Volume 3, Issue 5

05/2020

the exchange

SWODXA
WWW.SWODXA.ORG
SouthWest Ohio DX Association

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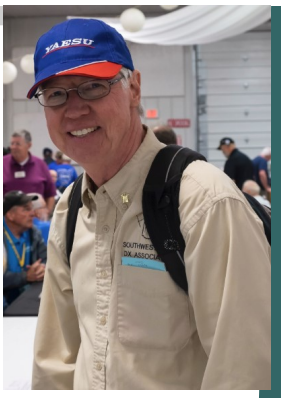
INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Prez says…..Tom, NR8Z



I sincerely hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones in good health and making the best of whatever situation you find yourself in during the coronavirus pandemic. Perhaps this May 2020 edition of the SWODXA newsletter will coincide with successful economic re-opening and lifestyle restoration.

I've come to appreciate our ham radio hobby even more as both a distraction from the life as well as a learning experience. I find myself on the air when I wouldn't normally be since many of my activities are on hold, thus I'm expanding my understanding of daily propagation at the bottom of the solar cycle. While a number of DXPeditions have not occurred, the bands seem nicely populated on FT8 and CW, there's always someone to work.

Unfortunately, our DX Dinner had to be cancelled for 2020 due to the cancellation of Hamvention with restrictions related to the pandemic. I will miss the fellowship opportunity and the immersion in DXing. We will announce the DXPedition of the Year® award the week when the DX Dinner would have occurred. Bill, AJ8B, is working on a creative multi-media, multi-outlet announcement. Stay tuned.

With the coronavirus group meeting restrictions, we don't expect to be able to have an in-person SWODXA meeting in May. But hams are agile communicators so we're going to have our first (and only?) virtual meeting by videoconference. This may be a once-in-a-lifetime event so don't miss it. The invite will go out to members via email. Also, to help you stay connected please join the Saturday evening "Coronanet" on 10 meters that Rob, W8MRL runs.

This newsletter has insights from current top DXers as well as some DXing history from both warm and frigid climates. I pondered the differences between being quarantined in Ohio in Spring and being ice-bound in the Artic in winter.

73,
Tom—NR8Z

Since our last newsletter, we have lost two members of the SWODXA family—K8LEE—Wayne and W8ILC—Ron. Please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers as well as all of those members who are Silent Keys and others who need your support. (Info from qrz.com)

Wayne M McKenzie, , K8LEE
October 27, 1942 - January 16, 2020

We are sad to announce the passing of Wayne M. McKenzie, age 77, of Bright, IN on January 16, 2020 at his home. Wayne was born to Carl Vernon McKenzie and Mildred Gertrude (nee Meier) McKenzie on October 27, 1942 in Meridian, MS. He married Shelby J. Lewis on December 30, 1967, and they were blessed with two children: Todd and Amanda. Wayne worked for Siemen Corporation as a Senior Field Service Engineer and traveled all over the world. He was an amateur Radio enthusiast since the age of 12. He lived life to the fullest both in business and personal pursuits, this included traveling worldwide in sometimes dangerous situations. Wayne was a generous person, with both his knowledge and financial contributions.

Those left to cherish his memory are is loving wife Shelby Jean McKenzie; children: Todd (Julie) McKenzie, and Amanda McKenzie; cherished grandchildren: Zachary, Caleb and Myah McKenzie and Noah, Jonah and Ruby Wheelock; Sister: Janet McKenzie and brother: Carl McKenzie.

Visitation will be held on Saturday, January 18, 2020 from 9:00 am until the time of the service at 11:00 am, at Brater Winter Funeral Home, 201 S. Vine Street. Harrison, with Mark Fugate presiding. Graveside services will follow at Gibson Cemetery in Bright, Indiana.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Loving Hearts Hospice. You can make your donation at the funeral home or you may mail your donation payable to Loving Hearts Hospice to the funeral home. They will notify the family of your donation and mail donations into Loving Hearts Hospice. https://www.braterfh.com/obituaries/Wayne-Mckenzie-3/#!/Obituary

- Team member of CY9C Aug 2016
- Main interest is weak signal work on 50 mhz Also low band dx and contest.
- Active on FT8 all bands
- Other calls held or worked from:
- CY0AA 1996 CY0AA 2005 K8LEE/CY0 2011 VP2MLE VP2DX C6DX
- 5H3US K8LEE/5H3 TI2AA TI2A J6DX J8DX 4O6DX 4N6EE TX5C
- PJ2/K8LEE PJ2T W1AW/8 HI2DX W1AW/9 TI5/K8LEE CY9C 2016

Ronald L. Moorefield, W8ILC
Apr 24, 1937—March 18, 2020

Ronald "Ron" Lee Moorefield, age 82, of Dayton, Ohio passed away March 18, 2020 at Heartland of Centerville. He was born April 24, 1937 in Dayton, Ohio to the late Russell Moorefield and Ruth Hausefeld.

Ron liked to help people through the Dayton Amateur Radio Association. He was a volunteer at the Box 21. He was a founding member at the Huber Heights Church of God. Ron retired after 38 years of employment at Ohio Bell/AT &T. Ron carried the Olympic Torch in 1984. He enjoyed traveling and fishing with Barb's family.

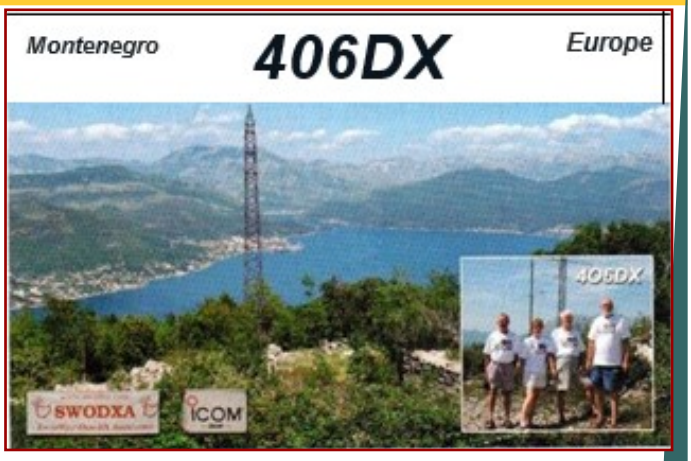
In addition to his parents, Ron was preceded in death by his wife of 36 years Nancy L. Moorefield; and close friend Barb Hobbs.

Ron is survived by his daughters, Lynn Moorefield, Andrea (Chris) Anderson, and Rhonda (Kelly) Calhoun; grandchildren, Kristen (Mike) Woods, Shelby Anderson, Karlee Calhoun, Kellen Calhoun, and Kerigan Calhoun; great-grandchildren, Peyton Maloney, Harper Woods, and Cole Woods; as well as numerous other family members and friends.
Memorial contributions can be made in Ron's honor to Hospice of Dayton.
Memorial Services will be held at Huber Heights Church of God at a later date.
https://www.newcomerdayton.com/Obituary/182649/Ronald-Ron-Moorefield/Dayton-OH

- QCWA Number: 11083 & NAQCC Number: 6508
- ARRL Life Member. Life Member Dayton Amateur Radio Association.
- Charter Member Huber Heights Amateur Radio Club.
- Charter Member of the Southwest Ohio Dx Association (SWODXA).
- CQ Hall OF FAME 2011.
- 1984 Olympic Torch Relay New York to Los Angles Radio Officer 86 Days.
- Hamvention Special Achievement Award 1978.
- 2007 Dayton Amateur Radio Ham of the Year. F
- rank Schwab,W8OK SWODXA Ham of the Year.
- Great Lakes Division George Wilson Award 2005
- ARRL DXCC Honor Roll#1 with 373 Countries Both Phone and Mixed.
- CQ DXCC Honor Roll with 341 Countries
- 160 Meter #89 DXCC now 163 Countries.
- #1 DXCC #1 200 Countries #1 300 Countries with less than 1 watt output.
- ARRL QRP 5 Band DXCC.
- QSL manager for J6LRU,J68AM and VP2EK.
- DXpeditions to VE2,C6,J6,6Y5,Ti5,V2,V4 VP2E.
- Great Lakes Division Assistant Director
- Public Information Officer(PIO) Ohio.

*In 2006, several of our members went to Montanegro to activate a new one. This task was taken on by W8GEX—Joe, W8CAA—Janet, K8LEE—Wayne, and KP2A—John. This article originally appeared in "**The DX Magazine**" January/February of 2007.*

Trip to Montenegro—4O6DX
August 12-21, 2006
By Joe Pater, W8GEX



When the news came out that Montenegro was to be a new DXCC entity, I contacted Ranko, YT6A, who owns the Sky Contest location on a peninsula overlooking the Adriatic Sea. Ranko was planning a festival that would last three weeks, and he invited me to join them. He said there would be three stations running 24/7 on all bands and modes and that I could be part of this large operation. They were going to have a big celebration with many festivities planned to honor Montenegro becoming a new entity.

I declined his kind invitation, as I had already started to put together my own smaller group. Although there was a lot of interest, it was difficult to recruit a team because we didn't have a firm date as to when Montenegro would be issued its prefix. In the beginning l planned to have an international group of nine operators. However, as the planning went forward, five of them had to dropout because of work or family commitments. I was disappointed, but it ended up being a blessing because propagation was not very good.

