



Newsletter of the
Twin City DX Association

Volume 3, Issue 2

June, 2006



Inside this issue:

<i>Propagation</i>	2
<i>KØJUH</i>	
<i>Member Profile</i>	4
<i>WØJX</i>	
<i>TY on Topband</i>	9
<i>IK1PMR/TY5MR</i>	
<i>TCDXA Member</i>	12
<i>Kudos</i>	
<i>QSL Database</i>	15
<i>Systems</i>	
<i>KØRC</i>	
<i>The First QSLs</i>	20
<i>KØRC</i>	
<i>VU4 2006</i>	21
<i>WØGJ</i>	

Gray Line Staff

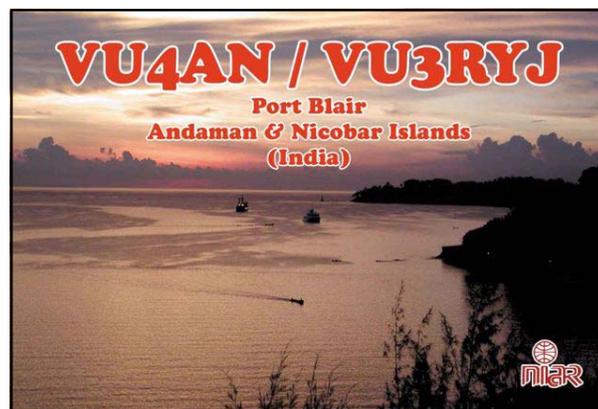
KØIEA
KØJUH
KØRC
WØBV



June Meeting to Feature VU4 Andaman Island Hamfest and DXpedition Program by Dr. Glenn Johnson, WØGJ

Don't miss this opportunity to join us in welcoming TCDXA member Dr Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, and his daughter Melissa Johnson, K1MJ to the June meeting. Glenn is making the trip down from his home in Bemidji, to share with us his fascinating story about operating as VU4AN/VU3RYJ from the Andaman Islands. Plus, it will be a very special evening for Melissa. She has been awarded the distinguished Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, which will be presented at the meeting by the ARRL Dakota Division Director, Jay Bellows, KØQB.

The meeting date is Monday, June 19th. Watch your email inbox for a detailed announcement. If you can't make it to the meeting, you can still enjoy the VU4 trip summary by Glenn, beginning on page 21.



A BIG welcome to our newest TCDXA members:

NNØK	Michael Elwood	Hudson, WI
W9CLA	Craig Anderson	Hudson, WI
KØEF	Eric Foss	Plymouth

Propagation



Propagation and the Sun - Some Remarkable Solar Facts

by Jim Junkert, KØJUH

A giant, spinning ball of very hot gas, our sun is fueled by nuclear fusion reactions. The light from the sun heats and lights our world, and makes life and HF propagation possible. The sun is also an active star that displays sunspots, solar flares, and coronal mass ejections. These phenomena impact the space weather near earth, as well as radio wave propagation.

Conditions at the sun's core (approximately the inner 25% of its radius) are extreme. The temperature is 15.6 million Kelvin or 27 million degrees Fahrenheit, and the pressure is 250 billion atmospheres. At the center of the core, the sun's density is more than 150 times that of water.

Our sun is one of more than 100 billion stars in our galaxy. At present, it's about 70% hydrogen and 28% helium by mass. Everything else (metals) amounts to less than 2%. The outer layers of the sun exhibit differential rotation. At the equator, the surface rotates once every 25.4 days, and near the poles surface rotation is as much as 36 days. This odd behavior is due to the fact that the sun is not a solid body, like the earth.

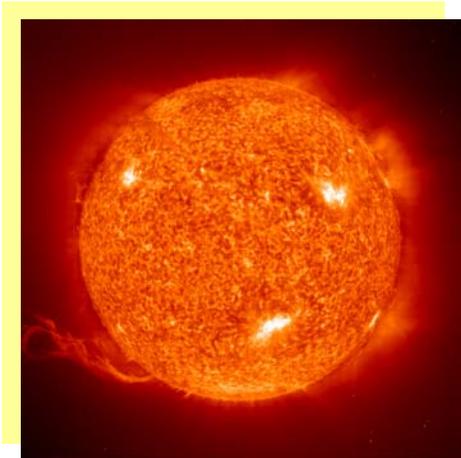
The sun's output and the amount of sunspot activity are not entirely constant. There was a period of very low sunspot activity in the latter half of the 17th century called the Maunder Minimum. It coincided with an abnormally cold period in northern Europe, sometimes known as the "Little Ice Age". Since the formation of the solar system, the sun's output has increased by about 40%.

Sunspots are dark spots which move across the surface of the sun, contracting and expanding as they go. The average sunspot is about the same diameter as the earth. They can be as large as 50,000 miles in diameter. The surface of the sun, called the photosphere, is at a temperature of about 5800 Kelvin or 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit, where as sunspots are "cool" regions, at only 3800 Kelvin or 6400 degrees Fahrenheit. Sunspots are caused by complicated and not very well understood interactions with the Sun's magnetic field.

The number of sunspots on the surface of the sun changes from year to year. The *sunspot cycle* was discovered in 1843 by the amateur German astronomer Samuel Heinrich Schwabe. The average sunspot cycle is around eleven years. Between 1700 and today, the sunspot cycle has varied in length from nine years to fourteen years.

A *solar flare* is defined as a sudden, rapid, and intense variation in brightness. A solar flare occurs when magnetic energy that has built up in the solar atmosphere is suddenly released. Radiation is emitted across virtually the entire electromagnetic spectrum, from radio waves at the long wavelength end, through optical emission to x-rays and gamma rays at the short wavelength end. The amount of energy released is the equivalent of millions of 100 megaton hydrogen bombs exploding at the same time!

In addition to heat and light, the sun also emits a low density stream of charged particles (mostly electrons and protons) known as the *solar wind*,



which propagates throughout the solar system at about 450 km/sec. The solar wind, and the much higher energy particles ejected by solar flares, can have dramatic effects on the earth, ranging from power line surges to radio interference and the beautiful aurora borealis.

Coronal mass ejections (CMEs) are explosions in the sun's corona that spew out high-energy charged particles. CMEs can seriously disrupt the earth's environment through radiation, which arrives only 8 minutes after being released, and through very energetic particles pushed along by the shock wave of the CME. The *corona* is the outermost layer of the solar atmosphere, characterized by low densities and high temperatures, often several million Kelvin.

The sun is about 4.5 billion years old. Since its birth, it has used up about half of the hydrogen in its core. It will continue to radiate "peacefully" for another 5 billion years, or so (although its luminosity will approximately double in that time). Eventually, it will run out of hydrogen fuel. It will then be forced into radical changes which, though commonplace by stellar standards, will result in the total destruction of the Earth.

Five billion years from now, the bands will definitely go in the tank – permanently! But, until then, let's enjoy the propagation we have today. Computer models predict Cycle 23 will end sometime in late 2007 or early 2008. They also predict Cycle 24 will peak in 2012, and will be much more intense – as much as 50% stronger than Cycle 23. This means that HF band openings will be more frequent and last longer. Look for some serious detail on solar cycles in the September *Gray-Line*.
- **JUH**

KCØSB goes QRT in Forest Lake

On Tuesday, May 9th, the antennas and tower came down at **KCØSB**'s in Forest Lake. Gary is preparing to move to his new QTH in Wyoming (MN), where he hopes to get something back up, again, for the HF bands.

Don Overbye, **WD9ISQ**, did the "tough" work on the tower, while **WBØSYQ**, **KØIEA**, and **KØJUH**, assisted on the ground. Don has a commercial tower company, and squeezes in ham jobs, when he can. Don can be reached at 715-821-0250.



Don, **WD9ISQ** begins disassembly of the TH-11.
Can you do **that** with *your* feet??



Gary, **WBØSYQ** (on ground) and Dave, **KØIEA** are busy as "ground grunts."

Dennis Sokol, WØJX

Long-standing TCDXA member Dennis Sokol, **WØJX**, has been DXing for over 45 years. Growing up in the Chicago area, Dennis first became interested in radios at the age of 12, when he found a book about electronics in his grade school library. His dad encouraged Dennis to build a crystal set. Dennis also began listening to local hams on 160 meter AM, using an old Zenith console radio.

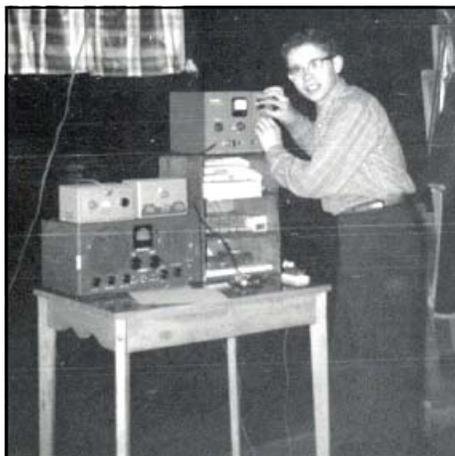


“Even though I haven’t lived in Minnesota since 1982, I have always enjoyed and valued my membership in TCDXA.” - Dennis, WØJX

Dennis became interested in DX, even before he was first licensed. His father worked with Hank, **W9MZX**, who had a tri-band quad. Hank’s rig was a pair of 812s in a homebrew transmitter, driven by an old Hallicrafters VFO, and an HQ-129X receiver. On a visit to Hank’s shack, Dennis listened intently, as Hank spun the dial of the old 129X. That was in October of 1958, near the peak of the best sunspot cycle of the century. 10 and 15 meters were loaded with DX signals from one end of the band to the other. Dennis was hooked!

Allied Radio, located on North Western Avenue in Chicago, was the big seller of electronic parts and ham radio gear in the 50s and early 60s. The hams at Allied Radio conducted theory and code classes at the store. Dennis signed up in the fall of 1958, and passed his Novice exam in November.

His dad took Dennis to Allied Radio and bought him a Hallicrafters S-20R for Christmas. Dennis did not have enough money saved to afford a commercial transmitter, so he scrounged up some parts, and built a 6AG7 – 807 transmitter for 40 meters, which was powered from an old Zenith radio. It ran about 7 watts out to a 40 meter dipole. Dennis received his Novice ticket on January 29, 1959. He was off and running on the 40 meter Novice band as **KN9QNC**. He soon was able to upgrade his transmitter to a Heath AT-1, and was QRV on 15 meters, too.



