

TCDXA

TWIN CITY DX ASSOCIATION



Minnesota

Newsletter of the
Twin City DX Association

www.tcdxa.org

Volume 9, Issue 3

September, 2012



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KØAD
KØIEA
KØJUH
WØBV

The GRAY LINE REPORT

DXing from Minnesota - Land of 10,000 Lakes

TCDXA and MWA

were well represented on Field Day this year, when Ron, NØAT hosted this group on Blue Lake near Park Rapids, MN.

See page 6 for the story and more photos!



From left to right:

Standing in back: Ron, AE5E, Ralph, KØIR, Al, KØAD, and Ron, NØAT
In front: Kirk, KØKK and Glenn, WØGJ

Member News

KFØQR Wins QST Cover Plaque Award!

Dennis Johnson, **KFØQR** has won the prestigious *QST* cover award for his article “*A 160 and 75/80 Meter Folded Monopole*” article that appeared on pages 44 through 47 of the June, 2012 issue.

Dakota Division Director Greg Widin, **KØGW** presented the plaque to Dennis at the September TCDXA meeting.

Congratulations Dennis!!



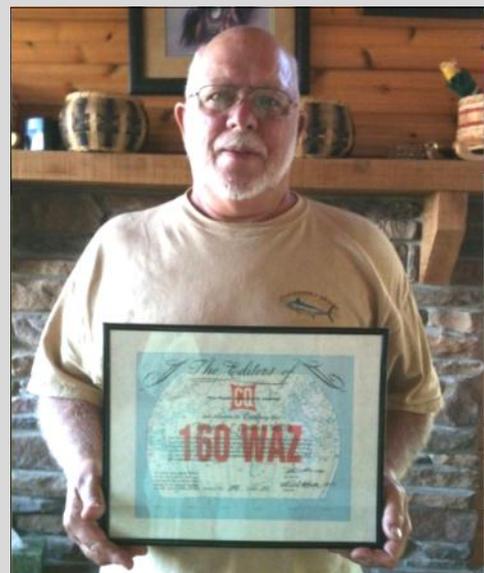
Scott Johnson, WDØDAN Achieves 5BDXCC *AND* #1 Honor Roll!

Scott uses a Yaesu FTDX-5000MP, FT-1000MP and an Alpha 87A amplifier. Antennas are: Force 12 XR5, Force 12 Sigma 40 that has been reconfigured for 30 meters, shunt fed tower for 80M and various wire antennas.

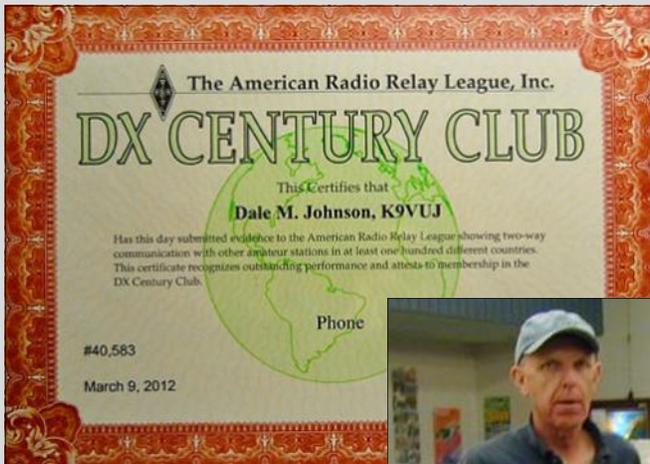
WTG Scott!

Rich Goodin, WØDD Earns 160m DXCC *AND* 160m WAZ!

Rich, WØDD displays his new 160 meter WAZ #395 (31 zones). Rich also achieved 160m DXCC last season. Rich says, “It *only* took me 35 years. HI!”



Member News



Dale Johnson, K9VUJ Joins DX Century Club!

Dale says: “After years of procrastination, I finally received my DXCC certificate. It was done entirely using LoTW. Without LoTW, I doubt that I would have received the needed confirmations, due to cost and time. LoTW is a BIG advantage these days. I do still have a large stack of QSL cards from my early days of DXing back in the 1960s and 70s.”

Richard Conrad, W9JA used LoTW to Capture 5BDXCC

“After years of sitting on hundreds of cards, and thanks to LoTW, I was able to submit for 5BDXCC.

And, the addition of South Sudan (STØR) has kept me on #1 Honor Roll.”



VP2MWG Wins Multi-op World in the 2011 Ten Meter RTTY Contest

Ron, NØAT and Bill, WØOR proudly display their award for placing #1 in the World in the new 10 meter RTTY contest! For the full VP2MWG story, see the March, 2012 edition of the *GrayLine* at <http://tcdxa.org/Newsletters/March2012Grayline.pdf> . Their story starts on page 4.



Member News

Like many of us in the DXing hobby, Vlad Mitchchenko, **NØSTL**, has struggled keeping up with QSLing and submitting his cards for DXCC credit. Recently, LoTW came to his rescue.

Vlad emigrated from the Ukraine in 1992 to Alexandria, Minnesota, and has called this farming and resort community home, ever since. He enjoys DXing and contesting and has been a member of the TCDXA team that operated from **TGØAA**, **CP6CW**, **HQ9H**, **5JØA**, **YS4U**, and most recently **VP2MWG** in 2011.

He confesses to not being very well organized, and having a tendency to procrastinate. Over the years, this led to hundreds of QSL cards piling up, waiting for his TLC.

“I almost got buried under the growing pile of cards, but every time I got started working on them, something would come along that would drag me away.”

It was at this point that Vlad turned to LoTW with reservation, as he wasn't looking forward to the learning curve. As luck would have it, everything went smoothly, and submitting his logs to LoTW went without a hitch.

“When I checked my LoTW account the next day, there was a pleasant surprise awaiting me, and that's when I really got excited. I had 287 DXCC entities and 5BDXCC confirmed (out of 320 worked) on Phone and CW (Mixed). This was truly a fascinating moment in my 35 years in ham radio. I was several credits shy on LoTW for 160 and the Challenge, but have the missing credits confirmed with paper QSLs. All of this may sound trivial, but for me it was like a fisherman who caught the biggest fish in his life!”



