

Newsletter of the  
Twin City DX Association  
[www.tcdxa.org](http://www.tcdxa.org)

Volume 16, Issue 1  
March, 2019



**Inside this issue:**

<i>Pitcairn Island</i>	1
<i>New Gray Line Staff</i>	5
<i>ARRL DX CW from Paradise</i>	7
<i>TCDXA Member Profile</i>	11
<i>Contesting in Costa Rica</i>	17
<i>Backscatter</i>	19
<i>Dollars for DX Report</i>	20
<i>Contest Corner By KØAD</i>	22

**Gray Line Staff**  
KØAD  
KØJM  
WAØMHJ  
WØZF



## Pitcairn Island From the Bounty to the Braveheart to Your Log



*By Ralph Fedor – KØIR*

*Ralph, KØIR graciously agreed to provide TCDXA members with this interesting update on his upcoming Pitcairn Island DXpedition.*

*I am fascinated by Ralph's upcoming trip for a couple reasons. One is the very interesting history of the island which Ralph touches on in his article. The other reason is the fact that five TCDXA members (KØIR, KØPC, WØVTT, WØGJ, and WB9Z) will be part of the Pitcairn team.*

*Although Pitcairn may not be at the top of your needs list, I encourage TCDXA members to support this trip financially. Check out the Pitcairn DXpedition Site at [www.pitcairndx.com](http://www.pitcairndx.com) with more information about this fascinating trip including how you can help.....Al, KØAD*



Pitcairn: An island paradise.  
A paradise lost and regained, again and again.

**They stripped her** of everything useful, and as she burned to the waterline, they watched her sink to the bottom of the sea. As she slipped below the surface on January 23, 1790, the HMS *Bounty* belied their presence on Pitcairn Island and sealed their fate. The 9 mutineers and 20 Polynesians were now part of the island; there was no longer a way off.

It was an idyllic paradise with a warm climate, abundant food and water, and a productive sea. But there were dark times ahead. William Golding had no idea that his novel, *Lord of the Flies*, would be the sequel to life on Pitcairn Island 254 years earlier.

Internal strife, murder, suicide, and abuse, were on their way. The population would leave the island twice, only to return. Leaders would emerge only to fall until the influence of a man named John Adams brought stability

and mutual respect to the island, for a time. It is peaceful now.

Ever since my first QSO with Tom Christian, VR6TC, I've wanted to visit Pitcairn Island, the home of the mutineers of the HMS *Bounty*. Tom was the great-great-great-grandson of Fletcher Christian who led the *Bounty's* mutineers and took them to Pitcairn Island. The lore, legend, and curiosities of this small, isolated island fascinated me.

After the sting and disappointment of the failed Bouvet DXpedition, a trip to Pitcairn seemed right. Air travel would be long, but sea travel time short, just 30+ hours aboard the RV *Braveheart*. There would be no ice, no helicopters, and no disintegrating ship; rather there would be the comradery of friends, old and new, sharing common goals and interests. It would be





Our site, looking toward North America and Europe.

something for the DX community and therapy for us, a win-win situation for everyone.

And so it began. The Braveheart was available during the time I wished and finding a team was never easier. I had my friends from the Bouvet DXpedition and a deep bench of other eminently qualified people. I also wanted to take new DXpeditioners on this trip, people who had never done this before and deserved the opportunity.

My friends KØPC and WØVTT from the Twin City DX Association filled the bill perfectly. They were known hard workers, good operators, and most importantly, good people capable of working as a team member. Team work and coachability are vital to a DXpedition's functioning to its full capability. With our core team and our two new, enthusiastic members, we have a team with that power.

My contacts on Pitcairn have been pleasant, hospitable, and helpful. The landing permission, visa requirements, team housing, and station site location were taken care of within a few days. Our host is even hastening the construction of an addition to his house so we all can sleep inside. Our food, sleeping quarters, water, beds, and laundry arrangements are complete. The operating site has excellent take

-offs for North America, Japan, Europe, and Oceania. Our license is assured but will not be issued for several months to avoid changes if cancellations occur.

We are not compromising on equipment. Our plans include eight stations, each capable of full legal output power. There will be two Yagis for each band, 10 – 20 meters and two ¼ wave verticals for 80 meters and for 40 meters with equipment to erect a 40 meter 4-square if possible. We have single verticals for 30 and 60 meters (if we can get permission to operate on 60 meters). If we align our Yagis in a row running east-west, we will minimize cross station interference when working major population areas.

Our low band guru, Nodir – EY8MM, has plans to erect the 90 foot 160 meter vertical which DX Engineering designed and built for Bouvet. In addition Nodir plans an array of receive antennas and RA6LBS boxes to maximize our low band effectiveness. To my knowledge, there has never been a digital QSO on 80 or 160 from Pitcairn. So, get ready!

As always, propagation will dictate everything we do. So far, despite where we are in the sunspot cycle, good openings to Japan, North America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania appear likely. In time, our website will help you find your personal window of opportunity.

We have challenges. Perhaps even more than we have faced when planning previous DXpeditions to more difficult and dangerous destinations. The zeal and interest of the team is there, but it's more difficult to cultivate the interest and support of the DX community. We hear from clubs, "None of our members need it," or, "It's not rare enough." Yet our cost per team member is as high as it is for the rare ones. There are those who need Pit-





The 160 meter vertical

cairn and have helped us, but they are few in number and their need does not garner the support of those who do not need Pitcairn

We also have a tight shipping schedule. Our gear has to be in New Zealand, ready to be put aboard the Braveheart by August 1st. To be sure we make this deadline, our container has to be shipped by June 1st. Prior to shipping we need to inventory everything and do mock setups of stations, antennas, computers, and the network. Our shipment will also be subjected to a rigorous biosecurity protocol.

