

TCDXA
TWIN CITY DX ASSOCIATION



Minnesota

Newsletter of the
Twin City DX Association

www.tcdxa.org

Volume 12, Issue 4
December, 2015



Inside this issue:

<i>PZ5W</i> <i>KØAD</i>	1
<i>Member News</i>	10
<i>Myanmar Scouts</i> <i>NYØV</i>	12
<i>Member Profile</i> <i>KØUU</i>	14
<i>MWA Contest Corner</i> <i>KØAD</i>	17
<i>VP5S</i> <i>KØMD</i>	19

Gray Line Staff

KØAD
KØIEA
KØJUH
WØBV

The GRAY LINE REPORT

DXing from Minnesota - Land of 10,000 Lakes

The 2015 PZ5W CQWW CW Contest Operation from Suriname

by Al Dewey, KØAD

Deciding on Suriname

With my retirement in June, one of the things I started to think about is the list of things I've always wanted to do but never had the time – a bucket list, so to speak. One of the things on that list was to operate a major DX contest from a semi-rare location outside of the U.S. At a TCDXA meeting, I mentioned this to Ron, NØAT; Tom, K3WT; Bill, WØOR and Vlad, NØSTL. They graciously invited me to join their team for the CQWW CW DX Contest in 2015.

In the first of many planning meetings we held at Perkins restaurant starting late in 2014, the first order of business was to determine a destination. There was some talk of locations in the Pacific, as well as a return to Montserrat. There were pros and cons to the VP2M location. It was an easy trip, and the logistics were pretty straightforward. However, there was also a desire by the team to do something different. We decided to do VP2M anyway, but, by the time we did, the CQWW CW date was no longer available. So, it was back to the drawing board.

Bill, WØOR did a Google search of "DX Shack Rental Locations." One of the locations that came up was PZ5RA in Suriname. We agreed this would be a great location. It was not too hard to get to, and it was "semi-rare" for a contest. Bill contacted Ramon, PZ5RA and asked if his station was available for CQWW in November. Unfortunately, it was already reserved for 2015 CQWW CW by a single operator.

Fortunately, the reservation was cancelled, and the date was offered



to our group. But, there was one complication. Ramon was in the process of moving his QTH about 25 kilometers inland from his then current location in the capitol city of Paramaribo. In April of 2015, the DX guest shack had not even been built yet, nor were there any towers in place at the new location. However, Ramon was confident that all would be ready by the November contest date.

So, we committed to PZ5, and sent Ramon a down payment. We each paid a flat rate per night, which covered everything including transportation to and from the airport, all meals for our entire stay and lodging at the DX guest shack. All we had to bring were our own radios.

With the location locked in, we continued to meet monthly, or so, at Perkins to nail down some of the details. We decided we would operate Multi-2.

Bill made our airline reservations to leave the Monday before Thanksgiving, and return the Wednesday after. This gave us a lot of time to set things up, test out our 160 meter antennas and see a little bit of Suriname.

Bill and Tom would bring their Elecraft K3s, and Vlad would bring his ICOM 746 as a backup. For amplifiers, Ramon had an ACOM 2000A that we could use, as well as his new Elecraft KPA500. I also brought down my own KPA500 as a backup. All we had to worry about for antennas was 160 meters.

We decided to take the materials down to Suriname to build a 160m "T" and a K9AY loop. Ramon had two towers at 62 feet and 70 feet. Each had a Mosley PRO 67 beam that covered 10 through 40. He had an 80 meter inverted V, which ended up playing very well. Writelog would be our logging software.

We had some concern about vaccinations. We all went to the travel clinic, and most of us ended up getting Typhoid and Yellow Fever shots. We were strongly advised to take all precautions to stay away from mosquitoes. We all came well prepared, but as it turned out, mosquitoes were not an issue at all. Except for an upset stomach or two, we all survived the week in good health.

The Trip Down

Prior to our Monday departure, we all met at

Bill's house and had our "weigh-in." The purpose of this was to make sure all our carry-on and checked luggage were within weight and size limits and, if not, to redistribute items, accordingly. Our flights were relatively uneventful. We flew through Charlotte and Aruba and then on to Paramaribo.



Waiting with our luggage in Aruba. Besides our clothes, we were carrying two Elecraft K3s, two Elecraft KPA500 amps, an ICOM 746, an antenna tuner and wire/coax for a 160 meter antenna.

We were met at 1:00 in the morning by Ramon (PZ5RA) and his XYL Ernie. Two separate vans were necessary for our six-person team and our luggage. We arrived at Ramon's QTH around 2:00am, and he showed us around. His property included his house and the newly-constructed contesting DX guest shack.



The PZ5RA DX guest shack.





Operating positions in the DX guest shack.



Gregor, DF7AT and Vlad, NØSTL making breakfast in the DX guest shack.

Ramon had been working hard to get everything complete by the time we came down, and his efforts really showed. The DX guest shack had a main operating room, a small kitchenette, two private toilet rooms, a shower room and three bedrooms. It was all air conditioned, with separate temperature settings for each room. Ramon was rightfully proud of this awesome DX guest house that he had built. The refrigerator and cupboards were stocked with a variety of beverages and food to help get us through the week. In short, the facility was topnotch. With the excitement of our arrival and the awesomeness of the QTH, we all stayed up until about 4:00am the first night readying each station.

Pre- and Post-Contest Period

By design, we had a fairly lengthy pre-contest period. This gave us an opportunity to do the following things:

- Get the station set up,

- Put up the 160 meter antenna and K9AY receiving loop,

- Identify any problems with the operating of the station (RF issues, computer issues, etc.),

- Put PZ5 on the air – especially on the WARC bands, and

- Practice our skills for the weekend.

We did all of these things. Setup of the station went smoothly. We did have a few problems with the computer network. These were mainly caused by the fact that the wi-fi router was located in Ramon's house. We solved this problem by running a 150-foot CAT-5 cable from Ramon's router to our own router in the DX guest shack. This allowed us to have our own local network for Writelog, which worked much better.



A wasp-like insect built a nest within a few hours of installing a CAT-5 cable between the house and the DX guest shack.

We installed the 160 meter T antenna between Ramon's two towers. We thought about using some trees for this, but they just weren't quite high enough. Gregor was drafted into climbing the two towers, using a safety belt provided by Ramon. Gregor and Vlad built up a matching network that gave an almost perfect match. The K9AY loop was placed in a field south of the guest shack.

