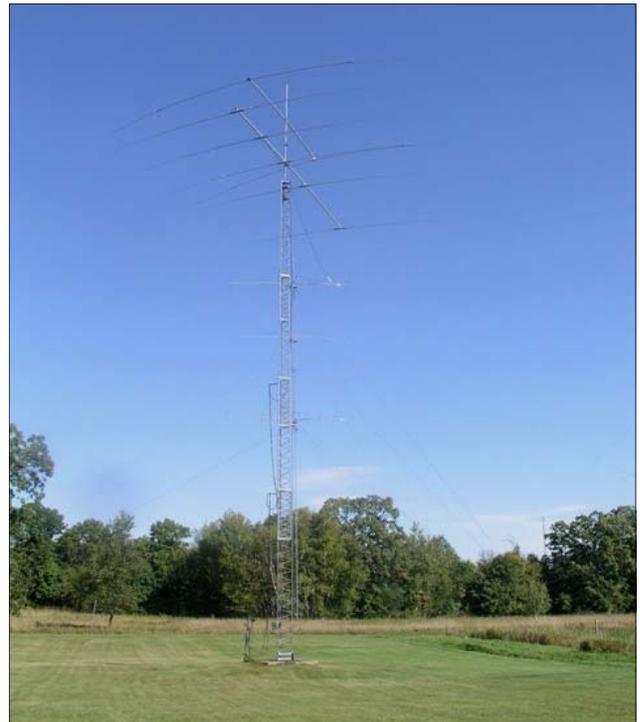
190 ft. rotating Rohn 55.
Top: 4el 40m. 2nd: 6el 20m. 3rd: 7el 10m.
4th: 7el 10m. Bottom: 6el 20m (all M2)



128 ft. rotating Rohn 45.
Top: 6el 15m. Middle: 9el 6m. Bottom: 6el 15m.
(all M2)



70 ft. Rohn 55.
Top: 4el 12m. 2nd: 5el 17m. 3rd: 3el 30m (all M2)
Bottom: side mounted 5el 10m (Cushcraft).



70 ft. Crank-up.
Top: 2el 40m. Bottom: 5el 20m (both Cushcraft)



Approaching the KØIR QTH.



“Fedor Park”



Mark, WAØMHJ looking for more antennas.

These radios drove a selection of linear amplifiers, including an Acom, Ameritron, and an Alpha. The two stations were operated at the conservative power level of 1,000 Watts.

The team consisted of six operators; Ralph KØIR, Bob KØRC, Mark WAØMHJ, Jim KØXV, Charlie KØSV, and Scott NØUV. We operated 46 of the 48 hours, with only one major problem. This happened when one of the logging computers dropped offline early Sunday morning. A restart of the network cured this problem, and normal operation resumed for the rest of the weekend. Other minor issues happened along the way, but these came from the normal learning curve of new software and operating a new mode.

Overall, the contest was a great success. Our 2,400+ contacts and 2.5 million point score might possibly bring us a World Wide First Place win in our category!

Ralph’s new station brings another upper Midwest QTH online, where an operator (or operators) can be very competitive in the radio contesting community. He will be looking for guest operators to help put the KØIR contest station on the air. Send him an email message, if you are interested in working a contest from a superstation!

ralphfedor@gmail.com .

73 de Bob, KØRC



Ralph, KØIR running SO2R on 15 meters.



