



Newsletter of the
Twin City DX Association

Volume 2, Issue 1
March, 2005



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TCDXA Officers

President
Bob Bruner, WØEK
Secretary
Dennis Johnson, KFØQR
Treasurer
Jim Junkert, KØJUH

Gray Line Staff

KØIEA, KØJUH, & WØBV



The President's Corner

Hello members, and greetings from Albany, MN. I feel very honored to be President of TCDXA for 2005, and I want to thank everyone for their support. Our club has developed positive momentum in recent months, and with your help, I hope we can continue the trend.

Our membership is now at an all-time record high (89), and the turnouts at our meetings have been on the increase. If you haven't joined us at a recent meeting, we hope that you can find time in your busy schedule to squeeze us in. We look forward to seeing you.

If you're ever up in the Albany area, please stop and say hello. The coffee pot is always on, and I'd be happy to give you a personally-guided tour of my pride and joy - my growing antenna farm. 73! de Bob, WØEK, 2005 TCDXA President



Your TCDXA officers for 2005: (left to right)
Secretary Dennis, KFØQR
President Bob, WØEK
Treasurer Jim, KØJUH



WØGJ Receives Special Award for Excellence

A "Special Award for Excellence" was bestowed upon Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, at the W9DXCC Convention. The award recognizes Glenn's operations from Bhutan, where he trained fellow physicians in his specialty of orthopedic surgery, and where he did an enormous amount of work to re-ignite amateur radio, by forming a local radio club and by training many new operators. This award also recognizes Glenn's A52A operation, which netted 82,000 QSOs, using only 100 watts, and which provided ultra-fast QSLing.

Congratulations Glenn!!!

A Hearty Welcome to TCDXA's Newest Members!

KCØRET, Greg Merth	NØZK, Tom Sneed
NN7L, Jason Fallon	WØBCA, Rod Rosse
NDØM, Don Carlson	WØQU, George Fisher
WSØS, Bob Beiersdorf	



What's a "GRB"?

by Paul Harden, NA5N

ed. - Up here in the auroral zone, we watch and worry about the stability of our sun. Events such as coronal mass ejections (CMEs), flares, and the resulting solar wind streams bombard us, turning the auroral zones "red", often shutting us out of the DXing game. But, now, we have something else to worry about! Last December 27th, we experienced a sudden ionospheric disturbance which was caused by a source other than our sun. The following explanation by propagation guru NA5N explains what happened that day, when the bands temporarily went dead.

There have been some episodes over the past few months of some very strange Sudden Ionospheric Disturbances, or SIDs. These have not been caused by solar flares or the like, but rather from **GRBs ... Gamma Ray Bursts**, from very distant objects, several hundred light years away.

The biggest recent event was on December 27, 2004, when a massive gamma ray burst hit the earth about 2130 UTC from a magnetar called SGR-1806. This GRB was so powerful that it was able to ionize our ionosphere, just like a solar flare, and cause ionospheric absorption down to the VLF frequencies. This indicates a GLE, a Ground Level Event, meaning the ionizing radiation from the GRB penetrated our atmosphere, all the way to ground level.

There are amateur astronomers of sorts who monitor the signal strength from high-powered VLF transmitters, such as the Navy stations NAA, NPM, NLK, etc. At VLF, signal strengths are fairly constant, varying a bit during day and night. Some of these amateur stations show a sudden absorption of signals at VLF due to the arrival of the GRBs. Some of their plots can be seen at: <http://aavso.org>

Click on the "GCN #2932" button for the SID plots. Very interesting.

For the neophytes out there, go to the website at http://gcn.gsfc.nasa.gov/gcn3_archive.html. This is the clearinghouse for all observatories and satellites doing GRB monitoring and/or observing. A little on the heavy side, including several reports about the observing that we're doing at the Very Large Array (VLA) radiotelescope on SGR-1806. Our normal observing schedule has been interrupted to observe this strange phenomenon.

The VLA has found SGR-1806, and is making images of it daily. It's not clear, yet, what SGR-1806 is, or was, other than something that possibly blew up big time - perhaps a collapsing pulsar that has spewed debris and electrons out into space, traveling from 0.3 to 0.7 times the speed of light. It was the initial explosion, on Dec. 27th, that showered gamma rays into the earth's ionosphere. This is an explosion that occurred 200+ years ago, and the shockwave of gamma rays is so powerful, it was able to ionize our E and F layers, and absorb VLF propagation. Pretty impressive.

73, Paul, NA5N

Behind the Scenes: 3YØX - 2005

by Ralph Fedor, KØIR

Rare countries are rare for a reason. The challenges to activate them may be political, bureaucratic, or geographical. Of these entities, I have mostly dealt with the geographically isolated countries, favoring distance, sea, and ice over reams of paper and AK-47s.

The attempted Peter I (3YØX) DXpedition added a new twist. Not only did we face the challenge of geographical isolation, but also we ran headlong into business as it is conducted outside our borders. While one doesn't usually think of Chile and Argentina as 3rd world countries, I now think of them as at least being a 2.5.

Last year, we cancelled the expedition, when we could not get a contract from Antarply, an Argentine company with a ship, the *MV Ushuaia*. They claimed all was well, that they were ready to go and had a helicopter, but would put nothing on paper.

This year, we had a written contract with a Chilean vessel, *The Antarctic Dream*, operated by Antarctic Shipping, SA. The ship was to be remodeled and ready to sail from Punta Arenas, Chile early in January. So, we shipped 15,000 pounds of supplies to Punta Arenas. One delay led to another, until it was obvious that the ship would not sail at all, this season. Antarctic Shipping defaulted on our contract with them. When the ship fell off the radar screen, so did the helicopter that was to go with it. We were fortunate to recover all of our deposit from Antarctic Shipping.

The individual we worked with from Antarctic Shipping called us, saying he had found a new vessel, the *Cavendish Sea*. The vessel seemed adequate, and its owners proposed a plan to construct a helicopter deck on top of three forty-foot sea containers that would be on the rear deck. Engineering types in our team studied this, and felt the plan to be sound. We signed a contract with the vessel, and were told that get-



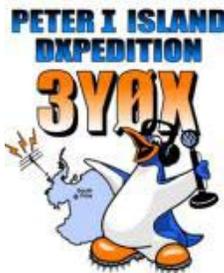
On the street in Ushuaia, Argentina (left to right): N4GRN, NP4IW, K9SG, KØIR, and PA5M.

ting a helicopter would be “no problem,” and that the ship would be poised and ready to sail on two-hours notice. The vessel was positioned about 500 miles north of Ushuaia, Argentina, and Ushuaia became our new departure point. Meanwhile, our supplies in a 40-foot sea container were 20 hours away by truck, and in another country.