KN9QNC in 1959

Dennis received his General Class license on August 31, 1959. He now signed **K9QNC**. He bought a Heath VF-1 VFO to add to his AT-1, and was now in full command of the 40 and 15 meter CW bands. In 1960, he traded his S-20R for a Hallicrafters SX-100A. And, in 1963, he traded the SX-100A for a Hammarlund HQ-170A.



K9QNC in 1960.

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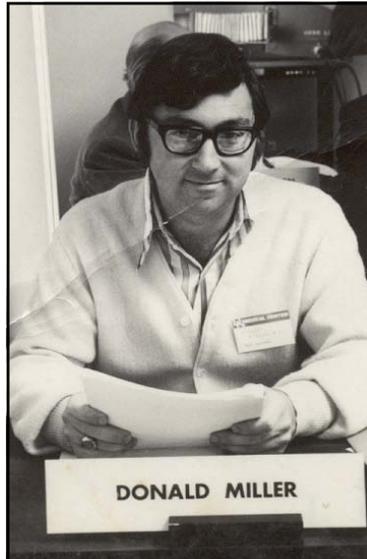
Dennis made frequent visits to the home of his DXing mentor Les, **W9ALP**. Les was a post-WWII OT. He had a pair of 813s, driven by a converted BC-458 VFO. And, he used an HQ-129X, with an RME DB-23 preselector for receiving. Les also had a Hornet trap beam – *“The beam with a sting.”* It worked well, even though it was only 30 feet high. On occasion, Les invited Dennis to operate, and Dennis began to put DX stations into his log.

With the lure of DXing now fully in control, Dennis was able to persuade his dad to let him erect a HyGain 14AV vertical on the roof of their Chicago home. He also added a small homebrew amplifier. With the new vertical and 150 watts, he began working new countries on 15, 20 and 40 meters, from home. Dennis became an Amateur Extra Class op on June 27, 1963.

From 1963, until 1966, Dennis dipped his toe into mobile operation, by installing a homebrew crystal-controlled transmitter in his 1957 Oldsmobile 88. It used a 6AQ5 oscillator, a 6AQ5 final, and a 6V6 modulator, which produced 10 watts output on 1810. He used the AM car radio, tweaked up to 1810, as his receiver. It worked fb!



The K9QNC mobile shack - 1969 to 1974.



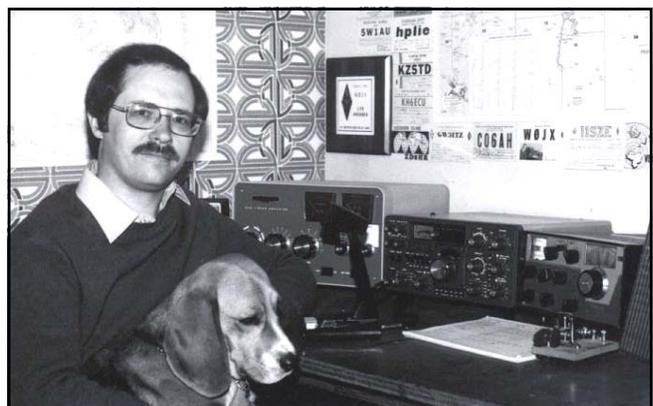
A chance meeting in Omaha!

If you are one of Dennis’ friends, you know that he has both the perfect voice and positive spirit for commercial radio. He obtained his First Class Phone license in 1963. In September of 1965, he packed his possessions and moved to De Kalb, IL to attend Northern Illinois University. He worked as an on-the-air DJ during and after his college years, moving from De Kalb to Rockford, IL to Davenport, IA, and to Omaha, NE between August, 1968 and February, 1972.

In 1972, Dennis shifted his career path, when he discovered health care administration. He worked for two different hospitals in the Omaha area, and completed an MBA program at the University of Nebraska.

In May of 1972, while working at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Dennis had a chance meeting with a famous DXer of that era. Dennis was working in the Continuing Medical Education Department, running recertification courses for family practice doctors. During one course, he happened to walk past a doctor, who had “Don Miller” on his name card. Dennis asked, “Are you the Don Miller of DXpedition fame?” He said “Yes,” and they talked a bit about Dr. Miller’s adventures.

In 1974, he moved to Minneapolis to attend the University of Minnesota, full time. He graduated from the U of M in 1976 with a Ma-



Two Minnesota DX hounds - 1980.

ters Degree in Health Care Administration. After graduation, Dennis was hired as a Vice President for Administration for Golden Valley Health Center.

The period from 1965 to 1976 was the biggest gap in his operating activity. DXing was placed on hold, while Dennis moved about, living in apartments. But that was about to change. He bought his first house in late 1976 in Minneapolis, and put up a 60-foot tower with a TH6DX tri-band beam in 1977. By 1979, Dennis had the DXCC award on his wall.



Stacked monobanders in Minneapolis - 1980.

He changed his callsign to **WBØWWR**, and soon changed it again to **WØJX**, when 1 x 2 callsigns were offered to Extra Class license holders in 1977. From his new Minneapolis QTH, Dennis started out using a Drake TR-4, which he had purchased back in 1969. He added a Heath SB-220 amplifier, which he built in 1976. In 1978 he bought a Yaesu FT-901DM. In 1980, he replaced his antenna with a stack of three monobanders for 10, 15, and 20 meters. And, in 1983, he added 10 feet to his tower, which placed his stacked antennas at 82, 76, and 70 feet. His station was now the “real deal,” and by the mid-80s, Dennis had 250 countries in his DXCC total.

In September of 1969, Dennis jumped back into mobiling by installing his TR-4 into a Volvo he bought in 1967 (see photo on page 5). He later moved the TR-4 into a 1973 Chevy Nova, which he took on a trip to Canada in July of 1976. In 1978, Dennis toured England, Scotland, and Wales for two weeks, where he operated 2 meter FM mobile as **G5CLR**,

GW5CLR, and **GM5CLR**. He returned in 1983, and operated HF mobile as **G4/WØJX**, **GW4/WØJX**, and **GM5/WØJX** for three weeks.

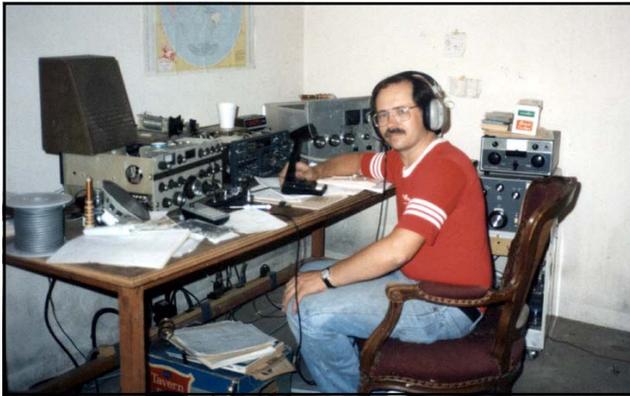


G4/WØJX/M is QRV for the road - 1983.

Dennis was recruited in November of 1982, as president and CEO of Sacred Heart Health Services in Yankton, SD, where he served until January, 1998. In 1986, a freak September tornado squarely hit his neighborhood, destroying his antenna and tower. He re-emerged from the radio rubble with his trusty, old TH6DX on a 70-foot tower.



Damage from a freak September tornado in Yankton - 1986



DXing from South Dakota - 1988.

In February of 1998, Dennis became president and CEO of Firelands Community Hospital in Sandusky, Ohio. Over the next 5 years, Dennis orchestrated a merger with the other hospital in Sandusky, and created Firelands Regional Medical Center. In late 2003, Dennis decided that it was a good time to gear down a bit from the fast pace of medical center operations, and went into part-time health care management consulting and community volunteer work.

Dennis and his wife Jolene now reside in Milan, Ohio – the birthplace of Thomas Edison. Jolene is an English instructor at Bowling Green State University's Firelands Campus in Huron, Ohio. They have a blended family, with children from previous marriages. Dennis has two daughters. Anne, 25, lives in St. Paul. She's married and has a 1-year old son, Andy. Ellen, 22, lives in the San Francisco area. She and her husband have a 4-year old daughter, Raina. Jolene's 36-year old daughter Leslie has two children: Emily, 12 and Sam, 5, and lives in Fargo, ND. Her son, Mike, is 34, and lives in Lincoln, NE. With other close family members scattered all around the Midwest, Dennis and Jolene are always on the go.



Jolene, Dennis and their 1948 Cessna 140.

Apart from his radio activity, Dennis loves to fly. He has held a private pilot's license since 1970, and an instrument rating since 1993. He owns two aircraft. One is a 1948 Cessna 140 two-seat trainer. The other is a 1956 Cessna 180 (4 place). Dennis and Jolene have flown as far west as Utah. And, Dennis especially likes to do Sunday morning fly-in breakfasts, around Ohio and Michigan.



Dennis poses next to his 1956 Cessna 180.

Here's the lowdown on Dennis' current rig. He's using a Yaesu FT-1000MP MK V Field and a Kenwood TS-850SAT. He also has an Icom IC-706 MkIIG, which he uses in his car. His main amplifier is an Ameritron AL-800H. He has a BTI LK-1000, which is dedicated to 160m CW and AM. And, he also has a Collins 30S-1 for use on 75 and 40 meter AM.

He now has his trusty, old TH6DX atop a heavy-duty 80-foot Universal aluminum tower. And, he shunt feeds the tower on 160 meters. On 80, 40, 30, and 17 meters, he uses a modified Butternut vertical, featuring full-size ¼-wave elements on 80 and 17, over an elevated radial system.

Their home is situated on 2.9 acres, which has a considerable number of trees. This large lot has allowed him to install multiple 450-foot long Beverage antennas, which has helped to pique his interest in the low bands. With the sunspot cycle currently deep in its valley, he's concentrating his DXing efforts on chasing new ones on 160 meters, where his total is quickly closing in on 200 countries. And, he's recently started working on the goal of DXCC on 160 meter SSB.



The current WØJX QTH in Milan, Ohio.

He is also on the prowl for “new-ones,” and his mixed-mode overall DXCC total currently stands at 325 worked and 314 confirmed.