Each of us took turns operating during the week. We tried to get on as many bands and modes as possible, emphasizing the WARC bands and RTTY. We also tried to get on SSB when we could. Ramon (PZ5RA) is one of the only hams on from Suriname, and he says he rarely operates phone. So, we figured





Gregor volunteered to climb the towers to attach the 160m T antenna.



Bill secures the Beverage antenna to a ladder. Supports for the Beverage included two homemade ladders, two shovels and a bunch of trees.



Gregor and Vlad working on the matching network for the 160m T.



We ran the ground for the Beverage into a nearby stream.

PZ5 might be a country that is needed on many band modes. We also wanted to put forth our best efforts to put PZ5 on 160 meters. As it turned out, our T antenna worked great as a transmit antenna, but we really had trouble hearing. Each day we would get emails saying that there was a wall of stations calling us, but we just were not hearing them.

We double-checked our K9AY antenna on Friday, and made a few tweaks. We were still concerned that 160 and 80m would be a bust if we didn't do something. A few emails back and forth to **WØBV** provided the guidance for us to solve the listening problem. Ramon had about 100 meters of some "Chinese" wire that was not much good for anything, so we decided, on the last day, to use it to fabricate a

beverage antenna. It was not a thing of beauty, but we hoped it would be an improvement over the K9AY loop. Ramon explained that it's often difficult to hear on 160 meters near the equator, due to atmospheric noise.

At the end of our stay in Suriname, we had made almost 10,000 QSOs on all bands 10 through 160m, *in addition to the contacts we made during the contest.* Figure 1 on the next page shows a summary of our pre- and post-contest QSOs at PZ5W.

On the day of the contest (Friday), we spent some time talking about band strategy. **K9LA** had prepared some propagation charts showing us what bands would be open long path and short path during



the 48 hours of the contest. We also had to consider which antennas could be used at the same time from each tower. Ron had put together a good operating schedule which gave us all nearly equal operating times across various times of the day, so everyone would experience a variety of propagation.

During the week (and on Monday and Tuesday after the contest), Ron uploaded the PZ5W logs to Logbook of the World, as well as to Club Log several times a day. The entire CQWW contest log was also uploaded as soon as the contest was over. This allowed those who thought they had worked us to confirm the QSO the same day. Those who want a PZ5W QSL can request it via Club Log.

By Friday evening, we were ready to go!

The Big Event!

Our team did not set any specific scoring goal for the contest. We found that the record for Suriname in CQWW CW was 9.3M for the Multi-2 category. We thought we could break that for sure. We talked about what it would take to make 10,000 QSOs. It would mean maintaining a rate of over 200 QSOs for the entire 48 hours of the contest. We kept checking the combined rate during the entire contest, and felt better and better about making 10,000 Qs as our average rate stayed well above 200.

We spent the last couple hours before the contest making sure the computers were all set up correctly, and that the network was solid. We had a firm operating schedule, which we adhered to over the week-end. With six operators, the grind was not too bad, and we all got some sleep over the weekend.

We started the contest on 15 and 20m, quickly moving from 15 to 40 after the first hour. There were HUGE pileups wherever we went. An analogy is trying to take a sip from a fire hose – a torrent of stations. One of the things we discovered in hour #2 was the K3 had been set up to use a separate RX antenna on 40 meters, but we had no separate RX antenna attached! We were STILL working people! Once that was fixed, the rate shot way up and never decreased.

We ran entirely the first day, and had beaten the PZ5 record by the end of day. On the second day, we passed multipliers back and forth a lot, which really helped our multiplier count. We also tried to chase any new multipliers we saw spotted, without losing our run frequency. The only real technical problem we experienced was some noise that came and disappeared on 15 meters. When it was there, it was almost impossible to work that band for a while.

Those who have been on a DXpedition, especially near the equator, are no doubt familiar with the type of pileups that are generated. For me, it was a new experience. On virtually all bands we operated, the pileups were huge, and never seemed to

	QSO	DX
160M CW	529	41
80M CW	282	36
60M CW	41	5
40M CW	1360	66
30M CW	412	43
20M CW	1331	81
17M CW	1193	54
15M CW	1240	68
12M CW	624	46
10M CW	489	54
160M PH	1	0
80M PH	1	0
40M PH	2	0
20M PH	2	0
17M PH	786	9
15M PH	181	1
10M PH	305	5
30M RT	16	0
20M RT	253	2
17M RT	221	7
15M RT	202	10
12M RT	183	5
10M RT	26	0
Total	9680	533

Figure 1.
A summary of QSOs made before and after the contest.

PZ5W Operating Schedule - 2015 CQWW CW Contest							
Day 1				Day 2			
Local	Zulu	RIG1	RIG2	Local	Zulu	RIG1	RIG2
21	00	WØOR	KØAD	21	00	K3WT	NØAT
22	01	WØOR	NØAT	22	01	K3WT	WØOR
23	02	K3WT	DF7AT	23	02	DF7AT	WØOR
00	03	K3WT	WØOR	00	03	NØSTL	K3WT
01	04	DF7AT	WØOR	01	04	NØSTL	K3WT
02	05	NØSTL	K3WT	02	05	KØAD	DF7AT
03	06	NØSTL	DF7AT	03	06	KØAD	NØSTL
04	07	KØAD	DF7AT	04	07	NØAT	NØSTL
05	08	KØAD	NØSTL	05	08	NØAT	KØAD
06	09	NØAT	NØSTL	06	09	WØOR	KØAD
07	10	NØAT	KØAD	07	10	WØOR	NØAT
08	11	WØOR	KØAD	08	11	K3WT	NØAT
09	12	WØOR	NØAT	09	12	K3WT	WØOR
10	13	K3WT	NØAT	10	13	DF7AT	WØOR
11	14	K3WT	WØOR	11	14	NØSTL	K3WT
12	15	DF7AT	WØOR	12	15	NØSTL	K3WT
13	16	NØSTL	K3WT	13	16	KØAD	DF7AT
14	17	NØSTL	K3WT	14	17	KØAD	NØSTL
15	18	KØAD	DF7AT	15	18	NØAT	NØSTL
16	19	KØAD	NØSTL	16	19	NØAT	KØAD
17	20	NØAT	NØSTL	17	20	DF7AT	KØAD
18	21	NØAT	KØAD	18	21	DF7AT	NØAT
19	22	WØOR	KØAD	19	22	K3WT	NØAT
20	23	WØOR	NØAT	20	23	K3WT	WØOR



end. When the pileups are TOO big, of course, it makes it difficult to maintain a good rate. Still, a combined rate of well over 300 per hour was common, and there was one brief period where the combined rate exceeded 600 per hour.