We ended up with four operators: Wayne, K8LEE, from Indiana: John, KP2A, from St. Thomas, U.S. V.I.: Janet, W8CAA; and myself. John, Wayne, and I had been on many DXPeditions. Janet, my wife and a new ham, had been on many radio trips with me but never operated. I thought it would be a great opportunity for her to get her feet wet from a new DXCC country, and it was. I was very pleased with her handling of a pile-up.

After we knew the firm date, we had about two months to plan our trip. We would be flying from Cincinnati to London's Gatwick, and then on to Dubrovnik, Croatia. We planned to meet John in Dubrovnik.

Two days before our flight the terrorist scare in London occurred and there was heightened security. Since everything was in place, we forged ahead. Our flight to London was uneventful, but the flight from London to Dubrovnik was another story. We were about 100 miles from landing in Dubrovnik when we encountered severe turbulence. The plane rolled from side to side, people were screaming, and it dropped a long way in one air pocket … a flight to remember.

When we arrived in Dubrovnik, John, KP2A, who was to have arrived three hours earlier, was nowhere to be found. We asked the airline about him, but they didn't want to tell us anything because of ·'privacy information." After much questioning, they finally told us his flight had been diverted to Paris, plus two more stops, and that he was scheduled to arrive at 9 PM that evening. Our taxi was waiting, so we left.

(cont. on next page)

Trip to Montenegro—4O6DX (cont.)

Joe. W8GEX

We had about an hour taxi ride which took us though two checkpoints. The cabbie was a hot rod. What a ride! When we arrived in Montenegro, our host, Ranko, YT 6A, and Bob, N6OX, who was still there from the 4O3T operation, met us. We transferred our luggage to Ranko's van and had another hour ride to the bottom of the big hill. Boro, YT6ZZ, met us with a truck to transport us up the hill to the contest station. It was a 4x4 with an enclosed box body. Janet rode in the front with Boro, and Wayne and I were in the back just holding on. This 2-km hill was one of the worst roads we had ever been on. It took about 45 minutes to reach the station because of the large boulders and holes. It was similar to a dry creek bed.

Once at the top of the hill we unloaded our equipment which included laptops, ICOM Pro lll radios, some miscellaneous equipment, and our personal luggage. Buro showed us around the station and we started to unpack. It was now 9 PM and time for John to land. Just then a big thunderstorm hit the area. That meant John was now diverted to Split, Croatia. Ranko called to tell us that John was scheduled to arrive in the morning. That he did, but with no luggage. The station had an extra keyer and a laptop that he was able to use in the meantime. The last of his luggage finally arrived two days later.

Janet and I planned to work SSB while Wayne and John concentrated on CW. Being at the bottom of the sunspot cycle, conditions were not very good for the next eight days, but at least

Janel. W8C AA

we had many European pile-ups because of our excellent location.

We used two ICOM Pro Ills, a Kenwood TS- 775, and a Yaesu FT- I000 Mark V, all with amps and stacked antenna arrays. I used a 2-element SteppIR on 17 meters that worked very well, as did all the stacked antennas. The location, at about 2000 feet above the sea, was great, as was the view. The weather was very hot at the time, and the air conditioner in the radio room did not work properly. With all of the heat generated from the radio equipment, laptops, etc., it was hot in both areas where we operated. We had very little breeze and no fans. It was so hot I thought I might get a tan without being in the sun. Hi.

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Trip to Montenegro—4O6DX (cont.)

Wayne, K8LEE

A close friend, Bob, KD8AX, had asked me to register with LoTW (Logbook of The World). He said if I sent the logs to him, he would make the posting every day to LoTW. That's exactly what we did and it worked great. We had a lot of on-the-air and email comments about how well it worked. I think we were the first DXPedition to use LoTW during the trip. That seemed to make a lot of people happy since they didn't have to spend money on QSLing and waiting for the return card. LoTW was also good since we didn't have a web page at this time. Even so, as always, we had plenty of cards waiting for us when we got home. There was a six-hour time difference from home, so it took us a while to get adjusted.

Ranka YT6A

Our best time to operate 20 meters to the USA was at about 2 AM our time. When we had propagation we were up and running, and when the bands were down we tried to get some rest. We just never had the good band opening we had hoped for.

The stations had no QRN and with the large antenna array we could hear quite well. We had US stations tell us they were hearing W6s and W7 calling, but, sad to say, we did not hear them. I guess we just have to remember that there was a 5,000 to 6,000 mile distance between us.

Speaking of listening, I believe the European pile-ups were the best I've ever heard.

John, KP2A

When we asked them to stand by so we could listen for North or South America, they did and we were most appreciative of that. A few still kept calling, but the majority were much better and more considerate. There is a worldwide effort by QSL Managers of placing stuffers with QSL cards trying to educate all operators on good operating practices.

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Trip to Montenegro—4O6DX (cont.)

The main thing is to listen to the DX operator and follow his instructions. As always, we kept in mind Phil—W9IXX's, three Rules to Remember:

ALWAYS be a gentleman.
NEVER lose control.
The World is listening .

We certainly appreciate everything Ranko did for us. He was a great host. He took care of all of our transportation, accommodations, and food, and of course the station was well equipped. All we had to do was show up and start operating!

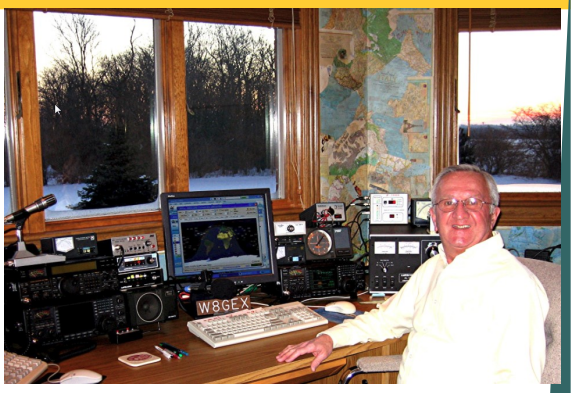
Buro, YT6ZZ, was our driver, maintenance man, and cook for the week. He knew the station and antenna farm very well. We were most grateful he was with us, with all the little glitches that inevitably happen at a large contest station when guests are operating. He did a great job of keeping everything running smoothly.

We want to thank our great sponsors: ICOM for supplying the Pro III's, N3FJP for the logging software, and N1ZP and UX5UO for the QSL cards. Also, we thank SEDCO (Southeast DX and Contest Organization): The East Tennessee DX Association and Dave, W5BXX, for their financial help.

We very much enjoyed our trip. The area is beautiful and the people are very friendly. It is a place well worth visiting.

60 Meters—The Channel Band

By Joe, W8GEX



April 15, 2020

As you know, a lot of the DXPeditions have cancelled due to the Corona-19 virus. While we are home, it's a good time to get on the radio or do antenna work. Please remain safe.

NEW COUNTRY

TO5T Saint Pierre & Miquelon: August 10-17, 2020

A group of Canadian and American operators will activate Saint Pierre & Miquelon from the island of Ile Aux Marins NA-032 from August 10-17. They will operate SSB, CW and FT8 on 160-6 Meters, including newly allowed activation of 60 Meters. For more information visit http://www.to5t.com. QSL via WB2REM. Clublog, OQRS, LOTW

ACTIVITY

E6 – Niue: LZ1GC, Stan, says an expedition by him and LZ1PM is September 28 to October 17, callsign E6AM for 160, 80, 60 and 40 and a Hexbeam. They will be on 160-10 including 60 bands. For a QSL go through OQRS for direct or bureau, or via LZ1GC or the LZ bureau.

A3 – Tonga: A35GC will be the second stop for LZ1GC but apparently without LZ1PM. This will be Tongatapu Island, OC-049. This stop will be October 19 to November 2. Will be on CW, SSB, RTTY and FT8. QSL through OQRS for direct or bureau or via LZ1GC.

Rotuma: Just to let you know that some missing Rotuma QSOs from the 21st of December on 60m FT8 have now been added to ClubLog. There was a software bug that day and logs were lost, but thanks to Jim K2JL who sent some screenshots, some QSOs could be salvaged.

Kind 73s, Antoine 3D2AG

V4 – St. Kitts & Nevis: W5JON/V47JA says his current plan is to be there June 11, to July 2, at his vacation home 200 feet from the edge of the Caribbean. He will be on 160-6 including 60, SSB and FT8, six meters. QSL direct or LoTW.

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60 Meters Update (cont.)

Rwanda 9X: Hi Guys, I hope you are and stay healthy. The time in Rwanda was not so successful this time. Lightning struck on the first day, destroying a matchbox and the power supply. Subsequently, the battery and solar panel were only used with low output. Towards the end of normal time, Corona panicked the flight home, so half as many QSO,s. I will post the pictures of the new QTH in QRZ. See you, Harald DF2WO

FM – Martinique: DL8UD, Uwe, with the TO5O callsign, plans to be on the air July 22-30, to be on all the bands 160-6M CW and SSB and "maybe 60M." QSL via DL8UD bureau or direct. If direct, include 2 USD to cover the return postage and an SAE.

