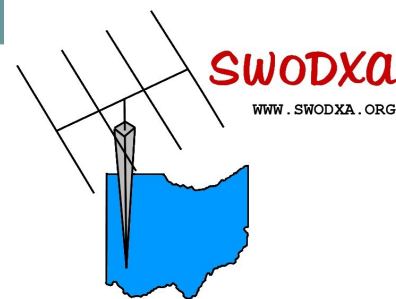




Volume 6, Issue 2

11/2022

the exchange



SouthWest Ohio DX Association

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The Prez says.....

DX is Back! If you have been on the bands then you know that there is a lot of activity. Time to fill in band slots and track down new ones.

I have a challenge for you. There have been many members who have not attended a meeting, either in person or virtually, for quite a while. Think about the friends who have not attended and give them a call. Check up on them and invite them to the next meeting. Why?

As Tom, NR8Z, used to say, “If you miss a meeting, you miss a lot!” The past several meetings we have had very good presentations. The November meeting will have an excellent presentation by one of our own, K8UD. Don’t miss it!

You may have heard that we have had a major donation by K4QPL, Jim, for a special raffle; a week at his QTH in the Turks & Caicos. We will be passing along more details on this fantastic opportunity to win a fabulous prize AND to help the club generate significant revenue to offset our costs.

You heard me talk about a new partnership with Icom. N9JA, Ray, and I have had ongoing communications and have identified several Win-Win opportunities that you will start to hear about very soon. Several club members have been working on these behind the scenes and we will let you know the details soon. In fact, the first evidence is in this very newsletter—check out the JACOTA article.

I recently have had a chance to talk to Icom, the NCDXF, IN-DEXA, and the Twin Cities DX Club. What became obvious to me was the prestige that our club is held in throughout the DXing World. The DXDinner® and the DXPedition of the Year® really are the DX “place to be” once a year and the recognition that all DXPeditions strive to receive. To keep this tradition alive, we need more members to step up and give time, energy, input, and even money. (Raffle tickets etc.) How about doing that for 2023?

73, Bill—AJ8B

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SWODXA Club News	2
Japan Castles OTA	7
CE3GKU Interview	13
CQDX Marathon	17
“Bog” Brush Antenna	25
Why Contest?	26
A61ZX Interview	28
50 Years of IOTA	33
4X1UF Interview	40
C3 Digital Award	42
From the Editor	43
VP5M DXPedition	44
VP8ADR Interview	51
A Patient Waiter	53
UAAC	58
Club Contacts	63
Club Fact Sheet	65
DXPedition Donation	66

SWODXA Club News

Upcoming Club Dates and Topics

Meeting Date	Topic
November 10th	Cleaning & Repairing Traps by K8UD—Steve Coy
December	Christmas Party!!!
January 12th, 2023	"Golden Anniversary of NCDXF - What have we done and where are we going?" by W0GJ - Glenn Johnson
February 9th	"QRP DXing and Contesting" by ND0C—Randy Shirbroun
March 9th	Rob Sherwood, NC0B

I have wondered from time to time why some QSL cards are returned to me quickly, why some take a long time, and why some never make it back. I received an email from 5J0DX regarding the receipt of my QSL card for San Andreas Island. It seems that his dog was hungry and my QSL card wetted his appetite. The picture shows what is left of my card and envelope!



Here is a challenge from our friend, David, G3ZPF

Thought your members might be interested in a personal challenge I set myself every year. Just before UK midnight I try to work someone to the east for whom it is already the next year. Then, just after midnight I try and work someone to the west of us for whom it is still last year.

First part is easy for me. Lots of EU on, but the second part relies on me finding someone in USA/Canada/Caribbean who is in their shack on New Years eve, and that gets tricky.

(Cont. on Next Page)

SWODXA Club News

W8GEX Beverage Update

The farmer got all of the soybeans in our field picked the day before, so yesterday we took advantage of the great weather. You just never know in Ohio when it might turn. So Janet, W8CAA, and I installed my 30 deg beverage at about 400 feet, and the 90 deg beverage at 600 ft.

My west beverage stays up all year as it's in an area that is not farmed. I still need to install one in my front yard looking toward the Caribbean and Bouvet. When that's up, I'll have four.

My beverages are only 4 ft tall and the deer jump over or duck under them so they are not a problem. I use a four ft.3/8 rebar that a four ft piece of 1/2" PVC goes over. Then I put a PVC tee that I have a notch thru it on top to accept the wire. The wire just doesn't need to be very high so 4 ft is enough. These antennas work really well.

Also this week I did my yearly maintenance on all my verticals by reconnecting any radial wires that I broke mowing around the antennas. I also cleaned up the ground on each one. So I should be good and hope they all work well this contest/DX season.

Better to get this done before the weather turns bad.

(Cont. on Next Page)



N3FJP

Amateur Radio Software®

SWODXA Club News

SWODXA at SEDCO



Bootcamp Master of Ceremonies Kevin, W8KJ, kicking off the morning session



I have taken too long in my presentation, and Rob, W8MRL, is on his way to let me know!



Jay, K4ZLE, leading a session on Saturday.



AB8YK enjoying the presentations, but disappointed he did not win the ticket to 2023

Hamvention!



W8MRL and W8KJ getting the bugs out before we get started.

SWODXA Club News



SWODXA was well represented as shown above (L to R) KC8RP, W2FQ, KI4KWR, W8CAA, W8MRL, KC8CKW, KD6XH, W8GEX, W8KJ, AB8YK, AJ8B, K4ZLE, W8FN, and W9IXX.

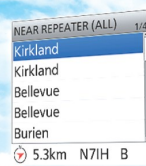


K4QPL, Jim, and AJ8B, Bill, having lunch in Raleigh while finalizing the details of the VP5M donation.

NEW

ID-52A

2M / 70CM Analog / Digital



Waterfall Display

See Band Conditions Instantly

- Multi-function Analog/D-STAR 2M / 70CM
- 2.3" Color Display with Waterfall band scope
- Dual D-STAR receive
- VV/VU/UU receive capability
- Bluetooth® enabled

▲ ID-52A & Repeaters Shipping Now ▲

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ID-RP4010V
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2m Analog/D-STAR Repeater
70cm Analog/D-STAR Repeater
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Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA

I had a great call with Icom's Ray Novak, N9JA. Somehow we started talking about our newsletter and Ray suggested that I contact Greg, J03SLK. Greg has a series of articles describing his activations of Japanese Castles. I read the first several and knew that these would be great for our newsletter. Greg was kind enough to allow me to reprint these. The first article describes the Planning and Preparation for a JACOTA Castle visit. Over the next several newsletters, we can follow Greg's path.

Thanks to Ray for the connection and for Greg for his permission to reprint.

Planning and Preparation for a JACOTA Castle Visit—Greg Cook, J03SLK

In this article I will introduce you to the website I use to find castles to operate from, the one I use to check the weather, and the antenna systems I use.

Finding the Castles

Jcastle— I use a website called “Jcastle” to find the castles that I want to operate from. It is a super tool, and anyone wanting to operate ham radio from a castle, or just want to know about everything there is to know about castles in Japan, should check out. All the following screenshots are thanks to Jcastle. <https://jcastle.info/view/Home>. You can search for details on the nearly 900 Japanese castles on jcastle.



This is the main search page for Jcastle.

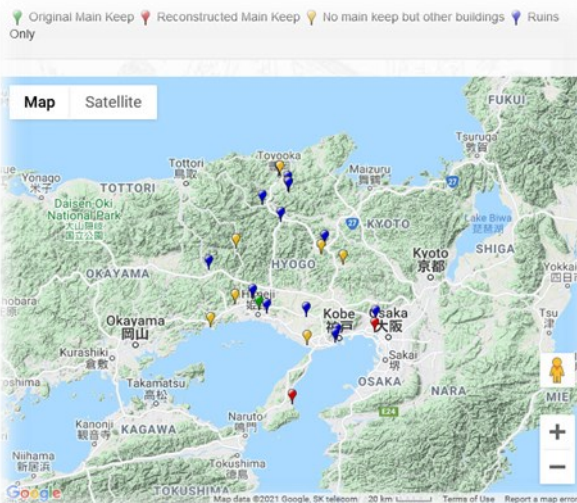
(cont. on Next Page)

JACOTA Intro (cont.)



The image on the left is a simple search I made. Search by criteria: Castle type = Flatland, Designations = National Historic Site, Historical Period = Pre Edo period

You can also search for castles in various prefectures. The site returns a map with the castle marked with the type of castle structures that you can see at the site. Note the color of the marks, and what they represent.



The image to the left shows a Hyogo Map with Castle Types.

Sonobe Castle



The main page of Sonobe castle, the first castle I operated from, is shown to the right.

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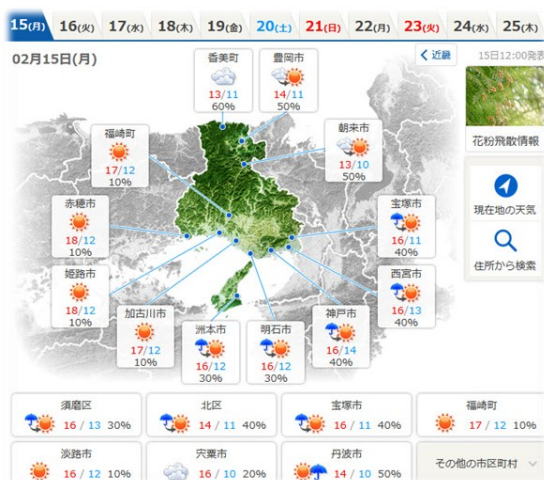
History

Sonobejō has the distinction of being the last ever castle built in Japan! It was built in 1668, the same year as the Meiji Restoration, and thus, the year the Edo Shogunate ended. In the Bakamatsu Period (end of the Edo Period), the situation in Kyōto became very dangerous, with Shinsengumi (Shogunal police corps) engaging in street fights with anti-Shogunate revolutionaries. There were several skirmishes around the Imperial palace in Kyōto between Satsuma and Chōshū, at that time rival clans fighting for the influence over the Imperial Court. Chōshū advocated for continuing the Shogunate albeit with more influence from the throne, whereas Satsuma wanted to overthrow the Bakufu completely, re-installing the Emperor as sole sovereign of Japan. These forces, and the forces of the Shogunate, and various other revolutionaries, all fought over the Imperial Capital, making it a very dangerous place to be. Sonobejō was built as a place of refuge for the Emperor should he ever have to flee Kyōto. It was founded by the Koide Clan who had served as the Emperor's guards throughout the Edo Period.

JACOTA Intro (cont.)

Without Jcastle, I would not have known about Sonobe castle, which is not that far from my home. And, I would not have had such a great time visiting and operating there in the middle of the Autumn leaf color turning season. I will be using Jcastle in selecting all the castles for the JACOTA project.

Checking the Weather—tenki.jp



Knowing what the weather will be like when you visit a castle can influence whether you will be able to successfully, and comfortably, operate there. Tenki.jp is a great site to check the weather in any part of Japan. You can really zoom in and get a lot of detailed weather information, over several days. There are too many features to show here, so check out their website and the pages for your area.

<https://www.tenki.jp>

Antenna Systems

There are lots of antennas that you can use for castle operation. Dipoles, verticals, loops, mobile whips, and simple long wire antennas can be assembled and used to make contacts. Whatever system you decide to use, learn to assemble it, and tune it for optimal performance, before you take it to a castle to operate.

Icom AL-705 Loop Antenna

I will be using the AL-705 Loop antenna during my scouting visits to castles. The AL-705 will enable me to check for the best location to operate from, and to check for RF noise at the castle.



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JACOTA Intro (cont.)

Buddipole© Antenna System

I mainly construct antennas for my actual castle operation using the Buddipole© antenna system.

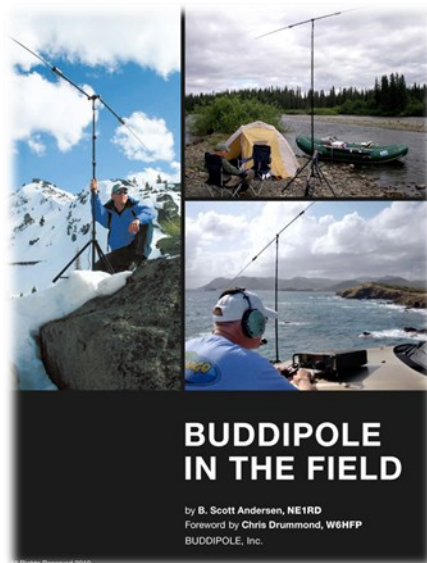
This is my basic portable antenna system. I use it to build horizontal and vertical dipole antennas.



Choosing an Antenna Configuration

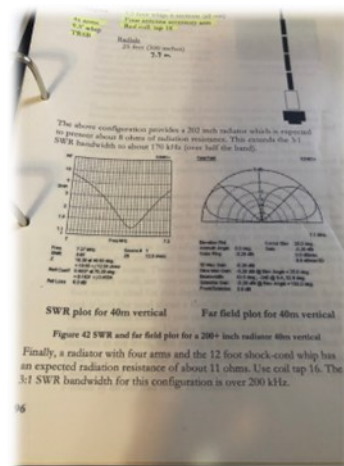
There are lots of optional accessories that you can get to build various configurations. There are even components for compact antennas that are great for limited spaces at castles, or when somewhat of a “stealth” antenna is best for popular castle operation. I really like to operate on 40 meters, so I bought extra antenna arms and a longer whip to make the antenna physically longer, but I use it in a vertical configuration, so it doesn’t extend out like a horizontal dipole.

