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Inside this issue:

by Bill Mitchell, ***AEØEE***

(Editors note: The ***Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands*** *is an Australian external territory. They are a group of barren Antarctic volcanic islands. The group's overall size is 372 square kilometers (144 sq mi) in area and it has 101.9 km (63 mi) of coastline. Discovered in the mid-19th century, they have been territories of Australia since 1947 and contain the only two active volcanoes in Australian territory. The summit of one, Mawson Peak, is higher than any mountain on the Australian mainland. They lie on the Kerguelen Plateau in the Indian Ocean. Heard Island is the largest (368-square-kilometre, 142 sq mi) of the islands in the group. It is located at the antipode of a point in Alberta Canada.*

The islands have an Antarctic climate, tempered by their maritime setting. The weather is marked by low seasonal and daily temperature ranges, persistent and generally low cloud cover, frequent precipitation and strong winds.

An American sailor, Captain John Heard, on the ship Oriental, sighted Heard Island on 25 November 1853, en route from Boston to Melbourne. He reported the discovery one month later and had the island named after him. Captain William McDonald aboard the Samarang discovered the nearby McDonald Islands six weeks later, on 4 January 1854.

Heard Island is one of a class of extremely isolated islands worldwide that are unoccupied and very seldom visited. Because of their isolation, these islands present a challenge and an opportunity to better understand radio communications from such complex and poorly described locations. Prior to this DXpedition, the most recent radio operation was done in 1997. After nearly two decades, Heard Island had risen to #5 on the Club Log most wanted list worldwide.

More details on the recent DXpedition can be found at www.heardisland.org)

A few months after getting my license, my Elmer, Jack (**K6JEB**), invited me to join him for a trip to the East Bay Amateur Radio Club. I knew Jack from the UC Berkeley Amateur Radio Club, and he promised that we would have an interesting talk by the leader of the recent **TX5K** expedition to Clipperton. While I hadn't worked TX5K from the club station, I figured I'd go along anyway to hear what it was like.

Bob Schmieder (**KK6EK**) presentation described the many contacts they had made on Clipperton, and about a system called DXA which could, at least in theory, allow stations to see in real-time that they were in the log. What gripped me in the talk, though, was his announcement of the next place to go: Heard Island, a small, uninhabited, sub-Antarctic island on the Kerguelen Plateau in the southern Indian Ocean. Heard Island is volcanic, with its main edifice, Big Ben, reaching roughly 2.7 km (9000'). Mantling the volcano are numerous fast-moving glaciers, fueled by the high precipitation rates from the oceanic air. Four species of penguins also inhabit the island.

Committing to Go

Between the birds and the rocks, I was hooked. I wanted to go on the expedition! Unfortunately, life got in the way: I would be a year or so out of grad school, and would be settling down into a job somewhere and pretending I was a real adult. I didn't like that answer; I wanted to go on the expedition! After months of thinking about it (and without a job offer), I realized that it was unlikely I would have a better time in my life to go than now: no job, no house payments, and no family commitments. The next time I might see those conditions could be when I retire!

I emailed Bob: I was in, both from the scientific side and the amateur radio side.

Finalizing the Team and Getting Permission

At that time, in fall 2014, the plan was this: a team of approximately thirty five, half radio operators and half scientists/photographers, would take the *SA Agulhas* from Cape Town to Heard Island and back in fall 2015. However it became clear that the contract would be very expensive and the ship would not remain at the island. We needed a different ship.

Soon after, we came upon the *Akademik Shokalskiy* (yes that one, made famous for getting trapped in the ice in Antarctica a few years earlier). Again we could not get an acceptable contract.

Finally, we were able to secure a contract with the

VKØEK Team Left to right: Carlos (**NP4IW**), Dave Farnsworth (**WJ2O**), Alan (**VK6CQ/VKØLD**), Dave Lloyd (**K3EL**), Bob (**KK6EK**), Vadym (**UT6UD**), Hans-Peter (**HB9BXE**), Ken (**NG2H**), Adam (**K2ARB**), Gavin (**VK2BAX**), Fred (**KM4MXD**), Jim (**N6TQ**), Arliss (**W7XU**), Bill (AEØEE).

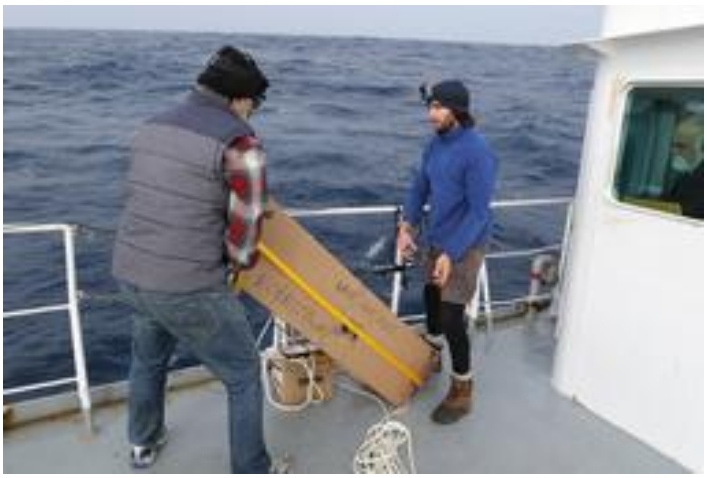
Braveheart to go from Cape Town to Heard Island, then on to Fremantle/Perth. Unfortunately, the *Braveheart* only had berths for 14 passengers: many on the team would not be going. Fundraising from amateur radio community had been going quite well; with very little money coming in from scientific organizations or private grants, the science side was clearly going to see the worst of the cuts. Additionally, in order for the amateur radio operation to be viable, a team of at least 10 operators would be needed.

In the end we had 12 radio operators and two scientists. I was still on the expedition team, though sad to see that our scientific goals would be cut back. My role would be primarily as an amateur radio operator, but I would be doing everything I could in spare moments to get valuable scientific data. I would also be the on-island IT lead.

Putting on an expedition to Heard Island is complicated, like Field Day writ extra-extra-large. In addition to the usual radio operation logistics of antennas and equipment, obtaining a landing permit which allows overnight stays is quite difficult. Permits to stay on the island require a scientific purpose, due to its listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an IUCN Class 1a Strict Nature Reserve, among other protections. Early in the process, the Australian Antarctic Division, who is responsible for administration and protection of the island, informed us that permits would only be issued shortly before departure, contingent on compliance with many specific biosecurity requirements which aim to prevent the introduction of foreign species to the island.

Black-browed albatross.

As the team began heading for Cape Town, about ten days before the ship departed, our permit was finally issued (still contingent upon a biosecurity inspection). We would be allowed to access the parts of the island we were seeking samples from, although once we entered the area near Spit Bay, we would not be able to return to the wilderness area around Stephenson Lagoon.



Adam (K2ARB) and Elliot deploy one of the ARGO diving buoys from WHOI.

In Cape Town the team assembled, and many of us met in person for the first time. We prepared the tents and gear for biosecurity inspection, and went shopping to pick up last-minute items and personal provisions. With the help of the *Braveheart* crew we got everything loaded onto the ship.

On Our Way to Heard Island!

Late in the afternoon of March 10th we set out from Cape Town, finally on our way to Heard Island!

Seas were a bit rough coming out of Cape Town, so for the first day or two several of us were not feeling our best. Eventually the meds kicked in, the swell moved to a more favorable direction, we gained our sea legs, and generally felt better.

Aboard the ship we kept busy getting to know each other, preparing for scientific activities on the island, poring over maps, operating maritime mobile, and watching the scenery. Once we reached the furious fifties, we began scientific buoy deployment. We carried both surface drift buoys from NOAA, as well as diving buoys from the Woods Hole Oceano-

Big Ben and Mawson Peak on a mostly-sunny afternoon.

graphic Institute. At specified lines of longitude, we deployed the buoys to measure temperature, conductivity, and pressure as they drift along either at the surface or at depth.

