

*Merry Christmas & Happy  
2023 from the  
SWODXA Officers to you  
and your family!*



From our DX Friend, CE3GKU—Juan Domingo Morales Castro

The Exchange—1/1/DX Association

‘Twas the nite before TEN opened, and all through the shack,  
Not a signal was stirring, for outside it was black.  
The dipoles were hung, by the tower with care,  
In hopes that strong signals,  
soon would be there.

The harmonics were nestled, all snug in their beds,  
while visions of pileups, danced in their heads.  
With me in my PJ's and Mom in her thong,  
We wondered about DX and where we went wrong.

When out on the snow, there arose such a mess,  
I sprang from my bed, and forgot to get dressed.  
Away to the window, I flew like a streaker,  
Broke open the amp and became suddenly weaker.

The coax was ripped and the new fallen amp,  
fell onto the floor and the ‘Test was now damped.  
But what do my wondering eyes, should suddenly see here?  
...but a miniature stack of 10m Yagis and deer !

With that little old man, so adept at the key,  
this could be our good luck, if only it could be....  
More QRQ than Hashafisti and with power to spare.  
Now Dasher, now Dotter, now all deer, he yelled proud,  
We’re doing this right, and we're going to be loud!

On Meteor, Aurora and Backscatter too!  
We’ll work everyone folks, ‘til the tubes they turn blue.  
To the top of the hill, we ran with our tools,  
Now dash away, dot away, lids and DQRM fools.

The dummy loads are cool, before the current that flows,  
I will rid you of keyclicks, splatter and gosh Heavens knows.  
So up to the house-top, the signals they flew,  
With antennas and amplifiers and St. Nicholas too.

And then in a moment, I heard on the stairs,  
DX being worked, that was exceedingly rare.  
As I logged with N1MM (plus version of course),  
St. Nick was working VK’s, SSB and on Morse.

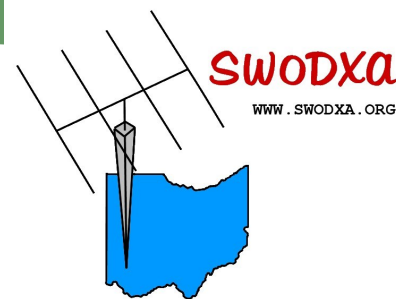




Volume 6, Issue 3

1/2023

# the exchange



SouthWest Ohio DX Association

## 2023 Officers

President AJ8B  
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Kevin Jones  
Secretary KC8CKW  
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Club Call : W8EX

## The Prez says.....

Happy New Year! Hope 2023 will keep us all in good health and active on the bands.

To help you keep active, there are several club activities that I challenge you to get involved with.

The first is the ARRL Volunteers on the Air. You can read about this on page 10, but the challenge to operate in this and to represent Ohio was given to us directly from the ARRL Vice Director. N8QF, Ron, has graciously agreed to assist with scheduling. It is a few months out so there is plenty of time to prepare.

The DX Dinner® and the DX Forum will be here before you know it. Please plan on attending these functions as they support the club and DX! Let me know if you have a few free hours, we have lots of things you can help with.

We have announced the VP5M raffle. We hope to generate a lot of buzz around the DX Dinner and also generate some revenue to assist DXpeditions. Please consider participating in this raffle. Details on page 12.

I hope you have been on the air since the last newsletter. I can tell you that your officers have been busy with all of the programs and raffles described in this version of the newsletter.

You may have noticed that the website looks a bit different. We could not longer (technically) support the previous design. I hope to have it completed for your input in a week or so. Stay tuned for that. Some personal and shack pics would be a great way to round it out.

From Karen and me to you and yours, The Best in 2023.

73, Bill—AJ8B



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## SWODXA Club News

### Upcoming Club Dates and Topics

Meeting Date	Topic
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
April 13th	Horizontal Loop Antennas by John, N7GHZ
May 11th	DXPedition to Montserrat by Cliff, KD6XH

*We had a fun time at the Christmas party. Thanks to Mindi, KC8CKW, for pulling this all together and to Richard, KC8RP, for gathering together the excellent prizes. Below are a few pictures from the event.*



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## *SWODXA Club News (cont.)*

### *Christmas Party*



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# N3FJP

## Amateur Radio Software®



# *SWODXA Club News (cont.)*

## *Christmas Party*



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## *SWODXA Club News*

Dave, K8CMO, moved in August downsizing into a smaller one-floor residence. His only antenna during the past 3 months has been a Buddipole on a tripod sitting on the deck. Now he has installed a new ground-mount Hustler 6BTV. It is a vast improvement over the Buddipole and works on all 6 bands (with the assistance of the KAT-500). However, it does need a little tweaking and need someone with some antenna experience and an antenna analyzer. Any volunteers? David Yockey

As we start to focus on the 2023 DX Dinner®, I always have a fond memory of two DXers having a bit of fun on the stage. Remember this?



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## ***SWODXA Club News***

### **SWODXA Announces the DX Mentor Recognition Program**

The Southwest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA) in conjunction with ICOM® America, Inc. is announcing a program to recognize and reward amateur radio operators who have played a key role in helping other amateur radio operators achieve DXCC. The purpose of this program is not to bring recognition to those that achieve DXCC but rather to recognize those amateurs that assist others in achieving their first 100 confirmed entities.

There is an application form and a judging committee staffed by SWODXA representatives and a representative from both the NCDXF and INDEXA. Those amateurs receiving the mentoring must be under 30 years of age during the calendar year for the award. The intent of targeting this audience is to attract and retain those amateurs that are most likely to remain engaged in the hobby after achieving DXCC.

SWODXA is uniquely positioned to bestow this award at the annual SWODXA DX Dinner®. The DX Dinner, held annually in conjunction with the Dayton Hamvention®, is arguably the largest gathering of active DXers in the world. We present the DXpedition of the Year Award®, the DXpeditioner of the Year Award, when applicable, and host the DX Forum there. CQ Magazine announces their CQ DX Hall of Fame inductees at the DX dinner as well.

As a technology leader in our hobby, there is no better partner to promote and celebrate this award than ICOM. Ray, N9JA, has been a constant promoter of ham radio, even coining the phrase “For the Love of Ham Radio”. ICOM has selflessly supported amateur radio over the years and is taking this opportunity to promote the mentors of DX. Thanks to ICOM for their support!

More information and the entry form can be found at [www.swodxa.org/DX-Mentor-Program](http://www.swodxa.org/DX-Mentor-Program), by emailing [thedxmentor@gmail.com](mailto:thedxmentor@gmail.com) or by calling 1-513-855-3980.

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## SWODXA Club News

### The ARRL Volunteers on the Air Operating Event

*I hope this is an event that most of the club will participate in. You don't have to leave your shack. Please consider a 2 or 4 hour shift (or more!)*

While at the Highland ARA Christmas party, I was approached by Scott, N8SY. Scott is the Vice Director of the Great Lakes Division and a great guy. We struck up a conversation that went something like "With all of the great operators that must be in SWODXA, I have an event that would be a great fit for SWODXA!" With that, Scott explained the Volunteers on the Air program (VOTA) that is being sponsored by the ARRL in 2023.

The basic idea is explained by ARRL Director of Operations Bob Naumann, W5OV, and ARRL Radiosport Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, in QST:

2023 is the ARRL Year of the Volunteers. With that, ARRL will be holding Volunteers On the Air (VOTA), a year-long on-air celebration that recognizes the organization's abundant volunteer support and contributions. By using ARRL's Logbook of The World (LoTW, [www.arrl.org/logbook-of-the-world](http://www.arrl.org/logbook-of-the-world)), participants making contacts in 2023 will accumulate points, as well as contact new stations and make new friends all over the world.

From January 1 (0000 UTC) to December 31, 2023 (2359 UTC), hams can participate in the VOTA event, which will include special week-long activations by W1AW portable stations from all 50 states and most US territories. Each W1AW portable activation will begin on a Wednesday at 0000 UTC and end the following Tuesday at 2359 UTC, and each state will be activated twice. **Ohio will be active from Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 0000Z until Tuesday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2359Z. This is where SWODXA gets an opportunity to shine. Members can get on the air using W1AW/8 and represent Ohio for all those looking for points. N8QF, Ron, has graciously agreed to coordinate schedules to ensure that we have as much time covered as possible. Ron can be reached at [N8QF@Roadrunner.com](mailto:N8QF@Roadrunner.com). We will be in touch after the first of the year with more details.**

#### Scoring and Awards

This is the second ARRL-sponsored operating event for which every member is worth at least one point (the first was ARRL's 2014 Centennial QSO Party). The event is open to all, and only ARRL members, appointees, and elected officials; HQ staff; W1AW; DXCC Card Checkers, and ARRL Affiliated Club call signs are worth points. DX member stations outside of the US may count for points.



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## ***SWODXA Club News***

### **The ARRL Volunteers on the Air Operating Event (cont.)**

Only two-way contacts qualify for points (cross-band, cross-mode, and repeater contacts are not valid), using any mode (CW, phone, or digital) -including EME and satellite operations- on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2, and 1.25 meters, as well as 70 centimeters, VHF/UHF/SHF, and microwave bands available to US amateurs above 2 meters (2190-, 630-, 60-, 30-, 17-, and 12-meter band contacts are not counted for credit in this event).

All contacts must be uploaded to LoTW. (N8QF and I will supply more information on this in 2023.) Stations exchange call signs and signal reports common to the modes being used. Contacts do not have to be contest-style, and participants are not required to provide ARRL organizational information.

The VOTA database will assign point values to all contacts within logs submitted electronically via LoTW.

Participant scores are the values of all the completed eligible contacts, as uploaded to LoTW. Eligible contacts may be made with the same station on each of the three mode categories. Points are assigned based on the level of volunteer, or ARRL representative or member contacted. For example, ARRL RadioSport Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, may be contacted for 75 points on 20 meters CW, 20 meters SSB, and 20 meters digital, as well as on the other bands where multiple modes are used. Essentially, each station may be contacted on each of the mode groups on each band. There are no multipliers or bonus points.

See the Volunteer QSO Points Table at <https://vota.arrl.org> for the list of contact values.