The efforts we put into the 160 meter receiving antennas paid off. Although copying the 160 pileups from both Europe and North America was not easy, it was so much better with the beverage antenna. It made it possible to make 280 QSOs in 51 countries on 160 meters.

Before we knew it, the contest was over. We had exceeded our stretch goal of 10,000, and made over 23 million points (claimed). It was especially fun to work all the MWA and TCDXA members – many of whom we worked on all six bands.

Score: 23,224,198			
	QSO	ZN	DX
160M	280	15	51
80M	816	26	80
40M	2134	34	109
20M	2015	37	122
15M	2831	36	121
10M	2281	29	101
Total	10357	177	584

PZ5W Claimed Score for 2015 CQWW CW.

On Monday after the contest, we all slept a little bit later. As much as possible, we put the two stations on the bands - on the WARC bands, as well as working some RTTY and SSB. The pileups were still big, as many DXers were still looking for PZ5 on a number of band modes. Ron also operated 160 meters on Tuesday night before we left and had one of the most amazing European runs on 160 that he had ever experienced. Total number of contacts on 160 meters both during and outside the contest was over 800.

Suriname Life

Suriname is a sovereign state on the northeastern Atlantic coast of South America. It is bordered by French Guiana to the east, Guyana to the west and Brazil to the south. At just under 165,000 km² (64,000 sq. mi), it is the smallest country in South America. Suriname has a population of approximately 566,000. Most of them live on the country's north coast, in and around the capital and largest city, Paramaribo.



The PZ5W Team



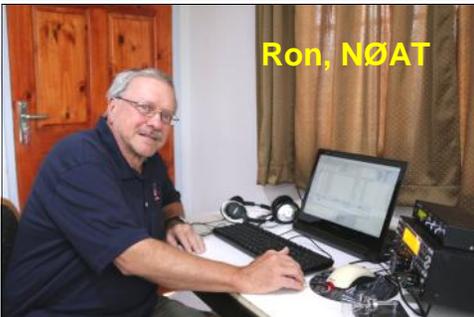
Tom, K3WT



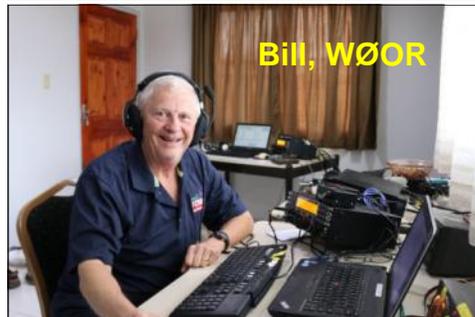
Gregor, DF7AT



Al, KØAD



Ron, NØAT



Bill, WØOR



Vlad, NØSTL



Originally inhabited by a number of indigenous tribes, Suriname was explored and contested by European powers before coming under Dutch rule in the late 17th century. Dutch Guiana remained a plantation colony until 1954, when it became one of the constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with equal status to the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles. On 25 November 1975, the country of Suriname left the Kingdom of the Netherlands to become an independent state, nonetheless maintaining close economic, diplomatic and cultural ties to its former colonizer. As it turned out, our group was there during the celebration of Suriname Independence Day.

While we were there, the daytime temperatures were typically 90 plus degrees F, with the humidity also above 90% most days. Although most days were sunny at some point, it usually rained at least once each day – even if it was for only a short time. If the DX rental shack had not been air conditioned, it would have been very difficult. But, our operating and sleeping locations were very comfortable.



Suriname seems to be a birdwatcher's paradise. This little guy spent some time on our tower.



This variety of banana is shown fully-grown. They tasted good right off the tree.



Mangos grew in a lot of locations, including on PZ5RA's property.



Many of our dinners consisted of rice, a meat sauce of some kind and a vegetable. We were well-fed.

On Tuesday, Ramon took us on a sightseeing tour of Suriname. We saw many of the sites in and around Paramaribo, including an open-air museum from which we learned quite a bit about the history of Suriname.



The Suriname President's Residence.





Somehow a frog got into one of our bathrooms. This warning sign helped prevent a surprise.



An unusual thing we saw at the open-air museum was the remains of a lighthouse built into a boat.

A Tribute to Our Host

Our team can't say enough about the efforts of Ramon Kaersenhout, PZ5RA and his wife Ernie to make our DXpedition to Suriname a reality. From the time Bill first contacted him, Ramon responded quickly and fairly to our requests. In the weeks leading up to our trip, he worked many hours getting the new DX guest shack ready for us, even working late the night before we arrived. He is one of those people with a "can do" attitude, which really made working with him great.

Several evenings, Ramon and his wife had us over for some great dinners in their home, where we also

met his step daughter Mime and his grandson Ryan. On the other nights, he brought us dinner in the DX guest shack, and made sure that the pantry and refrigerator were well-stocked. This included some fruits unique to tropical regions: oranges and mangoes from his property, along with locally-sourced bananas and watermelons. He also served us a variety of foods of different ethnic origins that included Chinese, Indonesian and others from Suriname, itself. This included a variety of chips (like banana chips) and unique soft drinks, with flavors not seen in the US. It was a form of culinary tourism. Also included was an ample quantity of the local Parbo Bier, which was really good.



Ramon serving us "Chinese" food on Thanksgiving.

On the Tuesday before we went home, Ramon took the entire team on a sightseeing tour of Suriname. He gave us each QSL cards listing all the times we had worked PZ5RA over the years. It turns out we were all in his log at least once.





Ramon with grandson Ryan.



Ramon soldering.



Ramon and Ernie.

Ramon greatly enriched our stay there by providing us with meaningful insights into both the country, as well as the culture. We had the opportunity to see a side of Suriname that few visitors would ever experience.

Perhaps the best thing that Ramon gave us was simply the time he spent with us. It was so enjoyable to just sit around the DX guest shack and talk about ham radio and life in general. We had the privilege



This was our final dinner with Ramon at an Indonesian restaurant on Tuesday, before our return to the U. S.

of being the *first* contest group in Ramon's new DX guest shack. We think this site is going to really be popular with contesting groups. Almost all the major contests for 2016 are already booked. If you ever want to experience the thrill of some awesome pile-ups on all bands, our entire team highly recommends this location. You won't be sorry.