We managed to get our sea container moved through customs from Chile to Argentina, but the “no problem” helicopter was becoming a problem. Mostly, using our own resources, we got commitments for a Bell 412, a Bell 206, and a Huey. Each commitment melted away in a day or so. Finally, we got what appeared to be a firm commitment for a Lama helicopter from a company in Santiago, Chile. We now had our team and equipment in Ushuaia, Argentina; a ship 500 miles away in Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina; and a helicopter about 20 hours of flying time away in Santiago, Chile.

We pulled the trigger, telling the ship to begin sailing south to Ushuaia and telling the helicopter to begin flying south to rendezvous with the ship. At this point, we were several days behind schedule, and concerned about the decreased time we would have on Peter I. But, we still felt we could do a satisfactory job.

It was a three-day sail for the ship from Comodoro Rivadavia to Ushuaia. On the second day, we inquired about the ship's progress. The ship hadn't moved from the dock in Comodoro. We now had a ship that couldn't possibly get us



to Peter I, so that we would have enough time on the air to justify the DXpedition. But, we did have a helicopter in the air, and headed south. We managed to stop the helicopter, when it was about 1/3 of the way to Ushuaia, and made our postponement announcement. After two days of additional work, we got our sea container re-routed again - this time for Savannah, Georgia.

This juggling consumed most of the time of those in a leadership position. The remaining time was spent securing supplies, fuel, food, and propane and then releasing it all, again. Fortunately, for the rest of the team, the local LU hams were outstanding hosts. They gave us the key to their clubhouse, got temporary licenses for us, let us operate the club station whenever we wanted, and hosted two evening gatherings at their clubhouse.

Nearly every team member wants to try this again, next year, although we're debating the merits of not going through South America. We already have a few leads that sound more trustworthy, but we are again reminded that we are not dealing with the U.S.A. There appears to be more than geographical isolation that makes Peter I a rare country.

Hope to get you in the log in 2006!

Vy 73, de Ralph, KØIR



Club Station LU8XW in Ushuaia. These were a really great bunch of guys, who were excited about our visit. They gave us the key to the station, held two social events, and were our 24/7 taxi service.

TCDXA has a new home!



After the abrupt closing of Benchwarmer Bob's restaurant in Brooklyn Park, we were forced to find another place to hold our dinner meetings. By my count, this is our ninth meeting place after Jennings Red Coach, Bloomington Holiday Inn, Richfield VFW, Anchor Inn, Robbinsdale Legion, Nicklow's, Little Jack's, and Benchwarmer Bob's.

The credit for finding a new location goes to **KØJUH**. Jim fielded all the suggestions, and made all the telephone calls. For now, we'll try the third Monday of each month for our dinner meetings (there are no meetings in July and August).

The **Sunshine Factory** appears to be a clean place, with good food and good service. And, it's fairly easy to get to for most of our metro members. We had a good turnout for our first meeting there. Let's hope this will be a good "marriage" between us and the SSF.

73 de Dave, KØIEA



TCXDA Treasurer's Report - YTD January thru March, 2005

reported by Jim, KØJUH

Income

Balance Jan. 1, 2005	\$	444.63
Annual dues collected-2005		1,968.00
Above/beyond the call of duty		174.00
Door prize raffle ticket sales		138.00
WØDXCC profits		102.38
TCDXA shirt order		202.50
Total income	\$	3,029.51

Current balance - March 25, 2005:

\$ 2,136.51

Expenses to date

MWA donation	\$	-75.00
3YØX donation		-500.00
NCDXF Donation		-250.00
Materials - member certificates		-7.00
Postage/envelopes		-18.00
Check written/ deposit fee		-2.00
Monthly checks and service fee		-9.00
Door prize - MFJ watch		-32.00
Total 2005 expenses	\$	-893.00

Projected Expenses for 2005

ARRL Frequency Defense Fund	\$	150.00
TCDXA website hosting		70.00
TCDXA banner		200.00
Monthly checks and service fee		27.00
4 DXpeditions @ \$250/donation		1,000.00
Unexpected expenses		100.00
Total projected expenses	\$	1,547.00

Packet Cluster Escrow Account

Balance Jan. 1, 2004 \$1,070.56



Lou, Lisa, and their daughter Anna Rose.

ACØX Zeros-in on 5BDXCC!

*ed. - The following is an email received from ACØX on March 8th. On 80 meters, Lou runs **only 100 watts** to an Alpha Delta model DX-DXD inverted-V, with its apex at 14m up a side of his tower. We'll be following Lou's progress towards 5BDXCC - this will be an amazing accomplishment from Minnesota!*

“You know, I'm finally believing it is possible. If you'd have asked me three years ago when I started to attack this seriously, I wouldn't have believed that was so. I was at 38 countries on the band. I'd look at what I needed, do a count of what wasn't 'too far' or 'too rare,' and I always came far short of 100.

Even at the beginning of this season, I had set a goal of 90 worked by the end, 95 worked by the end of the 2005-2006 season, and 100 worked by the end of the 2006-2007 season, although I still wasn't quite sure I could even do that. But somehow, I've worked them, and ahead of what I'd ever thought I would. Even a lot of countries I'd originally thought were 'too far' or 'too rare'. I worked KH8SI yesterday morning for #96. Although 100 this season probably isn't possible, I can believe 100 by the end of this year may be. I'll do a lot of repetitive calling at stations CQing in my face in the mean time, but out of all that I really think I can get those last 4!

73 es gud 80m DX, Lou”

Does this photo look familiar to you? It should, if you own a 2005 *CQ Amateur Radio Calendar*. That's because our own Scott Johnson, **WDØDAN**, is "Mr. March". Take a look at the calendar up on your wall and, you'll see Scott and his daughter Katelyn, **KCØGKA**. It seems only fitting that we feature "Mr. March" in our *March Gray Line*.

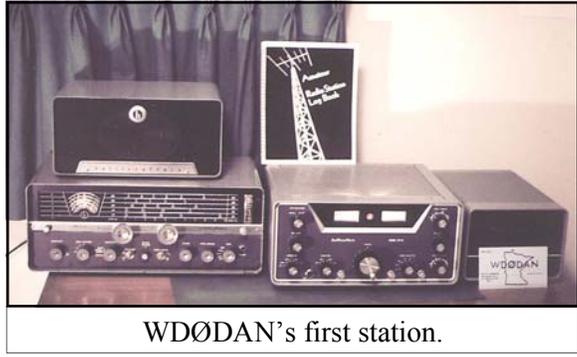
Scott Johnson, WDØDAN



Scott was first licensed in May of 1977. He has kept his original callsign, because of the unique suffix. He says that it's amazing how many times that he gets called "Dan" on the air (*ed. - I've been guilty of that slip - more than once*). He is even called "Dan" by his neighbors, because of the call plates on his car!