Scores will be calculated daily (between 3:00 and 6:00 AM the following morning). Real-time score leaders by band and mode will be viewable on the VOTA dashboard, and certificates will be available to print or download (details will be announced on the dashboard after the event begins).

Worked All States (WAS) and VHF/ UHF Century Club (VUCC) awards can be enhanced by contacting the portable W1AW and volunteer stations (standard LoTW award tracking and application processes with credits and fees will apply).

The deadline for completing LoTW uploads from your 2023 contacts is February 10, 2024. A final tally of participation, as well as a summary, will be made in the weeks following the deadline. This deadline is not connected to WAS or VUCC awards.

More information can be found in this month's QST or at <https://www.arrl.org/volunteers-on-the-air>



## SWODXA Announces Major New Prize Raffle at the DXDinner®

The Southwest Ohio DX Association (SWODXA) in conjunction with the owners of Harbour Rock Villa announces a Major Prize Raffle to raise funds to support DXPeditions.

The Prize is a week at Harbour Rock Villa in the Turks & Caicos Islands. This gorgeous villa has room for 6, a well-equipped amateur radio station, multiple antennas, including the use of a vehicle, and assistance in obtaining a VP5 license. The winner will provide their own transportation to the island and meals.

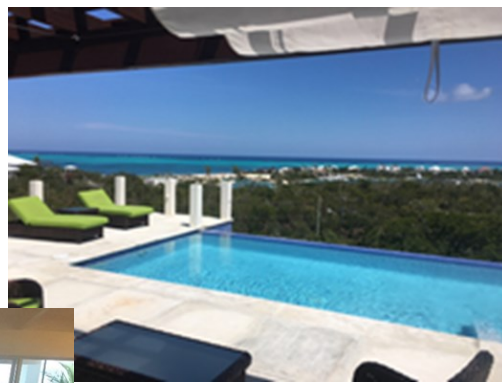
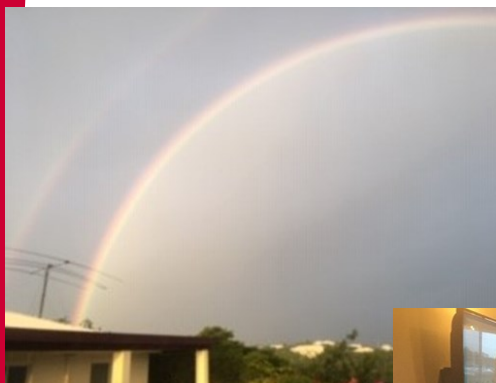
This raffle prize is worth approximately \$5,000 and will be awarded at the 2023 DX Dinner held in conjunction with the Dayton Hamvention®.

Please visit <https://www.harbourrockvilla.com/vp5-ham-radio-2> to view the Villa layout, the amenities, and other details. For updates and more ham information search VP5M on QRZ.com.

Raffle tickets can be purchased after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Ticket sales will be capped at 500. The cost is \$25 each or 5/\$100.

More information can be found at [www.swodxa.org/VP5M](http://www.swodxa.org/VP5M), by emailing [thedxmentor@gmail.com](mailto:thedxmentor@gmail.com), or by calling 1-513-855-3980.

**Don't Just Work DX – Be DX at Harbour Rock, Turks & Caicos – VP5!**





## The DX Mentor Podcast Announcement

A new Amateur Radio Podcast is now available, and we invite you to give us a listen. The DX Mentor Podcast is different than any other podcast you have heard. It is focused on helping you become a better DXer no matter your current level.

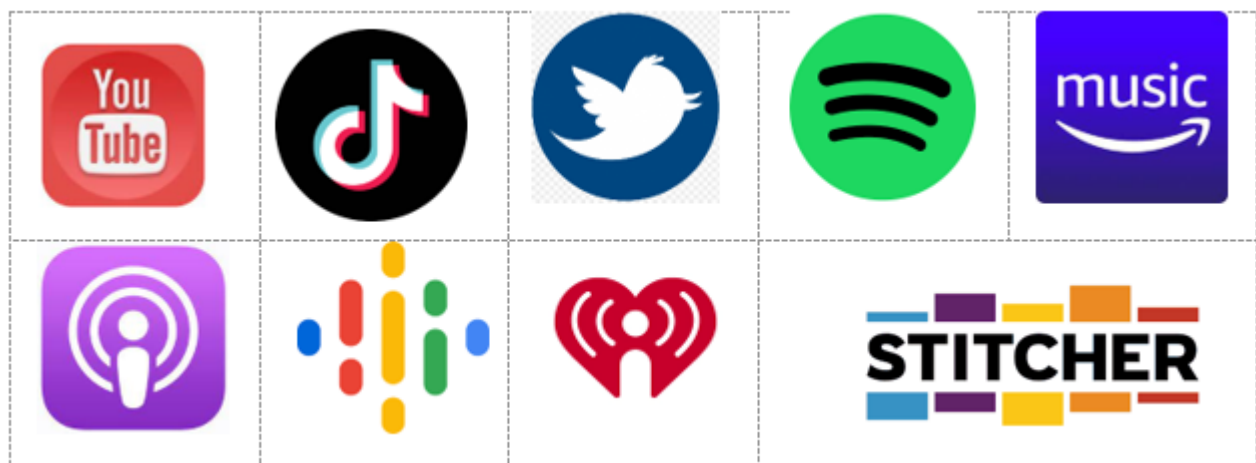
Each podcast will focus on a specific topic and will feature several guests to discuss and analyze the topic at hand. These guests are among the top in the subject matter and will cover the topic so that both entry level DXers and seasoned DXers will learn something.

The DX Mentor Podcast is sponsored by Icom America, The DailyDX, and Gigiparts and is available on Stitcher, Spotify, Google Podcasts, iHeart, Amazon, and Apple podcast services.

The introductory edition of The DX Mentor is available now. Go to your favorite Podcast service, download The DX Mentor and subscribe. When the first edition drops on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, you will be right there with us.

You should also subscribe to The DX Mentor YouTube® channel, Twitter®, and TikTok®

More information can be found by emailing [thedxmentor@gmail.com](mailto:thedxmentor@gmail.com), contacting us on Discord (TheDXMentor) or by calling 1-513-855-3980.



## How to Break a Pileup—by John, HK3C

HK3C, John, is one of those rare individuals who walks the walk and talks the talk. He lives and breathes the DX Code of Conduct, is a first class human being and a pleasure to work. I have never met John personally, but, consider him a friend. Every time I hear John on, I stop to listen to him run the pileup. He has the best audio on the air and runs a fine station. I asked him share some wisdom with us. With Crozet on the air and Bouvet fast approaching, I thought this might be good information for new DXers and a refresher for the rest of us —AJ8B



### The key to breaking a pileup is listening and learning - before you call.

**First - you need to hear them.** Unless you can hear the DX station, and hear them well enough to tell exactly what they're doing, there's no point calling. And once you can hear the DX station well, you need to determine where they are listening. This is easy if they are operating simplex. But, more than likely, for any reasonably sized pile-up, they will be operating split.

Many modern transceivers allow listening on two frequencies at the same time, so the next step will be easy: listen to the DX station on their transmitting frequency, and find the station they're working on their receiving frequency.

Depending on propagation however, you may not be able to hear who the DX station is coming back to, so keep listening and tuning - you'll eventually determine whether the DX station is staying in one spot, or tuning around in the pileup. Of course, the best frequency to be when you start calling is on the exact spot where the DX station was listening for their last contact.

Only then is it time to call. BTW, if you need to tune up your amplifier, move somewhere else before doing so.

**Keep your calls short:** Give your full call sign - then go back to listening. Sometimes you'll need to repeat this cycle two or three times. Once the DX station comes back to someone, there's no sense continuing to call - unless the station called is you. And even if you start calling, don't stop listening.

Who is the DX station working? Stations in your area, or another continent? Perhaps they're working callers from all over. Listen closely.

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## How to Break a Pileup—by John, HK3C (cont.)

Who are the stations the DX station responds to? Are they the earliest, or the strongest callers, or is the DX station picking callers later in the pileup when the calls die down? Are “tail-ender” callers being worked or ignored? Determine the pattern the DX station is using and use that information to adjust the timing and placement of your calls.

**Be patient:** Pileups can be huge random events, and if you keep listening and carefully calling, you'll likely get through. It may be on the first or second call, or it could take a half hour of calling. Don't get discouraged. And remember, despite your best efforts, some DX will get away. Propagation will change, or the station will switch bands or modes, or may even QRT. You have no control over that, so don't worry about it. Importantly - don't let it affect your performance.

Careful listening makes a big difference. It will tell you where to transmit, and when.

**Get the Rhythm:** Listen to get the rhythm of how exchanges are being made, and what information is being exchanged. Is the DX station giving only their call sign and a “5-9” signal report? Or, do exchanges include name and other details? Follow suit. If only call sign and signal report, refrain from giving your QTH and/or name.

Remember - listen, listen - and listen some more. You will pick up clues which will help you make the contact. The DX station may be “running by the numbers”, or by areas. You might notice QSB on the band and be able to make the contact when the propagation fluctuations are on the rise. Learn by listening and take note. By listening to a DX station over time you'll learn about propagation, not just to and from the DX station, but also to other areas of the world.

Listening will help you make the contact properly. You'll hear good operating practices - and unfortunately, bad ones. Don't imitate the bad ones. Through close listening you'll learn things from a perspective which might not otherwise be apparent.

### Phonetics and Exchanges:

Listen to how different amateur radio operators make their contacts. Some use techniques with a winning pattern, while others have a hard time.

“Tail-ending” - quickly throwing in your call sign right after the non-DX station is about to clear with the DX station - is a technique which can be successful. But be careful not to cause QRM. And know that some DX stations don't like that practice, considering it rude. Remember, when you do this, you're essentially interjecting yourself into another conversation which may interrupt the rhythm of the communication.

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## How to Break a Pileup—by John, HK3C (cont.)

During a pileup, it sometimes helps to get your call sign in first - right after the DX stops transmitting. However, more often, you'll need to let the "roar" of the pileup die down, and just about the time most stations stop transmitting - but before the DX picks a call sign - say your call sign. That's sometimes the best time to call. Listen to see whether the DX station regularly picks up the first station that calls, or if they let the pileup settle down for the most part, and then pick a call sign near the end, when most stations have stopped calling.