TCDXA Welcomes our Newest Member!



A door prize at the annual MWA meeting held on September 18th was a 2012/2013 membership to TCDXA. The lucky winner is Rolf Krogstad, **NRØT** of Bloomington, MN.

Here, TCDXA President Pat Cain, **KØPC** (on the right) presents Rolf with his free membership.

Congrats Rolf, and welcome to TCDXA!!



INTRODUCING A NEW MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE

<http://www.tcdxa.org/membershipcertificate.pdf>



After serving the club since the 70s, changing times have finally caught up with the old (original) membership certificate. Over the years, some of the language had become outdated and no longer represented the club's current mission. Coupled with rising printing and mailing costs, we knew the time had arrived to take a serious look at redesigning the certificate program.

The changes

- * The certificate dimensions were downsized to save the club considerable dollars in material, printing, and mailing costs.
- * The certificate language was updated to represent the TCDXA mission and non-profit status.
- * The officer signatures were embedded to eliminate the need to chase people for their signatures.
- * The new letter-size certificate eliminates the need for expensive oversized paper, a special wide-carriage printer to handle the printing and expensive mailing tubes.
- * The embedded "Certified DXer" seal eliminates the cost of material and time spent applying the old seal by hand.

For years, Gary, KCØSB and Dave, KØIEA, teamed up to produce the old certificate. Producing the new certificate has evolved into a one-man operation, which Dave will continue to handle. Gary gets to retire and take life easy. Our sincere thanks go out to him for all the time and effort (not to mention \$\$\$) he put into the old certificate.

Pat Cain, KØPC
President





by Al Dewey, KØAD

The MWA Contest Corner

FIELD DAY EXPERIENCES of TCDXA MEMBERS

For many of you like me, ARRL Field Day holds a special place in our hearts. It may have been the first time you were introduced to contesting. (Although, the purists will claim it is not really a contest.) It may be the only time during the year that you get to “do radio” with your friends from the local club. It can be a camping experience with an awesome picnic. With all the planning and setup, it can have the feel of going on a DXpedition, without the travel. With its roots as an emergency preparedness exercise, it can still fill that need, especially when the local media participates. For me, Field Day is whatever you want it to be. I thought it would be fun to pull together some recent (and not so recent) stories of Field Day, in which current TCDXA members have participated. - Al, KØAD



WØAA – Class 2A – Park Rapids, Minnesota – 2012

For a number of years, Ron, NØAT has graciously opened up his family-owned resort near Park Rapids, MN for operating Field Day. NØAT, NØKK and I have participated most years with other MWAers joining us. This year, our team consisted of NØAT, NØKK, KØAD, WØGJ, KØIR, AE5E and KØADX. The resort is situated on Blue Lake, and has six cabins, a couple houses and lots of space and trees for antennas.

This year, most of us arrived early Friday afternoon; then the fun began. WØGJ and KØIR both had military crank up masts, which were put up to hold our tri-banders for the main station, as well as the GOTA station. Our main station was located in a small building known as the game room. We pushed the ping pong table aside, making it the perfect size for holding our two HF stations, as well as the VHF station.



Al, KØAD reloads the line launcher with compressed air, making it possible to get those wires up really high!

The fun new addition to our antenna erection efforts this year was Al's new line launcher that was picked up at Dayton. Rather than struggle with sling shots and sinkers as we had in the past, it was amazing to watch the small tennis balls clear the tallest of trees. It took us a while to get the air pressure right but once we did, getting all the wire antennas up was a breeze. We had loops for 40 and 80 and a multi-band windom that we used as an alternate antenna on 10 thru 20 (it compared quite favorably with the Yagi). Rounding out things was a small 6-meter beam that we put up about 30 feet, or so.

On Friday night, we traditionally drive into Dorsett and have dinner at a great little Mexican restaurant called “Campaneros.” This year was no exception. After our fill of tacos, burritos and margaritas, we returned to the Field Day site.

By Saturday morning, the antennas were all up, so we spent the time setting up equipment, debugging software and network issues, and generally getting ready. KØAD, NØKK and NØAT brought their XYLs along, and they helped





Ron, NØAT with grandson Will at CW Station #1.

set up a picnic lunch Saturday (and throughout the weekend). In the past, we never had an operating schedule. We just sort of worked it out in real time. With six operators, we decided (about 15 minutes before the start) to set up a schedule. With 48 hours of slots to fill, we each operated a total of eight hours over the weekend.

Kirsten, KØADX was our GOTA operator. The GOTA station was setup for RTTY, only. Kirsten made some Qs on Saturday afternoon, but then had to head back to the Cities on Saturday night. The GOTA station was setup in the cabin that Marianne (my XYL) and I were in. As Marianne watched Kirsten operate, she said to me “I think I could do that.” So, on Saturday evening, I sat Marianne down in front of the GOTA station, showed her what to click on and what Function Keys to press, and she was off and running. Before I knew it, she was running RTTY contacts at the GOTA station. Although Marianne has been supportive of my hobby, I NEVER thought she would actually get on the air some day.

When the bell rang at 1pm Sunday, we started taking down everything. It’s funny how something that took about 12 hours to set up comes down in about two. We gathered around the picnic tables and ate the last of the food. From a score standpoint, we ended up with a little over 2,200 QSOs and a score of a just over 9,700. This was down from last year, mainly due to the fact that 6 and 10 meters were virtually closed from our location all weekend. Still, from the standpoint of having a good time, we were all winners.

WØEF – Class 3A – St Louis Park, MN – 2012

{The Twin City FM Club holds one of the premier Field Days in the area. They have a great location in St. Louis Park, and provide a convenient place to stop by on the west side of the Twin Cities. Bert, WBØN gives a brief description of this year’s successful event.}

The TCFMC had another good Field Day. We were again located at Louisiana Oaks Park in St. Louis Park, MN. We operated class 3A (three HF Transmitters), plus a 6 meter station and a GOTA station. Unfortunately, the GOTA station had a poor antenna. While our score was down a little from last year, it was still our second best score, ever. Despite poor propagation, some scheduling holes, a faulty generator and a little antenna issue, we feel we did pretty well.