I had my own science project: counting birds for the eBird project. Birders around the world keep lists of the number and type of birds they see each time they bird, then submit those observations to eBird.

The database is then used for scientific research, as well as keeping track of your various lists—not unlike Logbook of the World, but for birding. I took pictures of the birds when possible, which would help me identify the birds after-the-fact as necessary.

King penguin (left) and gentoo penguins (right).

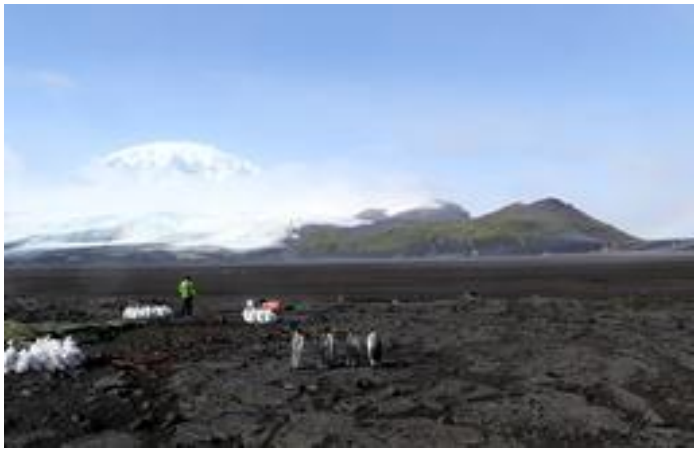
On the 12th day of the voyage, I woke up around dawn and went up to the bridge. There were more birds around the ship than there had been previously. What had been few-bird species were now up to tens, and there were clearly more albatrosses and large petrels. We were close!

That afternoon, Heard Island emerged from the fog: we had arrived! Birds circled the ship, and a flock of Heard Island cormorants, found only at the island, escorted us in to Atlas Cove. I had been worried I would have to hike around searching for them, yet here they were, just a few meters away, flying alongside the ship.

Arrival at Heard Island

After anchoring, a small team went to scout the beach for landing. Once a landing site had been located, a small team of us went ashore to scout the campsite while we still had light.

On shore the scenery was gorgeous, and there were penguins and seals lining the beach. But we were not there for photographs. We hiked over to the site of the **VKØIR** expedition in 1997. Two fiberglass water-tank shelters now occupied that location (off-limits except in an emergency).



Setting up the tents, supervised by a few of our friends

Several problems now became obvious. Our two tents each needed a large, flat space, preferably with a small flat space between them. Here the rocky and broken ground of an old lava flow was not very flat, and what was flat was not very large. Anchoring the tents would be another challenge: the lava flows were not going to take stakes very well, if at all. With the light fading, it was time to return to the ship.

We were in trouble. In just over 12 hours, we were scheduled to be landing on the island, but the campsite we had chosen from the satellite imagery was clearly unsuitable for our tents. Although there was a large, flat, sandy area—termed the nullarbor—just at the foot of the lava flows, it was known to flood during heavy rains or in windy conditions. While scouting, we noticed kelp and other marine debris on the nullarbor. It was not going to be a good place to pitch a tent.

That night, the ship's captain—Matt—and I managed to work out a system to at least deal with the stake issue. In 1947, the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition had faced this exact problem in this exact spot. Their stakes being mostly useless, they instead filled their petrol drums with rocks, and anchored their shelters to those drums. In our case, we could take the empty fuel containers (and their metal cages) ashore if necessary, fill them with water, and use the same solution the Australians used.

In the morning, we were up dark and early, many of us on little sleep. At 6:00 AM local, Bob had an interview via satellite phone with Tom, **W5KUB**, on his live show. Soon after, we were in the landing boat and on shore.

30 m 4-square, 160 m vertical, and 17 m VDA in

We needed to find a site! Fortunately, I was able to find a promising site alongside the nullarbor, but just up onto the lava flows. Our measuring crew found that it just barely would contain the tents.

It took a little work to get the cobbles out from the sandy area, but we soon had a tent site a few hundred meters from the beach. We couldn't have had better Heard Island weather for setup: mostly sunny, vaguely warmish (upper 40s or 50s F?), with little wind. Big Ben showed its peak a few times, and we took pictures as work allowed. Several teams of king penguins came by to inspect our campsite, and to oversee our operation.

Setting Up and Getting Started

Soon the ATV was bringing gear up to the tent area and the tents were inflating. After lunch, a couple teams began work on antennas: 30 m 4-square, 40 m 4-square, and one or two yagis for the high bands.

Tables, chairs, and bunks were set up in the tent. Two radio stations were brought out, and a satellite terminal connected to give us internet access.

Fifteen hours after we landed, we were ready to go: two stations were online (30 and 40 m), the network was working, and DXA was working. If we hurried, we could catch the opening to the US and work **KY6R** and **KJ4Z,** our mission control team in California. But we had a problem: one operator had no rig control.

We restarted N1MM+: no go. We restarted the computer: no go. We restarted the radio and N1MM+: no go. Propagation was fading. Our IT team had planned for this kind of circumstance, so we followed the instructions: swap out the computer: still no go. The problem might be the radio itself, so we swapped that out: no go. Propagation to California was gone, Rich would have to wait. Meanwhile, the world knows we're almost-on-the-air from the test QSOs we put on DXA. We unplug the wireless mouse (evil things!), restart N1MM+, and rig control returns! All systems go!

Bob, KK6EK took to the mic on 40 m. He gave an introduction to the operation, then asked for callers. Silence gripped the tent. He called CQ a few times, but still there was silence. Our rig showed that we were putting out the full legal limit of 400 W. After a few minutes, it was clear that SSB was not sufficient. Radio team leader Dave, K3EL, came over and began calling on CW. Two calls, then three, then four. Finally **SM3GSK** came back and made it in the log. We were underway! The second station came to life, we scheduled short shifts for the night, and then went to bed—it had been a very long day.

In the morning, we had some breakfast and operated until 30 and 40 m were dead, then continued setting up antennas and shoring up things around camp. Late in the afternoon, we remembered that there should be a big US opening on 30 m, so I headed in and tuned up. Being one of the less experienced DXpedition ops on the team, I was a little worried about the pileup that I knew would be coming.

I called CQ VKØEK DN once, and immediately, 1 kHz down, was **K6SRZ**—a friend of mine from California. It blew me away to have a response on the first call, let alone a friend of mine! I worked him, and gave an extra 73. The pileup was there already as soon as I sent TU, but my training as a contest operator was serving me well.

Operating tent in action. Left to right: Adam (K2ARB), Dave (K3EL, in green), Jim (N6TQ), Vadym (UT6UD), Ken (NG2H), Arliss (W7XU), and Hans-Peter (HB9BXE).

After I was relieved on the radio, I checked our email status: mission control was very worried about what was going on, and the DX community was quite upset that DXA hadn't shown any updates all day. Quickly I updated the DXA page, and sent word back to mission control apologizing for neglecting to post that we were going to be QRT while we were all -hands-on-deck putting up the other antennas and squaring away the camp. Also in my inbox was a report that K6SRZ had, with my contact, reached #340. What a rush for both of us!

Working the Pileups

Three days had passed on the island before I was able to really catch my breath. It was some of the most intense work I had ever done, with many different high-priority projects needing to be done. But we worked those pileups down, and soon had stations up and a routine going. Most mornings, I was on for the opening to the US, and would work friends from the Twin Cities DX Association, which was always a thrill. I could hear the emails go out to the reflector, and a host of familiar call signs would come back. Perhaps the most memorable of the contacts with friends from the TCDXA was getting **WAØMHJ** on 20 m SSB, knowing that for him VKØEK was #340. I know there were quite a few other all-time new ones handed out for the TCDXA, too!

Throughout most of the operation, we had three teams of four operators, each doing four-hour shifts. During off times, we would sleep, get a bite to eat, fill generators, fix/improve antennas, and do other needed work around camp. We also had a little time to wander around, take pictures, and get on the internet. With things settling down a little, we were able to get three satellite terminals operating: one for DXA, and two for general use. Only once was I woken in the middle of the night to handle IT problems.