Al, KØAD



Member News

Recent TCDXA **ROMEO** (Retired Old Men Eating Out) Lunch Meetings



August 18th, 2015 at Maynard's in Excelsior, MN

Clockwise around the table: starting with Ron, NØAT at the lower left; Bob, WØBV; Dennis, KFØQR; Harold, NØACH; Dave, KØIEA; Max, KØDPT; Dick, WØTRF; Tom, WØZR and Tony, KMØO.

Bob, WØBV was visiting from his retirement QTH in Buena Vista, Colorado.

September 29th, 2015 at Maynard's in Excelsior, MN

Left to right: Ted, W1GL; Dennis, KFØQR; Tom, WØZR; Dave, KØIEA; Dick, WØTRF and Ted's brother Bill, WØTL.

This was Ted's going away luncheon. He moved to Connecticut on November 7th. Ted's new address is:

Ted Kirst, W1GL
16 Mountain View
Danielson, CT 06239



October 14th, 2015 at Carol's in Blaine, MN

Clockwise around the table: Max, KØDPT; Tom, WØZR; Big Mike, NØODK (training for ROMEO status); Jim, KØJUH; Jim's son Terry; Dennis, KFØQR; Dave, KØIEA and Harold, NØACH.

Terry and Jim came to lunch in Jim's restored 1935 Chevy street rod. See page 5 of the [September, 2015 GrayLine](#).



TCDXA Treasury Report

December 10, 2015

For FY 2016: September, 2015 to August, 2016

Income:

Carryover from FY 2015	\$4,165.60
2016 dues and donations	1,449.52
Door prize ticket sales	241.00
Total YTD income	\$5,856.12

Expenses YTD:

Membership Recruitment	0.00
Website	0.00
Office supplies and misc.	(10.68)
Holiday party 2015	0.00
ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund	0.00
NCDXF Donation	0.00
MWA Plaque	0.00
DXpedition Donation, KP5	(1500.00)
DXpedition Donation, FT4JA	(1000.00)
DXpedition Donation, PZ5W	(200.00)
DXpedition Donation #4	0.00
DXpedition Donation #5	0.00
DXpedition Donation #6	0.00
DXpedition Donation #7	0.00
DXpedition Donation #8	0.00
DXpedition Donation #9	0.00
Total YTD expenses	(\$2,710.68)

Current Checking Balance	\$2,370.92
PayPal balance	699.52
Cash on hand	75.00
Total current funds	\$3,145.44

Join TCDXA

Our mission is to raise *Dollars for DX*, used to help fund qualified DXpeditions.

Our funds come from annual member contributions (dues) and other donations.

TCDXA is a non-profit organization, as described in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions from U.S. residents are tax-deductible.

Becoming a member is easy. Go to <http://tcdxa.org/> and follow the instructions on the home page.

All contributions (including annual dues) may now be paid on our secure site, using PayPal or credit card.



Gary Grivna KØGX



ELECTRONIX SERVICING

Amateur Radio Repair all Brands
Computer Sales-Repairs-Upgrades
Audio-Video-Electronic Repair

6028 Candlewood Drive
Brooklyn Park, MN. 55443-2019

763-561-2836
grivn001@umn.edu



Source: View from the QTH

Isla de San Andrés



DXers Have a Choice!



The Daily DX - is a text DX bulletin that can be sent via email to your home or office Monday through Friday, and includes DX news, IOTA news, QSN reports, QSL information, a DX Calendar, propagation forecast and much, much more. With a subscription to The Daily DX, you will also receive DX news flashes and other interesting DX tidbits. Subscriptions are \$49.00 for one year or \$28.00 for 6 mos.

The Weekly DX - is a product of The Daily DX that can be sent weekly to your home or office via email in the form of a PDF (portable document format). It includes DX news, IOTA news, QSN reports, QSL information, a DX Calendar, propagation forecast and graphics. Subscriptions are \$27.00 for one year.

Get two weeks of The Daily DX or a sample of The Weekly DX free by sending a request to bernie@dailydx.com, or at <http://www.dailydx.com/trial.htm>.



An Intro to Amateur Radio for Myanmar Scouts

by Tom Vinson, NYØV

Last summer my XYL, Karen and I were planning a trip to Yangon, Myanmar (Burma) to see our daughter Jamie, son-in-law Ethan and our two grandkids. Ethan is the Director of the Myanmar International School of Yangon (MISY) and our Jamie works for UNESCO. During the planning of getting all of the details worked out, Ethan asked if I would be interested in helping out the scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides to introduce them to amateur radio. I thought to myself “Are you kidding me? Does King Kong like big bananas?” Ethan put me in touch with their scoutmaster, Gokul, who just happens to be **VU3GBG**. We were off to the races

Since the resources available to Gokul in Myanmar are limited, it would be difficult for him to get the scouts introduced to the radio merit badge. We decided that I could pull the resources together here in the States and bring them over. The plan was to take enough material to provide the scouts with an introduction to amateur radio, and for Gokul to take the ball from there.

As an aside, I asked Gokul if he knew Pai, **VU2PAI** (who is well known in the DX community), as they are both from Bangalore. Not only did he know Pai, but Pai had been in his son’s wedding, and he was Pai’s Elmer! Small world?

I put out an email to members of EIDX, the MWA and some local hams in Rochester asking for assistance in finding some cheap keys and oscillators. I was not disappointed with our fellow amateur community! I ended up with four keys, and a couple of oscillators from Mike, **NA9Q**; Joe, **KCØVKN** and Stew, **WØSHL**! Rod, **KØDAS** provided bags of sample parts so we could show the students different part types. Dave, **K1AN** narrates a very well done video on “An Introduction to Amateur Radio.” (See <http://radioqrv.com/>)

I had doubts that the internet would be up or fast enough at the school when we wanted to show it. So, I emailed Dave, and asked if he knew where I could purchase a DVD. Low and behold, Dave sent it to me in the mail at no cost. From that, I went ahead and ordered various ARRL materials, such as the world call area map, the Walter Cronkite video as well as **K4UEE**’s DXpeditions to the Top 10 DXCC Entities. I also purchased some kits, so the scouts could learn how to solder parts onto circuit boards as a requirement of the radio merit badge.