New Zealand: Here in ZL we can only use 5362 for FT8. So in order to work the States we have to work split. My Tx is 5362 and my Rx is 5357. Unfortunately, it is hard to get attention other than clusters to get the boys up your way to listen on 5362. I am super surprised how many guys do not know how to operate their rigs in split mode!!

Cheers 73, Roly – ZL1BQD.

From Benny OZ8BZ: It is not easy to assemble a list for 60 meters from LOTW. However you can try this:

- Log in to LOTW. (my QSO's)
- Listed all confirmed QSO's on 60M
- Copied them to an excel sheet.
- Sort the sheet by prefix.
- Removed all dupe countries.
- Added a count in leftmost column

Now you have the list. I hope that this helps, Benny

If you very need/want a DXCC or a WAS certificate from the 60m group, Benny has more detailed information on the website at www.60metersonline.com. From the first page go to WAS/DXCC certificates. Under the boxes, click on "HERE" for the instructions. Remember this has nothing to do with the ARRL or CW awards programs. Joe

Recent Activity

3D2AG, HI8DL, WP4G, OY1R, 9Y4DG, KH6AP, TK4LS, KG4NE, EY8MM, 4X5XR, VP8A, YL3CW, FO5QS, KH2L

Upcoming DXPeditions

V4 – St. Kitts & Nevis: W5JON/V47, June 11 to July 2

FM – Martinique: DL8UD TO5O July 22-30

TO5T Saint Pierre & Miquelon: August 10-17

E6AM – Niue: LZ1GC, and LZ1PM is September 28 to October 17

A35GC – Tonga: October 19 to November 2

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/347995275954755/

60m website: www.60metersonline.com

Interview with Roberto—CE3CT

I have worked Roberto many times, in and out of contests. He is an outstanding operator and has a very interesting story to tell. YHe immediately responded to my query about an interview. You can reach him at
ce3ct.roberto@gmail.com

AJ8B: How did you first get interested in amateur radio?
CE3CT: My interest in radio started in 1987 when I was 15 years old and living in Talca. I began listening to FM broadcasting so that I could record music on cassette tapes to take to parties. The closest FM station was in Curico, 55 kms north of Talca, so I needed to install an outdoor hi-gain antenna to receive the station. I began to study various antenna designs and built several different antennas always with the desire to improve the received signal of the distant FM stations. I also discovered I was able to copy many other FM and short wave stations and soon I was listening to signals from around the world. In early 1988 I received SWL license CE-064 and in late 1988 obtained the license as an aspiring amateur A-8304.

AJ8B: When did you get on the air?
CE3CT: I obtained my Novice license, CE4PBB, in 1989 and a little time later passed the examination for extra class. My main interest was in DX and Contesting.

AJ8B: Do you have a favorite band or mode?
CE3CT: Of the beginnings my interest was Contests, I was part of the team of Radio Club of Talca, and for many years we have been one of the more active Chileans Club on DX Contesting. For many years Phone was my favorite mode but a few years ago CW became my favorite. Also I work Digital modes and satellites.

AJ8B: What time of day and days do you like to operate?
CE3CT: I have a medium Contest Stations with two big towers and mono bands, available for Multi Operators, and these require much work for maintenance. Every weekend I dedicate time to repair something and testing. We operate the majors contests on Phone and CW Full time.

AJ8B: Any secrets to your success?
CE3CT: The only secrets is preparation and station maintenance. We have all Zone 12 records as Multi and Single Op. And our technical problems are minimum.

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Interview with Roberto—CE3CT (cont.)

AJ8B: Any tips that you can share?
CE3CT: The connectors are the principles problems. Few years ago I decided to use the crimp connectors and that was very significant to cancel any interactions (Interferences) between stations.

Another contesting tips, especially on Multi operations, are to form a good team with good friends.

AJ8B: What license levels do you have in Chile?
CE3CT: General Licence, in Chile we have the following licences, Aspiring (CD), Novice (CA), General (CE) and Superior (XQ). The last category requires a change for the prefix from CE to XQ. For me the XQ prefix is not a good prefix for phone contesting. This is my reason not apply for this category.

AJ8B: Describe what you are currently using:
CE3CT: I have three identical positions using Elecraft K3 + Amplifiers Alpha 91B, 89A, and an Acom 1500.
The antennas are:

- 160m : Sloper 1/4 + Beverages to NE and NW
- 80m : K8UR Array + Dipole + Beverages to NE and NW
- 40m : 40M2L with kit coils Rotating @ 100 ft. M2
- 20m : 6 elements Rotating @ 130 ft, JVP Antennas
- 15m : LJ155 Rotating @ 100 ft. // 6 elements NA @ 50 ft, JVP Antennas
- 10m : 6 / 6 Elements @ 110 ft / 60 ft rotating, JVP Antennas
- + 30m Dipole @ 60ft, 2 Elements WARC Bands @ 50 ft. , 5 elements 6m

Any station can be use any antenna of the antenna farm.

Also I Am hosting the AMSAT CE Satellite station CE3SSB in my home. This station has an FT-847 and array for U-VHF with high gain performance with elevation and azimuth rotator.

AJ8B: What advice do you have for those of us trying to break pileups to work DX?
CE3CT: I think patience is the main recommendation.

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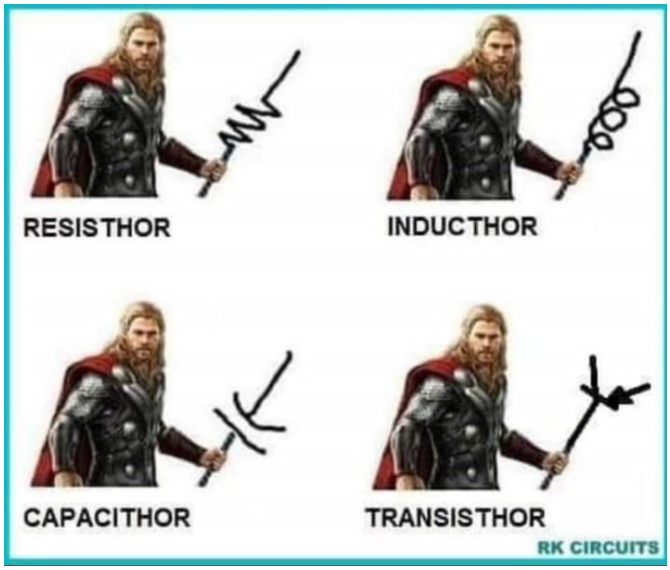

Interview with Roberto—CE3CT (cont.)

You need to stay at your transmitting frequency as much as are possible to break the pile-up, you never know when the DX station can hear you.

Also, respect the others stations is important and don't call when the DX stations is listening to someone else!

AJ8B: Any QSLing hints?
CE3CT: Now I'm LOTW user, it is a fantastic platform and safe. Thanks to ARRL-LOTW for this great job.

AJ8B: What coaching/advice would you give new amateurs?
CE3CT: One of the most important things over the years on ham radio is that I have found great friends, I think this is important to know for young amateur radio, this a special little world with a great people. Ham radio is part of my life, I studied electronic engineering , the radio is my passion for my work and for my hobby. I love the radio.

AJ8B: Thanks for taking the time to answer my questions. Is there anything you would like to share with us?

CE3CT: Many thanks to SouthWest OH DX Association for the interview, always is import to know hams for any place of the world. It is an honor for me to see your interest in showing my passion for radio amateurs.

Many thanks
CE3CT
Roberto
www.ce3ct.com

Ernest Krenkel—As I was researching the BOX 88 Moscow item for the last newsletter, I came across this story. Although it is rather long, presented in two parts across two newsletters, I believe you will really enjoy it. My thanks to David, G3ZPF, for allowing me to reprint it. Check the Radio Amateurs Old Timers Association (RAOTA) website for more info. (www.raota.org)

Introduction by G3ZPF

When I began my SWL career in the mid 60's the prefix list included UPOL, which was stated as being a 'Russian floating arctic station'. At the time I was curious, but never enough to investigate, and eventually I forgot all about it.

When Yuri (RW3GA) joined RAOTA recently it seemed a good idea to ask him to provide some insights into the hobby from a viewpoint on the other side of the iron curtain. He sent me a lot of information and pictures about Ernst Krenkel, which reminded me about UPOL. I learned about its history, and the man behind it. In a time when all USSR amateurs had to communicate via "PO BOX 88 Moscow", Ernst Krenkel was allowed to have his private address on his QSL cards, and also allocated a non-standard callsign RAEM. This guy had to be something special in the eyes of the USSR govt and here, courtesy of the information supplied by Yuri, is the story of a remarkable man and an extreme DXPeditioner.

In addition to Yuri, who set me off on this historical adventure, I would like to pay special thanks to SM5IQ, N4IA, and G4AYO, for their help with translation of Russian technical information about the equipment used by Krenkel on the ice, together with additional information and images from their personal collections.

Using the Google search engine will produce a mountain of information about Ernst Krenkel, but I do not believe that his radio equipment has ever been described (certainly not in English) anywhere previously.