One of the highlights of the trip for me was working 15 m RTTY one afternoon. Europe was pounding in, and every time I finished a QSO, the panadapter showed a 15-kHz wide wall of signal which erupted out of nothingness. It took quite a while to find a station strong enough to break through the pileup and decode a full call sign. That was incredible.

At the height of our operation, we had 11 HF antennas in the air: 24-m vertical for 160 m, a vertical for 80 m (one element of a 4-square we never felt the need to finish), a 4-square and a delta loop for 40 m, a 4-square for 30 m, two 10/15/20 m triband yagis, two 12/17 m yagis, a 17 m vertical dipole array, and a 15 m vertical dipole array. Verticals and 4-squares were set up out on the nullarbor, where the fantastic ground conditions gave excellent performance. Yagis and the delta loop were set up on the old lava flows. Everything was guyed well to stand up to the high winds.

A windy morning on Heard Island,
with a dusting of snow

One morning we set up one of the Elecraft K3s radios for remote control. Using the satellite link and the callsign of one of our operators, VKØLD, Mike **KJ4Z** was able to make 41 contacts on 20 m CW from his home in California. There was some latency so he didn't push the speed beyond 25 wpm, but found that it was at least functional from the other side of the world.

In discussions with the ship's captain about the Spit Bay operation, it became clear that from safety and logistics perspectives, we would not be able to carry it out. We had good propagation to the western US, which was much of the reason we wanted to go to Spit Bay, so the Spit Bay radio operation was scrapped. Stephenson Lagoon and collect samples, but had a nail-biting ride through the surf back to the ship.

Interesting Geology

Back at Atlas Cove we would take short hikes around the nullarbor when we could. It was nice to take in the scenery, get some fresh air, and see some wildlife. Heard Island is home to four kinds of penguins (king, gentoo, macaroni, and rockhopper), various petrels and albatrosses, elephant seals, a few leopard seals, and the Heard Island cormorant.

Heard Island's geology is also quite interesting, with a few limestones, lots of glacial sediments—both new and old—and of course various volcanic rocks. Glaciers mantle the volcano, and one flows into the sea not far from camp. As part of a scientific project to make remote geologic sites accessible digitally, I took three high-resolution panoramic pictures on the island: one of Big Ben, one of the lava flows near camp, and one of Windy City, an outcrop carved by—you guessed it—wind. As we entered the final week of operation, a major geomagnetic storm wiped out HF propagation around the world. Our rates dropped to under half of what they had been for two days, before a slight recovery. One more smaller geomagnetic storm again pounded us shortly before departure. Throughout the expedition, voice contacts were difficult. They were nearly impossible with the poor propagation.

Takedown and Departure When we began to take down the antennas, the weather was not as pleasant as it had been when we first arrived. Rain and high winds had flooded the nullarbor. As we were deciding which antennas to take down first, we went outside and found that some of the decisions had been made for us: the 40 m delta loop was down, and guy stakes had come out for the 80 meter vertical, causing it to come down as well. We put on our rubber boots and waded out into the shin-deep water to disassemble the antennas and remove the kelp from the guy wires. It was a good thing we didn't put our tent on the nullarbor!

Departure day was cool, but at least it wasn't raining on us. We packed the gear, loaded it onto the ship, and were off the island in the late afternoon of April 11th. That night we raised anchor and began the journey to Fremantle. A storm was coming, and that night we had the biggest roll of the trip: 40 degrees to starboard, followed by one of more than 30 degrees back to port. Fortunately the weather generally cooperated and kept the seas off our bow.

On the ship again, we had a chance to relax a bit, discuss the results of the expedition, prepare some of the samples, and look over the photographs we had taken. Unlike on the way to the island, the station set up in the ship's library was not in use nearly 24/7, so the WSPR beacon got some time on the antenna.

Sunset on R/V Braveheart, nearing Fremantle.

I, having used macros or an iambic paddle for sending code all expedition was anxious to get in a straight key contact or two. After sunrise, I would get up and if nobody was on the rig, would plug the paddle into the key jack and call in the higher portion of the US 40 or 30 meter CW allocations. One morning, I picked out TCDXA member Roger, **KØMPH**, and had a nice ragchew contact with him from close to the opposite side of the world!

Aboard the ship I also tried using the JT65 digital mode on a band which seemed to be dead. Soon I had a pileup on my hands, and found that having an 11-character callsign (**ZL/AEØEE/MM**) is tough when the mode only allows a 13-character message. Over two mornings of effort, I made about 10 QSOs (each taking roughly 6 minutes to complete). Twice on JT65 I had stations finish the QSO with "TNX VKØ 73" or

Bill (AEØEE) in front of Big Ben.

"TNX HEARD". It's an amazing feeling to be out at sea, and know that stations out there are following us so closely.

A Touchy Visa Problem Solved

Only three days out of port, a major problem arose: one of the expedition members did not have a visa to enter Australia. If the ship were to enter Australian waters, it would be fined $15K AUS, and the expedition member would be detained as an illegal migrant. We were due to land Friday morning before a holiday weekend. If we missed that port date, it would be a huge delay to get in, and most of the expedition team would miss flights.

The Australian customs agents suggested the fastest way to get the appropriate visa would be to apply online. On a ship where connectivity is plain-text email a few times a day, that was going to be tough. However, the weather was quite temperate, no spray was coming over the bow, and the satellite terminals were stowed in an easily accessed location. We got it out and stationed a person on the bow to hold it and point it toward the satellite. Nobody was to connect except the one computer applying for the visa.
It took about an hour to find the correct application and to get through it. Luckily there was no payment involved (some payment processors don't accept transactions from the satellite network), and the turnaround time was about 1 day. We still had time. The application was filed, and the next day we were cleared for entry into Australia.

At sunrise on April 22nd, we arrived in Fremantle. By the afternoon, customs and quarantine had been dealt with, the agents were put in charge of the expedition gear, and the team relocated to a hotel. We were back to civilization. Celebrations followed, we explored the local attractions in Fremantle, then went our separate ways back home.

All told we had made 75K contacts from the island, and an additional 10K maritime mobile aboard the Braveheart. We collected many of the scientific samples and observations we had wanted. There were no health, safety, or environmental incidents. Our goals were fulfilled, and in many cases surpassed. What an experience, and what an expedition it had been! I hope to be able to return someday.

TCDXA Member Profile

Mike Sell
KØCOM

I was born in Minneapolis and my earliest memories are of ice skating in the winter and exploring the more remote areas near my family's home in Richfield, Minnesota. The skating was done on a pond nearby and the exploring was of the vast sand pits along the East side of France Avenue South. This was in the late 1950's and I remember when Southdale and the Mann France Avenue drive-in theater were built.

I became interested in radio when I was about nine years old after my family moved to South Minneapolis in 1960. At that time my dad finally unpacked a wooden crate that had been sent to the Richfield house seven years earlier, the same year I was born.

My Father, a Chief Radioman in the Navy, was stationed in Kodiak Alaska in 1951 during the Korean Conflict. He requisitioned from scrap a National RAS receiver, power supply, coils and storage box. He packed them up in a crate and had it shipped to Richfield. With the receiver finally set up in the basement workshop together we set about building an antenna for it. I remember him taking me to Schaak Electronics on Minnehaha Avenue in South Minneapolis many times. He knew Leander Schaak and his son Dick. They would chat while I searched the parts bins for the items I needed. It was also during one of those visits that Dick was very excited to show us the new stereo equipment he was selling.

The thrill of listening to shortwave radio had my attention for several years. By the time I entered my teens my interest turned to audio and HI-FI. That led to learning to homebrew guitar and PA amplifiers, etc. In high school I was working with small time local rock and roll bands setting up equipment and sound systems.