A great book by Scott Anderson, NE1ED, explains about the Buddipole© system, and also has “Cookbooks” on various antenna configurations, including required components, construction diagrams and tuning notes. It is an invaluable tool in deciding what antenna parts to take to your next castle location. I downloaded it from the Buddipole© website.



Configuration for a 40 meter vertical antenna as described in Scott’s book

(Cont. on Next Page)



JACOTA Intro (cont.)

Antenna Analyzer

Every portable ham operator should have a good antenna analyzer and learn how to use it...learn what the readings mean for the best antenna performance, in the operating configuration and environment. There are many good manufacturers, and the NanoVNA is also becoming very popular.

Tuning the Antenna

When a loading coil is used, the electrical length of the aluminum element is adjusted by placing clips at the correct point on the coil. Cables from the feed point are then connected to the clips through a banana plug.

Another critical part of the antenna is the elevated wire radial. Once I assemble the components for the antenna, set the coils in the proper location in the coil, I attach the wire radial to the VersaTee© unit and extend out to the proper length. Then, using my analyzer, I fine tune the length of the radial for the best readings on my analyzer.



Coil on a vertical antenna

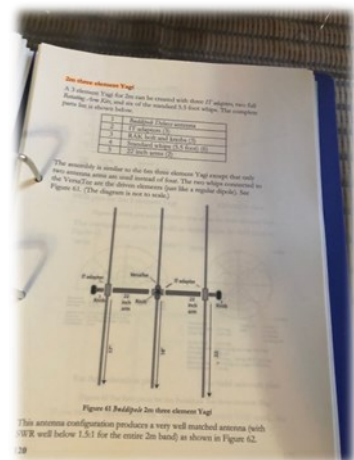
The Castle Yagi

With a few accessory components, I can make 2 and even 3 element Yagi antennas between 10 and 2 meters. The Yagi construction is also explained in the "Buddipole in the Field" book.

2 element Yagi

antennas for 10, 6 and 2 meters...especially 6 and 2, are good for castle operation. I can setup in a corner of the castle and then contact stations without a large antenna getting in the way of other visitors.

A 3 element 2 meter Yagi diagram and list of needed components is shown at the right.



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The Daily DX - is a text DX bulletin that can be sent via email to your home or office Monday through Friday, and includes DX news, IOTA news, QSN reports, QSL information, a DX Calendar, propagation forecast and much, much more. With a subscription to The Daily DX, you will also receive DX news flashes and other interesting DX tidbits. *Subscriptions are \$49.00 for one year or \$28.00 for 6 mos.*

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Get two weeks of The Daily DX or a sample of The Weekly DX free by sending a request to bernie@dailydx.com, or at <http://www.dailydx.com/trial.htm>.

JACOTA Intro (cont.)

Getting My Gear to the Castle

When you are going to a castle that is relatively flat, but covers a large area or, if the castle is in a location where you have to walk up a steep slope (not stairs), a cart can be a handy tool to haul your equipment. You can also take a small table, small folding chair, an umbrella, and a larger camera bag.

Since operating at a castle is a portable operation, try to refine your needs and condense your antenna components down so they will fit in a small bag.

So, before you head out for your next castle operation, check with the Jcastle website, or other website in your operating location. Check the weather not only at the castle, but between your home and the castle. Decide what antenna you are going to use, and the components you will need. Then pack everything, including your antenna, analyzer, camera and radios and enjoy!

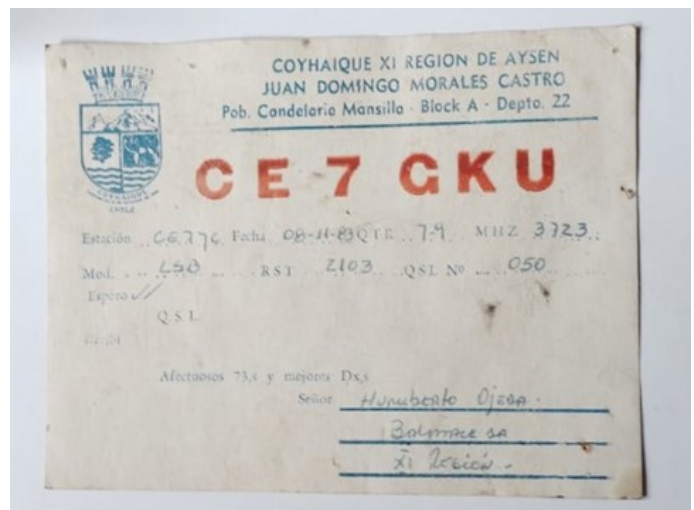


Interview with Juan, CE3GKU

I have had some great QSOs with Juan and was pleased when he accepted my interview invitation. He provided a great deal of information and I hope you enjoy this interview.

AJ8B: How did you first get interested in amateur radio?

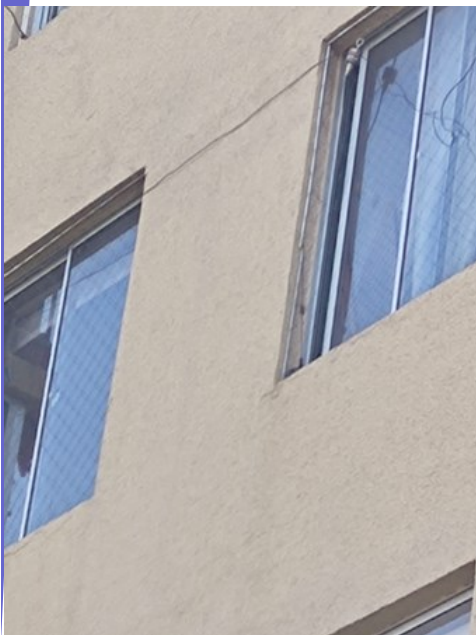
CE3GKU: It was the 80s, working at the Tte Vidal Aerodrome in Coyhaique, being a specialist in Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Safety (SSEI), seeing the geographic isolation that the inhabitants had in those times to get some medicine (among other things), Having the possibility of working at the Aerodrome, which made it easier for me to send the requirements, I thought it would be a direct contribution to have a Radio Amateur license and communicate, supported by the local Radio club, and in this way end the isolation of urgent needs. I took the course, achieving my long-awaited license and beginning to be one of those in charge of the emergency network in 80 meters of the region that in those times we met in 3,680 km. (I attach my first QSL)



AJ8B: Do you have a favorite band or mode?

CE3GKU: Right now I live in Santiago de Chile in a Condominium of small buildings that do not allow the installation of antennas, in this situation is that I foray into digital modes, which allowed me to install a dipole for ten meters, and So continue with the hobby, you will see according to the photo the precarious installation of the antenna that allows me to do FT8 in the 10 m band preferably and supported by an ATU 100 Plus antenna tuner, allowing in some opportunities to venture into other bands.

(Cont. on Next Page)



Interview with CE3GKU (cont.)

AJ8B: What time of day and days do you like to operate?

CE3GKU: I work preferably at noon and in the afternoon, from Monday to Saturday and Sunday when there is a contest or the hunting of important stations and expeditions.

AJ8B: Any secrets to your success?

CE3GKU: I think there is a secret, but success is based a lot on perseverance and always being informed of radio activities, special events, DXpeditions and having the transceiver turned on to call and answer. Being present in the bands and being attentive to the propagation, gives great satisfaction. You have to be on and prepared because the propagation sometimes opens for minutes where that window allows us to listen to distant stations and that after a short time they disappear.

Success is achieved by being constant, patient in addition to the exchange of knowledge with our peers, which allows continuous improvement.

AJ8B: Any tips that you can share?

CE3GKU: Love the hobby, be respectful, project yourself to the goal to be met. The most talented of all bases their success, above all, on effort and perseverance.

AJ8B: Describe what you are currently using:

CE3GKU: My station is made up of:

- Yaesu FT991
- Dipole antenna for 10 meters,
- ATU 100 Plus tuner.
- Kenwood MC60 microphone adapted to Yaesu.
- WOUXUN SPS30 III power supply

AJ8B: What advice do you have for those of us trying to break pileups to work DX?

CE3GKU: Interesting question, for this I use patience and perseverance, for which I verify the following steps: 1.- I find out in the cluster what station it is and if I need it or not. 2.- If I am interested, I will go to a second stage verifying your data in QRZ.com to know your name and where you are transmitting from, that way I do not interfere by asking unnecessary questions that hinder the operation of the DX station. 3.- Once informed of that, I check if I have conditions in that area of the world with an application that determines if the conditions are met. 4.- verified all this I verify I make sure if it is in Split mode. If it is, I place myself where the DX station indicates what to listen to. 5.- Located on the frequency, I wait for a favorable window of time to tell you my complete callsign and the signals, nothing more. If you don't answer me, I patiently wait for another window of empty time, sometimes a few seconds, to take advantage of it again without interfering with others so that they can listen to me.

“Success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan”

John Kennedy.

(Cont. on Next Page)

Interview with CE3GKU (cont.)

AJ8B: What is your favorite contest?

CE3GKU: The truth is, I don't have any favorite contests, but whoever I find interesting I'll follow until the end.

AJ8B: Any QSLing hints?

CE3GKU: For me, the ideal QSL should have all the QSO data on a colorful and clean image, which clearly represents the activity, my country or my station.

AJ8B: What coaching/advice would you give new amateurs?

CE3GKU: I would tell young people to take advantage of all the technological tools at their disposal like QRZ. Cluster, YouTube, but mainly that they belong to a Radioclub to learn from the experience of older adults who can give them wisdom and technical knowledge

AJ8B: If I were to stop by for a visit, what local place would you want us to visit?

CE3GKU: From my prism. I would like Regions XI and XII to visit the southern zone of my country,

AJ8B: What local food would you want me to try?

CE3GKU: Purely Chilean products and meals, a crazy appetizer, a conger eel in butter and mote dessert with huesillos, accompanied by an ice cream white wine.

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

CE3GKU: Thank you for considering me, I invite you to see my QRZ, I also want to take advantage of paying tribute to my DX teacher, Hector CE3fzl.

a big hug, 73 cordial

Juan Domingo Morales Castro—
CE3GKU

(Cont. on Next Page)



Interview with CE3GKU (cont.)



The CQ DX Marathon—A Different Kind of Competition

This article from Bob, W9KNI, first appeared in the NCJ from Nov/Dec 2012. I have updated it for 2022. Bob wrote an excellent book entitled “A Year of DX”. This best seller was published in 2010 and I have found copies of it at Hamfests and on eBay. I read it every other year, or any time my enthusiasm starts to wane. Hope you enjoy this and hope you participate in the 2023 Marathon! If you do, send me your monthly Marathon numbers and we can have a running leaderboard.

Imagine a DX competition that does not require a North Atlantic rim location to win the world. A contest that is 365 days long instead of 2 days. A contest that does not require a superstation to compete seriously. A competition where the QSO rate is less than one per day instead of 200+ per hour. That contest is the CQ DX Marathon (www.dxmarathon.com).

Many, if not most, serious DX contesters started competitive operating by chasing DX. Over a few years, as their skills improved, they worked most or all the available DXCC entities. At the same time, they strived to collect the QSL cards and confirmations for DXCC and climb to the Honor Roll.

Eventually, with most entities in the log and on the wall, the new worlds left to conquer became fewer and fewer. For many, DX contests renewed the thrill and adrenaline rush that DXing once offered. Thousands of amateurs dedicate much of their discretionary time toward preparing for and then enjoying the thrill -and exhaustion ---that comes from a few 48-hour all-out contest weekends.

But 48-hour contests fail to offer some of the satisfactions of DXing. The competition-minded operator needs to have a reason to turn on the rig mid-week. The joy of tuning an open band outside of a contest can be addictive for some.

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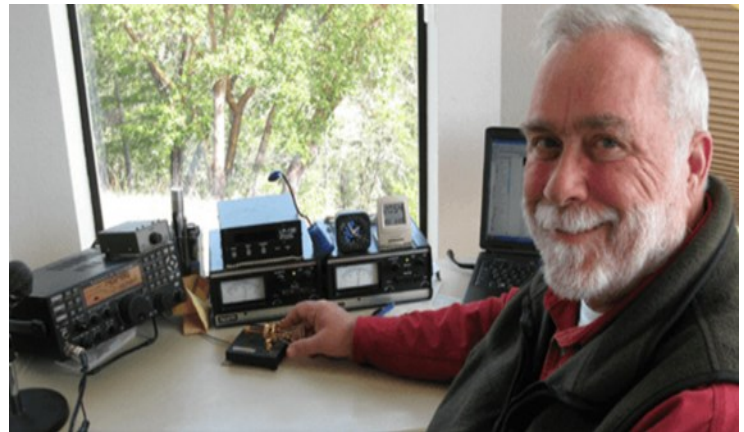


Figure 1- W1JR - 2011 CW Champion

The CQ DX Marathon (cont.)

Night watches just before bed, dawn patrols on a frosty morning with that first cup of coffee, the anticipation of a major DXpedition, and stalking the elusive rare ones that would never appear in a 48-hour contest are some of the joys one might miss. These are some of the rewards that entering the CQ DX Marathon offers; it's a chance to return to your ham radio roots.

A Yearlong Event

So, just what is the CQ DX Marathon? It is a yearlong contest that starts January 1 at 0000 UTC and ends December 31 at 2359 UTC. During that period the goal is to work as many entities and CQ zones as possible. Participants may use any band and any mode. Band countries and band zones do not count extra; you can work for credit an entity or zone only once, regardless of band or mode. The final score is the total of entities and CQ zones worked; there are no multipliers. A good score would be about 330 the sum of 290 countries and 40 CQ zones worked. Note that the CQ Country list governs, as it does in the CQ World-wide contests, not the DXCC list. This means that all DXCC entities count as well as such CQ countries as Sicily, European Turkey, the Shetland Islands, and the African Italy islands.