David G3ZPF

ERNST KRENKEL **by Yuri, RW3GA**

Ernst Krenkel was born on December, 24th, 1903 in the city of Belostok (Russian empire, now territory of Poland) in family of the inspector of commercial school. In 1910 Krenkel's family moved to Moscow. Despite their limited means Ernst's parents were determined to provide him with a good education and in 1913 sent him to a private school. Sadly Ernst was not able to complete his schooling. During the hard times of WW1 and the civil war he had to work to help his family make ends meet.

He was briefly employed as a packer, a billposter, an electrical engineer's assistant, and for a while a repairer of kerosene stoves and carriages. But Krenkel was not content and in 1921 he became interested in the role of radiotelegraph operators. Broadcasting and radio communication was perceived as something mysterious back then, slightly magical. At 18 yrs old Ernst Krenkel had the good fortune to notice an advertisement for a free evening class, leading to a Radio operator's license.

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Ernest Krenkel—(cont.)

As with anywhere else, during that hard time, classrooms were not heated. Cadets and teachers wore overcoats and caps to keep warm. To cadets " the strengthened ration " - a small piece of black bread with the spoon of jam (free of charge) was a real incentive to attend.
Krenkel seems to have been an excellent pupil and in the final examinations showed himself capable of the highest CW reception speed in his class. After graduation he was sent to work at a receiving station near Moscow, but after working there for some time he decided upon a career as a ships radio operator to satisfy his desire for world travel.

In the summer of 1924 Ernst Krenkel went to Leningrad with what little money he had saved, hoping to find employment as the radio operator on any ship undertaking a long voyage. At that time, only specially designated Soviet vessels went on long voyages, and in Leningrad there were already qualified naval radio operators without work.

Just when Krenkel had given up all hope of finding work he was told that the hydrographic management bureau was in urgent need of a radio operator prepared to go on any expedition, to any island in the Arctic Ocean. There was little interest because the pay was poor and it was necessary to be away for the whole year, living in 'hellish' conditions.

Ernst rushed around for an interview, and was offered a post. With a small advance on his salary, and wearing his new naval uniform he set off by train to Arkhangelsk (Archangel).
On arrival he was assigned to the "Yugorski Shar" which was preparing to take the relief crew to the first Soviet polar observatory "Matochkin Shar", constructed the year before on the northern coast of the Matochkin Shar strait of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago.

In his book "RAEM is my callsign" Krenkel notes that.... "My arrival was, in fact, awaited in Archangel, where the expeditionary ship "Yugorski Shar" was tied up at the jetty, ready to put to sea. She was an old but quite strongly built vessel, which had been bought in Britain before the revolution by the Solovetsky Monastery. For many years the monastery, one of the most beautiful spots on the White Sea, attracted pilgrims and the monks made a respectable business out of this, as one may gather easily enough from their purchase of the "Yugorski Shar", which was acquired for the specific purpose of transporting pilgrims."

After returning to Moscow the following year he was enlisted in the Red Army and served in the radiotelegraphic battalion in Vladimir. At around this time the USSR government decided to allow 'private radio stations' on the short-waves. Ham radio was born in the USSR and Ernst Krenkel was delighted. Soon he was on-air using homebrew equipment, with the callsign EU2EQ (later U3AA).

But Krenkel had fond memories of his winter on Novaya Zemlya and he was determined to return to the arctic. Shortwave radio had never been fully tested in the arctic, and few believed that fragile equipment could be reliably operated in such extremes. Ernst faced an uphill struggle to convince anyone to sponsor an expedition.

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Ernest Krenkel—(cont.)

Somehow Krenkel managed to convince officials at the Moscow branch of the Nizhegorodskoj Radiolaboratory (Nizhny Novgorod Radio Laboratory) to provide radio equipment for his expedition by giving the impression that the russian Navy was keen to test it in the arctic. Then he went around to see the Navy officials in Leningrad. He explained to them that the Nizhegorodskaya Radiolaboratory had given him radio equipment to test in the arctic and he was ready to fill any vacancy in their polar expedition team.

His ruse worked, and he got the job despite the fact that no-one seriously believed he would be able to contact the mainland from the soviet polar station on Novaya Zemlya. Nowadays we would find it hard to believe that you would *not* be able to contact the Russian mainland from the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, but this 'over-wintering' expedition was in 1927/28 and things were very different back then. For one thing, climate-controlled accommodation was unheard of. Wide variations in room temperature, with the risk of 'dew-point' condensation within high voltage circuitry was an ever-present problem. Within a few hours of his arrival Krenkel made contact with Baku, and then many other locations, to the utter amazement (and delight) of the Russian authorities.

Crucially, for our interests, he was able to persuade the authorities that he could use the radio in his leisure time for amateur radio. The callsign was PGO, allocated to the Polyarnaya Geograficheskaya Observatoriya (Polar Geophysical Observatory).

Krenkel returned to Moscow, working as a ships radio operator, but he was always looking for an opportunity to return to the far north. He joined an expedition to spend winter 1929/30 on Franz Josef's Land as a wireless operator, using the callsign RPX. Early in 1930 he surpassed all previous achievements by making contact with Admiral Byrd's Antarctic expedition. This was on a wavelength of 42m. He was using 250w output, while Admiral Byrd's party had 700w. The radio operator of Byrd's expedition was Howard Mason, the callsign WFA.

The Russian authorities were keen to use airships in the arctic, so in 1931 Krenkel joined the crew of the "Graf Zeppelin". This flight was arranged in preparation for 1932, which had been designated "International Polar Year"

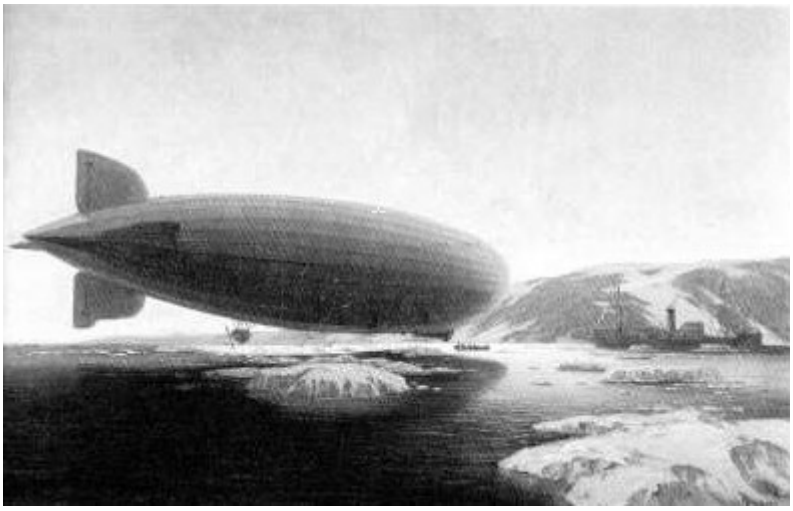

Fig. 1—Graf Zeppelin at Franz Josef's Land

The flight lasted 104 hours and covered over 8000 miles. Starting from the Zeppelin Hangar in Friedrichshafen, to Leningrad, Arkhangelsk (Archangel), and then to Franz Josef's Land. Returning via Severnaya Zemlya and Cape Chelyuskin.

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Ernest Krenkel—(cont.)

1933 was probably the year that really brought Krenkel's name to the attention of the general public. The north-east passage was important to Russia. All along the Siberian coast there were trappers, weather stations, and others who needed regular supplies. The previous year (1932) Krenkel had been wireless operator on board the icebreaker "Alexander Sibiryakov" which had demonstrated the viability of sea passage from Archangel to Vladivostok without having to over-winter trapped in ice, in ships with specially reinforced hulls.

The icebreaker "Chelyuskin" (7,500 tons displacement) had been fitted with a 2,500- horsepower engine, a special frame, and reinforcements, plus extra steel plates on the bow and forward bulkhead. By the time the ship reached Cape Chelyuskin (after which it was named), Captain Vladimir Voronin realized that his vessel was not performing to expectations and that conditions were worsening rapidly as the summer drew to a close. By mid-September, the "Chelyuskin" was picking its way through narrow strips of water, twisting and turning to avoid the big floes, heading ever eastward. Then, just 200 miles from the Bering Strait, the ship became trapped in the ice. Even its powerful engine was unable to free it.

The ice began to drift steadily to the southeast, and on November 3, the ice pack, with the "Chelyuskin" in it, moved into the Bering Strait. By radio, the captain heard that 12 miles ahead was open water. In a matter of hours, the "Chelyuskin" would be in the Pacific Ocean free to steam south. Success was finally within their grasp.

But alas it was never to be. Without warning the ice was gripped by powerful northerly current. After weeks of drifting to the northwest, they realized the ship was now in the main polar ice-pack and would never be free, so the captain started to make plans to abandon ship.

Once again nature would force their hand. On February 13, 1934, a mountain of ice gashed a 40- foot-long hole in the side of the ship, flooding the engine and boiler rooms. The Chelyuskin's bow began to go down rapidly and the order was give to abandon ship.