Mike Sell
KØCOM
Member Profile
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After high school I transitioned to working in consumer electronics working for the House of Great Sound, then Sound of Music, Audio King and finally Ultimate Electronics. I transitioned from sales to the service side of the business where I eventually built up and managed a service subsidiary of Audio King called Fast Trak Electronics Repair. From 1981 to 2004 it grew into the largest consumer electronics (ce) service provider in the upper Mid-West. That career ended in the mid 2000's and I've moved into other areas of technical service management since.

My biggest mentor was my Father who shared his interests in radio and HI-FI audio with me. When I wanted a stereo, guitar amp, FM receiver, etc., my dad's answer was always, "go build one." We always had an electronics work shop in every family home we lived in which provided me with everything I needed.

Some of my mentors in the consumer electronics business were Dick Schultz who I worked for at Sound of Music and Randy Carlock at Audio King.

While radio took a backseat to Hi-Fi for many years, I did goof around with CB radio in the 70's while at Sound of Music. A customer traded in a Realistic 23 channel CB with SSB. Wow, that was neat. I got to know a great group of SSB ops including a yet to be ham, Joe Dolinsky (**WØWD**) another mentor at the time. That grew into selling the 23 channel rig and ordering a Kenwood TS-520 from Amateur Electronic Supply and becoming a "tweener" working SSB above channel 40 and below the 10 meter ham band. I needed a good antenna for the new radio and a friend knew of a guy selling a Hy-Gain Superscanner. This turned out to be the first of two antenna's I've purchased from Gary Grivna! (K0GX) The Kenwood 520 was sold to a ham in Denver in 1980 but before that I worked a ton of DX on that radio in the late 70's. It wasn't until 1992 when a new CFO came to work at Audio King that I met my main mentor and Elmer into Amateur Radio. I noticed he had call sign license plates, KD0Z on his cars. Eric would stop by the Fast Trak operation and pick me up for lunch so he could pester me about getting licensed. My "no code" tech license in 1993 was the result. After that I worked on my code, eventually moving up to earning my Extra Class license in 1996. I've had two call signs. **NØWEI** was my first and my current vanity call is **KØCOM**. The story behind the vanity call is that in the 90's I was trying to get my Dad to get a license. He had operated as **WØCOM** before WWII and I found that call as well as KØCOM were available so I got the K version hoping it would spur him into action. While that didn't work out, my Dad did share in my ham radio adventures by joining me in collecting vintage radio gear until his death in 2000.

What kind of radios have I had since getting licensed? I've been through a few. My first radio, as a licensed ham, was another Kenwood, this time a TS-850, which I traded in for an Icom 775. As I got going on HF I was mentored by a consumer electronics service business owner I knew well out on the East Coast, **WA4HHG**, Chuck Ripple. He belonged to the Collins Collectors Association and helped me acquire my first vintage SSB station, a Collins S-Line. He also introduced me to other local members which led me to another mentor in vintage radio, **KØBS**, Butch Schartau who then lived down in Rochester, Minnesota. That led to building a large collection of both SSB and AM equipment primarily by Collins.

For the DX'ing side of the hobby, I'll have to credit then **NØCIB** (now **WØPR**), Larry Menzel as being my main mentor. It was with his encouragement that I joined the TCDXA back in April of 2001. Since that time many others of you in the club have been very instrumental in my activities with contesting and DX'ing. I want to thank all of you for all the help and encouragement over the years.

My initial interest in DX began back when I was an SWL at 10 years of age. I liked keeping track of all the stations I was able to tune in on the National RAS. With my ham radio ticket, I started working up my submittal for DXCC and collecting QSL cards.

Mike Sell, KØCOM

Member Profile

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Modern Station

Vintage Station

Mike Sell
KØCOM
Member Profile
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Today I'm working on a five band DXCC. I've operated from Minnesota and Colorado where I lived for 9 years in the Denver area. I have earned WAS from both locations and both on 160! A couple of my most exciting DX contacts are working Hawaii on 160 phone and working plus confirming P5.
I also had the opportunity to work **KØCOM/MM** from a small cruise ship, the Windstar while on a trip to Tahiti and Bora Bora.

The "Swamp Noodle"

Over my ham radio career, I've lived in five different houses. I've had a variety of antenna systems over the years. The best being a Hy-Gain TH-11DX up at 70 feet in Plymouth. In Colorado I lived with attic antennas and wire dipoles. I now live in Southwest Bloomington after moving back to Minnesota in 2011. My antennas consist of a Hex Beam at 30 feet on a roof tower, an OCF dipole at 40 feet and in the winter I have a 65 foot vertical up in the backyard with 32 80-foot radials under it. The vertical, better known as the "swamp noodle" was designed and built by Steve Fraasch, **KØSF**. It is with his gracious approval that I have been given temporary use privileges. I have always heard that verticals are great for low band DX and this one proves that hands down. What a great feeling it is when the DX station your chasing says to the 80 meter pile up, "standby for the zero, did I hear a Charley Oscar Mike in there?"!

The current radios I use today include an Elecraft K3, Kenwood TS-2000 and Acom 1000 amplifier for the modern stuff. the vintage SSB station – a Collins KWM-2 with 30L-1 or home-brew linear with a pair of 813's. And lastly, for the vintage AM station, Collins 75A-4, Johnson Ranger II and Johnson Desk Kilowatt. On the work bench currently being refurbished is, the National RAS that started it all. The rest of my large vintage collection was sold while I lived in Colorado.

My other hobbies are Skiing (55th year) and Fly Fishing.

I'll end by thanking my family for their support and understanding of my hobby. My wife of 17 years name is Diana. She and I met back in the summer of 1970, had a brief romance, then life took us in different directions. Life events again led to us getting back together in 1997. Yes, she is the love of my life and had been all along! We were married in 1999. We have three daughters by previous marriages. Autumn, Emily and Sarah. Autumn and Sarah are here in Minnesota and Emily lives in Denver, Colorado. We have two grandchildren (Autumn is their mom) - John who is 5 and Josephine who is 3. John loves to "play radio" with his Pops! Hopefully he will be the future of ham radio for the family! My biggest goal in ham radio is to pass it on to him like my dad did for me.

Member News

New Members:

The Twin Cities DX Association welcomes the following new members.

NGØZ John Rusciano, of Minnetonka, MN

K9OCO Joseph Veras, of Vestavia Hills, AL

KEØDXA,Hameed Shahjehan, Coon Rapids, MN

KEØHHH, Albert Ngafua, Minneapolis, MN

Silent Key:

It is with great sadness that we report that Bill Smith, **WØWOI**, of Jefferson, IA recently became a silent key. Our condolences to his family.

John, W9RPM with his DXCC Honor Roll Plaque

Two TCDXA Members Achieve #1 Honor Roll!

John, **W9RPM** and Mark, **WAØMHJ** each achieved the top of the honor roll recently. The Grey Line Report is pleased to congratulate them both. Next time you see them at a meeting or contact them on the air, extend your congratulations as well.
Here are their stories:

Thoughts on Reaching the Honor Roll

By John, W9RPM

When I became a Ham in 1997, I had read about and talked to several hams who had achieved Honor Roll and other awards in DXing. Getting the last one and reaching 3000 in the DXCC Challenge the same day was a thrill. I never thought it to be possible to have accomplished even a few of them, let alone #1 Honor Roll from my 150 by 60 ft city lot surrounded by the bluffs in what I was told was the Black Hole.
Scott, **KA9FOX** was my biggest influence and friend. I learned a lot from him. And without those who spend the time and money to go to all the rare places and those who support them, I would have still need many entities. I have to acknowledge **K9NW, N2TU, WB9Z, WØGJ, K9CT, K3LP, N6PSE, AEØEE, W7XU, KØIR** and many others who have gone to the rare ones. For some entities, this may be the last time they are activated.

Member News Continued

TCDXA President Mike, KØBUD Congratulates Mark, WAØMHJ on Achieving DXCC Honor Roll

Reaching the Summit

By Mark, WAØMHJ

I'm not sure when the possibility of "working them all "entered my mind, but I think it really only became a thought after landing country #339, when I worked **XZ1J** in 2013.