The Marathon has several flavors. The Unlimited class allows full legal power and no restriction on antennas. The Formula class allows either an output power level of 100 W and simple antennas, or a maximum output of 10W but allowing the use of Yagis on a single tower of 20 meters maximum height. Also, there are single-band and single-mode categories, and the use of spotting nets and other Internet-based resources is allowed.

History

The DX Marathon began following World War II. It proved to be very popular but had to be suspended due to manpower limitations in favor of the CQ WW DX contests. In those days there was no volunteer management of contests, which were administered by CQ Magazine staff.

In 2006 the DX Marathon was revived, and since that time, the DX Marathon world winner has been twice in Ohio, once in Slovakia, twice in Oregon and once in Italy. The number of entries has been growing by about 20 percent a year. The rising enthusiasm level of the DX Marathon is worldwide.

(Cont. on Next Page)



Figure 2 - IK0OZD 2011 Unlimited Champ

The CQ DX Marathon (cont.)

Many DX Clubs have embraced the DX Marathon as the perfect opportunity for intramural competitions or as the basis for challenges to other DX Clubs. In some countries, particularly Brazil, the internal competition is fierce.

World winners of the contest in both divisions receive handsome plaques, and more recently plaques have been awarded for band winners on 80 through 10 meters, as well as for unlimited continental and for mode winners.

Personal Challenge

Many DXers use the DX Marathon as a personal challenge, paying little or no attention to other contestants and instead simply trying to better their score from a prior year. If you get the idea that progress and success in the DX Marathon is pretty much like chasing DXCC all over again, you are right. No QSLs are required, and the contest is finished at year's end and starts all over again.

So, what do you do to enter? First, of course, to read the rules, available online at www.dxmarathon.com. Then, download the spreadsheet entry form. You can use this to enter contacts directly as you make them, or you can use the output from DX Marathon-compatible logging programs. It's a good idea to visit the Web site from time to time throughout the year to take advantage of the useful news and information posted there. I use DXLab for all of my logging and it will generate the submission automatically.

Managing the Madhouse

At 0000 January 1, the fun begins, and you can start working as many countries and zones as you can. New Year's Day tends to be a madhouse - a fun madhouse -especially if conditions are decent. Working well more than 50 countries and 30 CQ zones the first day is quite possible. Everyone on the bands is full of good cheer and bonhomie.

In the early days of the New Year, triage can be important. Spotting nets will call out many of the countries you need and for which you have propagation; the question is, which DX do you go for first? A few rules of thumb may help. Generally, the first criterion is whether a DX station is a DXpedition that may only be on for a limited time. Here, I am reminded of the adage, "Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first!" The same goes for DXpeditions. Work them first.

After you have logged the current DXpeditions, the next layer would be rare DX stations. Let's say the band is open deep into Asia and the Indian Ocean.



Figure 3 - V51YJ 2011 African Champion

(Cont. on Next Page)

The CQ DX Marathon (cont.)

You hear AP2NK and 388CF. Which do you after first? Well, if you have spent much time operating over the past year or so, you know that 388CF is virtually a beacon on the bands, whereas AP2NK is only an occasional visitor. Go for the AP! In any case, especially in January and February, concentrate on working the rare ones. If you are in the US, you will easily be able to pick up a lot of commonplace countries during the ARRL International DX Contest phone and CW weekends.

As the weeks and months go by, such conflicts become rarer and rarer. Once you have worked about 100 countries, it is time to start a serious "need list," and you should be well acquainted with its contents. Also, your spotting software's DX alarm list should be carefully crafted. Some operators rely exclusively on their logging programs for this, but that's a good way to end up as an also-ran. Just like the English language, with its many spelling, pronunciation and usage rules, the list of exceptions is long enough to cause complete despair for anyone trying to learn English. So, it is with DX alarm lists. Special prefixes, not to mention multiple prefixes, are more and more the norm, and a simple need list for alarms may let a lot of the DX you need slip past unheralded.

You should be studying the DX bulletins carefully, to be aware of and watching for DXpeditions from needed countries. Make a special note to enter unusual DXpedition call signs to your alarm list. You also should spend as much time as you have available tuning the bands. Not all rare DX gets spotted, and once it is and if it is truly rare - you are going to have to fight the pileup to put it into the log. It is a lot more fun to be the station that finds the rare DX calling "CQ," and then posting the spot after you've made your contact- assuming the DX station is agreeable to an instant pileup.

As the year progresses, your totals climb ever more slowly, as fewer and fewer new ones are left to work. You have already picked all the low-hanging fruit. The CO WW contests in October and November typically are an opportunity to add a few new ones and offer a flurry of excitement. But don't relax your efforts just yet. You need to stay active right up to the end. In several years past, the contact that put the eventual winner over the top was worked the last week of the year.

The winning strategy for the DX Marathon is simple: Work as many countries and zones as quickly as you can, and make sure you get everything right. Don't worry about the competition. Worrying is a time waster unless it spurs you to even greater efforts.



Figure 4 - VK4CC the 2011 Oceania Champ

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The CQ DX Marathon (cont.)

Skill Set

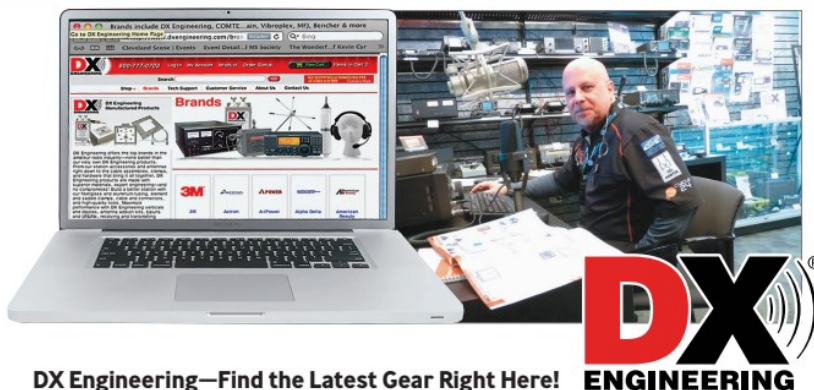
The skills required for success in the DX Marathon are not entirely the same as you would need for success in a 48 hour contest. For one thing, unless you are doing a single-mode entry, you need to be reasonably proficient in all modes, and that certainly includes competence in dealing with pileups. You need to gather all the DX intelligence you can about rare DX stations, using the Internet, DX bulletins, and information gleaned from listening.

The 48-hour contests rarely involve split-frequency pileups, while many of the stations that count in the DX Marathon are worked because of split operation. Or CW, not all DX stations use high speed. Some DX even may be found using hand keys or bugs. More and more countries are represented on digital modes. FT-8 and/or FT-4 offers up stations that simply are not available in typical contests. Many DX stations do not want brief, high-speed contacts, preferring a slower pace, and, indeed, often a bit of a rag chew. A lot of rare DX stations try to hide on the bands, only becoming active when openings are limited and then operating in parts of the bands away from mainstream DX activity. Simply waiting for the DX alarm to go off will not yield anything like a winning score in the Marathon. You need to do a lot of tuning and hunting on your own.

Higher is Better

A major contest station with stacked arrays for most bands would be ideal for the DX Marathon as well, if the station includes competitive antennas for 30, 17 and 12 meters. As in DXCC, contacts made on those bands count toward your DX Marathon total. For us lesser mortals with simpler antenna farms, a DX Marathon station would generally have higher antennas than the typical contest station. Although higher antennas will not deliver the same rates as antennas optimized for DX runs, they will deliver openings that lower antennas will not. This allows the operator to log additional coun-

tries from brief openings. To take advantage of high antennas, however, the operator needs to have a working knowledge of openings, especially regarding secondary paths that no one else is exploiting. High antennas tend to open and close a band, and this is always a potential benefit for the DX Marathon contestant.



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The CQ DX Marathon (cont.)

This brings us to another difference. In a 48-hour contest, the operator very much wants to be the first contact in the log once he or she hears a desired station. The dedicated DX Marathon operator too would always love to be the first in the log but is at least satisfied to be the last in the log for a new "counter." In the DX Marathon, being first in the log of a new one is not so important; being in the log is.

Preparedness

DX Marathon operators will almost surely benefit from having a second receiver in the transceiver. A good spectrum scope offers another benefit. Of course, it is important that each operator be intimately familiar with the operation and features of their gear. Seems obvious, right?

Why are these tools so useful? Several countries in the Marathon will first come to your attention thanks to DX alarms from the spotting net. Once the alarm sounds, you essentially have 3 minutes to log a contact before the cavalry arrives that being all the DXers. An Indy race car team can change four tires, fuel a car, adjust the chassis trim and have it on its way in 9 seconds. An NFL quarterback can march his team down the field for a winning score in well under a minute's playing time. In some big city neighborhoods trained "professionals" can have the engine and transmission out of your new Corvette in 90 seconds flat. And that's while you are parked on the street.

The proficient DX Marathon operator should be able to have the appropriate antenna closing in on the correct bearing, change bands, tune up the linear (please, on a vacant frequency, not on top of the DX) and be ready to call in less than 30 seconds from entering the shack. If you can't, you need to figure out why not and do something about it. Don't be satisfied until you can.

At the end of a year's campaign, you'll be amazed at how many DX stations you logged within 3 minutes of the first alarm, and I personally guarantee you will be grinning in satisfaction as the pileup gets exponentially larger by the minute when you are already in the log. With practice you will get even better at the 3-minute DX alarm drill, more quickly getting on frequency and nailing the contact.

(Cont. on Next Page)



The CQ DX Marathon (cont.)

At the end of an operating session, consider what station you will most likely get an alarm for next perhaps, for example, a T30 from the Central Pacific at 2 AM on a summer night. Position your station for that possibility, leaving the antenna pointing at T30 and the amplifier tuned up on the band where you anticipate the DX will show up. Even a few seconds saved after the alarm calls can make a huge difference.

To be sure, conventional 48-hour DX contests offer a great opportunity to work a lot of new ones in a hurry. Nothing in the DX Marathon rules stops you from all-out efforts in such contests, and, of course, contacts gleaned from these efforts count toward your DX Marathon score as well.

As they do in other contests, many DX Marathon entrants will have errors in their entries that reduce their scores. Several errors are common in the DX Marathon. Many contestants lose one or more CQ zones as a result. Two problem areas stand out: Zones 17, 18 and 19, especially since Siberian call sign blocks have changed, and zones 3, 4 and 5, the US/Canadian zones. In both cases, it is not enough to trust a logging program to get it right - or even for the call sign to be proof of location. US call signs are no guarantee of a station's location either, although Canadian call signs are. You should always take time to confirm the location of a US station you are claiming for a particular zone. For example, CQ zone 2 is a problem for many entrants. All V02s (Labrador) are in zone 2, and a few VE2s are in zone 2, but most VE2s are in zone 5. Some VY0s are in Zone 2 as well, while others are not.

Before you submit your log, always check zones carefully. The contest adjudicator will do it for you, of course, but once you submit your log, you can't change an erroneous entry -even though you might have good contacts in your log to replace the erroneous ones. Another problem in submitting an accurate log comes from making the presumption that the call sign of a station spotted on the net is correct. Far too often that simply is not the case. You should never count on the spot for identification; always verify the call sign yourself. A special problem is EZ, Turkmenistan. Many operators mistakenly copy the E7 prefix (Bosnia) as "EZ." At this writing, there are no legitimate stations in Turkmenistan, yet each year many stations claim a contact.

Trust, but Verify

You should always check contacts claimed for the Marathon. Was the E51 you worked in the South Cook Islands or in the North Cooks? There are always a few perfectly legitimate call signs that do not correspond with typical practice. XWPA is a good example. It was a legitimate and properly licensed station in Laos that was active last year, but many logging programs will reject that call sign.

So, verify everything possible. Make sure you have correctly entered the call sign. Make sure the DX station got your call sign correct and that the DX station is where you think it is. Many DXpeditions offer online logging, giving you the chance to confirm that you are in the log and giving the DX Marathon judges a chance to check the validity of a claimed contact in such cases.

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The CQ DX Marathon (cont.)

Few things are more disheartening than to find a DX Marathon contact was disallowed, costing a country and perhaps a zone as well, when you had a dozen other contacts in the log that would have been valid. The DX Marathon home page (www.dxmarathon.com) offers guidance in dealing with these issues, and contestants should regularly check the page for recent information.

Commitment

An all-out effort in the DX Marathon requires a major commitment on the operator's part and, indeed, the family's as well. It helps a lot if you're retired or work at home, but some winners have succeeded while burdened with more conventional schedules. If you have a job that requires long hours away from the shack, you might consider a single band effort, on a band where the propagation profile matches your time at home as much as possible.

For many operators, a year in the DX Marathon proves to be one of the most rewarding experiences in our wonderful hobby. As in any other contest, winning is very demanding, yet very rewarding, and, if you love operating, you can't lose!

Anyone who competes is guaranteed to win, even without posting the top score. At the very least you will enjoy hours and hours of excitement and thrills of DXing at its best. Being on the rig on a regular basis will certainly sharpen and maintain your operating skills for 48-hour contests as well and keep your station operating at peak efficiency.

January 1 is just ahead. Visit to the CQ DX Marathon home page, study the rules, download the entry sheet, and have a ball!



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TOP STORIES

Phone mast left looking like giant toilet brush after plans to hide it backfire

From our Friend, David, G3ZPF : I know that despite typically having more space in your yards than we do on our tiny island, you have HOAs to deal with.

In the UK the closest we come to that is local council planning regulations, which get unbelievably strict in "areas of outstanding natural beauty".

If you move into an area designated AONB then kiss goodbye to any aerial higher than 2m....yes 2m.