In many cases, "Big Gun" stations will overpower the pileup and make the contact. But if you're a "little pistol", running 100W to a wire antenna, smart timing can help you win out.

Sometimes, you should say your call sign only once, and sometimes you should say it once, wait a few seconds, then say it again. Avoid calling continually though, because you risk becoming a nuisance, not only to the DX station, but also to everyone - especially if you call when the DX station returns to someone else. It's important to observe the timing, pace and flow of exchanges.

Occasionally, the DX station may only get a part of a call sign, and may say: "the India Tango station" or just: "station with Tango". That's when you would give your call sign again, providing they gave a portion of your call sign. However, there may be other stations who also have a letter of your call sign, so don't call, especially if you know it's the portion of a suffix belonging to another station.

If you hear the DX station ask for: "the Papa Zulu station" and no one answers, you might be tempted to throw your call sign in after a second or two. This is a bit of a gamble. If you do throw your call in, you're sticking your foot in the door - and that door may either open - or it may slam shut.

Finally, when pileups grow too large, DX stations often may start operating by the numbers, or by country, or by zone. Note also, some DX stations may not operate "split" when they perhaps should. This may be because they lack the capability, or the necessary knowledge or experience.

Always remember - the DX station is "boss" of the pileup - they run it as they see fit.

Good hunting!



**DXers Have  
A Choice**



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

**The Weekly DX** - is a product of The Daily DX that can be sent weekly to your home or office via email in the form of a PDF (portable document format). It includes DX news, IOTA news, QSN reports, QSL information, a DX Calendar, propagation forecast and graphics. *Subscriptions are \$27.00 for one year.*

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



## Lotsa lakes, parks, summits, and even lighthouses on the air. An 'OTA expedition down in the deep south of New Zealand by Rick, ZL3RIK.

*Rick is one of our newsletter friends and sent this along. Thanks Rick for thinking of us!*



Here in ZI we have not only POTA & SOTA but also LOTA (Lakes On The Air)

We have over 500 freshwater lakes we can activate by being within 500 meters of the lake's edge & in the award rules you can activate from within your car if you so wish. In December 2021 I took the plunge, (no pun intended), & travelled across the middle of our South Island activating lakes as I went. At this point I must add that I'm a keen SOTA activator.

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022, I headed down to Mosgiel which is just south of Dunedin on the east coast, stopping on the way to activate Kaikorai Lagoon which is just off the main road south of Dunedin. Within 20 minutes I had 13 ZL contacts in the log on 40 metres with a further half a dozen VK's on 20 metres.

Mosgiel was where I was domiciled for the next 2 days & Tomahawk Lagoon, Ross Creek Reservoir, Southern Reservoir, Lake Waipori, Lake Mahinerangi & Loch Luella were added to the list during this time. (On my portable activations I use pen & paper logging, transferring it to the computer later for uploading to QRZ.com, LOTW etc.)

Once again there was an eager band of chasers waiting. Being the weekend, it was excellent chance to work the other outdoor activators including John, ZL3MR who was doing his share of the work activating a summit in the Clent Hills near Mt Barossa (ZL3/CB-499) as he started his travels around the west of the South Island.

The road from Lake Waipori to Loch Luella & Lake Mahinerangi can be best described as "interesting" & definitely not for the fainthearted either as a driver or as a passenger. Shingle, very narrow even one way in places with poor visibility ahead & large potholes. I heard later from one of the local hams that it is used for the annual Otago Southern Rally. However upon reaching the saddle at Lake Mahinarangi the road, although still shingle, widens out with great views across to The Lammerlaw Range to the northwest & to Waitahuna Hill (a SOTA summit) to the south.

Not all my time was spent talking to other hams on the air. I took time out to visit Ron, ZL4RMF. Ron & I had worked each other many times over the years both in contests & ragchewing & it was my first chance to meet him face to face. We had planned to activate Saddle Hill ZL3/OT-) together which is a SOTA summit nearby but the recent rains made ascending it a bit treacherous but we both enjoyed an off air chinwag over afternoon tea.

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## ZL “OTA” by ZL3RIK (cont.)

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> I headed down to my new QTH for three days in Invercargill, ZL's southern most city. I was originally going to activate four lakes on the way but a traffic holdup meant postponing one till the next day. Once again, a dedicated band of chasers, plus some new ones were waiting patiently for me.

It was down in Southland that I came across the generous hospitality of the local farmers. A lot of the lakes & parks meant I had to park on a narrow country road & finding a safe place to do so took a bit of time. I finally plucked up the courage & approached a farm house to ask if I could park at the entrance to one of their paddocks where it would be safer. After explaining who I was & what I was doing, the farmer replied, “No way you are parking on the road! Open the gate & drive in. You're most welcome.” To say I was astounded would be an understatement. This was followed up about half an hour later by the farmer's wife pulling up & offering me an invitation to come in for afternoon tea with them afterwards. On other occasions a huge farm tractor, usually towing a hay baler or similar behind it, would rumble up beside me & the driver hop out to inquire what I was doing & to wish me all the best. It made it interesting when two arrived at the same time from two different directions, but they were obviously quite used to the road code as pertaining to farmers in the deep south.

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## ZL “OTA” by ZL3RIK (cont.)

The next day with Lake Bennett, Lake Muriku, Big Lagoon, & Long White Lagoon now under my (and a lot of others) belt, it was time to spend another day & head further around the coast past towards Fiordland National Park & past Colic Bay/Oraka to Lake George.

After activating Lake George it was a short 20 minute drive to do my first POTA park of the trip, The Longwood Forest Park, ZL-0098/ZLFF-0152. This was a huge success as ZLFF parks are very popular in Australia also & I had plenty of chasers & propagation was excellent across “the pond”. Needless to say I was very tired by the time I returned to Invercargill QTH & I slept like a log.

However, the next morning it was on the road again, this time to head eastwards. This took in Waituna Lagoon, Lake Vincent, Lake Forrest & Lake Brunton.

Activating Lake Forrest was a bit nerve racking. It necessitated having to park on a narrow verge on the side of a 100Kp/h open road. I took six contacts & left.

It was at Lake Brunton I was asked by one of the chasers, “Are you near the Waipapa Lighthouse Rick? I'm collecting lighthouses for the NZART lighthouse award.” Well I was on the Waipapa Light house Road so we made a quick check to make sure I was in the activation zone & hey presto. A lighthouse activated (NZ0004). We actually did this for a couple more lighthouses including Nugget Point Lighthouse (NZ0026) the next day.

By this time I was staying in Balclutha about a 2 hour drive north of Invercargill & on 2<sup>nd</sup> December I was able to activate Malones Dam, Phoenix Dam & Milburns Pond all situated above Lawrence which is about 40 minutes drive inland on State Highway 8. With a total of 41 contacts in the log from both ZL & VK, I was well satisfied with the day's effort

And now for something different. Two SOTA summits beckoned; the Mt Stuart (ZL3/OT-502) & an un-named summit ZL3/OT-510) about 3K further on. 27 contact later (by this time ZL3MR was at Lake Dunstan) including 3 summits to summits I headed back to Balclutha.

On Sunday I was planning to to another summit but with 55 k/ph winds forecast for the mountain tops, I had to switch to plan B. I'd had a chat with Norm, ZL4SY a couple of days earlier & he'd pointed out on the map a good spot to activate The Catlins Conservation Park, an international POTA park (ZL-0081) which is not far from his QTH. This turned out to be one of the many highlights of the trip with the RF the way it was. I'd got quite a few contacts in the log including 5 summits when a sudden thought occurred to me. Why not try AM as well as SSB & CW. So with this in mind I soon had ZL3ND, ZL6QRP, ZL3ASN & ZL2STR as AM contacts. David, ZL3ASN also obliged by also working QRP as well from his qth back in Christchurch. And yes, that ZL3MR had teamed up with Matt, who was using the call sign of ZL6QRP, to activate St Bathans Range (ZL/OT-098) between Otemetata & Cromwell.

The next day I headed home but not before stopping on the way to activate the Katiki Point Lighthouse (NZ0024). For some reason this was first time the propagation gods didn't smile down on me. With an s7 noise level I struggled to make 3 contacts in half an hour!!

(Cont. on Next Page)



## ZL “OTA” by ZL3RIK (cont.)

As I was packing up I happened to glance up at a nearby power pole that held the lines leading to the lighthouse. Attached to it was a power transformer that was giving a very audible buzzing sound . Ok, enough said.

Final statistics:

21 Lakes    2 Summits    2 POTA parks  
2 WWFF POTA parks (There is a difference)  
3 lighthouses

And a few other local parks that sort of got in the way as I was activating the odd lake or three.

Rigs used

Yaesu 897    Elecraft KX2    DMX 40 CW only rig

Antenna: my trusty 40/20 linked dipole which naturally gives me 15 metres as well.

Power—100 watts using a 12 Volt 18Amp hour battery

Rick—ZL3RIK

(Cont. on Next Page)





## ZL "OTA" by ZL3RIK (cont.)

Lock Luella Sun 27/11 ZLL/0866 RE 44X				
Time	Call sign	Freq	OUT	IN
1326	3 N13	7 059	59	59
1327	3 A5N		59	59
1327	3 QR		59	59
1327	3 OY		59	59
1328	3 SM		59	59
01330	1 (3Q1)		57	55
1331	3 ND		59	59
1332	4 HK		59	59
1334	2 STR		58	55
1337	3 ART		37	59
1338	3 DMC		59	59
1339	4 RMS		59	58
1340	2 ATH		59	57
1345	4 LO		55	57
1346	1 ALF		56	44
1347	3 SV		59	59
1359	<sup>6</sup> UKNH	14.300	57	57
1359	UK4DXA	"	57	57
1400	24 TM		56	54
1402	UK7RS		57	58
1404	UK5BSF		55	51
				00
				21



The Exchange—1/1/DX Association

## Japanese Castles on the Air—JACOTA

### Castle #1—Sonobe Castle

*This is part 2 of the Japanese Castles on the Air program submitted by Greg Cook, JO3SLK,. Thanks to Ray, N9JA, for connecting us for these great articles.*

Portable operation has been a part of Amateur Radio for a very long time. As soon as powering equipment with batteries became possible, hams took their radios, batteries, and a piece of wire for an antenna into the outdoors and made contacts with other “portable” or fixed stations, all over the world. Operating from picnic tables and hill tops evolved into DXpeditions to



rare and remote locations. As equipment became smaller, lighter, and more efficient, hikes to mountain tops became common. Groups like “Summits On The Air” (SOTA, where mountain tops are activated and registered) are a very popular part of ham radio worldwide. SOTA spurred hams to go to national, state, county, and city parks to operate, and “Parks On The Air” (POTA) was born. In Europe, there are lots of castles and castle ruins that have become popular operating spots, and so there is now a group called “Castles On The Air” (COTA) where you can register your operation/activation.

