

TCDXA
TWIN CITY DX ASSOCIATION



Minnesota

Newsletter of the
Twin City DX Association

Volume 5, Issue 2
Summer, 2008



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The GRAY LINE REPORT

DXing from Minnesota - Land of 10,000 Lakes

Rochester Amateur Radio Expo - A Huge Success!!!

It was a great weekend for Amateur Radio. It's now history, but won't soon be forgotten. The Rochester Amateur Radio Expo got started Friday night, August 8th with a big turn out at the ARRL Dakota Division Banquet. On Saturday morning, the crowds showed up at the University Center for a day filled with DX and Contesting seminars. Add in several forums, vendor displays, and a flea market, and you have the ingredients for a very successful convention.

The DX Banquet on Saturday night was sold out, and was the highlight of the weekend. The audience was treated to an evening of speakers, awards, and door prizes. Early on Sunday morning, Room 103 was standing-room only for the balance of the DX seminars. Finally, the crowds began to thin out, and by noon the Expo came to an end.

Congratulations to the organizers for a job very well done!

Meeting Co-Chairs:
Scott Wright, **KØMD**
John Scott, **NØHZN**
Stan Cram, **AIØM**
Kari Ann Wiles, **KCØWIP**

Honorary Co-Chairs:
Mike Sigelman, **KØBUD**
Al Dewey, **KØAD**
Bill Lippert, **ACØW**
Lou Sica, **ACØX**



Rochester Amateur Radio Expo 2008 - Scenes From Saturday



NØIJ picks up his tickets on Saturday morning.



Sean, **KX9X** checks QSLs for DXCC submissions.



Classrooms were full for DX and Contest seminars.



Bob, **KØRC** explains contest strategies.



Dan, **KBØXC** of Radio City does brisk business.



Bill, **NØNUV**, and future DXers operate special event station **WØW**.

Rochester Amateur Radio Expo 2008 - Saturday DX Banquet



It was a sellout crowd at the DX Banquet.



Keynote speaker Glenn, **WØGJ** recounts his DXpeditions to an engaged audience.



Jay, **KØQB** presents the WØ Young Ham Finalist plaques to Sarah, **WØSMW** and Cal, **KØDXC**. Cal was also awarded a Kenwood TH-K2AT as WØ Youth Operator of the Year.



Al, **KØAD** accepts the award for WØ Contester of the Year. As President of the Minnesota Wireless Association for the past several years, Al has done an amazing job of growing the MWA into a world-class contesting group. Al is also editor of *NCJ*.



The WØ DXer of the Year award was presented to Ralph, **KØIR**. Ralph has been the leader and co-leader of many DXpeditions, including South Sandwich, South Georgia, Peter I, and Heard Island. He holds five DXpedition of the Year awards, and was recently inducted into the DX Hall of Fame. 3

Rochester Amateur Radio Expo 2008 - Saturday DX Banquet



Jim, **KØJUH** receives a special TCDXA Leadership Award for his outstanding work to restructure and strengthen the Twin Cities DX Association. Jim's "Dollars for DX" program now allows TCDXA to offer significant funding to major DXpeditions. Thanks to Jim's efforts, the TCDXA logo is now recognized by DXers, worldwide.



Scott, **KØMD** (left) presents Tom Schiller, **N6BT** (formerly WAØENP) with the WØ DX Lifetime Achievement Award. Tom is founder and former owner of Force 12 Antennas.



TCDXA President Mike, **NØODK** and Sean, **KX9X** hand out prizes.



Rev. Paul Bittner, **WØAIH** was presented with the WØ Hall of Fame Award. The plaque reads "For outstanding contributions to amateur radio; encouraging participation in contesting and DXing and international good will."



Left - Tom, **NØZK** wins the second prize - an Icom IC-7000. Boy, was he excited!! First prize - a Yaesu FT-2000 - was won by Kelly, **VE4XT**, who had already hit the road home to Winnipeg.



TCDXA Membership Surges Past 100 For First Time!!

It gives us great pleasure to announce that club membership now totals **104 DXers**. We received 10 applications during and following the Rochester Expo, which pushed us over the 100 mark for the first time in the history of the club!

We are very appreciative of the support we have received from our members. The success of the club mission - Dollars for DX - is the direct result of the annual dues paid by each member. On behalf of the many DXpeditions we've sponsored, Merci, Danke, Grazie, Arigato, Gratia, Spasibo, and Thank You! Please welcome our newest members:

Fred Regennitter, K4IU
Jim Fielder, KEØL
Rich Torgerson, KI7K
Vivien Johnson, KL7YL
Dick Kleppe, KØMN
Pat Cahill, NØADQ
Kirk Pengelly, NØKK
Al Samson, NØNQX

John Lyon, W9LHG
Paul Bittner, WØAIH
Clay Conard, WØFS
Harry Williams, WØLS
Peter Cross, 8P9NX/WØSA
Stewart Lewis, WØSHL
Bill Smith, WØWOI
Hal Lund, ZS6WB/KCØVAX

TCDXA Treasury Report

YTD August 15, 2008

Submitted by TCDXA Secretary-Treasurer Jim Junkert, KØJUH

Income:

Checking account balance on 01/01/2008	\$1,692.24
Dues collected (2008: 90 @ \$25; 2009: 9@\$25)	\$2,475.00
Donations & misc.	110.07
Door prize ticket sales	<u>280.00</u>
Total YTD income	\$4,557.31

Expenses:

Website expenses	\$ (85.33)
Bank service fees	(31.00)
Postage, member certificates	(55.00)
Newsletter copies for membership drive	(187.50)
MWA plaque	(75.00)
VP6DX Ducie Is. funding	(400.00)
TX5C Clipperton Is. funding	(400.00)
9XØR Rwanda funding (USD/Euro conversion)	(246.88)
TO4G Glorioso Is. funding	(250.00)
VK9DWX, Willis Island	(250.00)
ZS8T, Marion Island	<u>(150.00)</u>
Total YTD expenses	\$(2,130.71)

Current Balance (04/15/2008):

Checkbook balance	\$2,426.60
Cash on hand	<u>17.00</u>
Total current funds	\$2,443.60

Member News

NØIJ Earns 5BWAZ!!!