Scott became interested in radio during high school. He took an electronics course taught by Loyal Younggren, **WAØFGJ**, who became Scott's first Elmer. Loyal helped Scott study for the Novice theory and code tests. Loyal then gave the Novice test to Scott at school. Scott studied on his own, and passed the General and Advanced tests at the FCC office in downtown St. Paul, during 1978. He upgraded to Extra class in 1990.

Scott has lived in Bloomington for his entire life, except for 4 years in the 1980s, when he lived in Richfield. His first station (see photo) was a Hallicrafter HT-44 transmitter and SX-111 receiver. His antenna was a 5-band ground mounted vertical. Over the years, he has used a Kenwood TS-520S, TS-440S, TS-850, and FT-1000MP. More on his station, later.



WDØDAN's first station.

Scott's first job was at Telex Communications, where he worked in the Technical Services Department for four years. He left Telex in 1984, and took a job with NSP (now Excel Energy), where he is working today as a Journeyman System Relay Specialist. His job typically involves working in

power substations on equipment that monitors and protects the high voltage transmission system. Other areas of Scott's work include coal, gas, garbage, and nuclear plant work.

Scott and his family currently live in southwest Bloomington, where they've been for 16 years. His wife Lori is very supportive of Scott's ham radio activities. He says that she "puts up with my room full of equipment, tower in her garden, and the wires strung all over the backyard." She is also Scott's ground crew for his tower work. Lori is an expert quilt maker, and she enjoys scrapbooking family photos.

Their daughter Katelyn is 16, and in the 10th grade. Kate is kept very busy with her school activities, and takes dance classes in the evenings. She has been licensed for about 4 years, but has not been very active, due to her other activities.

Daughter Sarah is 13 years old, and is in the 7th grade. She enjoys competing in dog shows with their 3 year old champion beagle Rubin.



Rubin stands guard in the back yard, warding-off those pesky tower-climbing squirrels.

The Johnson's QTH is located on the edge of the Minnesota River Valley. It's fairly high, with great vistas to the East, South, and West. The land rises to the North, but Scott does not feel it's been a handicap. His only real handicap is his typical suburban lot, and the 50 foot tower height limit, imposed by Bloomington.

Handicap or not, Scott's DX accomplishments are very impressive. He holds DXCC awards for SSB, CW, 10m, 12m, 15m, 17m, 20m, and 40m. Scott is working hard on his 80m count, to complete 5BDXCC. And, he is currently just a few credits short of the 1500 level in the DXCC Challenge.

Scott and Katelyn's current station consist of a Yeasu FT-1000MP and Alpha 87A (see photo on page 6). He also has a Henry 3K Premier amp. Antennas include a Force 12 XR5 on his 50-foot tower, a vertical for 30m, inverted-vee for 40m, and a sloper for 80m. What strikes

visitors the most about Scott's shack is the incredible neatness and thoroughness of his antenna wiring. He's done extensive grounding for lightning protection, which includes 500+ feet of 00 (#2-00) copper cable, buried with 25 ground rods positioned around the lot. Grounding in the shack is modeled after the Polyphaser single-point grounding system (look at the antenna selection bank located behind Scott in the picture on page 6). Scott says that he's never had a direct lightning hit, but his equipment has survived many close hits.



Lightning protection at the base of Scott's tower.

One of Scott's other passionate interests is photography. As a teenager, he enjoyed taking and developing black and white photos. He drifted away from photography for several years, but regained his interest about two years ago, using digital photography, with methods of computer enhancement. Scott also volunteers with the Bloomington Communications Group. This group performs communications duties for local events and does training for emergency communications, together with the City of Bloomington.

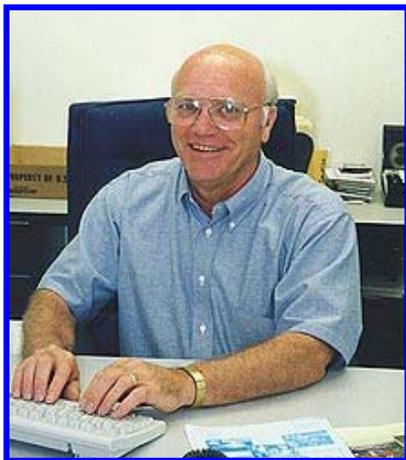


Scott's mailbox: when the door is opened, the beam rotates and LEDs on the tower flash!



Logbook of the World

An exclusive update for TCDXA by Wayne Mills, N7NG



Wayne Mills, N7NG
LoTW Project Manager

Logbook of the World is an electronic QSO matching system, designed and sponsored by ARRL, to provide credits for ARRL awards.

Logbook traces its roots back to the

late 90s, when the exchange of QSO information began to look like an ideal application for the continuing development of the Internet. In 1998, the Yasme Foundation organized a meeting at the Visalia International DX Convention to discuss the concept of electronic QSLing, and the possibilities of actually realizing such a system. This meeting was attended by representatives from the Yasme Foundation, ARRL, RSGB, and industry.

The ARRL moved on the idea in 1999, when the Board of Directors tasked the Executive Vice President to “study, develop and implement” an electronic QSLing system for ARRL awards.

One of the key design features of Logbook of the World is its reliance on digital signatures to ensure the integrity of the stored data. After signing each QSO with a digital signing process, it is virtually impossible for a hacker to alter data, without that fact being known to system administrators. Thus, the data is safe, and the user’s expectation of high integrity is realized.

After much design and development work, the process moved into a new arena in September 2003, when Logbook began accepting credits. In May 2004, LoTW began providing these credits to the DXCC program.

Logbook does a wonderful job of organizing credits, and interacting with DXCC software. After importing a DXCC record, Logbook can inform the user which credits that have been identified in its database are needed for submission. Without this utility, the user would be spending considerable time organizing and locating credits.

It was a major project, done with limited resources and limited time, so when it was finally turned on, it wasn’t quite finished. Today, although Logbook works well, there are still things to be done.