Just getting around on Pitcairn Island is a bit of a challenge. There are no roads on the island, just steep, and sometimes very steep, trails which become muddy and slippery in the rainy season. They are normally negotiated by quad bikes and less frequently walked. Getting all our gear from sea level to the 700 foot level may test our mettle.

But we will do this thing. And we will do it with the hopes of bringing new DX'ers into the fold, giving the DX community something to do during the sunspot doldrums, and by retelling the story of this remarkable island. **Let's have some fun!**

*Pitcairn Island, VP6, is ranked number 67 on the ClubLog global "most wanted" list. Its approximate location is 25.10°N by 130.10°E and is located in CQ Zone 32.*

*— KØJM*



# Introducing the New Gray Line Staff

By Al, KØAD

With this issue, the Gray Line introduces its new editorial staff. I will continue to serve as chief editor. Stepping up to the plate to handle the challenging task of laying out each Gray Line issue is Mark, KØJM. One of the reasons the Gray Line continues to be such a quality publication is the important work done by the proof reading team. Mark, WAØMHJ and Dave, WØZF will put their proof reading skills to work with each issue to make sure each issue is as close to flawless as possible before it is posted. The following is a brief profile of the new members of our Gray Line staff. As you will see, each one of them brings some unique skills relevant to keeping the Gray Line a top quality publication.

Mark, KØJM was first licensed in 1967. He has been a member of TCDXA for about a year and a half after moving up from Iowa. Mark has a passion for satellites and holds a Satellite DXCC certificate! Mark and his wife enjoy traveling, biking, hiking, and classical music. He is retired from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa where he was a professor of communication studies. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa School of Journalism.



Mark, WAØMHJ – Part of Proofreading Team



Mark, KØJM – Responsible for Gray Line Layout

Mark, WAØMHJ has been licensed for 50 years having gotten his first license at the age of 14. He originally joined TCDXA in 1972. He took a hiatus from membership in both TCDXA and MWA (as well as other on-the-air activity) for a number of years. However, he has been active for the last 20 years and managed to accumulate 360 countries putting him at the top of the honor roll. He needs one more for 5BWAZ and 35 more on 80M to achieve 300+ on 5 bands. Mark retired two years ago from a career in engineering doing hardware de-



sign, manufacturing engineering, and quality assurance. Toward the end of his career, he became the “go-to” person for reviewing customer user manuals. Having written up the Minnesota QSO Party results for 20 years, Mark appreciates the importance of having multiple sets of eyes reviewing a publication before it goes out.



Dave, WØZF – Part of Proofreading Team

Dave, WØZF, was first licensed as KAØJNG in 1980, shortly after graduating high school. A few upgrades later, Dave achieved his Advanced license and held it almost 30 years, upgrading to Extra (and a new call) in 2011. Dave earned mixed DXCC in 2012, and joined TCDXA in 2013. He enjoys dabbling in all aspects of ham radio, including DX, contesting, VHF+ roving, portable operation, QRP, station building, and experimenting with a wide variety of modes, from CW to ATV. Other related interests include general electronics, audio, video production, and drones. Dave and his wife live in Lakeville, where they are active in their church. They enjoy traveling, although he has yet to talk her into coming along on his yearly pilgrimage to Dayton. Dave has over 30 years of IT exper-

ience, much of it focused on information security. He is currently Director of Information Security Architecture at Prime Therapeutics in Eagan. Dave is passionate about clearly communicating information, and hopes to uphold the high standards that the members of TCDXA have come to expect from the Gray Line.

As you can see from the background of these three gentlemen, they are a great fit to maintain the quality standards of the Gray Line report. I thank them for stepping forward.

Finally, I would like to extend my utmost thanks to Dan, WØJMP and Keith, K9WAG for the tremendous effort they put forth over the last two and a half years as members of the Gray Line staff. The TCDXA membership owes them a debt of gratitude for keeping the Gray Line Report alive and relevant. Thanks again, Dan and Keith.

Ω Ω Ω Ω Ω





Sunset at VP5K

---

## ARRL DX CW from Paradise - 2019 Edition

*By Pat, KØPC*

Bill, ACØW, and Pat, KØPC, were back in Turks & Caicos for another go at the ARRL DX CW contest. This was the latest iteration of a contest crew that started in 2013. From 2013 to 2017 we operated at “The Hamlet” owned by Jody, VP5JM. The hurricanes in the fall of 2017 damaged her antennas and she decided not to repair them. We were lucky enough to find a new home on VP5 beginning in 2018 contest at “Harbour Rock” owned by Jim, K4QPL.

*[Continued]*





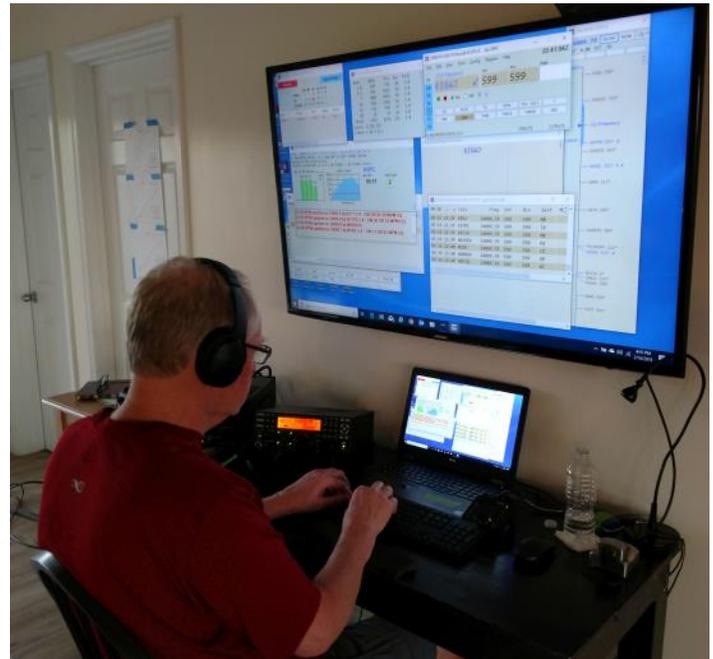
This great DX contest location even has a pool to relax between shifts.