The wonderful world of DX'ing began for me on October 17th, 1969. The hand written entry just above the date in my paper logbook simply indicates: "*DX BUG" !!!"* I had become infected! It would be almost a year later before I achieved DXCC, but I expected that there was more to come, so I put off applying even for the basic DXCC certificate. It would not be until 2008, when I qualified for 5BDXCC that I would actually apply for any type of award from ARRL. I then submitted the 2000+ cards needed to get me up to date and current for awards.

After working XZ1J, I began to think in terms of:

- Will Heard Island ever come on the air in my lifetime?
- If they do, will the DXpedition be bashed because of funding problems?
- If they get past the funding problem, will I be able to work a top five most wanted entity?

After Myanmar, I had just about a year of calm until the **VKØEK** project was announced in early 2014.

For the next two years, I would jump on every press release, wondering if this was the announcement of cancellation. Thankfully the project seemed to be moving forward with a committed group. The team was formed, and a Nov. / Dec. 2015 date was confirmed. TCDXA made a wonderful donation in April 2015, and I made a personal donation at Dayton that same year.

In late May, the announcement was a schedule pushback from December to what would be the actual expedition dates. This was due to contractual negotiations with the Braveheart. This was just a little "*uptick*" in the anxiety level, but I was still cautiously optimistic.

As we entered into 2016, I had printed out all of the propagation forecast analysis tools, searched my log for all QSO's in the past with this region of the world, and formulated my game plan. I thought I was ready. And then……

A few months before the expedition start-up, I developed a rotator issue. I seemed to be able to rotate clockwise, but I had a very intermittent ability to turn the antenna counterclockwise. Since the antenna was north of where I wanted to be, I decided to turn the antenna to the short path direction and leave it. There would be no skewed path or long path. For the next month, I was committed to the short path direction to VKØ. I told myself: "That's OK, I can make this work."

Member News Continued

Then, not long after this, I turned on my amplifier, and nothing. It was apparent that there was going to be no quick fix for it, and I did not want to face the prospect of my last chance DX entity running barefoot. A call to Bob Chudek, **KØRC**, and I had a borrowed amplifier to use. His spare amplifier had been out of commission for a while, so I gently brought it up and ran it conservatively, I worked Laos-XW on 80 meters for my 5BWAZ number #198! That was actually the first (and only) QSO made with Bob's amplifier until the VKØ DXpedition began.

Mark's Quest for the DXCC Honor Roll Plaque Began in 1969

That Laos contact boosted my optimism, and now I was ready to settle in for the hard battle to get into the VKØEK log. A bit nervous about the huge pile-ups, and the relatively poor propagation expected, I was hoping to find some luck three to five days into the expedition.

About 12 hours into the expedition, I heard VKØEK on 40 meters with a very nice signal, and a large, but not massive pile-up. My intention was to record the historic QSO on a digital recorder which I always have hooked up to the radio, but I did not think there was any imminent chance of making a QSO on the first night. (I also had thoughts this may be a pirate). I sent my call twice. He came back to someone else. On the next QRZ, I sent my call three times with pauses. He came back to me! I sent my exchange in a daze and sat back for such a long period of time that I was not able to see the confirmation on the DXA web page. As it turned out, they were the loudest I would hear them for the rest of the DXpedition.

1 HONOR ROLL was achieved!
A special thanks to:

-KØRC for the use of an amplifier when I needed one!

-Denny **KØTT** who was more than willing to provide any tower work needed to get the antenna positioned & working, even if it be a on a semi-tolerable February day.

-**KØSF** for diligent and persistent amplifier repair which will allow me to work the next new entity that becomes reality.

Member News Continued

Weekend in Jersey

by Jeff, KØUU

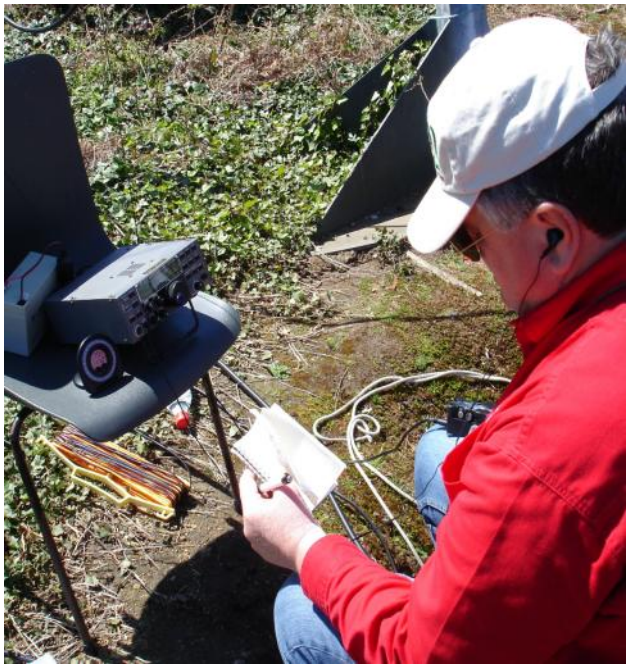
*(Editor Note: TCDXA member Jeff, **KØUU** recently relocated from VR2 to London. Although his flat in London does accommodate radio operation, Jeff still plans to be active in the area from time to time. Here, in Jeff's words, is one example.)*

No, not that Jersey — GJ, the Bailiwick of Jersey. Three days after receiving UK reciprocal call **MØHZY**, and with the XYL away and a holiday weekend looming, I booked a last-minute roundtrip via Southend and Luton (greater London's outlying airports) to Jersey, a Crown dependency in the English Channel.

Jersey (IOTA EU-013) lies 14 miles off France's coast and is only a stone's throw from neighboring Guernsey.

Thanks to the graciousness of the Jersey Amateur Radio Society, I was able to operate beside **GJ3DVC**, a fortified signal station built in 1942 during the long Nazi occupation of the UK's Channel Islands.

I operated portable atop a WW2 era ammunition bunker under brilliant blue skies (the club's Opti-Beam was down for R&R). Remarkably, I worked 45 countries QRP on CW in just 208 QSOs over 24 hours. The signal station represents the ideal location for a single op or multi-two contest effort — quiet for RF, with an array of installed yagis and low-band dipoles, and immune from bombardment or attack by competitors



Jeff, KØUU in his operating position on the Isle of Jersey

Another photo of Jeff's operating position. What a view!

Member News Continued

Weekend in Jersey

by Jeff, KØUU
Continued from previous page

There was one momentary hiccup: since I was temporarily on Jersey, I naively assumed that **GJ/MØHZY** was the proper way to sign. Wrong. The geographic identifier, or 2nd letter, in a UK call ('D' for the Isle of Man, 'I' for Northern Ireland, 'J" for Jersey, 'M' for Scotland, 'W' for Wales) is added by the amateur and is not assigned by the UK Office of Communications (Britain's FCC). So, after 168 QSOs, I learned that I was signing as GJ/MØHZY was incorrect, and I switched instead to **M(J)ØHZY.** Apparently this information is buried somewhere in the 23-page printed license (**GJ/KØUU** would have been correct had I signed with my US call).
I hope to return to Jersey for a repeat effort at GJ3DVC within the next year. By the time you read this, I will have made weekend ventures to Sark and Guernsey (EU-114, but RF free with the XYL) on May 14-15, and on May 27-28 to the Isle of Man (IOTA EU-116), where I will operate as **MDØHZY**.

N0AT Returns to Suriname with KØBBC for 2016 ARRL DX SSB Contest

By Matt, KØBBC

*(Editor Note: In the March issue of the Gray Line Report, the trip to **PZ5W** for the CQWW CW DX Contest in November, 2015 by **WØOR, NØAT, KØAD, NØSTL, K3WT**, and **DF7AT** was described. Ron, NØAT had the opportunity to return to the same location in March, 2016 with Matt, **KØBBC**.)*

Ron, NØAT and Matt, KØBBC near the outskirts of Lelydorp, the home QTH of PZ5RA in Suriname

Matt, KØBBC running during the 2016 ARRL DX SSB Contest at PZ5W

Being nearer to the equator gave us some fantastic runs on all of the bands except 160. The Sunday morning solar disturbance was not seen here. Ten meters exceeded our expectations as we thought 15 meters would be the money band. Being so far East of the U.S and the same time zone as Greenland, our morning run rates were low as most of the U.S. yagis were pointed at Europe.

