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K1N Navassa DXpedition

Mission Impossible or Mission Possible???
So close, yet so far

by

Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, co-Team Leader

The History of Navassa (The Poop on Navassa)

Before 1997, getting permission to activate Navassa was relatively easy. Just get a letter from the U.S. Coast Guard (easy), and arrange to get a boat to take you to the infamous "ladder." Every few years, someone activated Navassa. When the USCG deactivated the lighthouse in 1997, administration of Navassa was transferred

K1N Team (left to right):Mike, **NA5U**; John, **W2GD**; Tomi, **HA7RY**; Ralph, **KØIR**; George, **AA7JV**; George, **N4GRN**; Gregg, **W6IZT**; Jerry, **WB9Z**; John, **K6MM**; Mike, **N6MZ**; Bob, **K4UEE**; Craig, **K9CT**; Lou, **N2TU**; Glenn, **WØGJ** and Jeff, **NM1Y**.

Ralph, KØIR (left) and Glenn, WØGJ sporting their TCDXA-wear on Navassa.

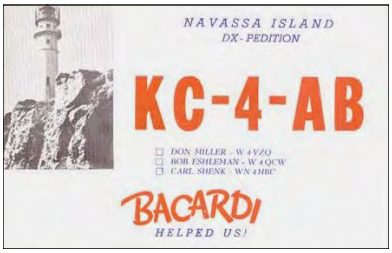
to the United States Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the ladder was removed. FWS declared Navassa to be a "closed" refuge for the protection of several unique and rare species of plants and animals. Any request for permission to activate Navassa was declined, and for many years, only rare visits were made by FWS biologists. Navassa is in the Jamaican Channel, 90 miles east of Jamaica, 40 miles west of Haiti and 100 miles due south of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Columbus visited Navassa on his 3rd and 4th visits to the New World, but noted great difficulty getting onto the island, and that no fresh water was to be found. The Guano Act of 1856 set the stage for activity on Navassa. In 1857, Peter Duncan claimed Navassa for the United States, and started mining phosphate. The ownership/management changed hands several times, but, from 1857 until 1901, over one million tons of phosphate was strip-mined and exported, primarily to the United States. In 1901, the workers (literally slaves) revolted because of abusive conditions, and killed several of the supervisors. Three men were put on trial in Boston, convicted, and given death sentences, which were later commuted by President Harrison.

Navassa lay dormant until the Panama Canal opened in 1914. Navassa Island was in the middle of the shipping lanes to the Canal. In 1917, the Navy built a 165-foot tall lighthouse and a light keeper's house. A light keeper and two assistants tended the lighthouse until 1929, when the lighthouse was automated.

The very first amateur operation from Navassa was in 1929 by the very last lighthouse keeper, Russel Dunaja, **K4NI**. He was 24 years old at the time. He was initially licensed as **3ADY** in 1921. His last callsign was **W3BBF**. He passed away in 1989.

The next recorded activity was 25 years later in 1954. This was **KC4AB**, a four-day operation by Don Miller, then **W4VZQ**, Bob Eshleman, now **W4DR** and Carl Shenk, **WN4HBC**. The last accredited operation was **W5IJU/KP1** in 1993. Between these operations, every couple of years or so, some individual or group obtained permission, and Navassa was "irregularly" on the air. Navassa has been silent until February of 2015, a period of 22 years.



Navassa is claimed by seven countries (United States, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia and the Dominican Republic), but most of the world accepts U.S. control, because of the IARU, economic, navigational and refuge management activities and oversight. In 1981, a group of Haitian amateurs led by **HH2JR** operated as **HHØN**, but this operation was not counted for DXCC because appropriate permission was not given. To say that the HHØN operations caused a rift with Haitian hams and the DXCC administration, would be an understatement. Regardless, if Navassa was in fact Haitian territory, it would not count for DXCC because of the proximity rule.

I could ignore the "sour grapes" of HHØN, and not even bring it to anyone's attention, but, as we will see, this played a crucial role in the K1N operation, almost leaving the team and FWS personnel stranded indefinitely without food and water.

Several individuals and groups were seeking permission from FWS to activate Navassa, beginning in 1998, or so. In 2002, we combined forces, and formed the **KP1-5 Project,** with the express purpose to activate the closed refuges of Desecheo and Navassa, and at the same time, assist FWS in their logistics and management of these refuges.