---

The great accommodations at Harbour Rock make this a wonderful place to operate a contest. The pool and fantastic view don't hurt either. It wasn't hard to leave Minnesota during the polar-vortex, all-time snow record February for the sun and warmth of the Turks & Caicos. We even drove through a snow storm to get to the airport for good measure.

The 48 hour contest took an unexpected break on Saturday afternoon. We lost power for about 80 minutes in the middle of a 180 Q/hour run. It's hard to assess the impact on our final score but we certainly took a hit.

Conditions looked to be about the same as last year and that proved to be the case. We had a lot of noise on the low bands the first



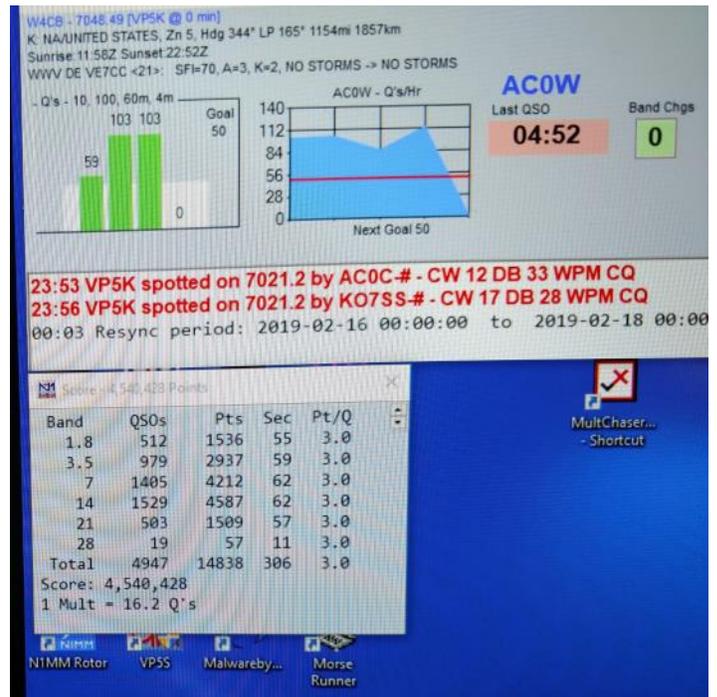
Pat, KØPC at the controls of VP5K

---



night last year, but luckily that didn't happen again. Two good overnight rounds filled out our low band log with 20% more QSOs than our previous best year. 40M & 20M were the go-to bands as usual and we worked them hard. 15M left something to be desired and never really seemed to open up for us. 10M was bad again but at least we had 19 QSOs and 11 multipliers this year. Last year we had nada! Just 30 points on the solar flux would make a big difference. A man can dream can't he?

Our score was within 1% of last year. Considering we lost 90 minutes to the power outage, we were happy.



The final score



Antennas at VP5K consisted of a Stepper for 10 through 40, an 80 meter dipole, and a 160 meter inverted L





The simple, compact VP5K station consisted of an Elecraft K3 and KPA500 amp plus a laptop



Bill, ACØW was one half of the VP5K team this year. Note the large screen!

Gary Grivna *KØGX*

**ELECTRONIX SERVICING**

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

6028 Candlewood Drive      763-561-2836  
 Brooklyn Park, MN. 55443-2019      grivn001@umn.edu

## 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.



## TCDXA Member Profile

By Matt Holden, KØBBC



Matt Holden, KØBBC  
Operating from US Virgin Islands in 2015

**My start** in amateur radio was really for communication convenience (before inexpensive cell phones) and public service. I received my technician license in 1991 while living in St. Cloud Minnesota. Callsign NØQFM was issued to me. While working for Fingerhut and WJON-AM radio, I earned enough money to afford my first car. I put a 2 meter rig in the vehicle so I could use the autopatch function to communicate with my girlfriend (now wife) and family. Mother and grandmother caught on pretty well to saying “over” when passing the conversation back to me.

I joined the St. Cloud Radio Club and Tri-County Repeater Guild looking to advance my technical knowledge into topics like packet radio. I ended up getting hooked up with the local Skywarn group and found an interest in spotter net control. Ironically, I happened to be the closest net control operator to the National Weather Service office at the St. Cloud Airport. It meant I was able to spend quite a few afternoons and evenings with the small staff of meteorologists in this now closed central Minnesota weather outpost.

*[Continued]*



Besides dabbling in packet radio with KØVU (ex-KBØVU), I became interested in 10M and 6M DX chasing. A few contacts in Sauk Rapids and Wilmar, Minnesota got me excited and connected me with a few “elmers” who told me a better antenna would get my signal out further.

