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TWIN CITY DX ASSOCIATION



Minnesota

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The GRAY LINE REPORT

DXing from Minnesota - Land of 10,000 Lakes

A Year of National Parks On The Air

by Bill Mitchell, AEØEE



Dave (WØZF), Matt (KØBBC), and Bill (AEØEE) along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway near Hastings, Minnesota, May 1, 2016. Photo Credit: AEØEE

In 2016, to celebrate the centennial of the National Park Service, the ARRL organized a year-long operating event: National Parks On The Air (NPOTA). The event was loosely modeled after the wildly successful ARRL centennial event, and encouraged operators to get experience operating in the field. Not only would the 59 national parks be celebrated, but all of the other administrative units over which the National Park Service has jurisdiction, including national monuments, wild and scenic rivers, trails, scientific preserves, and recreation areas, among others. During the event I completed nine activations, with two additional attempted



Preparations

My adventures with National Parks On The Air began in late 2015, when Matt Holden (KØBBC) suggested to that we should plan an activation of the Mississippi National River Recreation Area running through the Twin Cities, for the opening hours of 2016. Unencumbered by the common sense which most people possess, I agreed that setting up and operating portable after dark in Minnesota during the winter sounded like fun.

Matt Holden (KØBBC) and the setup for the January 1, 2016 (UTC) activation of Mississippi National River Recreation Area. The 40 m dipole and its feedline are shown in green. Photo Credit: AEØEE

activations (both VHF+) falling short of the 10 QSO minimum required for activation credit.

Throughout the event, I was struck by the similarities between some of the NPOTA activations and major DXpeditions, such as the VKØEK Heard Island expedition. Operators needed to plan not just for radio equipment and access, but also for environmental protections, food, and waste disposal. On the air, the pileups can be fierce (at least if you get spotted) and the difference between seasoned and casual operators is quite evident. For the activator, there is a tension between trying to maximize the number of contacts and exploring the wonderful and interesting place you are activating.

Our plan was to use a generator to power a single HF operating position in the back seat of Matt's Jeep while parked at Raspberry Island in St. Paul. The year-long event began at 6PM CST. We would set up a 40 meter antenna operate until it was too cold to continue. Prior to activation, we posted our plans on the NPOTA website and sent an email to the TCDXA and Minnesota Wireless Assn reflectors to enable chasers to spot us. With a short activation, food, water, and restrooms wouldn't be an issue. The urban park is not terribly ecologically sensitive, and offers a number of posts and structures which could be used to attach antennas without disturbing the local ecology.



During the summer, Matt (KØBBC), Dave Fugleberg (WØZF) and I decided to make a day of the Worthington Hamfest, and stopped at Pipestone National Monument for the afternoon. Unlike our previous urban location, Pipestone is ecologically and culturally sensitive. It also lacks structures to hold up an antenna. Rangers informed us that nothing could be staked into the ground so we opted to use Matt's Buddipole for our antenna, and used the car and some 1-gallon water jugs as dead-weights to guy it. The weather was gorgeous, so our activation was longer than on New Year's Eve/Day, and we were glad to have brought some snacks. Operating from the parking lot also provided convenient access to the visitor center restrooms and drinking fountain.

Operating

Perhaps the most thrilling part of National Parks On The Air is the pileup from being a rare one! Often the pileups were a few callers deep, especially when there were decent band conditions and a spot was just entered. A few occasions on CW, I ended up working split to keep the pileup off of my frequency, particularly when running QRP. The standard advice on pileups seemed to work well; try to get a full call sign rather than just a partial, and work them fast. Fortunately, most stations were pretty good about waiting their turn if you did come back with only a partial call sign, unlike on major DXpeditions.

When operating with two HF stations, Matt, Dave, and I generally found that bandpass filters were needed. One station was set up on the WARC bands, the other on contest bands. With three of us, two ops worked the

pileups leaving the remaining op to engage in public relations and advancing awareness of amateur radio in the community. The third operator would also sometimes fire up the VHF/UHF FM rig and see if 146.520 MHz yielded any contacts.

Although most of the contacts I made from national parks were with stations in the continental US, DX stations also participated. In a few instances, park activators were operating search-and-pounce to contact DX stations. According to the official standings page, VKØEK has contacts with five NPOTA units! My hat goes off to any operators who managed to work Heard Island from a portable station at a national park.

During the August UHF contest, Rick Clem (WØIS), Dave (WØZF), and I did a pack rove through the central Twin Cities. Rick and Dave each managed enough SSB contacts at our first site along the Mississippi River to qualify for NPOTA activations, but I ended up just short.

Two months later I went to Zion National Park, where two of my friends (both hams) were getting married. A few of the groom's family members are licensed, so as we were hiking we made a few contacts on the handhelds. Unfortunately, I came up two contacts short of a full activation, but had a wonderful time hiking with friends and admiring the cross-bedded sandstones, the remnants of ancient sand dunes.

At the end of the year, the lure of winter operating again called to me. Matt, Dave, and I prepared for one last activation of the Mississippi National River Recreation Area. Although both the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers are eligible for NPOTA and very close to



the Twin Cities, the Mississippi had fewer QSOs. We decided to choose a more rural site than for our initial NPOTA activation, where we had set up opposite a steam plant in downtown St. Paul.

Our final operation began around 1800z December 31st, with Dave on the WARC bands using a screwdriver antenna on his pickup. Matt was on the air shortly thereafter on a 40 meter feedline dipole, and having no commitments later in the afternoon and no band-pass filter, I hoisted the 20 meter antenna, assembled the 2 meter beam, and made a pair of contacts with my handheld. Matt and Dave both left between 2000z and 2100z, but left me the generator. I stayed and operated on 20 m and 40 m, both SSB and CW, until the very end. My last contact entered the log at 23:59:35z. As I was taking down the antennas, the temperature was 20 °F, not too bad for Minnesota in late December or early January.

Local Attractions

Big pileups aren't the only game in town at a national park. Part of the mission of National Parks on the Air was for radio operators to learn about and explore the parks. I took some time to see the ancient sand dunes, the potholes carved into 1.1-billion-year-old basalts by a glacial outburst flood at the end of the last ice age, the ripples left in a stream bed long before plants appeared on land, and the eagles soaring over the oak trees lining the Mississippi River bluffs.

Although much of the learning and exploring I did at the parks involved enjoying the birds, rocks, trees, and waters, the history behind

some of the parks was not always rosy. One example is Pipestone National Monument. In 1858, the Ihanktonwan Dakota Oyate signed a treaty with the US Government that placed them on a reservation 150 miles away, but secured their free and unrestricted access to a one square mile area around the pipestone quarry, which would remain tribal land. Settlers soon came to the area, but quarried on tribal lands without permission. For years the mayor of Pipestone lived on the quarry land until the US Army evicted him. Settlers and the US Government repeatedly broke promises, violated treaty terms, and moved goalposts. Over nearly 30 years the Ihanktonwan sought compensation for their land, eventually having their case decided by the US Supreme Court in 1926. They were paid nearly \$340,000, but forfeited all claim to the quarries. Finally in 1937, Pipestone National Monument was designated, and allowed members of any federally-recognized tribe to quarry, while protecting the grounds from use by settlers.

While it is fun to operate on a fine summer day with a view over the prairie, the history of the site is one of repeated injustices, some which continue today. It is important to respect and learn from all of our national parks, even if it makes us uncomfortable about our history.

Lessons Learned

From the several winter operations I have participated in, I can say that there are a few lessons to be learned about cold-weather operating. First is to be prepared for the cold. Dress warmly, in layers, and make sure that they are wind-proof (and waterproof if necessary). Good cold-weather clothing makes for





Bill (AEØEE) works VHF FM contacts from the Mississippi National River Recreation Area on December 31, 2016.

Photo Credit: KØBBC

NPOTA contacts of the year on a straight key, because it was the easiest to control while cold. Most of my code was generated at my elbow, not in my wrist or fingers. My porta-paddle iambic is mostly made from solid aluminum, which acts as a heat sink, not helpful when I need to be able to type and it's cold. To make it more cold-weather friendly, I gave the finger pads a few coats of plasti-dip, which made them a bit more insulated.

In the cold, the ink in pens can get more viscous. Test out your

a comfortable operation. Fully waterproof gloves are very handy if you need to set up or tear down antennas in the rain, or if you need to disentangle kelp from the radials or guys in standing water at temperatures just above freezing.

It is also important to keep physically active. Get up and walk or run around a little periodically to keep your circulation, which will help keep your fingers, toes, and ears from getting frostbite. This is important, because it is very difficult to operate and type while wearing gloves.

Another cold-weather consideration is your CW paddle or key. I pounded out my first

pen for cold-weather compatibility before starting your operation, or get one that is specifically rated for the operating temperature. Foods such as granola bars can also get quite a bit harder, so what's "chewy" at room temperature might be rock solid at 20 F.

Bring a thermos filled with a warm beverage of your choice. I'm a big fan of a one liter bottle of hot chocolate. It helps keep me warm, and provides some caloric intake when my granola bars aren't necessarily available.

When planning your operation, choose or design antennas that are cold-weather-friendly. My behemoth 80/160 meter fan dipole uses thumbscrews and wingnuts so that I can



assemble and disassemble it without taking my gloves off. If you're just tying ropes to hold some wire in the trees, use slipped knots such as the highwayman's hitch. These knots will let you untie the knot later simply by pulling on the free end of the rope; again, there's no need to take off your gloves. Slipped knots also work in the summer, allowing you to tear down your operation quickly to avoid being exsanguinated by mosquitoes.



Buddipole vertical at Pipestone National Monument, anchored with water jugs and a vehicle (just out of frame to the left). The elevated radial is held up by a fence post wedged in an equipment tub. Photo Credit: AEØEE

Conclusions

I had a blast last year activating and chasing National Parks On The Air. Although I did less of both than I would have liked, I really enjoyed what I did. With an urban living situation, portable operation is a main part of my amateur radio interests. I made nine activations of five parks (plus two failed attempts and one additional park).

Activating responsibly in a protected area can be a challenge, as it was with Heard Island, but it is extremely rewarding. Not everyone is physically able to operate from a scenic location, or has the tenacity to brave the elements to get on the air and hand out contacts despite in-temperate weather. However, portable operation is a wonderful learning experience, and generally leads to all kinds of memorable stories.

Now that the National Parks On The Air has come to a close, let us not forget the many wonderful things the National Park Service protects for the public and for our posterity. We can still operate away from home even without a special event, and our parks are still there for us to enjoy. Even though this was an amateur radio event, I hope it brought you closer to the national parks, and that you will continue to support these national treasures as they face the challenges ahead from climate change, urban sprawl and the whims of politicians. I look forward to seeing you on the bands and in the parks!



Using Club Log

By Pat Cain, KØPC



What is Club Log?

Club Log is a free, on-line database containing the uploaded logs of thousands of active DXers. This large database allows Club Log to generate reports on when rare entities were last active. It helps you know the best time and band to catch that DXpedition currently on the air based on actual QSOs reported from your area. Finally, it allows you to compare your DXCC totals against your friends, fellow club members, and all of the users of Club Log.

The database of current information from active DXers lets Club Log generate the most accurate “DXCC Most Wanted” entity list available. It has become the standard used by the TCDXA Donation Director to evaluate potential contributions by the club.

Security is important to Club Log. Your log is not available to other users. Only your DX totals will show up in league tables and challenges.