Rod put me onto Brian Milesosky, **N5ZGT** who does a lot with Scouting. Brian pointed me to the merit badge materials up on **K2BSA**’s website. There are other materials out there on **K2GW**’s website and others. I ended up packing a backpack full of these resources, as well as the K2BSA modules for the radio merit badge. I put everything I could on a back-up CD, so Gokul could print more student handouts as he holds classes. My



Gokul, VU3GBG with his XYL, Anita



thanks to all my fellow hams that showed the spirit of amateur radio in donating so many items!

Gokul set up a meeting in a school classroom that had a computer/projection system. I met him and his XYL, Anita about an hour ahead of the time he would bring the scouts into the room. Anita set the system up. She teaches physics and the electromagnetic spectrum at the school. A great combo of teachers for the kids! I was glad I had Dave's 19 minute introduction video, as the internet would not stream steadily enough to make it happen off the radioqrv website. I brought a set of QSL examples (the top 20 most needed), and pinned them up on the wall along with the ARRL world call prefix map. Gokul brought typed-out phonetic alphabet handouts and a sample QSO. We were ready.

When the scouts arrived I was amazed at how many he had in tow. There were over 40 students that participate in his Boy Scouts/Girl Guide group. It was a fantastic number to expose to amateur radio at one time. Gokul showed the keys, and we presented the introduction to amateur radio video. When it was over, Gokul asked how many were interested in pursuing the radio merit badge. I would say that at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of them were interested. I heard some thought that they couldn't learn the technology, but maybe they just needed some confidence boosting.



The scouts watching the 19 minute video "An Introduction to Amateur Radio" - K1AN narrating.

Gokul and I talked together about how to obtain a license, since XZ does not have an amateur service. Zorro, **JH1AJT** was the last one to obtain a license a year ago, or so. It's my understanding that it took a



Gokul explaining a typical QSO with ham "lingo."

lot of meetings and connections (and probably moolah) to make it happen. I had applied three years ago, and was rejected. So, this time we thought that maybe the authorities would be open to a scouting club station at MISY. This would be a similar model to China when it opened up and allowed club stations. Gokul has support from the head of scouting and there are some very influential people in the ownership of the school.

If Gokul gets a group of scouts with their radio merit badge and approval for a club station, I'm sure that the amateur community at large will come together to help furnish the station. A vision of a dozen or so new hams in XZ operating from a club station could become a reality!

My thanks to my fellow hams who contributed to the assets I took to Myanmar. It was fun to see Gokul's expression of amazement as I kept pulling out more resources for him to use.

73s Tom, **NYØV**



Jeff Strandberg KØUU

I have been on the move since I was born in Kansas City at the end of 1956. I was the oldest of four children (dad was a college professor and mom a speech pathologist). I grew up in several places in Kansas, College Station, TX and Charleston, IL before attending Culver Military Academy (IN) and Georgetown U (DC) as an undergrad. Custom wheat harvesting on a combine crew in the Great Plains for two of those summers made my peripatetic upbringing complete.

Today, I manage international library sales for a Minnesota-based company out of Hong Kong, where I hold the call **VR2UU**. My XYL Carolyn and I are approaching the end of a two-year expatriate stint here in Asia, and all signs point to another two years working out of London, before both of us look at retiring in 2018.

I built a Heathkit, and was gifted a beat-up 6m antenna in the 1960s from one of my dad's fellow faculty members (long since SK), which led me to an interest in amateur radio.

I met **K7UGA** in the parking lot of the US Senate when we 'shared' indoor parking in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. (I was a lowly part-time student mail clerk in the US Senate, and was allowed to park my bicycle behind some water pipes in the parking garage, where Barry Goldwater would occasionally wave to me.) K7UGA had perhaps the most hideous mobile setup ever - a purple 1967 AMC Marlin with matching Heath transmitter and receiver mounted where the front bucket seat belonged. But, he had ham tags instead of AZ plates with the number 1 or 2, which made K7UGA OK in my book (politics notwithstanding).

A third inspiration to become a ham came from a late Georgetown professor (**W3ACE**, SK), who combined a fantastic career as a US diplomat (chief of mission in Afghanistan, Ambassador to Lebanon, Iran and Japan), while handing out new countries from some fairly exotic locations.

Before becoming **WV3B** a quarter century ago in the MD/DC area, where I joined the Potomac Valley Radio Club and the National Capitol DX Association, I held a few forgettable calls. In the late 1990s, I moved to Minnesota and secured the vanity call **KØUU** in 2000. Before changing my callsign, several confused work colleagues asked when and where I had received my DUI (I hadn't--they thought my amateur license plate with a 2x1 beginning in W was what are commonly known as "whiskey plates" in MN).



Operating in March, 2014 as 3D2FJ from Beqa in the Fiji Islands (OC-016).



First and foremost, I am a CW op, and mostly at QRP levels. Simply put, the signal-to-noise ratio is much better on CW than SSB, and Morse code takes a little more thought, which is why dead air is rarely filled with idle chatter in a CW QSO.

Rigs: A trusty 15 year-old Elecraft K2 is my main HK companion, backed up by a 4-band K1. I have a Yaesu FT-450 now in the care of a fellow member of Tates Bluff Deer Camp (club call: **K5DOE** - *really*), while we are overseas. Only wires and 100w are used at home in Orono, MN on Stubbs Bay of Lake Minnetonka.

Foreign activity: Aside from VR2UU, I have been **HR9/KØUU**, **KH6/KØUU**, **C6A/KØUU**, **V31SG**, **ZF2MN/ZF8**, **VQ5RP**, **VP5/KØUU** and **3D2FJ** (see pg. 2 of the [July, 2014 GrayLine](#)). All of them have coincided with SCUBA diving trips (Carolyn is a dive master).

I would have been more active on HF if foreign licensing had not been so confounding in other countries (e.g. - Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, where a secrecy affidavit must be witnessed by a judicial official during business hours).

In February, 2015, Carolyn and I fled the Chinese New Year for a long weekend in Kathmandu, where I managed a dozen QSOs as guest op at **9N1AA** by calling CQ, having a QSO or two on a particular band, and then QSYing to a different band once the DX cluster drew a bead. Satish, **9N1AA**, confirmed that casual operation from Nepal is nearly impossible.

The tragic earthquakes that followed our visit spurred us to donate equipment (a Yaesu dual-band HT with GPS) and funds for disaster relief operations in that beleaguered nation.