TCDXA members Bert, **WBØN**; Mark, **WAØMHJ** and Greg, **KØGW** pause for a photo outside of TCFMC’s air conditioned operating room.

Our first attempt at wireless networking worked well, as did all the radios and antennas. One antenna had a snafu that needed fixing, but that’s part of Field Day. We had another great setup and takedown team; the operators were top notch, as always. The food was GREAT! We had a lot of visitors to which we could show off our hobby. This is what Field Day is all about. Most of all, WE HAD FUN!

When all was over, we made 2,822 QSOs for 10,198 points. This compares to last year’s total of 3,430 QSOs and 11,200 points.

TCDXA members participating in the Twin City FM Club Field Day were: **WAØMHJ**, **KØMPH**,



NØSTL, KØBUD, KEØL, KØBBC, K3WT, WGØM, KØRC, KGØDK, WØOR, KØCOM, and KØIVO.

I think with the problems lining up operators and getting enough productive bands available, it might be time for us to go back to class 2A, with a 6m and GOTA stations.

KØKWO – Class 2A – Webster City, Iowa – 2012
{The following was submitted by TCDXA member Clay, WØFS}

Our Field Day this year was held at West Twin Park in Webster City, Iowa. Besides myself, those participating were Margot, **KBØMPL**; Juan, **NØPSF**; and Kevin **KEØH**. Our setup was very simple. We used a multi-band vertical and a 40 meter inverted vee on a 70-foot mast. Our radio was an OMNI VI+. We ended up with 246 CW QSOs and 123 Phone QSOs. This is not too bad for a small club with four operators. The club was busy that weekend, providing communications for the Boone Bash River Dash. The food was simple, also. We did it off site, except for donuts on Sunday morning.



A multi-band vertical was the main antenna at the **KØKWO** Field Day in Webster City, Iowa.

NØKK – Class 2A – Blaine, Minnesota – 1999
*{For this one, we step back in time to one of the only recent Field Day operations put on by the Twin City DX Association, itself. Lots of these guys are still around and active, of course, but they look a little different today! Thanks to Bob, **KØRC** for submitting this look into the past.}*

The Twin Cities DX Association was organized in

1971 as a social club of operators, who were interested in DX and climbing the DXCC ladder of accomplishment. The bylaws at that time required proof of basic DXCC as a qualification for membership. In addition, an existing member in good standing was required to sponsor the applicant when submitting their membership form.

By 1999, the membership had risen to approximately 60 operators. Some of the newer members were bringing fresh ideas into the group. One of those suggestions was to have the TCDXA sponsor a Field Day event. Volunteers were commandeered to round up radios, antennas, towers and suitable shelter for the summer event.



Dave, **KTØR** (SK) operates the CW station at the 1999 TCDXA field Day in Blaine, MN.

The specific details are probably lost to history, but I do know someone had made arrangements to use “Garbage Hill” for the Field Day site. It gained this notoriety because it was created from refuse collected and piled up in a rural (at that time) section of Blaine, MN. Today, it is known as Lockness Park, and can be found northeast of I-35W and Lexington, Avenue, a block to the north of the Wal-Mart and Home Depot stores. That location provided a slight elevation above the surrounding countryside, and was wide open in all directions. There was a concern regarding “odor,” but a visit to the site prior to setup dispelled that concern.

I believe Jeff May, **WØXV** had purchased a surplus military tubular tower at the Dayton Hamvention, and brought it to Field Day. It consisted of short telescoping sections of large, thick aluminum tubing



painted the requisite army green color. It supported a 40m rotary dipole and 4el tri-band antenna rising about 40 feet in the air.

I brought some Rohn 25 tower sections that were used to support other VHF/UHF antennas.

In addition, the communications trailer from the 25/85 repeater group was used during the weekend. (I saw **KØLAV** and **WDØHWT** call signs lettered onto the side by the door.) It had a crank-up tower mounted on one end of the frame, and it supported a 5el tribander, in addition to supporting a number of wire antennas for the low bands.

I think there was at least one other operation hosted by the TCDXA from that location. I have additional photos which show Jules, **W2JGR** (SK) operating RTTY on the 20m band. It is possible I am recalling his participation during a second operation, which might have been the next year.

I posted 14 photos from this particular Field Day event in a folder. Download them [<here>](#).



Bob, **KØRC** and Paul, **KØPA** operate at the 1999 TCDXA Field Day, while youngster Kirk, **NØKK** (in the red cap) looks on. (The person on the far right is unknown.)

ZL2GT – Napier, New Zealand - 2012

*{The following was submitted by Lee, **ZL2AL** who is a member of the TCDXA. While most of us are familiar with the annual ARRL Field Day, it is fascinating to read about how Field Day is run in other areas of the world. What follows is Lee's interesting story of his Field Day operation in New Zealand. }*

New Zealand is located right on the fault line of the Pacific Rim, where the threat of earthquakes and volcano eruptions are always present. All New Zealanders have the “next one” in the back of their minds. Two years ago, we had two major earthquakes in the South Island, which destroyed the business centre of the city of Christchurch and affected 80,000 homes in one way or another. Sadly, 185 people lost their lives. Rebuilding will take years and over 30 billion dollars. Amateur radio played a big part when normal communications failed.

We have permanent, ready search and rescue teams in every city to find lost hikers in our mountains. The country also experiences floods and with three active volcanoes around the North Island, emergency preparedness is essential. In 1931, a huge earthquake hit my city, Napier. It killed 252 people, destroyed Napier, Hastings and other surrounding towns. Local hams put together battery operated radios to tell the outside world what happened.

Out of the Napier Earthquake grew an AREC, our Amateur Radio Emergency Corp. NZ is divided into four major areas, with around 88 Amateur Radio clubs. Each club has a group of AREC people who are on call in the event of an emergency. Each club has emergency generators and the usual portable radios and antennas. Out of this arrangement it was decided that each club should have a yearly emergency exercise in the field to test radios and gear and preparedness which is how the ZL National Field Day was born.