To make a very long complex story short, the KP1-5 Project participated in two Congressional hearings, helped draft a bill in Congress that would allow periodic access to the refuges (but this bill died between legislative sessions), attended several appeal hearings for denied Special Use Permit (SUP) requests, etc. Eventually, in 2008, permission was granted for an operation from Desecheo.

After sifting through many applying groups, USFWS selected the KP1-5 Project proposal. The **K5D** operation (117,000 Qs) in February 2009 is history. At that time, we had a very good relationship with USFWS, and we all believed that after K5D, Navassa would happen within the next 18-24 months. We stored all of our infrastructure gear and equipment in Puerto Rico in anticipation of Navassa.

However, because of retirements, job assignment changes and other factors, we basically had to start over with mostly new personnel at USFWS. An application for several SUP requests were denied.

Following USFWS regulations, we formally appealed in person at the district level, which was denied. Regulations allowed an additional in-person appeal at the regional level, and after presenting some regulatory "loop holes" in their own USFWS regulations, we were elated when our appeal was approved in May 2014!

We had subsequent meetings with USFWS to discuss what it would take to make Navassa successful. We felt that if we could make 100,000 contacts, we would be successful. This could be done with a team of 30 in five days or a team of five in 30 days. We felt the best compromise would be 15 people for 15 days.

Two RARE passport stamps - Desecheo and Navassa.

It was very difficult to keep this quiet, as it took USFWS several months to draft the specific requirements they would need to issue an SUP. On August 31, 2014, the USFWS opened the SUP for "bids," just as they had done for Desecheo. Six weeks later, the KP1-5 Project was notified that we had been selected. Up to this point, it is impossible to estimate the thousands of man-hours expended, personal dollars spent and airline miles flown, since 1998.

The specifics of the SUP required an operation in the January-February timeframe, as that was the time of the least bird nesting on Navassa; particularly the endangered red-footed Booby (Sula sula). This timeframe is also the worst time of year for sea conditions, as the winter storms on the North American continent burn out in the Caribbean. The choice was ours of January 2015 or January 2016. With the decline of an already-weak sunspot cycle, our choice was to proceed sooner than later, particularly since we had permission in hand….and things can change with time.


The rare red-footed Booby.

It was also required, like on Desecheo, that three USFWS Law Enforcement officers accompany us; not just to protect us from any possible threats (illegal aliens, drug traffickers, etc.), but to insure we abide by all of the specifics in the SUP. We were allowed 15 people for 14 days, total. Besides requiring helicopter landing (for safety), we were also required to supply a stand-by support vessel for any possible emergency or evacuation. USFWS would also have three biologists on the island doing survey work. Also, in writing, it was made very clear that USFWS would not consider another SUP application for "at least" ten more years. This made the opportunity a once in a 32-year period opportunity. We had to be successful!

Full Steam Ahead

During the summer and early fall, we had explored all possibilities of transportation and logistics. The Gulf oil support companies could help, but at incredible prices. We found a large private vessel with a helicopter hanger on board. This would be ideal in non-January seas, but the price just for this was far above the most expensive southern ocean DXpedition, ever. No helicopter company or U.S. contractor in Jamaica would agree to fly.

Through a friend of a ham friend of a ham friend, who was in the tower business in the Caribbean, we learned of the Helidosa Helicopter Company in the Dominican Republic. They are the premier helicopter company in the Caribbean and Latin America. They focus on air ambulance and cargo, and have an impeccable safety record. One of their helicopters is a Bell 212 (a "Vietnam Huey") with an easy 1000 kg payload capability when loaded with fuel and pilots. They had operated out of Ian Fleming International Airport (IFIA) near Boscobel, Jamaica, on the NE coast before and knew the people and logistics issues. **Mission: Possible.**

Helidosa's Bell 212 - aka "Vietnam Huey."

In early November, Bob, **K4UEE** and myself traveled to the DR and met with Helidosa, and while there, put together the requirement for a contract. We discussed our logistics for equipment, food, water, etc., and came up with a plan. We would "buy" a packaged total of 50 hours of flight time (which included 10 hours of ferry time) for a fixed price that would include "everything," so there would be no additional surprise charges, including standing by in Jamaica for any emergencies.