Club Log is a free service and does not have advertising on the site. It does rely on donations from users to pay the bills. If you find Club Log useful I encourage you to make an appropriate annual donation.

Why should I use it?

Club Log provides tools to analyze your log and track your DX progress. It also

checks your log for possible errors in the DXCC allocation of your QSOs.

DXCC Leagues show how you rank among your peers who have also uploaded logs to Club Log. Club Leagues show how you rank among the members of the clubs you belong to. During DXpeditions you can track total number of band/mode slots you worked and compare against your friends.

Club Log also provides an Online QSL Request System (OQRS). This system is used by many DXpeditions but it is also available to the average user. When a DXpedition uploads its log to Club Log, the OQRS will automatically crosscheck your log and show you which QSOs can be confirmed. Click one button to request QSL cards from the DXpedition team. There is no need to fill in the individual QSO information, Club Log already has it.

How do I use it?

Go to <https://secure.clublog.org> to get started. You can register for a new account or log in if you already have an account. Once you have a new account the first thing to do is upload your log. Most logging programs will generate an ADIF file of your log. Choose the Upload menu at the top of the Club Log page and browse for your ADIF file.

Now that you have your past QSOs in the Club Log database you will want to find an easy way to keep your log up to date. Many general logging programs have the ability to automatically upload new QSOs to Club Log. Check your program documentation to see if that is available in your logger.

If that feature is not available in your logger you will have to make periodic ADIF uploads of new QSOs.

You will receive an email from Club Log with



Number of entities needed: 9

Prefix	Entity	Most-wanted Rank
P5	DPRK (NORTH KOREA)	#1
3Y/B	BOUVET ISLAND	#2
FT5/W	CROZET ISLAND	#3
BV9P	PRATAS ISLAND	#7
FT/G	GLORIOSO ISLAND	#12
SV/A	MOUNT ATHOS	#14
ZS8	PRINCE EDWARD & MARION ISLANDS	#16
YK	SYRIA	#28
3C0	ANNOBON	#32

an analysis of your log upload, noting any DXCC entities that don't match the call sign. Club Log has an extensive database of DXCC information that is continually updated. This report is very useful for clearing up log errors. There are several tools to analyze your log on Club Log. For example, you can get a timeline of your DXCC totals over the years. Also you can see the entities you still need and their Most-Wanted rank.

Now that your log is part of the full database you can look at how you rank among others. For example, if you listed TCDXA as one of your club memberships when you registered you will be part of the

ClubLog can provide you a summary of the DXCC entities that you still need.

League for TCDXA - Twin City DX Association

KDPC ranks 16

Rank	Callsign	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	DXCC ▼	Slots	Range
1	W3UR-2	313	332	336	336	339	338	337	336	337	127	339	3131	40 yrs
2	W9RPM	233	320	329	321	338	333	334	325	327	142	339	3002	20 yrs
3	N0AT	247	312	335	323	338	335	336	331	333	61	339	2951	50 yrs
4	W9XY+1	232	281	334	252	333	320	332	280	318	6	339	2688	40 yrs
5	W0DJC	163	227	297	332	338	334	333	322	323	2	339	2671	30 yrs
6	W9JA+3	47	191	309	265	338	332	332	318	328	42	339	2502	56 yrs
7	K0QC ★	149	275	318	241	338	258	331	203	324	12	339	2449	52 yrs
8	WA0MHJ ★	140	267	301	196	337	247	326	199	302	10	339	2325	49 yrs
9	WD0DAN	0	136	219	194	337	320	322	291	305	0	339	2124	26 yrs
10	W0VTT-2	165	271	332	305	332	320	325	304	318	54	338	2726	36 yrs

This report tells you how you rank with your peers in TCDXA



CLUBLOG		Worked	Confirmed	Log Search	
VP5/KØPC		80	73	<input type="text"/>	Go
DX Call	Date	Band	Mode	Entity	
SQ9DXN	2016-02-24	17M	CW	POLAND	
DL3MF	2016-02-24	17M	CW	FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	
VE1YX	2016-02-24	17M	CW	CANADA	
W4KRN	2016-02-24	17M	CW	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	
DL5FU	2016-02-24	17M	CW	FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	
SP9FOW	2016-02-24	17M	CW	POLAND	
IK2ZJR	2016-02-24	17M	CW	ITALY	
RZ3DCK	2016-02-24	17M	CW	EUROPEAN RUSSIA	
SP6FX Y	2016-02-24	17M	CW	POLAND	
KØBLT	2016-02-24	17M	CW	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	

This summary can be used on your Web Page to allow operators to search for your call and request a QSL card from you.

Club DX League

The league below is based on all of the QSOs in active members' logs. Only the primary callsigns of members are considered. The data should be interpreted with care if the number of members in a club is much less than the full membership expected.

Clubs having fewer than 15 members are not included. Updated once every 7 days. Last updated: Fri, 10 Feb 2017 10:26:31 +0000.

Tip: You can click the headings to sort the table.

Position	Club Name	Members*	Years QRV	DXCCs
1	TCDXA - Twin City DX Association	28	37	320
2	CDXA - Carolina DX Association	51	40	315
3	MHDXA - Mile High DX Association	16	37	314
4	FOC - First Class CW Operators' Club	103	35	310
5	599DXA - 599 DX Association	22	30	309
6	BCC - Bavarian Contest Club	85	27	308
7	NIDXA - Northern Illinois DX Association	27	33	307
8	CADXA - Central Arizona DX Association	35	31	304
9	FRC - Frankford Radio Club	46	33	302
10	GPDX - Grupo Português DX	22	29	301

TCDXA leads all DX Clubs in the average number of confirmed DXCC entities in logs uploaded to Club Log.

TCDXA Club League. A portion of the TCDXA Club League report is shown below.

One of the other nice features of Club Log is an embedded log search for your web page. I have done this for my VP5/KØPC and VP5K logs on their QRZ.com web pages. It allows operators to search for their call and request QSL cards by mail or via the QSL bureau.

TCDXA Leads the Way

It is interesting to note that the Twin City DX Association is at the top of the list of Club DX League. What this means is that TCDXA leads all DX Clubs in the average number of confirmed DXCC entities in logs uploaded to Club Log!

If you are not already a Club Log user, why not sign up and keep TCDXA at the top of the list?

Conclusion

Club Log is a powerful tool to analyze your DX log and help you snag that next rare one. Join the thousands of DXers who already use it and enjoy its many features.



XWØYO - CQWW CW and More from the Lao PDR

By Tony Wanschura, KMØO

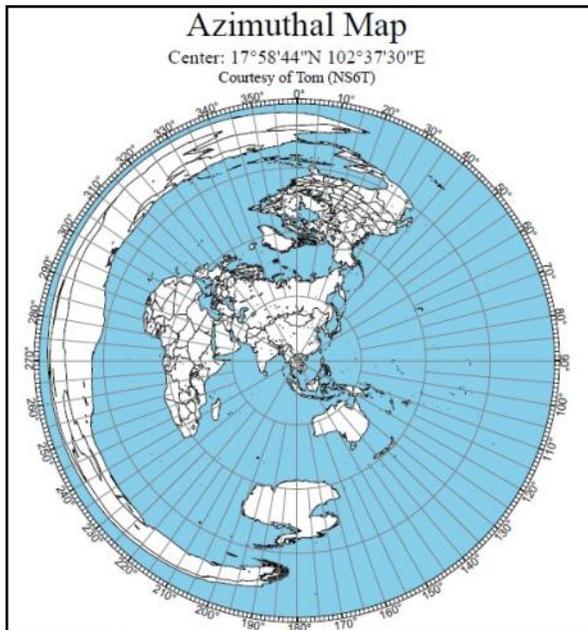
Late last year, I visited Laos and Vietnam for five weeks. The last four weeks were divided between Danang, on the central coast of Vietnam, and the Mekong Delta in the far south, sightseeing and visiting friends. The first week, though, was all ham radio, in and around the CQWW CW contest, from a few miles outside Vientiane, Laos.

About Laos

Laos (the Lao people prefer "Lao" or "Pathet Lao"; French colonizers added the "s") is a small landlocked country in the heart of SE Asia, stretching from about 14 to 22 degrees north latitude, and bordered by Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, China, and Myanmar. It's length and diverse topography, from



The XW4XR location, showing the shack and the compound walls



The world from Laos. Eastern NA is tough on the short path.

the cool, high, craggy mountains of the north along the Chinese border to the low southern plains along the Mekong River result in wide climate differences at every time of year and lots of ethnic diversity. Those attributes alone make Laos a fascinating place to visit, but what I like most about Laos is that, in addition to lots to see and do, it's basically a very quiet, laid-back place. Its official name is "Lao PDR", where "PDR" stands for "People's Democratic Republic". But to those who really know the country, "PDR" also means "Please Don't Rush". Vientiane, the capitol, is the only Lao city that qualifies as "big", with growing big-city problems like traffic congestion and pollution. The rest of the country is basic countryside SE Asia at its very best.

The location I operated from is outside Vientiane and not far from the Thai border. The winter weather in that part of Laos is just about perfect, with daytime high



temperatures in the mid 80s, with clear, sunny days and cool nights. This was the best weather of my trip, by far; my next few weeks, farther south in the Mekong delta of Vietnam and along the coast, had rain nearly every day. In contrast to the pleasantly warm winters, the summer heat is brutal, but even during the Lao winter the high afternoon sun can quickly drive you into the shade, something I discovered while helping to lay down a mile of radials one afternoon.

The Station

The station is in a compound owned by a telecommunications company. One of its employees is Bruce (XW4XR, 3W3B), who has a home and station there. The transceiver was a borrowed Yaesu FTDX-5000, which is a good-performing radio that, in my opinion, has way too many knobs and tiny pushbuttons to be practical for contesting. I do my bandpass filtering in my head, rarely set the radio narrower than about 600Hz, and just don't see the need for multiple different ways to tweak my passband. Also, I like a radio that's easy to use when I've gone more than 24 hours without sleep, and the 5000 just isn't it. It seemed like I was always accidentally enabling some feature that I didn't want, which I then had to figure out how to turn

off. I like Yaesu radios, but the learning curve for the 5000 is pretty steep. The 5000 did perform very well, but I truly missed my Elecraft K3. Again, just my opinion...

The 10/15/20 antenna was a 2 element Lightning Bolt quad at 80 feet, which got out really well, and was broad enough to cover JA and US (northeast) and EU (northwest) without touching the rotor. The 40 meter antenna was a SteppIR BigIR vertical, which was just okay.

You really need an antenna with some gain and front-to-back to hold a frequency working into EU from Laos, and to minimize the almost constant illegal Indonesian fishing boat SSB QRM that trashes most of the 40m CW band. On 80 and 160 there was a full sized quarter wave 160 meter wire vertical, trapped for 80 meters, with about fifty 135-foot radials. It worked very well on transmit, but I felt that I was getting out much better than I was hearing. There was always a persistent "swarm of bees" buzzing away in the background, just slightly too weak to copy. The receive situation for 80 and 160 is now much improved, due to a new 8-element vertical receive array just installed (a couple of weeks after the contest, of course).



The 2el Lightning Bolt performed like quads everywhere: Surprisingly well for it's size.

There was plenty of antenna work to do when I arrived. All the radials for 80/160 vertical needed to be laid down. The BigIR vertical I had been counting on for 40 meters had been damaged in a storm, so we splinted it temporarily with wood stakes and duct tape. We were lucky to have the stakes and duct tape on hand. One huge drawback to Laos is that you





Repairing the BigIR vertical. Use what you have: Duct tape and wooden stakes

can't just run down to a local home-improvement store for stuff like that, like you can in Thailand or the larger cities of Vietnam. Repairs that should be simple get jury-rigged for lack of proper hardware and tools. Getting spare parts is a problem, too. The only international shipping service in Laos is DHL, and it is very expensive.