Overseas operation is limited for me on several levels. A 12v gel cell offers a quiet alternative to AC from diesel powered generating plants found on many islands. My entire operation (rig, laptop, long wire antenna, Te Ne Ke key, battery, etc.) fits in an inconspicuous laptop carry-on case. A desirable IOTA designation often adds a two S-unit boost to a typical 539 QRP signal.



9N1AA (r) and VR2UU(l)
on 9N1AA's rooftop QTH.

Most important, I often act as the “mule” for Carolyn’s dive equipment, which trumps anything resembling a Pelican case (rig/amplifier) or crate of aluminum (HF array) as checked baggage.

So, what does the typical TCDXA'er sound like on the other end of the pileup? It depends as much on propagation and band conditions as the station, except when **WØAIH** calls on 40 meters during CW contests. Paul is at least as loud as any east coast or W6 mega-station, and in high-latitude mid-America to boot. Pat, **KØPC**, takes the cake for working me on the most overseas jaunts, followed by Bob **WØBV**, John **KØTG** and Dan **KØTI**.

What advice can I offer for pileups? I keep my CW filters wide open when calling CQ, so I can hear stations calling a few hundred Hz off my calling frequency. Once I go split and listen up a kHz, a narrow Hz filter goes on and I jiggle the RIT. Call a second time after a brief interval, and don't zero beat a simplex DX station (get a little low or high), and the results will surprise you.

A sneaky tactic to use as a rare QRP station calling CQ during contests: Find a loud station in



Eastern Europe or Russia with a high noise level, scoot in underneath them, set your filter to 250 Hz, and let the DX cluster do all the heavy lifting. Many of them will battle another mega-station they can hear by calling CQ indefinitely, but paradoxically will yield some room if they can't hear a station who is working station after station above their noise floor.

If you've worked me as VR2UU, then you know how handicapped I am operating surreptitiously from a high-rise window on IOTA AS-006 in Central Hong Kong. Our apartment is on the 20th floor of a 45-story building situated mid-way up Victoria Peak, which obscures as much as forty degrees either side of due south. But fortunately, NA and EU are straight ahead from our study window (see photo, below), which overlooks Victoria Peak and Kowloon. Charlie **VR2XMT**'s Moxon (see photo, top right) has one of the few HF arrays in Hong Kong (he is in HK's New Territories, within sight of the P.R.C., while I am on HK Island, IOTA AS-006).

I'm able to operate in Hong Kong only at the graylines and in darkness, because I must extend a 15-ft fiberglass pole clamped to an open window.

If there is a Worked All JAs award, I probably qualify. (*ed.* - There is: the WAJA for working all prefectures.) JAs are remarkably disciplined, and there are a lot of them.

Generally, I work W7s and W6s on 30m and 40m for a half hour after sunset, with W5s and W4s adding to the mix about twice a week and WØs and W9s once or so weekly as an



View from VR2UU high-rise shack.



VR2XMT(l) and VR2UU(r) on VR2XMT's rooftop.

added bonus. Several hours later, in total darkness, I often work EU on 15m/17m/20m. VKs and ZLs are rare given my location (SA even more so), and the Caribbean is nonexistent for reasons I do not understand. I seem to be popular from Hong Kong, because no other VR2s use LOTW, and only a handful have CW privileges (denoted by VR2xx 2x2 callsigns) and are active.

DXCC confirmed totals as KØUU are 302 (all but a dozen or so from days as WV3B on the Aluminum Curtain), and as VR2UU I'm at 96 and counting. My week-long operations as: 3D2FJ, V31SG, HR9/KØUU, ZF8/ZF2MN, VP5/KØUU+VQ5RP and KH6/KØUU each resulted in 50 or so DXCC entities confirmed via LOTW. Notably, inbound QSL card volume dropped more than half from my overseas operations from 2006 to 2014, perhaps due to the success of LOTW - a boon for Luddites like me, who continue to fill out return QSLs by hand.

So, if you hear me on HF before we pull up stakes in mid-February, please give a call. Chances are good that if you can hear me at all, I will hear you and answer.

73, Jeff KØUU:
D.B.A. VR2UU





The MWA Contest Corner

Contest Voice Keying for ICOM Radios

by Al Dewey, KØAD



The Problem

When operating a phone contest (which is somewhat rare for me), I find the use of a voice keyer a must. Most contest logging programs like N1MM+ and Writelog include the capability to record .WAV files on your computer, and then start them off from specific F keys on your keyboard. For example, F1 will kick off CQ, F2 the contest exchange, etc.

Although this works OK, I have never been crazy about this approach, because you need to adjust the sound card levels in the computer, plus the microphone and compression levels on your radio to get things to sound right and to match the audio from the microphone.

I much prefer to use the voice keyer that is built into the radio. The messages are easy to record and change during a contest. Compared to a live microphone, they sound more like the actual audio you are using during the contest. The one downside, however, is that it is necessary to push a button on the radio to start these messages. Alternatively, you can buy or make a little external box with pushbuttons to kick off the messages. What I *really* want to do is record the voice messages on the radio, but start them from the *keyboard on the computer*. It turns out that this *is* possible on Yaesu and Elecraft radios. You can enter a special code in the logging software (e.g. N1MM+, Writelog, etc.) function key macro that will kick off the messages you have recorded on your radio.

The problem is that this is not possible with ICOM radios. ICOM uses CI-V commands between the radio and the computer, and there are no commands for playing voice key messages from the radio. I own an ICOM 7600 (as well as a Yaesu FT 2000). I keep hoping that ICOM will add a firmware upgrade that will provide this capability; something that's already available on Yaesu and Elecraft radios. I have talked to the ICOM rep at Dayton about it, as well as the ICOM Marketing guy who spoke at a recent TCDXA meeting. The guy at Dayton said that others have also asked for this. Still, no firmware update has been forthcoming from ICOM.

The Solution

After talking to a number of people with ICOM radios, as well as some of the gang on the N1MM reflector, I came up with a simple solution. The first step was to build up one of those external boxes that let you send ICOM voice keyer messages with pushbuttons external to the radio. This was a simple project, requiring only four pushbuttons, some resistors and a small plastic case. Once this was working, I added four small relays that allowed me to “push” the buttons externally. The final step was to figure out a way that my N1MM+ logging software could trip the relays when an F Key was pressed on the computer keyboard.