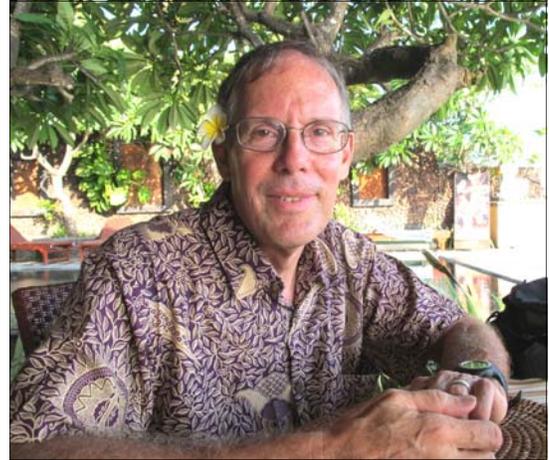
2009 CQWW CW From 9M6LSC

by Tony Wanschura, KMØØ

[As I write this,] we are still in Bali. We've been without internet access for several days, but I am writing now from a little shack in a coconut grove (with WiFi!), a few feet from the sea on the southeast coast of Bali. A cool breeze is blowing in off the water, and the beer is self-serve and plentiful. We've read about the weather back home, and figure we will see it soon enough.

On to the contest. In East Malaysia, CQWW begins at 8am on Saturday morning - a very civilized time to start a contest. The fine breakfast that came with the room at Langkah Syabas Resort was just what I needed to fuel up for the hours ahead. I wouldn't get tired until around 3am, when the rate was very slow, and I would take my longest break of 4 hours.

Like the YS4U group, I tried to maximize my EU contacts, but 8am was already two hours past my sunrise, so I had to be satisfied with JA and NA for the first few hours. I put out my first CQ high in the band on 20, and ~~KØØU~~ responded. Not really upper midwest, but still a zero, and I hoped that was a good sign. The next two hours saw my best rates for the contest, with lots of NA and JA calling in, along with some welcome multipliers like 9N1, VK6, and ST2.



Steve, 9M6DXX; John, 9M6XRO; a local palm tree climber and Godfrey, 9M6GY discuss where to hang the 160m dipole.

Unlike from XU, JA contacts from 9M6 (Oceania) are 3-pointers, and especially welcome. In XU, I always tried to clear them out quickly so I could get to the higher-point Qs underneath. Thirty percent of my total contacts were 3-point JAs, which really helped the score. Thirteen percent were with US stations.

I tried to keep my ears tuned for zeroes and nines, and was rewarded by working many of you. Even during the biggest pile-ups, many of you found a way through. That's saying a lot about your operating know-how. It made a difference.

Langkah Syabas is a fine location to operate from, although the local guys consider

Sabah a bit of a black hole. A few miles south of the capitol city of Kota Kinabalu, it is right on the ocean, which, according to the local guys, gives it a huge advantage over their own stations. The station is all Yaesu gear, with a 45-foot crank up holding a C4 and wire antennas for the

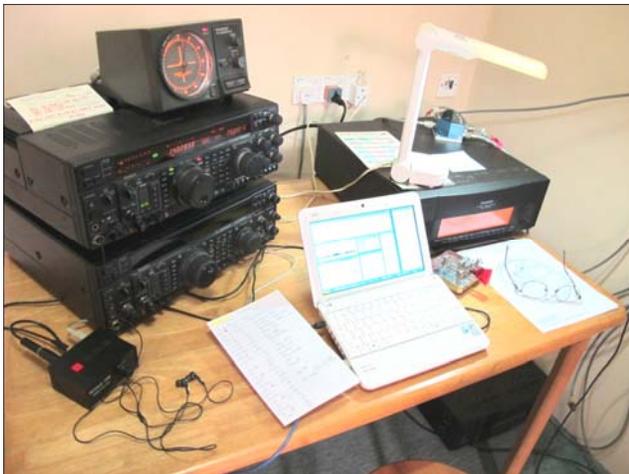


Here's how to hang a 160 meter dipole.

low bands. We improved on the wires by installing an HF2V a few feet from the water, with three radials on each band. We also hung a dipole for 160 from the top of the tower, and one of the local kids gave a great palm-tree climbing demonstration, while hanging the ends about 40 feet off the ground.