Krenkel stayed in his cabin to send a distress call. Only after he was sure it had been received did he dismantle all the radio equipment and carry it out onto the ice. As they watched, the stern of the ship gradually rose higher, until she stood almost vertically, before sliding down through the ice. Within just a few minutes she was gone.

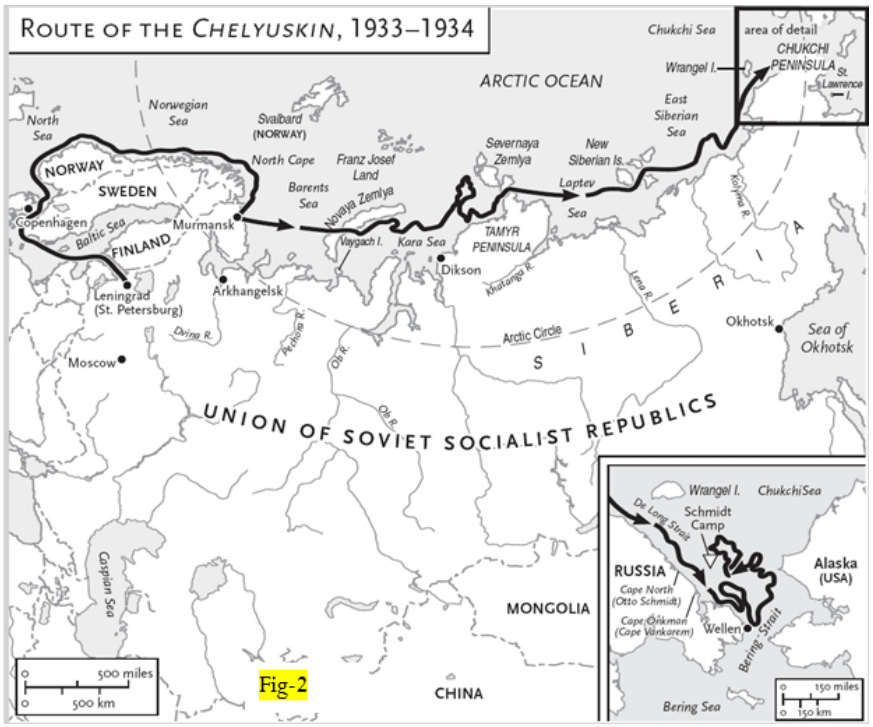

Fig-2

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Ernest Krenkel—(cont.)

Out on the ice after the sinking of the Chelyuskin.

Pictures courtesy of SM5IQ

It was 13th February 1934, and the 104 men & women from the "Chelyuskin" had to camp on the ice. Rescue would have been impossible to organize without radio communication. The only aircraft available were based 230km away and could only take a few people each time. Rescue was coordinated via a radio station at Uelen, operated by Ludmila Shrader.

Flights were entirely dependent on favourable weather, something in short supply at those latitudes, and the last six men (Krenkel was one of them) would not be rescued until 13th April, after 7 weeks on the ice.

Throughout this time Krenkel had to maintain the radio equipment carefully. During the night, the 'indoor' temperature was well below zero, so dew formed inside the gear when the paraffin heater was lit in the morning. Every time they wanted to use the radio Krenkel had to dismantle it, polish all the contacts, and let the components dry out near the paraffin heater.

The pilots of the rescue planes were the very first people to be made a "Hero of the Soviet Union" (an award that Krenkel would later be awarded himself) but for his part in the rescue Krenkel was awarded something that (as a radio ham) he would probably have been more pleased about. The Soviet government gave him the callsign of the Chelyuskin for use with his home amateur station. That callsign was RAEM.

In his book "RAEM is my callsign" Krenkel describes the final moments of his operating…."I received instructions from Vankarem to close down the station and radioed back that I was removing the transmitter and would no longer hear them.

Then I transmitted a general call in international code announcing that the camp's station was ceasing operations. Three times I repeated slowly: "RAEM! RAEM! RAEM! This was the Chelyuskin's callsign and it had been used as the callsign of Schmidt's camp.

I did not know then that it would soon become my own callsign, presented to me as a radio "ham" for fulfilling my professional duty in Schmidt's camp. I made the last note in the log: "Transmitter removed at 2.08 Moscow time, April 13, 1934".

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Ernest Krenkel—(cont.)

Schmidt's camp fell silent.

Vladimir Voronin cut the name Chelyuskin from a ring buoy and picked out the signal flag representing the letter "C". I severed the leads of the transmitter and receiver. For a moment I felt a lump in my throat: it was not so simple to break with a single movement the link with the mainland that had been our lifeline."…

Most people would have opted for a quiet life after surviving such an ordeal, but Krenkel's love for the polar region was undiminished. By august the following year he was on board the ice-breaker "Alexander Sibirjakow" en route to Severnaya Zemlya. There, at Cape Olovyanny he was to be the chief of a 4-man team at a wintering camp. But once that previously deserted camp had been restored Krenkel decided that it was foolish for four young men to do nothing but read the thermometer and weather data 4 times a day and relay it to Moscow.

He requested permission for himself and one other man to travel 100km further north to Kamenev Island to restore an abandoned weather camp. His wish was granted, but he and his companion suffered terribly from scurvy during their stay. Despite this they survived, and were taken back to the mainland in May 1936 by the ice-breaker "Alexander Sibiryakov", which brought Krenkel the news that he had been selected as 2nd in command for an expedition to the North Pole, led by Ivan Papanin, in March the following year.

Their mission was to set up a weather monitoring station near the North Pole. On the outward journey the 5 large aeroplanes carried 35 researchers and 10 tons of equipment. They left Moscow and arrived at Rudolf Island easily enough, but then had to wait two months for the weather to become suitable to make the final leg of the journey to an ice floe near the North Pole.

Ten hours after leaving Rudolf Island a radio message was heard there. "This is UPOL. I hear you loud and clear". By then they had erected a 'residential tent' made of eider down in a silk cover (weighing 17kg), a radio tent, a tent for the hydrological laboratory, and the radio masts. All on an ice floe near the north pole.

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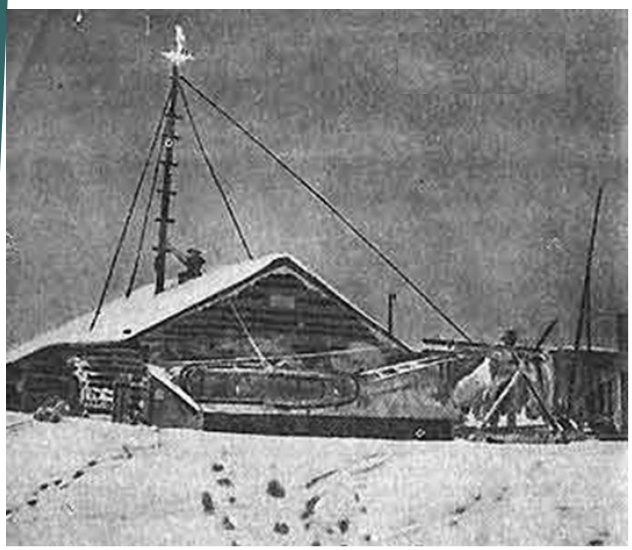

The Weather Station at Domashny

The Domashny team. Krenkel is tye 3rd from the left.

Ernest Krenkel—(cont.)

The radio tent at UPOL.

Krenkel operating UPOL.

Another view of Krenkel operating UPOL.
Picture courtesy of G4AYO

The decision to leave the ice floe was taken when it broke into 3 pieces during an extreme storm.
- The picture shows Krenkel waiting to leave UPOL. Picture courtesy of N4IA.

Once again Ernst Krenkel had obtained permission to use the radio equipment on the amateur bands when he was not on duty. But there were restrictions. Wind power was used to charge the batteries so Krenkel was only permitted to use the radio on the amateur bands if the batteries were already fully charged, and there was enough wind to maintain them fully charged while he operated the equipment.

This inevitably limited the time he could spend on the amateur bands, but despite this he made a number of contacts:

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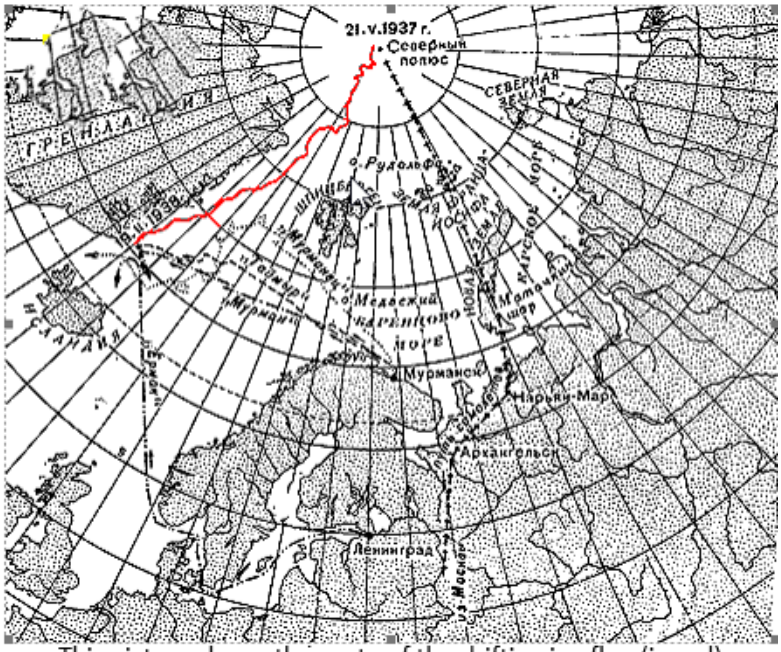
Ernest Krenkel—(cont.)