Admittedly, the certification interface needs to be simplified. Many users have no difficulty obtaining a certificate, and there are some guidelines that will make it easier. First and foremost is to read and understand the instructions. Interestingly, the folks who have the most “experience” in data systems have the most problems with Logbook. Next in line are those who really don’t know how to use their computers. In the not-to-distant future, we will implement changes that will make Logbook certification more foolproof.

After re-doing the user certification process, we need to expand Logbook’s horizons. More awards must be supported. Worked all States (WAS) is next. We expect to have WAS done sometime in the third quarter of 2005. Following WAS, we will likely design software to support the various CQ awards. Other, non-ARRL awards are also slated to be supported. VUCC will likely be considered although a re-write of the VUCC software will be necessary.

As a result of Logbook development, other benefits have emerged. We have developed the capability of accessing data from the DXCC system, and that has allowed us to post nearly real-time DXCC standings on the Web. To allow Logbook to export credits to the DXCC software, an update was done in the current DXCC system that allows us to import credit data electronically. This, in turn, will allow us to have field-checked data from DXCC Card Checkers submitted electronically, saving considerable manpower, which can help save money and minimize fee increases. In turn, additional processing capability may enable us to accept Topband, deleted and old cards from card checkers. No guarantees here, but we are looking at the concept.

Logbook is an alternative to conventional and traditional confirmation methods. Considering the cost and often-unreliable nature of post mail, Logbook is an effective alternative to traditional QSLing.

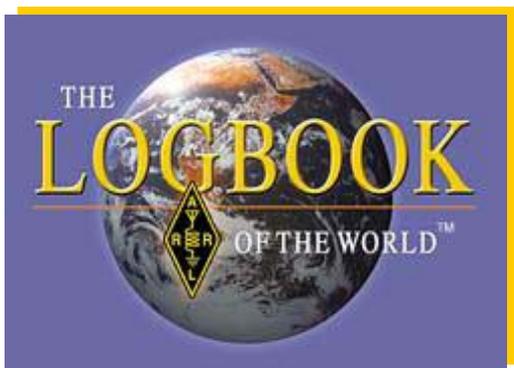
One question that immediately arises is: will serious DXpeditions utilize Logbook? In fact, many have. Recently, the YVØD DXpedition to Aves Island submitted its log to LoTW, long before the paper cards were distributed. Will all DXpeditions proceed in this way? Not likely. We do expect that they will wait for some time to allow direct requests to run their course, and then submit the logs, sometimes in lieu of dumping the remaining cards to the bureau.

To date, Logbook has collected some 66 million QSOs from over 100,000 logs. Some 9,300 users have submitted logs for about 13,750 callsigns. There are more than 300 countries represented in Logbook. Many DXCC awards have been attributed to LoTW, and even several LoTW 5BDXCCs have been recorded.

It is important to note that Logbook is not intended to replace, paper cards. In fact, the possibility exists that someone will print and distribute paper cards based on LoTW data. Anyone interested in such an undertaking is urged to contact ARRL.

Where Logbook will go in the future is anyone's guess, but we fully expect it to grow, and to become a viable alternative to the increasing cost and lack of reliability in paper cards. We also expect Logbook to provide additional services, which can and will add to our operating enjoyment in ways we can't even imagine today.

73, Wayne, N7NG



DX Quiz History of the Pacific

by Jim, KØJUH

The current DXCC list contains many well known island entities in the Pacific region, where history-making land and sea campaigns took place, during World War II. See how many of these events you can match up with the appropriate DX entity prefix.

Prefix/entity options: DU, P2, H44, JA, JD1, KHØ, KH2, KH4, KH6, KH9, T3Ø, T31, V7
Deleted Prefix/entity option: KR6

Hint: You may have to pull the World Atlas off the bookshelf for this one. Answers are on page 19.

- 1) Dec 7, 1941 - The American naval base at Pearl Harbor comes under attack.
- 2) April 9, 1942 - US troops on Bataan surrender and the Bataan death march begins.
- 3) April 18, 1942 - Doolittle's raiders bomb the enemy mainland. (Elvin, please don't take this personally!)
- 4) May 4, 1942 - The Battle of the Coral Sea.
- 5) June 4, 1942 - The Battle of Midway.
- 6) August 7, 1942 - U.S. troops land on Guadalcanal.
- 7) Nov 1, 1943 - U.S. troops land on Bougainville.
- 8) Nov 20, 1943 - U.S. troops land on Makin and Tawara Islands in the Gilberts.
- 9) Feb 1, 1944 - U.S. troops land in the Marshall Islands.
- 10) July 21, 1944 - U.S. troops land on Guam Island.
- 11) July 23, 1944 - U.S. troops land on Saipan and Tinian Islands in the Marianas.
- 12) February 19, 1945 - U.S. Marines land on Iwo Jima.
- 13) April 1, 1945 - The Battle for Okinawa.

**TCDXA members who saw action
in the Pacific, during WW II:**

Jack Chapman, WØHZ, USMC
 Bill Davies, SK, WØYCR, USN
 Jim Milnor WØIR, SK, USMC
 Curt Risvold, WØHY, USN

Contesting from VP5H

or, How We Spent Our 30th Wedding Anniversary

by Dr. Glenn Johnson, WØGJ



In 1994 I helped with a multi-single operation in the ARRL SSB DX Contest from The Hamlet, a ham rental property owned by Jody Millspaugh, VP5JM.

The Hamlet has been a very popular vacation/contest destination, not only because of its Caribbean location, but because The Hamlet is a very well-kept, nice cottage, with an abundance of antennas....perfect for contesting and casual DXing. Jody rents The Hamlet to individuals or groups for a specific contest, for as long as they return annually for that contest.

When I was there 11 years ago, I asked to be put on the list for the ARRL SSB DX Contest....and my number came up last Fall! It also happened that our 30th anniversary occurred just before the 2005 ARRL SSB DX Contest. There was no way we were going to turn down this opportunity! My XYL Vivien, KL7YL, gave me permission to operate the contest, but hinted that I shouldn't do much more radio than that. NO problem!

The decision was to keep it simple, with only low power for the contest. When we travel, we never check luggage - just so that we never have the problem of lost baggage, particularly when something critical (like a radio) could be missing for a contest.

Jody was surprised when we walked out of the Providenciales airport with only tag-alongs, knowing that we brought a station with us! Jody has a fairly nice ICOM HF radio (the model escapes me), but I wanted to use one of my ICOM 756 Pro II's....for several reasons. It would be fully functional with my laptop, and also have a band scope to see the band openings and to see the "gaps" in a busy band. I carried my laptop in a small briefcase.