In Japan, there are lots of castles, and castle ruin sites, and they are very popular places for tourists to visit. There are many in the Kansai (JA3) area where I live, and I thought it would be fun to operate ham radio from the castle grounds. I tried to contact to the European COTA group leaders to ask about activating Japanese castles, and I finally just received a reply. But before receiving the reply, I began a “Japan’s Castles On The Air” (JACOTA) project, and this article is the first report on my “JACOTA” adventures.

#### Sonobe castle

The first castle I operated from is Sonobe castle ruins in Nantan city, Kyoto prefecture. Sonobe castle was built in 1868...the very last castle to be built in Japan. It was built to be used as a refuge for the Emperor, in case of a war in Kyoto. A lot of the castles in Japan were dismantled during the Meiji period (1868 ~ 1912) and the

(cont on next page)



## Japanese Castles on the Air (cont.)

only original Sonobe castle structures left are the gate, the guardhouse, and the turret at the far end.

The Sonobe castle Keep was reconstructed in a park near the original castle site, and now houses the International Culture Center. I visited there, explained what I wanted to do, and asked for permission to operate at the castle. It was a bit challenging to explain about why I wanted to raise an antenna, connect it to a radio and call CQ to other hams.... But in the end, the kind staff agreed, and I went around the castle grounds to find a suitable operating spot. I found a small hill not far from the Keep that seemed to be a good location.

It is always a good idea to meet with the facility staff, explain what you want to do and ask permission. You do not want to just setup a portable station and operate without the staff knowing who you are or what you are doing. With permission, you can relax, enjoy operating ham radio, and maybe write an article about your adventure.

A couple of weeks later I went to Sonobe castle, visited the office again and let the staff members know I would be operating at a location in the park, and thanked them for giving me permission. I then took my Buddipole® antenna system, antenna analyzer and LC-192 multi-bag with the IC-705 inside to the spot in the park that I had decided on during my first visit. The autumn leaves were beautiful, and they really made the day a doubly enjoyable visit.

The picture of the bag at the top of the next page contains the Buddipole® tripod, mast, cable, and antenna element components. The second bag contains extra antenna arm sections, guy stay wires, and other accessories I brought along in case I wanted to make antenna configurations other than a horizontal dipole, or a vertical antenna. The long bag on the left contains a 12 foot shock-cord whip, and the small blue bag contains my antenna analyzer. The last bag is the LC-192 multi-function backpack containing the IC-705, mic, batteries, notebook, and other items.

I set up the tripod, inserted the mast into it, attached the antenna parts and coil and extended the whip. I then attached the radial wire and extended it to a nearby tree. Placing the LC-192 with the 705 at the tripod base, I was ready to begin tuning the antenna.



(cont on next page)

## Japanese Castles on the Air (cont.)

The radial wire is on a wire winder, which makes it easy to keep neat and ready for use. Just unwind the length you need for the band you will be using and attach it to something that will keep it about a meter above the ground. Keeping the radial wire at least one meter above ground is important for the vertical antenna I have made. I found a small stump where a limb had broken off, and it worked great to hold the winder at the right length and the right height. I operated on the 40 meter band and made the antenna with a 9.5 foot (2.9 meter) long expandable whip and extended the radial wire to 25 feet (7.7 meters).



In the future I will also add two 22 inch (56 cm) long antenna arm sections and the long whip, or a 14.5 foot (4.46 meter) long “shock-corded” whip for an extended active element antenna for the 20 meter band. I will then adjust the tap on the coil, and the length of the radial, to make the antenna resonate on 20 meters. The Buddipole® system enables you to configure various antennas, for various bands.

The Triple Ratio Switched Balun (TRSB) enables you to select three ratios, 1:1 (50 ohms), 2:1 (25 ohms) or 4:1 (12.5 ohms). The vertical has an impedance of less than 50 ohms, and the ratio of 2:1 gave the best match. The unit also has an isolation transformer built in to help keep current off the outside of the coax cable.



(Cont. on Next Page)





## Japanese Castles on the Air (cont.)

Using my RigExpert® AA-230PRO antenna analyzer, I adjusted the coil tap and the length of the radial wire and brought the SWR down to 1:1.2. If you do not have an analyzer with you, you can tune to a clear frequency close to where you want to operate, and then slide the coil tap up and down the coil to find the point with the most noise. Secure the clip to that point on the coil and it will be very close to where you want to be. The IC-705 has a convenient SWR meter function that you can use to see the antenna SWR, and you can use it to optimize the antenna for the operating frequency that you want to use.

The operating location was at the top of a hill in the castle park. The park was empty when I arrived and for an hour or so later. Then a group of elementary school children and their teachers arrived and took over the park! A few of the kids wondered over and stared at the operation wondering what was going on. You should be prepared to answer questions from others that come to the place you are operating from. You might even meet another ham!

All set up, tuned up and ready to go. The band was packed with contesters, but I was able to make a very nice long contact with a ham in Akita, a prefecture in northern Japan, who spoke excellent English. We talked for about 15 minutes. Later, more and more people began coming to the park to view the autumn leaves and take pictures, so I packed up and headed home.



(Cont. on Next Page)



## Japanese Castles on the Air (cont.)

The next JACOTA challenge will be at Fukuchiyama castle in Fukuchiyama city, Kyoto prefecture. I visited the castle ahead of time and asked the castle and museum director for permission to operate at a future date. Luckily, he is also a ham, and quickly agreed to let me operate. Stay tuned for that article in the next newsletter.



Fukuchiyama castle Keep



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## Interview with PY1LC—Luiz

*Luiz immediately answered my email requesting an interview. He is an active ham who builds most of his antennas and station accessories. Great signal from a great operator.*



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

**PY1LC:** Since I was 10 years old (I am 65) I have been very interested in electronics. So amateur radio was a direct consequence of this. I started on the 11-meter band - citizen band, in an interesting time - the conversations were serious. After that, I got my call sign PU1JTU and started operating on the 2-meter band. Little by little I evolved, always in the amateur radio spirit of experimenting and trying to build my equipment.

**AJ8B:** Do you have a favorite band or mode?

**PY1LC:** My favorite bands have always been the 40 and 15 meter bands, and in good propagation times, also the 10 and 6 meter bands. I am also present on the 2 and 12 meter bands. As for modes, I have been operating exclusively in digital modes for some years now.

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

**PY1LC:** I don't have any time preferences. I prefer to operate at times when the dx contacts are more favorable in Brazil, especially on the 6 meter band where propagation appears by surprise.

**AJ8B:** Any secrets to your success?

**PY1LC:** I don't consider myself more successful than most radio amateurs, but like everything in life, for good QSO, perseverance and discipline are essential, as long as there are minimum propagation conditions in a given band. The behavior of the band must be observed.

**AJ8B:** Any tips that you can share?

**PY1LC:** As for equipment, I believe that the most important thing is for the radio amateur to have the best possible radiating system. Not necessarily expensive antennas and special cables, but a well-balanced system with the lowest SWR possible and antennas suitable for the intended modality. For example, I use a simple moxon antenna for the 10 meter band with excellent results for the digital mode. On the other hand, I believe that higher gain antennas are needed for CW and phone. In any case, no linear amplifier will provide the reception gain with noise rejection that a good antenna can provide, although I find linear interesting for phone and CW modes.

As for the operator, patience, observation and perseverance are essential, and of course respect for ethics.

(Cont. on Next Page)

## Interview with PY1LC—Luiz (cont.)

**AJ8B:** Describe what you are currently using:

**PY1LC:** My equipment is a Yaesu FT450-D, a Yaesu FT 897-D, a MFJ 969 antenna tuner.

A CAT interface, a simple audio interface, a linear power supply and an antenna tuner, all homemade.

The antennas currently in use, all homemade and designed in 4NEC2 software, are a moxon for 10 and 12m and a 3-element LFA for 6m. I also have a 10-element LFA for 2m and a shortened dipole for 40 and 15m currently disassembled.

**AJ8B:** Any QSLing hints?

**PY1LC:** For me the QSL should contain all the necessary information about qso, a message of thanks and a figure representing the city or country. Changing QSL on paper will always be a joy and a nostalgia at the same time but nowadays we have a lot of ease in terms of speed and reliability with the use of LOTW, QRZ.com and e-QSL applications among others.

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

**PY1LC:** Start at the bottom, with simpler equipment and a suitable radiating system. Seek advice from more experienced radio amateurs on operational and equipment issues. All of us radio amateurs are supportive and like to help.

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

**PY1LC:** Our customs are very similar. I realized this in two professional trips I made to the USA. Brazil, like the United States, has a great diversity of people, climates and places. Wherever you go, you will find very interesting things. In terms of hobby I would like to visit the ARRL headquarters as well as other amateur radio associations to exchange ideas and check "in loco" how the spirit of American amateur radio works.

**AJ8B:** What local food would you want me to eat?

**PY1LC:** We have a very diverse gastronomy and basically everything that exists in the US also exists here and vice versa. Maybe you want to try some typical fruits, but in general we eat much less fast food here.

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

**PY1LC:** It is a pleasure to answer the questions. Very interesting the interview work you all do. This increases interest in the hobby as well as enables the exchange of knowledge of the culture and customs of other countries. Knowing how radio amateurs from other countries operate as well as their habits and customs in relation to the hobby.