Cold beer, Lao style.

Lao Food (and Beer!)

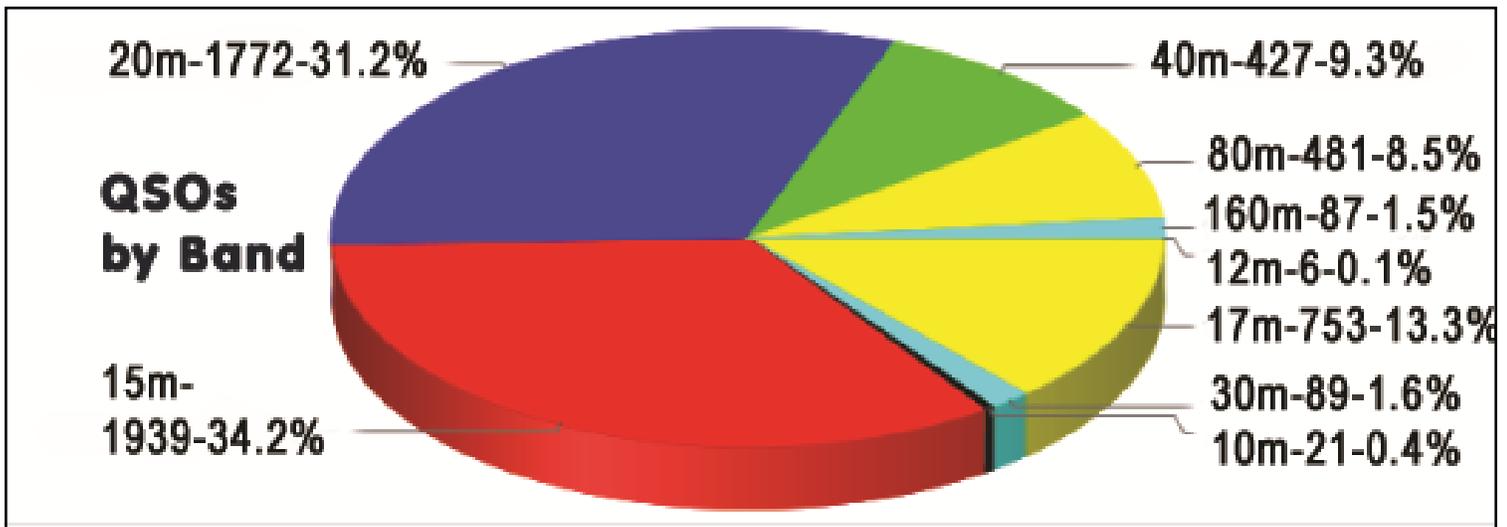
There is nothing spectacular about Lao food, but it is generally pretty healthy. Lots of rice and stir-fried vegetables, but the best part for me was the Lao sausage and roast pork. Different parts of the country produce different styles of sausage, and comparing them can be a real adventure. Often, it's better to not ask what you're eating. Just try it. Chicken is also important in the diet, although chickens run free and the meat can be a little tougher than what we're used to here. But, to me, they taste like chicken ought to taste.



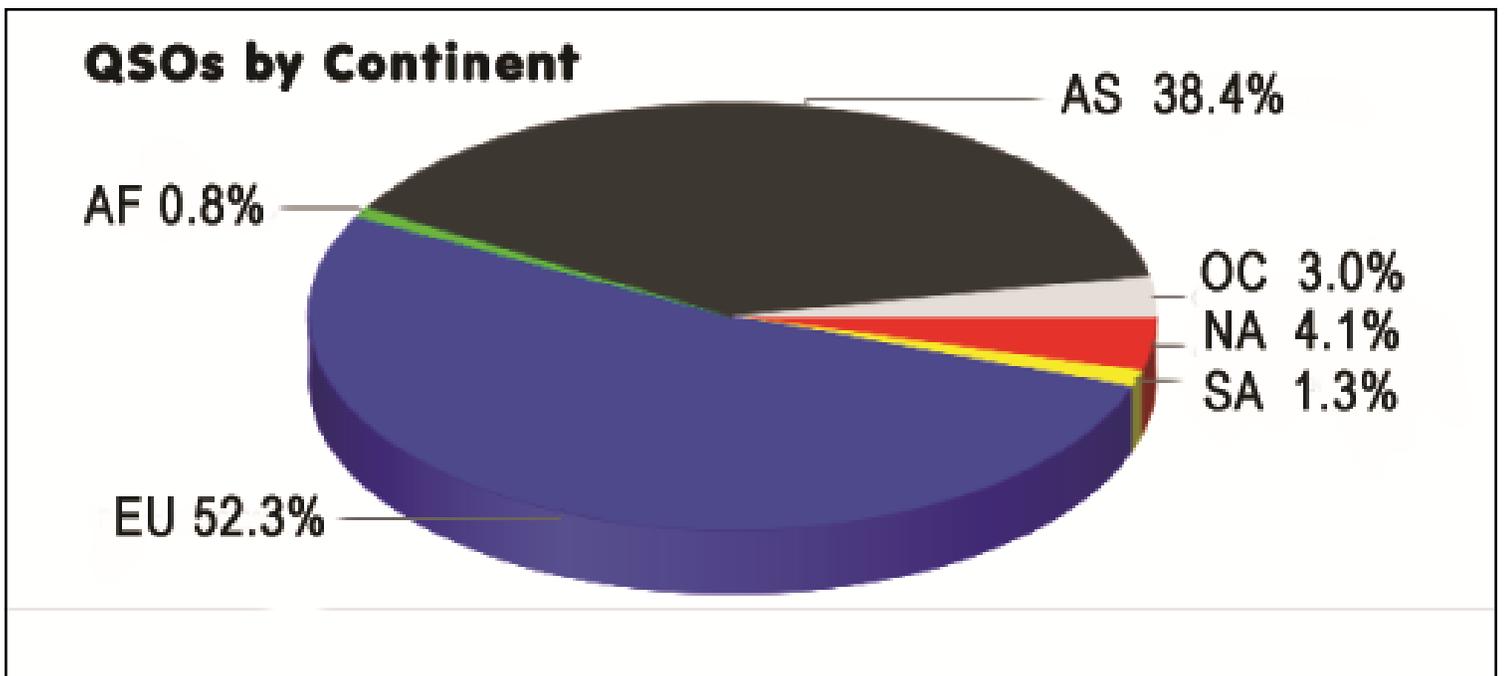
The splinted BigIR. Yes, it held up

Almost all beers in this part of the world are lagers, not too different from Coors and Budweiser, and most are a little too sweet or watery for my taste. A few are simply undrinkable. (If you visit, just ask the local expats; they can save you a lot of time and misery, and when in Vietnam don't drink 333 brand.) That said, afternoons in this part of the world can get pretty warm, and are best spent on the porch in the shade with a few cool ones at hand. Cold beer is often hard to find outside of the larger cities and away from bars and restaurants that cater to foreigners. Order a beer, and you'll likely get a warm can with a glass of ice.





Number of contacts and percentage of total by band



Percentage of total contacts by continent

Bruce has solved this problem by building an arrangement with the owner of a roadside market stall just down the road from the compound. She recognizes his vehicle when he passes on the way in, and puts a case of Beer Lao in her refrigerator. We go back the next morning and pick it up cold, and the same again each day until we leave. Just like in ham radio licensing in this part of the world, it helps to know the right people.

XW Licensing

Licensing in Laos is pretty straightforward, though some aspects of it may make some people think twice. Application is made through the Ministry of Telecommunications. In my case, the application was shepherded through the process by my local friends who had existing relationships with the authorities. The application must specify the exact location you'll be operating from, so there can be no moving across



town, or even across the street for better antenna supports. The normal license term for a resident operator, at this time, is six months, and renewal application must be made every six months. That policy can easily change whenever the government personnel change. As a visitor, my license term was one month, and the fee for that one month was \$285. This was pro-rated, which makes the six-month rate pretty pricey. All licenses are individual; there is no such thing as a club or group license in Laos. You need deep pockets to be a resident ham there!

At my time of application, I thought I had the callsign issuing policy figured out. For the few years preceding, the authorities would issue XW plus the number and suffix of the applicant's current foreign callsign. Bruce, AA4XR, was issued XW4XR. Great, I thought, I'd probably get XWØO. But no such luck. I got XWØYO. Why the Y? Who knows?

QSO Statistics

Laos is definitely in demand by hams chasing DXCC and other awards, and, of course, in the CQWW CW contest. Between recovering from jet lag, repairing antennas, laying radials in the sun, and frequent beer breaks with Bruce under the shade of the veranda while watching the chickens, I made just fewer than 5700 total contacts between pre-contest operation and the CQWW CW contest. All contacts were CW. I had planned on doing some SSB, but I just never quite felt like subjecting myself to a phone pileup. Sorry, maybe next time!

Of those 5700 contacts, 25% were JAs. The one great thing about JA stations is, in Laos, JAs are available constantly, in quantity, on one band or another; pretty much 24 hours a

day on 20, 30, and 40 meters. You really do work the guys running 2 watts into an attic dipole or a mobile whip. It's a nostalgic reminder of what 10 meters sounded like in CQWW during the sunspot peaks three or four cycles back. For contest purposes, JA's are worth only one point each and often got in the way during the contest when I knew to expect NA stations (and other higher-point stations) calling. Fortunately, politeness still pretty much rules Japanese ham radio culture. There are some signs that their sense of order is wearing a little thin, but nearly all would stand by for a minute or two to let me listen for NA, even in the contest. At 25% of total, they kept me from starving during slow times, but EU stations were the contest bread and butter, at 52% of total.

NA stations amounted to only 4%. Best bands and times for NA were 20 meters between 2300 and 0300 UTC, and 40 meters between 1100-1500 UTC and 2200-0000 UTC. Openings were spotty and short. I made a real effort to find zones 3, 4, and 5 on as many bands as possible. With conditions as poor as they were, I felt I'd be fortunate to work just a very few stations in each of those zones for multiplier value. I only managed all three zones on two bands, 40 and 20 meters, in spite of listening specifically for NA as much as I could get away with during peak times. No zone 2 or zone 6 stations were worked on any band. Only three MN stations made it into my log in eight days of operating. A marginal opening on 17m a few days before the contest brought a contact with NYØV at 1251Z, with Tom beaming long path. KØIEA made it into the log about an hour later on 40. I also had a 40m contact with Tom a couple of days later, at 1258 UTC with him beaming SW. My only Minnesota contest QSO was on 20m with Mark, KØKX. I heard a weak "KØ", to which I responded "KØ?", then a much stronger



"KØKX", then Mark's response as he faded out. Long Lake, MN had the XW propagation spotlight that day for a few vital seconds, just long enough.

Ferocious Pileups

I was honestly taken aback by the size and ferocity of the contest pileups, especially in the final hours. I'm talking now about pileups in which callers are centered around the DX station's own frequency. (Contests generally don't allow the sublime luxury of working "split".) XW4XR routinely activates Laos for a week or so at a time, maybe four or five times a year. He is very active and a good CW op, but the demand for XW is still large, especially on the low bands. In CQWW CW, pileups were large enough and unruly enough to require some unusual measures. The

problem can't be blamed simply on the desire for another multiplier. The size of the pileup is as not as much of a problem as the fact that, with few exceptions, spotting network users' transmitters all land on the same frequency. When that happens, it becomes impossible to make out ANY callsigns at all. Often, I had no choice

but to just QSY and start over, or QRX for a few minutes, then grab a few more contacts.