Vivien & I had to overnight both ways in Atlanta, because from Bemidji, "you can't get there from here" in one day. We left home Feb. 28, and arrived in Providenciales shortly after noon on Tuesday, March 1. We spent a few days exploring the island, and eating wonderful seafood. I think I have only a dozen contacts in the log as VP5/WØGJ, as I tested the antennas on the evening before the contest.

You can see details of The Hamlet at www.vp5jm.com. Jody has a 52 foot tower, with it's base probably 100 feet above the Caribbean Sea. There is a Mosley Pro 67B (40-10M) and a rotating dipole for 75/80M above it. There is also a 3/3 stack of 10M beams fixed on the U.S. In 1994, I put up a dipole for 160M, about 15 feet above on of Jody's fence line. This was an "emergency" antenna, but after 11 years, it is still up and everyone has always been impressed with how well it works. Go figure! Someone has put up a receiving loop for the low bands, and it worked great!



VP5JM's rental "Hamlet" on Providenciales



Looking down on the Hamlet from Jody's house.

My station consisted of my ICOM 756 Pro II, a ZS4TX SuperComboKeyer and an older IBM laptop running Windows 98 and Write-Log.

Near the bottom of the sun spot cycle, conditions were poor. We had a small opening on 10m late Saturday afternoon, and a little longer one in the middle of the day Sunday. 15m was so-so. Sunday, signals were strong, and from every state/province, but there was essentially never a good fast run. 20m was the "money band," but crowded. I was able to have several runs with the rate meter on 450/hour, several times. 40m was tougher with low power. 80m was even harder! 160m was disappointing, but part of that was my option of low power. That receiving loop was a great help!

My choice for the older Windows 98 laptop was for the functionality of the LPT port available with Win98. XP versions don't operate the LPT port like Win98. With most of the contest programs, the Function keys can be used for triggering voice keyers.



I used WriteLog, and had it all tested and operational, before I left home. I recorded the transmit and receive audio onto the hard drive. I've never done that before, but what fun after the contest! When I right-click on a Q, the audio starts playing 2 to 3 Q's before the selected one, and then continues on, until manually shut off.

It always helps to be the only station on in a country for a contest, because of the Multiplier Effect. Everyone needs you, and the pileups are endless. This year, VP5B was a Multi-2 on North Caicos Island, running high power. This made for two high power and one low power (me) station available for the VP5 multiplier. Rumor is that the VP5B station is moving somewhere else in the Caribbean, so maybe next year, if I run low power, I might be instantly 10dB louder because of the Multiplier Effect!

My results are:

Band	Q's	Mults	
160	90	26	
80	336	46	
40	453	53	
20	971	58	
15	811	58	
10	<u>247</u>	<u>29</u>	
	2,908	270	= 2,355,480

As I write this one week after the contest, there have been two SOAB LP stations reporting a higher score: VP9/W6PH and PJ7/ND5S. These were the only stations on from their countries.

It was amazing to hear so many MN stations in the contest on all bands! (I never did hear anyone from MN on 160M, but I suspect that is because no one in MN could hear me low power, or had worked VP5B on high power.) GO MWA!

Vivien asked me if she could help me with the contest next year, and I won't refuse that offer! Our plan for next year, right now, is to do a family multi-single for the ARRL SSB DX Contest from the Hamlet.

Anyone who has been in the Caribbean, knows that antenna and station maintenance is a nightmare. Jody has done a *superb* job of keeping the Hamlet looking nice, and in keeping the antennas



Jody, VP5JM, and her Jack Russell Terrier.

working. She started The Hamlet in 1990, and now, 16 years later, it looks almost brand new! If anyone is interested in operating from Turks & Caicos for a contest or for casual DXing, contact Jody via her website at www.vp5jm.com.

73! Glenn, WØGJ



One of our frequent, colorful visitors at the Hamlet.

THE DX HOG AWARD AND HOW IT ORIGINATED. THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY!



Official TCDXA Hog Award

The DX Hog Award evolved from a conversation between members, when an individual was singled-out as being a DX Hog, because of the numerous contacts he made with a DXpedition. The conversation turned out to be nothing more than some good-natured ribbing, and no one figured it would go any further.

But a few of us thought otherwise. We saw an opportunity to create a humorous award that would encourage competition among the members, and at the same time, recognize operating excellence. It didn't take long, and the DX Hog Award evolved.

The "Happy Pink Pig" became the graphic for the Hog Award. How could anyone look at the image and not crack a smile? This was the touch of humor we were looking for.

The requirements for the award were structured around operating on 9 bands and three modes: 10 thru 160m on CW, SSB, and RTTY. It was decided that a minimum of ten band/mode QSOs would be required to qualify for the award. The maximum possible number is 26. Dupe Q's do not count. WØAW holds the club record, with 22 Q's.

When available, we check online log servers to see who may have qualified for the award. In the case of operations without log servers, you can send your band/mode information (on the honor system) to the Happy Pink Pig Board of Directors.

Have fun, and enjoy the pileups. Please be advised that long periods of feeding at the trough are a normal trademark of a serious DX Hog!

73!

The DX Hog Award Board of Directors

KØOB

Achieves DXCC Honor Roll!



*ed. - The following story is a posting from Greg, **KØOB**, to the Minnesota Wireless Association reflector.*

“Today, I finally received a letter I have been waiting for since I sent in my DXCC application three weeks ago. Actually, I've been waiting 26 years for this letter! I anxiously read the letter that started with: “Congratulations! It is with great pleasure that I inform you of your qualification for the Mixed Honor Roll!”

I finally got DXCC Honor Roll! Like all goals, the journey towards it is what makes it special. It started in 1978, when, at the tender age of 16, I made my first DX contact in the 15m Novice band with G4GKG, while living in Iowa. I was excited, and amazed that the Heathkit HW 101 that I built actually was heard in England! I remember excitedly running upstairs to tell my folks, which became a ritual, with each new country I worked. I still remember how magical each DX contact felt, during those years.

Fast forward to 1992, after twelve years of being out of the hobby and now living in Minnesota, getting married, and buying our first house. I remember I didn't look at the antenna possibilities, while shopping for houses, but thinking to myself that someday I would have to get back into radio. Well, after several months,

I asked my visiting Iowa parents to bring up my old radio gear, which had been stowed away all those years.

After a long day of painting the house with my Dad, I went to the basement to check out the boxes they had brought. I wasn't even that interested in looking into the boxes but, an amazing thing happened that night. As I opened the box with my old Drake TR4CW, the smell of the radio hit my nose, and it suddenly all came back to me. The excitement, the thrills, the adventure that was radio! All those dormant radio memories exploded in my mind! My heart started to beat faster, and my palms actually became sweaty, as I imagined the possibilities of being a ham radio operator again. Except, this time I was an adult with a real job and my own money! (Being a newlywed, I quickly discovered the money part wasn't really true.)