When Dennis was asked to recall his most memorable DX contacts, he answered, “That’s easy to answer! My most memorable contact was VQ9AA, Aldabra Is., on May 19, 1962 at 0035z on 14 MHz. Gus Browning was operating, and I was able to break through the pile up with only about 100 watts out to the HyGain 14 AV ground plane. It was my first, big long haul DX contact.

Another great DX contact was snagging 1SIDX on Spratly Is. on April 9, 1979. It was a split operation, and even though I had a beam and a KW, their unique operating style left you in doubt if you made the Q. Essentially, they were giving out signal reports, and when you came back to confirm, the ops were already sending a report to another station. So, I had to wait to receive the QSL to be sure of the contact.



The trusty, old TH6DX at 80 feet. Tower is shunt fed for 160 meters.



Modified Butternut covers 80, 40, 30, and 17 meters.

Also on 20 meter SSB, I had the dubious experience of working **WB6MID/HR3** in September, 1978 with the infamous Jim Jones at the mic!

My first really great 160 meter DX contact was on Dec 29, 1979, when I worked Bob, **ZL2BT** from my Minneapolis QTH on 160 SSB with only 100 watts to my shunt fed tower.

Lastly, my most difficult and best DX contact on 160 was on February 5, 2000, when I managed to work **XZØA** at my sunrise. I had been listening for them for almost three weeks and didn't get useable propagation until the second to the last day of the DXpedition. The tailenders stepped all over my Q, and thankfully the XZØA team tape recorded all of the 160 meter QSO's. The operator kept getting my call wrong, sending W1 instead of WØ. But, upon reviewing the QSO, they clearly determined that I had made it into the log, and the card was received, without delay!”

This year, Dennis is planning to replace his TH6DX with a new TH11DX, which is already in his garage, waiting for action. He also plans to add another 10 feet to his tower, as part of that project. In addition, he’s thinking about some sort of directional antenna for 30 and 40 meters.

Dennis says that he’d really like to go on one really exotic and rare DXpedition (“to a country I already have confirmed, of course!”). He figures that he has about two more sunspot cycles to experience, before he can’t copy CW anymore (due to normal hearing loss). During that period, he’d like to move to a warmer climate, with even better propagation!





Our DXpedition to Benin was a four operators effort: Claudia **K2LEO/TY5LEO**, Ronald **PA3EWP/TY5WP**, Tom **GM4FDM/TY4TW**, and Andrea **IK1PMR/TY5MR** (all members of the 2004 DXpedition to Banaba Island, T33C). We were QRV March 16-30, 2006 from a QTH 12km West of Cotonou, in the Southern part of Benin.

In this short note, I'll focus on our Top Band effort. After setting up the antennas for 80m-10m, we built an inverted-L antenna for 160m, using a 10m fiberglass mast and a few radials on the ground, but the antenna did not work well. It was impossible to use elevated radials: space was limited, and too many animals around (including a horse).

So, we dismantled the inverted-L and erected a 160m dipole between trees at about 10m above ground. Tom, **GM4FDM**, was an artist when throwing stones through the trees! We also had a K9AY receiving loop (quite close to the bungalows), and an elevated beverage (too short, however, to perform well on Top Band, only 100m long, but effective on 80m and 40m).

Our 160m effort was possible thanks to the great friendship and cooperation between us. Low band enthusiast Ronald, **PA3EWP**, transported and installed most of our low band antennas, including the K9AY loop. Moreover, we agreed to focus on different bands/modes to reduce duplicate QSOs, and to give out the maximum number of "new ones": 160m for **TY5MR**, 80/40m for **TY5WP**, 12/10m for **TY4TW**, RTTY on 20/17/15m for **TY5LEO**. However, the only strict assignments were 160m and 80m.

So, if you made a QSO with TY5MR on 160m, the whole TY group is responsible for that, I was just the one who operated the radio. Due to the problems with the inverted-L antenna, we started operations on 160m with some delay. Operating 80m-30m at the same time was impossible, so only 20m low power was available when I was active on Top Band; all team members were very cooperative to shut down or reduce power, when necessary, to allow low band operations.

Our 160m station was an Elecraft K2/100 driving an Acom 1000 amplifier, for an output power of about 600-700w. We were able to listen on the transmitting antenna (dipole) or K9AY loop (4 switchable positions) or beverage, with or without preamplifiers (internal and external). The software was Writelog, kindly sponsored by the author; the "super check call" feature was a great help sometimes to verify call signs and partial calls heard through the static.

QRN was something terrible - the worst I've ever experienced. It was much harder than from Somalia, where I operated 160m last year as 600CW (maybe due to the season, or to our somewhat limited receiving antennas). Making



Our bungalow.



The operating shack.

QSOs was very often so close to operator's limits as I can imagine, with rates sometimes going as low as 10 QSOs/hour.

A few times, I had to wait several minutes to copy a single callsign, and make the QSO. It was a good exercise for patience, sometimes a good opportunity to relax for few minutes, or at least to check which kind of animal was climbing my leg or spray some more insect repellent on my hands - all of this with headsets on, just in case the QRN gives a break.

Operating time on Top Band was limited by several factors, including Ronald's big effort on 80m, where TY5WP logged over 2000 QSOs. The two bands were incompatible, due to the limited separation of 160m and 80m antennas. Also, we had a single K9AY loop and a single Acom 1000 amplifier (the small solid state amp was not suitable at all for low band operation in a multi/multi environment, due to spurious emissions).

For the few persons asking for a QSY to 160m: I am always sorry to reply "no sri", but please realize that switching to 160m for us was not the same simple task as it is at home. Top



Tom (TY4TW) & Ron (TY5WP) assemble antennas.

Band operation had to be scheduled. To QSY to 160m, I had to first go out in the field at night (surrounded by barking dogs) and move a coax from the 30m vertical to the 160m dipole; then connect the K9AY loop and beverage (because we had to share coax lines for our antenna farm), switch and tune the amplifier (sometimes generating a power fault), ask all other operators to shut down their stations (except perhaps for a low power signal on 20m) and then start listening to a very noisy band.



Claudia, TY5LEO, hands out Qs on RTTY.

Believe us, we were aware of your sunrise/sunset times, but usually after our sunset on the equator all bands from 160m to 15m are well open for DX, and some compromise/planning was necessary. Top Band was almost always apparently dead when we started calling CQ. I usually called on 1821.5 UP 4-5. Normally, one or two CQs were enough to generate a fairly large pileup! VE1ZZ was our first contact on 160m on March 22 at 23:01z, immediately followed by a bunch of (weaker) EU stations!

Most stations were all pretty much the same signal strength, with few exceptions like IV3PRK, IV3TDM, ON4UN, PA3GCV, SP2FAX, W3BGN, W3LPL. Maybe their well known callsigns helped them too, or it's just radials and watts? They only know the answer. I would just love to hear more signals like these when I send a CQ from a rare entity! Not everybody owns hectares of real estate covered by antennas, but it's nice to note that all the operators we found on Top Band were really excellent ones, and I was particularly proud to log well known WØ, W7 and W6 callsigns from TY.



Tom, **TY4TW**, in action.

Our final result was 583 QSOs on 160m, including 31 dupes: 324 North America, 248 Europe, 7 Asia, 3 Africa and 1 South America. US stations were highly represented on Top Band, with huge pileups from the States, despite all US big DX foundations and associations said: “TY is not rare enough for us, sorry but we’re not going to support this expedition”! We declared our focus on the low bands and RTTY, but there was no way to get support from North America. Now, our statistics say something different: TY was badly needed on 160m and 80m by US hams; our online guest-book is also a good indication of this fact.

Our sponsors were all European clubs and foundations: RSGB, BARTG, EUDXF, GDXF, Chiltern DX Club, GM DX Group, MDXC and we thank them all for making possible our effort on the lower bands with their support (the K9AY loop, beverage, 1kw amplifier, bandpass filters and 24h power were all essential “extras” to operate on Top Band).

We would appreciate an extra greenstamp for QSL requests from outside Europe, especially for 160m and 80m QSOs. More important, we hope DXers from North America can send a good word to their major DX foundations about our expedition, if they were happy with our operation. Our opinion is that the criteria for assigning sponsorships should focus less on the number and nationality of the operators and more on the real plan and experience of the team: our four members activated about 75 DXCC entities in the past, including some

pretty rare ones like 6O, FO/M, TI9, T30, T33.

It was not easy to put TY on the bands for a small group, as it was not cheap. We had to pay for each hour of generator power, as well as for licenses, customs, rental of an extra room for the shack, extra baggage and so on.

But, we had a great time and it was our pleasure to meet you on the bands! Our final score was close to 24,000 QSOs, including 2680 QSOs on 160/80m and 3298 RTTY contacts (13.8%). CW represents 64.1% of our QSO total, and it was the mode of choice for the low bands, of course. The “old mode” is still by far the best one for working DX below 14 MHz from entities like TY, where the noise is a factor and pileups never end.

Please look for our full story on the major DX magazines, and for some pictures on our web page at: www.ik1pmr.com/dx-peditions/ty/ if you like.

Best 73/DX,

Andrea Panati, Ph.D. - IK1PMR / TY5MR

Also: 3D2MR, 6O0MR, 9H3MR, T30MR, T33MR, VU4ANVU3TLY, AI4CA (ARRL and NCDXF)

www.ik1pmr.com

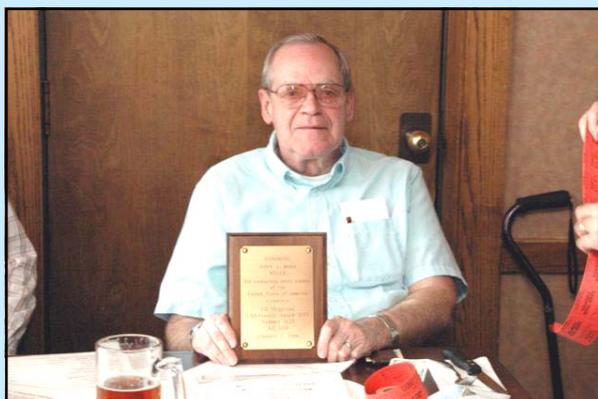
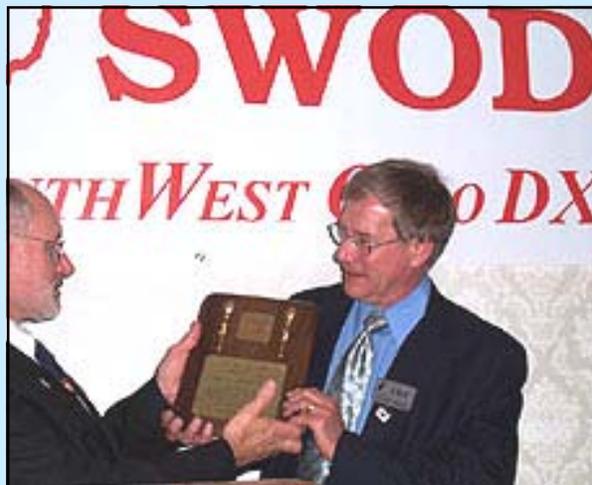


TCDXA Member Kudos!