John Baumgarten, NØIJ had been idling at 199 zones confirmed for several years. He was missing only Zone 21 for his 5BWAZ. The quest inspired him to construct better antennas for 80 meters (see page 8 of the Fall, 2008 *GrayLine*). On the evening of last December 17th, the ionosphere cooperated for us in the Midwest, and John scored by working **9K2HN** for his 200th zone! Here is John's recount of that exciting, cold Minnesota night from an email he sent out to the MWA mail reflector, right after he made the QSO:

“Well, after 3-1/2 years of trying for that elusive (for me) Zone 21 on 80 meters, the stars lined up tonight and I had an unquestionably good QSO with 9K2HN. My heart is still beating a little fast as I've been thinking about this for sooo long. During this time period, I built an 80 meter Force 12 vertical and NE Beverage at my home station, and, recently an 80 meter 4 Square at the lake station, for lots of reasons, but always in the back of my mind was the increased chance of getting that "Last One." I'm confirmed with CQ WAZ manager for 199, so this last card will do it for 5BWAZ.

I was at the home station, so can't say the 4 Square helped on this one. I've heard him a couple of times the past week, but he really wasn't too strong, and the huge pileup was unbreakable. Tonight, he was much stronger, and I jumped in just as he moved from simplex to a split, which most folks didn't figure out right away due to the mayhem. A really good start for the week!”

After his QSO with 9K2HN, John sent an email to Hamad to explain the significance of the QSO. Here is Hamad's interesting response:

“John,

It is my pleasure. The problem with you guys that you are always covered with EU/AS pileup it is huge in my side but what I do I don't ask for NA only in CW any more I just listen and try to pick up NA. I enjoyed it today very much. I will try to do the same more often to help more guys like you.

I have here 2 element yagi for 80m (SSB & CW) by Optibeam. Power was 1 KW: Alpha 87a.

73, Hamad, 9K2HN”

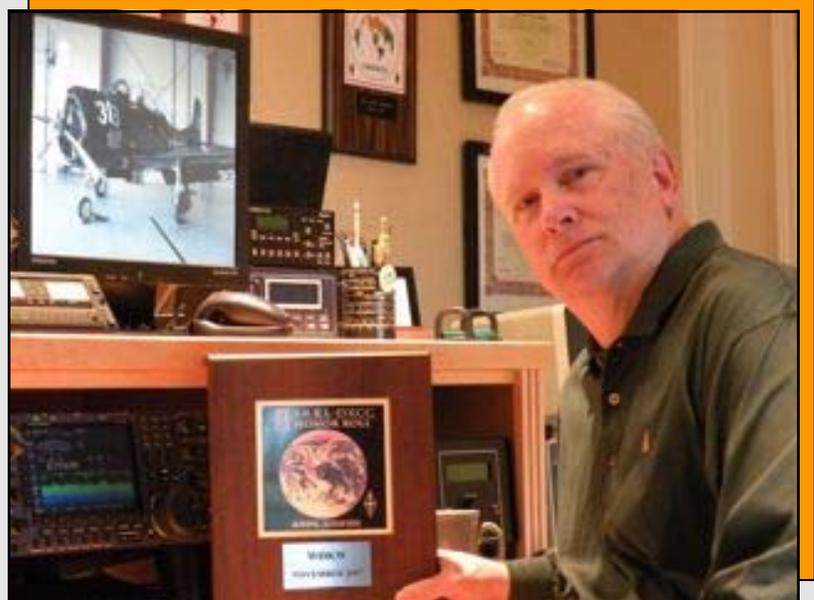


Hamad, 9K2HN

Member News

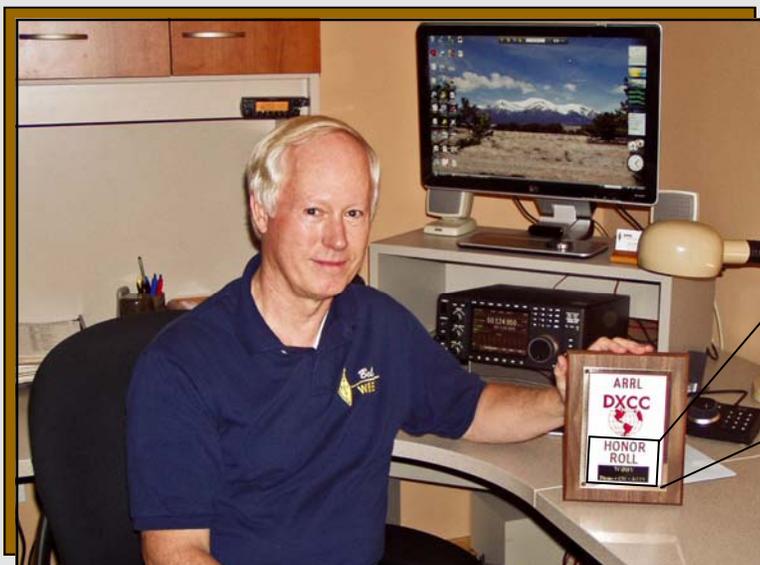
WØKW Receives DXCC Honor Roll #1!!

Ken Wessels, **WØKW** proudly displays his DXCC Honor Roll #1 plaque. The BS7H Scarborough Reef DXpedition in May of 2007 was his last one!

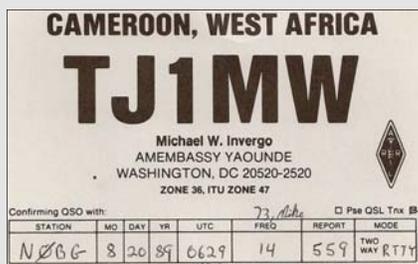


WØBV Makes DXCC RTTY Honor Roll

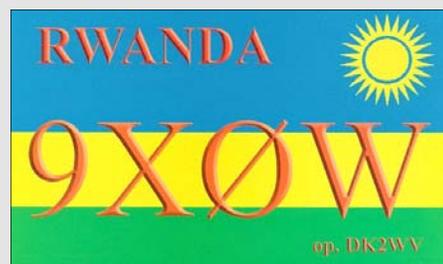
Inspired by Jules, **W2JGR** (SK - see September 2005 *GrayLine*) and elmered by RTTY expert Ken, **WØLSD** - Bob, **WØBV** has chased the goal of RTTY



Honor Roll, beginning with his first RTTY QSO made in 1989 with **TJ1MW**. On February 19th of this year, Bob worked **9XØW** for RTTY country #329.



First RTTY QSO - 1989



RTTY DXCC country #329

Is Minnesota Really a DX “Black Hole?”

by Dennis Sokol, WØJX

I've been asked to comment about my experiences of operating from several different locations over 49 years of hamming. Since 1959, I have lived in five different states, including northern Illinois, eastern Nebraska, southern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota, and northern Ohio. To be sure, each area has different propagation characteristics, although these attributes are not as varied as one might think. However, as in real estate, the old adage of “Location, Location, Location!” plays out in ham radio, too.