By signing my call as seldom as possible, I hoped to have a few moments before getting re-spotted. But sooner or later I'd be spotted again, so I had to get creative. I needed to find a way to respond to someone, anyone, quickly, to maintain a regular rhythm and control in the pileup and keep the QRM level under control. Unable to pick out individual callsigns or even prefixes much of the time, I found I could

move things along by throwing out random prefixes or suffixes. If I was running EU, for example, there's a good chance that there would be a DJ and OK or LY, among others, calling. So I'd repeat "DJ" a couple of times, and sure enough, one or several would come back, or something close enough. Or I'd go back to a made-up suffix, and work everything close to it. Sometimes it was "WØ?" (I could always hope!) This got enough callers to QRX long enough for me to pick someone out of the pile and keep things moving well enough to maintain a rate of 120 contacts per hour. I could not have dealt with the huge zero-beat pileups without resorting to this. It became a sort of game, guessing which prefixes would be most productive, and trying to be fair to everyone at the same time. Pileup callers could help DX stations immeasurably by simply off-

setting their TX frequency by 50-200Hz or so, up or down, but very few make the effort to do this. Spotting networks and laziness are responsible. This is not good for our hobby. Just my opinion. (*Editor Note: Stay tuned for some additional pileup tips from Tony in the July issue of the Gray Line report.*)



Running JAs on 30m.
Orderly. Split frequency.
What a luxury!

Conclusion – A Great Place from which to Operate

XW is the best place to operate from that I've found in SE Asia so far. Surprisingly, there was no detectable man-made noise at the compound, and Bruce has consistently observed propagation from this particular area of Laos to be significantly better than from his HS and 3W locations.

Laos is my favorite country in SE Asia, an endlessly fascinating place to visit, and I'll definitely be going back.





Collecting our daily case of cold beer



Grilled meats at a roadside stall



Left: the freshest produce possible

At the market. I have not tried the dried fish



Bouvet: “The Most Isolated Island on Earth”

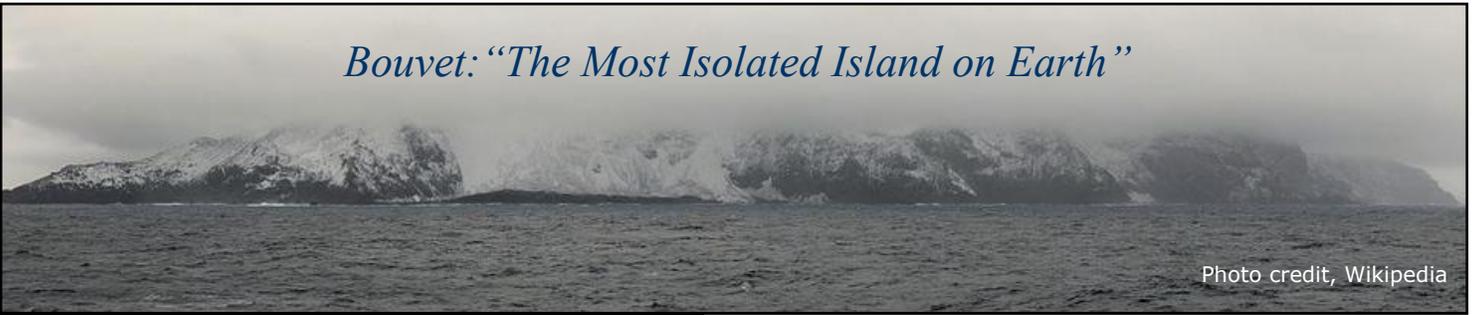


Photo credit, Wikipedia

Bouvet Island DXpedition; an Update, 3YØZ

By Ralph Fedor – KØIR

Alphabet Soup

Remember this stuff? You dip into it and see what sense you can make of the letter-shaped noodles in your spoon. It kind of reminds you of Bouvet doesn't it? You look into the broth and there's 3YØG. Then 3YØH floats by and here comes 3YØI. Oops, 3YØJ just spilled from your spoon. And then there's 3YØZ. What is one to think of all this? Being in this cauldron (we're 3YØZ) our group was interested in sorting this out too. Here's what I can tell you.

If anyone is going to Bouvet this year, they had better be there by the time you read this. If not, the weather is going to provide them with a very exciting time. Not good, but exciting. We've had verbal conversations with all these players. All appear to be out of the running, save one who remains half obscured in the murky broth. One needs to remember that ego can trump reason and only a few letters separate “could do” from “should do.”

But considering the time, difficulty in securing reliable transportation to the island, necessity of a helicopter to get on the island safely, movement of cargo and supplies, and the financial resources all this entails; I sus-

pect there will only be one operation from Bouvet. That's 3YØZ. This is perhaps a bit blunt for a Minnesotan, but it's how I see it.

Let's have another look into the bowl. Where is 3YØZ with all this? Team wise we remain intact. We've had one individual cancel and considering that 20 team members are involved, we might well have others. But our bench is deep with eager and qualified backup operators. Our transportation options remain viable and all our permits and licenses are secure. Our primary equipment sponsors, DX Engineering and Flex Radio Systems have been outstanding and have put us on track for a full-scaled attack on the ionosphere, from 160 to 2 meters with legal limit power levels and efficient antennas.



Tim Duffy, K3LR of DX Engineering (primary sponsor) discusses antenna supports with Ralph Fedor, KØIR and Glenn Johnson, WØGJ



Heating this pot is propagation. How's that look? What can TCXDA members and other North American hams expect? Thanks to Stu, K6TU, I've had the opportunity to look at a lot of propagation models. NOAA estimates the SSN to average 17 to 18 during our time at Bouvet; it could dip as low as 8 and as high as the upper 20's. Somewhat surprisingly, average translates into decent propagation with 10 meter openings just brushing the east coast. Fifteen meters and below should open across the entire U.S. with 15, 17, and 20 meters peaking in TCDXA land at 1800, 2200, and 2300 UTC, respectively. Look for peak signals on 30, 40, 80, and 160 to occur around 0200 UTC. Our workload will vary during the day. From 1000 to 1400 UTC we may only have three bands open. At 2100 we could have seven bands open

However, to make this the best recipe ever, we need more of one critical additive, funding. I'm overwhelmed by the generosity of clubs like the TCDXA and individuals worldwide. But this is very expensive cuisine and we need to find every possible funding ingredient. We have almost a year of fundraising ahead of us, so I'm cautiously optimistic and I think to myself, *Please, let every QSO be rewarded by the cost of a bowl of alphabet soup.*

ARRL Raises Fees for Use of Outgoing QSL Bureau

By Al, KØAD

Effective November 1, 2016, the ARRL implemented a price increase for use of its outgoing QSL Bureau service. The cost per ounce (about 10 cards) has risen from \$0.80 to \$1.15. There is now no minimum fee but a \$7.00 service fee will now be added to all submittals to the outgoing bureau. The increase has stimulated

much discussion on both local and national e-mail reflectors. While several have questioned whether this rather steep price increase is "taking something away" from ARRL membership benefits, others have pointed out that it is quite reasonable in light of ever increasing postage costs. Jay, KØQB points out that current member dues pay for only half of the services provided by the league, while reminding us that ARRL dues increased only recently after 13 years without an increase. He also points out the tremendous benefit that Log Book of the World (LOTW) has been to members chasing DXCC countries and other awards. Scott, KØMD reminds us that those who make a tax deductible donation to the ARRL Diamond Club received free QSL bureau and LOTW service for life after a certain giving level.

Another suggestion many have made is to be sure to define your QSLing policy on your QRZ page. For example, a reasonable policy might be:

- Respond to all QSLs only if it includes an SASE. Sufficient postage for DX cards must be provided.

- Frequent posting of your log on Logbook of the World (LOTW)

- No response to eQSLs (This is a personnel preference)

- Respond to cards received from the ARRL Incoming Bureau via the ARRL Outgoing Bureau one to two times per year

There are many other variations of the above. Recently I worked a GW3 on 80 meters. I needed that country confirmed on 80 meters. I looked him up on QRZ.COM and he said that he does not collect QSL cards and did not want cards sent to him. If you needed his card, he simply requested 2.50 euro be sent his PayPal account along with a short e-mail requesting a card. I did so and had his card within a week. I thought that was a pretty painless way to get a needed confirmation.



Suriname Supply Run

By Matt Holden, KØBBC

Ramon, PZ5RA, was yearning to get a repaired radio back into the shack and make further enhancements to his growing antenna farm, so I make a four day visit to his Suriname QTH in January 2017. Originally I had no plans to operate in a contest as I arrived early Friday morning and flew home Monday afternoon.



Besides a repaired FT2000 , KØBBC delivered some additional supplies to PZ5RA on his recent trip to Suriname

On Wednesday January 25, I flew to Miami and stayed overnight at the hotel attached to the airport. The hotel could use a fresh coat of paint, but its location meant I could wheel my bags right into my room without leaving the airport. I was loaded down with 3 bags of equipment for Ramon and didn't want to mess around with hotel shuttles. I brought a Yaesu FT-2000, 300 feet of coax, 600 feet of rotor cable, Yaesu G-1000DXA antenna rotor, Alpha Delta 4 port antenna switch, Daiwa SWR meter and PL-259 connectors. The coax weighed 66 pounds so I had one over-weight bag (70 pounds max on Delta and Surinam Air), a 3rd bag on Delta and a 2nd & 3rd bag to pay for on Surinam Airways. I had over \$500 dollars in baggage fees to pay for



Surinam Airlines (surprisingly without an "e") flies into Paramaribo, Suriname.

two days of travel. My flight from Minneapolis to Miami and Miami to Paramaribo (with a one hour stop in Georgetown, Guyana) was uneventful. All flights arrived on time and all luggage arrived, intact, with me at Johan Adolf Pengel International Airport.

Sixty and six meter operations planned

By 2 A.M. I was on the air and operating on 75 and 40 meter phone. My goal was to get as many North America West coast and Pacific stations in the log on these lower bands as possible. The early morning run benefited mostly European stations. Several U.S and one JA and VK station were logged before I went QRT at 0800 UTC. After 1000UTC



sunrise, I delivered Ramon his DXCC Honor Roll plaque along with 160 and 6 meter DXCC certificates. Following the award and equipment delivery, Ramon showed me his station upgrade plan. His goal is to put up a third tower for six and sixty meters. He has built his own 8 element six meter yagi, on a large boom, from an old HF antenna. This will top the tower. In addition he will have an inverted V dipole for 60 meters hung off this tower. Both bands are in demand from Suriname and should provide great fun to future visitors and PZ5RA.



Temporary Six meter Yagi at PZ5RA's QTH.



QTH of PZ1EL

Seeing the sites

Sunday we took a drive into the capital city, Paramaribo. We had lunch at Ramon and Ernie's (XYL) favorite Chinese restaurant.

The menu was in Chinese and most of the restaurant patrons spoke Chinese. Many of the small plates that spun by me on the lazy Susan were a mystery to me, but, tasted deli-



KØBBC enjoys some great Chinese food with PZ5RA and his XYL, Ernie

icious. Deep fried chicken feet are an acquired taste and tasted better than I expected.