I wish everyone success in the work of broadcasting amateur radio.

A big 73 from PY1LC



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73,

Clay Cougar - N5YJZ  
Ned Stearns - AA7A  
Paul Ewing - N6PSE  
IDXC 2023 Co-Chairs

[info@dxconvention.com](mailto:info@dxconvention.com)





## The DXPedition to Andaman Islands—VU4W

April 28th to May 16th, 2022

On 28th of April I started my journey Riga – Helsinki – Delhi with Finnair. On the way to Andaman Island I had to stay in Delhi for two days where I planned to use this time for sightseeing.

After stepping outside of airport, I realized the very hot temperatures outdoors about +42 to +44°C. I changed my plans and stayed in hotel instead.

In the evening of May 1st, I had flight to Andaman Island. Plane landed in Port Blain airport the next morning. Temperature was around +32°C and also you could feel the humid sea climate there so it was challenging. Taxi brought me to hotel “Princess Beach resort” that was 28 km away from the airport. This hotel was chosen to be the most suitable for expedition and previous expeditors VU4G worked from there as well. John G4IRN also suggested it for me.

From VU4 it's allowed to operate only for amateurs with VU callsigns. In the license we were three operators, however, Indian friends did not join because of work matters.

Hotel staff welcomed me very friendly and showed me a room that I declined. After explaining my needs for the space for antennas, they proposed me a conference room for additional cost that was located in a separate building next to the yard with palm trees. This actually was good location because antenna cables could be much shorter than intended. Sleeping quarters were shown in a different room. Right after settling in I started setting up LBS vertical and shortly realized that I wouldn't be able to complete it until the dark so I left it for the next morning. Instead I worked on 40-10 m vertical intended for FT8 so I could make first QSO's as midnight stepped in and license for VU4W was ok. While unpacking my gear I found out that K3 screen was smashed and this probably happened while the hand bag felt from the seat on the plane.



*Port Blair airport*

(Cont. on Next Page)

## DXpedition to VU4W (cont.)

So, transceiver was broken, however, I solved this problem by connecting it to computer that allowed me to change frequencies. For the remaining DXpedition I used this K3 only for FT8. First QSO is completed right after midnight with YB3BBF.

The next morning, I start setting up the Spiderbeam antenna and complete it by mid-day. I chose the location right next to the fence because other places were covered with palm trees. After setting it up it had SWR > 5 on all bands. I checked the antenna and found the problem – broken transformer cable. After fixing it was good and I started to work on CW upper bands. In the evening I went to take some sunset pictures for QSL cards. I was lucky to do it then because this was the only evening with clear sky. The rest of the time was rainy with clouds.

On Wednesday morning I started with setting up LBS vertical. Weather was windy and foggy as the monsoon season was about to begin – two months of rain and no sun. We also received weather warnings for storm and heavy rains in South of Andaman Island for the next day.

The next day I started with setting up beverages behind the hotel fence next to the jungle. Weird noises came from there while I worked and I didn't venture deeper in the jungle because of wild crocodile risks. In the end, beverages were 120 m long. During the night wind picked up and started to tear down coconuts from the trees. Their falling and hitting on roof made loud noises like firing from a gun. From now on electricity interruptions also were frequent and at least 10 times a day for 10-20 minutes till local generator was switched on.

(Cont. on Next Page)



*DXpedition shack*



*Spiderbeam*



## DXpedition to VU4W (cont.)



*Yard with antennas*

This was the reason for unexpected disappearances from frequencies.

On 5th of May I uploaded log and it was ~6500 QSO's. Internet was accessible only in the reception hall that was 300 m away from the shack. In order to talk with XYL and also to set correct time I walk there every evening. Dinner was usually served at 7pm and some of the evenings I was the only visitor there. Some more visitors came only on

weekends. During the day outside was +30 to +33°C and very humid. When working with antennas I had to change shirts often.

For the following days the aim was to work more on lower bands. On Sunday 8th of May first 300 QSO's were made on 80 m CW and 40 m FT8. Propagation changed every day and for the worst. On Monday I tried for 6 m and managed to get only 6 QSOs with Japan. Later I uploaded the log and in total it was 7732 CW and 10092 FT8 QSO's. The targeted QSO count was set 30000 for the expedition to reach Mega DXpedition standards by GDXF.

I received message from WSJT development team with question why I only operate with MSHV software instead of WSJX Fox mode. I had MSHV from previous expedition 3DA0WW because this was the only software that worked with non-standard callsigns. Other problem was that I didn't have internet connection at all times and couldn't provide my frequency for Fox mode. For this moment I operate only on standard FT8 frequencies. I know it's not the optimal solution, however, for this situation I didn't have other options.

*Cont. on Next Page)*



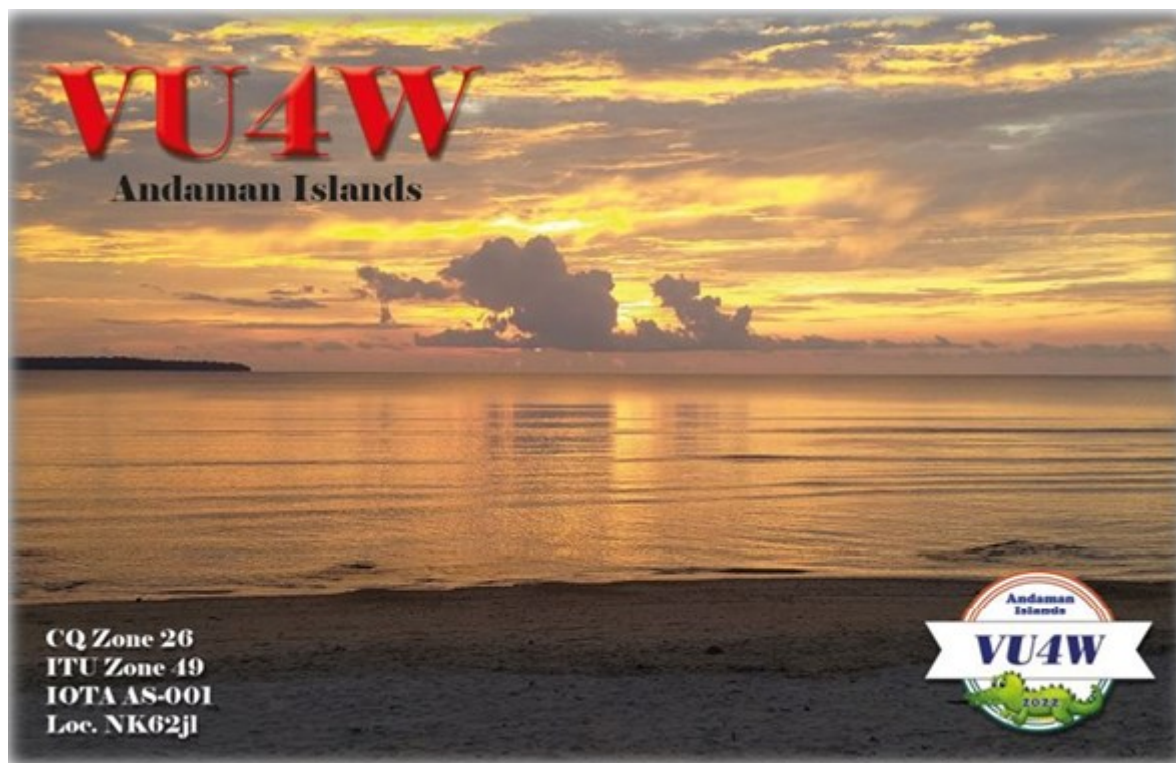
*Celebrational dinner*

## DXpedition to VU4W (cont.)

Remaining days went by in usual routine. On Saturday 14th of May I made last QSO. Goal was reached and the total QSO count was 33577. Unfortunately, not many contacts on SSB and majority of them on FT8 which is today's reality. On Sunday I took down antennas and packed all my gear. My biggest concern was the falling coconuts and if they would hit your head than in best case scenario it would be injury for life. In the evening I had celebrational dinner and photo with chef and personnel. Monday morning taxi took me to airport from where I had flight back home. From humid +30°C in Andaman Island back to Delhi +43°C. Little shopping for small gifts on the way back home from Delhi – Helsinki – Riga. Expedition is concluded and now huge work for QSL printing and dispatching.

Thanks to everyone who supported this DXpedition and who worked with us. See you soon in the next one.

Juris /YL2GM/

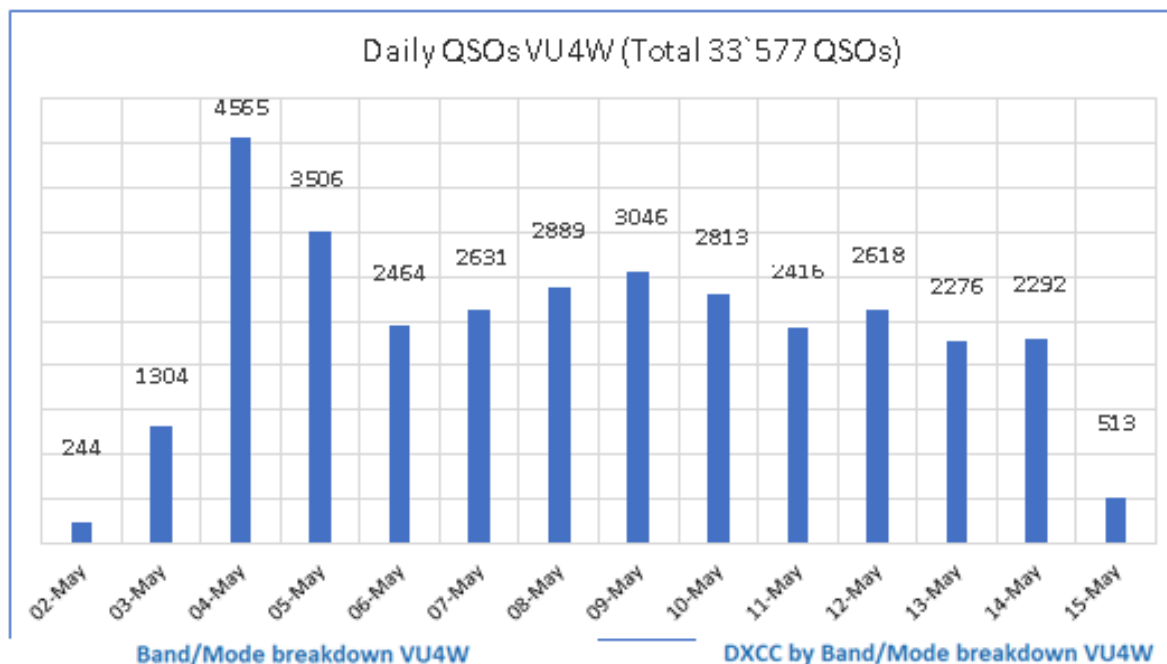


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## DXpedition to VU4W (cont.)