CONGRATULATIONS KØIR!

TCDXA and MWA member Ralph Fedor, **KØIR**, was inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame on May 19th at the Dayton DX Dinner. CQ magazine sponsors the DX Hall of Fame.

Ralph was nominated for the honor by Italy's IARU member-society, the Associazione Radioamatori Italian (ARI), the OHDXF, an alliance of OH - DXers and the TCDXA, Twin City DX Association.



WØJAR Achieves USA-CA!

John Ross, **WØJAR**, of Alexandria proudly displays his CQ Magazine Worked All Counties Award at the April TCDXA meeting. Some say that this is the most difficult award to earn in Amateur Radio - even tougher than #1 HR and 5BWAZ. The USA-CA award requires confirmation by QSL of all 3,077 U.S. counties! Congratulations John on a job well done!

3YØX is Pick for DXpedition of the Year!

Also at the Dayton DX dinner, the South West Ohio DX Association ([SWODXA](#)) announced that the recent Peter I Island **3YØX** DXpedition was the organization's choice for DXpedition of the year. The entire 3YØX team was on hand to accept a plaque.



3YØX DXpedition co-leaders Ralph, **KØIR** and Bob, **K4UEE** display their award for DXpedition of the Year.

KØCOM is MHDXA's New President



TCDXA member Michael Sell, **KØCOM** recently assumed the reins of the **Mile High DX Association**. We saw Michael at our monthly meetings when he lived in Plymouth, MN. But, a few years ago, his career took him to Denver.

Michael has retained his TCDXA membership, while getting to know the great bunch of DXers at MHDXA. He plans to implement several ideas designed to pique interest among Front Range DXers, and to move MHDXA forward. **Congratulations, Michael!**

TCDXA Health and Welfare News

We've been informed that due to failing health, two of our Senior Members are no longer active in amateur radio. It's always a sad day when old timers hang up their headphones, and close their logs for the last time. We wish them well!

Ed Martinson, **WØGYH**, is residing with his long time friend, Rose Schieffert, **WAØWVR** in Mounds View. Ed is 93.

Ed Martinson - WØGYH
5651 Cornell Drive
Mounds View, MN 55112

≈

Don Birks, **WØOOK**, is residing at St Mary's Home in St. Paul. Don is 84.

Don Birks - WØOOK
St. Mary's Home
1925 Norfolk Ave
St. Paul, MN 55116

TCXDA Treasurer's Report YTD Jan 1 thru May 31, 2006

Assets and Income

Balance Jan. 1, 2006	\$ 2,722.40
Annual dues collected-2006	1,944.00
Donations	590.00
"Pass the hat" contributions	125.00
Miscellaneous	0.38
Total 2006 assets	\$ 5,381.78

Expenses - YTD

MWA donation	\$ -75.00
ARRL Spectrum Defense	-150.00
Glorioso donation	-250.00
NCDXF Donation	-250.00
VU4AN/VU3RYJ	-500.00
Funeral flowers	-191.99
Peter One DVD order	-22.00
Misc. (postage, raffle tickets)	-20.00
Bank fees	-19.25
Total 2006 expenses	\$ -1,478.24

Current balance, March 20, 2006:

\$ 3,903.54

DX Quiz Moments in History

In this issue, the DX quiz will test your knowledge of people, events, and dates. We've listed 19 "Moments in History," and ask the reader to select the correct year for each event. If you score 100% on this one, the *GrayLine* staff will buy you a prime rib dinner at the next TCDXA meeting. No cheating, please! The honor system is in effect. Don't feel bad if your score is low. This quiz is rated *extra difficult!!!*



Year	Moment in History
_____	Albert Einstein's birthday, March 14th
_____	Marconi invents the radio
_____	Amelia Earhart's birthday, July 24th
_____	Galileo discovers sunspots
_____	Heinrich Schwabe announces discovery of the sunspot cycle
_____	Richard Carrington discovers solar flares
_____	WWII begins
_____	J.S. Hey discovers solar radio emission
_____	Roald Amundsen reaches the South Pole in December, one month before Scott
_____	Charles Lindberg crosses the Atlantic by plane on May 20th
_____	Stock market crash on Oct 24th precipitated the Great Depression
_____	The Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the first artificial satellite
_____	Dow loses 508 points on Oct 29th, the worst percentage single day drop in history
_____	End of World War II
_____	"Score" the first communications satellite launched by the US
_____	First manned mission to the moon
_____	Launch of the <i>Solar Maximum Mission</i> satellite
_____	First flight of the space shuttle
_____	Dow loses 554 points on Oct 27th, the worst total single day drop in history

Available dates:

1613 1859 1879 1895 1897 1911 1927 1929 1939 1942 1945 1957 1958 1969 1980 1981 1987 1997

Answers on page 30

Who Owns this Shack ? (Answer on page 29)



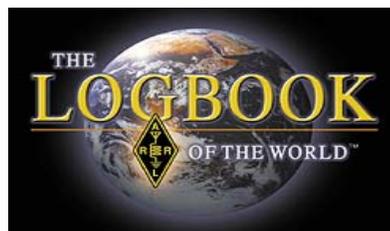
The owners of this station call an island in the South Pacific home. They decided to show off their cat, rather than their equipment. They founded the HIDXA back in the 80s, and have been active from Heard Island, Bhutan, and Temotu Province. They are world-class DXers, who have put some very rare entities on the air. Many DXers owe them a debt of gratitude for that "rare one" they have in their log. And, don't forget, many of us have a "grand slam" (9 bands confirmed) with their home island. You will find some of their logs on LoTW.

A Comparison of the *eQSL.cc* and *LoTW* Database Systems

by Robert Chudek, KØRC



VS.



Every amateur radio operator knows the time, effort, and expense associated with the exchange of QSL cards. These issues become even more poignant when pursuing foreign cards from rare DX stations. For nearly a century, amateurs have looked for cost effective ways to exchange QSL cards. Cards have been routed through QSL bureaus, while many others have been exchanged via QSL managers. Some cards have been hand-carried to DX clubs and conventions for bulk distribution. Even so, a significant number of cards are still exchanged direct, via first class or air mail.

Modern computers and software logging programs can help us keep track of our radio activity, and manage our logbooks. Statistics and reports can be quickly generated, and QSL labels can be easily created for outgoing QSL cards. But, there is one aspect that has remained unchanged throughout this evolution. It is still a manual process to label cards, package them up, and ship them off to their destinations.

The rising domestic and international postal rates, and the courtesy of funding the reciprocal mailing expenses, cannot be ignored during the pursuit of certificates and awards. The art of QSL card exchange is both time consuming and expensive!

Within the past six years, two systems have evolved which address many of the issues surrounding the physical exchange of QSL cards. These are the *eQSL Card Center*

<http://www.eqsl.cc> and the *Logbook of the World* <http://www.arrl.org/lotw> systems. These new systems came online in 2000 and 2003, respectively. You can access either of them, when using any computer which has an internet connection.

I began using the *eQSL.cc* system earlier this year, and more recently began to also upload my logbook data to *LoTW*. I found both systems to work as advertised, but like anything new, they each have an inherent learning curve.

At first glance, these online systems may look similar, and may be perceived as competitive. Now that I have used both of them, I am convinced they are neither! In reality, both systems support a similar goal, but embrace different objectives. Depending upon your personal QSL goals and objectives, you may achieve the best result by using one, the other, or maybe using both online systems.

So first, let's take a look at the high-level goals of these two systems. It is safe to say both *eQSL.cc* and *LoTW* are designed to help minimize the time, effort and expenses of QSLing. A second but related goal is to help decrease the overhead for the award sponsors, who input and manage the individual award applications. The two systems implement different objectives to achieve these goals.

Both systems implement an online master database, where amateur radio operators can upload their personal logbook entries. The

eQSL.cc system uses a standard login / password system, while the *LoTW* system uses a robust trusted-security mechanism.

Both systems proclaim their database and the data within them are secure and at minimal risk of fraud and tampering. (See the related story “*The First QSLs*” regarding early attempts of QSL card fraud in wireless communication on page 20.) This has been a lively topic of debate ever since these systems were brought online. Database security and intrusion detection are beyond the scope of this article. I will simply state the *LoTW* system requires extra steps in initial setup and logbook processing, which provides an extra layer of security.

That said, whenever you introduce extra steps into a process, the probability for problems will increase. My installation of *LoTW* was no exception. The first tQSL software installation went smoothly on my desktop computer, but failed miserably on my laptop computer! I have invested minimal time trying to debug the laptop. My desktop machine fulfills my immediate *LoTW* need. In contrast, I setup my *eQSL.cc* account, without issue, and can access it from any one of my three computer systems.

The *eQSL.cc* allows basic user features, and does not require pre-authentication. Both *eQSL.cc* and *LoTW* require you to provide adequate credentials to authenticate you as a qualified user. This verification process allows you to participate in their awards programs.

One notable architectural difference between these two products is that the *eQSL.cc* system supports SWL accounts, whereas the *LoTW* does not.

The *eQSL.cc* system predicts it is on track to exceed over 100,000 user accounts by mid-year, compared to approximately 13,000 user accounts in *LoTW*. In contrast, the *LoTW* system contains over 100 million QSO records, while *eQSL.cc* is approaching 65 million records. That averages 650 records per user on *eQSL.cc*, compared to 7769 records per user on *LoTW*. I will leave you to speculate about the reason for this disparity!