A typical Field Day setup at **ZL2GT**.



Field Day in New Zealand is vastly different than in most other countries. The date is known 6 months in advance, but you only have three hours to set up the antennas. Radios and station equipment may be set up earlier. Of course, any shelter must be tents or temporary shelter. The second major difference is that there are only 88 clubs. Only 40 or 50 are active, which limits the number of contacts each club can make. Oceania DX stations count for points, but all other areas of the world do not. Only 80 meters and 40 meters are used. The logic is that those bands would be the only useful bands to work for a New Zealand facing an emergency. The last major difference is that each club station based around the two islands work SSB for the first half of each hour and CW for the second half of each hour. In other words, any station may not contact any other station more than once per hour or twice per hour if the second mode is used. You end up working the same stations over and over again. It sounds a bit strange and it's Field Day not as you know it, but it works for the ZLs. In reality, we all know each other and our operating habits. New hams in each club are often introduced to contesting during Field Days. It is an important training ground for emergencies.



Lee, **ZL2AL** operating at the **ZL2GT** Field Day near Napier, New Zealand.

We ZLs are quite civilized about the time we spend operating. Field Day starts at 3pm in the afternoon local time and ends at midnight, when we knock off to sleep. We start again at 6am the next morning and go to 3pm in the afternoon, when the contest

ends. It is possible to rack up around 700 QSOs on each of the two bands. CW contacts count for 5 points, SSB contacts count for 3 points, and these are multiplied by the number of clubs to give a final score. Several trophies and certificates are awarded to each of the four regional winners and different mode winners.

ZL Field Day in the middle of our summer is a fun event, with small teams of 5 to 10 ops using tents and portable generators. It's certainly different from the NA and EU experience. I have been participating for the past 40 years as a ZL, and it is quite charming to say hello to ops from around the country again each year. The ZL amateur community is a small one, and most of us know each other and Field Day is an opportunity to renew those friendships, which is what amateur radio is all about!

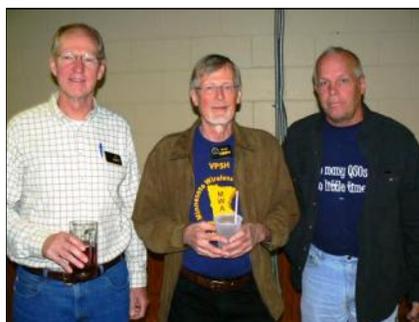


Familiar Smiling Faces at the Annual MWA Membership Meeting on September 18th



MWA President
Bill Lippert,
AC0W.

Ralph Fedor,
KØIR (left) and
MWA Director John
Baumgarten, **NØJJ**.



TCDXA President
Pat Cain, **KØPC**
(left), Roger Roth,
KØMPH (center)
and QRP contest
master Jim Lageson,
NØUR.



Hans Brakob KØHB

“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

--- Arthur C Clarke

“Any technology distinguishable from magic is insufficiently advanced.” --- KØHB



I’ve spent my adult life involved in things which can generally be termed “technology.” And, for fifty-odd years, I’ve played in a “geeky” hobby called ham radio.

Growing up in the 1940s and 1950s on a small rural farm not even blessed with electric lights or a telephone (let alone a refrigerator or a television set) does not seem a likely incubator for a lifelong vocation and avocation in electronics, radio, and telecommunications. So how did that transpire?

It was all the result of a stew made up of a mix of adolescent boredom, curiosity, the romance of “far away places” and an old six-volt Zenith radio. In our “front room” (“living rooms” were for town people) on a convenient table next to Dad’s chair stood a large Zenith radio set. Everything on a farm serves some purpose, and this set served to provide the daily 5pm news and weather report from WDAY in Fargo. It wasn’t used a lot for “entertainment,” with the exception of the Thursday evening weekly episode of “Dragnet,” to which Dad was addicted. Beyond that, the radio stood idle.

Now besides the usual AM broadcast band, the old Zenith had a couple of additional “shortwave” bands. Despite a long wire antenna, which stretched from the house to the top of the hay barn, those shortwave bands were the home to mostly static and very weak foreign sounding stations.

With one exception, on dark quiet winter evenings the “4 to 6 megacycle” shortwave band would sometimes contain a lot of squeaky/squawky Morse code signals. I knew that our mail carrier, a fellow named Norman Eid, was something called a “ham radioman.” One day, when he delivered our mail, (most likely seed catalogs and such), I asked him about those signals. He said in that band that they were probably messages being sent back and forth from ships at sea.

To a preteen kid on an isolated farm in the middle of the Great Plains, he might as well have told me that they were messages between Venus and Mars! I was determined to learn Morse, so that I could eavesdrop on the secrets that they were exchanging.

It turned out that those “secret messages” were mostly about mundane things like position reports, weather reports and expected arrival times. Thus, began my love of the magic of radio.

- continued on next page -



Through my teen years, I became an avid SWLer, concentrating on the 4, 8, 12, and 16 megacycle maritime bands (before it changed to megaHertz). To boost my code speed, I spent a lot of evenings copying the fleet broadcasts from US and Canadian Navy stations like CFH, CFI, NSS, NPG, and FQN.

The notion of becoming a ham never really entered my mind in those days. I taught myself a little about antennas, but never bothered to learn to SEND the code. I also had no particular interest in the electronics involved in getting a license.

My first passing exposure to ham radio was during my first year at college. The U of Minnesota had a club station (**WØYC**), that I visited a few times, but the bug never really bit until a few years later.

After a year of “working my way” through college and just barely keeping my stomach full, I decided to delay the remainder of college, join the service to get the GI Bill and finish later (“later” turned out to be about 26 years!)