27th May to 31st July (from 89 degrees North to 88 degrees North)
LA1M, F8IS, W2CYS, PA0AS, GI5AJ, G6KP, G5RI, TF3C, U1AD, U1AP, W1EWD, OK1PK, ON4BW, D3FZI (Germany), U3CY, PA0FF, UK1CR, D3GKR (Germany), F8AI, PA0GN, K6SO (Hawaii), VK5WK, VK2DG

QSL showing contact between G5MY and UPOL.
Picture courtesy of G4AYO

1st August to 31st October (from 88 degrees North to 84 degrees North)
SM5UW, W7LQS, VE5LD, G5MY, W8PMB, W1AEF, W9PNE, GM2JF, W2KAP

1st November to 4th December (from 84 degrees North to 82 degrees North)
W2SB, W2FSN, W8EME, K7RT, G5JX, F8GQ, W9THH, W9ALV, W9VDQ, W8CMH, W8HRD, W8NOT, W9AJA, W9PLX, W8BGX, W8LSK, W8DFH, U1CO, ZL4BR, U9ML, W1HUD, GM2JF, W2BHW, W2GTZ, PA0DA, SM5WM, SM5QU, U1AD, U1BC



This picture shows the route of the drifting ice-floe (in red), together with the outward flight, and return journey home via sea.

End of Part I

Interview with Pantelis—SV2ESW

After having worked SV2ESW and then J42L, I realized that these 2 calls were tightly linked. Based on the pictures on the SV2ESW webpage, I had to learn more. Pantelis was quick to respond and sent along quite a bit of information to share. I hope you enjoy this.

AJ8B: How did you first get interested in amateur radio?
SV2ESW: I saw my first radio from my father, SV2CQC. I was 13 years old and I was amazed that he could make contacts with people all over the world without a telephone. I will remind you that back in those days (1994) we didn't even had mobile phones! So I studied and passed my exams at the age of 16.

AJ8B: When did you get on the air?
SV2ESW: At the age of 15 without a license, at the Citizens Band (CB). But I wanted more!!!!

AJ8B: Do you have a favorite band or mode?
SV2ESW: I enjoy working all bands and modes! Every band has its magic! I really like 15 meters when the band opens but I really love 20 meters band! My favorite mode is CW! You can put on your headphones and enjoy qso's without annoying (XYL especially) anyone with your shouting!!

AJ8B: What time of day and days do you like to operate?
SV2ESW: Day time for sure! There is always a window for DX 's and all the upper bands work fantastic! Plus it is much easier to have directional antennas for the upper bands, because living in the city, space is an issue! Low bands antennas require space don't forget it!!!

AJ8B: In reviewing your QRZ.com page, I see that you have been very successful with chasing countries and with contests. Any secrets to your success?
SV2ESW: It is all about experience! You can get some general directions and information's about how to operate and how the bands work, but it is you that you have to find out at the end of the day how the bands behave. Yes I chase Countries and DXPeditions but all the fun is at the contests! I always see them as a big party, a chance for many people to be on air at the same time! So, every day practicing, knowing the prefixes well , learn your radio equipment excellent and see in everyday use what your antenna's can do!!

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Interview with Pantelis—SV2ESW (cont.)

AJ8B: You are an extremely accomplished contester. Any tips that you can share?
SV2ESW: I was lucky, because two of the best contesters in Greece, SV2DCD and SV2DSJ are good friends of mine and they shared without hesitation a lot with me. After all, this is the Ham Spirit! The big secret is practice, practice, practice. You can begin with small contests and then participate to bigger ones! Two things are important if you want to get a good place in contests! Good antennas and operators skills! A Radio Amateur is what his antennas are and you cannot get skills unless you practice!

AJ8B: What license levels do you have in Greece?
SV2ESW: We have to levels. In level one you are a fully functional Radio Amateur and you can operate in all bands and modes. In entry level, you have limitations about your power, the bands and modes you can use. (ex. You cannot use CW)

AJ8B: Describe what you are currently using:
SV2ESW: My small station has the main transceiver, an Icom – 7300 and the second one (my first one) TS -870 from KENWOOD. I use a KENWOOD TL-922A Amplifier and a KENWOOD TM-D710 for the 2m/70cm bands. My antennas are: Diamond X510 vertical Vhf-Uhf, a Hexbeam antenna for 20/17/15/12/10/6 (two elements on each band), a rotary dipole for 40/30 meters band and an inverted V for the 80m band. Not big, but they do the job alright

AJ8B: What advice do you have for those of us trying to break pileups to work DX?
SV2ESW: Well I love working pileups! And even better if I am operating!! (hi hi) Well they give you this wide smile on your face when you finally make the contact so how can you not love them? First of all, listen! Don't always trust the cluster! Then you have to be able to listen the station that is calling. Usually when an experienced operator has a big pileup works split! Try to find where he is listening, which station he is working, up 5, up 7 up 10? Try to find a pattern, usually in CW, the operators like to move a lot! You will have your shot if you are quick and always use your full Callsign!!

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Interview with Pantelis—SV2ESW (cont.)

AJ8B: Any QSLing hints?
SV2ESW: I prefer using LOTW! It is fast, inexpensive and you can monitor your progress all the time! Always reply on direct QSLS, you can make an amazing collection with cards from all over the world and especially from some amazing places!

AJ8B: What coaching/advice would you give new amateurs?
SV2ESW: You can involve with Ham Radio only if you love it! I still have the same radio friends from the time I got my license (1997). I met a lot of people, I have radio friends all over the world and I think that the only thing you can get out of this is only happiness! Go for it, explore this fantastic world and don't be afraid to experiment!!!! Find more experienced hams and make them a lot of questions! We all were newbie's sometime! And I strongly recommend you to learn CW. Hear it! You will be amazed how fast your brain can learn. Leave the computer programs of CW decoding aside. You have ears and brains! Use them!

AJ8B: What is your relationship with J42L?
SV2ESW: J42L is a big school for me! The owners of this excellent Contest Station are SV2DCD Leo and his father SV2RM Steve. It is situated in the West part of Greece in an area called Argos Orestico. Leo and I had our radio exams together but Leo had big love about Ham Radio and contesting when we were students! He is a DXCC HONOR ROLL HOLDER, DXCC SSB,CW,DIGITAL 6 – 160m. So, it is a great honor and I am very proud to be a member of J42L. This contest station has participation in almost every big contest, gets first places in Greece, Europe and good positions worldwide! Its success of course is its antenna farm (5 towers, inverted L antennas, monobanders, beverages etc) , all installed by Leo and its members! All of us are DX and contest freaks!!!

AJ8B: I have worked J42L several times. It would seem that your club has been very successful. What is next for the club?
SV2ESW: Well, you know that in our hobby you can never say well that's enough!!!!! You never have enough towers, you never have enough antennas, amplifiers and transceivers. J42L is learning something new day by day, and has dreams for an even bigger antenna farm! Stay tuned or visit J42L on qrz to find out more!!!

AJ8B: Thanks for taking the time to answer my questions. Is there anything you would like to share with us?
SV2ESW: It was my pleasure really! Well, I know that we are all worried about the Covid -19 virus and we see now even more how important is to be healthy! Please protect yourselves and the people you love! Hope things are getting better for everyone! Cu on the air, 73 de SV2ESW..... proud member of J42L , proud member of PIKRA Club....

VU7RI—Lakshadweep DXPedition Oct 10—Oct 30th, 2019

Because SWODXA made a donation to this DXPedition and because we have a newsletter, M0KRI, Shabu, made sure that we received a copy of his article as soon as it was written. Unfortunately, I received it 2 days after we published our last newsletter so it is not as new as it could have been!

I really enjoy remote portable operating and, having spent a couple of weeks operating holiday-style down in Burundi as 9U4RI, in 2019, I thought that I would like to go somewhere a bit more exotic. However, there were many considerations; where to go that was fairly high on the DX wanted list, when to go, with whom. what equipment to take, which antennas to use and the logistics of travelling to the remote site, to name the key ones. The germ of this idea was born in my mind during April 2019. Being originally from India, it made some sense to look at some rare, but familiar, locations around the Indian sub-continent, such as islands in the Arabian Sea or Indian Ocean. The choice of location was Agatti Island in Lakshadweep (VU7), one of an inhabited group of 36 atolls and coral reefs off the coast of Kerala, India. VU7 was number 55 on the Club Log's "Most Wanted List". This location met most of the above criteria.