I felt fairly loud and had good rates most of the time, working all over NA on both 40 and 80. The exception was 40 and 80 in the wee hours of the night, when EU stations were mainly working each other. Their QRM level was so high that I had a hard time being heard, and establishing a frequency was really tough. The vertical worked surprisingly well, but I do need to find a way to be louder on 40 and 80 next time.

The 160m dipole was a surprise. I didn't spend a lot of time down there, because I could get a better rate on 80, but I did work into EU as far west as Sweden and Latvia, a



Ready to go. FT-1000MP MkV, Quadra amp, and MSI netbook computer running N1MM.

pretty long haul for a low, horizontal antenna. No NA, though.



The HF2V was only 20 yards from the sea.

I believe I will be back next year. Thanks to John (9M6XRO), Steve (9M6DXX), and Godfrey (9M6GY) for their generosity and help before the contest, and to all of you who found me during the contest. For certain, the best part of CQWW CW was being called by MWA and TCDXA friends. Thanks!

73,
Tony, KMØ0/9M6LSC

**Box Score for 9M6LSC
2009 CQWW DX CW S/O**

Band	QSOs	Pts	Cty	Zn
1.8	28	77	11	9
3.5	423	1249	59	20
7	713	2098	72	28
14	651	1876	73	31
21	623	1816	65	26
28	13	28	6	6
Total	2451	7144	286	120

Score : 2,900,464



Sunset at Langkah Syabas.



WØGJ/QRP Wins First Place *WORLD* in 160m Contest!



I about fell off my chair when I opened a letter from the ARRL. It was a certificate for **FIRST PLACE WORLD, QRP** for the **2008 ARRL 160M Contest**. As I recall, I put in most of the time, but did sleep for several hours each night.....I could have tried harder. The US record was 104,000+ points. I had about 94,000 points.

This year, I was in the contest for the full time, except for the middle of Saturday day, which was nap time. My gross score this year with 842 Qs with 150,000+ points, with 5 watts! I'm sure I'll get docked some. When I would call CQ, I had many dupes on the last night.....and I wonder if my original contact was in their log as a mis-copied call, being QRP on my end. The most exciting Qs: I had a CT1 and an OM call me at my grayline, and a G and a KL7 call me at their grayline, while I was CQing. I tied up **ON4UN** for almost 10 minutes getting my callsign correct. (Thanks, John, for your perseverance!)

This is the second year in a row that I've worked **WAS** with 5 watts on 160m, within just a few hours. THAT is a thrill!

I have a 1/4-wave ground plane with elevated radials at 25 feet. The tower is a Philystran-guyed Rohn 25G that sits on top of a small hill, 800 feet from the shack, and fed with 7/8" hardline. I have an inverted-V at 140' on another tower 700 feet away from the ground plane. Lobes are to EU and VK/ZL. Receiving (when needed) is a K9AY loop. I have no neighbors, and all power lines in the area are buried. My noise floor is exceptionally low. I have used Beverages in the past, but with my low ambient noise level, they rarely help, unless there's lots of QRN from a storm.

I have learned (quickly) operating QRP on 160M: Don't plan on working DX the first night....and maybe some Caribbean DX the second night. If someone steals your run frequency, move or start S&P. If I have to call someone more than 3-4 times, I move on....unless it is a multiplier. Trying to run with a 2:1 SWR is a harder than with 1:1 SWR with only 5 watts. That 15-20% power loss is critical when QRP.

QRP does not lend itself to a lot of DX, but here in the midwest, with QRP, I can work both the east and west coasts. I'm sure QRP on either coast would have a hard time working the other coast. For once, at least, in the QRP category, the midwest is the place to be on 160m!

73!

Glenn WØGJ in Brrrrrrmidji, MN

A BIG Welcome to Our Newest Member!