It turns out that N1MM+ has such a feature. All I had to do was wire the four relays to pins 3,4,5 and 6 on my computer's LPT port, as well as a connection to pin 25 for ground. Then, in N1MM+, all I needed to do is select “Configure Ports” and “Set” under the details column for the LPT port. Finally, I just needed to check the “DVK” box and I was good to go. The only other thing I needed to do was to enter “empty.wav” under the macros for Function Keys F1, F2, F3 and F4. Now, when I press F1 through F4 on the computer keyboard, the appropriate voice message that I recorded on my ICOM 7600 is sent.



Construction and Use

A diagram of the circuit I ended up with is shown in Figure 1. I built it almost entirely from parts I had around. I had a small plastic box, some pushbuttons, small 12V relays, the 2N2222s and the necessary connectors. All I needed from Radio Shack were the specific resistors.

I realize, of course, that many newer computers and laptops no longer have LPT ports. I have a newer computer, but I specifically bought an after-market LPT card for it, because I use a Top Ten DX Doubler in my shack for two-radio operations. The Top Ten box interfaces to the computer using an LPT port. To get at the pins on the LPT port, I tapped off the connector inside the Top Ten box and ran a small cable out the back of the box. There was an opening between two RCA jacks, so I didn't need to drill a hole.

There are also a number of USB to LPT interfaces available for under \$25. Although I haven't tried these, I don't see why they wouldn't work. To interface to the radio, I ran a small diameter twisted pair into the ICOM's microphone connector for connecting to pins 3 and 6 (along with the existing microphone cable). I placed the interface box behind the radio, since I didn't need access to the pushbuttons, except for initial testing.

I used this interface for the first time during this year's CQWW DX Phone contest. It worked just fine. One of the nice things about having the Function Key SSB Macros integrated in your logging software is that features like "Enter Sends Message (ESM)" can now be used. In this mode, you can run up and down the Band Map, and all you have to do is hit the enter key twice to make a QSO. No talking required. Now that is something a CW guy can really appreciate!

See you in the pileups,
Al. KØAD

ICOM Voice Keying Circuit

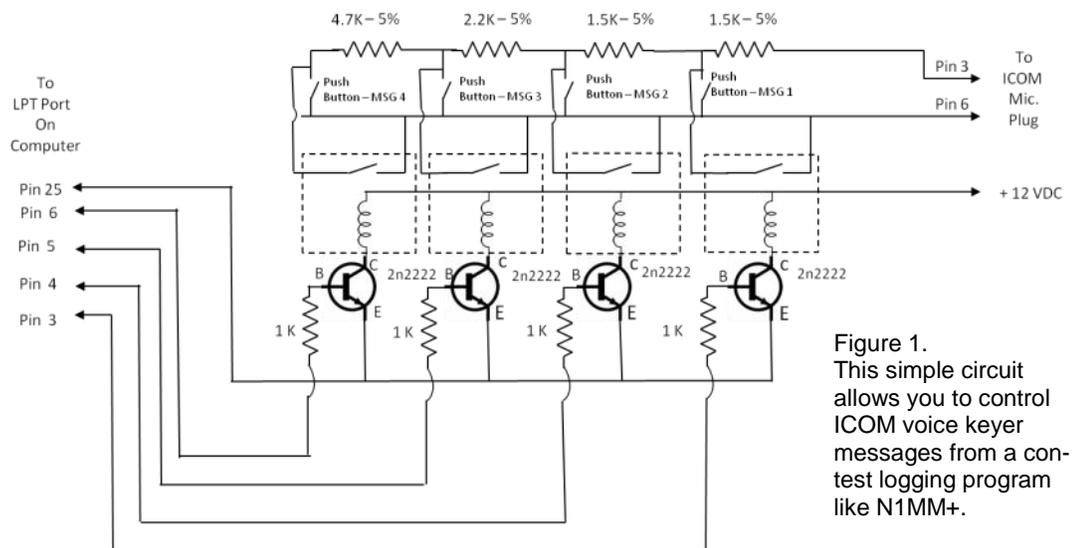


Figure 1. This simple circuit allows you to control ICOM voice keyer messages from a contest logging program like N1MM+.



The completed interface box was built almost entirely from parts on hand.



Four typical messages recorded on the ICOM 7600 internal Voice Keyer.



2015 CQWW DX SSB From VP5S

by Dr. Scott Wright, KØMD drscott.wright@gmail.com

Once again, MWA members traveled to Turks & Caicos to operate multi-single - this time in the CQWW SSB DX Contest.

Our contest team members for this contest were: Fred, **K4IU**; Bill, **ACØW**; Pat, **WØBM** and myself.

The Hamlet

As we've done for several other DX contests, we operated from the **VP5JM** "Hamlet" on the island of Providenciales. For years, Jody has hosted hams who are visiting the Turks & Caicos at her scenic hideaway ham rental. This little cottage has all the comforts of home, with two remarkable added features: no snow and a wonderful array of antennas. But, the great antennas at this QTH really put it over the top.

A 40-foot tower provides most of the firepower for the Hamlet. It holds a Force12 model XR-5 for 20-10m and a Force12 Delta 240 for 40m. There are also dipoles for 160 and 80m. The site is very near the shore, and about 100 feet above sea level on a hill. The vista opens to the north, providing excellent paths to both North America and Europe.

All of this ham radio nirvana comes with a wonderful hostess. Jody makes us feel very welcome, and goes out of her way to assist us with licensing, transportation and supplies.



Our QTH - The VP5JM "Hamlet"



The island of Providenciales.



Our contest team (left to right):
KØMD, K4IU, ACØW and WØBM.

Equipment & Pre-contest Operation

With great antennas already in place, all we had to do was provide the radio. I packed my Icom IC-7600 and Acom 1010 amplifier into two large Pelican cases, along with vari-



ous cables and accessories. They didn't exactly fit in the overhead bin, so I had a lot of checked baggage.



My baggage.

Luckily, we didn't have to pack any antennas.

The station went together very quickly, and we were all able to operate prior to the contest using our VP5/<home call> licenses. The Turks & Caicos does not have a reciprocal operating agreement, despite the fact they are a British Overseas Territory. Licensing was simple with Jody's assistance, and we took care of that a couple of months before we arrived.



K4IU assesses the saltwater conductivity.



MWA President, Bill, ACØW



Fred, K4IU

Contest Comments and Observations

The results on 160m were diminished due to QRN, but 80m was a pleasant surprise. And, thanks to the enhanced SFI, 10m was a gift for this contest.