### STATISTICS



Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total	Total %
160	232	151	0	383	1.1%
80	901	1227	0	2128	6.3%
60	0	155	0	155	0.5%
40	699	1514	0	2213	6.6%
30	1041	1778	0	2819	8.4%
20	2800	3603	545	6948	20.7%
17	2329	4095	0	6424	19.1%
15	2551	3476	302	6329	18.8%
12	1524	1755	0	3279	9.8%
10	1469	1425	0	2894	8.6%
6	0	5	0	5	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13546</b>	<b>19184</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>33577</b>	<b>99.9%</b>

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total
160	32	31	0	38
80	56	64	0	69
60	0	37	0	37
40	63	73	0	79
30	61	78	0	80
20	90	103	55	110
17	83	96	0	105
15	86	90	47	107
12	62	67	0	75
10	67	60	0	73
6	0	2	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>133</b>

### Continent by Mode VU4W

Band	SSB	CW	FT8	Total	Total %
AF	7	68	75	150	0.9%
AN	0	0	0	0	0.0%
AS	99	3405	8230	11734	14.8%
EU	664	9274	8880	18818	58.5%
NA	57	481	934	1472	19.4%
OC	9	241	828	1078	2.0%
SA	11	77	237	325	4.4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>13546</b>	<b>19184</b>	<b>33577</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Expedition website: <https://www.lral.lv/vu4w/>

## The Grayline

*Joe, W8GEX, has always sworn by the practice of working DX at the gray line. Here are some details.*

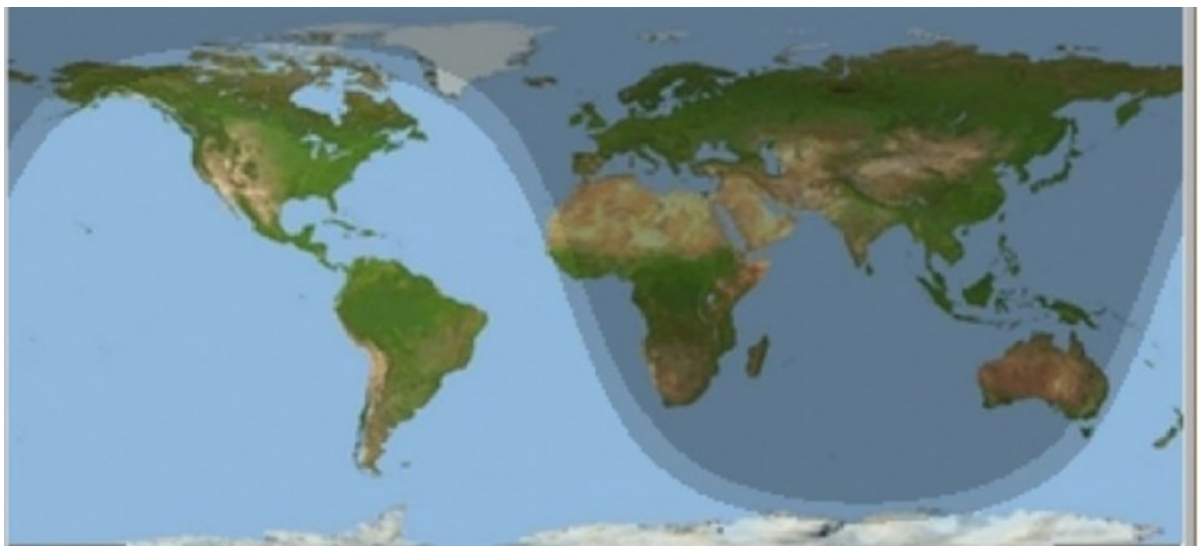
I have always been a fan of the grayline. It happens twice a day; at sunrise and again at sunset. It's also called the terminator. As shown in the image at the bottom, it's the area between sunlight and total darkness. I have a separate monitor that has a grayline program running 24/7. I get up early and am always ready for the morning DX towards the Pacific Rim. I do all this mainly on the lower bands 30 to 160 meters.

This morning I worked T88WA on Palau on 80m for a new one. I called for about 20 minutes but worked him at 1230Z. The grayline program indicated that my grayline started at 1219Z. This proves what I knew from operating, and been saying for years; there is something to the grayline. I do the same in the evening towards Europe. As I get on the evening grayline, Europe has total darkness.

This terminator line lasts for about 30 minutes. In the grayline image, it's the lighter gray in color. Part of the line It's the part between darkness and daylight. This 30 minute period of time will always give you the best enhancement to your signals on TX & RX.

I have also noticed the same on the higher bands. I'll work a station -let's say in Europe - and he'll be on the grayline. Even on 6 meters I get the same results. They say it's not a factor on the higher bands but that has not been my experience.

If you get the time, play around with this phenomena and let's see what you come up with. You'll get hooked on it as I have. Good DXing



## *From Our DX Friends*

*Several of our DX Newsletter friends have kept me informed of their activities since our last newsletter. Here is what they sent.*

Hello Bill and Many thanks for the newsletter.

Recently I reviewed the MFJ 1788X Mag Loop I have in my loft space, where it has resided for the past 8 years. Horizontally polarized as it's about 25 feet off the ground.

Its always been used but not overly just a spare or last resort, I have better and as most will know, the tuning can be tiring and time-consuming. I was reading an article in E-ham reviews from a US ham that had considered, or found, the MFJ SUPER HI-Q LOOP Control Box inadequate or lacking certain shielding features. He had inserted a power/SWR meter after the MFJ control box which gave him a better indication of his true output and SWR.

So I did the same but also added a Dunestar 600 bandpass filter and remote controller. What a difference !!!!!!! SWR is low on all bands, 40 meters to 15 meters and I am now able to able to run 100 watts, working USA, Japan, and China on FT8/4.

The moral of the story? Always be open to others' views.

Best wishes  
Doug Goodison—G0LUH



Hi Bill,

Thanks for the latest newsletter , I am still waiting for DX engineering for the new antenna . Regarding new projects at the moment We are working to install a new tower for our club TH-11 antenna.  
Thanks

VY 73 Nart JY5IB

(Cont. on Next Page)



## Our DX Friends (cont.)



(Cont. on Next Page)





## Our DX Friends (cont.)

Hello Bill

I just participated in the CQWW CW test from Kosovo with the callsign Z68EE and got a lot of calls from the USA. It has encouraged me to plan my attendance at the ARRL Int. DX CW Contest in February 2023 from the same Entity and with the same call sign (which I must use for a period of one year).

When I was in Pristina in November, I had an agreement with Fehmi Z62FB that I could borrow the club station Z6ØA, which is located approximately 10 km outside the capital. Here I had access to a Force-12 Beam antenna at a height of 30 meters and there were some wire antennas which did not really work.

While I was in the clubhouse I was visited by Z61DX Driton, who offered me the use of his antennas and apartment which is located in the mountains far outside Pristina and therefore doesn't have problems with QRN in the same way I had on the low bands. So this is what I am planning for February 2023.

I can refer to the website at <https://oz2i.dk/sh5/2022-CQWW-Z68EE/comments.htm> You are also welcome to download pictures for the magazine from there.

So I wish you and yours a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Best 73 de OZ2I Henning

(Pics on next page)



## DX Friends (cont.)





## Our DX Friends (cont.)

*I had sent out a email with the question “What would tell someone about amateur radio if they asked about it?” Eduardo was the only person to reply in time for publication. Below is his answer.*

Greetings friends,

First of all, amateur radio is a hobby to be enjoyed alone or with a group of friends, sharing experiences and results.

Personally, like everything in life, success goes hand in hand with perseverance and patience, experimentation and study. Being constant in pursuing our goals is the key. Listening to the advice of the oldest can be a great help to continue growing as operators.

Something very important is to help those who are just starting out in the hobby, direct them to be good operators.

Technically a way to improve our stations by testing different types of radio/ antenna configuration. improve connections and wiring. experience both the noise of the city and the tranquility of the countryside. As I always say with little you can do a lot.

Studying about antennas, in my opinion, is the best way to learn about ham radio, understand how propagation works and use it to our advantage.

One of the devices that I always recommend having is a spectrum analyzer, that helps a lot to improve the construction of our antennas.

Having the help of antenna and coverage simulation programs is the best way to start experimenting.

Over time I have realized that the 2m and 70cm band is an excellent school to start with, and with this knowledge and basic concepts to become a better HF operator and in competitions.

As for radio, there are many fields in which to work, contests, experimentation, satellites, digital modes, dxs, DMR, FUSION, CW, APRS..... my idea is always to know all the fields as time goes by. he allows it.

In short, we have many tools at hand and available for our growth, it's just a matter of doing it.

CE3ERM  
73s

*Are your days up to date? Is the correct mailing and address on file with our treasurer? If not, it can lead to confusion when we are sending out important information. Please email Mike, W8RKO ([msuhar@woh.rr.com](mailto:msuhar@woh.rr.com)) with your details and he will confirm.*



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## Interview with Joao, CU8AI

*I worked Joao several times and checked out his QRZ.com web page. He has a nicely alyed out station, beautiful QTH, and is an excellent operator Thanks to Joao for answering my questions.*

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

CU8AI : My interest in radio began in 1979 when I went into military service and my area was communications

AJ8B: Do you have a favorite band or mode?