Within six weeks, I had a used Icom 745 and a dipole. I was overwhelmed by how radio had changed in twelve years, but one thing was the same, and that was the thrill of DX! Once again, I continued my tradition of running upstairs to announce when a new country had been worked. After awhile, my wife started to question if it was a real country, or one of those made up Hamster countries? (Hamster is a term of endearment she uses for us.) The finer points of DXing were lost on her.

I remember the excitement of chasing my first big DXpedition, 3YØPI, Peter Island, with our very own KØIR. With only a vertical, I worked them on 17m CW the very first night they came on. Ha! This DX stuff is easy, I thought. Well, I chased 3YØPI on CW and phone the rest of the time they were there, and never made another Q. I remember trying for hours to get through but, after awhile, I started to notice how the locals were getting them, and on a regular basis. That's when I started listening and learning from the local masters of DX. (I think I was lucky that first night, because I believe Ralph was at the key and had an ear for zeros.)

In 1994, I put up my first tribander on the top of the house, which kind of dwarfed our little Rambler. When I asked my neighbor what he thought, he said it was #*!@ ugly, once again proving beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Now the DX came easier, even though the tribander was only at 32 feet. I even had a little AL-811 amp to throw 400+ watts at the DX. Now, I was learning to be smarter when hunting DX. One of my favorite memories is chasing 3B7RF. It seemed I just kept missing them when they were on, or just not getting through the pile ups, and the DXpedition was down to the last few days. I could see on the cluster that each night they came on 20m phone around 0230z, so I parked myself on 14.195, starting at 0200z and listened. Sure enough, at about 0230 I heard "QRZ, this is 3B7RF." I quickly dumped my call in, and was amazed when he came right back to me and no one else was there! We chatted for about a minute before you could "feel" the presence of the pileup that was about to begin. I felt like one of the deserving that night.

The fun of chasing DX continued, and I slowly built up my total, until I finally hit 325 with TO4WW in November of '03. I was excited when the card arrived last Summer but, I was getting frustrated, because no new ones were coming in the DX bulletins. I was only one away from the holy grail, yet it seemed like it would never happen. In August, I was reading the latest *QRZ DX* bulletin and saw a picture of a QSL card from 6O1Z, Somalia, from 1999, which was finally approved for DXCC. Oh boy, I thought, if only I had worked that one! The next morning, while in the shower, out of nowhere, a thought popped into my head. Didn't that 6O1Z card look familiar? I quickly got out of the shower and went to my wall of hanging QSL cards, and started to search. Incredibly, on the wall hung 6O1Z! Like they say, work 'em first, worry later!

If you're like me, and think you'll never get there, just keep the faith and be patient. I made it with wires, a vertical and a tribander never higher than 35 feet. So, proof once again, that you don't need the big hardware to work 'em. What's next? Well, I've always promised my wife that when I joined the ranks of the Honor Roll, she and our 9 year old son would get to go out for a special dinner to celebrate. Of course, in the meantime, there are 9 more to go, and I see FT/X is now on the air. As they say, "DX IS"!

73, Greg, KØOB"



**Dayton Hamvention 2005
Dayton, Ohio
May 20 thru May 22**

Once again, the TCDXA gang will be headquartered in the Flea Market, selling their valuable "used stuff," and promoting DXing from Minnesota.

Look for our smiling faces at vendor spaces 4015, 4016, 4017, and 4018. Stop by and have a Coke on us. See you at Dayton!

73,

**WØEK, NØSTL, KØSQ,
KØGX, KØIEA, KØJUH**

ELECTRONIX SERVICING

by Dave Wester, KØIEA

Owned and operated by Gary Grivna, **KØGX**, Electronix Servicing has been in business since 1976. Gary does computer consulting, sales and repair, in addition to repairing all types of consumer electronics, including amateur radio gear.

How did Gary get started in this business? Gary received his initial electronics training at NEI in 1968. While attending school, he worked for Stark Electronics, where he did factory warranty work for Dumont/Emerson. He moved on to full-time employment at Nortronics, where he installed and aligned tape heads for radio and TV stations. At Nortronics, Gary also built automatic test equipment.

His next employment was with T.L. Systems, where he built serum bottling machines for the medical industry. More expertise was gained when he went to work for Audio Design in Minnetonka, doing all of their service work.

With all this experience, Gary decided to start his own business in 1976. Electronix Servicing got off to a good start by receiving a Sylvania franchise. Then, in 1979, he made the big transition into computers by picking up the Benson Optical account, where he serviced all of their computers. Incidentally, it was there that he met Bob Shaw, **WØIM**, who was doing all of Benson's computer programming. Gary's next customer was the West Tonka public schools, where he did all of their computer repairs. And would you believe, Gary also did all the T.V. repairs for the Sunshine Factory?



Okay, why am I telling you this story? Because I believe, with Electronix Servicing, the TCDXA has a real resource to turn to for computer sales, service and consumer electronics repairs at reasonable rates.

Recently, four of us took our Yaesu MK Vs to Gary to have our INRAD roofing filters installed. The filter does what I want it to do. With the NB engaged, I no longer hear the hissing on CW from strong stations up or down the band. The filter's bandwidth is 4 kHz. See the recent article in the February 2005 QST (page 76) for more details.

I admit it; I'm an "appliance operator." I wasn't willing to risk trying to install the roofing filter and zapping a PC board with a static charge or making a slip with the soldering iron and ruining a printed circuit. Appliance operators need someone like Gary to turn to when our electronic devices start malfunctioning. I ask you; where else can you get your computer power supply replaced at 10:30 p.m.?

73 de Dave, KØIEA



Gary installs roofing filters in our Yaesu Mark Vs, while Dennis, **KFOQR**, intently looks on.



Performance on each band was checked, using Gary's IFR-Com 120B high-end circuit analysis equipment.

2005 Minnesota QSO Party - The Year of the Rover

by Al Dewey, KØAD

*"....This is the next best thing to being in the Caribbean."
Ethan, K8GU*

On February 5th, about a dozen contest fanatics jumped in their cars and put all 87 counties in Minnesota on the HF bands. I don't want to steal any thunder from WAØMHJ, who is patiently compiling all of the logs from that fun packed day. He will be issuing the official report, soon. But, I thought I might give you a perspective of what it's like to be a mobile participant during an increasingly popular state QSO Party.