### **Moving to the Twin Cities**

My wife Valerie, KØVAL, finished her college education, at St. Cloud State University and she was looking for a career change. I was getting nowhere at Fingerhut and agreed it was time to move to the Twin Cities. We settled in Eagan, Minn. where I built wire dipoles for two and six meters connected to a Yaesu FT-736R. As an apartment dweller my options were limited. My landlord was tolerant of my activity. She also let me put up a dual band Ringo Ranger for 144/444 FM repeater contacts. I made a few 10-meter contacts with the Southern U.S. and



**KØBBC Checking out the Antenna on the Roof of the Hotel in Saipan**

---

Northern South America. It was time to upgrade to a two element yagi on either band.

### **Itching to be DX**

In 1998, I took a job with Northwest Airlines. New opportunities spawned from my new job. A few years later, I met David Fugleberg, KAØJNG (now WØZF) and struck up the idea of making a trip to the Dayton Hamvention. During my first trip I purchased a used W3FF (now Buddipole) portable antenna system. When I got home, I spent the summer making QSOs on ten and six meters. I purchased additional hardware to make two element yagis on 6/10/12 meters.

In December 2010, I got the itch to be the DX station. I flew down to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands and conducted a one-day DXpedition. I had about 20 hours on the ground to chase DX. I had no clue what was to fill my earphones. I had quite a pileup on 10 meters and struggled to make out a single call sign.



**Matt Mentoring at Field Day in 2017**





### Operating from VY2TT with Ron, NØAT during IARU Contest in 2014

After a few hours I had 45 QSOs in my paper log. Operators were telling me to “go split” and I had no idea what that meant. My ears were ringing and I realized I had no idea what most of the radio’s buttons and knobs did. I read the radio manual, cover to cover, on the flight home the next day.

On the days ten or six meters didn’t open I became a SWL on the HF bands and realized I was missing quite a bit of activity. In February 2011, while on vacation in Arizona, I passed my General license exam. I made a few 20-

meter QSOs from my friends’ driveway and got hooked on chasing DX. I enjoyed summers with an entirely portable operation from area parks and atop a local public parking garage. Snow was covering Minnesota and reasonable portable operation was months away. On a few occasions I would sit in Dave’s shack. His dipoles were way up in his trees and heard better than my Buddipole horizontal dipoles. In March 2011, I got the itch to return to the U.S. Virgin Islands.



## Discovering Contesting

I read there was a contest where stations around the world participate to work all U.S. and Canada stations. Maybe I could earn Worked All States as KP2/KØBBC? I made 201 QSOs and felt a bit more comfortable with pileups. Reviewing the results led me to understand I'm just a beginner at this contesting/DX stuff. I went searching for help and found it at the Twin Cities DX Association.



KØBBC's Compact Rover Set often used with WØZF and AEØEE

One of the first people I met was Ron Dohmen, NØAT. Ron had a few stories about his operations at call sign prefixes I had never heard of, let alone worked. Ron invited me over to see his shack and chase a DXpedition for an all-time new one. Over the year, I had stopped by to see his opera-

tion in a RTTY contest and the ARRL Ten Meter contest. I learned from him better radio operation as well as better antenna and band selection. In July 2012 we teamed up to operate in the IARU contest. It was a fun 24 hours operating from a full-sized station. Afterward, we hatched a plan to be the DX in a contest.

I found a destination served by Northwest Airlines and booked the rental shack on Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands. Ron took care of equipment and I was in charge of lo-

gistics. Ron brought his radio and we used the amplifier that was provided for the run station. We used a barefoot station that was provided to search for multipliers. The antennas were in rough shape. Daily exposure to salt air and periodic typhoons took their toll on the antennas. First, we lost 20 meters, and later, the 80 meter antenna. Ron came up with the idea to toss a wire out the window and tune it up. We lost our ability to work Europe but several Japanese stations heard us.

Ron has taught me the need to have a plan B and be flexible to changing operating conditions.

Summers provide a great gap between the major HF contests. The June VHF contest has evolved into quite a road trip. I started



small operating portable from one or two grid squares. Dave, WØZF, also had an interest VHF+ operation. We have combined forces to concoct rover vehicles that have become more elaborate over time. We added William Mitchell, AEØEE, to the crew and our party pressed West as far as Eastern Montana in a single weekend to hand out QSOs from rare grid squares on 50 MHz to 1.2GHz.

### **Serving Local Clubs and the ARRL**

I have gotten involved with Bloomington Amateur Radio Association field day and

monthly meetings. This is a terrific mix of men and women with varying interests in many aspects of amateur radio. With good coaching from Mike Ostlund, NØANP, I stepped up to be club Vice President and eventually served six years as President. I also got back into Skywarn net control operations and providing auxiliary communications for civic events with sister organization Bloomington AUXCOMM. It was a great honor to assist, as an auxiliary communicator, during the 2018 Super Bowl. Working over a year with Dan Anderson's team at Hennepin County Emergency Man-



Operating from PZ5RA in Suriname



agement preparing for one “super” weekend was a rewarding way to serve the community when all the world’s eyes were looking at us.