CU8AI : No but I really like the digital modes especially FT4 and FT8

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

CU8AI : Any time, but to make USA stations and pacific the best height is at sunrise

AJ8B: Any secrets to your success?

CU8AI : Sometimes “lose” many hours

AJ8B: Any tips that you can share?

CU8AI : Never give up and be too patient

AJ8B: Describe what you are currently using:

CU8AI : Kenwood Ts 2000, Kenwood 870, Yaesu FT 950 and my old yaesu 757 GxII. Antennas, delta loop multi band for 80 mts, Dipol for 80 mts, Delta loop for 17 mts and delta loop for 12 mts. I don't have directional antennas because it makes a lot of wind on the island, especially winter, and it becomes difficult

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

CU8AI : I don't know, I'm not much of a pileup lover. Sometimes I like to do dx but when the confusion is too much give up

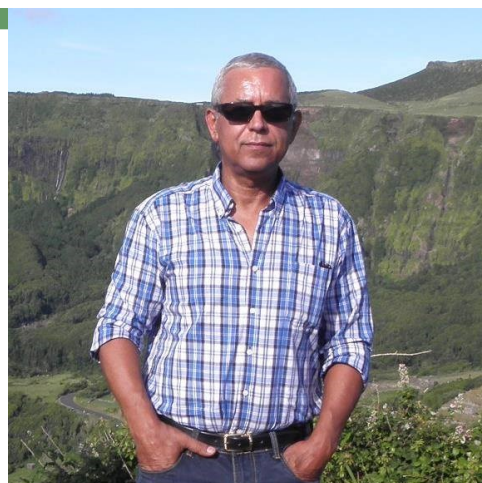
AJ8B: What is your favorite contest?

CU8AI : I don't like contest. I prefer to look for different countries

AJ8B: Any QSLing hints?

CU8AI : No

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## Interview with CU8AI (cont.)

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

CU8AI : Especially that they have education, that they respect the rules

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

CU8AI : Maybe Australia, Brazil and USA

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

CU8AI : Probably fish. Here is very good

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

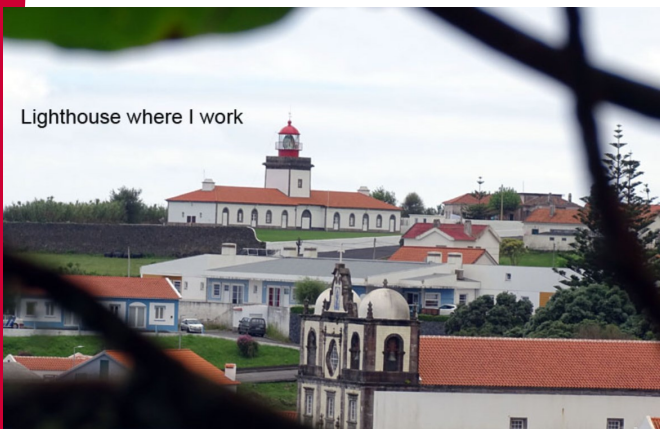
CU8AI : Nothing in particular. A merry Christmas to all

### Place where I live



My home

Lighthouse where I work

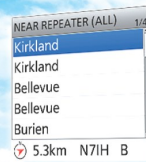




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The Exchange—1/1/DX Association



# Anatomy of an Inexpensive DXPedition

*Lee Barrett—K7NM/VP2MLB*

There is a legend in Montserrat that if one drinks the water of the volcano, you are doomed to return to the island. I must have unknowingly imbibed because this was my fourth trip back. The Gingerbread Hill (GBH - <https://gingerbreadhill.com>) villa is extremely “ham friendly” and has been since my first trip in 2006. At retirement in April as an international medical company VP, I had a lot of air miles to use. I immediately thought of the beauty and comfort of GBH. However, I could only find one local ham in Utah who wanted to go! Through my PhotoQSLs.com ham contacts and through SWODXA, I put the word out for a potential trip in October 2022. The results were interesting. Mike Furrey (WA5POK) from Texas, Cheryl Pratt (KM4TYV) from Tennessee, Larry Anderson (K5LDA) from Alabama and Clifford Hauser (KD6XH) from Ohio joined Glenn Dixon (AC7ZN) and me from Utah forming the new team. Weekly



Zoom calls were used to coordinate the trip - deciding on gear, transportation, licenses and even shirt designs. The team is shown in the photo standing in front of the Soufriere Hill Volcano which buried the island’s capitol city, Plymouth, in 1996.



Zoom calls were used to coordinate the trip - deciding on gear, transportation, licenses and even shirt designs. The team is shown in the photo standing in front of the Soufriere Hill Volcano which buried the island’s capitol city, Plymouth, in 1996.

Montserrat is in the eastern Caribbean – 15 minutes by “bug smasher” aircraft southwest of Antigua. Due to the amount of gear and weight limitations for the six of us, it was less expensive to book a charter from Antigua and back than to fly the regular flights. Commercial airlines routinely fly into Antigua’s nice airport. But since Montserrat’s airport has no runway lights or instrumentation system, it can only be approached through Visual Flight Rules (VFR) with no night landings. Schedules for the normal commercial hops are limited. And, you had better be there to check in one hour before departure.

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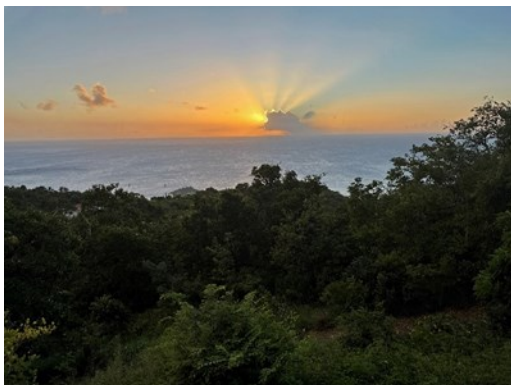


## Anatomy of an Inexpensive DXPedition (cont.)

The team met at JFK airport on 12 October 2022 – the first time in 3D. We flew together to Antigua. Due to logistics and price, one person flew the commercial leg while the rest of us and gear flew charter. From Utah it was 27 hours of flying and waiting – but worth it!

Bed and Breakfast with a wonderful restaurant. One cannot help but be a bit stunned by the beauty all around GBH. The view from my upper floor window each morning and the sunsets are “eye-watering”. Further, the day temperature averages 84 with nights at 74. Trade winds are almost constantly blowing through your bungalow, keeping the temperature very comfortable day and night.

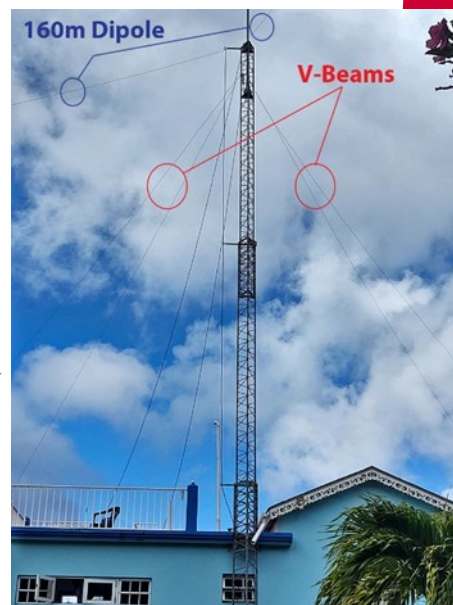
Also staged at GBH were two Toyota land cruisers for our use. This also was arranged through the GBH ownership. The cost for 9 days was \$650 for the two.



Two of us had to get Montserrat driver licenses at the airport. That involves showing your US license and paying \$20. Since Montserrat is a British possession, you drive on the left side of the road. This is one of the bigger challenges on the island. We used these to primarily go into the town of St. Peters for groceries. On other trips, we also visited some of the many restaurants on the island.

The first morning on the island we deployed the antennas. With six people it went much quicker than previous trips - one time being with my wife only. Though there are Yagi antennas available (in pieces to be assembled) and a motorized 60' tower with rotor installed, the time required to put the Yagi's together seemed a bad trade-off to operating time. We used four wire antennas. Hanging from the tower top were the center baluns of the nested Vee-Beams (designed for the 2006 trip) and a full sized 160m dipole. The Vee-Beams cover 40m – 15m without a tuner. The 160m dipole covers 12m, 10m and 6m with a tuner. The third antenna was a set of wire verticals for 80m – 10m. There were 12 each 65' radials spread as uniformly as possible on the terrain. We used an air cannon to shoot a line over an 80' high palm tree to raise the vertical elements. It took about five minutes to change band elements, raise it and then tune the C-Match network at the bottom for minimum SWR

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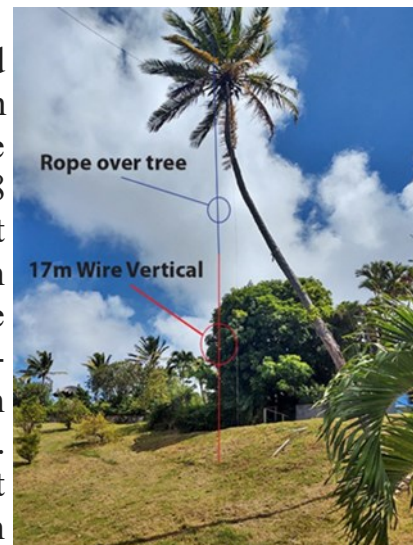




## Anatomy of an Inexpensive DXPedition (cont.)

We ran this antenna on 10m, 12m and 17m in the day and on 60m and 80m at night. It is entirely made out of #18 speaker wire pulled apart into single strands. The whole antenna and radials weigh 16lbs. It was extremely effective! The last antenna was one we left behind after the 2018 trip when my team took first place for DX, High-Power, Multi-op in the ARRL 160m CW contest. It is a 700' long Beverage antenna pointed NW or SE depending on termination. It was also very effective on both 160m and 80m for receiving.

We had two or three stations on each day and a good part of the night. The upper bands (15m – 10m) were open all day and into the late night. It has been a long time since these type of openings have occurred – and long before FT8 was invented. Further, there are a number of hams who visit Montserrat and operate SSB or CW so it is not so rare on those modes. Therefore, we decided to focus on FT8 on the high bands, 60m, 80m and 160m. This made us VERY popular. One surprise was nightly openings on 6m into South America from 6pm until 10pm local time. Solid pile-ups. When the band faded, then we moved to 160m for late night pile-ups. We did operate limited SSB and CW operations. In all, we accumulated over 6500 QSOs during our time there.