Member News

NØAT Returns to Suriname with K0BBC for 2016 ARRL DX SSB Contest

By Matt, KØBBC

(continued from previous page)

As the higher bands shut down in Europe, our run rates would rapidly climb over 200 QSOs per hour and stations from Washington to Maine were being heard brilliantly. Zero land stations and MWA stations did a great job breaking the pile-ups. All corners of Minnesota were in the log and we were surprised by the number of North and South Dakota stations we worked. The Wisconsin stations were also heard in abundance including a six band sweep for the **WØAIH** team. We suspect most of the 67 stations we worked on 160 meters earned their "Suriname worked all bands" award during the contest. Ramon PZ5RA, our host, pitched in several hours of operating time each day to give us some relief. PZ5W earned WAS on five bands with Wyoming being the multiplier last in the log.

Canada was more challenging. 5 band sweeps were achieved of all provinces except NS and LB. NWT was worked only on 20 and NU and YT territories were never heard. Thank you all for the "GO MWA!" chants along the way and hope you had as much fun working PZ5W as we did hearing the friendly voices from home. We used a new Antlion MOD microphone. It was a hot mic so we ran the mic gain down on the radio. Our score summary was as follows:

Summary:

Band	QSOs	Mults
160:	67	23
80:	617	59
40:	958	58
20:	1115	61
15:	1525	60
10:	2362	60
Total:	6644	321

Total Score = 6,398,172

This “more permanent” beverage installation at PZ5W made is easier to achieve those 160 and 80 meters QSOs

Member News Continued

ARRL DX CW from VP5K By Pat, KØPC and Glenn, WØGJ

The quickly constructed fan dipole in the background saved the day during ARRL DX CW at **VP5K**

For the past few years a group from Minnesota has ventured to the Turks and Caicos Islands for the ARRL DX CW contest in February. This year it was just a two-man operation by Bill, **ACØW**, and Pat, **KØPC**. We were staying at the Hamlet owned by Jody, **VP5JM** and looked forward to a great contest. Jody took advantage of low air fares and was visiting her family in the U.S. during the time we were there. Her handy man Frandy was there to take care of us.

In past years Scott, **KØMD**, brought his Icom 7600 and Acom 1010 but without Scott to act as Sherpa this year we decided to lighten the load and just take a K3. We had problems with the 80M CW dipole last year so we took some new coax and a center insulator in case we needed to work on it.

.

When we arrived we found the dipole had been fixed so we spent the days before the contest playing on the radio and everything worked well.

With all systems go we turned the beam toward the U.S. a couple of hours before the contest started. Then Murphy walked through the door. He had just been up the tower to mess with our feed line and the SWR was all over the place on the 20M/15M/10M beam. The winds were gusting strongly and Frandy didn't want to climb the tower so we had to quickly come up with a plan B.

Jody has a beam at her house but it was out of commission. She also has a Hy-Tower vertical that she uses most of the time but we needed to connect it to a coax run between the Hamlet and the main house. After doing that nothing worked and with some analyzer work we discovered the coax run to the house was bad. On to Plan C.

It was already getting dark when we constructed a 20M/15M fan dipole out of the materials we brought for repairing the 80M dipole and got it about 12 feet off the ground generally pointed toward the states. It did have the benefit of a sea view which made the little antenna feel much better about itself. After a little trimming it was resonant and we were off to the races about 45 minutes after the contest started.

After 48 hours we had almost 4600 QSOs and a score of 4,513,608. In the end we were very satisfied with the results given our antenna issues.

Score - 4,513,608 Points

Band	QSOs	Pts	Sec
1.8	364	1089	51
3.5	666	1992	57
7	1155	3462	59
14	793	2367	59
21	1172	3516	59
28	445	1335	43
Total	4595	13761	328

Score: 4,513,608
1 Mult = 14.0 Q's

Member News Continued

ARRL DX CW from VP5K By Pat, KØPC and Glenn, WØGJ

(continued from previous page)

WØGJ at VP5H

Glenn, WØGJ operated at the same Hamet location in Turcks and Caicos for the ARRL SSB DX Contest. Always liking a challenge, Glenn decided to operate the contest QRP. Friday night and Sunday until noon was a real struggle. Early in the day, his QRP signal kept getting crowded out by Europe QRM. Glenn continues to really enjoy his new Flex 1500 radio. It really helped him find the open spots and see the nearby QRM. He appreciated having Vivien, **KL7YL** along to wait on him during the contest. Contest's XYLs are unsung heros! Although Glenn's score was down from last year, Glenn managed 1949 QSO with 253 multipliers for a final score of 1,478,532. It's amazing what you can do with 5 watts and some good antennas from the Caribbean.

The Flex 1500 used at VP5H fits in the palm of your hand!

The simple, compact setup used by W0GJ at VP5H consisted of a Flex 1500, a LogiTalker Voice Keyer, an Azden PTT-02 VOX, and a laptop

Story by
Dave Wester, KØIEA
Photos by
Dave Wester, KØIEA
and
Glenn Johnson, WØGJ

Dayton, 2016

What Was New at Dayton for DXers?

After missing the Dayton Hamvention last year, Dennis, **KFØQR**, Keith, **KØKG** and I decided to attend Hamvention 2016. We parked across the street from the main entrance. Very convenient, but it cost $20.00 (last year it was $10.00). It was worth it, not wanting to be stuck in a muddy field if it rained.

We hit the flea market and headed for Gary Grivna's (**KØGX**) table. Gary had his usual assortment of Items and seemed to be doing very well selling them. After a short tour of the flea market, we followed the crowd into the arena. There have been many comments about the run down condition of the facilities. For what it's worth, here's what one of the organizers said on local TV. "Dayton is Hamvention, Hamvention is Dayton, and it's not going to change."

At the far end of Hara Arena (from the flea market) is the ICOM booth. And there, prominently displayed, was the new IC-7300. Despite its small size, I was impressed by its good looks…enter the age of touch screens.

ICOM IC-7300 HF/50MHz Transceiver

At DX Engineering's booth we saw the NEW ACOM A2100 amplifier. Power Output: 1500 W continuous carrier, no mode limit. The salesman said it sports a heavy duty power supply, the same supply as the ACOM 2000. What I like is its ability to handle a 3:1 VSWR.

ACOM A2100
All amateur bands 1.8-54 MHz

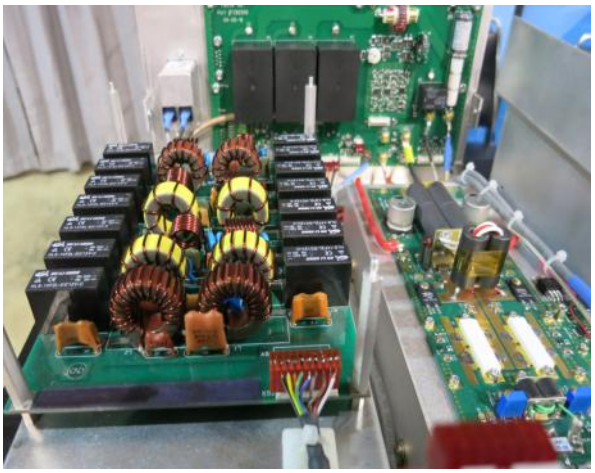
Dayton
Continued from previous page

If you want more power, consider the new OM4000 HF Power Amplifier. It uses two FU-728F ceramic tetrodes, putting out 4,000 watts plus. It reminds me of the old Alpha 77 SX.