BUT, as you'll see from the attachment, one local council approved a 5g telephone mast "provided it is camouflaged to look like the surrounding trees".

Clearly they didn't bother checking what the comms company had in mind.

But if that's what it takes to get a 25metre mast in an AONB then maybe your HOA-inflicted members could use this idea :-)

The locals call it 'god's bog brush' (bog being UK slang for toilet)

regards

David G3ZPF

Why Contest?

During the Bootcamp session at SEDCO this fall, a ham asked me "Why do you contest?" We had a discussion about it but it reminded me of an article that I had previously read. Below is an article by K4RO, Kirk Pickering. It originally appeared in the Nov/Dec 2007 issue of NCJ.

Why Contest?

Perhaps a good place to begin is to ask the question, "Why get involved with contesting at all?" People enter the sport of radio contesting from many different places but usually for the same reason -- it's a lot of fun. While this may seem like stating the obvious, it's an important point to keep in mind. There are many different ways to have fun contesting, and not everyone's idea of fun is the same. Some of us get a kick out of the simple act of "Can you hear me now?" In contests, we get to repeat that feeling over and over, and it's a non-stop thrill.

What Drives Us?

For some operators, staying up all night to the point of utter exhaustion, scraping QSOs out of the noise level, is fun. For others, it's running high rates for hours on end. Some operators find their joy in serious competition, and some find their satisfaction in winning. Other operators enjoy mixing radio contesting with travel. Some find their joy in building the ultimate station. Some enjoy building teams and competing in the multi-operator categories. The point is to find out what rings your bell, and then go after it. Some testers seem to like a challenge. There are plenty of challenges to be faced in contesting. There are aspects of contesting which may not be considered "fun" by some standards. Fierce QRM, exhaustion, frequency fights, poor conditions, and geographic disadvantages can test a tester's spirit. Testers manage to find joy in the operating, even under adverse conditions. Some are driven by determination, others by competition.

Contesting has a special appeal, regardless of the circumstances. There is something that keeps us coming back. Successfully dealing with the challenges of contest operating can result in great personal satisfaction.

Room to Expand

One aspect of contesting that many find appealing is that there is always room for growth. I've heard from folks who have been contesting for over 40 years, and they still learn something new during every contest. There are many challenges and opportunities for learning. Whether it is operating technique, antenna design, propagation knowledge, or station construction, your imagination is the only limit to how far you can take it.

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Why Contest (cont.)

Learn by Operating

The real way to learn the "secrets" of contesting is to operate in contests. Again, this may seem like stating the obvious, but this is how contesting skills are learned. Like learning to play a musical instrument, there are no shortcuts. Proficiency requires practice, period. It is through time in the operating chair making contacts that we learn the techniques and subtleties of contest operating. Simply put, the more time that you spend operating contests, the better you will become at it. There is simply no substitute for time spent in the operating chair.

It's you against the clock

There is one thing that all contests have in common: They have a finite operating period. There is a start time and an end time, and your goal is to use that time as efficiently as possible. Using your time wisely is one of the most effective ways to improve your contest scores. Efficiency is the name of the game. The best operators can use every minute wisely, and they are always concentrating on making the next QSO. One obvious tactic is to use as much of the available operating time as possible. If a contest allows ten hours of operating time, operate for ten hours. If a contest allows for 48 hours, operate as much of that time as you can.

Identifying Call Signs

Another feature which all contests share is the need to identify signals quickly and accurately. Determining a station's call sign is perhaps the single most important skill for a contest operator to develop. The goal is to be able to determine a signal's complete call sign the moment that the call sign is sent. Whether in search-and-pounce (S&P) mode or running stations, the better you can become at identifying call signs, the quicker you can complete a QSO and proceed to the next one. The best contest operators can identify a station with one call, regardless of signal strength. Some operators can even identify a station when one of the characters is wiped out, based on acute timing skills, their knowledge of active call signs, and propagation conditions.

A Final Comment from VE3GFN

For me, the big question before any contest is, "With whom will you compete?" There are many different operating categories for almost every contest. Choose the one that suits you best. Keep accurate records of past contests, together with your radios, antennas, and power levels, and plan to compete against yourself. In 2014, I won the plaque for single operator, low power for Canada in the ARRL International DX Contest, although my goal that year was only to top last year's score.

Mike Goldstein, VE3GFN



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Interview with A61ZX (KG5UFV)

Ibrahim immediately answered my email requesting an interview. He sent the below narrative that I know you will enjoy. Great signal from a great operator.

I was born in 1970 in Sharjah city, United Arab Emirates.

At an early age I found fulfillment in reading and looking at a map of the world and thinking of the world and listening to AM radio stations from faraway places which became a passion.

I became a ham radio operator through my love of electronics and the passion I had for learning languages and listening to voices on air and my curiosity to know what was happening in far places and lands and what far places look like. These interests made me get involved and hooked since the age of 13.

I bought my first handheld CB (citizen band) which was meant to be used for a very short distance to communicate with friends during our bike drives. Not very long I started to hook the handheld to a homemade vertical antenna which surprised me by receiving more local operators and better TX/RX. In a few months time, I was able to get my first home base CB transceiver and I was able to contact nearby countries like KSA, Qatar, and Kuwait. In 1988 I traveled to the US to study electronics for some time and one my projects at the school was the building of an FM receiver which was an interesting experience. I met some operators in the state of Texas and Alabama but I can't recall their calls. In 1991, I was back home with some Ham Radio gadgets in hand but, due to lack of time and more travel to US, I was not on the air much. The reason I bought CB radios was because this was what all that was used here and I was limited to know CB operators in those days, I didn't have an idea of who was using HF bands those days, so I kept my world around CB radios.

In 1995 I bought Ranger RCI-2970 from US which had CB and two of HF bands, 10 and 12 meters. I got my beam antenna. The funny thing is, I don't ask people how things works, I find out myself through reading and experimenting. I started guiding myself, so I decided to go on HF and WOW.

Naturally, when I turned the radio on HF, I started to listen to very far places and I looked up those places on a map and started to list call signs, frequencies and cities. It was fascinating listening to people talking about "rigs" and "QTHs" and giving reports of signals and weather conditions. First contact was with Brazilian station. I did not have an official call sign, I was SWL and managed to do my first QSO with that Brazilian station on 10 meter and the first QSL card received was from the same station.



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Interview with A61ZX (cont.)

Again I was on the move travelling again. I finally decided to settle down in 2001. I joined a telecommunication company in A6 land as a field technician and started to gain knowledge and more understanding about what was going on in the air regarding signals through wires and antennas and how to use the technology to operate radios and install antennas. In 2008, the Emirates Amateur Radio Society was established. I applied for my license to begin with VHF which was very simple and within one month, I was able to get my HF license.

Nowadays I spend a sufficient time on air trying to hunt far places and log many contacts across the world and meeting new long-distance radio friends. I have also become fascinated by radio contesting and enjoy participating in many local activities.

I have been in many contests and the results were been very good! I have been rated as one of the top contester from the UAE on <http://wrtc-rank.com/> site and have been awarded with 1st place in United Arab Emirates in many contests.

I was selected by Qatar Contest team A73A to participate in CQWW 2011 contest with other elite testers which was a great event and unforgettable memory.

CQ WPX SSB IS MY FAVORITE CONTEST

I was able to get my WAS and WAZ along with many bands DXCC in a short time. I enjoy SSB mode the most, however I do go on air with digital mode from time to time. I also enjoy guiding new comers and successfully was able to train many new comers to go on air and enjoy the gathering of operators.

Many Ham Radio operators' local and international operators were welcomed to visit and operate from my humble station.

Nowadays we use mobile radios in our cars while going off road in to the large desert. Because of the radios we are on one frequency and no one is lost and its fun exchanging talks for free except for the car battery which we can say it's the best way of communication where there is no telecommunications signals.

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Interview with A61ZX (cont.)

The challenge begins when we don't see all countries in our log books. Therefore I stay tuned and seek those countries. During crises we feel that there is something we can do to give hands to others through radio signals and the wonderful moments when we met other ham operators from far places and share knowledge and experience. Our first goal is serving humanity by keeping our good relations and having a warm greetings all over the world.



A61ZX during one of the contests 2013

Radio	Antenna	Linear
FT-2000D	Optibeam 13-6	OM 4000 HF
FT-857 for Mobile Use	Optimbeam 15-6	Alpha 91B
Icom 746 Pro	5 Elements 6M	TL-922A
RCI-2970	80M Dipole	
FT-2800M	2M Diamond Vertical	



My Son Mohammed (3 Years Old) is fascinated by the noise he hears. He likes to call CQ CQ and Listen.

(Cont. on Next Page)

Interview with A61ZX (cont.)



With DJ0KM, GARANT-FUNK in Euskirchen, Germany October 2010. A very nice gentleman who I was very pleased to meet.



The visit To DL0OV, BONN amateur radio club, Germany October 2010.



9A9R visit to A61ZX QTH – 2022



ZS6EZ AT A61ZX QTH 2017

50 Years of IOTA by Roger Ballister, G3KMA

I received some questions about the IOTA program and I thought it was be a good topic for the newsletter. The information that I gathered is from several sources and does a good job of explaining the history and purpose.

Much has been written in the detailed in-house stages of development, most recently in the 40th Anniversary Directory and in an article headed 25 Years as IOTA Manager in the 2011 Directory. There, mention was made of decision by Geoff Watts, March 1985 to ask the RSGB to over management of the IOTA Program that he himself had launched in ended the first phase and opened to three further ones. Let us look the effect it had on the amateur to the present day.



Geoff Watts with his radio

IOTA Mission Statement: To increase activity on the amateur radio bands by encouraging operations from island locations, to keep a database of contacts made by IOTA program participants and to recognize high performance in the making of such contacts.

1964-1985—Geoff's concept of working islands caught on immediately with a small number of amateurs, particularly in Europe and the USA, and equally with some SWLs as it was open to listeners also. His original Directory of Islands listed 500 island groups of which 194 had a reference number, indicating that they had been activated at some stage in the past. They were almost all recognized island groups such as the Canaries or were large islands deserving of a separate status. The focus was on the geography of islands rather than political affiliation – in fact the lack of a political dimension meant the grouping of more than ten DXCC entities in the Caribbean into just two IOTA groups, Leeward and Windward Islands. The group concept was key because, with maybe a quarter of a million islands in the world, it was inconceivable that any island program could cope with recognizing them all or that more than a fraction would ever be visited by radio amateurs. Also, at a practical level in 1964 there was not the ready access to mapping information that we came to enjoy which would have allowed a much larger list. Many atlases were great on Europe and North America quite scanty on other continents. For most people the list long enough!

So, at program launch IOTA had just 194 numbered IOTA groups. The aficionados to-be combed the bands for island stations but after the first few dozen groups worked, new ones were hard to find. Often it was only when the following week's DX News Sheet, also written by Geoff, issued that we learned that a new island had appeared on the bands days earlier and that we were going to have to apply our efforts to tracking it down (same time, same day of the week was usually

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IOTA (cont.)

a starting point). Most stations were likely to be found on 40, 20, 15 and 10m as this was, for most of the period, before the WARC bands were allocated. When a ‘juicy’ island station appeared, there was invariably no pile-up, just a handful of stations on frequency to work it. In terms of performance the simple truth was that the folk who put in most effort listening were the ones to benefit most. In these early years IOTA was not sufficiently well-known on the bands to have any impact beyond the inner circle of devotees and island chasing was a largely relaxed pastime involving small disparate groups of like-minded friends. To glean up to the minute information it was necessary to be part of one of these groups. Towards the end of this period local VHF DX alert nets were springing up but these tended to be used for the passing of DX rather than IOTA information. In fact, there was very little IOTA- specific DXpedition activity although of course activity put on for DXCC helped IOTA aficionados to build their scores and more so those chasers following both programs! Towards the end of Geoff’s stewardship things began to change. Portable equipment had begun to appear on the market although there was still some way to go to improve functionality. In Europe, island stations found on the bands were being associated with IOTA more readily, especially where, as in the case of the Italian islands, they had an identifying island prefix or suffix. People were beginning to look at islands that had a regular ferry service from the mainland or were otherwise easy to reach to see if an operation was practicable. It was this that caused pressure to build for granting IOTA recognition to coastal islands that were not in any recognized group nor large enough to justify listing under Geoff’s previous practice. In short the warmer climate of the Mediterranean was stirring the amateurs of that region in particular to fall in love with IOTA.

1985-1994—The change of stewardship to the RSGB in March 1985 came as a jolt to the growing IOTA Community – Geoff had run the program for 20 years and it was difficult to see it without him. Although by 1985 the island list had grown to 560 groups, almost immediately requests came in for further additions or, for that matter, this or that rule change. It is perhaps natural to expect a change of manager to be seen as a good time to get a request in for consideration! Certainly, as a rookie manager it demanded a cautious response if management of the program were to remain firmly in control. A hard look at the program showed just what a challenge it would be to maintain that control. We could slide into an open-ended program unless there were clarity as to reasons for inclusion or exclusion of islands. This is not criticism of Geoff’s work but rather an acknowledgment that pressures were building to take forward his initiative, which had proved so popular, in a direction that might not be the best.

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IOTA (cont.)