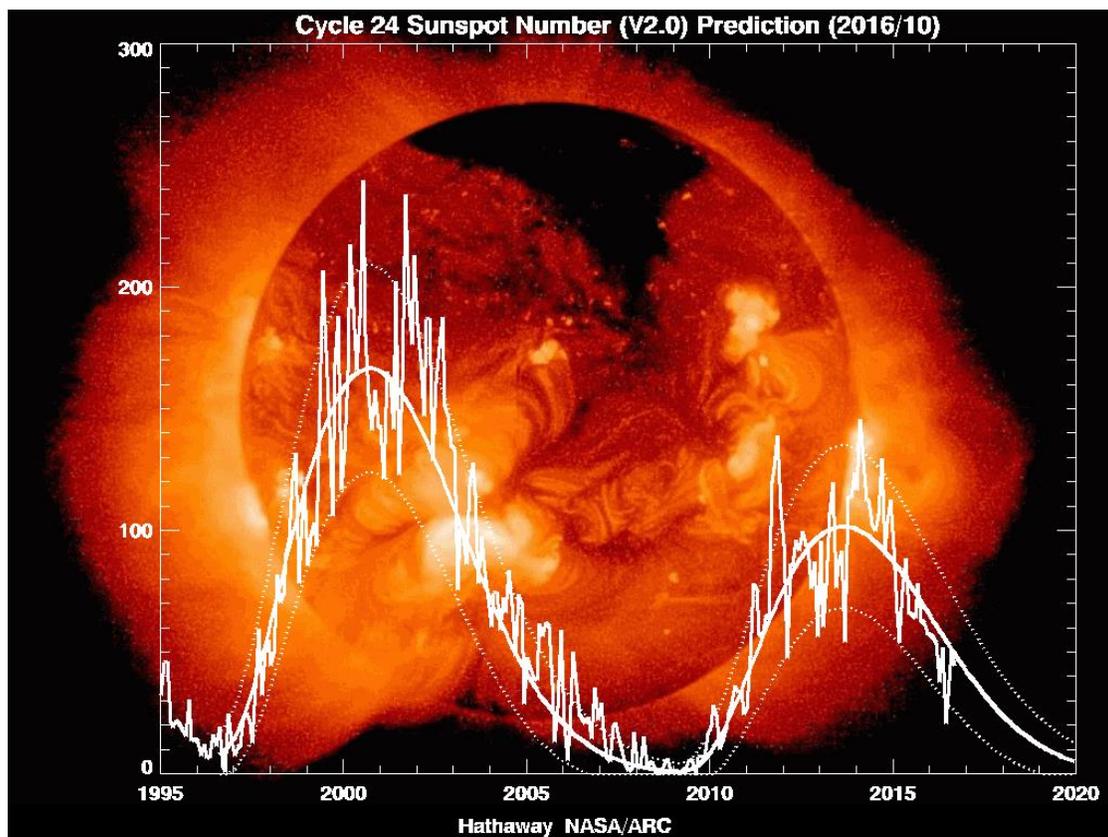
I have enjoyed the benefits of being a life member of the American Radio Relay League. Several years ago, I was looking for ways to volunteer by getting more involved with league activities. I was very happy when Minnesota Section Manager Skip Jackson, KSØJ, and Public Information Coordinator, Mike Sigelman, KØBUD, appointed me public information officer.

On the ARES front, I’ve enjoyed being Emergency Coordinator for the City of Bloomington. In January 2016, Greg Widin, KØGW, was elected ARRL First Vice President. Kent Olson, KAØLDG, moved up to Dakota Division Director. Kent asked if I would serve the remaining Vice Director term

and I said yes. It was quite a surprise when Kent Olson announced he would not seek another term. In November 2017, Dakota Division members elected me Dakota Division Director. I’m honored to represent the ARRL members of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. It’s a challenging job as the board of directors steer our membership organization further into the 21st century.

Amateur radio has provided me with so many of my life’s highlights. I’ve made friends around the world, enjoyed operating different modes, activated remote grid squares, and transmitted from distant DXCC entities all the while using amateur radio to give back to my community.

*73 GUD DX Matt Holden, KØBBC*



# Contesting in Costa Rica

By Bill Mitchell, AEØEE



The two towers and the operating cabin for the TI7 operation.  
(Photo: Bill AEØEE)

---

**Guayabo, Costa Rica** was the destination for Matt (KØBBC), Paul (W6PNG), and Bill, AEØEE for the ARRL DX SSB contest, up in the hills near the Miravalles Volcano. With help from our local hosts, we put up a pair of 40-foot towers to hoist wire antennas.

There were tough conditions for the contest: We had no contacts on either 10-meters or 160-meters. The 40-meter and 20-meter bands were packed. But we were able to make a lot of headway on 15-meters, finishing the contest with 1,256 contacts for a claimed score of 640,560 points.

After the contest I played on CW and FT8, while Matt hopped on FT8. We worked a good number of TCDXA members (thank you for your spots!), as well as many DX stations.



Bill (AEØEE) holding a scoria pebble in front of Volcan Miravalles.  
(Photo: Matt KØBBC)



Matt (KØBBC, left) and Paul (W6PNG, right) preparing the station for the contest.  
(Photo: Bill AEØEE)

Sunset over the station and the 40' tower.  
(Photo: Bill AEØEE)



## Backscatter: Miscellaneous, Assorted and Sundry Items of Note

by Mark Johns, KØJM

**Congratulations** to TCDXA Officers  
and Board of Directors elected for 2019:

President

Bill Mitchell AEØEE

Vice President

Bert Benjaminson WBØN

Secretary/Treasurer

Pat Cain KØPC

Board Member/DX Grant Manager

Mike Cizek WØVTT

Board Member

Mark Endorf WAØMHJ

Thanks to Doug Arntson, KØPX, for his ser-  
vice as Board Member during 2018.

—...—

**Welcome** to new TCDXA members:

Keith Mobarry, WAØTXJ

Eden Prairie, Minnesota

Lynn Nelson, WØND

Dakota Division Vice Director

Minot, North Dakota

Ron Reed, N9OY

La Crosse, Wisconsin

—...—

**Minnesota Wireless Association**

will have its spring meeting on Saturday,  
April 6 at 10:30 a.m. in the Shoreview Pub-  
lic Library Community Room, 4560 North  
Victoria St., Shoreview, Minn.