My early experiences in Chicago and other parts of northern Illinois from 1959 through 1971 demonstrated that this area is a good one from an overall propagation perspective. I had simple vertical antennas and only 150 watts input, but was able to work a great deal of DX on 40 through 10 meters, primarily on CW. Topband, and 80 meters, were out of the question, due to property restrictions. Operating further south and east of Minnesota (more on this later) seemed to provide propagation advantages to Europe, although the Pacific was also worked regularly. Jim, **K9RJ** (SK), who lived in suburban Chicago, is #30 on the ARRL DXCC list. One concept was learned which has remained constant everywhere I have been: big cities generate big noise! On the lower bands, man-made noise can be propagated many miles at night. **W8JI** has an excellent discussion of this concept on his website at:

<http://www.w8ji.com/noise.htm>.

After leaving Chicago in 1968, I lived in apartments until 1976. So, my operating was limited to mobile on 80, 40 and 20 meters. From northern Illinois and eastern Nebraska, I had some very good DX QSOs from my car, primarily on 40 meter SSB. Being able to drive through quiet, rural farm areas made this possible.

In 1974, I moved to Minneapolis from Omaha to attend graduate school. I lived in apartments the first two years, but was able to listen to Topband during the winter. I had a simple indoor wire strung out in the basement of our duplex, yet I was able to copy G stations, and other DX, with ease. Our first home purchase provided the opportunity to put up a 60 foot tower and a TH6 beam, but did not have enough room for low noise receiving antennas. Being located in southwest Minneapolis, this location was quite noisy. Yet, with a shunt fed tower I was able to hear, and work VK, ZL, Norfolk Is (VK9) as well as much of South America and the Caribbean with only 100 watts output. No South Africa or Asia was heard on Topband. While many operators decry Minnesota as a lowband “RF Black Hole,” I found the propagation to be excellent on the HF bands for the years 1976 through 1983, while I had the tower up. In fact, I have never heard 10 meter signals as strong in my other QTHs as I have in Minneapolis. However, after operating in South Dakota, and Ohio, I have

concluded from my own experience that propagation cycles, especially the 11-year sunspot cycle, has a more profound effect on lowband reception in Minnesota than other places I have operated.

In early 1983, I moved to southeastern South Dakota to take a new job. A home with a larger city lot was purchased, which allowed a taller 70-foot tower and room for a horizontal loop for receiving. While there was still a moderate noise level in our town of 13,000, it was much quieter than Minneapolis. The fall, winter, and early spring months of 1986, 1987, and 1988 were excellent on 160 near the bottom of the sunspot cycle.

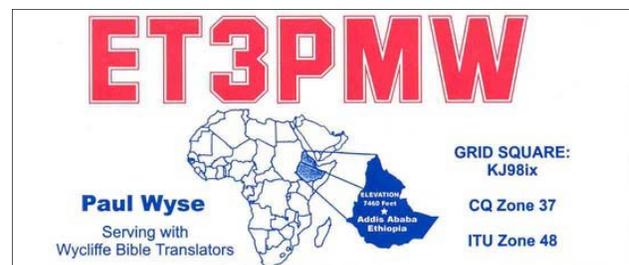
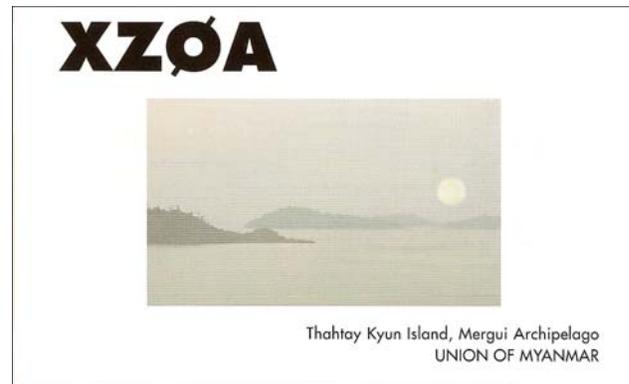
From South Dakota, the Pacific and Japan were worked, as well as contacts into eastern Europe, the Mideast, and Antarctica on Topband. These experiences were repeated again during the mid-1990s, when we were able to operate 160 through another sunspot minimum. Some writers state that there is no, or a very weak, association between 160 propagation and the sunspot cycle, but that has not been my experience. For an interesting article on 160 propagation, see the following link:

<http://solar.spacew.com/cq/cqmar98.pdf>

On the higher HF bands, propagation was as expected: not too good during the summer months; picking up during the fall, winter, and early spring; and performing very well during the two sunspot cycle peaks of the 80s and 90s. I experienced some really exciting HF long path openings into India and Australia from South Dakota. I'm sure that if I had a good, quiet Beverage antenna, my successes on the low bands would have been much greater.

In early 1998, I got the opportunity to move to Ohio. This time, I was focused on finding a location that had some land and was away from big city noise. While we did not find the 5-acres with a house that we wanted, we were able to buy a nice older home on nearly three acres in the small town of Milan, Ohio (pop. 1,500) that had enough trees to shield the tower

from neighbors who might complain. We are not "out in the country," but more like a fringe suburban location of a smaller city of 18,000. There was also enough room to put up several 450 foot beverages. These antennas, and the quieter location, have made a tremendous difference in my ability to hear weak DX on 160, 80, and 40 meters. The tower went up to 80 feet and there was now room to put out enough quarter-wave radials to make the shunt-fed tower really play on 160. If I had to name one major propagation difference between northern Ohio and Minnesota on 160 and 80, it is that I have been able to hear and work some great lowband DX around the peak of the sunspot cycle. For example, **XZØA** was worked in February, 2000 while **ET3PMW** was worked in June, 2002.



Ohio has some significant advantages over Minnesota, yet there are some downsides. Because we are about 900 miles further east, signals on the low bands out of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa are significantly stronger. I've heard Great Britain, Germany, and Italy come through during the late afternoon daylight hours on 160. DX peaks at my sunset are not uncommon, and there seems to be a reliable pipeline to Africa on 160 and 80 from here. Further south

of me, the receiving conditions are often much better. Don, **K8MFO** is my Topband mentor, and is about 50 miles southeast of Milan in rural Apple Creek, Ohio. He has a fantastic QTH because he is in the middle of Amish country on top of a little hill. The Amish use very little electricity and usually power their factories with LP or natural gas engines. Consequently, the rural areas in central Ohio are very quiet. Don hears signals that are simply “not there” for me. Don is #13 on the ARRL 160 DXCC list with 294 confirmed. Further south, near Columbus, Randy **W9ZR** is #10 with 298 countries on 160. In fact, if you look at the list of the top 5 stations, most are located near the east coast or in the southern states. See www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc for the most recent list.