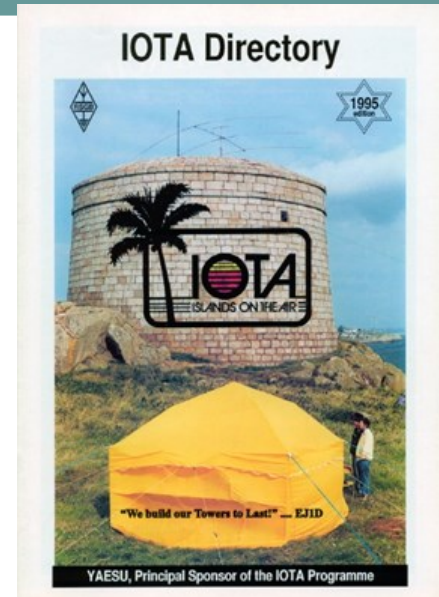
Over the next five years various ways of addressing expansion of the island list were tried to meet the aspirations of the growing IOTA community. With hindsight steps taken tended to be reactive rather than proactive. This had the unintended consequence of increasing the Europe list out of proportion with other continents. The only fair solution was a root and branch review of the list and the introduction of coastal island groups for every country with a seaboard. Each coastline was split into a series of boxes delineated by geographical coordinates taking account where possible of local administrative boundaries. This new system was introduced in a new Directory published in 1991.

Around the same time the then IOTA Committee took the decision to cap the current island list at 1200 groups and that remains to this day the key guiding principle.

Within weeks of the change of management in 1985 a group of IOTA aficionados started using 14260kHz as a meeting frequency and this evolved before long into a regular lunch time net promulgating the latest information about activity by island stations. When 14260 and other frequencies were nominated as IOTA meeting frequencies, they quickly gained a listening public keen on talking about all aspects of IOTA.

It was not long before island stations, brought to the net by IOTA friends, soon participated in list operations run by the MC. One way or another, for several years 14260 and 21260 were the frequencies to listen to for the chance island contacts. For so many a feeling belonging to a like-minded group was generated.

The running of an IOTA net and the issue of the 1991 Directory were the first steps in the development of IOTA as a serious worldwide program. I saw the fervor of so many activators to put on a New One for the program, a humbling experience since I had been responsible, with support from the IOTA Committee, for advocating every one of some 600 plus additions to Geoff's original list.



1994-2004—By 1994, IOTA's 30th anniversary, IOTA had made great strides towards becoming a mainstream program but had still some way to go to achieve general recognition. That year Yaesu had stepped in to become principal sponsor, later followed in 2006 by ICOM. Each in turn provided welcome financial assistance. In 1996 IOTA had been further boosted by the decision of the RSGB to take IOTA fully in-house in an arrangement whereby it provided some administrative support with payments and provision/dispatch of certificates etc. Sponsorship helped to finance a DOS-based system computerization that continued until 2007.

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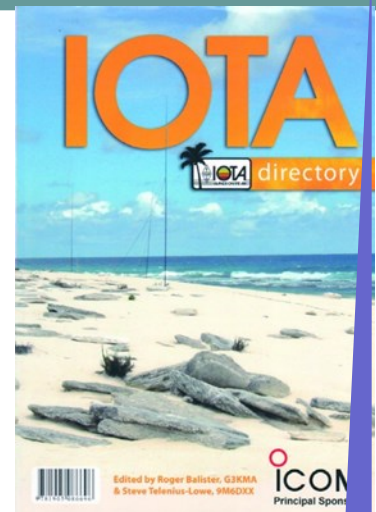
IOTA (cont.)

During these 10 years more than 200 IOTA groups were activated for the first time. Many of these were in countries totally untouched by IOTA, e.g. China and Vietnam, or rarely so, e.g. Indonesia's remote islands, India and Colombia. China's case was remarkable. Before 1994 only one of its islands, Hainan Island, had been briefly activated. Over the next seven years 15 previously un-activated Chinese IOTAs were aired for the IOTA Program and not just once, in most cases, there were several operations. Indonesia's case is similar with an extraordinary number of new groups activated. In both cases the DXPeditioners were local operators, sometimes working in large teams, who systematically targeted the un-activated IOTAs in their 'patch'. This high level of activity in China and Indonesia continues to the present day.

The 1991 Directory revision achieved the twin objectives of strengthening the IOTA rule structure and of providing a definitive list of island groups. However, in the absence of marine maps it had not been possible to specify all the islands that qualified for each group, but this was not seen as quite so important at the time since only the more accessible islands received visits by amateurs. The situation changed with the arrival on the scene of the new national island programs. Increasingly they encouraged DXPeditioners to activate small, often tiny, islands to satisfy both the demands of the award enthusiasts and also their own desire to activate a New One. In 2000 a major review was carried out, aided by Martin Atherton, G3ZAY, to tidy up and expand the list. In the end some 15,000 islands were listed, covering a high proportion of all countries with a coastline.

2004-2014—The main event of the last 10 years was the launch in 2007 of an Internet-based module enabling on-line applications. This has made life very much easier both for applicants and management. An enhancement was added to allow applicants to match QSO information in IOTA Contests with contest logs, thereby avoiding the need to submit QSLs for these QSOs. A further enhancement was due to be rolled out in Spring 2014 to allow applicants to submit an ADIF log and receive back a listing of contacts potentially valid for IOTA. Selection of contacts on the list that are found to be supported by QSLs offers a saving in time in constructing an entry.

Within a few years the growth in popularity of IOTA has enabled it to become a mainstream program. It clearly complements DXCC since every IOTA contact counts for a DXCC entity and every island DXCC entity contact counts for an IOTA. Promotion of an operation for IOTA means promotion of it also for DXCC.



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IOTA (cont.)

Where there is a difference is in the age profile of IOTA aficionados – it tends to be at the upper end of the scale. Many amateurs enter IOTA after they have had a long period chasing DX for DXCC, working mostly what they can, and now need a new challenge. They are often already well up the IOTA score ladder and have shoeboxes containing rare and much-cherished island cards which may well prove to count for IOTA. They relish the idea of trying out their skills in finding and working 50 Indonesian IOTAs or 100 groups in the Arctic. They have grown up with the stories of endeavor, heroism and bravery shown on rarer DXCC team operations. Now they are about to learn of similar exploits by single- or two-man operations to some of the remotest islands on earth. The two programs may complement each other in many ways but in one they don't. The IOTA Most Wanted List is quite different from that which appears each year for DXCC. The DXCC island entities filling the top 50 positions do not, with barely an exception, figure on the IOTA Most Wanted List. In fact, fundraisers for operations to the top Most Wanted DXCCs often express amazement when told that their target island features more than half way down the IOTA Most Wanted List. For its part 95% of the top Most Wanted IOTAs are islands in DXCC's easier entities. The most notable exceptions are the four North Korean IOTA groups!



The Future—IOTA has a robust rule structure that has been tested over many years and found to work well. Similarly, the on-line application module has done sterling work. Given adequate volunteer effort to run both, there is no reason why IOTA should not have a bright future. However, there are developments that could affect the program. Paperless QSLing is a concept that is fast gaining popularity, made even more attractive by the ever-increasing cost of postage in exchanging QSLs. There is also a detectable change in culture about continuing to send paper QSLs that is worrying. Consideration is being given to the introduction into IOTA of an application route based on paperless QSLing. However, changes to the existing software would be significant and potentially expensive to implement. We are open to offers of help.

2014 – 2022—Islands On The Air (IOTA) Ltd, hereafter referred to as IOTA Ltd, was set up in early 2016 as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee in UK law, in partnership with the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB). Under a Memorandum of Understanding the RSGB ceded full responsibility to IOTA Ltd for all aspects of the IOTA program, its day to day management, strategy, policy, finance, development, promotion and marketing. The company was registered in the names of Roger Balister, G3KMA and Stan Lee, G4XXI who at the time were its only directors.

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IOTA (cont.)

IOTA enthusiasts should be assured that the new company is fully committed to maintaining IOTA on its well-established path as a major international program bringing increased activity to the amateur bands.

IOTA Ltd now has an extensive international management team of volunteers. The Board of Directors consists of Roger Balister G3KMA as General Manager and Program Coordinator, Cezar Trifu VE3LYC as Deputy General Manager and Operations Manager, Charles Wilmott M0OXO as Awards Manager, and Hans-Georg Goebel DK1RV, Jim Nakajima JA9IFF, Ghis Penny ON5NT and Dan Sullivan W4DKS as Board Members. Stan Lee G4XXI is Company Secretary and Treasurer, Johan Willemsen PA3EXX is IT Manager and Bob Cox K3EST is Deputy Operations Manager. We have 4 members on an IOTA Advisers Group, Michael Wells G7VJR, Mauro Pregliasco I1JQJ, Bob Barden MD0CCE and Donald Chamberlain W9DC. We have 23 card checkpoints in 20 countries. Together they form an IOTA Management Team of some 34 individuals committed to making a success of IOTA.

The current IT system was launched in 2016 on the IOTA website at www.iotaworld.org. Its most significant feature was the introduction of paperless QSLing through QSO matching with logs on Club Log and in 2020 on Logbook of the World (LoTW). It has come as an enriching experience to see it integrated on the new system. The IT Team led by Cezar Trifu VE3LYC has been working all hours to add operations that are valid for IOTA so that matching can take place and credits given. A huge vote of thanks goes to them and particularly to Johan Willemsen PA3EXX for developing the system and seeing it through to completion.

Friends of IOTA (FOI): To help raise the necessary funds, initially GBP 25,000, to meet the investment costs, the company launched FOI in June 2016 as a supporters' group. Its aim was to give IOTA enthusiasts the opportunity not only to participate in one of the most active DX programs in the world but also to support it with donations to ensure its long-term future.

The Performance Challenge—There are two prestige awards: the 750 Islands Plaque of Excellence and the IOTA 1000 Islands Trophy. The IOTA Plaque of Excellence (below left), available for contacting 750 IOTA groups, takes the form of an attractively produced walnut wood shield, engraved with the recipient's details and a number signifying the order in which it was presented. The shield is supplied with 9 blank metal mini-shields which can be replaced with shields, each signifying a score increment of 25 groups up to the 975 level.

The IOTA 1000 Islands Trophy (below right), available for contacting 1000 IOTA groups, is a beautiful diamond glass feature resting on a highly polished wooden base. The trophy is fitted with a metal plaque, which is engraved with the recipient's details and a number signifying the order in which it was presented. There is space on this base for 8 metal mini-plates each signifying a score increment of 25 groups which can upgrade the trophy to the 1200 level.

IOTA is here to stay. It has had 50 years of ever-rising popularity. It is the second most popular international activity program after DXCC. It's the choice of many amateurs who have now worked as much as they can in DXCC. It encourages many people who like DXpeditioning to go to islands the world over. It generates enthusiasm and passion. It breaks down barriers between peoples and races. But above all, it provides an ongoing source of activity on the bands and for many this means staying active in amateur radio.

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Interview with Izzy, 4X1UF

Izzy lives in Haifa, Israel, which to him is "The Most Beautiful City in the World." If you review the images on his QRZ.com webpage, you might agree! Thanks to Izzy for agreeing to answer our questions.



AJ8B: How did you first get interested in amateur radio?

4X1UF: When I was 10, I received as a birthday gift a "portable radio receiver", a huge transistorized radio made by Siemens and put it on my bicycle and ran across the city. Suddenly I heard a voice on "shortwave" (apparently 40 meters AM) and with unknown instinct I rode and traced his location. Eventually I found that he was 4X4BS (SK). The guy opened his door and welcomed me in showing his station and I was mesmerized. I believe if it was the other way around I wouldn't become a ham operator.

AJ8B: Do you have a favorite band or mode?

4X1UF: I always loved the low bands! During my teenage period it was 80 meters (160 wasn't permitted at that time) and currently its 160 meters. It's a magical band.

AJ8B: What time of day and days do you like to operate?

4X1UF: High bands during the day time (local time) and low bands at night

AJ8B: Any secrets to your success?

4X1UF: Curiosity and strong will.

AJ8B: Any tips that you can share?

4X1UF: Be kind to others, help the beginners and never involve politics with this wonderful hobby.

AJ8B: Describe what you are currently using:

4X1UF: Icom based station (I am a dealer), IC-7300, IC-9700, IC-705 for field days and Acom 700S Linear

AJ8B: What advice do you have for those of us trying to break pileups to work DX?

4X1UF: Don't be rude, always listen before calling

AJ8B: What is your favorite contest?

4X1UF: I am not participating anymore (lack of time)

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Interview with Izzy, 4X1UF (cont.)

AJ8B: Any QSLing hints?

4X1UF: Again, don't be rude, follow the instruction normally given by the DX station (a nice email can help)

AJ8B: What coaching/advice would you give new amateurs?

4X1UF: Always listen first

AJ8B: If I were to stop by for a visit, what local place would you want us to visit?

My QTH Haifa, is the world center of the Bahai, their temple is near my home. A beautiful place to visit

AJ8B: What local food would you want me to try?

4X1UF: Being in the middle east, a Mediterranean cuisine is the typical combined with Arab cuisine

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

4X1UF: Keep our hobby alive, don't forget CW !!!



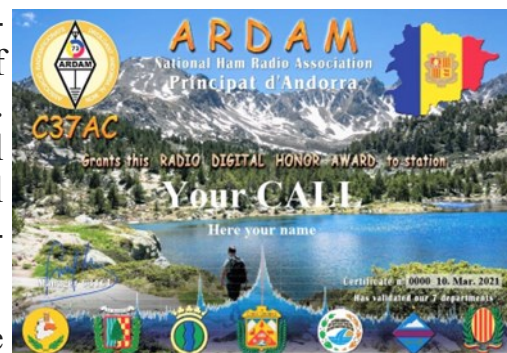


THE ANDORRA DIGITAL

ARDAM Ham Radio Association is the second association of amateur radio constituted in the Principality of Andorra. The callsign of the radio club is C37AC. With the hope that friends from the world of radio will keep us in their memory, as well as that of this small country, he organizes and offers the possibility of obtaining this permanent and free award. 14/03/2021

All radio amateurs with a valid license to transmit are invited to participate.