On the North end of the city, I visited the office and school supply store that the family operates. Ernie and daughter Mimi operate the store Monday through Saturday. Nearby, we drove past PZ1EL's shack. Ramon (not related) recently returned to the airwaves, but has a great deal of antenna repairs and tower work ahead of him before he's on all HF bands.





Office Planet is PZ5RA's office supply business that helps him support his hobby

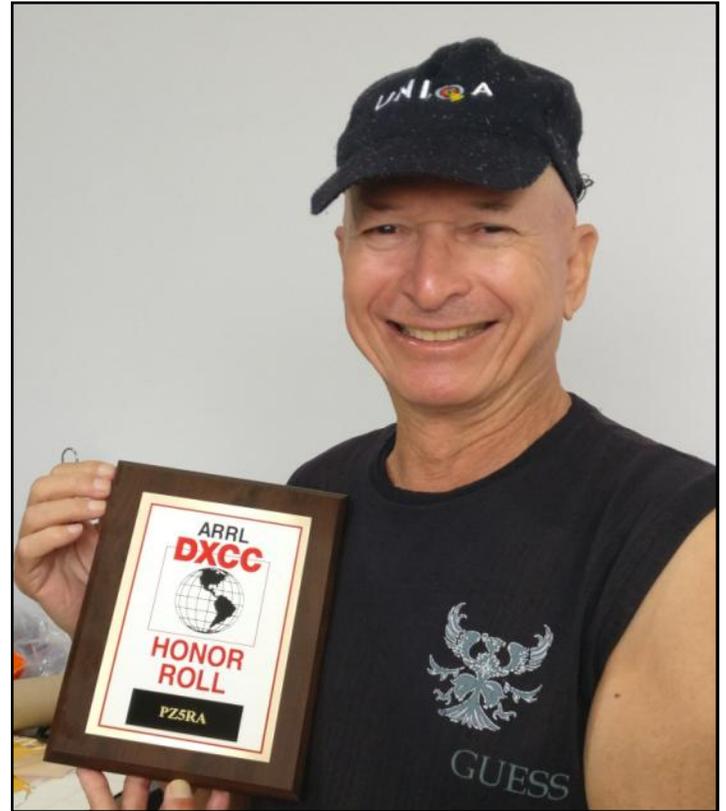
Suriname is a melting pot of cultures and religions. I visited a mosque, synagogue and an all wood cathedral in the capital city.

In addition, we walked past the president's house, parliament and Fort Zeelandia, the 17th century fortress that was used by the French, English and Dutch to rule the colony.

Final QSOs

On Monday morning, I awoke a few hours before sunrise to work the Pacific on 75 meters. I started working North America at 10:00Z and got several North America stations in the log before working JA2ATE at 1010Z as the band closed. On 40 meters I worked 3D2JS 10:35, FO5JV 11:01 and JR7AMZ 11:17 before moving up to 20 meters at 1200Z and a European pile-up that lasted until going QRT at 12:42Z and the start of my drive to the airport. My advice to future visitors is get up early and take advantage of the propagation to regions outside Europe and North America.

It was a short and fruitful trip and I already have dreams of operating six and sixty meters on my next visit. Thank you to Ramon, Ernie, Mimi and grandson Ryan for good conversation, good food and wonderful hospitality.



Ramon, PZ5RA proudly displays his new DXCC Honor Roll plaque hand delivered by KØBBC



The PZ5RA guest shack at sunset.



Computers and Ham Radio, a Personal Journey

By Robert Chudek, KØRC

Today, choosing a new computer

to use in your ham shack can feel just as complicated as choosing a new car or a new house! If your trusty shack computer has been serving its purpose, you may have not kept up with all the new innovation. In the computer industry things are changing at a head spinning pace.

As you know, the old LPT and COM ports are pretty much history. Even the USB ports that replaced them have gone through an evolution; USB1.0, USB 1.1; USB 2.0, USB 3.0, and more recently, USB 3.1 or USB 3.1 Gen 2.

And that's only one hardware technology. Of course you remember 5-1/4" drives, then the smaller 3.5" drives. Laptops forced even smaller formats like the 2.5" and 1.8" sizes. Those are now beginning to vanish in favor of Solid State Drives which supply data near the speed of light!

USB thumb drives are very popular, convenient, and transportable. But this is storage that allows you to misplace gigabytes of data in a coat or pants pocket! Small media cards the size of your fingernail, are easily lost when slipping under your keyboard or a piece of paper on your desk! No longer is a disk crash your enemy, it's misplacing your favorite storage device! The files I need are often "in the other pair of pants at home."

Throw on top of all that hardware evolution, the software evolution. Windows 1, 2, 3, 3.1, 95, NT 4, 95, 98, 2000, ME, XP, Vista, 7, 8, 8.1, and now Windows 10. I won't even mention PC-DOS or MS-DOS. It all started in

1981 only thirty six years ago.

So when the shack computer bites the dust and you begin looking for a replacement, what do you do? Do you find another old workhorse or make the jump to the latest and greatest technology? Personally, I have wrung the last penny of value out of every computer I owned. My upgrade criteria were to upgrade only if the performance of the new system was twice that of the old system. In the early days that was fairly easy to compute. Today with multi-core processors and advanced memory addressing schemes it is a little more difficult to compare system A against system B.

There is a website I use to help sort out performance of CPUs, Video Cards, Drives, and

Upgrade only if the performance of the new system is twice that of the old system

other system components. That is the **Pass-Mark Software** website at <https://www.cpubenchmark.net/> where they claim to have benchmarked more than 800,000 different CPUs! Explaining all the tools available on this website is beyond the scope of this article, but you can really "geek out" on this website if you are so inclined. My primary use was to reveal the ranking of different CPUs. For example, was an Intel Core i7-4770S @ 3.1 GHz clock more powerful than an Intel Xeon E5-2440 at 2.40 GHz clock that cost an additional \$100? I'll leave it to you to look it up and find the answer.

We must also make the choice between Apple products and PC products. I am sure you are aware the ham radio environment is strongly biased to the Windows/PC platform. There are excellent applications that run on



the Apple O/S and Linux, but I do not have recent hands-on experience with those platforms. I can only offer an acknowledgment that they exist. My caveat is about the support available for ham radio specific integration. In general it will be more difficult to find ham radio knowledgeable people to help solve any issues outside the PC environment. That's simply due to the disparity of the user base on each platform within our hobby. My career was in the pre-press graphic arts and printing industries. The Apple computer systems dominate those industries. I gravitated to the PC for my radio station needs due to the abundance of really neat things that were developed for that platform. For example, the original Packet Cluster system only ran on a PC. I had no choice.

Plunk down \$300 to \$700 for just about any PC computer system today and it will satisfy the needs of the average ham

With the comments and opinions I have stated up to now, I'll take the plunge and provide a broad brush, generalized statement . . . you can plunk down \$300 to \$700 for just about any PC computer system today and it will satisfy the needs of the average radio operator. Today's systems are a bargain, even compared to computers sold just a few years ago. They all have the power, memory, and other resources to run your applications and control your shack. Multiple high-resolution monitors are even becoming a standard in many shacks.

The primary purpose for a computer in most stations is to log your QSOs and control some external equipment, such as your radio, a rotator and possibly antenna switching. Every

computer is now fitted with a sound card system. New software has eliminated a lot of costly hardware that was needed for specialized digital modes (RTTY, SSTV, PSK, WE-FAX, etc.). And more recently, specialized software provides communication modes for which proprietary hardware had never been developed (JT65, JT9, etc.).

New software has eliminated a lot of costly hardware that was needed for specialized digital modes

Of course an internet connection is a requisite that lets you surf the net or collect spots during a contest if you want to operate in the assisted class. In my shack I have both wired 1-Gb and Wi-Fi access to the internet. The contesting computer uses Wi-Fi which will eliminate a potential source of RFI ingress via a network cable. A wireless keyboard and mouse are other devices to consider for the same reason. I can tell you that internet Wi-Fi is totally adequate for contesting. My hardwired GHz internet connection supports my development computer where upload & download speed is more important to me.

Flashback; many years ago, my station consisted of a bulky desktop computer, a transceiver, a couple RTTY controllers, an amplifier, and a horrendous number of cables connecting the keyboard, mouse, monitor, speakers, and all the other equipment together.

Oh, and I almost forgot, a high-speed 1200 bps dial-up modem. The rats' nest of wires had to be labeled on each end or I would waste a lot of time trying to figure where the connections needed to go. Today all that has



been simplified with a few interconnections thanks to Wi-Fi, USB and my MicroHam controller. The ends of the cables are still labeled, but there are relatively few compared to the old days.

It was both a sad and joyful day when I finally retired my homebrew CW/FSK/PTT interface. That interface was almost as old as I was (almost!). It had been powered from the LPT port on that old desktop computer for years. I had resisted the change to a new interface, but not being able to operate RTTY in the BARTG 75 (Bauds) Sprint was the final straw after sitting out that event two years in a row.

[It was a sad and joyful day when I retired my homebrew CW/FSK/PTT interface.](#)

I do know some nostalgic items cannot be replaced. For example, 55 years ago my mother had a new kitchen sink and counter top installed. The carpenter cut out the hole for the sink and tossed that piece of laminated wood onto the scrap pile. I retrieved it and created a foot switch for my Novice station. I still use that homebrew foot switch today.

Okay, fast forward back to this century. One change I did make a while ago was to ditch the desktop computer in favor of a laptop computer. I bought a Dell that would slip into a “docking station” which allowed me to pull the computer out and take it with me whenever needed. I didn’t have to fuss with disconnecting any cables because they remained attached to the docking station. This was the era when laptops still had COM and LPT ports. The docking station provided additional COM ports as a bonus. I used that con-

figuration for over a decade.

During that period of time I had everything in my house running on Windows XP across a small wireless network. This allowed me to test the original N1MM logger in a network configuration as those guys continued to develop their software. I clung tightly to XP and watched Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8, and finally Windows 8.1 being rolled out by Microsoft. Once again I was resisting change (or still being stubborn) about abandoning XP. XP was comfortable, XP was stable, and XP was doing everything I needed. Nothing needed ‘fixing’.

But then the N1MM team rolled out their new N1MM Plus! That software was created in a new development environment (MS Visual Basic .NET) and it pretty much swamped my old laptop. Yeah it would run, but agonizingly slow . . . and I could take a nap while I waited for the RTTY engines to launch if I wanted to operate that mode. The laptop performance was just adequate as long as I stuck to CW or Phone contesting.

I made a bold decision (as if I had a choice) and I ordered a new Dell laptop that came with Windows 8 installed and a free upgrade to 8.1. Now I had the horsepower I needed to run the new generation N1MM+ software. The laptop had a 4-core Intel CPU (Intel i7-3630QM if you want to look it up on Pass-Mark), 8-Gb of RAM, and a solid state drive. It felt like I moved from a Chevy Nova to their Corvette!

My excitement didn’t last long. Lo and behold, the “new & improved Windows user interface” that popped up was a flashback to



the old AOL dashboard from the 1990's. I joined the loud chorus of users who hated Windows 8. Remember I grew up as a "C:\\" type of guy. I was derailed by the mess I saw on my Windows 8 screen. Quickly I discovered a great utility named "Classic Shell" which was designed specifically for this situation (Thanks KA9FOX). This free program recreates the traditional look & feel of earlier versions of Windows. I still use it today.