In Navy boot camp they discovered that I knew Morse, so the die was cast. They didn’t even send me to radio school. Right out of boot camp I was sent to a fast destroyer in the Atlantic as a radioman “striker,” and soon I was getting paid for copying NSS, NAM, and NHY “fox broadcast.” That gets boring pretty fast when you do it at 8-hour stretches. The Navy had two different types of Morse circuits in those days: “one way” and “two-way.” Since I hadn’t learned to send Morse, I was assigned to copy the boring “one way” fleet broadcasts. It didn’t take me very long to decide to learn to send, so I could “sit” the more interesting two-way Morse circuits.



It turned out I really enjoyed sending, so I progressed quite rapidly. It wasn’t too long before I was one of those “far away sailors” that I so envied in my SWLing days as a youth. My first four years passed quickly, and I was enjoying it so much that my plan to finish college on the GI bill was postponed, and I signed up for six more.

In 1962, the Navy pulled me off destroyers (kicking and screaming) and sent me off to a year of advanced electronics training. This training gave me the last bit of the

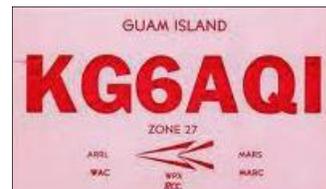
requirements for my ham license, so I started thinking about getting a license.

But, during the time ashore, I had fallen madly in love with a gal from New Brighton, MN. Instead of chasing a license, I chased (and caught) Colleen. We were married in 1964, while I was assigned to the Navy High Power Transmitting station at Driver, Virginia. Then, in 1965, the Navy needed my newfound skills at another High Power Transmitting station; this one in Barrigada, Guam.

Unaccompanied tour!

Suddenly, the idea of a ham license took on new meaning. I met a St Paul ham, Hal Newell, **WAØKDI** (SK) who said I should get my license, and he’d be happy to run a schedule so I could talk to my family (now including a couple of toddlers). Some of you will remember Hal, a great DXer, and one of the founding members of TCDXA.

As soon as I got to Guam, I tested for my first license, a “Conditional” class, and was assigned the callsign, **KG6AQI**. There was a nice club station up the road at the Finegayan Communications Station, **KG6AAY**, which was well equipped with a couple Collins S-Lines, big beams high in the sky, and salt water all around. What a great “first station” to provide the weekly link via **WAØKDI** back to my bride in Minnesota.



After a year “unaccompanied,” I got a 2-year extension on the island and Colleen and our two children joined me. I then set up a station at our house. My first setup was a used Hallicrafters HT-37 transmitter and an SX-111 receiver that I bought from a local ham, Lou Garrido, **KG6AIG**. I bought some surplus aluminum tower sections from the Navy, and hoisted a tri-band quad at 30 feet. I was on the air (for about an hour).

About two blocks away was another ham, Bill Wehrung, **WA4YOK/KG6**. Bill was an avid DXer, and my HT-37, a “phasing” transmitter, put white-noise hash +/- 50kcs from my operating frequency. We just couldn’t co-exist on the same band, so I went back to SWLing. We saved up our pennies, and I mail ordered a brand new Swan 350 from Allied Radio in Chicago. The price I recall was \$325.00.

Well, I waited and waited and waited and waited and finally started writing frantic letters to Allied Radio. It turned out that Swan had discontinued the model 350, but Allied Radio took pity on me and substituted the “latest and greatest” from Swan, their new model 500C.

I was finally on the air with my own rig. Meanwhile,



I'd heard about something called incentive licensing, so I upgraded my license to Extra.

There were a lot of stations on Guam at the time, so it wasn't particularly rare, but I was still "DX," and what a grand introduction to DXing that was. There was always an opening to somewhere on some band, so DXCC was typically a week's work (a month at most), to anyone who wanted to work for the award.

After leaving Guam in 1969, with a growing family and a lot of moving around, ham radio receded into a background hobby for many years. I stayed somewhat active, but it just wasn't the same as **WAØPQF**, **WBØDLL**, **WB4GXH**, or **WBØWFF** (the Navy moved me around a lot, and each move meant a new call sign in those days).

Fast forward to 1976; the Navy sent me to Minneapolis as Chief Recruiter of the tri-state (Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota) recruiting area. We moved to Plymouth, and since it was my last Navy tour, I could put up a more permanent station, as we intended to remain in Minnesota when I left the Navy. I quickly traded in my **WBØWFF** call sign for **KØHB** when I became eligible.

At that time, my station was all Heathkit: an SB-104A transceiver, SB-230 600W amplifier and another quad (I loved quads!). My next rig was a Heath (not Heath-KIT) SS-9000. What an awesome radio I thought that was. It was all solid state with dual VFOs, no tune-up and computer control. I bought it from Fred Bagg at the Hopkins Heathkit store on a "close out special price." JA rigs like the Kenwood 940, and the Yaesu FT-One had taken the market away from Heath.

In due course, the SS-9000 was replaced by a Yaesu FT-890, Icom 761, Icom 765, Icom 775 (all used rigs), and finally last summer my xyl bought me a Yaesu FTDX-5000D for my birthday.

My current station, in addition to the FTDX-5000D, consists of an Ameritron AL-1200, and the usual assortment of "peripherals." The antenna farm is dominated by a TH7 at 65 feet, a GAP 160-20 vertical and an ever-changing collection of wires and "special" verticals.

Most of my operation is still CW. I like to tinker around with the various digital modes, but none have really captured my fancy. Because of hearing issues, SSB isn't used much, but I love to rag chew on a quiet band once in a while.

My DX accomplishments are modest alongside many of the club members. I'm still about 10 countries shy of the Honor Roll, but keep in the hunt. I also like contesting, primarily domestic contests like ARRL November Sweepstakes CW and NAQP CW.



In addition to TCDXA, I also belong to the Minnesota Wireless Association and the Arizona Outlaws Contesting Club. I'm a longtime member of ARRL, and served a couple terms as the Dakota Division Vice-Director, back when Tod, **KØTO** was the Director

Besides ham radio, my hobbies are walleye fishing and woodworking projects. My dear wife, Colleen, is also a ham, **KØCKB**. She's not routinely active, but helps out in some of the contests, sometimes tuning the bands on a second receiver, a Drake R4C, for needed multipliers and very occasionally taking a turn on the key for a few minutes while I "refresh" myself.