The TEAM

Having chosen my destination, I shared my VU7 enthusiasm with my old- time home QTH friend Sree, VU2OB, works for a national newspaper in Delhi. He seemed very keen on the idea but was uncertain if he would be able to join me for the two weeks because of his work commitments. However, he was very willing to help procure the VU7 licence and provide moral support. We really needed at least three persons in the VU7 team, so I asked my childhood friend Samson, VU3XTG. Sam was quite excited about the prospect of working a pile-up of stations from a remote island and made movements to help me procure local assistance on the island in terms of accommodation.

Unfortunately, owing to unforeseen personal circumstances Sam was unable to join the team for the DXpedition. So, we invited Ashraf, VU3MTY from Calicut, who is a close friend of Sree. He is a passionate amateur radio operator and goes beyond the hobby, actively participating in disaster relief projects on an ongoing basis. So, he was an ideal candidate for the team. None of the team had any real "DXpedition" experience but they did have enough operating skills to form a good team. So, the team consisted of Sree, VU2OB, Ashraf, VU3MTY and me, Shabu, M0KRI (ex VU2CAC).

We had decided that October was a good month to go for several reasons, not least of which was that it coincided with the half term school holidays here in the UK, but also, the monsoons would be over and we would be able to enjoy blue skies all day (ideally), plus, we would expect HF propagation to be good.

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VU7RI—Lakshadweep DXPedition—cont.

The License

This is not just a matter of buying an airline ticket and travelling to Lakshadweep and operating. To secure a licence to operate from VU7, you need to obtain a "Notice of Variation" from the Ministry of Communications in Delhi, the Capital city. Secondly, even an Indian citizen needs permission and sponsorship to visit the island. This permission must be granted from Delhi. There are no regional or state level centres who would grant this, so, getting there and operating in VU7 is a long process. Samson, VU3XTG finally made a contact from Kavaratti Island who offered to help us and arrange accommodation and the local logistical support. However, we needed that contact to sponsor us and, in order to do this, he needed to regularly communicate with the officials. The sponsorship did not seem to be forthcoming; the contact person simply said, "You will get the help when you arrive." In other words, we needed to have official permission to go there and to have arrived before we would receive local assistance. At this point, Sree, VU2OB, said it would help our cause to have the Member of Parliament for Lakshadweep sponsor us for "entry on to the island". At this time, elections were taking place in India and we needed to wait to see who we could approach to request the sponsorship. Finally, the Honourable Member of Parliament, Mr P.P. Mohammad Faizal, helped us with this aspect. Sree was already in Delhi and was able to obtain the temporary licence to operate as VU7RI from the Ministry of Communications. So, it all came together nicely in the end.

Equipment & Antennas

After the experience from my previous solo DXPedition to Burundi earlier in 2019, I had realized that it was important to carry an HF amplifier when visiting exotic places like VU7. If I were to make the most of the rare callsign, it was important that my signal should be heard using directional antennas and the legal limit of power. Naturally, there were weight considerations, especially as the small aircraft taking us from Kochi to Agatti Island in Lakshadweep would only allow 15KG maximum weight of luggage per passenger and it was unclear whether we would be allowed to exceed this limit because of safety constraints. Therefore, large commercial HF amplifiers were out of the question. Fortunately, my good friend Fred, G3SVK kindly agreed to loan me his Expert 1.3 FA amplifier, which is considerably lighter than most other commercial HF amplifiers. We also decided to take a Kenwood TS-480 SAT, Icom IC706 MK2G, Yaesu FT-857D and a Furuno HF amplifier. We also carried a DX Commander and a G3TXQ Hexbeam as well as other off-centre-fed dipoles for FT8 low power digital operation, inverted Vee dipoles for 80/160M. Between us, Sree and I carried more than 60 Kg of equipment. So, after some careful negotiation, additional permission and the payment of 9 US dollars per additional Kg, we were allowed to take the extra baggage. This was in addition to the extra baggage fees I had already paid Gulf Airways for the flight from London to Kochi and return. A 100 Kg worth of accessories were coordinated by Ashraf, VU3MTY and sent using the cargo section of a passenger ship from Calicut in India a week or so prior to our travel.

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VU7RI—Lakshadweep DXPedition—cont.

These accessories included all sorts of tools, earthing spikes, wires, cables, etc that were too heavy to hand-carry by aircraft.

Forward Planning

It was important that all the equipment should be tested prior to departure because once we were on the island there would be nowhere to buy additional cables, plugs or sockets etc. An inventory was constructed to ensure that we took everything we needed at the remote site. Laptops with logging software was a main priority along with power supplies and leads. We carried out some last-minute testing to ensure that the main rig would key the amplifier correctly through the CAT and ALC leads. This initially caused a bit of a headache as the CAT lead didn't key up the amplifier. Using a different lead cleared the problem, Phew!

We had set up a website giving full details of the DXPedition (www.VU7RI.com). This included a schedule setting out when we intended to be active on the various bands including CW, SSB and FT8. This schedule was designed to be flexible to accommodate local band conditions.

We were aware that there was no internet connection on the island, so uploading logs would be difficult. I was able to send texts from my cell phone and I was able to keep in contact with the outside world which proved to be very helpful at certain times throughout the DXPedition. My mobile bill increased by £150 that month to cover the cost of these texts.

Travel & Accommodation

The hotel owner is a well-educated guy. He has a "Master's Degree" in physics from Kerala University but had decided to help his father running the family business rather than taking up a career in physics.

Sawad, the caretaker, a friendly but sharp guy, referred the Special Branch police to me as they were a little suspicious about the 6m wide Hexbeam we had erected at the beach. I had to politely explain that this was only a hobby and nothing concerning security. I explained this very innocently and the policemen went away.

Our housemaids at the hotel were two girls who did all the cooking for us. The local people on Lakshadweep are very friendly, loving and caring. The local industry is mainly coconut processing and fishing. There are plenty of coconut trees on the island. Tourism is another form of income and local beach huts have been erected to take tourists. Some of our local neighbours prepared snacks at their home and brought them to us. We even had a visit from the local policeman who has an interest in radio communication. On 29th October we were able to give a radio presentation and demonstration to a group of 40 students and staff at the government-run high school.

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VU7RI—Lakshadweep DXPedition—cont.

The idea was that we would introduce them to amateur radio in the hope that some might become amateur radio operators someday.

The demonstration and presentation were well received by the staff and students and their appreciation was very evident. Thanks to Wilfred Master.

Radio Operation

As we were very tired after our long journeys, we decided that we would just erect a simple "off centre fed Dipole" antenna and make a start using FT8. We accomplished this in less than half an hour and we were "on the air" using the normal FT8 mode as I had only had a few weeks experience using FT8. After some excellent tuition from various articles, I soon got to grips with FT8 using DXPedition mode. I thoroughly enjoyed working more than a thousand stations in the first couple of days, at least until the clock on the laptop went of sync. This was a real challenge as we had to guess the accurate time in seconds and tweak the FT8 settings to bring it back in sync.

On the second day, we decided to erect the DX Commander multi-band vertical antenna that we had brought with us. The wind was quite strong, so we tied this to one of the nearby coconut trees. This worked OK although the top was swaying about causing the VSWR to fluctuate which affected the amplifier; mostly this worked OK.

We could hear absolutely nothing on the bands between 9am (local time) till 1pm every day. 15M started to open between 2pm and 6pm allowing us to use either CW or FT8 during this time. 20M started to open between 6pm till 10pm. So, there was not a very large operating window. We used SSB and some CW during this opening. 40M would be open from 2am till 7am allowing us to work some CW and SSB. Between 7am and 9am we could only work mainland India on SSB. We managed some 80M during the night. I was mainly operating on CW and FT8 keeping the bands busy as much as we could, while Sree was operating mainly SSB.

On our first excursion onto 40M CW, there was a very strong station pirating our callsign. It is likely he has been transmitting from the Indian mainland as his signal was very strong. He was working a pile-up of stations. I sent a text message to Fred, G3SVK, back in the UK, asking that he put the information on the DX cluster to alert stations that our callsign was being pirated. Fred did this straightaway and very soon the pirate stopped transmitting and I was able to resume my operation. From then we were able to keep to the schedule that we had advertised on our website.

Difficulties & Challenges

Our first obstacle was the fact that there was no internet coverage where we were based. The island does have internet at about 64kbps speed but not on every part of the island. So, using data modes was out of the question and none of our cell phones could connect to the internet either. Fortunately, I was able to send SMS spasmodically. I had to cycle to the local teacher's home on most evenings at 9pm to time-sync the laptop with his internet connection; this was very time-consuming

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VU7RI—Lakshadweep DXPedition—cont.

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We also had to rise to another challenge: There is a seasonal rainfall during the month of October, which is usually "fairly light" and not as strong as the Monsoon during June and July. However, the "Thula Varsham", as it is called, was very different this year. The first cyclone to come, called "Kyarr", hit part of our island. This caused the antenna to sway wildly in the wind affecting our VSWR badly. Since we had no external antenna tuner it meant that we were unable to use the HF amplifier for several hours, so we had to resort to using QRP which meant that we could only work Europe on SSB. We were unable to do this for too long and so, our operation was limited to very low QRP and thus only FT8. Our other fear was that the high winds would blow down the coconut tree anchoring our vertical antenna.