It was our first attempt as a team for CQ WW SSB from Jody's place on Provo. The Hamlet was busy with our activities, and Jody was a fabulous host.





Pat, WØBM

The secret to our success was Jody's new dog Molly - our unexpected mult chaser!

We worked a lot of new hams in this contest. It was nice to see them on the bands. It was great to work the Europe and Asian stations from outside of the U.S. phone bands. In retrospect, we should have spent more time there for additional DXCC totals.



That's me, KØMD

We want to use a low band receiving antenna for the next contest, so our European friends are not so frustrated with our "deafness," as they indicated on the spotting cluster. Yes, we read your comments, but the QRN was so loud we were lucky to get as many Qs as we did.

VP5S Box Score 2015 CQWW DX SSB Contest M/S HP

Band	QSOs	Zones	Countries
160	139	6	21
80	555	16	71
40	850	25	80
20	750	29	104
15	1498	30	102
10	1527	25	93
Totals	5319	131	471

Score: 7,355,838

Club: Minnesota Wireless Assn.

Operators: ACØW, KØMD, KØPC, K4IU



We think we found Al Dewey's retirement investment.



Jody and the VP5S Team.

It's always nice to work my friends from around the world - **DF2BO**, **CE2AWW**, **CE3CT**, **VE7SV**, **WØGJ** and many others from the MWA, TCDXA and RDCC.

73, Scott, KØMD





TWIN CITY DX ASSOCIATION (TCDXA)

CLUB FACT SHEET

Who We Are:

The Twin City DX Association (TCDXA) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit amateur radio organization, whose members have an interest in DXing and in supporting the club mission: **Dollars for DX**. Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation govern the club's operation.

Club Mission:

The club mission supports major DXpeditions with financial donations. The source of operating income for this activity is an annual contribution (dues) of \$25 from each member.

DX Donation Policy:

The policy supports major DXpeditions that meet our requirements for financial sponsorship. All requests must be approved by the Board of Directors. Final approval is by vote of the full membership. Over fifty DXpeditions have been sponsored since 1997. Details are available on the website at: <http://www.tcdxa.org/sponsoredexpeditions.html#MenuBar1>.

Club History:

The club was formed in the early 1970s by a small group of DXers from the Twin City area. Over the years, the club has changed; most notably by opening its doors to anyone interested in DXing - from the casual to the very serious operator. Our membership now resides in numerous states and several countries.

Requirements for Membership

We welcome all hams who have an interest in DXing and hold a valid FCC Amateur Radio License. It doesn't matter whether you're a newcomer, or an oldtimer to DXing; everyone is welcome!

Meetings:

The club meets on the third Monday of each month (except July & August) at PUB 42 Restaurant in New Hope, MN. Members gather early in the bar for Happy Hour, and move into a private room at 5:00pm for dinner and a short business agenda, followed by a program. If you enjoy a night out on the town with friends, you'll enjoy this get together. Meeting attendance is NOT a requirement for membership.

Club Officers:

Four officers, plus one additional member make up the Board of Directors; currently: President Michael Sigelman, **KØBUD**; Vice President Tom Lutz, **WØZR**; Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cain, **KØPC**; DXpedition Funding Manager Matt Holden, **KØBBC** and Director Rich Goodin, **WØDD**.

Website:

We maintain a website at www.TCDXA.org that provides information about a variety of subjects related to the club and DXing. The site is maintained by our webmaster Pat Cain, **KØPC**.

Newsletter:

The **GrayLine Report** is the club newsletter, which is published on a quarterly basis. We're proud of the fact that 99% of the content is "homegrown" – written by our members. Past issues are on the website at: <http://www.tcdxa.org/newsletter.html>.

How to Become a Member:

An application for membership can be completed and submitted online, or printed and mailed in. (See <http://www.tcdxa.org/Application.html>) Contributions may be made by check or via the PayPal link on the homepage at www.TCDXA.org.

Visit us at a Meeting:

You are most welcome to attend a meeting, and look us over, before joining. Meetings are held at the PUB 42 Restaurant at 7600 Avenue North in New Hope (<http://pub42.com/>). Join us for happy hour at 4:00pm with dinner at 5:30pm, followed by the meeting at 6:30pm.



VKØIR	K5D	AHØ/NØAT	3W2DK	K4M	XU7MWA
ZL9CI	VK9DWX	5X8C	FT4TA	TX3A	S21EA
A52A	FT5GA	K9W	VK9MT	KMØO/9M6	J2ØRR
T33C	3D2ØCR	XRØZR	VK9DLX	YS4U	J2ØMM
3B9C	E4X	T3ØD	VU4KV	YI9PSE	BS7H
TX9	CYØ/NØTG	3W3O	EP6T	ZL8X	N8S
CP6CW	VP8ORK	3W2DK	VP8STI	4W6A	3B7SP
3YØX	VU4PB	FT4TA	VP8SGI	T32C	3B7C
K7C	STØR	VK9MT	TX3X	HKØNA	5JØA
5A7A	3D2C	VK9DLX	VP6DX	7O6T	K5P
VU4AN	3CØE	VU4KV	TX5C	NH8S	FT4JA
VU7RG	TT8TT	EP6T	9XØR	PTØS	
VK9DWX	9M4SLL	3GØZC	9U4U	FT5ZM	

TCDXA DX DONATION POLICY

The mission of TCDXA is to support DXing and major DXpeditions by providing funding. Annual contributions (dues) from members are the major source of funding.

A funding request from the organizers of a planned DXpedition should be directed to the DX Donation Manager, Matt, **KØBBC**, k0bbc@arrl.net. He and the TCDXA Board of Directors will judge how well the DXpedition plans meet 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 their vote. If approved, the TCDXA Treasurer will process the funding..

Key Considerations for a DXpedition Funding Request

DXpedition destination	Website with logos of club sponsors
Ranking on <i>Most Wanted Survey</i>	QSLs with logos of club sponsors
Most wanted ranking by TCDXA Members	Online logs and 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	Previous operations by same group
Equipment: antennas, radios, amps, etc.	Valid license and DXCC approval
Stateside and/or foreign QSL manager	Donation address: USA and/or foreign

To join TCDXA, go to <http://tcdxa.org/>.

FT4JA

March 31th to April 14th, 2016

Juan de Nova