Although I am retired, I volunteer at the county historical society and I am responsible for their in-house technology. They had an older HP laptop running Vista Home and a Windows 7 desktop for their main computing needs. The laptop was not being used so I upgraded that computer first to Window 7 and later to Windows 8. I eventually upgraded their desktop to Windows 8 as well. Each of these computers was fitted with Classic Shell so the office staff could continue using their familiar Windows 7 interface.

Then Microsoft started pounding all these computers with their free Windows 10 upgrade offer. I used the society's original HP Vista laptop as the guinea pig and accepted the free upgrade. I immediately ran into a serious problem. The video chip manufacturer had not provided drivers for the new operating system. The display would only run in 640 by 480 resolution and that was totally inadequate. The screen supported a 1280 x 1024 format. Searching the internet I discovered I was not the only person afflicted with this issue. All of the affected users had decent (but granted, older) laptops that would not display at higher resolutions

with Windows 10. I continued digging around on the internet and finally came up with a "hack" that allowed the higher resolution video driver to install and function properly. That HP laptop was later fitted with a solid state drive and has been performing nicely without any further problems running Windows 10 Pro. It supports the Microsoft Office Suite, Publisher, a custom database program, and I even loaded N1MM+ to verify that would also run. It does.

By this time I was getting more comfortable with Windows 10 and the Classic Shell combination. I decided to start upgrading my own computers while the free offer was still valid. I did not experience any problems installing on my own systems. I eventually upgraded all of the historical society desktops to Windows 10 too. The operating system has been very stable and it is supporting both office type software and any radio software that I have tried. As another experiment, I purchased a low-end RCA 10.1" Cambio tablet that uses Windows 10. I have N1MM+ running on that device too, although I have not connected it to any station interfaces. I was simply curious whether it would run, and it does. And no, I would not recommend using one for Field Day, tempting as it might sound.

Software Migration is a Major Issue You will Face when it comes Time to Replace an Existing System

There is a major issue you will face when it comes time to replace an existing system with something newer. That is your software migration. Although there are methods to move existing applications onto the new computer, I have always shied away from this approach. Modern software keeps track of where all the requisite program and user files are stored.



My recommendation is to do a “clean install” of all your software

If the directory and access privileges are not identical on the destination computer, the software is not going to work properly. A while back Microsoft forced adherence to access rights within different directories. Deviating from this standard is unwise. It is BEST to load your software using its default settings and let it select the correct program and file locations.

My recommendation is to do a “clean install” of all your software. Yeah it’s a tedious task and takes some time, but it forces you to adhere to the new software standards. Moving your data files can be done after the software is up and running on the new computer. Software user groups are helpful in providing guidance of what files should be copied to the new system and which files should be left behind. A frequent problem encountered is the new computer will assign different port numbers to the external connected devices. I find it easier to setup from scratch than to reverse engineer “what is was and what it is now” scenarios. After the new computer is setup, another consideration to think about is buying an external case to install your old HDD into. This will allow you to plug the old drive into any USB port and access all the old files directly.

(Editor’s note: One other issue plaguing new computers today is “bloatware”. Bloatware is the multitude programs that are pre-installed on new PCs. Many of these programs are limited trial versions designed to entice new users to buy or subscribe to the full-featured versions. These programs can consume large

amounts of RAM and storage. In the worst cases, they are trials that crash after the trial period and lock up. Software developers pay to have their software installed on new computers. Margins on computers are so low that that the manufacturers are looking for any revenue stream. You can go through the programs one by one and delete the offenders. But that is slow, tedious and may not eliminate all remnants of the program. I prefer to wipe the hard drive clean and reinstall the operating system. Make sure you save your OS product key so you can reinstall it on your clean hard drive. One must also be careful about downloading and installing needed programs like Java and Adobe Reader. Pay close attention not to check or accept unwanted changes in your settings. WØJMP)

A great place to get immersed in computers and technology is MICRO CENTER ® in St. Louis Park, MN

Regarding “Windows Auto Update” I have that feature activated on all my computers. That has been nearly trouble free for me. The exception is occasionally I have had to force a manual reboot on the oldest desktop computer. It seems the auto reboot gets hung up on that machine and does not restart as expected. I do allow all my computers to run 24/7 and Windows 10 is smart enough to reboot at times of the day or night I am not using the system. That said, I always close my contest program when I am done operating to avoid “asking for trouble” with my contest logs.

This story has been my recent history (past 15 years) of moving up the hardware and software technology ladder. Each person has different ham radio goals and budgets, and each



station is unique. As mentioned previously, modern computer equipment is a bargain. Hardware has become a commodity and it is very competitively priced. A great place to get immersed in computers and technology is MICRO CENTER in St. Louis Park, MN. There are a couple other “roll you own” shops around the Twin Cities but I have not engaged with any of them recently. I do purchase ‘manufacturer refurbished’ late model equipment from resellers on eBay. These places offer warranties, which I have yet to need. I avoid bargains from the tailgate of pickup trucks.

I wouldn't expect to migrate from one computer to the next in a couple hours, or even an afternoon

All said, there certainly can be validity to the “if it's working, don't fix it” concept. If a system is working and satisfies your needs, especially if it performs a specialized function, then it can be wise to “let sleeping dogs lie” as the saying goes. But don't be disappointed if you want to run newer generation software on older computer hardware. You could run into similar issues that I experienced where the old hardware was just no longer adequate for the new software or a specific driver is not available.

And as a “final final”, I wouldn't expect to migrate from one computer to the next in a couple hours, or even an afternoon. It has taken me days, even a week or more, to tweak everything to my liking on the new system. Just like getting into a new car, all the controls are in different locations and all your repetitive motion memory flies out the window!

Jeff May – WØXV – SK



Jeff displaying VU1NRO QSL card which gave him #1 honor roll (Photo from June, 2005 issue of Gray Line Report)

Long time TCDXA member Jeff May (WØXV) passed away on February 24th of this year at the age of 74. Jeff was diagnosed with an aggressive form of liver cancer just days ago and fought bravely before losing his battle while surrounded by loved ones. He was a beloved father to 4, grandfather to 13, and devoted companion to 8 special dogs. Jeff was an Air Force Veteran, an accomplished business man, and an active member in his community. He was first licensed as KN4RSD in 1957 at the age of 14.

Many TCDXA members have fond memories of WØXV, especially when he lived in the Twin Cities. Here are a few remembrances of Jeff by TCDXA members:

Kirk, NØKK: “To those who knew him you know he enjoyed the art of the trade or deal in used equipment. He liked to try new radios and amps. Well when he was parting with an Ameritron AL-1200, in mint condition of course, I called him up and told him I'd take it off his hands and play with it for a while at my shack. So I drove out to his home where



he had the amp all fired up for a demo. We then packed it up and off I went. A couple days later I had it in-line but, alas, it would not work. It wouldn't even turn on. I called Jeff and he was a baffled as I. I mean we'd just been using it. We talked it over thinking of what could have gone wrong. I think he even called out to Burghardt's to see if Jim had any ideas. Nothing...then it hit him a day or so later. He had pulled out the fuse(s) forgetting to tell me or give them to me. What a hoot. I always admired that big Quad he ran with too. Quite the antenna."

Larry, WØPR: "My Jeff story is when in the 90s things were a bit thin for me, I sold off some gear including my amplifier. One day Jeff drove into my yard in his Corvette and handed me a Heathkit 3-500Z single tube amplifier and told me no the DXer should be without an amp. A year or two later when things were better and I wanted to upgrade my amp, I tried to give it back to him but he told me to trade it in against the better amplifier. That's just the kind of guy was, generous and caring."

Mike, KØBUD: "Jeff May was one of the most kind and sharing guys I know in our hobby! He was giving and concerned about all. I visited him some time ago when he was recovering after a major illness and his kind appreciation for my visit could not be matched. He loved to trade radios and was anxious to have you get the better side of the deal. Many years ago I asked him for a simple two meter radio for a friend. I told him

that the guy didn't have a lot of money but would reimburse him. Jeff gave the radio to my friend and wouldn't hear of reimbursement. He did it with little fan fair and was anxious to hand it off to my friend. Jeff May was a great caring guy. I will miss his quick hi's on twenty. I only wish there were more kind and caring guys like Jeff May in our hobby. As far as a tribute I can best say "He gave a darn and was anxious to show it!"

Tom, WØZX: "Jeff May was a long-time friend. He was the "complete" radio amateur. I vividly remember my first visit to his QTH in Chaska. I had never seen a shack that had three operating positions, each in its own room. Jeff was a devoted AM operator as demonstrated by the wealth of old-time Collins AM rigs, many coming in eight-foot tall relay racks. When he moved to Mississippi, his main concern was that his radio museum pieces would survive the move! Jeff was one of those guys you could call with a technical issue and he would show up and have the correct solution. If you were lucky enough to call Jeff a friend you knew you had a friend for life. My amateur radio experience was enriched being able to call Jeff May my friend. May he rest in peace."

TCDXA Welcomes our Newest Members!

Jack Bravis, NØNV, Fridley
Dan Royer, KEØOR, Bloomington



Chuck Munce, KØSQ - SK



Long time TCDXA member Chuck Munce, KØSQ pass away on February 17, 2017. He had suffered a heart attack earlier and was in the ICU at Mercy Hospital at the time of this death. Chuck was first licensed in 1956 in Sioux City, SD. His previous call was KØGJX. Chuck's claim to fame in the DX world was being the first DXer in our area to obtain 6 Meter DXCC back in 2001. Additional details on Chuck's very impressive DX credential on 6 Meters are available in the September, 2006 issue of the Gray Line report available at: <http://www.tcdxa.org/Newsletters/September2006Grayline.pdf>. Chuck was a friendly guy and a common fixture at TXDXA meeting for many years. He will truly be missed.