Don, K8MFO—my Topband mentor.

The negatives about being further east are that it is much harder to hear Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, and other Pacific and Asian countries. Also, we seem to have much higher QRN with frequent, intense thunderstorms. Lastly, we are much closer to the large population centers of the East Coast, and the South. The “big guns” are really loud - so loud that they cover up the weak stations. If they have key clicks, their transmitters can drive your receiver crazy.

I have really enjoyed the propagation advantages that my Ohio QTH has provided and look forward to another seven years of being here

before the XYL retires, and we move west to our “final” QTH. We are starting to think about that now, and for sure, the location will be rural, quiet, and a little bit further south than we are now.

Finally, a comment about “operating time.” Over the years, I learned that one of the most important factors in hearing and working DX on the low bands is simply being at the rig to hear the unpredictable openings when they occur. These events often happen when you least expect them, and not necessarily at the most obvious times like the DX station’s sunrise or your sunrise or sunset. So, the retired operators who have the will, and stamina to stay up all hours of the day and night to catch those rare openings have a decided advantage over those who do not.

In summary, the lowband propagation disadvantages of the Upper Midwest can be mitigated by operating from a very quiet, rural location using good, properly constructed low noise antennas, and spending long hours in front of the radio waiting for that elusive, unpredictable opening. Is Minnesota the black hole? Maybe it is more like “Gray.” Looking again at the ARRL 160 DXCC list, shows that some very high totals have been achieved by operators in Minnesota, and further west. Tim, **NØTB**, is #61 on the current list with 237 confirmed on Topband. If you want to operate from a real black hole, try Montana or central Washington. Larry, **W7IUV**, says “Forget about it!”

73 & Good DX!
Dennis, **WØJX/8**, Milan, Ohio



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Pat
Cain

KØPC



Pat Cain, KØPC has been involved in Ham Radio for almost forty years. He was born and raised in Fort Dodge, IA. During his freshman year in high school, a complete amateur radio station was donated to the school. That donation and a prod from a science teacher was the seed that got him started in a lifelong hobby.

In 1969, Dr. Paul Kersten, WØWIT was planning a two-year sabbatical in Spain, so he sold his house and gave all of his radio equipment to St. Edmond High School. This gift included a Collins KWM-2 transceiver, Johnson Thunderbolt amplifier, 70-foot tower, antennas, and all the miscellaneous equipment and parts from a long ham career.

This generous gift was put under the control of science teacher Gil Copper, who recruited Pat and a few others to help dismantle the tower and move all the equipment to the school. With modern liability concerns, it would probably be impossible to do the same thing today. But, in those simpler times, a couple of 14-year olds and a science teacher dismantled the tower with no previous experience (and no injuries).

The station was reassembled in the corner of a classroom, and study for the Novice test began. Pat passed his novice exam, and received the WØZSF call in August 1969. The donated KWM-2 was unsuitable for a novice station, so a member of the local radio club loaned him a Johnson Ranger transmitter and a handful of crystals. The first receiver was a Heathkit Mohican general coverage receiver. This powerful combination together with a shaky fist made for a memorable first QSO on 40M with WØZJC in Little Falls, MN.

Pat later bought a Hallicrafters S40A receiver with money from a paper route. This improved the receive side of the station, immensely. His first DX contact was with SM5DBF on 15m. A whole new world opened up, and every spare minute was spent on the radio.

In the spring of 1970, Pat attempted the General exam at one of the quarterly FCC testing sessions in Des Moines. He thought he had the theory down, but was worried about the 13 WPM code test. It turned out that he passed the code test with ease, but failed the written by two points. A second trip to Des Moines three months later netted the prize of a General class license and **WAØZSF** was on the air.



WAØZSF - 1970

Now the donated KWM-2 was put to good use. Initially, the straight key was put in the drawer in favor of the microphone. But, it didn't take long to realize that he really enjoyed CW, and the key came back. Since that time, CW has always been the primary mode for Pat.

Field Day 1969 with the Fort Dodge Amateur Radio Club was Pat's first exposure to contesting. In 1970, Pat caught the contesting bug when he worked his first Sweepstakes, along with his friend and elmer Bruce, **WAØHHE**. Of course, those were the days of a straight key, paper logs and the dreaded dupe sheet. The scores were minimal, but the excitement of contesting was there. Since that time, contesting has been a big part of Pat's operating activities.

Pat attended Iowa State University after graduation from high school in 1972, and the ham radio bug went dormant for a few years. At Iowa State, Pat met his future wife Marlyn, and they were married in 1978 and made their home in Minneapolis. They were living in an

apartment that was too small for two people, let alone a radio and antennas, so the hobby had to wait. In 1980, they bought their first house in Brooklyn Park, and the radio bug came back to life.

Pat upgraded to Extra in 1980, and retired the **WAØZSF** call without a regret in favor of **KNØD**. In celebration of the new privileges and call, he bought a new radio - an Icom IC-730. This was his first new radio, and his first solid state rig - quite a change from twisting all the knobs and staring at the meter. The antenna farm was a modest vertical and dipole, but the thrill was back. 1980 was a good year for cycle 21, and the DX rolled in even with minimal antennas.

A new job took Pat to Salt Lake City in 1985, and once again the radio bug went dormant for a few years. 1995 brought Pat & Marlyn back to the Twin Cities and a new home in Chanhassen, where they have lived since.

The vanity callsign program opened in 1996, and Pat decided to make one more callsign change to **KØPC**. This change, and some new logging software, prompted him to start to get serious about tracking DX totals. Since 1996, Pat has confirmed 295 entities on CW and just 177 on phone. This shows Pat's preference for CW, and he figures he can work on the phone totals after he retires.

Since 2006, Pat has served as the Dakota Division representative on the ARRL DX Advisory Committee. His current station consists of Elecraft K3 and K2 transceivers and an Icom IC-756ProIII. He built the K3 in early 2008, but still finds it hard to let the Icom go, so both are on the desk now. Antennas are very modest, with only a 40-foot crank-up, and trees for support. This is not a killer station, but it still provides a lot of fun. A few sunspots couldn't hurt though.

Pat works as a Software Engineer for Applied Materials, Inc. and has had the good luck to work from his home since 1996. He and his wife Marlyn recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary and are child-free.