OM4000 HF Power Amplifier

The trend is towards solid-state amps. Two years ago we talked to Mr. Gianfranco from Expert Linears. He told us, in his opinion, ten years from now they will not be making tube amplifiers anymore. Here are a few of the *new* solid-state amps we saw. (I didn't include the MFJ and Expert amps as they've been around for sometime). The Communication Amplifiers was very large in size with big carrying handles on the sides. The designer told us that with 200 watts reflected, it cuts back by 3 db. At 1500 watts and 200 watts reflected, it cuts back to 750 watts. At that power level he told us you can literally short the output, and it can handle it.

CA1500HF+6 Solid-State amp



PALSTAR also has a new solid-state offering.

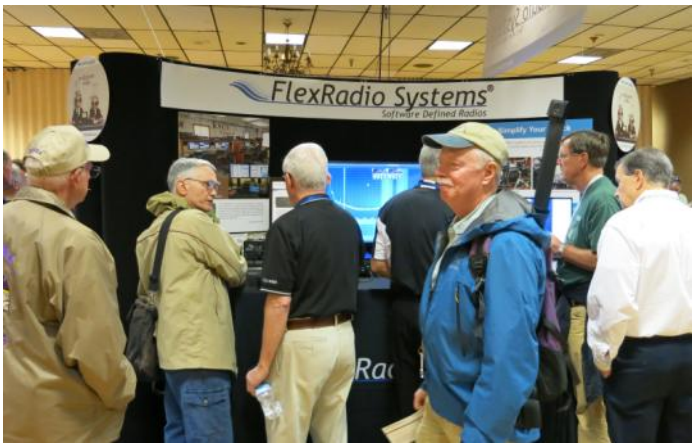
Here's another solid-state amp from Italy

The new solid-state amplifier that attracted most of our attention was FlexRadio Systems prototype. We thought it was beautifully constructed. We were impressed by the small size of the 3000 watt switching supply. You can hold it in your hand. Try that with a big tube amp.

FlexRadio Prototype Solid-state Amp

Dayton
Continued from previous page

FlexRadio Systems, Begali Keys and Elecraft seem to draw the biggest crowds.



FlexRadio Systems Booth

The Elecraft Booth
Packed as Always

We met Kan, **JA1BK,** at the JARL booth. I asked him what he thought of LUSO towers. His response was, "No good, no good, top-heavy." (That's one man's opinion).
Here's the LUSO booth. We signed the giant white cloth with our name and call. Pictured are two of LUSO's helpers.

Begali Keys

LUSO Towers

Dayton

Continued from previous page

Bharathi**, VU2RBI**, was there handing out brochures for Hamfest India 2016. You may remember the Andaman & Nicobar Islands DXpedition in 2004 which included, Bharathi.

Bharathi, VU2RBI

Walking through the crowds, we saw Tom**, WB8ZRL** and Jim, **WØSR**, both from Iowa. We're all Top Band enthusiasts, so naturally, the conversation centered on the recent DXpeditions. I asked them how they did with **VKØEK**, and they both replied they had no copy. No copy, living in Iowa? Dennis and I told them we had a nice 5 minute opening. So how do you figure this stuff? Usually, Iowan's out hear us on 160 meters, but not this time. But Tom shot back, "How'd you do with the, **FT4JA**." We had to admit our one opening was brief and we didn't work them. They said they had no trouble working them. That's what makes Top Band so interesting. At times, it can be a big mystery. And, the A and K don't always apply.

Tom, WB8ZRL
and Jim, WØSR

Dayton
Continued from previous page

Dennis, Keith and I were interested in the new, Shared Apex Loop Array. We made our way to the ARRAY Solutions and met with John, **WXØB**. He explained the features of this new receiving system. I think he sold us on this new product.

Dennis, KFØQR and John, WXØB

Finally, we ended up at the TOP BEAM booth which features a large WALLER FLAG receiving system.

Top Beam Waller Flag

The Dayton Hamvention should have something of interest for everyone. If you haven't been there, give it a try. You might like it.

73 de Dave, KØIEA

{Editor Note: Also attending Dayton this year was Scott Wright, K0MD. Here are a few things he found.}

Dayton's Happiest Fleamarket Shopper – Paul, **WØAIH**

Dayton

Continued from previous page

IØZY (left) with **W5UQ**

John (**WBØSID**) and Tod (**KØTO**) Olson

New Elecraft KX2 QRP Rig (right)

Youth Station operating HF!!

TOP LINE SUMMARY

TCDXA OPERATING BUDGET FY 2016
(Sep 2015 - Aug 2016)

June 9, 2016

INCOME		ACTUAL	BUDGET	Actual 2015
Surplus from FY 2015 (balance 8/31/2015)		4165.60		6162.67
Member Dues 2016 by Cash/Checks/PayPal		4751.59	4800.00	4834.80
Door Prize Ticket Sales club share		667.00	500.00	814.00
Donatons (estates, wills, etc.)		0.00		
Refunds and Reversals		0.00		
TOTAL INCOME		9584.19	5300.00	11811.47
EXPENSES			BUDGET	Actual 2015
Member Recruitment/Retention		0.00	(300.00)	(158.25)
Website ISP & Domain Name		(44.26)	(70.00)	(137.37)
Office Supplies, Miscellaneous expenses		(30.43)	(150.00)	(446.68)
Flowers <SK> and Hospital gifts		0.00	(200.00)	0.00
Holiday Party 2015		(257.52)	(400.00)	(278.57)
ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund		0.00	(100.00)	(100.00)
NCDXF Donation		0.00	(250.00)	(250.00)
MWA Plaque		(75.00)	(75.00)	(75.00)
DXpedition Contributions Total		(3712.32)	(6000.00)	(6200.00)
#1 DXpedition Palmyra K5P	(1,500.00)			
#2 DXpedition Juan de Nova FT4JA	(1,000.00)			
#3 DXpedition Suriname PZ5W QSL Cards	(200.00)			
#4 DXpedition Antipodes Isl ZL9A	(500.00)			
#5 Dxpedition Iran EP2A	(512.32)			
#6 Dxpedition	0.00			
#7 Dxpedition	0.00			
#8 Dxpedition	0.00			
#9 Dxpedition	0.00			
TOTAL EXPENSES		(4119.53)	(7545.00)	(7645.87)
NET		5464.66	-2245.00	
Checking balance		5326.66		
PayPal balance		0.00		
Cash / Checks on Hand		138.00		
NET BALANCE		5464.66		

When required, Wells Fargo & PayPal online statements can provide detail not shown in this report.

Join TCDXA

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

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWS

The makeup of the board changed slightly after the elections in November, 2016. Vice President Tom Lutz, WØZR, has retired and was replaced by Craig Anderson, W9CLA. We thank Tom for his years of service to the club and welcome Craig to the Board of Directors.

The TCDXA has supported several high profile DXpeditions during the last few months including VKØEK, FT4JA, and EP2A. It is only through your generous contributions that we are able to support these endeavors.

We are entering the quiet season for the TCDXA when we don't have meetings during July and August. I hope you all enjoy the summer months and look forward to seeing everyone back in the fall.

73, Pat KØPC
TCDXA Sec/Treas

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.

The MWA Contest Corner

by Al Dewey, KØAD

Youth in Contesting

One of the things that those of us who have a real passion for contesting worry about is how long our aspect of the hobby will survive. When groups of contesters get together, let's face it – it's mainly a bunch of old guys (like me). For those of you who operate ARRL Sweepstakes where you have to fess up the year in which you were first licensed, those who give a year greater than 2000 are dwarfed by the large number of contesters who were first licensed in the 20th century – many back in the 60s and 70s. A recent thread on the CQ-Contest reflector recently beat this current subject to death. The common refrain was that amateur radio was of little interest to today's young people. With cell phones and the internet, the appeal is just not there. For those who might be interested in technology and have a technological bent, their passions can be satisfied by video games. If a teenager today happens to develop an interest in ham radio and even contesting, the interest is often dampened when they attend their first radio club meeting and find out that just about all the people have gray hair (or no hair at all). Many feel the golden age of contesting is over and that participation will gradually diminish over the coming years.