Neither system requires a paid membership to upload logbooks to their system. The *eQSL.cc* system is supported by advertising revenue and a tiered membership structure. Likewise, ARRL membership is required when you want to apply your *LoTW* credits toward their award programs. A small fee is charged for each credit when you retrieve them to help offset the operating expenses.

Overall, both systems can save you significant money, compared to traditional methods of QSLing. At the end of this article, I have provided a few reasons why you should consider uploading your logbook data, even if you have no interest in QSLs or the awards programs.

Once you have been authorized and logged onto either system, your next step is to upload your logbook. This procedure is nearly identical for both systems, with the exception of preprocessing your ADIF log file for *LoTW*. This step creates a secure encrypted file that is transported across the internet. When uploading to *eQSL.cc*, your log data is transported in the clear text format (not encrypted). Whether to upload a complete log, a partial log, or an individual contact - the choice is yours.

After your information has been uploaded, remote software will automatically compare your entries against the master database records. When a QSO match is detected, a credit or confirmation is applied to both “sides” of each contact. At this level of operation, the two systems are virtually identical.

What happens next depends upon which system you are using. The *eQSL.cc* is designed to generate hard-copy QSL cards. When both sides of a QSO match, (your log and the other station’s log), a QSL card can be printed on your printer. Likewise, the other station can print your QSL card on their printer. Just like traditional QSLs, these cards can be displayed in your shack, and can be used to obtain certificates and awards.

For a step-by-step overview of the *eQSL.cc* process, you can view an internet slide show here: <http://www.eqsl.cc/qslcard/Presentation.cfm>

The *Logbook of the World* is designed to generate QSL credits in the ARRL database. These credits can be used to obtain certificates and awards. The *LoTW* system design does not support printing

hard-copy QSL cards. It currently supports the ARRL DXCC and WAS achievement programs. The League is currently discussing opportunities with other major award sponsors to use the *LoTW* system.

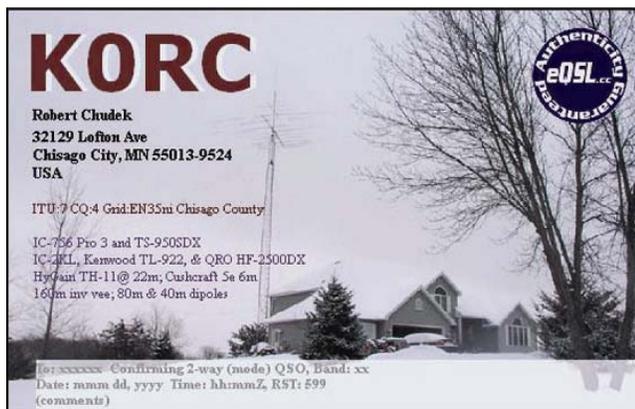
For a step-by-step overview of the *LoTW* process, you can view the ARRL internet webpage here: <https://p1k.arrl.org/lotw/getstart>

Also, Ward Silver, **NØAX**, wrote an excellent, detailed review. You will find it in the September 2005 issue of *QST* or online here: <http://www.arrl.org/lotw/silver.pdf>

Whether the system will print QSL cards or not is one major difference between *eQSL.cc* and *LoTW* system objectives.

If one of your goals is to display cards as wallpaper or in a QSL album, you will want to use the *eQSL.cc* system. It generates cards quickly, and efficiently. You can have a hard-copy QSL card in your possession almost instantaneously, from any station in the world! If you are beginning your amateur radio career, this may be an important feature to you.

Regarding the card capabilities of the *eQSL.cc* system, you can choose from several basic designs, or create a custom card using your own graphics. My QSL card includes a winter photograph of my current Chisago QTH. Here is my current *eQSL.cc* card. Come to think about it, I should update this card with a summer scene!



I previously stated the *eQSL.cc* system also supports SWL cards. Here's a sample SWL card I recently retrieved from the system:



If one of your goals is to obtain the ARRL-sponsored DXCC or WAS award, your choices are limited to submitting traditional hardcopy cards, use the *Logbook of the World* system, or use a combination of both methods. The *LoTW* can provide almost instantaneous QSL credit in your account from any other station in the world! Whether you are new to DXing, or a seasoned “professional,” and you are pursuing the ARRL DXCC program, *LoTW* and/or traditional QSL cards is your only route to this goal.

One caveat you should know about: the ARRL *does not* recognize electronic QSL cards from any source. Here is a little background regarding this decision that was made several years ago.

Everyone knows the ARRL strives to hold their awards programs to the highest ethical standard. History tells us some of the early DXpeditions were later revealed to be unlicensed, improperly licensed, or not in the actual location(s) they claimed. The DX Desk now has a stringent verification mechanism in place. DXpedition leaders are required to submit authenticated paperwork in order for their QSO's and QSL's to be accepted into the DXCC program. These new procedures do a good job to ensure an operation is truly legitimate.

The other half of the verification problem is to keep bogus QSL cards from entering the system, and from being accepted for credit toward the DXCC award. Forged or altered QSL cards would also diminish the quality of their awards program.

Unfortunately, as we have seen, faked QSL cards are nothing new! (See page 20.) That said, the ARRL has decided electronically generated QSL cards will not be accepted in their awards programs. It is their belief these “virtual” QSLs cannot be made secure enough to meet their standards.

I personally find this decision very disappointing, especially since I’m an advocate of new technology. This decision, focused on mechanical security, is being used to manage what is really a social problem. Fake money, fake diplomas, fake ID’s, and fake QSLs – they are all devices used by unscrupulous people with lower ethical standards.

In the long run, I expect this impasse will be resolved, but only time will tell. Until then, you should know the *eQSL.cc* cards are accepted by more than 80 organizations for their certificates and awards. If certificates and awards are one of your goals, many of them can be achieved using electronic QSL cards.

Let’s get back to my systems comparison. So far, I’ve uploaded all my logbook contacts for the first six months of 2006 into *LoTW*. This includes my general DXing (5%) and contesting (95%) activities. My online logbook summary shows 6,284 QSO entries and 1,834 matching QSL records. This is a little over a 29% “hit rate” of confirmations. Needless to say, I was impressed by these numbers.

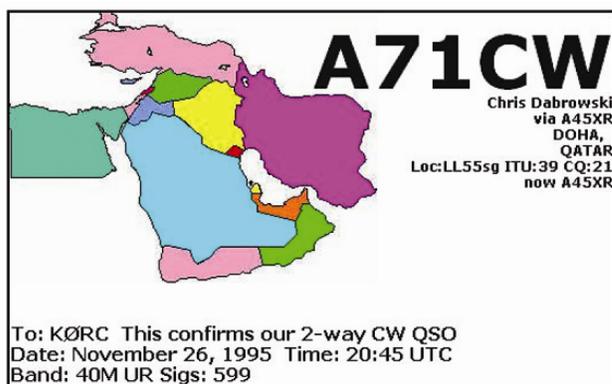
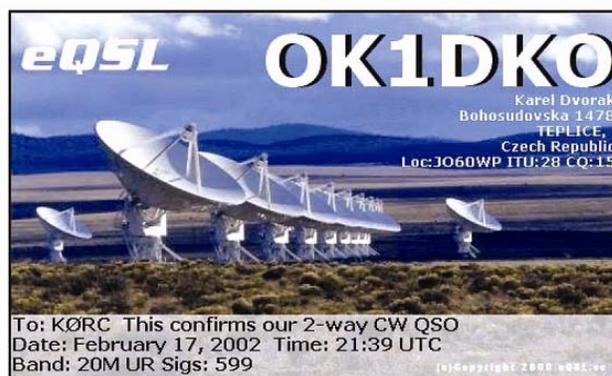
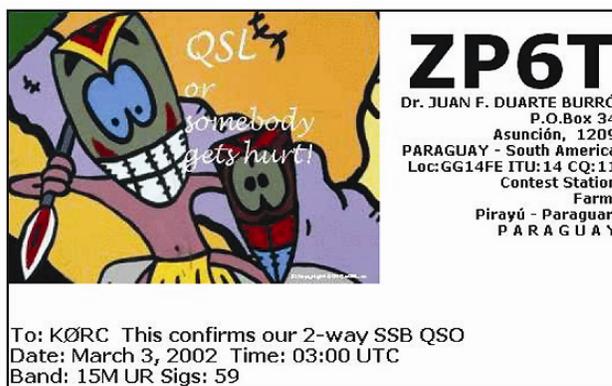
I then checked my progress toward the ARRL awards, and discovered I did not have enough credits for either the DXCC or the WAS certificate. I wasn’t too surprised about the DXCC numbers, because I had uploaded only six months of operating records. However, finding only 23 of the 50 states confirmed was a surprise. This disproportion probably comes from *LoTW* being promoted as a DXing tool from its inception, whereas, the WAS program was only recently added, in March of this year.

In contrast, I uploaded 17,101 entries into the *eQSL.cc* system. These are contacts from my logbooks dating back to January 1, 2000 (I’ve been working with this system a little longer).

When I checked my *eQSL.cc* status, I had confirmations for 105 countries, all 50 states, and 32 of the 40 Zones.

Truthfully, with 6½ years of logbook data uploaded, I expected I would be closer to working all zones. Reflecting on this, I have not been chasing and tracking the Zones, per se. So, what I have has come as a consequence of my CW and RTTY contesting activities.

What does an *eQSL.cc* card look like? Well, if you use one of the new photo-grade printers you would be hard pressed to notice any difference compared to a traditional printed QSL! Here are a few examples of *eQSL.cc* cards I have received:



Overall, when you step back from all the technical aspects of these two systems, it is the confirmations, certificates, QSLs, achievements, wallpaper, peer recognition, and personal satisfaction that these systems are really all about.

With that in mind, I suggest you also consider the goals of your fellow amateur radio operators, as well. For example, you may be an avid con-tester, a county hunter, an IOTA chaser, or a special events / WPX enthusiast. Your participation in these activities can generate a significant demand for both stateside and DX QSL's. Uploading your logbook to both *eQSL.cc* and *LoTW* will help your peers achieve their goals.