Learning to Fly - What Does it Have in Common with Medicare?

by Mike Warren, WØWG

Actually, nothing, unless you consider age. I figured that since there was little DX to chase, I needed something to keep me occupied. And, since I had always had a desire to learn to fly, I would give it a try. So, last year (2007), one week before my 67th birthday, I started taking flying lessons. This year (2008), one week before my 68th



birthday, I earned my Private Pilot Certificate (license). I took two months off during the period: one month for a vacation to Virginia last September, and one month in January for cataract surgery (both eyes).

Just like the FCC regulates our amateur radio activities, the US Government has an organization -- the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) -- that regulates aircraft operation using a set of rules called Federal Air Regulations (FARs). The regulations are broken up into sections called "parts": e.g. part 61 addresses rules for pilots (certification) and training, part 91 addresses air traffic and general operating rules, etc.

There are several different types of certificates (licenses), ratings and authorizations. Certificates are categorized as student, sport, recreation, private, commercial, airline transport pilot (ATP) and Flight Instructor (CFI). Certificates, once issued, do not expire -- however, you must have a current Medical Certificate (must be renewed every two years) and pass a Biannual Flight Review (BFR) every two years to legally fly.

I took my training at a Part-141 Flight School (Thunderbird Aviation - Flying Cloud Airport - Eden Prairie, MN). It was a very structured curriculum, with alternating computer-based ground and dual instructor-led flight lessons, as well as required solo flights. The minimum requirements under Part-141 are 36 hours of ground training and 35 hours of flight time consisting of dual instruction, solo flight (local and cross country), simulated instrument and night cross-country with instructor. You also have to make 10 night landings and three landings at an airport with an operating control tower. While the minimum is only 35 hours, the US average is about twice that, and it took me almost three times as long. During the training you take oral exams, written exams, "stage checks" (flying exams with a check-instructor) and the final exam called a Practical Test, which is an extensive oral exam, followed by a flight test with maneuvers done to specific FAA mandated standards (e.g. a 360 degree steep turn must be at a 45 degree bank angle +/- 5 degrees, maintaining altitude +/- 100 feet and speed +/- 10 knots. The training also includes navigation, stalls/recovery and emergency (power-off) landings.

To give an idea of the process, below is an excerpt from an AOPA (Airplane Owners and Pilots Association) publication¹:

Question: I recently started flight training, and I am eager to make my first solo flight. What is required of me before my instructor will finally let me go?

Answer: After you have received and logged training for the maneuvers and procedures specified in [Federal Aviation Regulation 61.87](#), you must demonstrate proficiency and safety as judged by a certificated flight instructor. This not only involves maneuvers and procedures, but also passing a [pre-solo written exam](#) covering the applicable sections of the federal aviation regulations, airspace rules and procedures, and the training aircraft's characteristics and limitations. When the CFI is satisfied that you are proficient and safe, he or she will endorse your student pilot certificate for the specific make and model of aircraft to be flown and endorse your logbook certifying that appropriate instruction has been given for solo flight. Now you're free! You'll quickly see that solo flights can be just as educational as instructional flights."

What does it cost? Plan on about \$50/ hour for the instructor and \$100/hour for the plane. And, they currently have a \$15/hour fuel surcharge. But, in the final analysis, I think it was worth it!

- Mike, WØWG

¹ Volume 8, Issue 30 . July 25, 2008 edition of *AOPA ePilot Flight Training Edition* published weekly by the Airline Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA).



My first flight as a Private Pilot with a passenger - my XYL Margaret. July 4th, 2008

The Old Timer

A New Book by Jim Smith, VK9NS

Hi Folks. We send our greetings to the TCDXA from Norfolk Island, and thank you for the opportunity to tell you about my new book.

I've written a book called *The Old Timer* – a look at my 60 years in the hobby of Amateur Radio and DXing. The 600 page book takes you along on my DXpedition to Bhutan and Heard Island, as well as many other operations in the Far East and the Pacific.

A few DXers stateside (**KØJUH**) have a copy, and are helping to get out the word. Hopefully, I will have a couple of reviews soon from Bernie, **W3UR**, and the UK RSGB, which will help raise awareness for the book.

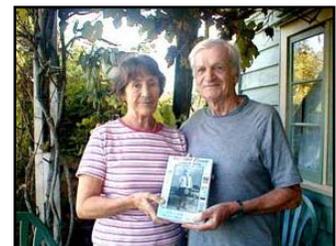
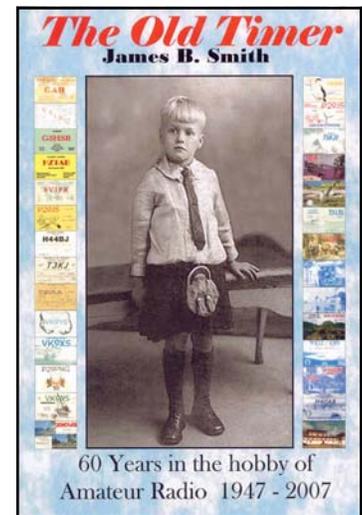
We have a website at www.jimkirsti.com which will further introduce you to the book and provide the details for ordering

Kirsti and I are doing fine. We have kept up with our SSB DXCC #1 status, and only need North Korea on CW. We can only look at Romeo's QSL, and wish it counted.

Warm regards from us both to you all.

73, Jim, VK9NS

ed - The book is a great read. It gave me a close look at Jim's many years DXing, and his frequent travels and adventures pursuing his love of the hobby. He brought back fond memories for me of my days in the pileups chasing him for a rare new country. Once you pick up the book, you will have a hard time laying it down. - Jim, KØJUH





Photography by Garrick aka Gary Meyer, KØSB



When this Honor Roll DXer isn't chasing DX or the golf ball, you will find him in the great outdoors with his digital SLR camera producing remarkable photos of Bald Eagles.

Garrick "Gary" Meyer's best kept secret is his interest in wild life photography. Most of us know him through DXing and the TCDXA, but not many people are aware of his accomplishments as a photographer.

His interest in photography started at the age of 10, and soon after he had his first darkroom in the bedroom closet. Over the years, Gary used 35mm film cameras, and in the early 90s made the move to his first digital camera.



Gary knows cameras inside and out. Over the years, he's used some of the finest cameras and lenses available. He currently shoots a Canon 40D and a Canon 5D, both digital SLR cameras. His favorite "bird" lens is an f2.8 - 300mm telephoto with a 1.4 and 2.0 extender.