I guess I am an optimist but I think this assessment is a little harsh. It is hard to fault the logic but I feel that there is still plenty of optimism for contesting in the future. I think it is important to separate youth becoming hams and youth becoming contesters. There is evidence, as chronicled in the May, 2016 issue of QST, that the number of new amateur radio licenses is continuing to rise. The only problem is that they are mostly Technician class licenses. Perhaps the group that we need to be evangelizing to are those hams who have just gotten their licenses. We need to find a way to get them on HF and then we can start talking about contesting. And perhaps the group we should be addressing are those in their 30s and 40s. Once teenagers go off to college and then start a family, it is hard to get their attention. I think there are plenty of hams in their 30s and 40s who just need a kick in the seat to get active again.

I do agree that we are going to have to embrace new technology as it relates to contesting if we are going to have any chance to making it attractive to new young people. I don't even know what that technology might look like but I would imagine it will involve the internet as well as some of the concepts used in computer gaming today. Classic contest categories as we know them today are undoubtedly going to have to change. Radio clubs, especially those with in interest in contesting and DXing, are going to make themselves more youth friendly. One comment I read recently said that many radio clubs today are made up almost entirely of guys with gray hair who are overweight and may not even smell that great. How do we expect this to appeal to young people today? Again, I do not have an answer here but I do firmly believe that kids like to do things in groups so clubs that would appeal to these kids seems like it would be very important.

A number of TCDXAers and MWAers have hosted contests at their station for young people from time to time. Other groups have used Field Day to really attract kids and get them on the air. I am sure that many of us got their first exposure to contesting at Field Day. I know I did. We need to do more of this.

NØHJZ's nephew, Dave, gets some real contest experience at a young age during the ARRL 10 Meter Contest at Rich's Eden Prairie Station.

Another reason for my optimism is that the average age for contesters in Europe is considerably less than in the U.S. We need to find out how they are making that happen. I have obviously just scratched the surface here. The ARRL Contest Advisory Committee is actually undertaking a study of how we can get more youth in contesting. If you have some ideas on this subject, be sure to get them to Dakota Division CAC Representative, Pat Korkowski , **NAØN** (korkowp1@comcast.net).

MWA Team Hennepin Wins the Pizza for 2015 / 2016 Season

The Minnesota Wireless Association (MWA) competes with the upper tier of contest clubs throughout the country in various ARRL and CQ Contests. In recent years, MWA has beat all other contests clubs in contests like the ARRL 16O Meter Contest as well as the ARRL RTTY Roundup. In many other cases, MWA ends up in the top five. A while back, MWA formed three internal teams to help increase participation as well as have some fun. The three teams are Team North (i.e. Northern Minnesota), Team South (i.e. Southern Minnesota) , and Team Hennepin (i.e. Hennepin County). During the contest season, these teams compete with each other in ten contests during the contest season. The way in which team scores are computed is actually a little complicated but is based generally on improvement over the previous contest season. Here is how this years team competition broke down:

TEAM HENNEPIN – 6 Wins
- CQWW RTTY Winners
- ARRL Sweepstakes Phone Winners
- ARRL Sweepstakes Overall Winners (CW and Phone Combined)
- ARRL 10 Meter Winners
- Minnesota QSO Party Winners
- ARRL DX Phone Winners

TEAM SOUTH – 4 Wins
- CQWW DX Phone Winners
- CQWW DX CW Winners
- ARRL 160 Meter Winners
- ARRL DX CW Winners

TEAM North – 2 Wins
- ARRL Sweepstakes CW Winners
- ARRL RTTY Round Up Winners

MWA's Team Competition is made possible by the diligent work of Rich, NØHJZ who collects the claimed scores from everyone and keeps the Team Competition Spreadsheets up to date. I should also mention that the above listing is not official. Rich actually rechecks the team scores once the official contest results have been released by the contest sponsors. Official scores and typically less that claimed scores.

Besides bragging rights, members of MWA Team Hennepin will have the cost of their pizza dinner at the MWA Fall Meeting subsidized by Team's North and South this year! Speaking of the Fall Meeting, it is scheduled for Tuesday, September 20th at Broadway Pizza in Blaine. This is a new location for the traditional fall meeting. All the meeting details are available at www.w0aa.org. Save the date.

See you in the pileups.

New Gray Line Report Editorial Team

After many, many years of producing TCDXA's Gray Line Report, the editorial team of Jim Junkett (**KØJUH**), Bob Garwood (**WØBV**), and Dave Wester (**KØIEA**) have decided to step down. The Twin City DX Association, as well as the DX community at large, owes them a debt of gratitude for the great job they have done in evolving the Gray Line Report into one of the best DX Club publications anywhere! They have some big shoes to fill. Taking up this challenge will be Al Dewey (**KØAD**) as Managing Editor, Dan Dantzler (**WØJMP**) in charge of newsletter assembly (i.e. content layout), and Jeff Martin (**WØJM**) in charge of final proofing / editing and member profile development. The new editorial looks forward to the challenge and hopes they can keep up the standards set by Jim, Bob, and Dave. A club newsletter is only as good as its content. If any club members have ideas for an article or feature to be used in the Gray Line, or better yet would like to write one, feel free to contact one of the new editorial staff. Likewise, if any members are aware of some news item that you believe would be of interest to TXDXA members, be sure to contact one of the staff.

Dan Dantzler, WØJMP – Newsletter Assembly / Content Layout

Jeff Martin, WØJM – Final Proofreading & Member Profiles

Al Dewey, KØAD
Managing Editor

Recollections from Eleven "Top 10 Most Wanted" DXPeditions

Rochester DX and Contest Club Hosts Presentation by Bob, K4UEE

The Rochester DX and Contest Club hosted a very interesting presentation On March 29th on some of the top DXpeditions over the last 23 years. Approximately 40 DXers attended this very well done presentation including a number of TCDXAers who made the trek from the Twin Cities. The DXpeditons spanned a period of over 20 years starting in 1993 with Howland Island. **K4UEE**'s presentation included some very compelling video clips document depicting just how dangerous some of these expeditions were. Eight of the eleven DXpeditions were named "DXpeditions of the Year" at the Dayton Hamvention. A frequent face in many of the videos shown were TCDXAer's Glenn Johnson (**WØGJ**) and Ralph Fedor (**KØIR**). Congratulations to Scott, **KØMD** for putting this great presentation together.

A list of the eleven major DXpeditions presented by K4UEE to the Rochester DX can Contest Club.

Kirk (**NØKK**), Mark (**WAØMHJ**), and Pat (**KØPC**) listen attentively to Bob Allphin's (K4UEE) presentation on top DXpeditons.

Pictured with Bob, K4UEE (center) is Glen, WØGJ (left) - a frequent participant in the DXpeditions discussed and KØMD (right) – organizer of the evening event.

Matt, KØBBC (ARRL Dakota Division Vice Director) gave the group an update on ARRL DX issues.

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 70 DXpeditions have been sponsored since 1997. Details are available on the website at: http://www.tcdxa.org/sponsoreddxpedtions.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 Craig Anderson, **W9CLA**; 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

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	PZ5W
VK9DWX	9M4SLL	3GØZC	9U4U	FT5ZM	ZL9A

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.

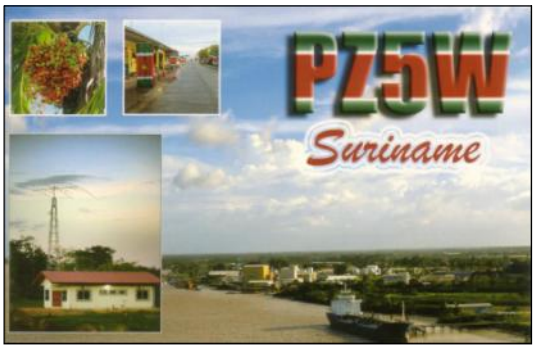
A funding request from the organizers of a planned DXpedition should be directed to the DX Donation Manager, Matt, **KØBBC**, k0bbc@arrl.net . He and the TCDXA Board of Directors will judge how well the DXpedition plans meet key considerations (see below).

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

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



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