**YJ, VANUATU.** Chris, VK2NYA/  
VK2YUS, will once again be active as  
YJØCA from Port Vila, Efate Island (OC-  
035), possibly between March 26<sup>th</sup> and  
April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Activity will be on 40/20/15 me-  
ters (possibly 10m) SSB only. He also  
plans to be in the CQWW WPX SSB Con-  
test (March 30-31<sup>st</sup>) as a Single-Op entry.  
QSL via his home callsign direct. [*YJ is a  
Clublog top-100 entity. Information cour-  
tesy of Northern Ohio DX Association,  
KB8NW/OPDX/BARF80*]

—...—

**Think spring!** If you are counting the  
days until the snow melts and spring anten-  
na work can begin, our neighbors to the  
north, the Kitchener-Waterloo Amateur  
Radio Club, have a nice online dipole  
length calculator available at:

<http://www.kwarc.org/ant-calc.html>

—...—

**Stories wanted:** Have you recently...

Added capability for a new band?

Operated from a foreign country?

Begun using a new mode?

Received a special QSL?

Put up a new antenna?

Built a new project?

Installed a new rig?

Changed QTH?

If so, the Gray Line Report staff would like  
to know about it! Send email to:

[aldewey@aol.com](mailto:aldewey@aol.com)

[k0jm@amsat.org](mailto:k0jm@amsat.org)

[mendorf@centurylink.net](mailto:mendorf@centurylink.net)

or

[dave.w0zf@gmail.com](mailto:dave.w0zf@gmail.com)



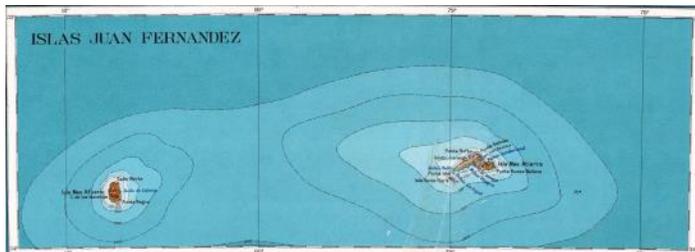
## Dollars for DX Report

Mike Cizek WØVTT  
DX Grant Manager

**Greetings.** This quarter was much slower than the last, with only two requests for DXpedition support. The Russian Robinson Club asked for support for their Juan Fernandez Islands trip, and fellow TCDXA member KØ-IR requested support for a trip to Pitcairn Island this fall.

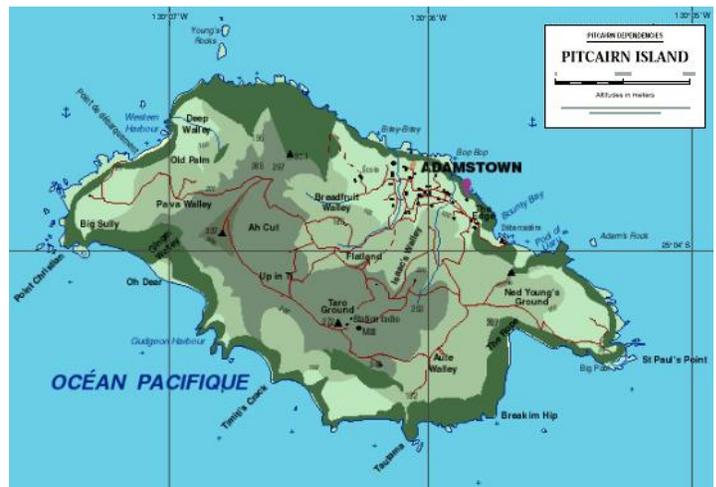


**Juan Fernandez Islands, CEØZ,** are ranked #68 globally and as such rate a \$250 donation. Your board of directors agreed with the \$250 amount and the club voted 40 to 2 in favor of the donation. CEØZ is a new one for 21% of those voting.



**Pitcairn Island, VP6** is ranked #67 in the world, despite having a handful of resident hams. Ralph KØIR is taking a 14-member team, including four other TCDXA members: KØPC, WØGJ, WØVTT, and WB9Z. KØPC and I recused ourselves from the board discussion, and the three remaining board members agreed on a \$750 donation, due to the large TCDXA contingent. The club voted 62 to 1 in favor of the donation and VP6 is a new one for 18% of the voters. On behalf of all of the team members, thank you very much for your generous donation. I hope everyone works us on all needed bands.

One new thing we tried was to ask for club members comments and discussion on DXpedition support on the reflector before the board made our recommendation. This appears to have been well received, judging by the number and nature of the emails, and we will continue this in the future. Please note that expressing your approval in the discussion is NOT the same as voting! We only had 42 club members actually vote on CEØZ instead of the 60 to 65 who normally vote. Please keep this in mind for the future.



Map courtesy of Jean-Pierre Langer Principality of Monaco.



**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](mailto:bernie@dailydx.com), or at <http://www.dailydx.com/trial.htm>.