I may write more about my discoveries regarding these two systems, as I continue to upload more of my logbook data in the future. But for now, I have a couple of final thoughts for you to consider. I want to put these QSO databases in a slightly different context, which maybe you have overlooked.

Many articles have been written about the human aging process, and, as we get older, how we begin to reflect upon our life, our achievements, and the legacy we will leave behind. It is inevitable; someday we will all be listed as a silent key. Ponder, for a moment, what you will leave behind. Without doubt, each of us will leave a chronicle of our radio career in the form of our logbooks. Your logbook is the official record of your radio activities.

After you are gone, do you think any of your family or friends will treasure and covet these logbooks and records like you do? Will they take the time and energy to respond to delinquent QSL requests? Would these posthumous cards even be valid, for that matter? Or, will your cards and logbooks slowly fade away in some isolated landfill?

Both the *eQSL.cc* and *LoTW* systems should be viewed as a permanent record of your radio

career. Future requests for QSO confirmations will continue to be granted on your behalf. Uploading your data preserves your history.

A very poignant example is the January 9, 2006 passing of our fellow TCDXA member and dear friend, Jules Freundlich, W2JGR/Ø. Even though Jules was a diligent and dedicated digital operator, his logbooks were never uploaded to either of these systems. I consider this unfortunate and a real missed opportunity.

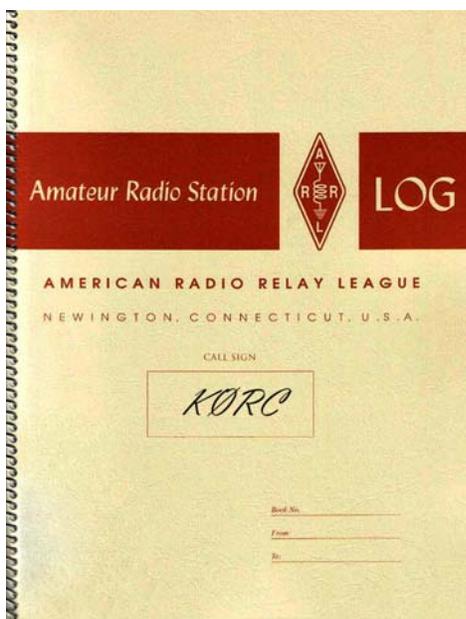
Let's fast forward a century or two and consider what value might be obtained from billions of communication records sitting in an archive. One possibility would be an extremely accurate propagation model. But most likely, it will be some benefit beyond our current comprehension. Uploading your data contributes to future research and discoveries.

My apology, if some of the preceding examples sounded a little pessimistic or morbid. My intent was to raise awareness of our reality! So, here is a final thought, with a little more immediate payback for you to think about: Consider both the *eQSL.cc* and *LoTW* systems as your personal, secure, off-site backup of your logbook data. Once your data is uploaded to these systems, it is safe from disaster. For example, if your disk drive failed, or your computer crashed, or

some other physical disaster wiped out your ham station, both systems provide the opportunity to retrieve your logbook data. This capability is not widely publicized, but you *do* have the option to retrieve your logbook data from either system.

If you are not already using one or the other online systems, give it some thought, give it a try. My confirmation of our QSO is most likely online, waiting for you to retrieve!

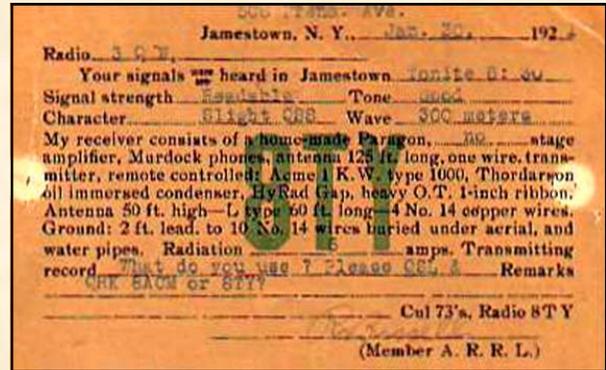
73 de Bob – KØRC



The First QSLs by Robert Chudek – KØRC

The QSL card has a long history as the vehicle used by shortwave listeners and radio operators to confirm reception reports and 2-way radio contacts. These postal exchanges date from the beginning of wireless technology. The postcard style QSL began to rise in popularity in the USA, when amateur operators resumed radio operations after WWI. There were several reports of QSL activity taking place even before the war.

One instance of an early hardcopy QSL exchange can be found in the June 1916 issue of QST. A letter written by Edward Andrews, **3TQ** of Philadelphia, PA was published which refers to a postal card received from **8VX**. It confirmed his 3TQ signal had been received in Buffalo, NY - a 400 mile path between these two stations.



The first European QSL card is alleged to have been created by William E. F. Corsham, **2UV**, **G2UV**, in January, 1922, although numerous archived samples predate this claim. In the summer of 1926, Cecil A. Jamblin, **G6BT**, offered to take on the responsibility of acting as the “clearing house” for the exchange of QSL cards. His idea to establish a central bureau for collection and redistribution of cards would make him the first British QSL manager. It is quite possible he was the first “bureau” in the entire world.

Faked or phony QSL cards are not a modern invention. Even in the 1920s, QSL cards were created to boast about contacts that most likely never took place. One example is the **XENOC** card that does not withstand the scrutiny of close examination. In other words, bogus QSL cards predate the original 1937 Countries List by nearly two decades!

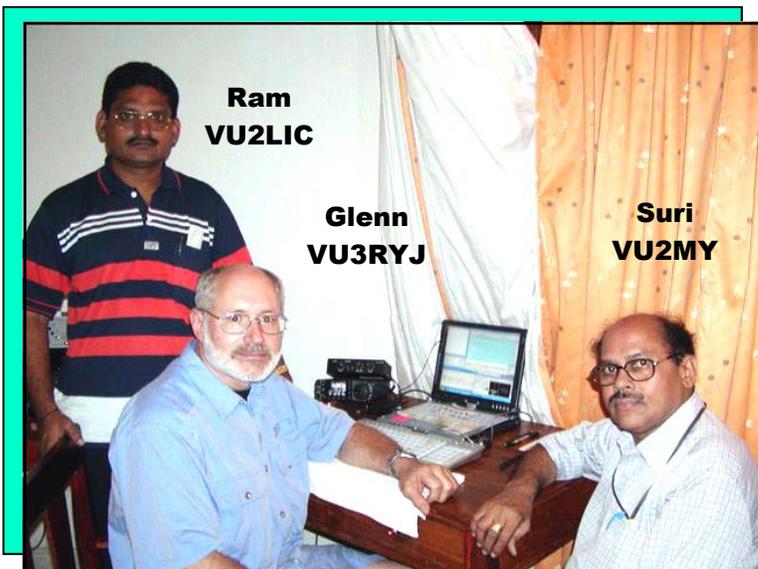
An in depth history of QSL practices and pictures of early QSL cards can be found on the internet by visiting: http://www.qsl.at/english/en_qslstory.html This website is home to the Documentary Archive Radio Communications / QSL Collection located in Vienna, Austria. It contains over 5 million amateur radio “artifacts,” including the 1+ million YASME QSL card collection donated by that foundation. You can also visit the homepage of the D.A.R.C. at: <http://www.qsl.at>. This website is written in both German and English.



XENØCP – A questionable QSL card!

VU4 Andaman Islands Hamfest and DXpedition

by Dr. Glenn Johnson, WØGJ



What is wrong with this title? Is this an oxymoron? A DXpedition implies a “rare one,” a country or entity that is wanted by DXers. A Hamfest implies a large gathering of active hams. **It is both!**

In the *DX Magazine's* 2004 Survey of the Most Wanted, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (VU4) were ranked #2, right behind the elusive Scarborough Reef (BS7). For years, North Korea (P5) dominated the #1 spot, but recent activity moved it down the list.

Bharathi Prasad, VU2RBI, and her family and friends, with the help of N.I.A.R. (National Institute of Amateur Radio, the “ARRL of India”) were able to secure permission to operate from Port Blair in the Andamans. The Indian government has been very slow and cautious about granting permission for amateur radio operations, because of security concerns. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands lie on a seismically active ridge in the middle of the Bay of Bengal, between the Indian mainland to the west and Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand to the East. The Andamans were the site of a large penal colony, and is also an Army and Navy base for India. Two airlines serve Port Blair from both Chennai (Madras) and Kolkata (Calcutta), daily. The islands have been a fairly popular tourist area for Indians, but still, no amateur radio permission could be obtained.

Bharathi and her crew were granted permission to operate for the month of December, 2002. Two stations (VU4RBI & VU4NRO) were on the air continuously, and they made several thousand QSOs. In the early morning of December 26, 2004, the “Great Tsunami” earthquake struck with a magnitude of 8.9. The Andaman & Nicobar Islands were at the epicenter, and the tsunami radiated outward in all directions.

After the earthquake, most of the commercial power and communications links were down, and the only form of communication with India was via amateur radio. And, as fortune would have it, Bharathi and her crew, in typical amateur fashion, rose to the occasion to provide the only health and welfare traffic source from the islands for many days afterwards.



Bharathi, VU2RBI, VU4RBI.

Fortunately, the Indian government, as did the press around the world, picked up on this, and highly praised the efforts of the hams and the work of NIAR. Officials were so interested in this “doomsday” communication method, that it took very little coaxing to sponsor several conferences and workshops on disaster communications. Someone suggested a conference in Port Blair to commemorate the hams’ help. Hence,



Subsistence in the aftermath of the “Great Tsunami.”

plans for the VU4 India Hamfest were organized to invite hams from around the world to a conference discussing disaster preparedness and communications. At the same time, if application was made, hams could operate for a week after the conference.

What a DXer’s dream come true! Even after the 2004 VU4RBI/VU4NRO operations, VU4 Andaman was still #10 on the most wanted list. Over 150 interested people showed up in mid-April, 2006 in Port Blair in the Andamans. Approximately 40 non-Indian hams and approximately 60 Indian hams showed up! There were many “very interested” government officials, university and private institutions represented. Some were just interested in disaster preparedness; some were strictly interested in amateur radio. Some were just curious and attended without specific plans or agenda. Several members of the press attended most of the entire meeting!