In the winter Colleen and I take our RV to Gold Canyon, Arizona, a small town near the Superstition Mountains (home of the legend of the Lost Dutchman goldmine). There, I do a lot of hiking in the mountains, and nature photography. You can read about those adventures at my blog at <http://oldslowhans.wordpress.com>.

Good DX de Hans, **KØHB**



Hiking in the Superstition Mountains.



KØPX's "Other" Hobby

When Doug, KØPX, isn't on the air chasing DX, you may find him in his shop working on his collection of old cars – his "other" hobby. He does all the fabricating and painting himself, building and restoring most of the cars from the ground up.

In a recent issue of the *Gray Line Report* we ran a story about Doug's rotating tower project that was also a one-man effort. See <http://www.tcdxa.org/Newsletters/March2012Grayline.pdf>.

If the tower story didn't prove it, this hobby should: KØPX is blessed with an abundance of mechanical skills.



'36 Ford 3-window coupe with 350 fuel injected motor. Rare body style.



'36 Ford Roadster with flathead motor and dual carbs. Chopped 2 inches. Only 3,000 were produced.



'28 Ford Roadster with 350 Chev motor, original Ford body (recently sold to buy '36 Roadster).



'63 Ford Falcon 2-door wagon with 350 fuel injected motor and shaved body (recently sold).



Doug's latest project – '32 Ford 5-window coupe. Plans call for a 350 Chev, 3 deuces, and a 5-speed manual tranny.



'63 Ford Falcon Sprint convertible with a Mustang fuel injected 5.0 and Mustang II IFS



Learning Spanish and DXing in Guatemala

by Bill Dean, WØOR

S ometime during the summer of 2011, I decided I wanted to improve my knowledge of Spanish. Why, you might ask, would a guy of 71 all of a sudden feel an urge to learn another language? Well, several fellow TCDXA members and I have traveled to various places in Latin America over the past decade, operating from Spanish-speaking countries for CQWW CW contests. We had been to Guatemala, Bolivia, San Andres (Colombia) and El Salvador. On each occasion I came away a bit frustrated by knowing so little of the local language. Also, my wife and I have talked of spending a winter sometime in Ecuador, which receives a good deal of praise as a retirement destination for gringos. Finally, I guess I wanted to prove to myself that it's still possible to learn.



Since I didn't know much Spanish to begin with, "improving" meant starting from scratch. Like a lot of Americans, I took a year or two of it in high school. But that was more than 50 years ago. I first considered the idea of taking a community education course, or buying a Rosetta Stone program. But, I wasn't sure I'd have the day-to-day discipline to make that work for me. So, I figured I had better jump in feet first, if I was going to succeed. And, that meant enrolling in an immersion school.

Almost immediately, I opted for Guatemala. It's relatively cheap, there are lots of immersion schools, the quality of spoken Spanish is reputedly good and I knew something about the country, having visited it three separate times in the past. And just as important, I would be able to obtain a license and get on the air! As an avid CW operator, tester and DXer, I knew there weren't many active CW operators in TG land.

So, I went on line and started looking for an appropriate school. I quickly narrowed the search to two cities: Antigua and Quetzaltenango. Both were touted as good places to study, and there were a variety of options available in each. Quetzaltenango, especially, appealed to me, as it is off the beaten track for tourists and has a rich cultural heritage. The city is called Xela (Chey-la) by the locals. It is the ancient Mayan name for the area. Also, it is large enough, with a population of about 300K, to have most of what one might need for an extended stay. I emailed several schools that looked appropriate for me and got responses from most, but the one that was the most aggressive recruiter, Escuela Sol Latino, looked like it would fit my needs: <http://www.spanishschoolsollatino.com>. It was reasonable, it offered a very flexible program and the owners seemed very nice in the emails we passed back and forth.

After studying the calendar and checking with my spouse, I decided on a 7-week stay during February and March of 2012. What I would get was 5 hours per day of one-on-one instruction and a stay with a Spanish speaking family, to include lodging and meals. This was all available for a total of \$1,150. When telling the school of my requirements, I listed permission to operate my radio station as a prime condition.

Licensing for Guatemala

There is a reciprocal agreement between the United States and Guatemala, which makes it pretty easy to get a license. One can't just go there and operate. You do need a letter of authorization from the authorities, which in Guatemala is the radio club in the capital city. It is called CRAG, which in Spanish stands for Club de Radio Aficionados de Guatemala, or "Amateur Radio Club of Guatemala." They have a website through which one can apply for a license: <http://www.crag.8m.com/>.

A U.S. amateur is required to submit a copy of their passport and FCC license. CRAG is supposed to respond



with a letter of authorization. It took me several inquiries after e-mailing my documents to receive my letter. Later, I found out from my friend Juan Carlos Munoz, **TG9AJR**, that the president of the club had not processed a license and was a little unsure of how to do it. Juan showed him how, and I eventually got my letter. I was able to meet Juan for lunch in Guatemala City on my return trip to the U.S. and learned of his help in obtaining my license.



Bill and Juan Carlos, **TG9AJR** in Guatemala City.

Getting There

Flights to Guatemala are available on several airlines. All go into Guatemala City, the capital and largest city. I was able to cash in some Delta frequent flyer miles to pay for my ticket. I booked in business class, which actually saved me money. That's because with my ham equipment and personal gear for almost two months, I needed to be able to check a lot of luggage. There are no bag checking fees in business and you are allowed up to 70 pounds free instead of 50 pounds. And, that's on top of the better seats and service.

The airport in Quetzaltenango was under construction, so there were no connecting flights. The school arranged for a taxi service to meet me at the airport and take me to the inter-city bus station. My morning flight from the U.S. arrived around noon. By 2:30pm I was on the bus to Xela. The distance is only about 120 miles. It was dark when we arrived, and I immediately found a taxi, loaded my gear and gave the driver the address of the family I was to stay with. It was well after dark when, ten minutes later, I stepped out onto the street in front of my new home.



My new home in Xela.