Helidosa administration, their agents, pilots and crew were extremely professional, helpful and ready to give helpful suggestions. The round trip flight from IFIA to Navassa with no wind was at the very limits of endurance (fuel) for the Bell 212. Helidosa fitted the helicopter with auxiliary fuel tanks to safely make the round trip, but this reduced the cargo capacity to 700 kg. (At the same time, it increased the cargo capacity on the return trip to Jamaica.) The maximum number of flights possible would be three per day. The only issue….. 50% of the estimated $197,000 was due 30 days before departure, and the balance due at departure. **Mission: Impossible.**

Another important issue came up, which complicated the Helidosa "issue." New USFWS regulations require that SUP activities be at "no cost to the taxpayer." What this means is that the "price" of a Special Use Permit for any refuge in the Caribbean or Pacific areas be cost neutral to the government. If Law Enforcement (LE) accompanies us, we must pay their salary and transportation, as additional help will need to be hired to take their place when away from home base.

The regulations also require that LE must leave and return to U.S. soil, not from any other country. Transportation, whether by sea or air, must be on a Dept. of Interior approved vessel. Helidosa had every certification and accreditation known to man, except for DOI certification, which could not be issued to a "foreign" carrier. The SUP fee did not include the cost of the biologists and their transportation, while on the island. The SUP also specified that the KP1-5 Project would provide food and wa-

ter for all FWS personnel on the island. The only issue…. $104,000 to be paid 30 days in advance. **Mission: Impossible.**

In summary, we had over $300,000 due and payable BEFORE we could go to Navassa and make the first QSO. Our team came up with half of the cost. The response from an urgent plea to the amateur community to donate before the DXpedition even started was overwhelming! We literally had exactly the right amount at the right time. It was that close. To thank those who came to bat before we came on the air, we have already uploaded LOTW QSLs for nearly 3,000 generous donors! As I write this, less than a week after leaving Navassa, we now have all of our "regular" DXpedition expenses to meet, so please be generous when you QSL. **Mission: Possible!**

After putting together a logistics "package" for 15 (really 21) people, we downsized from an estimated 14,000 kg we had on Desecheo to 9,000 kg for Navassa. Add 15 people and baggage, and we're up to another 2,000+ kg. Water alone, at 2.5 gallons/person/day was about 750 gallons or 150 5-gallon containers, about 3,000 kg total, and this was non-negotiable! The cost of water delivered to Navassa ended up to be about $50/gallon or 11 Euro/liter! Add in fuel (250 gallons or 1,500+ kg)….. and food……. Adding up the weight and volume, we discovered that we would be flying in the last of the supplies as the first departure flight was to leave. This would not work. The issue: impossible logistics! **Mission: Impossible.**

Enter MVC

We had hard choices to make. We totally revised our plans to a Minimum Viable Configuration (MVC): the minimum logistics to be successful with 15 (21) people. We planned, re-planned and revised plans. We were down to 7 or 8 full flights in and 5 or 6 flights out. In the middle, we would have 1 or 2 supply flights with water and fuel. We decided to use 7 or 8 stations (K-3s with KPA-500s), Honda 2,000-watt generators, MREs for food (no other kitchen equipment, save for a tiny microwave and icemaker) and water.

We would use rudimentary shelters with cots. Each person was strictly limited to 20 kg of any baggage. We had additional materials on the Electra, our support vessel, should off-loading be possible. Nothing on the Electra would be critical for the mission. The issue…… realistic logistics. It's coming together. **Mission: Maybe possible!**

We had just a few short weeks to put our gear into a container, and get it shipped to IFIA. Helidosa has used IFIA for cargo operations, and with the help of U.S. shipping agents, our container was listed for "trans-shipment," meaning, passing through Jamaica from U.S. territory to U.S. territory. Everything was arranged to have the container stored in a rented hanger, with a custom's seal in place, until we would transfer everything to the helicopter. But, because we had to OPEN the container and transfer the contents to the helicopter, almost every conceivable department and administration in Jamaica became involved in our container contents. "No, IFIA cannot be used for cargo." "No, you cannot pass electronics through Jamaica." "No, you cannot ship medical equipment through Jamaica." "No, you cannot pass MRE's through Jamaica." No, you cannot do this, no, you cannot do that. We'd never be able to get our gear staged on time for our window of permission! The issue….. impossible logistics! **Mission: Impossible!**

Logistics and staging.