Steve Hohman, KØIX
Pelican Rapids, MN



TCDXA Treasury Report

December 21, 2009

Submitted by TCDXA Secretary-Treasurer Jim Junkert, KØJUH

Income:

Carryover from 2008	\$ 649.61
2009 dues collected	2,810.00
2010 dues deposited to date	25.00
Donations & misc.	275.00
Door prize ticket sales	450.00
Glorioso DXpedition postponed (refund)	250.00
Marion Is. DXpedition postponed (refund)	150.00
Sable Is. DXpedition postponed (refund)	200.00
WØDXCC 2009 loan repayment from RARC	<u>1249.90</u>
Total YTD income	\$6,059.51

Expenses:

Website expenses	\$ (65.65)
Bank service fees	(41.00)
Office supplies, guest dinners, and misc.	(184.62)
Loan to RARC repayable after WØDXCC 2009	(1249.90)
TCDXA banner (replacement)	(96.08)
MWA plaque	(75.00)
ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund	(100.00)
NCDXF Donation	(250.00)
KH4M funding	(250.00)
VK9GMW funding	(200.00)
CYØ funding (postponed)	(200.00)
3D2CR funding	(250.00)
TX3A funding	(200.00)
FT5GA funding (re-sent)	(250.00)
YS4U funding	(200.00)
9M6LSC funding	(100.00)
EX/WØAIH funding	<u>(100.00)</u>
Total YTD expenses	\$(3,812.25)

Current Balance (12/15/2009):	\$2,247.26
Cash on hand	<u>76.00</u>
Total current funds	\$2,323.26

VKØIR
ZL9CI
A52A
T33C
3B9C
TX9
CP6CW
3YØX
K7C
5A7A
VU4AN

K5D
VK9DWX
FT5GA
3D2ØCR



K4M
TX3A
9M6LSC
YS4U

XU7MWA
S21EA
J2ØRR
J2ØMM
BS7H
N8S
3B7SP
3B7C
5JØA
VP6DX
TX5C
9XØR

TCDXA DX DONATION POLICY

The mission of TCDXA is to support approved DXpeditions by providing funding. Annual contributions from TCDXA members are the major source of funding for this mission.

A funding request from the organizers of a planned DXpedition is directed to the TCDXA Treasurer, who makes an initial evaluation of the request, and discusses the attributes with the TCDXA Board of Directors. The request will be judged by how well DXpedition plans meet several key considerations (see below).

If the Board of Directors deems the DXpedition to be worthy of support, a recommended funding amount is presented to the membership for approval. The TCDXA Treasurer will communicate the outcome of this process to the requestor.

Key Considerations for a DXpedition Funding Request

DXpedition destination	Website with logos of contributing clubs
Ranking on <i>Most Wanted Survey</i>	QSLs with logos of contributing clubs
Most wanted ranking by TCDXA Members	Online logs/pilot stations
Logistics and transportation costs	Up front cost to each operator
Number of operators and their credentials	Support by NCDXF & other clubs
Number of stations on the air	LoTW log submissions
Bands, modes and duration of operation	Success of previous operations by same group
Equipment: antennas, radios, amps, etc.	Valid license and DXCC approval
Stateside and/or foreign QSL manager	Funding mode: USA and/or foreign financial address

Guidelines for Level of Funding

\$\$\$\$ First level	A major DXpedition in terms of operators, equipment, duration of stay, and transportation costs. Requires elaborate planning and a huge budget. Always ranks high on Most Wanted Survey. Examples: VKØIR, 3YØX, K5D.
\$\$\$ Second level	Major to modest DXpedition in terms of operators and equipment. Ranking on Most Wanted Survey can vary from high to low. Examples: D68C, 3B9C
\$\$ Third level	Modest operation in terms of operators and equipment. Usually ranks low on Most Wanted Survey. Examples: T33C, K7C
\$ Fourth level	Special requests, and DXpeditions to entities <i>NOT</i> on the Top 100 Most Wanted Survey. Examples: CP6CW, YS4U



To join TCDXA, follow this link: <http://www.tcdxa.org/ApplicationForm.html>