It turned out that the “family” I was to stay with ran what might be described as a small hotel or boarding house. The next morning, after attending my first class and meeting my instructor, I anxiously rushed “home” to survey the ham operating situation. My room was on the second floor of a two story building. There was a large window facing the inside of a courtyard which, like many Spanish-style homes in Central America, featured an open air central patio, surrounded by covered structures. There was a stairway leading to the second floor outside my room and another stairway to the roof, where the family had clothes lines. It looked like I might be able to run a length of coax out the window and up to the roof. The roof itself was about 30 x 30 feet. On two sides there was a decorative ironwork fence and on the sides facing the adjacent houses there was a concrete wall about shoulder high. Reinforcing rod was sticking out at various points along the concrete wall.

Setting up the Station

The equipment I brought along consisted of my K-3 and switching power supply, a keyer and paddle, a Heil Pro-set headset/mic combination, two lengths of coax, plenty of insulated stranded 18 gauge wire, rope, a 1:1 balun, a 4:1 balun, a few insulators and a tool kit. I also lugged along a portable yagi purchased with this trip in mind from Joe Dolinsky, **WØWD**. My first thought was to see if I could somehow set it up on the roof. Unfortunately, I very quickly determined there simply wasn't enough room. In addition, the family needed the roof to hang their clothes out to dry from time to time. So, I opted



for dipoles. There was just enough room for a 20 meter dipole stretched from one end of one of the clotheslines to the other. I fed it through a 1:1 balun with one of the coax lengths just long enough to stretch from my room, out the window and up to the feed point on the roof. The broad sides of the dipole pointed slightly northeast and southwest. I also cut lengths of wire for each of the other bands.



View from the roof looking east. The antenna wire is yellow, and is taped to one of the clotheslines at each end. This antenna is the 20 meter wire dipole.



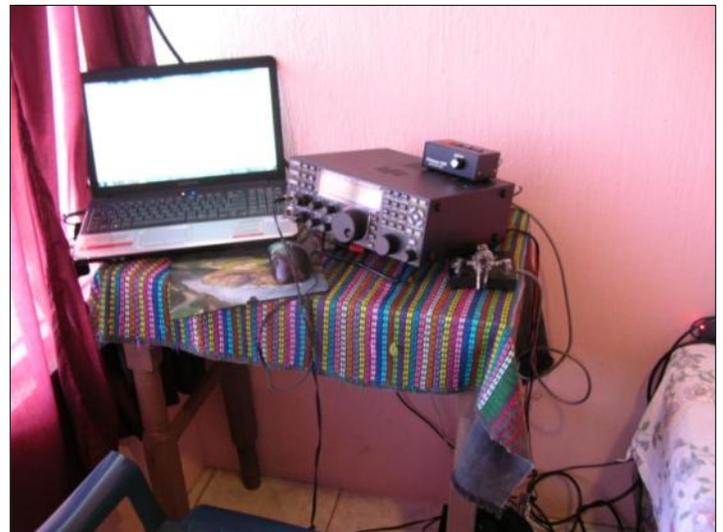
There was so much wind at the feed point that I had to tie the balun to the clothesline.

I had arranged a sked with Jack Falker, **W8KR**, to see if things would work. After an exchange of emails, I fired up on 20 meter cw. The band was open with W4s and W5s pounding in. Jack was lis-

tening for me and I gave him a call. He came right back with about a 589 signal and told me I was doing about the same with my 100 watts. Good news. It looked like the wire dipoles were going to work OK.

For the next few days, there was precious little time to operate because of my studies. But, I was able to get on occasionally, usually early in the morning or just before dinner, and I discovered that I would have no trouble working just about anybody I could hear. Xela is at 7,300 feet in elevation, and the city is located in a bowl surrounded by mountains. At first I was a little worried about that, but the mountains, which ranged from 9,000 feet to more than 12,000 feet, were far enough away to present no problem.

Insofar as setting up a shack was concerned, my room was small. It was furnished with little more than a bed and a small table, so the shack was pretty cramped. I managed to fit the K-3 and my computer on the table, as shown in the picture.



My operating position for the ARRL DX Contest.

I discovered early on that, without a satisfactory ground, there was a lot of RF floating around the shack. Often, the stray RF would cause my computer to act up, and, occasionally, would cause the keyer to malfunction.

I got on the air with Tom Menas, **K3WT**, who had the ability to ship via Fed-X from his workplace. He sent me a package of toroids, which I proceeded to wrap cables around, and that solved the problem. I also bought a roll of aluminum foil, which I spread on the floor and used as a ground. I'm not sure what



did the trick, but, between the two, the RF problems were solved. I was never able to get rid of persistent noise, however. I just learned to live with it. A picture of what the power lines outside the house looked like might offer a clue as to the cause of the problem.



Typical power line sight in Xela.

One of my goals was to operate in the ARRL DX Contest, which occurred my second weekend in the country. There was no possibility of operating 80 or 160 meters, but I figured I might be able to do something on 40. I cut dipoles for that band, with about half of the lengths hanging over the edge of the roof on each side. It turned out it worked just fine for the U.S. and Canada.

The DX contest worked out fairly well. I worked 2,137 stations and totaled 204 multipliers for a score of 1,292,544, which easily won the single-op low power category for Guatemala. I later learned there was one additional station in the contest from TG9, operated by **K9NW**, who scored about 238,000 points in the high power category. I never heard him, which isn't surprising, as TG9 land is at least 120 miles away and is separated by high mountains.

After the contest, the amount of time devoted to studying Spanish prevented me from getting on the air as much as I would have liked, although I managed to make about 1,230 contacts, mostly on CW, and mostly on 18, 21 and 24mHz. I discovered that I was popular on the WARC bands, especially with Europeans and Japanese. Outside of contests, there aren't many TGs that operate regularly on CW.

Since being in Guatemala, I have received many QSLs indicating that I was the first TG worked on A1.