Several years ago, I had tried to organize a DXpedition to the Andamans, with help from NIAR, but security issues always stood in the way and permission was never granted. Through this effort, I came to know several officials in NIAR. In November, 2005, I took some of my family to the first Asia-Pacific DX Convention in Osaka. There I met Bharathi and her husband Prasad, who stayed in the room next door to us in our

hotel. Bharathi and my 16-year old daughter Carrie instantly hit it off, and were best of friends for the conference. Bharathi invited me to the then planned VU4 Hamfest to talk about my experience in teaching ham radio in the Kingdom of Bhutan, where I have visited several times, primarily for volunteer medical work. Finally, after years of trying and coming to dead ends, there was a wide open invitation to operate from the Andamans!

Because of school and work commitments, no one else in my family was able to attend. Of the original planned group of 15 that I had been working with, only Jun, **JH4RHF**, and I were in attendance.

Most of us were logistically challenged, being allowed transport of only so much weight and volume of equipment and antennas. Several of the European teams arrived a few days early to put up their antennas and check out their equipment. Some of us had planned to arrive early, but encountered delayed and cancelled flights. I was almost 48 hours late of my planned arrival. If that wasn’t bad enough, when planning to go to the Andaman Islands from Minnesota, you quickly find out that you can’t get there from here, and vice versa! It is an overnight flight to Amsterdam, another overnight flight to Bombay and Calcutta with another overnight there waiting for the flight to Port Blair. The return is the same. With 215 pounds of equipment and antennas, I was most fortunate to only have to pay about \$90 for excess weight on the flight from Calcutta to Port Blair. I arrived just moments before the Hamfest officially started.



The First Session of the Hamfest was devoted to Policy and Planning for Amateur Radio for the Next Generation. Many government officials spoke and offered ideas. Officials from the Telecommunications Department actually apologized for their sluggishness with amateur licensing in the past and promised to proactively promote amateur radio in the future!

They would like to see the number of Indian hams increase from the present 12,000 to over 100,000 in the next few years! Then speakers from universities and educational institutions explained their visions to incorporate amateur radio into their curricula. It is indeed an amazing turn-around from severely restricting Andaman activities to not just allowing, but actually inviting hams to come and operate!

The Second Session of the Hamfest was devoted to "Practical DXpeditions." Martti Laine, **OH2BH** described, in detail, the Albanian Project, where amateur radio is taught in schools, particularly universities. I talked about my training of Bhutanese hams, and the establishment of ham stations in high schools around that country. Bernie McClenny, **W3UR** talked about his experiences at the U.N. station and the importance of international cooperation. He also told about the international cooperation in the establishment of the NCDXF Beacon project. Jorma Soloranta, **OH2KI** talked about the importance of amateurs keeping up with and using advances in technology in contesting and communicating. There were several other DXpedition and technical talks.



In the Third Session, an expert group of eminent hams from India and abroad met on April 20th, and made the following recommendations/resolutions to promote Amateur Radio in India:

1. The members appreciated the personal efforts made by Shri Dayanidhi Maran, **VU2DMK**, the minister of Communications and Information Technology, for promoting Amateur Radio Activity and also the officers of Ministry of Communication and Information Technology for their kind support and sponsorship to Hamfest which is a unique event that has received world wide appreciation. (Note that the minister is now a ham!)

2. The expert group appreciated the implementation of 1st phase of project on Digital Connectivity to urban rural/remote areas which

proved to be a starting point for successful activity in 2004 including rescue and relief operation in the Tsunami. It is felt that the II and III phase be completed at the earliest to have efficient network of amateur radio stations including places like Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.

3. The International members of the expert group agreed to provide technical information for the project on study of propagation conditions in the coastal areas of Tamilnadu. The expert group discussed on the antennas, locations, equipments, and discussed with hams from Tamilnadu members and NIAR.

4. The members felt the need for improving theoretical/documentation research facilities with a dedicated team of engineers with ham licenses at NIAR to conduct similar study on propagation conditions in other parts of the country.

5. The expert group asked educational institutions, to include amateur radio activity as a creative scientific activity and provide suitable incentives to the students to increase ham population in the country from existing 12,000 to over 100,000.

6. Further simplify the procedures for issue of amateur radio licenses and conduct of amateur station operator license examination.

7. Conduct awareness campaigns and lectures in educational institutions and coordinate awareness programs with help of Non-Government Organizations working in rural remote areas.

8. Upgrade technical facilities for use of amateur television, amateur radio satellite and digital modes of communication in amateur radio club centers.

9. Amateur radio goods imported by hams be exempted from customs and excise duty.

10. Conduct annual events with advance information to attract a large number of hams and exhibitors from foreign countries. There is the tremendous scope for International Hams to visit India as tourists.

And for us DXers, they perhaps saved the *most important* item for last:

11. Conduct a ham event in Lakshadweep Islands to promote amateur radio and tourism to the Islands. (Currently, VU7 is number two on the Most Wanted List.)

The organizing committee also met and took feedback from the delegates on the technical and administrative aspects of organizing a Hamfest in Port Blair during April 18-20, 2006, and adopted the resolutions made by the expert group of hams. The committee considered Hamfest a great success!

Perhaps most importantly for the government officials, educational representatives, press and visitors, a “tour” was organized for them to visit most of the stations operating to see us working the world!

The Indian and Foreign hams started their amateur radio operations from their locations in Port Blair from April 18 and operated their stations till the special permission issued by Department of telecommunications expired on April 25. As you can imagine, immediately after the formalities and commitments of the Hamfest and Conference, most of us “disappeared” into our hotel rooms to operate our hearts out for the next short week.

A total of 11 “teams” operated (see page 26). Each team had from one to seven stations. Several of the “teams” were individuals like Charles, **K4VUD**, Jun, **JH4RHF** and myself. The other teams varied in size from three to ten.

We were assigned hotels. I was at the Hotel Megapode Nest. In our hotel were four teams with a total of SEVEN stations! There was a group of five Polish and former-East German hams, a group of three Germans, a group of 7 Indian hams and myself. There were two stations set up in the hotel next door. There were four more hotels with stations just 4-5 blocks away. A Finnish and American team was across the harbor from our hotel and a group of 10 multinationals were a couple kilometers away.

I had been in contact with the Megapode Nest Hotel and had arranged to get a room in one of their cottages, hopefully as far removed from the others as I could get. “Far” is a relative term, as we were all pretty close. I had a Hustler 4-BTV trap vertical antenna with a 30M add-on modification. I also had a dipole for 80 meters. Not having a beam, I brought an ACOM 1010 600 watt amplifier to help make up the dB deficit of a beam.

We had four major obstacles:

1. Bottom of Cycle 23 and short windows of propagation to North America
2. Man-made noise and unstable power grid
3. Monsoon season QRN
4. Interstation QRM, desensitization and harmonics.

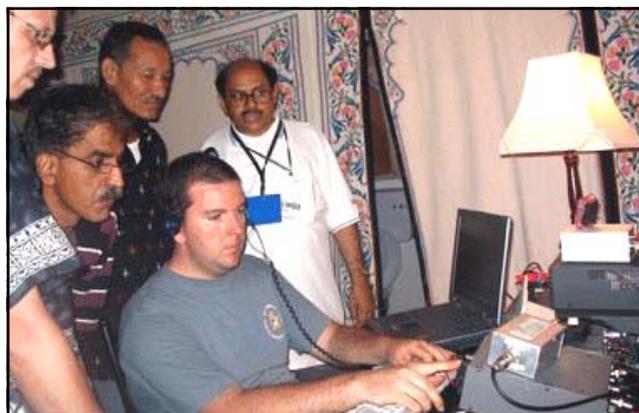
I offered my station to Indian hams who didn’t have a station to operate. It was a real thrill to work with hams “new” to DXing, computerized logging and computer controlled radios. Some operated RTTY for the very first time!



My QTH



Hustler 4-BTV vertical.



DX University is in session.

With a couple of exceptions, I made sure I made the best of the short North & South American band openings twice a day. Several times, an hour or two before the expected window, I would ask for NA ONLY and sometimes there would indeed be NA! With only a few exceptions, NA signals never moved the S-meter much. **WØBV** was loudest, **NØXB** was second loudest and **N5IN** was third loudest signal I heard from NA! In fact, when I was working **WØBV** on RTTY, he was SO STRONG I thought a local Andaman station was sending his call!!! I am so easily confused!

*(ed. - I had a **big** advantage, cuz I was operating at 9,000 ft. elevation in the Colorado Rockies:*

see www.lostcreekcabin.com. -BV)

On the other hand, when I returned home, I had an email from **W5RQ** telling me I was the only station he heard and worked during the entire week. "You were an honest 599 on my 20M sloper."

Propagation to NA certainly favored the WØs and W5s. I worked about an equal number of east coast and west coast, so at least to me, neither coast was "favored." I have far more WØs, W9s and W5s in the log from NA than either coast.

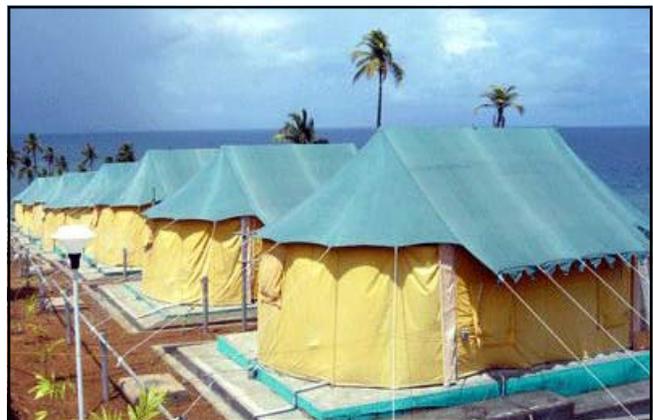


My view to North America.

There were a couple of times, the local QRM was SO BAD that I could only operate simplex and not split. I know that isn't good practice for weak and "rare" DX, but believe me, it was the only way. Most of the time we were able to op-

erate split. I could hear the incredible din of every CW station in NA calling, but oh, so weak, and picking out even part of a call was tough most of the time. There is definitely a lot of advantage to having a lot of dashes in your call with those conditions. It's amazing how many dits would disappear. I could hear calls sent over and over and each time it would be different - again, all so incredibly weak with a CW-din background. You'd just about get part of a call and the splatter/desense of another VU4 station would wipe it out. It was tough on the VU4 end, too!!! There was so much competition for the open bands that at times someone would open up on a band exactly one harmonic below, and it would wipe out any chance of finishing the pileup! Fortunately, my rig, seemed to be as immune to any other rig for interband QRM and I would just QSY a little and tough it out. It was THAT bad! Most of us were prepared with bandpass filters, too.