Other than some wedding photography he did while in Owatonna back in the 70s, he has not profited from his photography hobby. That is about to change, as he has started selling some of his photographs in the Stillwater area, and is marketing his "Eagles and other Birds" on the internet at www.earthwildlifeprints.com.

In addition to Family, Church, DXing, Golf, and Photography, this busy member has found time to squeeze in a day job. During the work week, you'll find Gary devoting his attention to his customers and their printing needs. He's employed by the Bureau of Engraving, and has been in the printing business for 40 years.

The TCDXA can thank Gary for the Membership Certificate he and Dave, KØIEA produce for new members. It's one more example of the good work volunteers do for the club.



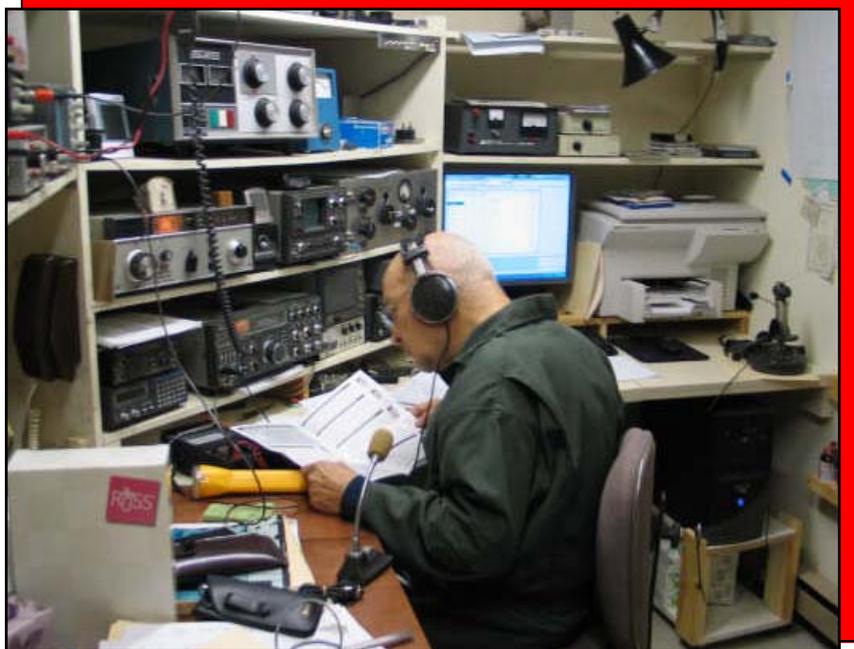
Remembering Earl Chiswell, WØIAK (SK)

by Larry Menzel, WØPR

What do you say about a guy whose life spanned one of the most eventful periods in world history? The period was eventful in so many ways. Technology advances occurred in ways that people only fantasized just 50 years ago. Wars changed boundaries, world leaders and countries came and went, and business became worldwide. Earl Chiswell, **WØIAK**, was a part of all that.

Born December 18, 1921 in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada, Earl grew up near Ottawa, where his father built aircraft and was the Ottawa Air Club's weekend mechanic (bet you didn't know Earl was a VE, eh?). Earl first experienced flight when he was about 10 years old, propped up by cushions so he could see out a back window of the cockpit. When given the stick to control the plane, his love of flying took off, too.

Earl served as a pilot and Flying Officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force in both SE Asia and Europe during World War II. During the war, he chiefly flew either B-18 or B-24 bombers. But, during his earlier flying days, he said he'd fly anything with wings. Earl was a skilled pilot and crew chief, and is credited with saving the lives of many men and aircraft under his command. I remember calling Earl on the phone earlier this year, when our Dayton Hamvention group was touring the Air Force museum, and describing to him the planes we were looking at. He loved it! He told me how he lost his teeth in a crash landing, while he worked to get his crew safely away before the plane burst into flames!



Earl is on the left end of the front row in this 1942 photo of his RCAF Squad.

There are lots of stories related to his flying career, like the time a prop fell off an engine while he was landing in Detroit or the time a whole engine fell off his B-24 while transporting classified equipment back to Canada for testing, and he had to make an emergency landing right after takeoff.



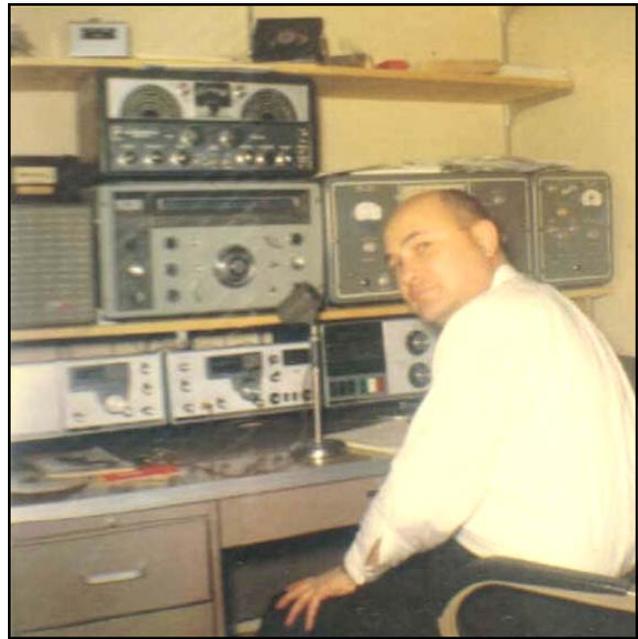
After the war, Earl graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He also attended the University of Minnesota

in Aeronautical Engineering. He became a research scientist at the U of M Technology Campus in Rosemount, MN. His most crucial work was with Martin Marietta in Boston, MD and Tullahoma, TN, where he worked with Werner Von Braun and his research team to develop and test the first rocket engines for the U.S. space program. Much of the work that Earl was involved in was top secret stuff. His connection with many of the major defense contractors and politicians was amazing. He knew many people who went on to become executives and leaders of some of the biggest companies in the country. Yet, he was so modest that you had to drag stories out of him about his background and history.

Earl was a very independent guy. He really loved being his own boss and choosing who he'd work for and what projects he wanted to do. He designed thousands of different circuits and devices over the years from large control consoles for big electrical companies to things as mundane as designing cattle and horse fences. But, one thing was common throughout--his consummate design skills and meticulous construction techniques. Work coming out of his shop had to be perfect before he let it go. It always really annoyed him when production models didn't live up to his standards, once a product of his design hit the street.