Second Location

While the operation from my first home away from home in Xela was satisfactory, the Spanish language experience there was something less than ideal. There was little chance to talk to family members. There were four other rooms, most of which were occupied by younger students with whom I had little in common. We ate together; not with the family. Their Spanish was generally not much better than mine, and so I felt the home stay experience I had sought was not working out well. So, I asked the school to see if they could find another place for me.

They arranged for me to stay with another family. This turned out to be much more satisfactory in terms of the Spanish practice, but there were drawbacks there as well. Again, I was able to put dipoles up on the roof, and, in fact, the man of the house had once been a CBer, and there was an 11-meter vertical mounted on the roof. Several years earlier, I was told, a dog had chewed up the coax. It had never been fixed, and apparently CB in Guatemala became less popular. So, the vertical had been sitting there for years, unused.

Fortunately, I had brought along a few coax connectors and barrels. I was able to attach a male connector to the existing piece of coax that was still hanging from the vertical, add a barrel and tie a feed into my rig. There was no window in my room, but there was a vent shaft through which I was able to run coax to the roof. The vertical tuned beautifully on 10 meters. And, as it turned out, 28mHz was the only band that was open much during the ARRL SSB contest, at least from where I was. I did work pileups on 10m SSB using the vertical. For the other bands, I again used wire dipoles, which seemed to get out well. As for the room, there was a larger table, which made operating a bit more convenient.

Some Notes on Guatemala

Apart from my amateur radio experiences, the time spent in Guatemala was both fascinating and richly rewarding. I highly recommend a visit to any Central American nation. With the possible exception of Costa Rica, all are "developing countries." There is a good deal of poverty, and many people live





The 11-meter vertical.



Marketplace in Xela.

I did manage to learn enough Spanish to “get along.” And, the Guatemalans I met almost universally seemed pleased that I would use their language. They are a friendly and vivacious people, who seem very welcoming to visitors from the U.S.

I am now eagerly looking forward to my next operation from Latin America. I hope to work as many TCDXA friends as possible from Ecuador next February and March. Until then, 73.

- Bill, WØOR



The operating position from my second location.

under conditions that most Americans would not easily tolerate. But, it isn't as difficult to adapt as one might think. Virtually, everyone has a cell phone, and most people appear to be well-fed. The condition of the infrastructure is mixed—some buildings, roads and bridges appear to be well built—while others are of dubious quality.

Food is plentiful, but folks from the U.S. should beware of eating uncooked vegetables. And, drinking anything but bottled beverages is a definite no-no.



Gary Grivna KØGX

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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 Treasury Report

September 1, 2012

Submitted by TCDXA Secretary-Treasurer Mike, KØCOM

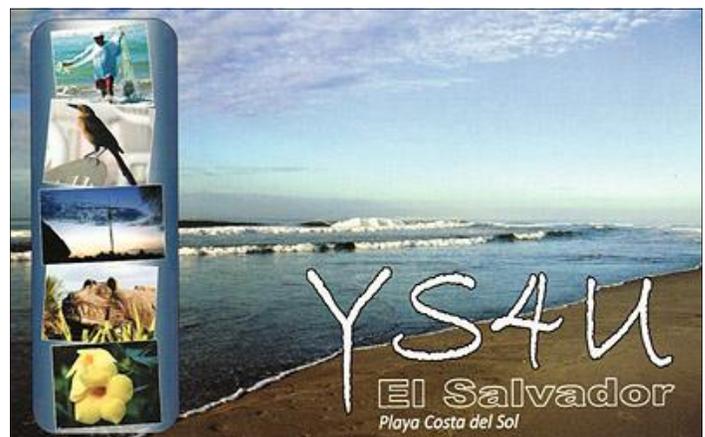
Income:

Carryover from 2011	1,921.58
2012 dues collected	3,416.34
Misc. donations	474.63
Door prize ticket sales	510.00
Dinner Ticket Sales, Malpelo program	975.00
Bank service fee (reversal)	9.95
Total YTD income	\$ 7307.50

Expenses YTD:

Bank service fees	(11.90)
Website	(67.69)
Office supplies, guest dinners and misc.	(180.68)
Memorial for Gary Strong to Mayo	(200.00)
MWA Plaque	(75.00)
Food Expense, Malpelo program	(1,010.90)
DX Hall of Fame Reception for WØGJ	(261.00)
WRTC Tent Donation	(325.00)
DXpedition Donation, 3CØE	(250.00)
DXpedition Donation, 7O6T	(250.00)
DXpedition Donation, NH8S	(500.00)
DXpedition Donation, PTØS	(250.00)
Total YTD expenses \$	(\$ 3,382.17)

Current Checking Balance	3,925.33
PayPal balance	0.00
Cash on hand	0.00
Total current funds	\$ 3,925.33



VKØIR
ZL9CI
A52A
T33C
3B9C
TX9
CP6CW
3YØX
K7C
5A7A
VU4AN
VU7RG

K5D
VK9DWX
FT5GA
3D2ØCR
E4X
CYØ/NØTG
VP8ORK
VU4PB
STØR
3D2R
3CØE



K4M
TX3A
KMØO/9M6
YS4U
YI9PSE
ZL8X
4W6A
T32C
HKØNA
7Ø6T
NH8S
PTØS

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

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, Ron, NØAT, TCDXA@n0at.net. He and the TCDXA Board of Directors will judge how well the DXpedition plans meet key considerations (see below).

If the Board of Directors deems the DXpedition to be worthy of support, a recommended funding amount is presented to the membership for their vote. If approved, the TCDXA Treasurer will process the funding..

Key Considerations for a DXpedition Funding Request

DXpedition destination
Ranking on *Most Wanted Survey*
Most wanted ranking by TCDXA Members
Logistics and transportation costs
Number of operators and their credentials
Number of stations on the air
Bands, modes and duration of operation
Equipment: antennas, radios, amps, etc.
Stateside and/or foreign QSL manager

Website with logos of club sponsors
QSLs with logos of club sponsors
Online logs and pilot stations
Up front cost to each operator
Support by NCDXF & other clubs
LoTW log submissions
Previous operations by same group
Valid license and DXCC approval
Donation address: USA and/or foreign

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