HAM RADIO AWARD



The requirements to obtain the award depend on the CQ zones of the applicants:

CQ zone n°, 14, 15, 16, 20 and 33. It is necessary to have made a QSO with C37AC and also, with seven other different C3 stations, for a total 8 QSOs, indistinctly in any of the amateur radio bands. The mode must be any of the digital ones, including SSTV and digital audio, the CW is considered the first digital radio mode is also valid.

Communication must be two-way radio. QSOs are not supported through any type of repeater. The eight contacts symbolize that each callsign will validate one of the 7 Parishes (Departments) of the Principality plus the ARDAM station.

For the rest of CQ zones, the same rules but a total of 6 QSOs are enough, also including our C37AC station. (5 +1)

QSO validity date: QSOs are valid in digital or cw modes from 01/01/2013, the foundation date of the ARDAM Association.

QSLs: It is not necessary to send them. It suffices to send a list with the done QSOs to the email address of the C37AC station manager (dipoma-ardam@hotmail.com). QSO data in the list must appear in the conventional order, namely, C3 station call, date, time and mode. The list must include call and full name of the applicant. LoTW or eQSL users must certify this control by sending a screenshot where the confirmed QSOs appear. It is not necessary to include in the screenshot the QSOs with the C37AC. In the unlikely event that the applicant the

(Cont. on Next Page)

The Andorra Digital Ham Radio Award (cont.)

does not use LoTW or eQSL, the QSOs will be checked against the logbooks of C3 operators.

Whoever obtains the award will receive it numbered via email for personal download. The ARDAM web ardam-andorra-award.blogspot.com will contain a list of all certificates issued.

IMPORTANT: Experience has shown, especially in FT8-FT4, that some OMs incorrectly consider a successful QSO. We remember that it is essential to have received the 73 or RR73 for it to be legally registered in the log, so if a QSO from the list sent is rejected by a C3 radio, this decision cannot be discussed. All applicants agree to abide by this award ethical standard.

Visit <https://ardam-andorra-award.blogspot.com/>

From the Editor—Bill, AJ8B

What is different about this edition of the newsletter? Overall, I tried to find articles, new and old, that highlighted activities that are competitive and challenging. These activities can be planned for in Nov and Dec and then executed in 2023.

Are you ready for Bouvet? When was the last time you sent a QSL card? Are you up to date at the QSL buro?

Since 2010, I have participated in the CQ Marathon. It gives me a reason to work DL each year! I really enjoy the chase. The article on the CQ Marathon gives all the details.

The IOTA program has always been a mystery to me. Now I know more and am ready to move forward. Great Summary article.

The Universal Award Application Center is a lot of fun to track your progress. I print out the more colorful certificates and put them in a binder. When the grand-harmonics come over, they check the binder to see what is new! Check out that article.

If you are a passive DXer (chasing just what you need), why not check out contesting? We have an excellent article about “Why Contesting?”

Finally, this is another newsletter that has 4 interviews! The reason for this is that when someone answers my query with a Yes, I am not going to turn them down or move them off for two months. Hope you enjoy this edition—keep me in the loop on who you are working and what you are doing!



An “Easy” DXpedition—K2SX—Dennis

If you attended the September SWODXA meeting, you know that we have been given a week at the VP5M location to use as a special raffle. This has a significant value and should allow us to promote DXing as well as to raise funds to help offset our DX Dinner costs. This article first appeared in Solid Copy, the newsletter for the CWOPS organization. It is reprinted with the permission of the K2SX and Jim, K4QPL—the owner! You will be receiving a lot of information about how you can be eligible for this raffle in the coming weeks. Until then, just imagine the sunshine, sea breeze, and the pileups!

For most of the 60+ years I have been operating in contests, my home station has never been competitive with the Big Guns. At least, that is the excuse I use for not being at the top of the scoring lists. Since retiring about ten years ago and moving to a gated community in South Caro- line with little hope of putting up even one tower, my hopes of building a superstation have evaporated into the ether, sort of like the sunspots in recent years.

My answer has been to go where I can be in high demand and where huge antennas are not necessary, i.e., a DXpedition. I hasten to add that I am not talking about those trips that require 3-5 days bouncing around inside a small ship on 30’ waves on the way to a remote island/reef that has probably not seen a human being for several years. No, those “tent and generator” DXpeditions are a bit more than I want to tackle. Even if the entity is not rare, it is usually possible to still push the rate meter well over 200 QSOs per hour on occasion, which generates its own adrenaline rush, something that is mostly missing from my home operations.



The VP5 house

I have gone on several trips, e.g. PJ7W, on which the operators have brought all of the antennas and radios and cables and PCs and built a fairly elaborate station from scratch, operated the contest and then dismantled it, often in lousy weather, all within a few days. I find I now prefer something a bit easier, where most, if not all, of the antennas are already in place and where other creature comforts are available.

Another factor that often creeps into the decision of where to go is the location’s “spouse appeal”. While my wife does not have a license, much less know CW, she does enjoy going to new places, trying different restaurants and seeing different sites.

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VP5M (cont.)

It is even better if she has another spouse to share in the adventure. Since she could care less about propagation or if the location is a three pointer rather than a two pointer, creature comforts climb higher on her acceptability scale. Her acceptance threshold is that the area we are going to has a Ritz Carlton or something similar nearby, even though we do not have to stay there. Now, I can still go off on my own and leave her behind, as I did on this trip, but I have found that the IOU list can get pretty long, a.k.a. “expensive”, if I don’t regularly include her on some of these trips. This trip to VP5 only cost me trips to Chicago and DC, so it was not too costly.

Several years ago, I was invited to do CQWW CW from a new ham QTH that Jim K4QPL, was building on Providenciales (referred to as “Provo” by those in the know), part of the Turks & Caicos Islands chain, a.k.a. “VP5”, an island chain about 650 miles southeast of Miami. The entity consists of over 300 islands although only eight are of significant size. Population is a bit over 30,000 residents, with about two-thirds of them living on Provo. Prince used to visit, but his estate was recently sold for a measly \$10.8 million. Drake is apparently a frequent visitor as well, most recently recording a new album from there. The islands are not part of CEPT though, so there is no license reciprocity and you must obtain a VP5 license. This is a simple process though, and one which Jim handles with ease.

I had met Jim while participating in an M/2 operation from NY4A a few years earlier. As it turned out, this renovation was Jim’s introduction to “Island Time” and the planned construction fell too far behind schedule to make that trip possible. However, earlier this year, Jim asked me if I was interested in doing CQ WPX CW from his now mostly completed station at VP5M as part of a multi-op operation. After conferring with my wife and promising her that, if it looked good, she could come on a future trip, I signed up and started getting ready. The island was pretty easy to get to with Jim and I taking a direct flight from Charlotte while the other two ops flew direct from Atlanta.

One of the incentives for going on this trip was that John K4BAI, would be another of the ops. I had first met John on a similar trip back in 1983 when a group of us operated from Haiti as HH2VP in CQWW CW. It was an interesting experience to wander around a small airport in Haiti looking for someone you had never met before and had no idea what they looked like.

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Rob KK4R (L) and John K4BAI (R)

VP5M (cont.)

Fortunately, John had the presence of mind to carry a copy of QST under his arm and, therefore, was pretty easy to spot. In addition to Jim K4QPL, the fourth operator would be Rob KK4R, who had operated from VP5M in the previous year and, therefore, was quite familiar with the operation.

Jim had decided when he started building the station in Provo that it would not have multiple towers with beams all over them but, instead, would be spouse and non-ham friendly. He has one AB-577 tower at 35' which carries a SteppIR three element Yagi, which covers 40 to 6 meters.

There is another beam, an A3S, which can be mounted temporarily on about 25' of mast. This can be used on the higher bands for chasing mults or for bursts of activity on 15 and/or 10 meters, if they opened. On 80 meters, we had a dipole with the center point just below the SteppIR. We decided not to bother with 160M given the nature of the contest, i.e., multipliers count only once regardless of band, and the high summer QRN levels. One of the advantages of the QTH was that it was near the top of a hill about 120' ASL with a clear shot going Northwest to Northeast, which just happened to be in the direction of Europe and the US. Nice planning, Jim.

The station comes equipped with its own K3 and KPA-500 linear and a TS-590 as a back-up for visiting operators. To augment that, I brought along my trusty, travel-worn K3 and John added his battle-tested laptop. Given the setup, we decided to compete as a Multi-Op/Single Transmitter Low Power operation, a category that the station had won in the previous year. Currently, Jim's station is the only one active in contests on the island since Jody, VP5JM, decided not to rebuild after Hurricane Irma destroyed much of her rental station in 2017. Jim correctly reasoned that the VP5 call sign would make up for the low power, even though there was no country multiplier in WPX.

One of the big advantages of operating from an existing station is that the set-up time is greatly reduced, leaving more time for casual operating or touring the area or whatever. We all did a bit of each. Testing the station by calling CQ proved to be a popular pass-time. It was encouraging to rapidly build a pile up indicating that we were getting out with a decent signal and to find out that the two stations were not, for the most part, interfering with each other.

After an initial burst of operating, we shut down and headed for downtown Provo to stock the pantry and get some dinner. We headed for a local shore restaurant called Sharkbite. The food was simple but good, but we were a bit disappointed that the



View from the deck looking north

(Cont. on Next Page)

VP5M (cont.)

namesake sharks did not gather for us to ogle while we ate. I have been told by reliable sources that the sharks really do assemble every so often for the viewing pleasure of the tourists. Then, it was off to the grocery store, part of the Graceway chain. I was particularly impressed by the quality and variety of food offered, much better than usually found on Caribbean islands. Prices were not cheap but that is to be expected when everything has to be imported. Following some judicious shopping, we re-turned to the station, known as “Harbour Rock”, for some additional operating and strategy discussions.

The next day, Wednesday, Rob headed off early for some SCUBA diving, which is apparently quite good off Provo, while the rest of us started putting the station into final operating shape. To see if the station was operating correctly, on Wednesday, we took part in the weekly CWTs.

John started off by operating the 1300Z CWT as VP5/K4BAI. Later on, I operated the 1900Z CWT while Rob operated the 0300Z version. In addition to becoming use to the vagaries of a strange station, we were also able to learn of some problems that needed to be corrected, particularly with regard to networking the two computers, something none of us were that familiar with. We were also having a bit of trouble setting up N1MM. I quickly dashed off an e-mail version of HELP! to CWops member VE3KI. Within a few hours, Rich replied with the answers to our questions, changes in settings were made and we were off to the races. Thanks, Rich.

The major technical problems we encountered were getting the mechanical and software interfaces to work correctly. For the M/S category, and only for that group, you are limited to ten band changes per hour and one cannot transmit on two bands at the same time. The interfaces were to prevent the latter from happening. We finally got the system to work but it still needed some fine tuning. I still do not understand the real need for inflicting this category with such a restriction, other than paranoia about possible cheating, but that is a much longer discussion to be held separately. I had become enamored with SO2V operation and wanted to incorporate that into the run station so that we could pick up mults while still running on the same band. But, alas, we never got comfortable with that process. That will take a bit more practice before that tool is used.

The next day, Thursday, our prime objective was to put up the A3S for our second high-band antenna. We eventually tied the 25' push-up mast and bottom-mounted rotor to the side of the house. I'm sure it would have been an interesting door-piece for any visiting non-hams. The important thing was that the antenna worked, and it stayed up for the whole weekend. It even rotated 360 degrees. What more could one ask for?



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VP5M (cont.)



Station owner Jim K4QPL

One interesting note was that as we tied off the mast, we saw a bunch of inch-long centipedes traipsing along the top of a concrete wall next to the driveway. On closer examination, there must have been more than a hundred of the little creatures racing atop the wall. And, while most of them were going in the same direction, a number of them were headed in the opposite direction, down the wall. It was sort of like watching a pileup on a P5 that had suddenly appeared unannounced on the band, although these creatures were much more disciplined in their approach. Some of them did crawl over their fellow travelers in their quest to reach the end of the wall while others turned about bumping into one of their brethren. We never did see where they came from or where they went when they finished their trip. Like signals on 10 Meters, they just faded away.

Friday was another casual day since the station was all ready to go. While Rob went off searching for some new type of sea-life, Jim took me on a tour of the northern part of the island, including the upscale Grace Bay area, while John checked out the setup. I was impressed with how well kept the island was, with hedges neatly clipped, roads clear of garbage and neat boutique stores. The only problem I had was that they drove their cars on the left side of the road and they also loved roundabouts, which made for some interesting driving.

At 0000z, John started running stations and we were off to the races. Once the rate slowed down a bit, we were able to use the second station to work new QSOs, many of them multipliers, while making sure that we did not exceed the ten band changes per hour rule. At 0300Z, I took over the run station and KK4R took over the mult station. Things settled down into a steady pattern and the QSO total kept steadily climbing upward through the weekend.

As expected, 40 and 20 were the money bands with nearly 900 QSOs and 1200 QSOs respectively. We managed only nine QSOs on 10 meters but, surprisingly, those included contacts with F5IN and CW4MAX. After looking at the Multi 2 logs, it is apparent that there were a lot more QSOs to be had on 10M if one had the flexibility to keep on the band, particularly if the number of band changes was not limited.

Band	QSOs
160	0
80	173
40	890
20	1,204
15	374
10	9

(Cont. on Next Page)

VP5M (cont.)

15 meters was a much better band with EU coming through much of the day. 80M was a bit noisy but still generated a bit under 200 QSOs. When the closing bell rang, we made a total of 2650 QSOs and a score of 8.13 million, a bit lower than last year's result mainly due to a shortfall on 20M. Based on claimed scores, we again came in as World #1 in the M/S LP category. Our final tally: 2,650 QSOs, 899 Prefixes for a score of 8,126,061.