## TOP LINE SUMMARY

### TCDXA OPERATING BUDGET FY 2019 (Sep 2018 - Aug 2019)

March 7, 2019



INCOME	ACTUAL	BUDGET	Actual 2018
Surplus from FY 2018 (balance 8/31/2018)	2945.79		2689.68
Member Dues 2019 by Cash/Checks/PayPal	4217.92	4500.00	4578.52
Door Prize Ticket Sales club share	360.00	500.00	723.00
Donatons (estates, wills, etc.)	0.00		
Refunds and Reversals	2400.00	2000.00	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>9923.71</b>	<b>7000.00</b>	<b>7991.20</b>
EXPENSES		BUDGET	Actual 2018
Member Recruitment/Retention	0.00	(150.00)	0.00
Website ISP & Domain Name	(19.00)	(70.00)	(65.69)
Office Supplies, Miscellaneous expenses	0.00	(50.00)	(23.27)
Flowers <SK> and Hospital gifts	0.00	(200.00)	0.00
Holiday Party 2018	(425.73)	(500.00)	(528.64)
ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund	0.00	(250.00)	(100.00)
NCDXF Donation	0.00	(250.00)	(250.00)
MVA Plaque	0.00	(75.00)	(75.00)
DXpedition Contributions Total	(2,650.26)	(3500.00)	(4002.51)
#1 Dxpediton - TT8KO Chad	(400.00)		
#2 Dxpediton - TO6OK Mayotte	(250.00)		
#3 DXpedition - XX9D Macao	(500.26)		
#4 Dxpediton - EP6RRC Iran	(250.00)		
#5 Dxpediton - T31EU Central Kiribati	(250.00)		
#6 Dxpediton - XR0ZRC Juan Fernandez	(250.00)		
#7 Dxpediton - VP6 Pitcairn Island	(750.00)		
#8 Dxpediton -	0.00		
#9 Dxpediton -	0.00		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>(3094.99)</b>	<b>(5045.00)</b>	<b>(5045.11)</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>6828.72</b>	<b>1955.00</b>	
Checking balance	6666.97		
PayPal balance	72.75		
Cash / Checks on Hand	89.00		
<b>NET BALANCE</b>	<b>6828.72</b>		

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





## The MWA Contest Corner

By Al Dewey, KØAD

### Contesting at the Bottom of the Cycle



**It's no secret** that contesting the last couple of years has been a challenge. With 15 and 10 meters all but closed, it seems like the whole world is crowded onto 20 meters during the day. Even on 20 meters, pileups on common DX can become a challenge especially on Sunday afternoons. Trying to run with low power or average antennas becomes frustrating. Openings to Europe and other areas of the world are often short and shallow. Sometimes the low bands will compensate but not always. Fading, noise, and QRM can make Friday and Saturday nights a good time to go to bed early. We know that bands will return some day (right?) but, in the meantime, what's a contester to do? Here are a few suggestions I have come up with in no particular order.

#### **Modify Your Expectations**

I have spoken in the past of the benefits of setting personal goals for each contest you enter. Without a goal, I often lose interest early in a contest. At the bottom of the cycle, I am less motivated to make a full out effort even in a domestic contest. I will often look at past contest results (from a previous propagation minimum) and, perhaps, set a goal to beat that score. To set a goal to beat a previous "top of the cycle" effort is a recipe for disappointment. Perhaps set a goal to place well (or even on top) of the list of scores from your ARRL Division rather than trying to beat stations in the southern latitude with much better propagation. This is, of course, true at any point in the cycle but perhaps even more relevant at a solar minimum.

#### **Don't Assume Zero Activity on the High Bands**

Although it is likely that there will be minimal activity on 15 or 10 meters during a solar minimum, don't assume there will be none at all. Some of the newer Software Defined Radios, allow you to set up multiple "slice views" on the same screen. This allows you to keep an eye on the other bands while doing your primary operating on a band that is open. Of course, you can also use the spotting network to do this but seeing a lot of spots on a band and actually hearing them are two different things.





During contests at the bottom of the cycle, it is common to have 20 meters open and 15 meters basically closed.

### Consider a Single Band Effort

Contests like the ARRL DX, CQ WW DX, and CQ WPX Contests all have single band categories. Rather than burning a whole weekend beating yourself up on bands that are in lousy shape, perhaps this is the time to try a single band effort on a band that is in decent shape (perhaps 40 or even 20 meters).

### Focus on Domestic Contests

Although bad propagation affects all contests, it seems to have less of an effect on domestic contests. Contests like ARRL Sweepstakes, North American QSO Party, ARRL 160 Contests, Minnesota QSO Party, etc. can still get the juices flowing even at the bottom of the cycle.

### Use the Spotting Network Wisely

Although using the spotting network when operating assisted is not something you

only do at the bottom of the cycle, you might use it a little differently. To avoid disappointment and frustration, care should be taken to set up filters so that you are not flooded with spots you are never going to hear. This is even more of an issue at the bottom of the cycle. Nothing can be more frustrating than seeing the band map on 10 and 15 meters lit up with spots that you don't have a chance of hearing!