Dan, NØPI, and I are co-workers at Emerson Process Management. Dan's a part-time contester, does some VHF/UHF, and is a real tinkerer. In late 2003, we started to kick around the idea of what it would be like to operate the Minnesota QSO Party as an HF Rover. Dan has a really great Chevy 2500HD Diesel Truck, equipped with *two* FT100Ds, an SGC antenna and coupler, as well as some VHF antennas. We headed out on a very **COLD** day in February, and had a ball. We covered 13 counties, and I made 501 QSOs on HF. Dan also managed to bag a bunch of contacts on VHF, over the course of the day

Based on our 2004 experience, we were really hooked, and wanted to give it a big effort in 2005. As 2004 wore on, Dan spent more and more time in my office, trying to figure out how we could get an edge this year. We had had some RF problems last year, so Dan worked on better grounding of the rig. He also built up a super, shielded, opto-isolated cable to go between the rig and the computer for CW keying. That took care of the problems. We also had problems with the rig interface. Dan was not able to get that working, but did the next best thing. He programmed in all the go-to frequencies (e.g. 7050, 14050, 7250, 14250, etc.). Changing bands was a lot easier. The antenna usually tuned is less than a second on each band change.



In 2003, Dan fabricated a cardboard "table" that slipped over the back of the passenger seat. It gave me a reasonably comfortable operating position in the back seat, but was a little unstable on those bumpy county roads. Dan improved on this in 2005, by constructing something made out of PVC and hard cardboard (see photo). It was a lot more solid, and gave me plenty of room for the FT100D, a laptop, and a keyer paddle. The final thing Dan spent a lot of time on was planning the route. In 2004, we covered 13 counties during the

10-hour period. By some careful study of the road atlas, Dan increased that to a 20-county plan for 2005. As a final preparation, we went out at lunch hour on Friday, February 4th and drove around trying things. Everything seemed to work fine, and we were ready to go.

I awoke early on Saturday morning, packed a few things in the car, and headed down to Dan's QTH in Savage. Dan was waiting in the driveway at 7:30 am, when I arrived. We did our final "pre-flight" checks, and pulled out about 7:45am. Dan suggested that we start the contest at a high spot he knew of in Scott County. We parked there at 7:55am, and were ready to go. At 8:02, we made



our first Q with **KF9D**, and we were off and running. After a few minutes, Dan started moving, as I got used to things in the back seat. As we left Scott County, and entered Hennepin at 8:23, we had 27 QSOs in the log. For some reason, Hennepin County was a real struggle. I made only 11 QSOs in 15 minutes. I suspect that it was because Hennepin was so well represented.

Next came Carver county, and things really picked up - 41 more Qs in 37 minutes. A big surprise was when we got calls from G3, DL3, and an HA7 on 20 meters. Like many U.S. stations, these Europeans would follow us from county to county, throughout the day. Things started to really move now. Every time we entered a new county, the pileups were fantastic. By the time we drove through McLeod, Renville, Sibley, Nicollet, Brown, and Watonwan counties, we had a total of 317 Qs in the log.

We decided to stop in the outskirts of Mankato for lunch. Although a 50 minute lunch break was a little bit of luxury, it felt good, especially for Dan, who was doing all the driving. At lunch time, we had 358 QSOs in the log. I couldn't tell how many multipliers we had, but noticed that we had not worked many of the other rovers. At 2:00pm, we jumped back in the truck. We continued through Blue Earth County and then into LeSueur, Rice, and Waseca. While parked along a

county road in Waseca County, we got a booming call from **WØZQ** (a mobile that we had not heard all day). Just then, Dan noticed a mobile parked about 100 yards back on the other side of the road. Sure enough, it was Jon. As he passed us, he pulled over, we all shook hands, and we were on our way again. By the time we left Waseca County, we had 433 Qs in the log. Next along our route were Stevens, Dodge and Olmstead Counties. In Wabasha County, we got a big surprise when HA7UG called us on 40 meters at 4:30 in the afternoon! Amazing!

We spent almost an hour in Goodhue County, which was probably too much. The hilly terrain in southeast Minnesota provides few direct routes through counties, but the scenery is great. Nevertheless, this is one adjustment we will try to make to our route, next year. By the time that hour was over, we had 637 Qs, but our rate had taken a hit. We entered Dakota County, and the end was in site. After 31 quick Qs in Dakota, we had 20 minutes to go, and we decided to finish things up in Washington County. Usually, there is a big flurry of SSB activity during the last 30 minutes of the contest, as guys warm up for the SSB Sprint. But, we didn't notice that this year, and finished MNQP 2005 on CW. We finished with 701 Qs in a little over 9 hours. This was a big improvement over last year but, surprisingly, this put us in the middle of the pack of rovers, this year. Dan managed 25 or so VHF Qs during the day, despite a decreased level of VHF activity, compared to 2004.

There was considerable excitement after MNQP this year – especially from the mobiles. Some of the guys got so addicted, that they are doing the same thing in the Wisconsin QSO Party a month later, and are already talking about the Michigan QSO Party.

Like many others, Dan and I are already talking about next year. Believe it or not, one rover did a multi-transmitter HF roving operation in MNQP, this year. This is something we are considering for next year.

Before I end, I would like to again thank TCDXA for their financial support of the Minnesota QSO Party. It's a great event for bringing the state together on HF.

Al, KØAD



Here's driver Dan, **NØPI**, making Qs on VHF.

The DXer's HORRORscope

A Look at DXers Through the Eyes of an Astrologer

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 18): You have the bad habit of falling asleep at the rig when you're DXing. As a result, your country total remains very low, even though you've been into DXing for years. Most Aquarius DXers own "boat anchor" rigs, and drink beer.

PISCES (Feb 19 – Mar 20): In DXing, you rely totally on luck, since you have very poor operating habits and don't have the ambition to clean up your act. Most Pisces DXers are anti-cell phones, and consider working into the Caribbean a major accomplishment.

ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19): You construct very sloppy antennas that perform poorly. You have never put up a resonant antenna. They don't stay up very long, and generally come down in light breezes. There has never been an Aries DXer who has worked DXCC before reaching the age of 75.

TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 20): When you buy a new rig, you spend days running audio checks with your friends. They always tell you the same thing: "you sounded much better on the old rig." Most Taurus DXers are very paranoid about their audio and trade rigs often. They're never satisfied.