Earl's extensive (and I do mean extensive) experience and almost endless supply of parts and gadgets was amazing. I remember asking him for some obscure part for something. He thought about it for a few minutes and then went to one of literally thousands of drawers and cubbies in the basement workshop of his home in Bloomington, MN, and came back with a handful of parts...any of which would have worked for my application.

I hate to use a trite expression, but it's really true - Earl was a ham's ham. Amateur radio was Earl's lifelong passion. He was licensed as **VE3VO** and **VE3AYE** in Canada and **WØIAK** as we knew him. A very active DXer, he worked over 350 countries during his ham career, and in 1993 was nominated for his spot in the FOC, which is limited to 500 active mem-



Earl in his shack - circa 1965.

bers, worldwide. The Quarter Century Wireless Association recognized him in 2003 for 65 years on the air. Earl was licensed for over 70 years, and hardly a day went by that we wasn't active in some way, enjoying the hobby he loved.

He never tired of tinkering with everything. As a consummate builder, he designed and built amplifiers, tuners, receivers, switches, control circuits and rotator controls, just to name a few things. His stock of parts was legendary, and before he passed away, he gave away thousands of components and parts to hams all over the country.

Earl was well known for his love of trying out new radios and equipment. He always bought two of everything, and sent one to his brother, Syd, **W2ICZ**, in Buffalo, NY. While we always thought that a bit eccentric, there was good reason for it, as Syd would work out bugs, document what he found and then send it all back to Earl who would then try to "make improvements" in the design of the equipment. One thing I remember, after he had purchased the latest radio or gizmo, I asked him, "Hey, Earl, how's that new Yaecomwood 90001 working for you?" To which, so often he'd reply, "Oh, boy, it was defective...I had to send it back." Seemed more stuff broke for Earl than

anyone else in hamdom! Could it have been that inquisitive golden screwdriver of his? I guess we'll never know.

Earl's shacks were always a thing of great interest. He almost always had one of the newest rigs or amplifiers wired in as he experimented away. And, he almost always was among the first to have a new piece of gear or to try a new mode like packet or RTTY.

Earl was a great friend to many of us. He was never too busy to lend a hand, or offer a pertinent suggestion. If you needed a part or component, all you had to do was ask, and sometimes not even that, and the part would appear...and you couldn't pay him for it, either. I recall coming home from work a few years ago, while I was installing my Rohn 45 tower and new antennas. There was Earl, unan-

nounced, sitting cross legged on the grass, weather-proofing all the connections on my 40 meter HyGain beam. I hadn't asked him to do that, but there he was, nonetheless. By the way, those connections are still working

I sort of lost touch with Earl after he moved to Big Fork, near Grand Rapids, MN, but still called him from time to time, just to see how he was doing. I could tell from those conversations that he was slowing down quite a lot. He passed away on July 2, 2008 due to complications from a major stroke he had suffered last October.

Our thanks to Earl's brother, Syd Chiswell, W2ICZ, Earl's wife of 63 years Molly Chiswell, and his daughter Carrie Gilleland for the photos and historical information in this article. Rest in peace, Earl. You made the world a better place.

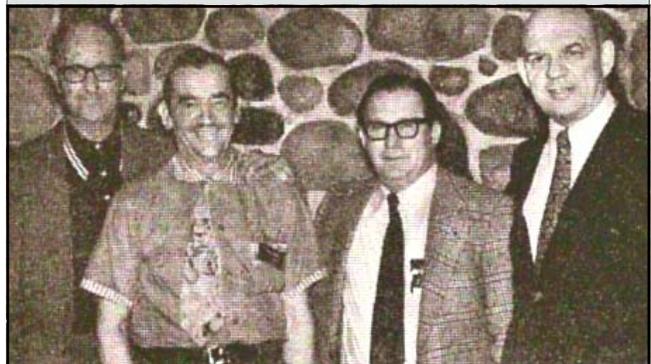


Earl's 100-ft. free-standing crank-up tower in Big Fork, MN. Earl loved to try antenna designs. Earl's brother, Syd asked if we know of anyone who'd want the tower. According to Syd, it's in need of some repair. Please email me at retire@means.net for details.

- Larry, WØPR



Crank Up the Wayback Machine to March, 1975



The Twin City DX Association hosted Bob Stone, **VK5PB** in Minneapolis. Shown left to right are Bob, **WØSFU** the winner of CQ 20 meter Phone WAZ #1, Ed, **WØGYH** first Minnesota 5BDXCC, **VK5PB** and CQ DX Committee member **WØYDB**.

Crimp-on Coax Connectors

by Michael Higgins, K6AER



Many hams have varying degrees of success when attempting to install the revered PL-259 solder-on connector. Often, these attempts end with melted coax and connector and a poor connection that will fail over time. I have installed thousands of these connectors, and I must admit that when things go right I consider myself lucky.

Recently, a crop of crimp-on connectors and crimp tools have become available that have made the process much easier. These connectors greatly ease connector assembly, and the tools are readily available to the average ham. Pricing on the connectors is about the same as a Teflon PL-259, and the connection and finished product is far superior. Some previous crimp-on connectors crimped a solder-on PL-259, and those connectors were poor at best. That is not the case with the RF Industries connectors. These connectors were designed from the ground-up to be a crimp-on connector.

Tools are available to prep the coax to the specified length, so all that needs to be done is to slip the new connector over the RG-8, RG-213 or LMR-400 coax, and then crimp the center conductor and then the ferrule over the outer shield. The end result is a coax and connector that is superior to any solder-on product. I know there are the old timers who scoff at a crimp-on connector, but in the cell phone industry, we have found that crimp-on connectors have a much lower failure rate than any field solder-on connector. In addition, the pull strength is much higher because the coax crimp is a much stronger mechanical connection than soldering through four tiny holes found on the typical PL-259 connector body.

The end product looks like what you would expect from a commercial product. This is depicted in the photo below:



In each case, the crimp-on product uses a ferrule that crimps to not only the outer conductor shield but also to the plastic jacket. This method makes a connection with superior pull and flex strength.

In tests, I have found the "N" and PL-259 crimp-on connectors to handle over 120 lbs of pull. I could not test to failure, because I ran out of weights to put in the horse bucket attached to the connector via a female connector.

The next test was to sweep the lines using my HP network analyzer. Just to keep things constant, all the connectors were attached to LMR-400. At 900 MHz, the crimp-on PL-259 had 0.1 dB more loss than the crimp-

on "N" connector. Not bad. The solder-on connector had 0.23 dB of loss at 900 MHz, when compared to the crimp-on "N" connector. The cable lengths in each case were 24 inches. I know the conventional wisdom is don't use PL-259s above 2 meters, but I saw nothing on the analyzer that said this was



true below 1 GHz. Now, that doesn't preclude a bad connector design or poor female connectors on the radio unit, but I saw no reason not to use the PL-259 crimp-on at UHF.