Monday was a take-down day and relatively relaxed since all we had to do was take down one antenna (the A3S) and take apart the station. That sure beat trying to remove a bunch of towers, wires, etc. In the afternoon, Jim finished my tour of the island. We did explore the North West Point of the island, which was essentially undeveloped except for a deserted reception area. The beach was quite unique, at least to me, in that it consisted of a layer of sand, covered by a layer of seaweed, followed by another layer of sand and then more seaweed and sand. The result was a very spongy surface which once we got used to it, was quite nice to walk on. We also went to the southern part of the island, including a trip by the infamous Bugaloo local bar. The area was not as "boutiquey" as the Grace Bay area.

Thanks to Jim for the use of his station and his hospitality and to all those who listened so careful to hear us under the big signals. If anyone is interested in renting the station for a future contest, read Jim's QRZ.com page at VP5M but don't wait because contest weeks are getting booked. Sign up now for your "easy" DXpedition and leave the antenna raising to someone else.

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Interview with Bobby, VP8ADR

I don't know how many hams there are in the Falkland Islands, but we have an interview with one of the most active. Feel free to email Bobby if you need a QSO!



AJ8B: How did you first get interested in amateur radio?

VP8ADR: I come from a family of amateur radio Mother VP8NY, Farther VP8WA now silent key my stepfather VP8ML and step mother VP8ZV also one of my older brothers Shorty VP8NE were/are radio hams following along is myself VP8ADR, XYL VP8BTR and my son VP8DKP.

AJ8B: Do you have a favorite band or mode?

VP8ADR: No not really just wherever the signals are coming in SSB, FT8, FT4 not really CW yet I have tried some with the help from ham radio deluxe

AJ8B: What time of day and days do you like to operate?

VP8ADR: Anytime I'm free but mostly early mornings and evenings being a farmer the day time is a bit taken up

AJ8B: Any secrets to your success?

VP8ADR: Not really just listen and learn from the old boys HI HI

AJ8B: Any tips that you can share?

VP8ADR: Get on the air and enjoy the hobby

AJ8B: Describe what you are currently using:

VP8ADR: Current station is Yaesu FT-DX10 Acom 1500 and Hexbeam but I do like experimenting with other antennas

AJ8B: What advice do you have for those of us trying to break pileups to work DX?

VP8ADR: Not shout out the stations that the DX is trying to work I'm sure your reader have very good radio ethics but there is some stations out there that just continue to call even when its plain that you are already working another station (some folk just don't have patients)

AJ8B: What is your favorite contest?

VP8ADR: Not really a contester although I have entered in a few FT8/FT4 contests

AJ8B: Any QSLing hints?

(Cont. on Next Page)

Interview with VP8ADR (cont.)

AJ8B: What coaching/advice would you give new amateurs?

VP8ADR: Live listen learn and have patience.

AJ8B: If I were to stop by for a visit, what local place would you want us to visit?

VP8ADR: All sorts to visit here but most that come like to look at the wild life penguins etc.

AJ8B: What local food would you want me to try?

VP8ADR: You cant beat a good feed of roast mutton and spuds

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

VP8ADR: No problem nothing I can think of at the moment but happy to answer any more question (if I can)



A Patient Waiter is no Loser by Herman, VK2IXV

I always like to include a historically educational item in every newsletter. Thanks to VK2IXV, Herman, and Bill, VK3BR for permission to reprint this article. It originally appeared in the September 2022 edition of The Radio Amateurs Old Timers Club of Australia (RAOTC) newsletter

In my collection I have a small memorial pewter plaque which shows that, 178 years ago, a middle-aged Samuel Finley Breese Morse, surrounded by Miss Annie Ellsworth¹ and members of Congress, sent the first official telegram over a short telegraph line from Washington to Baltimore. It is rather amazing that a man like Samuel Finley Breese Morse (1791-1872), a portrait painter with little formal scientific or technical training, established the first commercial telegraph system in the United States.



The small pewter plaque in the author's collection which shows the occasion of the sending of the first official telegram.



Morse as a young man.

Although he made friends easily and liked the company of people from all walks of life, the life of Samuel Morse had not been a bed of roses.

He went through periods of poverty when he could hardly afford to support himself and his family. For many years he was ridiculed and knocked back by private investors, as well as the American Congress, when lobbying for funds for his telegraph invention. Repeatedly he was called a daydreamer, was met with skepticism, and his scheme was condemned as ridiculous.

In 1811, after he finished University, Morse went to Europe to study and practice painting. In 1815, he returned to America, set up a studio in Boston and became a highly successful artist, painting prominent citizens.

In 1818, aged 27, he married 19 years-old Lucretia Pickering (née Walker). In 1825, when he was away from home on a painting commission, Morse received an urgent letter from his father, delivered by a messenger on horseback, that his wife, soon

(Cont. on Next Page)

Patient Waiter (cont.)

after the birth of her third child, had become gravely ill. Morse immediately hurried home but, by the time he arrived, his wife was dead and had been buried.

Some say that ‘heartbreak may have inspired the telegraph’, because a grieving Morse vowed to figure out a way to deliver messages in a timely manner. However, it would be nearly two decades before he would invent a device that could send long distance messages instantaneously.

From 1829 -1832, Morse went once more to Europe to learn about the latest painting styles and left his three children in the care of relatives.

In 1832, during his return voyage from Le Havre to New York on the ship Sully, Samuel Morse and fellow passengers, amongst them Charles Jackson², discussed at length the recent discoveries of electromagnetism by Hans Christian Oersted³ and Michael Faraday⁴.

When Morse began to understand how this worked, he became convinced that these inventions could be used to send messages via a wire. Immediately he went to work making his own telegraph apparatus.

The success of Morse’s telegraph invention and code was, for a great part, due to the skills and contribution of the academics he had read about, had contact with, and the ones that became his partners.

Men like Charles Thomas Jackson of Boston (his acquaintance on the ship Sully), Leonard Gale, Joseph Henry⁵ and Alfred Vail.

From 1837 to 1848, Alfred Lewis Vail joined Morse as a partner, giving him mechanical, technical, and financial support.

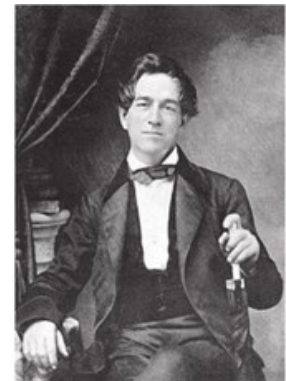
In 1839, Vail married Jane Elizabeth (née Cummings) and they had three sons. She died in 1852.

Vail made many improvements to the design of Morse’s original rather impractical and crude telegraph apparatus, and added a simple sending key called the Lever Correspondent⁶ (see photo below).

He changed Morse’s original numerical code, in which Morse had given each word in the English dictionary a number. Morse spent many months compiling this code dictionary. For example, the message ‘215-36-2-58’ meant ‘successful-experiment-with-telegraph’. However, because the names of people, companies, or townships, were not part of Samuel Morse’s huge dictionary, the code became quite cumbersome.

Alfred Vail developed a much simpler alphabetical system of a dot and dash code, and Morse’s impractical numerical code and bulky dictionary were never used again. Because the terms of Vail’s partnership agreement specified that all patents would be in Morse’s name, Vail’s code was called ‘Morse code’⁷.

On 6th January 1838, the first successful completion of a transmission with the new system and code was used at the Speedwell Iron Works, owned by Vail’s



Alfred Vail.

(Cont. on Next Page)

Patient Waiter (cont.)

father, across 3 km of wiring. The message read: “A patient waiter is no loser”.

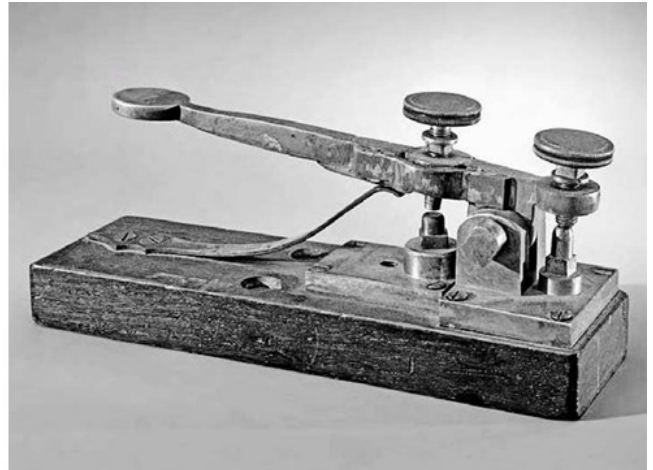
It was Morse’s university colleague Leonard Gale, a professor in chemistry, who showed him that Joseph Henry’s use of relays would improve the distance of transmission. As a result, by November 1838, a message could be sent through 16 km of wire arranged on reels in Dr Gale’s university lecture room.

It appears that Morse hijacked Henry’s innovations. However, between 1839 and 1842, Morse frequently kept in touch with Henry, seeking both scientific advice and public endorsements of his telegraph. Henry gave both willingly, but he also made it quite clear that he regarded Morse’s apparatus as the application of scientific principles discovered by himself and other scientists. Henry was more interested in demonstrating his invention to his students and not, like Samuel Morse, commercially to the outside world.

As early as 1838, Samuel Morse tried in vain to secure the aid of Congress in the construction of an experimental telegraph line between Washington and Baltimore. In desperation he travelled again to Europe from 1838 -1842, this time hoping to get recognition and raise funds, but to no avail. A less energetic and driven man would have given up after so many rejections, but Morse believed in his invention and kept on going.

In 1842, he tried Congress again and his invention was finally formally discussed. The story goes that, during debate in the Congress, one of the Congress members ridiculed Morse’s invention, comparing it to ‘sham scientific practices like mesmerism and animal magnetism’. It was not until March 1843 that he obtained from the Congress the princely sum of US\$30,000 (equivalent to about one million US dollars in today’s money) for his invention. He could now finance the construction of a 38-mile (61 km) telegraph line to be strung on poles between the national capital, Washington, and Baltimore, Maryland.

It was over this line, on 24th May 1844, that Morse tapped out his famous message, “What hath God wrought”. At the other end of the line Vail sent the same message back to him. The newspapers gave all the credit for this major breakthrough in long distance communications to Samuel Morse, the better-known partner and forceful personality. Alfred Vail was only referred to as the ‘assistant’ of Morse and was more or less overlooked.



Alfred Vail's late-1844 simple sending key, the 'Lever Correspondent' now in the Smithsonian Museum.

(Cont. on Next Page)

Patient Waiter (cont.)

In 1853, Alfred Vail, more philosophical than hurt about this, wrote: "I do not seek renown for myself. I care little for the world's applause, which at best is very hard to maintain even when justly yours, and given often, where they cannot and will not discriminate and justly award."

For his achievements, Samuel Morse became an international superstar and received decorations from the heads of numerous countries in Europe, but the reputation of his modest partner was allowed to suffer.

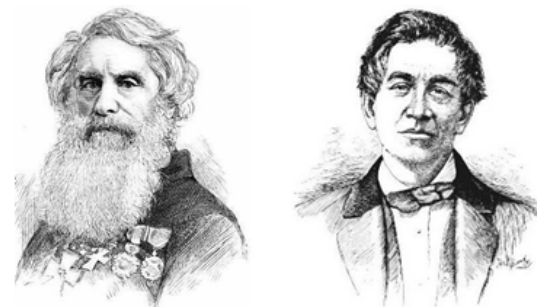
In 1848, aged 57, Samuel Breeze Morse married his penniless cousin, the 26 year old Sarah Elizabeth (née Griswold) and had four more children.

In 1858, Vail married Amanda Orpha (née Eno).

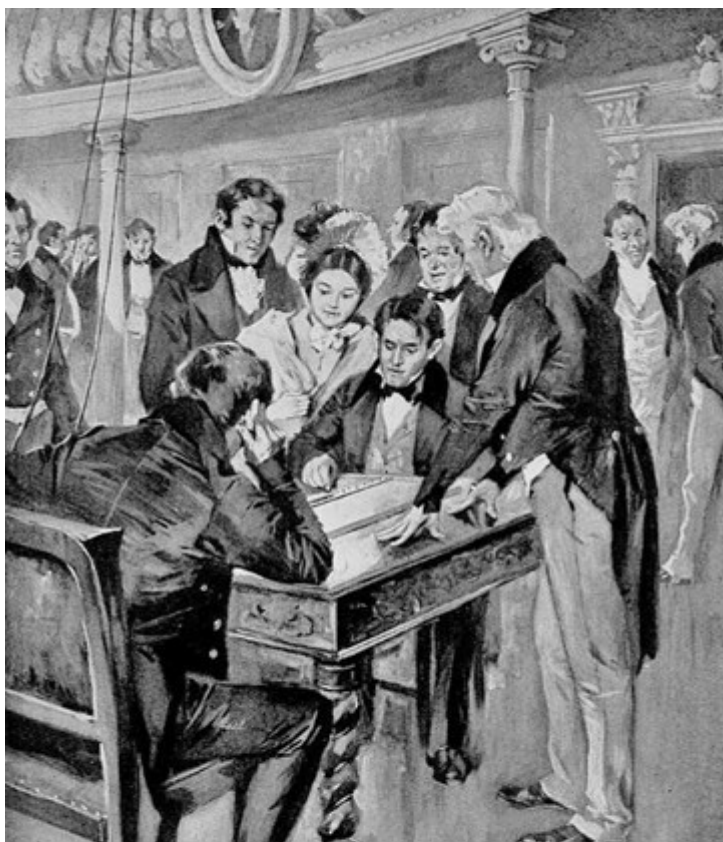
In 1859, Alfred Lewis Vail died in poverty at the young age of 52.