GEMINI (May 21 – June 20): You love nasty pileups - the nastier, the better. You prefer CW, but will work SSB pileups when forced to. You hate squatters, and love movers. If this doesn't make sense to you, join the TCDXA, and get help understanding what it means. Most Gemini DXers are terrific CW operators – at least that's what they tell themselves.

CANCER (June 21 – July 22): You have huge country/band/mode total numbers. You've worked everything there is to work on every mode. Nothing gets by you. If you need a station and it lets out a peep, you nail it. Most Cancer DXers seldom leave their shack, for fear of missing a new one. Just ask their family members.

LEO (July 23 – Aug 22): You have an excellent imagination, which is counter-productive when it comes to DXing. You log stations that are not working you. They're working someone else, but you swear you heard your call. Most Leo DXers get numerous QSLs returned marked "Not in Log."

VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22): You're an avid lowband DXer. At sunrise and sunset, you can be found glued to your rig, tuning for that tiny signal that may be the rare one you need. You love winter, and hate the long days of summer. Most Virgo DXers become very grouchy, when something prevents them from operating at the gray line.

LIBRA (Sept 23 – Oct 22): You hate CW, and can't copy or send over 10 WPM. You rely on a code reader and your programmable keyer to assist you in the pileups. Being a button pusher, and badly mistiming your calls, you take pride in contributing to the pileup bedlam. Most Libra DXers refuse to improve their CW skills by practicing.

SCORPIO (Oct 23-Nov 21): You're a lazy DXer. You rely totally on DX cluster spots and phone calls from your buddies to alert you to DX activity. You spend more time in the recliner snoozing, than you do behind the rig. Most Scorpio DXers never tune the bands to find a DX station on their own.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21): You're critical of DXpeditions, in general. You don't approve of a damn thing they are doing. Even though you have never left your backyard, (your wife runs all the errands), you consider yourself an expert on propagation, logistics, transportation, etc. Most Sagittarius DXers are productive whining machines. You lament, "If they would only listen to me."

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19): You love working DX and confirming your QSOs with a QSL card. Confirming the contact electronically through the LoTW program is not your favorite thing in life. A high-tech guy you are not. You struggle with computers, software, and LoTW. Most Capricorn DXers don't trust computer logging, and maintain a paper log as well.

2004 Most Wanted Countries USA Central Time Zone

Results compiled by Carl Smith, N4AA

1 - BS7	Scarboroughgh	51 - 3W	Vietnam
2 - P5	North Korea	52 - XW	Laos
3 - VU4	Andaman	53 - 9U	Burundi
4 - VU7	Lakshadweep	54 - FH	Mayotte
5 - 7O	Yemen	55 - UK	Uzbekistan
6 - ZS8	Marion Is.	56 - EP	Iran
7 - FR/G	Glorioso	57 - KH4	Midway
8 - FT8X	Kerguelen	58 - KH5	Palmyra
9 - FT8W	Crozet	59 - P2	Papua
10 - 3Y/P	Peter I	60 - T33	Banaba
11 - 3Y/B	Bouvet	61 - VK9M	Mellish Reef
12 - FT8Z	Amsterdam	62 - 1AØ	S.M.O.M.
13 - KP1	Navassa	63 - 3B6/7	Agalea/St. Brandon
14 - VKØ/H	Heard Is.	64 - A5	Bhutan
15 - KH7K	Kure	65 - FR/J	Juan de Nova
16 - KP5	Desecheo	66 - T31	Central Kiribati
17 - SV/A	Mt. Athos	67 - 5A	Libya
18 - VK9W	Willis Is.	68 - AP	Pakistan
19 - S2	Bangladesh	69 - H4Ø	Temotu
20 - VKØ/M	Macquarie	70 - YK	Syria
21 - FK/C	Chesterfield	71 - YVØ	Aves Is.
22 - 1S	Spratly	72 - 4U1UN	UN Hq
23 - E4	Palestine	73 - 4W	East Timor
24 - FR/T	Tromelin	74 - EZ	Turkmenistan
25 - VP8O	S. Orkney	75 - TJ	Cameroon
26 - VK9C	Cocos K.	76 - XZ	Myanmar
27 - VK9X	Christmas Is.	77 - ZK3	Tokelau
28 - 3CØ	Annobon	78 - E3	Eritrea
29 - JD1/M	Minami Tor.	79 - FW	Wallis & Futuna
30 - HKØM	Malpelo	80 - XT	Burkina Faso
31 - YA	Afgahanistan	81 - A7	Qatar
32 - 3D2/C	Conway R.	82 - J2	Djibouti
33 - XU	Cambodia	83 - TL	Central Africa
34 - ZL8	Kermadec Is.	84 - TR	Gabon
35 - ZL9	Auckland/Campbell	85 - TT	Chad
36 - 9X	Rwanda	86 - TY	Benin
37 - BV9P	Pratas	87 - XF4	Revilla Gigeo
38 - T5	Somalia	88 - ZD9	Tristan de Cunha
39 - V8	Brunei	89 - 3C	Eq. Guinea
40 - C2	Nauru	90 - A9	Bahrain
41 - JX	Jan Mayen	91 - VK9L	Lord Howe
42 - PYØS	St. Peter/Paul	92 - YI	Iraq
43 - VP8S	S. Sandwich	93 - ZK2	Niue
44 - 3D2/R	Rotuma	94 - 9M2	W. Malaysia
45 - 9N	Nepal	95 - HV	Vatican
46 - TN	Congo	96 - KH3	Johnston Is.
47 - 9V	Singapore	97 - ST	Sudan
48 - KH5K	Kingman R.	98 - 3A	Monaco
49 - KH9	Wake	99 - C3	Andorra
50 - VP8G	S. Georgia	100 - FO/C	Clipperton



The WP2Z "Windwood" ham rental on St. Croix.

www.qth.com/windwood/

photo by KØTG

Answers to **DX Quiz** (on page 9):

1. KH6 - Hawaii
2. DU - Philippines
3. JA - Japan
4. H44 - Solomon Islands
5. KH4 - Midway Island
6. H44 - Solomon Islands
7. H44 - Solomon Islands
8. T3Ø - Western Kiribati
9. V7 - Marshall Islands
10. KH2 - Guam
11. KHØ - Mariana Islands
12. JD1 - Ogasawara
13. JA - Japan
(or KR6 before May 14, 1972)

Fellow DXers, Contesters, QRPers, SWLs

If you're reading this newsletter, and are not a member of TCDXA, we welcome you to our website and *The Gray Line Report*.

If you have an interest in becoming a member of TCDXA, and would like to find out more about the group, please contact any of the members listed under "Member Information," or stop by a club meeting.