The electricity supply was provided by the local electricity generator which runs on kerosene. The Indian Government must spend thousands of dollars per day to provide the kerosene so that the island has electricity. The power regulation was also quite poor, so we were restricted to only 400 watts RF power before the voltage dropped and the lights would flicker in sympathy with the CW keying. Fortunately, we were the only tenants in the hotel, so this was not too much of a problem. On a positive note, we did not have to contend with local man-made noise problems and the band noise was relatively low.

Then, eight days into the operation, "Cyclone Maha" hit and was targeting Lakshadweep Island. We had early warnings of its approach. Winds were gusting up to 100mph which was quite frightening. Some of the plastic tables and chairs were blown hundreds of meters away from their position. We wanted to erect the "Hexbeam" but, while I was studying the construction details, the papers were blown nearly 200 metres away and I had to run after them before they reached the ocean; the island is only 200 meters wide where we were staying. Eventually we erected the Hexbeam and, in between cyclones, we were able to boost our QSO score a little.

Looking at the logs, we made a total of 1555 QSOs on FT8 and 1842 QSOs on SSB and CW giving a grand total of 3397 QSOS. This does not sound too impressive out of context but the two cyclones and time-sync issues on the laptop did have a huge impact on the total number of QSOs. However, it served as a wonderful experience and a steep learning curve for next time - when we hope to return to the island for a second DXPedition!

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VU7RI—Lakshadweep DXPedition—cont.

In Conclusion

Further drama was to unfold as we made our way home. The weather changed quickly, and we were faced with more heavy wind and rain. We were taken half-way across the runway in order to board the aircraft but, before we were allowed to board, the captain told us that there would be a delay. He explained, he was carefully monitoring the weight and would let us know how this would affect the flight. He decided that there was too much weight so some passengers would not be able to board this plane and would have to wait until the next day. We needed to be on that flight as I had prebooked a connecting flight for my return to London. Fortunately, we were classified as a "research team" and, wearing yellow T-shirts, looked more official than the other holiday passengers, so were allowed to go on that flight, but one of my main bags containing all the radios was taken off the plane because of the weight restrictions. I had to wait till a flight was available from the Island to return this important bag.

All three of us were on that plane on the first leg of our journey home looking forward to reunions with our respective families and a sense of comfort and calmness finally returned.

I believe that we fulfilled our "Mission Statement" which was "to make as many QSOs as possible on all three modes", at least we did so to the best of our ability in the face of adversity. Through those experiences we have learnt how we should do things very differently and better on our next visit. We will also benefit in future from the useful friendships that we had made there, and these will also help us to achieve our goals in the future.

Once home, all that remained was the task of QSLing to be completed. This aspect is very important to me. I was particularly proud of one photograph that I had taken on the island; it shows a group of local coconut climbers cycling along a road carrying the branches of a tree back to their home. This picture gives a more human perspective to the QSL card. Fred, G3SVK kindly offered to print the labels to stick on the reverse side of the QSL cards which has proven to be a huge labour saver. QSL cards have now been printed and all the direct and OQRS cards have been despatched. We now just wait for the batches of cards to arrive from the bureau.

It now remains for me to express my sincere gratitude to all those kind people and organizations who supported our DXPedition both financially and through the loan of equipment etc. I am indebted to them.

INDEXA, NCDXF, **SWODXA**, GMDX Group Scotland, Twin City DX Association, OKDX Association, North East Wisconsin DX Association and the many individual sponsors. Also, thanks to Callum's DXCommander and Anthony's G3TXQ Hex Beam for their antennas at reduced tariff, Angelo, M0OJD for QSL Card design & Printing and to Fred Curtis, G3SVK for the loan of his Expert 1.3 FA HF linear amplifier. Thanks to you all for the QSOs. We hope that we were instrumental in providing some with a new DXCC entity. Namasthe & Happy New Year 2020 to all of you from the Greater London!

The Monday Morning Memo...

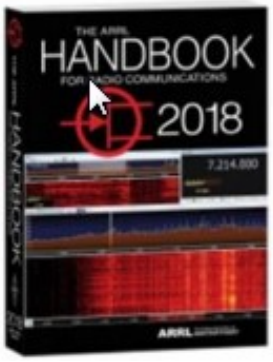
If you aren't receiving this each Monday, you should!

The Monday Morning Memo is a free electronic newsletter sponsored by the Highland Amateur Radio Association, Hillsboro. Information published may be used in local club newsletters and distributed to others providing proper credit is given to the Monday Morning Memo or the Highland ARA.

Information for publication should be sent to highlandara@gmail.com.

ARRL OH Section Updates

From our ARRL Section Manager, Scott, N8SY



Hey Gang, Do you get updates from your ARRL Ohio Section Manager via email? If not, go to: http://arrl-ohio.org/handbook.html and get registered.

What's the catch? I want to get everyone checking in to the Ohio Section website as often as possible, and in order to register each month, you have to visit the website often! There's nothing else to it. I pay all expenses, and from time to time, I Give Away more than just a Handbook. And, you'll never know just what months will be those special times that I will have more than just a Handbook to Give Away!!

Did you see the ad from ARRL recently? Well, they liked my idea so much that they've copied it. Yup, they were giving away a Handbook too!

Many of you ask me just how do I know when the drawing is on? Well, that's easy all you need to do is check in on the Ohio Section Website on a regular basis and watch for the big RED Arrow that will appear on the left side of the page. This is the sign that the drawing is on and you need to get registered. So, keep a sharp eye out on the website and check in often!

http://arrl-ohio.org

SouthWest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA) DX Donation Policy

The mission of SWODXA is to support DXing and major DXPeditions by providing funding. A funding request from the organizers of a planned DXPedition should be directed to the DX committee by filling out an online funding request. (https://www.swodxa.org/dx-grant-application/)

The DX Grant committee will determine how well the DXpedition plans meet key considerations (see below). If the DX Grant committee recommends supporting the DXpedition in question, a recommended funding amount is determined based on the criteria below. The chairman of the committee will make a recommendation at the general meeting on the donation.

Factors Affecting a DXpedition Funding Request Approval

DXPedition destination	Website with logos of club sponsors
Ranking on the ClubLog Most Wanted Survey	QSLs with logos of club sponsors
Online logs and pilot stations	Logistics and transportation costs
Number of operators and their credentials	Number of stations on the air
LoTW log submissions	Bands, modes and duration of operation

H40GC	H44GC	ZL9HR	XX9D	HK0NA	FT4TA
KH1/KH7Z	EP2A	FT5ZM	C21GC	VK9WA	NH8S
K4M	CY9C	VK9MA	PT0S	FT4JA	YJ0X
6O6O	VP6D	TO4E	XR0ZR	VP8STI	SP8SGI
W1AW/KH8	K1N	3D2C	VK0EK	S21ZBB	E30FB
ST0RY	TI9/3Z9DX	VK9MT	K5P	9U4M	TX3X
VU7AB	3Y0Z	3C0L	TX7EU	CE0Z	3C1L
TI9A	3D2CR	3B7A	K9W	VU7RI	6O7O
C21WW	CE0Z	T30GC	T30L	D68CCC	

SouthWest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA)
Club Fact Sheet

Who We Are: *SWODXA* is comprised of active DX'ers and contesters with a deep passion for all aspects of Amateur Radio. We welcome everyone who is interested in joining our club to please contact us. *SWODXA* members are active in all facets of DX and Contesting. We also travel to, and fund various DXpeditions all over the world. *SWODXA* sponsors the annual DX Dinner held on the Friday evening of Hamvention weekend in Dayton, Ohio. In addition, *SWODXA* members moderate the Hamvention DX Forum. *SWODXA* is proud sponsor of the prestigious *DXPedition of the Year Award*.

DX Donation Policy: The policy supports major DXPeditions that meet our requirements for financial sponsorship. Details are available on the website at: https://www.swodxa.org/dxgrant-application/ and elsewhere in this newsletter

Club History: The Southwest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA) is one of the country's premier amateur radio clubs. Though loosely formed in mid-1977, the club had its first formal organizational meeting in August of 1981 where Frank Schwob, W8OK (sk), was elected our first President. While organized primarily as a DX club, SWODXA members are active in all aspects of our hobby.

Requirements for Membership: We welcome all hams who have an interest in DXing. It doesn't matter whether you're a newcomer, or an old-timer to DXing; everyone is welcome! Visit http://swodxa.org/member.htm

Meetings: The club meets on the second Thursday or each month alternating locations between at Marions Piazza on Kingsridge Dr. in Dayton, OH or Marions Piazza in West Chester. (Check the website) Members gather early in the private room for dinner and then a short business agenda at 6:30 PM, followed by a program. If you enjoy a night out on the town with friends, you'll enjoy this get together. Meeting attendance is NOT a requirement for membership.

Club Officers: Four presiding officers and the past president (or past VP) make up the Board of Directors The current roster of officers are: President Tom Inglin, NR8Z; Vice President Kevin Jones, W8KJ; Secretary Mindi Jones, KC8CKW, and Treasurer Mike Suhar, W8RKO.

Website: We maintain websites at www.swodxa.org and www.swodxaevents.org managed by Bill, AJ8B. These sites provide information about a variety of subjects related to the club and DXing.