Morse became a famous man who settled down to a life of wealth and family. He was generous in his financial gifts to universities, religious organizations and struggling artists. In his retirement he grew a long beard that turned white, giving him the appearance of a man of great knowledge and wisdom.

Before and after his death, the validity of his inventions was unsuccessfully challenged by Charles Thomas Jackson, Joseph Henry and Alfred Vail's son Stephen. Samuel Morse died of pneumonia in 1872, aged 80, at his home in New York.



Pen and ink sketch of Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail.



A painting depicting the first telegram, sent on May 24th, 1881. Professor Samuel Morse is seated, sending the dispatch "What has God wrought", as dictated by Miss Annie Ellsworth.



The above was published in New York in May 1870 and details Morse's earliest apparatus for receiving Morse telegrams.

Patient Waiter (cont.)

Footnotes

1. The father of Annie Ellsworth was Henry Ellsworth, the US Patent Commissioner, who had supported Samuel Morse's invention and helped secure funding for it. On 24th May 1844, Annie handed Samuel Morse a bit of paper (the first telegram) on which she had written the biblical phrase from the book of Numbers 23:23, "What hath God wrought" (What has God done).
2. Dr Charles Thomas Jackson had visited Europe for three years where he studied both medicine and geology. During this time, he had met prominent European scientists and physicians. He claimed later that it was his original ideas that led to the creation of the electromagnetic telegraph.
3. Hans Christian Oersted discovered in 1820 that electrical currents create magnetic fields.
4. Michael Faraday, known for his 1831 Law of electromagnetic induction.
5. Joseph Henry invented and constructed, in 1830, extremely powerful magnets. See Ron Cook's article about Joseph Henry in OTN 39, September 2007, pages 11, 12 and 13.
6. More on the Vail Correspondent key in OTN 66, September 2020, page 15.
7. It was said by Samuel Morse supporters that Vail, in public and private writings, never claimed the code for himself. According to one researcher, in a February 1838 letter to his father, Judge Stephen Vail, Alfred wrote, "Professor Morse has invented a new plan of an alphabet and has thrown aside the Dictionaries."

In an 1845 book, Vail wrote describing Morse's telegraph and attributed the code to Samuel Morse. However, for a different view, please read the story on website: <https://telegraphy.eu/pagina/artikels/About-Morse-Vail-v4-2jan2021.pdf>
For some variations of Morse code, see Morsum Magnificat No 19, page 2, at: <http://www.n7cfo.com/tgph/Dwnlds/mm/mm.htm>



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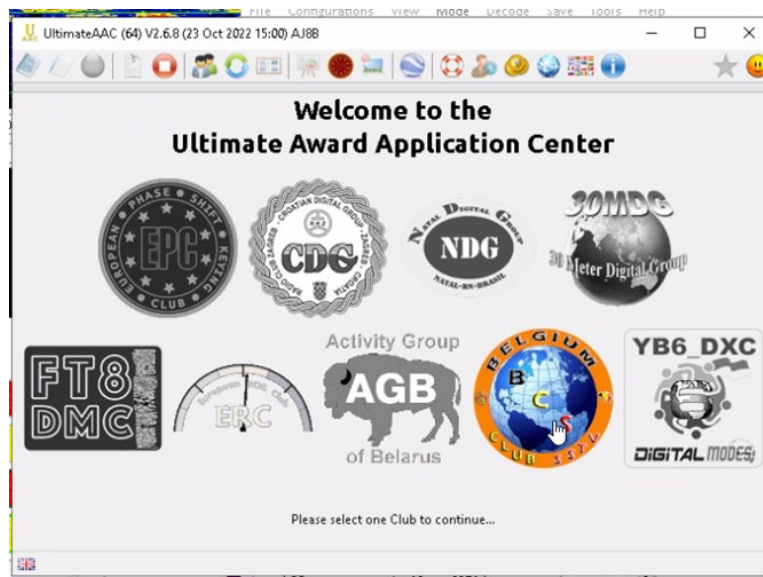


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Ultimate Award Application Center

Have you wanted to “chase paper” but the management and cost was just too much? There is now a “single point of upload” to manage and receive major awards and certificates at no cost.—AJ8B—Bill

I happen to be on a QRZ.com page of an avid FT8 DXer from Serbia and read about something called UAAC. UAAC is an abbreviation for the Ultimate Award Application Center. DK5UR has built a very easy to use and understand interface that submits the appropriate QSOs to various clubs that offer awards. Each of these awards has a very colorful certificate for reaching various levels. Once a month I load an .adif file of my logbook into the UAAC and it evaluates what awards I have become eligible for. The software then applies to the appropriate clubs, and I am notified that I have indeed earned a certain level or a new award. The UAAC is a single interface for at least 9 different clubs that offer awards for activity.



These awards are downloadable as soon as you earn them. All of this is available at no cost. Since my interest in UAAC has started, I have joined the each of the participating clubs. After you explore these options and then register for the ones that you are interested in, you will receive a membership number from each group. The UAAC app even allows you to apply from the app for each of these organizations, so you don't have to visit 9 different websites to sign up. Load your membership number in to the UAAC and then have the UAAC app evaluate your logbook. In my case, within a few hours, I received about 30 certificates from the organizations. The software can be accessed at

http://epc-mc.eu/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=1:ultimateaac&lang=en

On the next page are examples of some of the awards that I have achieved and information about some of the representative clubs. This has been a great amount of fun. I have never thought of myself as a “paper chaser”, but I eagerly await the results of each upload each month. The certificates are professionally done and VERY colorful. My only criticism is that there are TOO many certificates to earn. For example, there are awards for working Chilean stations. For each level of 5, 10, 15, 25, 50, QSOs etc, you will receive acknowledgment of a new level achieved. With the newest release of UAAC, you can select which awards you will qualify for and which you are not interested in. Give this a try – it really is a load of fun.

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UAAC (cont.)



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UAAC (cont.)

30M Digital Modes Group

(I have had a passion for operating 30 M since the allocation was assigned to hams at the WRC conference in 1979. In fact, Chod Harris, VP2ML, offered the very first DXCC award for 30 meters. I was fortunate enough to earn #79 in the world for 30 meters. I have chased DX on 30 meters nearly every day since then! – Bill AJ8B)

From the 30 Meter Digital Group Website (<http://www.30mdg.org/intro.html>)



Our goal is to promote the use of digital modes on the 30 meter band and awareness on how great this band is - plus provide place for like minded operators with the same interests. We will promote awareness of this unique HF band which many have called 'the best kept secret' in Ham Radio and encourage good digital operating practices, the use of different digital modes, experimenting, known weekly or monthly activities, skeds/spots, antennas, and study propagation for 30 meters.

There is no HF band in our minds, better to support and promote, than 30 meters - which in the U.S. is the only LOW POWER, Digital ONLY (includes CW), NON-CONTEST band. (note: this is a WARC band so we do not promote contests on 30 meters - the group/members would NOT participate if

this idea was ever suggested - again NO CONTESTS but we will promote activity)

Some other reasons to join this Group:

It is FREE! This site is supported by donations only, no Group fees, no hoops to jump - join and have fun on the band.

If you have never explored or used 30 Meters then there is no better time than now to explore - this group is dedicated to the 30 Meter Digital band.

If you are a seasoned Digital Mode Operator using other bands like 20 or 40 meters and are looking for a virtually under used band that has unique propagation qualities similar to both 20 and 40 Meters, then don't skip over 30 meters! You get the best of both bands here on 30 Meters, be it local propagation to World-Wide DX (it is open somewhere 24/7)

New to digital modes? We are dedicated Digital Operators, so join, look around and ask questions- then get on the band!

Don't like Contest Weekends, then join in on this NO CONTEST 30 Meter WARC band as there is plenty of room to have some very nice qso's/ragchews or work some DX while others are scrambling for a clear spot on other crowded bands with sometimes, poor operating practices.

30 Meters (in the U.S. and in some other Countries) is the only HF Digital ONLY band, so it certainly makes sense to use and promote digital activity on this Digital ONLY band.

To join 30MDG: <http://www.30mdg.org/join.html>

(Cont. on Next Page)

UAAC (cont.)

European Phase Shift Keying Club

The European PSK Club, or EPC for short, is an informal club of amateur radio operators dedicated to maintaining high levels of amateur radio communications on PSK Modes. Its purpose is to promote activity and good operating practice on the PSK modes on all amateur bands. Membership is FREE for any licensed radio amateur, club or SWL.

All of our managers serve on a voluntary basis. A high quality and colorful membership certificate in PDF format is sent via email to new members when membership is granted. Each new member is assigned a unique "EPC Number" which is retained for life. A EPC number is never re issued and it is listed in the Membership Records forever. All EPC members are eligible to participate in various club's activities and award programmes. (<https://eupsk.club/>)



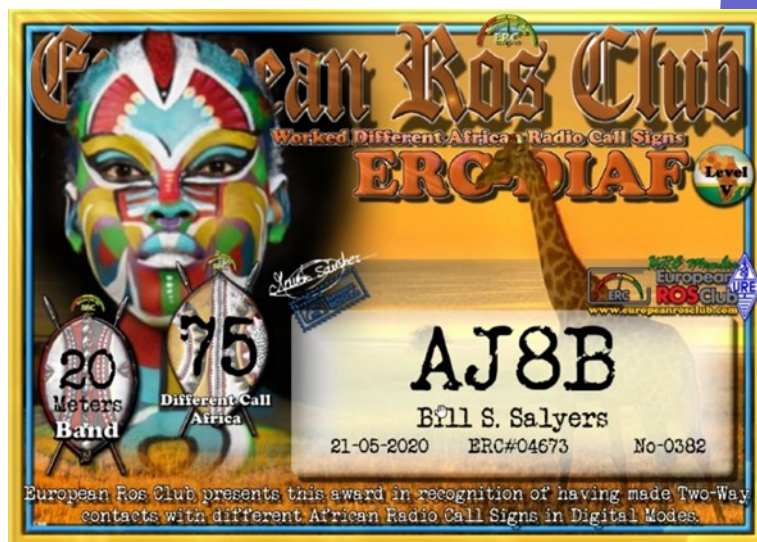
European Digital Club

EUROPEANROSCLUB (ERC) is a non-profit association created in 2010, it is legally constituted and registered in the National Registry of Associations with the number 602842.

ERC is the first Spanish association in DIGITAL MODES and is recognized and registered as an Amateur Radio Association in the Registry of the Secretary of State for Telecommunications and for the Information Society with number 280 and indicative EA5RKE.

We want the group to be always active, and for that we need the collaboration of all the members, contributing ideas or sending any information that you think may be interesting for everyone.

The purpose of ERC is to encourage all of us who work with digital modes, not only to do DX, but also to create beautiful designs for diplomas from the different countries, entities and modes of transmission, such as mobile, portable and maritime mobile, and that all the operators of each country have access to the certificates that we design, that is why almost all the certificates are from stations of different countries.



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UAAC (cont.)

ERC associates are not charged dues. ERC only receives voluntary donations made by members who want to help the Club and with this ERC expenses are covered.

In order to obtain the ERC diplomas, it is necessary to be a member of the ERC. At ERC all digital modes are valid for your diplomas. At the time of writing these words at ERC we are close to 9,000 members and 2,700,000 diplomas have been awarded to our members since we have been working with UltimateAAC.

FT8 Digital Modes Club



How was the FT8DMC formed? It was in the summer of 2017, actually a short time later after K1JT released the new FT8 mode with WSJT-X. I was very busy with JT65 on the 6m band at that time and of course immediately tried FT8 on that band and realized the great advantages, also on all other bands, this was the time when my friend Hannes, OE1SGU and myself thought about founding a FT8 club.

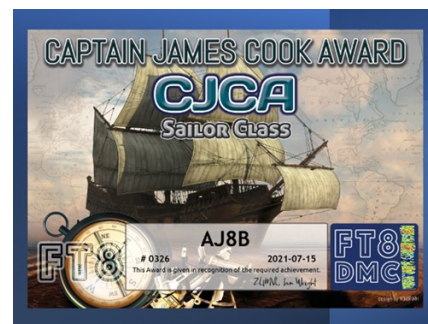
The FT8DMC was founded on July 12th, 2017, by Jo Engelbrecht, OE6VIE and Hannes Grunsteidl, OE1SGU, after recognizing the fast growth and the need for a club for FT8. Our aim is to provide a worldwide meeting point and platforms for users of FT8 and similar modes, especially for newcomers and less-experienced amateur radio operators and SWLs.

Within only 2 days, we already had more than 100 members and the new award program was launched shortly after. Now we count more than 19,000 members from all over the world.

Everyone with an open mind and interest in FT8 is welcome to join the club. For us, FT8 is a valuable addition to the other established modes in amateur. We also see FT8 as a chance for those challenged to cope with various difficulties modern society brings. Many of our members are all-rounders and FT8 is a new challenge for them.

All FT8DMC members are eligible to participate in various club activities and aware programs. Now, more than 200 different awards are available and so far, more than 1.6 *MILLION* awards have been issued.

All our team members are volunteers, and we have no financial interest, means all our service is free of charge.



Club Contacts



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President and Newsletter Editor
AJ8B—Bill Salyers

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Vice-President
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Treasurer & DX Dinner
Chairman
W8RKO—Mike Suhar,

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SWODXA Station
Trustee W8EX

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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 and host the *W8DXCC DX Convention*. *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 of each month at Hunter Pizzeria in Franklin, OH, and virtually via ZOOM. 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: Past President Tom Inglin, NR8Z, President Bill Salyers, AJ8B; 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.

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	VP8SGI
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	W8KKF/WP5
K5D	3Y0J	T33A	3Y0J	CY9C	