This was more of a vacation outing than a contest style operation. One whole day we were QRT while visiting the volcano area and the buried city of Plymouth – the former Capitol. See the photo of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of a hotel sticking up out of the sand, ash and rock. Truly impressive to walk around! We balanced personal time with hamming - keeping it fun!

We had a few troubles. The KPA500 linear would not turn on upon arrival. We were relegated to 100 Watts on all transmitters. One Kenwood radio had a fan and one final transistor compromised for which we found a “work around”. My Astron power supply for my K3 had a demolished fan upon arriving home – all of this after taking a fair amount of care in packing the equipment in bubble wrap. But we were able to still function.

The island is populated by large toads (which are deafening), iguanas, goats and roosters. There are also small piglet looking creatures, which I am sure would be delicious if anyone could catch one. Two of our team took kayaks to a remote beach around the island (there are only a couple of small accessible beaches) and found a sea turtle breeding ground and a cave full of bats. Montserrat is an interesting place!



(Cont. on Next Page)

## Anatomy of an Inexpensive DXPedition (cont.)



The total cost per person for this trip including airfare was around \$2K for 9 days on-site. This was the average over our six person team. Airlines are reliable and GBH is very inexpensive for the quality of stay. We are already talking about a “Next Time”. Licensing is fairly straight forward. The cost for a new license is \$26. One can apply on-line through the Montserrat Information and Communication Authority (MICA). Ms. Monica Blake is the person I have dealt

with for years. The biggest problem is to pay for the license. Before October 2021, the US Postal Service would be able to cut an International Money Order for the amount. But they ceased serving Montserrat after that date. MICA can only take cash at this time. So either arrangements need to be made through Clover Lea to pay GBH with credit card so she can pay MICA in cash, or you will have to go to MICA the first week day after you arrive to pay in person and receive your license. It is unknown how long this situation will remain in effect. A license can be issued for 7 days or for a year – your preference. Mini-DXPeditons don’t have to be expensive and/or fraught with danger! Montserrat is highly recommended! So, where is Montserrat? See the map below:



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## Sign Language—Jay, K4ZLE

*Jay first published this in 2001 and it is as relevant today as it was then. I have tweaked it slightly, but the challenge is absolutely the same!*



This weekend as I was sitting in church behind the section reserved for the hearing impaired, watching the proceedings being signed, I was struck by two thoughts. The first was how expressive the interpreter was. Even if she were not making real ASL signs, understandable to the intended audience, she was communicating the essence of the service through the gusto with which she was moving her hands and arms and the expressions on her face. The second thought was that there is more than one method to communicate.

It is no secret that I'm a CW bigot. I wasn't always one, but I gravitated to this method of communication because it fits my personality. I am not a glad hander. I am not a conversationalist. Believe it or not, I am somewhat backward when it comes to interpersonal relationships. I am not comfortable in a situation where I am expected to talk one to one. The hit and run form of a CW DX QSO is perfect for someone of my ilk. However, just as there are many different personality types, there are many different communication modes -- as I saw demonstrated by the sign language interpreter.

Poking around on the ARRL web page I found that almost half of the hams who responded to a survey do not work DX. Over half do not work satellites. Eighty percent have never worked an image mode (SSTV, FSTV, FAX). About 85 percent have never used PSK31.

(Cont. on Next Page)



## Sign Language (cont.)

Whether you are a DXer or not, I will take this opportunity to challenge each of you to try one new mode in 2023. If you have never tried a digital mode, other than CW, why not try RTTY, PSK31, FT4, or FT8? If you have never tried an image mode, try SSTV. If you have heretofore limited your self to two meter FM, try SSB on the HF bands. If you have always operated where a wavelength is longer than you are tall, move up in frequency, maybe even try some satellite communications.

If you are a DXer you may even find yourself working a country or two on the new mode that you have not worked using your current *modus operandi*. I have mentioned in previous rantings that some rarer DX stations use the rarer modes exclusively; GU0SUP works mostly non-CW digital and I was QSL manager for 5N6/KE6GEM, who did likewise. With PSK31 and only a few watts, it is possible to carry on a QSO with stations your ears can not clearly discern, a great boon for the QRP operator.

It doesn't take a kilobuck investment to get on the low signal modes either. Your computer sound card would get you on the air using a new digital mode or image mode within hours.



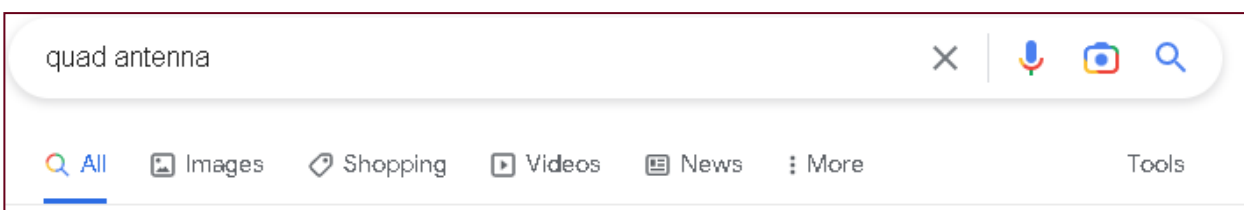
## Hamshack Tool by Bill, AJ8B

An overlooked tool that you should have in your DX toolbox is web searching. Most people use the Google Chrome browser to search so I will use that in my examples. (Personally, I use duckduckgo.com as my search engine. Duckduckgo.com is completely ad free and is very fast.) Let's take a look at some searching hints from <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/20-tips-use-google-search-efficiently.html>.



I know this may not seem directly related to chasing DX, but I have found these to be very helpful in the shack. I hope you do as well.

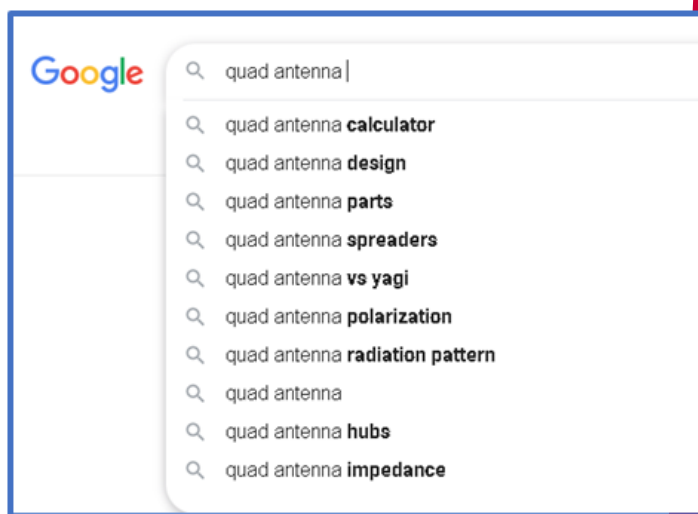
#1 – Use the tabs – after you enter a search term, you can narrow the results by clicking on the tabs as shown below:



If you were searching on images of a cubical quad, you could just click the images button.

#2 – Use quotation marks to narrow the search. If you enter the search phrase quad antennas, you will receive 15,600,000 results. However, if you enter “quad antennas”, you will receive 19,100 results. That is still a huge amount of data to sift through, but you can see the difference.

#3 – Use the google auto-complete when you can. It knows what has been searched for and chances are its suggestions are what you are looking for. An example is shown:



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## Hamshack Tool (cont.)

#4 - Sometimes you may find yourself searching for a word with an ambiguous meaning. An example is Mustang. When you Google search for Mustang, you may get results for both the car made by Ford and/or the horse. If you want to cut one out, use the hyphen to tell the engine to ignore content with one of the other. If you were only looking for returns about horses, you can enter it this way:

Mustang -cars

This tells the search engine to search for mustangs but to remove any results that have the word “car” in it. It can be really helpful when finding information about something without getting information about something else.

#5 - There may be an instance where you need to Google search for articles or content on a certain website. Let’s say we are looking for references to cubical quad antennas on the ARRL website. You could use this search term to achieve that:

cubical quad site:arrl.org.

That search returned 70 references. To get more specific, you could enter “cubical quad” site:arrl.org. That search returned 61 references.

#6 – You add the file type that you are looking for and get even more specific. For instance, let’s say you are looking for a pdf file on the ARRL website that discusses cubical quad antennas. You could search in this way: “cubical quad” site:arrl.org filetype:pdf. This returns 21 references.

#7 – You can combine phrases to refine the results you are looking for. For instance, try a search like “cubical quad” OR “delta loop” site:arrl.org. You can also “AND” two phrases for better results such as “cubical quad” AND “homebrew”

#8 – There are a few built in functions such as weather and time. Just search on weather \*Paris, France\* to get the current weather in Paris. Time \*Paris, France\* will give the local time

#9 – You are having a QSO with G0LIH and he tells you that he drove 143 KM and spent 531 pounds on his newest rig. What is a quick way to convert those values? In the google search window, type “143 KM to miles and you will get 88.85 miles. Then enter 531 pounds to dollars and you will get \$630.78.

I hope you will find this helpful when researching your next project.

## Club Contacts



Outgoing President,  
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President and Newsletter Editor  
AJ8B—Bill Salyers

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Vice-President  
W8KJ—Kevin Jones

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Treasurer & DX Dinner  
Chairman  
W8RKO—Mike Suhar,

[msuhar@woh.rr.com](mailto:msuhar@woh.rr.com)

## Club Contacts



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W8GEX—Joe Pater

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DX Dinner Moderator &  
DX Forum Chairman  
K4ZLE—Jay Slough

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DX Dinner Prize Chairman  
K4YJ—Dwight Kelly

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SWODXA Station  
Trustee W8EX

—  
KC8RP—Richard Pestinger  
[rpestinger@gmail.com](mailto:rpestinger@gmail.com)



# 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](http://www.swodxa.org) and [www.swodxaevents.org](http://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	