Chuck earned first six-meter DXCC in our area in 2001

Join TCDXA

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

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

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

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

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



**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>.



Treasurer's Report– Pat Cain, KØPC



TOP LINE SUMMARY

**TCDXA OPERATING BUDGET FY 2017
(Sep 2016 - Aug 2017)
March 1, 2017**

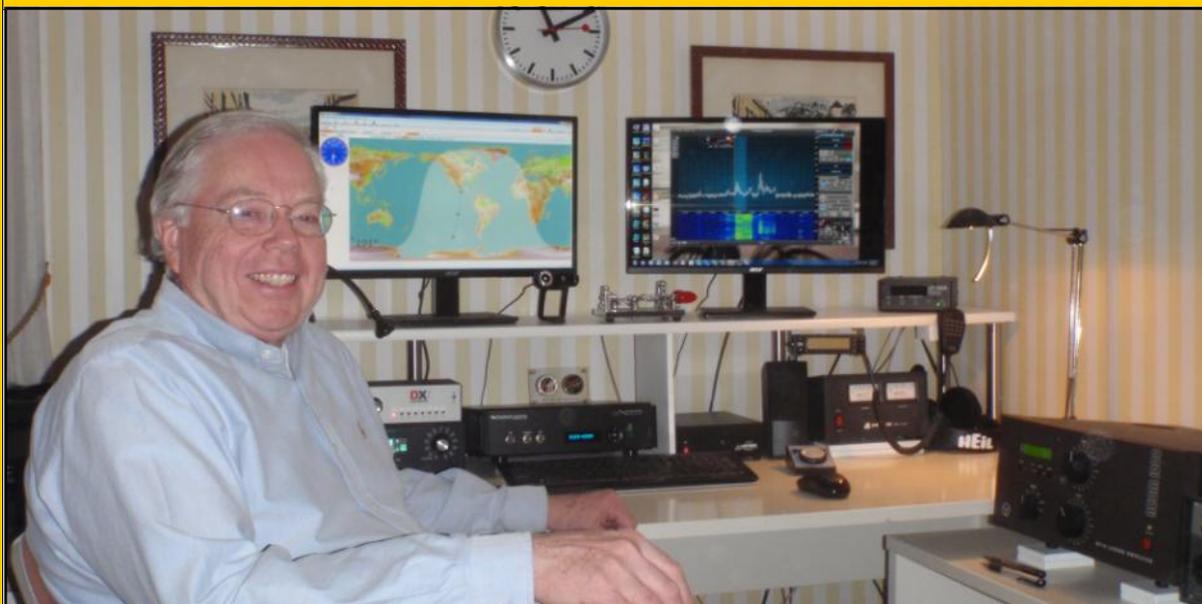
INCOME	ACTUAL	BUDGET	Actual 2016
Surplus from FY 2016 (balance 8/31/2016)	5200.20		4165.60
Member Dues 2017 by Cash/Checks/PayPal	4482.87	4800.00	4751.59
Door Prize Ticket Sales club share	326.00	500.00	756.00
Donatons (estates, wills, etc.)	0.00		
Refunds and Reversals	5.79		13.00
TOTAL INCOME	10014.86	5300.00	9686.19
EXPENSES		BUDGET	Actual 2016
Member Recruitment/Retention	0.00	(300.00)	0.00
Website ISP & Domain Name	(65.88)	(70.00)	(44.26)
Office Supplies, Miscellaneous expenses	(54.30)	(150.00)	(30.43)
Flowers <SK> and Hospital gifts	0.00	(200.00)	0.00
Holiday Party 2016	(433.15)	(400.00)	(257.52)
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	(4505.68)	(6000.00)	(3801.23)
#1 DXpedition - 3YØZ Bouvet	(3,000.00)		
#2 DXpedition - TL8AO Central African Rep	(250.00)		
#3 DXpedition - VP6EU Pitcairn Island	(255.00)		
#4 DXpedition - XX9D Macau	(750.68)		
#5 DXpedition - XW0YO Laos	(250.00)		
#6 DXpedition	0.00		
#7 DXpedition	0.00		
#8 DXpedition	0.00		
#9 DXpedition	0.00		
TOTAL EXPENSES	(5134.01)	(7545.00)	(4558.44)
NET	4880.85	-2245.00	
Checking balance	4725.85		
PayPal balance	0.00		
Cash / Checks on Hand	155.00		
NET BALANCE	4880.85		

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



Tom Weigel

ABØJ



Sometime during the summer of 1957, my parents gave me a tabletop AM radio. It was light beige in color, had a large illuminated tuning dial and five pushbuttons that could be set to go immediately to a station, just like a car radio.

Here was my first and very own radio. I could listen to favorite stations, almost at any volume, in my south Minneapolis room. I discovered a whole range of content and soon found WDGY at 1130 on the dial. I would listen to WDGY almost exclusively, until the songs repeated endlessly because of the limited Top-40 playlist at the time. Piano practice was now competing with my radio time!

Soon I began listening on the family Philco console. Equipped with a standard record-changing turntable and a heavy second tonearm for actually cutting records, plus an AM-shortwave band radio...here was all I needed!

Early Years

I remember listening to shortwave broadcasts, and gradually discovering where they originated from around the United States, and sometimes foreign countries. Maybe this was an early introduction to DXing?

About two years later, a long-time family friend, and a member of the Wheaton Amateur Radio Society who moved from Evanston, Illinois to Minneapolis, introduced me to real amateur radio. Steve had a General license, and a dream



station composed of a Central Electronics 20A with VFO, the 600L auto-tune linear, a Drake 2A and a triband quad antenna at about 35 feet. It was 1961, I was 14 years old, a Novice and studying for my General. Steve would let me operate his station Saturday mornings, being always close by, asking if I had contacted any of his Chicago ham buddies on 20 Meters. And once in a while I did! I never worked any DX, only making domestic contacts, but by then I was really hooked on amateur radio! Soon we moved to Edina, and eventually my Novice station consisted of a Hammarlund HQ-129X and Heathkit DX-40 feeding a 15 Meter dipole. As WNØEGT, I began entering contacts in my ARRL log-book. After five months as a Novice, I passed General and became WAØEGT. My station then was a Viking Pacemaker and Drake 2B/2BQ, with a well-used Hy-Gain TH-2 Junior tribander my father purchased for \$30. Before we moved, I made friends with Gary Rickheim through church, and we soon discovered our shared interest in electronics and radio. I clearly remember Gary riding his bike to my house, and the two of us tuning the Heathkit AR-3 receiver my father and I built, finding AM ham stations, and trying to pick up Sputnik (never did!) I developed an interest in building antennas and regularly making small changes to my station. I remember making dipole antennas, then taking a giant leap and building a full-sized homebrew 20-meter quad, made with bamboo poles and #14 house wire. This is when I began working some DX on 20 Meters! I remember my first DX, a CW contact I made with a ham in France! I used the quad atop a Spaulding 48-foot tower, which stood on an earth auger base (no concrete).

A Long Pause

Due to two job changes, work-related travel and some family needs, I became inactive in ham radio from about 1968 to 1992. I simply did not have the time to maintain my radio interests, much less to be on the air. Thus, following two renewals, my General license expired. The other major contributing factor was sailing. I became a highly competitive scow sailor, racing on Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis, as well as on lakes around the Twin Cities, in Iowa and Wisconsin. I also was Secretary/Treasurer of the Inter-Lake Yachting Association. My spare time seemed to be swallowed by work, sailing, and by downhill skiing. Ham radio was not back on the horizon again just yet.

A Return to Radio

During the early winter of 1991, while recovering from the flu, mental wanderings reminded me of the pleasant memories associated with ham radio and of the personal accomplishment and enjoyment derived from the hobby. I bought several ARRL license manuals and began studying. My CSCE's tell me I was relicensed in 1992, and by 1997 I passed my code Extra exams and ended up being ABØJ.

My new station consisted of a Butternut HF9V, a Yaesu FT-767MkII and my dusty J-38 straight key. The key was the only item I still had from my first ham radio days, having sold every radio item I had to help support expenses related to obtaining my Bachelor's Degree in Architecture and Journalism from the University of Minnesota. But, I was back into radio!



Catching Up

Rediscovering amateur radio was exciting, as the addition of computers greatly added to the enjoyment of the hobby! I found that my early background in radio and some electronics greatly contributed my understanding of computers. I am not a programmer, and have never programmed anything, except to set up and use several digital software programs. However, background gained from ham radio greatly helped me to understand computer hardware and software programs.

My working career began at SuperValu, in the marketing department. Along with one other person, I wrote, art directed and photographed a 220-page catalog for a division of SuperValu. After about ten months, I left and found my next job at WDGY-AM radio in Bloomington, Minnesota, as Sales Promotion Manager. Very recently I found out that Mike Sigelman, KØBUD, preceded me at the station by about a year, in the same job, working with the same DJ's.

I stayed at WDGY for two years, but decided I wanted to return to the creative side of advertising and marketing. I interviewed, and was hired as a

copywriter in Dayton's Advertising Department. After six years of writing, and changing jobs a bit in the department, I was made Advertising Manager for seven years, and then was moved over to Finance for five years, and then back to Advertising. I worked at the downtown Minneapolis store, 11th floor, for 27 years. Through all the years away from amateur radio, I simply had other interests, but continued to notice the occasional large beam and tower, or a vertical or wire antenna.

After returning to ham radio, I discovered new technical aspects in the hobby and software automation which were all computer-related. During my first go-around in the hobby, along with the thrill of DXing, I really wanted to set up an RTTY station. Now, with computers and new software that was free, this was easily done! I began to enjoy RTTY DX early in the mornings, before going to work, using only 100 watts. My station then consisted of an FT-990 (a great digital rig), and Mosley CL-33 beam.



ABØJ's current station is includes a new Flex 6500



No amplifier, but great fun!

Along with working DX, I also began to buy and restore the rigs I remembered from early ham radio days. As a result, I now have a collection of Collins and Drake equipment, some of which I have brought back from ‘nothingness’ to working on the air. In electronics, I am completely self-taught, but find great satisfaction resuscitating these rigs and using them on the air. My collection also includes several Icom rigs from the ‘80’s, built just before Icom ventured into DSP-related radios.

The Present Station

Recently I purchased a Flex 6500, which has become my go-to transceiver. The Flex is great fun, has what I consider a highly selective and sensitive receiver, and to me is intuitive to use. The rest of my station consists of the Mosley CL-33, now with the WARC element, a Butternut HF2V and a random-length long wire for shortwave listening. The amplifier is a wonderful ACOM 1000, which is easy to tune and highly effective. The ACOM is wired for 240 volts, and just loafs along, virtually silent.

Currently, I am restoring a WW II BC-348Q receiver, modified by a previous owner who added an internal power supply in place of the dynamotor. Initially the receiver just did not work, only producing an annoyingly loud 60-cycle hum and burbling noise in headphones. I have rebuilt the power supply, replaced some electrolytics and reworked some soldering and wiring. The ‘BC now receives, the loud

hum is gone, it is great on AM, but I find that the BFO was snipped out of circuit. Listening to SSB and copying good CW will return after I have repaired the BFO and reworked the crystal oscillator circuits.

My current interests still include RTTY, along with some CW and SSB, but remain focused on DXing when time allows. I have seriously worked only one contest, the ARRL International DX SSB, using CT for my contest log. My rig then was the IC-765 and IC-2KL/AT-500 combination. It worked very well, and I enjoyed making more DX contacts on 20- 15- and 10-meters. I’m planning on working this contest again in March, 2017! I also enjoy using Ham Radio Deluxe, MMTTY, PSTRotator and N1MM+. Occasionally, I build a station accessory from scratch, usually described in a *QST* article, and continue to experiment with wire antennas. My basement test gear consists of only a few pieces of test equipment, which includes an HP 410C VTVM and HP 8601A sweep generator.

Looking Ahead

Not having ever worked *from* a DXCC entity, I still greatly enjoy DXing. I have not achieved DX awards, and realize I have a long way to go to make DXCC! Other activities include some golf, downhill skiing in Colorado, sailing and, when conditions are favorable, DN class iceboating on local lakes. I am blessed with many good friends, now spread out across the states, including several families in Europe. My travel adventures continue to include skiing and sailing. I also enjoy operating portable with an IC-751A and my homebrew tunable vertical antenna. I’m certain that I provide hours of enjoyment for my Edina neighbors whenever I work on my



wire antennas or roof-mounted beam! As a member of the Bloomington, Minnesota VE Group, I help to bring some new hams into the hobby.

My long-time good friend and radio pal, Gary, WØARW is also my backyard neighbor! We get together every week or so, between club meeting, to discuss ham radio, propagation and generally solve world problems!

I continue to be thrilled with making DX contacts, especially breaking pileups, even though current propagation presents its own set of challenges. For me, radio continues to evolve, to excite and to fascinate!

Thanks go to my parents, again, for giving me that first AM radio and Heathkit AR-3 receiver kit!