The benchmark solder-on PL-259 connector assembly was a Teflon Amphenol unit. This is a \$3.00 connector, and comparable in cost with a crimp on connector.

Crimp tool cost is often what makes hams shy away from crimp-on connectors. Some special crimp tools can cost well over \$400. This is not the case with all crimp tools. RF Industries makes a very economical unit that I have been using for over 8 years, and it is holding up well. The crimp tool comes in a plastic case that has cut outs for die sets to crimp a variety of connector types from miniature coax up to LMR-400.



The RF industries crimpers with the .429 die set for LMR-400 size coax and the coax prep tool from Times Microwave.

A different prep tool is needed for the PL-259 connector due to the longer length needed for the center conductor. Although, if you are handy

with an Exacto blade knife, and have plenty of band-aids you may forgo the prep tool.

Typical time to assemble a connector is about one minute. This process is so simple that I stopped using solder-on connectors some time ago.

You can buy the tools from a number of distributors. Part numbers and pricing from Tessco distributors is shown below. The pricing shown is for small quantities.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Tessco #</u>	<u>Price</u>
Crimp-on PL-259 for LMR-400, RG-8	35985	\$2.47
Crimp-on N for LMR-400, RG-8	14515	\$3.35
Crimper set for large and small coax (RG-8/RG-8X)	54250	\$99.00
PL-259 prep tool for LMR-400, RG-8	68254	\$101.00
N prep tool for LMR-400, RG-8	59664	\$71.00

Note the crimp-on PL-259 from Tessco is an RF Industries Part Number RFU-507-ST, and is available also from Talley, Hutton and Electro-Comm. These distributors also sell the crimp and prep tools.

Typical quantity cable prices for LMR-400 equivalent coax can range from \$214 for a 500 foot reel from JEFA Technology to \$360 for a 500 foot reel of Times Mirror LMR-400 from Tessco.

Making your own cable assemblies can be a very cost effective alternative to buying pre-built coax cables and jumpers. You can make up your own jumpers and feed assemblies in minutes. The cost of the tools is under \$250, and you will recover your tool investment very quickly.

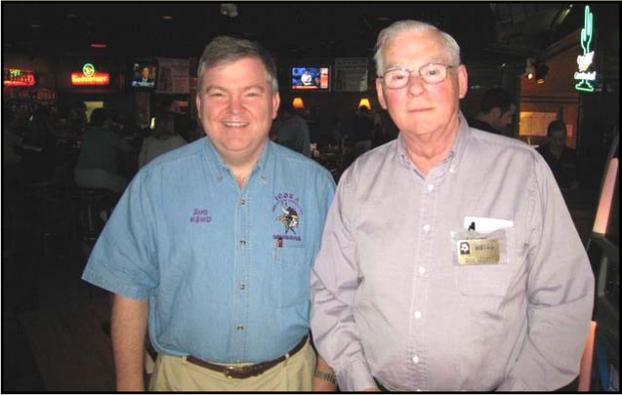
- Michael, K6AER



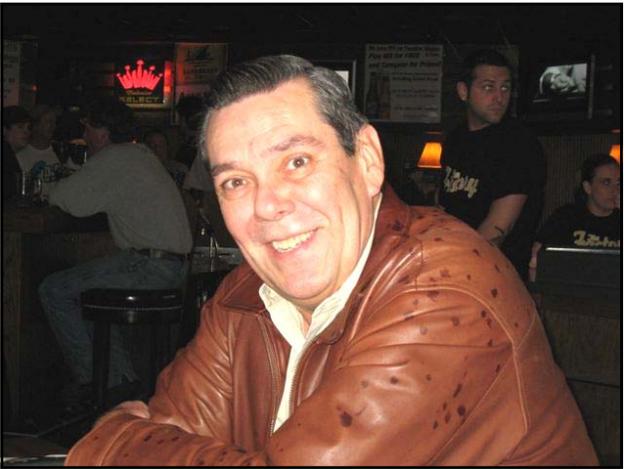
**Some of the World's Friendliest DXers
- as seen at a recent TCDXA meeting**



l - r: Greg, **KCØRET**, Tom, **NØZK**,
Tom, **KØYR**, and Gary, **WØAW**.



Scott, **KØMD** and Dick, **WØTRF**.



Bill, **KØKO**



Jim, **KEØL**

TCDXA Merchandise



Donn, **KØQC** and Mark, **KØKX**.



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<http://www.tcdxa.org/merchandise.html>

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XU7MWA
S21EA
J2ØRR
J2ØMM
BS7H
N8S
3B7SP
3B7C
5JØA
VP6DX
TX5C
9XØR

TCDXA DX DONATION POLICY

The mission of the TCDXA is to support approved DXpeditions with financial donations. Annual membership dues are the major source of funding for this activity.

The Club Treasurer is responsible for the initial evaluation of donation requests received by the club from DXpedition organizers. The request will be judged by how well DXpedition plans meet several key considerations (see, below). If the DXpedition is deemed worthy of support, a recommended donation amount will be sent to the membership for approval. The Club Treasurer will communicate the decision of the membership to the requestor.

Key Considerations for a DXpedition Funding Request

DXpedition destination	Website with logos of contributing clubs
Ranking on <i>Most Wanted Survey</i>	QSLs with logos of contributing clubs
Most wanted ranking by TCDXA Members	On-line logs/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	Success of previous operations by same group
Equipment: antennas, radios, amps, etc.	Valid license and DXCC approval
Stateside QSL mgr and/or foreign mgr	Funding mode: USA and/or foreign financial address

Guidelines for Level of Funding

\$600 - \$1000	A major operation in terms of operators, equipment, duration of stay, and transportation. Requires elaborate planning and a huge budget. Always ranks high on Most Wanted Survey. Examples: VKØIR, 3YØX.
\$400 - \$500	Major to modest operation in terms of operators and equipment. Ranking on Most Wanted Survey can vary from high to low. Examples: D68C, 3B9C
\$200 - \$300	Modest operation in terms of operators and equipment. Usually ranks low on Most Wanted Survey. Examples: T33C, K7C
\$ (open)	Special requests. Examples: CP6CW, XU7MWA



To join TCDXA, follow this link: <http://tcdxa.org/members.html>

- end -