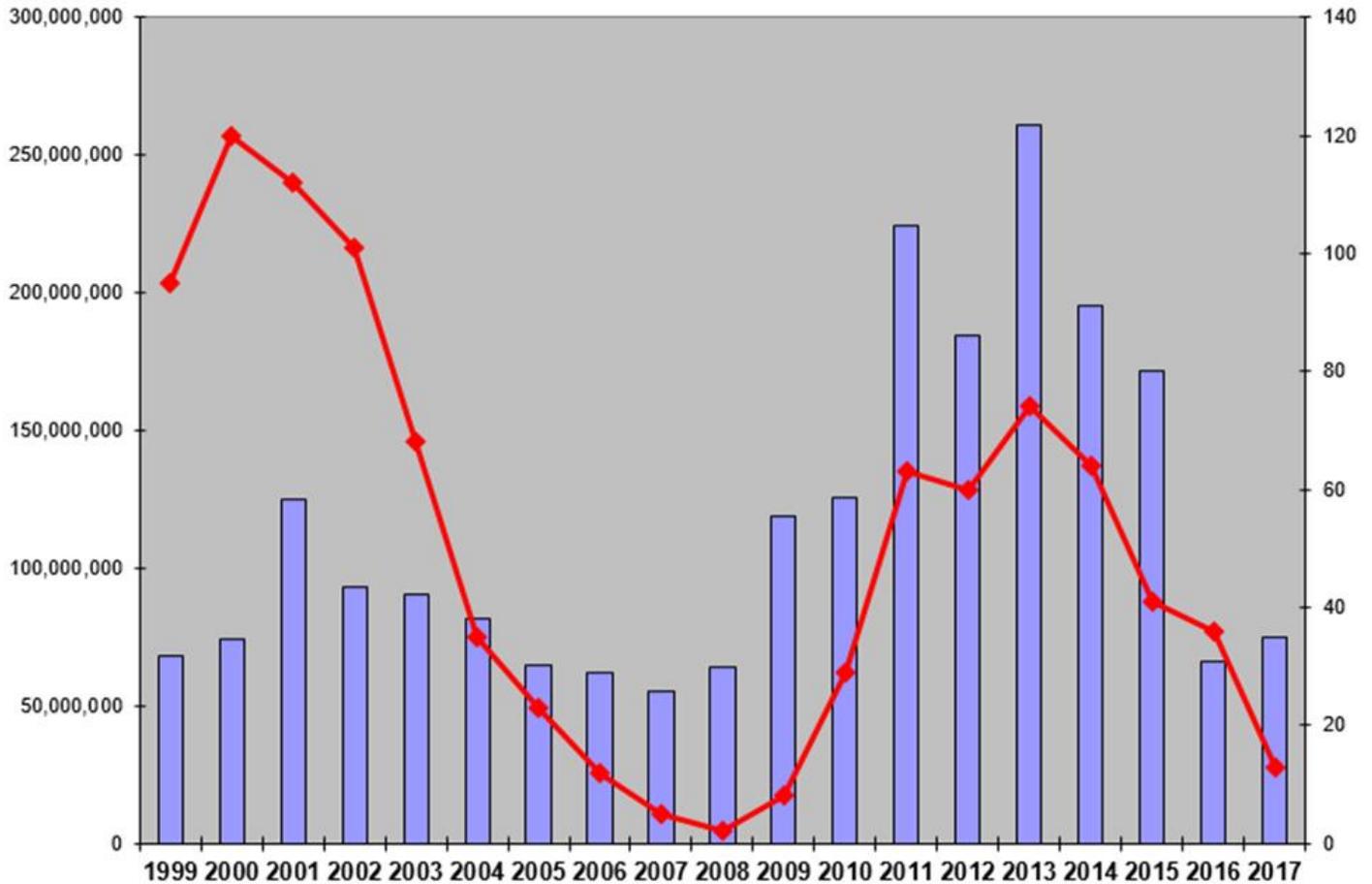
Operating contest after contest with poor conditions can be discouraging and make you even question why you are doing this. You can take comfort in the fact that you are not alone. One of the most compelling slides that Rich (NØHJZ) shows every year when at the annual MWA meeting is the one that shows the total aggregate MWA score for the last 20 years or so plotted on the same axis as the smoothed sunspot number for that year. The correlation between the two is no surprise. Every once in a while, there will be a surprise and the bands will be wide open to the world during a major DX contest. It doesn't happen very often but, when it does, it gives us all hope for better days ahead.

### Stay Positive

Even at the bottom of the cycle, there can be some surprises. Freak openings on the high bands do occasionally occur. In the recent ARRL CW DX Contest, conditions on 20 meters were very good except, perhaps, to Asia. MWAers enjoyed some long runs into Europe. Stations not used to running on 40 meters during a DX contest were able to do so. And 80 and 160 presented some of the best low band conditions many had seen in quite a while.



## MWA SCORE VS. SMOOTHED SUNSPOT NUMBER



Total yearly MWA scores are directly affected by the smoothed sunspot number for that year as shown in this chart from Rich, NØHJZ.

### Looking Ahead

One of the things that always interested me when I operated at the farm in Eau Claire, WI was the long plot of the propagation cycle that Paul, WØAIH (SK) had displayed in the main operating chalet. It covered many decades. When looking at the chart at the top of the cycle, Paul always speculated whether this would be his last solar maximum.

Regretfully, for Paul, the last maximum was, indeed, his last. But what about you? How many are in your future? At 72, I am hoping for at least two more. A third might be possible but, if my arithmetic is right, I would be closing in on 100 at that time. Will I still know (or care) what a solar maximum is at that point? See you in the pileups.





# 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>

### 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: Bill Mitchell, AEØEE, President & Director, [wsmitchell3@gmail.com](mailto:wsmitchell3@gmail.com), Bert Benjaminson, WBØN, Vice President & Director, Pat Cain, KØPC, Secretary/Treasurer & Director, [k0pc@arrl.net](mailto:k0pc@arrl.net), Mike Cizek, WØVTT, Director & DX Donation Manager and Mark Endorf, WAØMHJ, Director.

### Website:

We maintain a website at [www.TCDXA.org](http://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](http://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, Mike Cizek, WØVTT. 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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DXpedition destination</li> <li>Ranking on <i>Most Wanted Survey</i></li> <li>Most wanted ranking by TCDXA Members</li> <li>Logistics and transportation costs</li> <li>Number of operators and their credentials</li> <li>Number of stations on the air</li> <li>Bands, modes and duration of operation</li> <li>Equipment: antennas, radios, amps, etc.</li> <li>Stateside and/or foreign QSL manager</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website with logos of club sponsors</li> <li>QSLs with logos of club sponsors</li> <li>Online logs and pilot stations</li> <li>Up front cost to each operator</li> <li>Support by NCDXF &amp; other clubs</li> <li>LoTW log submissions</li> <li>Previous operations by same group</li> <li>Valid license and DXCC approval</li> <li>Donation address: USA and/or foreign</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

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