Tom's current antennas includes a Mosley CL-33 (with an additional WARC band element) and an HF2V vertical





The MWA Contest Corner

CWT Contest Provides a Mid-Week Contesting Fix

by Al Dewey, KØAD



A number of TCDXAers are getting a mid-week contest fix by participating in the CWT contest each Wednesday. Actually, there are three CWT events each Wednesday – one at 1300Z, one at 1900Z, and one at 0300Z (Thursday local time). Each contest lasts one hour. CWT’s are sponsored by the CWops organization (more about that later). The exchange is simply name and CWops member number. Rather than using sections as multipliers, the total multiplier in each of these events is the number of different stations worked over the hour. Participants who are not members of CWops provide

their state / province instead of CWops number. You can enter as High Power, Low Power, or QRP. All CWTs are CW only.

Propagation dictates which bands are used for the CWTs. The morning CWT (7:00 AM local in Minneapolis) usually starts briefly on 80, then 40 and finally 20. The early afternoon CWT (1 PM CST) start on 15 if it is open, followed by 20, and then 40. Finally, the evening CWT (9 PM local) usually starts on 40, then 80, and then 160. The bands are not hard and fast, and like I said, are based on propagation at the time. Many of the top CWT contesters use it to hone their SO2R (Single Operator, Two Radio) skills. Although most of the participation is from North America, these are worldwide events with DX calling in when propagation permits.

The results for each CWT are posted immediately by participants at www.3830scores.com. Within 10 or 15 minutes after each CWT is over, you can check that site to see how you did against the competition. I enter the CWTs each week to practice running and refine my SO2R skills. As with any normal contest, I set a goal for myself. This is typically 100 Qs if I am running low power and about 120 if I am running high power.

Once a year, CWops sponsors the “CW Open” contest usually in August or early September. The CW Open takes place on a Saturday and is a more formal version of the Wednesday’s events. The format is the same but usually there are more stations to work. Again, you can enter in the Low Power, High Power, or QRP category. You can compete in each of the three

Single Op LP					
Call	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score	Club
K7SV	127	95	1	12,065	PVRC
KØAD	122	96	1	11,712	MWA
NØ5W(@W5GAD)	100	85	1	8,500	LACC
KØEJ	100	76	1	7,600	TCG
K1DW	91	83	1	7,553	Lou CC
W8CAR	84	78	1	6,552	NCC
NØAC	83	74		6,142	IaDXCC
W7ZRC	85	71	1	6,035	
KM6Z	79	75	:55	5,925	SCCC
K4OAQ	79	73	1	5,767	

CWT scores are available immediately after each event using the www.3830scores.com site.



events during the day or for an overall score in all three hours. There is also a provision for team competition. Plaques are available for the winners. I was fortunate to win a plaque in this event a few years ago.

The CW Operator's Club (CWops)



As mentioned earlier, the CWT's are sponsored by the CW Operator's Club (or CWops). The goal of the CWops organization is to bring together Amateur Radio operators who enjoy communicating by Morse Code (CW). CWops encourages the use of CW in Amateur communications, and it supports CW activity through planned events. CWops promotes goodwill among Amateurs throughout the world, and it fosters the education of young people and others in matters related to Amateur Radio.

One activity CWops sponsors is CW Academy which helps new hams to develop CW proficiency. CW Academy sponsors an eight week on-line course that helps you either learn CW from scratch or improve proficiency. Several times a year the CWT events described above restrict their code speeds to 20 WPM so that new graduates of CW Academy can comfortably participate. What a great way to give not only get new CW operators on the air but also expose them to contesting. While many bemoan the aging of the contest population (especially on CW), CWops is actually doing something about it.

For those who would like to join CWops, just contact an existing CWops member to sponsor you. When two additional CWops endorse your nomination, you are in. As a member, you are assigned a member number (which you use in the CWT events described above). CWops

puts out a great newsletter on a periodic basis. There are small dues for all members. A list of existing CWops members is available at the CWops Web Site at: www.cwops.org. Some existing TCDXA CWops members are KØHB, WGØM, WØOR, KØPC, KMØO, KØTC, KØMD, and WØBV. I may have missed a few.

CWops also sponsors some fun awards. For example, there is now a CWops – WAS Award. You can get this award by working a CWops member in each state. There are also annual and cumulative awards for working a number of CWops members.

If you are going to Dayton this year, be sure to stop by the CW Operators Club booth and learn more.

MWAers and Others Honor Tod, KØTO in North American QSO Parties

It is common practice for testers to honor Silent Keys in contests where the first name is part of the exchange. In the January North American QSO Parties sponsored by NCJ, members of MWA and TCDXA honored Tod Olson, KØTO by using the name "Tod" instead of their own first name. Tod, who was an active tester, DXer, and ARRL league official, passed away on November 12, 2016. As a participant in both the CW and SSB version of these events, I was honored to use Tod's name. Many of the people I worked knew Tod and were very complimentary of Minnesota honoring him in this way. Many asked "Who is Tod?". In either case, memories of Tod were put into the minds of hundreds of testers during the NAQP events. Paul, WØAIH, surveyed all those who passed out the name "Tod" in both the CW and SSB version of the North American QSO Parties and came up with a total of **10,051** QSOs that were made using Tod's name. What a great tribute to a Minnesota amateur who added so much to our hobby.



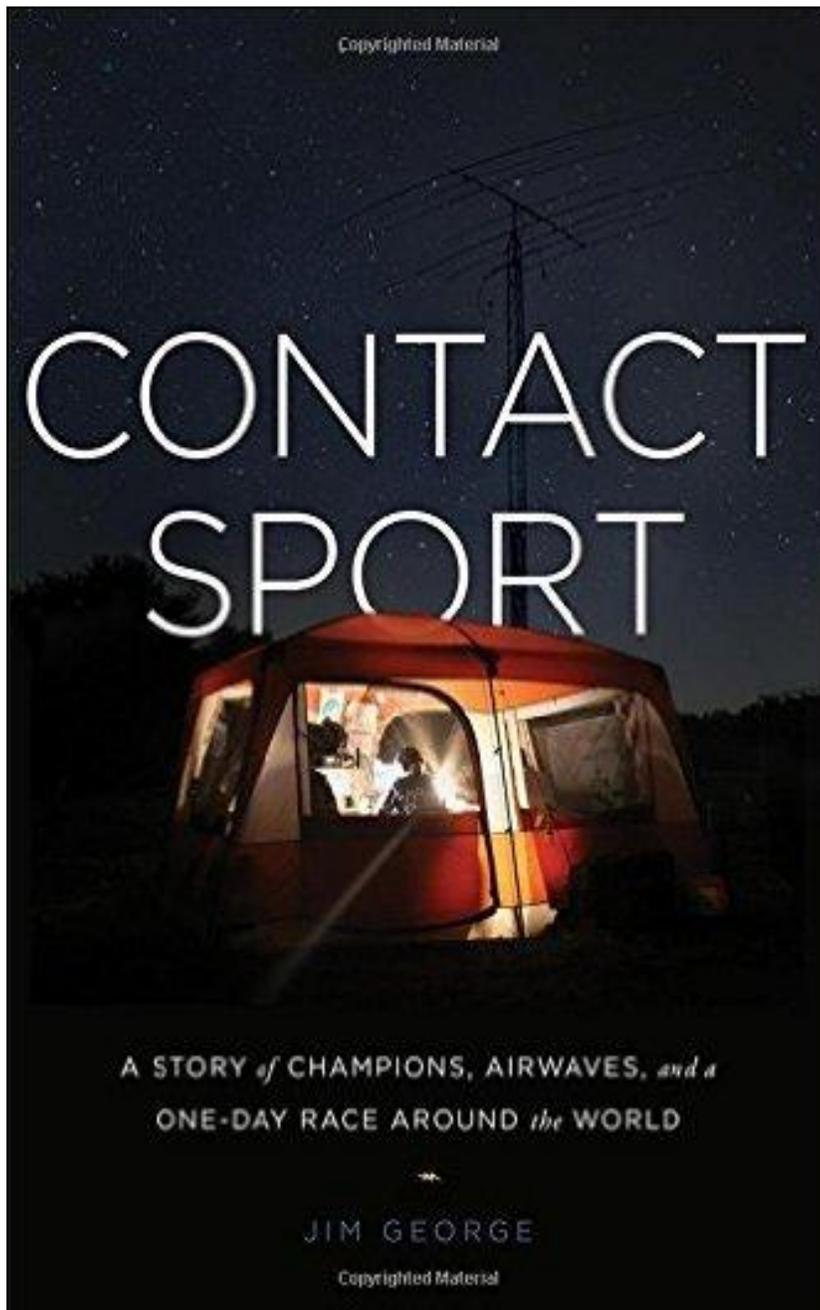
N3BB's "Contact Sport" a Great Read for Contesters and Non-Hams Alike

Although WRTC 2014 in New England is now a distant memory now, you can relive much of the drama though Jim George's book entitled "Contact Sport". I read this book last summer and really enjoyed it.

I have to admit that I was somewhat skeptical at first – wondering how interesting a book about radiosport would be to me

especially since I do so much of it myself. However I was pleasantly surprised when I read it. As most of you probably know, WRTC 2014 was a competition among 50 contest teams operating field day style from tests around New England. George skillfully described what it was like being in one of those tents to the point that I could really picture it in my mind. He also provided some great personal background on the participants. I found it interesting to hear a little about the personnel life of contesters from around the world who end up in my log almost every year.

I also wondered how Jim would describe this event to be of interest (or at least understandable) to non-hams who have no idea of what radiosport is. In my opinion, he nailed it. Every time Jim discussed some aspect of contesting that we all understand merely because of our tribal knowledge, Jim gave a clear (but not verbose) explanation of what the term meant. Because of this, I would also recommend this book to non-hams. Finally, although scores from all 50 teams were continually monitored, it was not clear until the very end who would take the gold, silver, and bronze at WRTC 2014. Jim did a good job of building the drama until the final winners were announced. I read this book on my Nook e-reader. The only issue I had was that it was hard to see the pictures clearly on my monochrome screen. But that certainly is not a problem in the hard copy book or a color e-reader. See you in the pile-ups.





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

How to Become a Member:

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

Visit us at a Meeting:

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



VKØIR	K5D	AHØ/NØAT	3W2DK	K4M	XU7MWA
ZL9CI	VK9DWX	5X8C	FT4TA	TX3A	S21EA
A52A	FT5GA	K9W	VK9MT	KMØO/9M6	J2ØRR
T33C	3D2ØCR	XRØZR	VK9DLX	YS4U	J2ØMM
3B9C	E4X	T3ØD	VU4KV	YI9PSE	BS7H
TX9	CYØ/NØTG	3W3O	EP6T	ZL8X	N8S
CP6CW	VP8ORK	3W2DK	VP8STI	4W6A	3B7SP
3YØX	VU4PB	FT4TA	VP8SGI	T32C	3B7C
K7C	STØR	VK9MT	TX3X	HKØNA	5JØA
5A7A	3D2C	VK9DLX	VP6DX	7O6T	K5P
VU4AN	3CØE	VU4KV	TX5C	NH8S	FT4JA
VU7RG	TT8TT	EP6T	9XØR	PTØS	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	Website with logos of club sponsors
Ranking on <i>Most Wanted Survey</i>	QSLs with logos of club sponsors
Most wanted ranking by TCDXA Members	Online logs and pilot stations
Logistics and transportation costs	Up front cost to each operator
Number of operators and their credentials	Support by NCDXF & other clubs
Number of stations on the air	LoTW log submissions
Bands, modes and duration of operation	Previous operations by same group
Equipment: antennas, radios, amps, etc.	Valid license and DXCC approval
Stateside and/or foreign QSL manager	Donation address: USA and/or foreign

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