Sometimes, the twice-daily NA openings would last almost 3 hours, other times, only 30-40 minutes. The openings were sudden, and so were the closings. With a vertical, I couldn't tell if signals were long path or short path. Regardless, with few exceptions, they all sounded the same.....WEAK!



The Megapode Camping Resort.

The power was very unreliable. Right in the middle of a NA run, the power would go off for 5-30 minutes. Sometimes it would be momentary. Our hotel was more "dependable" than others in that regard. Team 1 at the Megapode Camping Resort had power go off for hours at a

time. In fact, I think they computed they were without power for a total of 2 days of the 8 allotted days to operate! I watched my voltage swing from 150 to 260 volts....or is that from ZERO to 260????

April is the hottest time of the year in the Andamans. In my room, I had one outlet for both the air conditioner and the amplifier. I couldn't use both at the same time without blowing the breaker. At night I could get by without the A/C. During the day, I had to make choices. I would run barefoot and cool the room down, then turn on the amplifier until I couldn't stand the heat any longer, then go barefoot again.

It was the beginning of the monsoon season, and there were thunderstorms both day and night. The interesting thing is that in spite of all of the lightning, the QRN seemed to be minimal! I think the DSP noise reduction on my rig helped immensely in that regard!

I personally made 2957 CW Q's, 1970 RTTY Q's and only 556 SSB Q's. Several hundred Qs were made by other hams from my station.

Many times during the daylight hours, only ONE band would be open, and 10 stations would be trying to use it. That's when I would do other things, saving my time for the NA openings. I'd get on a dead 20M band and call CQ continuously for sometimes an hour without one Q, just to claim my territory for the later NA opening.

I have some pictures of the bandscope showing how BAD the interstation interference was! Other ops would visit the shack, and were amazed at how I could operate with my rig and other rigs couldn't handle the nearby QRM.

What rig did I use? I carried an ICOM IC-



Local competition for frequencies was fierce!



My rig (Acom 1010 amplifier not shown).

7000, SEC 1223 20 amp switching power supply, microKEYER and my laptop in a briefcase. In my tag-along, I had an ACOM 1010 amplifier, dipole, cables, toothbrush and one change of clothes.

I donated my antennas to one of the new local VU4 hams....so maybe, they will get on from time to time. Many of the DXpeditioners donated antennas and coax to NIAR and new hams.

A rough estimate of total contacts from the eleven teams is about 90,000 Q's for #10 on the Most Wanted List! It was a real thrill to work so many of the deserving, in addition to helping many new hams get a feel for DXing!!! And **NOIJ** is right, the THRILL is always there when you work your friends from the other side of the world!!! Getting to know the incredible hospitality of our Indian ham friends on the other side of the globe was priceless! Thanks NIAR!

In summary, it was a LOT of fun working MWA/TCDXA members back home from the Andamans! Stay tuned for VU7.....73!

Glenn VU4AN/VU3RYJ

(the WORST callsign I've EVER had!!!but some of the MOST FUN I've had!!!)



Summary of VU4 Teams, Operators and QSL Managers

For more information: www.niar.org

Home Call	Indian Call	Name	Country	QSOs	QSL Manager
Team 1 - Location Hotel Megapode Camping Resort					
DL4KQ	VU3FRK	Frank Rosenkranz	Germany	35	F5CWU
F4EGD	VU3SIB	Lefevre Sylvain	France	3362	F5CWU
F5CWU	VU3SIC	Moudar Florent	France	3853	F5CWU
1K1PMR	VU3TLY	Dr.Andrea Panati	Italy	4324	IK1PMR
K2LEO	VU3PLM	Claudia Fava	Italy	637	IK1PMR
AA4NN	VU3JLW	Joe Blackwell	USA	1933	AA4NN
K3LP	VU3RWO	David R.Collingham	USA	2381	N3ST
N6TQS	VU3RYN	Doug Faunt	USA	268	KC6AWX
DL5OAB	VU3RYM	Bernd Willike	Germany	213	F5CWU
VU3RSB		Mr. R.Sarath Babu	India	2312	F5CWU
Team 2 - Location Sinclairs Hotel					
DJ7ZG	VU3SID	Lother Linge	Germany	6823	DL7AFS
DL7AFS	VU3SIG	Baerbel Linge	Germany		DL7AFS
DJ8NK	VU3NZB	Jan Harges	Germany	3288	DJ8NK
Team 3 - Location Sinclairs Hotel					
K4VUD	VU3CHE	Charles Harpole	Thailand	2083	HS0ZCW
Team 4 - Location Sunsea Hotel					
JH4RHF	VU3RWP	Jun Tanaka	Austria	2925	OE1ZKC
Team 5 - Location House Near Fortune Resort Bay Island					
OH2KI	VU3KIE	Jorma Saloranta	Finland	3893	OH2BN
OH2BH	VU3OHB	Martti Laine	Finland	1016	OH2BN
W3UR	VU3OHA	Bernie McClenny	USA	3982	OH2BN
Team 6 - Location Hotel Megapode Nest					
DK5WL	VU3RYC	Dr.Heinz Josef Pick	Germany	3000*	DK5WL
DL9MS	VU3RYF	Joe Werner	Germany	1030*	DL9MS
DL9GFB	VU3RYE	Mr.Franz Berndt	Germany	5600	DL9GFB
Team 7 - Location Hotel Megapode Nest					
WØGJ	VU3RYJ	Dr.Glenn Johnson	USA	5483	WØGJ
Team 8 - Location Hotel Megapode Nest					
DL7DF	VU3RYB	Sigi Presch	Germany		DL7DF
DK1BT	VU3SIE	Dr.Manfred Gronak	Germany	25868	DL7DF
SP3CYY	VU3RYG	Janusz Ambrozy	Poland	total	DL7DF
SP3GEM	VU3RWN	Jerzy Smoczyk	Poland	QSOs	DL7DF
SP3DOI	VU3NZC	Fabjanski Leszek	Poland		DL7DF

* = Approximate

Summary of VU4 Teams, Operators and QSL Managers

(continued)

Home Call	Name	Home	QSOs	QSL Manager
Team 9 - Location Hotel Megapode Nest				
VU2BMB	Mr.B.M.Baveja	New Delhi	46	VU2NRO
VU2FI	Mr.S.Satyapal	Bangalore	10	VU2NRO
VU2JVA	Mr.Asokan	Kilakarai	10	VU2NRO
VU2LFA	Mr.Sushil Kumar Dhingra	Hyderabad	16	VU2NRO
VU2MYN	Mrs.G.Nirmala	Bangalore	156	VU2NRO
VU2WDP	Mr.Vijayan	Pollachi	10	VU2NRO
VU2RBI	Mrs.D.Bharathi Prasad	New Delhi	2000	VU2NRO

Team 10 - Location New Circuit House, Haddo				
VU2BL	Ms.M.Bhanumathy	Hyderabad	87	VU2NRO
VU2BVB	Mr.B.Venugopal	Hyderabad	75	VU2NRO
VU2DH	Mr.K.M.Devadas	Chennai	56	VU2NRO
VU2FSX	Mr.Rajendra Prasad	Hyderabad	130	VU2NRO
VU2JMA	Mrs.B.Jayamma	Hyderabad	31	VU2NRO
VU2JOS	Mr.Jose Jacob	Hyderabad	2088	VU2NRO
VU2MYH	Mr.S.Ram Mohan	Hyderabad	510	VU2NRO
VU2UWZ	Mr.S.Madhu Mohan	New Delhi	474	VU2NRO
VU3LGX	Mr.K.Leelakrishna	Hyderabad	65	VU2NRO
VU3LMS	Mrs. Lissy Jose	Hyderabad	125	VU2NRO

Team 11 - Location Circuit House, South Point				
VU3MUV	Mr.Murali	Tamilnadu	25	VU2NRO
VU2LU	Mr.Ramesh	Bangalore	10	VU2NRO
VU2VPR	Mr.Vilas Rabde	Pune	25	VU2NRO
VU2GRM	Mr. G. Ram Mohan	Mysore	25	VU2NRO

Estimated total number of contacts 90,286



Team #1



VU4 Grayline.

Scenes from Dayton 2006



KØGX mans the TCDXA flea market space.



KFØQR examines the **KØGX** orbital rotor.



Don, **WD9ISQ**, shows off his "new" prop pitch purchase - maybe from a B-29(?)



Left to right: **KFØQR**, **KØBUD**, **KØGX**, **KØIEA**, **KØEOU**, **KØSQ**, and **WØEK**.

Who Owns this Shack(and cat)?

(Here's the answer to the mystery posed on page 14.)



It's Jim Smith, VK9NS and Kirsti Jenkins Smith, VK9NL.

Answers to the **DX Quiz**
Moments in History
 Dates and events in chronological order.
 (from page 14)

- 1613 - Galileo discovers sunspots
- 1859 - Heinrich Schwabe announces discovery of the sunspot cycle
- 1859 - Richard Carrington discovers solar flares
- 1879 - Albert Einstein's birthday, March 14th
- 1895 - Marconi invents the radio
- 1897 - Amelia Earhart's birthday, July 24th
- 1911 - Roald Amundsen reaches the South Pole in December, one month before Scott
- 1927 - Charles Lindberg crosses the Atlantic by plane on May 20th
- 1929 - Stock market crash on Oct 24th precipitated the Great Depression
- 1939 - WWII begins
- 1942 - J.S. Hey discovers solar radio emission
- 1945 - End of World War II
- 1957 - The Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the first artificial satellite
- 1958 - "Score", the first communications satellite launched by the US
- 1969 - First manned mission to the moon
- 1980 - Launch of the *Solar Maximum* Mission satellite
- 1981 - First flight of the space shuttle
- 1987 - Dow loses 508 points on Oct 29th, the worst percentage single day drop in history
- 1997 - Dow loses 554 points on Oct 27th, the worst total single day drop in history