Enter JARA

We can NOT give enough thanks to the members of the Jamaica Amateur Radio Association!!! They came to our rescue. After "discussing" our situation with authorities at all levels, helping them to understand the purpose and mission of our endeavor, we were back to Plan A….. our container would be taken to IFIA, locked and sealed, until we were ready to stage. However, all items would be inspected. We were not shady characters on a drug running mission, after all!

JARA Members.

Bob, K4UEE and I selected the team members sometime in October and November. We wanted compatible team members that were tri-lingual (speaking CW, SSB and RTTY). It was not hard to find a team willing to activate #1 or #2 Most Wanted!

USFWS preferred U.S. citizens. George, AA7JV was part of the KP1-5 Project during our hearings. Tomi, HA7RY and George were partners on several previous DXpeditions. We convinced USFWS that Tomi's experience would fit in nicely with our plan.

Other team members were Ralph, KØIR; John, K6MM; Craig, K9CT; Lou, N2TU; George, N4GRN; Mike, N6MZ; Mike, NA5U; Jeff, NM1Y; John, W2GD; Gregg, W6IZT and Jerry, WB9Z. Everyone was assigned specific responsibilities. Everyone pitched in and filled any gaps. There were no conflicts of any kind at any time. A great compatible team, focused on operating until we dropped! **Mission: Possible!**

We all met in Boscobel, Jamaica, two and three days before our expected date of departure. Many watching us felt that we were holding back on our starting date, but we did not know exactly our start date either, until literally the last minute. It was all dependent upon USFWS transportation arrangements and the weather. To pass the time, we met with Customs agents and representatives from various departments and agencies in Jamaica. They literally went through everything, and I mean everything, with a fine-tooth comb.

We had a shopping list of needed supplies to purchase in Jamaica, including gasoline containers, some tools and other equipment. During that shopping spree, two candy bars were added onto the receipt, as a couple guys were hungry. We could not account for the candy bars at the time of inspection. We passed inspection (except for two missing candy bars).

As the container was totally unpacked, we carefully weighed and sorted everything for priority and needs for each helicopter load. We ended up with seven loads. Extra water and fuel would come halfway through the operation. We were ready and excited! **Mission: Possible!**

Weighing and more staging.

The plan that finally developed with USFWS, was that they would leave at dawn on Saturday, January 31. It would take an hour to fly to Navassa. They would clear the island and make sure it was safe, then give us a call to proceed. We were up for breakfast at 5 am, and waiting with a loaded helicopter before dawn. One hour after sunrise there was no call. Two hours - no call. We tried calling the LE satellite phones; no response. Three hours - still no word…….

It was absolutely mandatory that we could not fly and land on Navassa until cleared and given permission by USFWS. By noon, we were getting very worried that something serious must have happened to the USFWS crew. By 1 pm we were convinced that either their satellite phone was not

working or they were in trouble. Our pilots gave us a 2 pm drop-dead time for leaving for one trip for the day.

Knowing that USFWS was relying on us to supply much needed water and food, we decided that at 2 pm we would fly so we could at least deliver food and water. Just before 2 pm, as we were boarding the helicopter, the satellite phone rang, and we were told that USFWS had landed, and that they wanted us to arrive as soon as we could. They had a second helicopter due to arrive later, and they did not want congested airspace with limited landing spots.

With only a few hours of daylight remaining, George, N4GRN, Jerry, WB9Z and myself lifted off for Navassa. The delay was in some part due to satellite phone difficulties, but mostly because the Gitmo airspace was closed until early afternoon because of a visiting Congressional delegation. FWS was as disappointed as we were in the late start. We're off!!! **Mission: Proceeding!**

Our pilots and crew.

Within minutes, we were airborne. As we approached Navassa over an hour later, it was surreal to me. All of the pictures I had seen and studied over the years were coming to life! Upon landing, we were greeted by USFWS LE officers, our old friends from Desecheo! Before our helicopter departed, the second USFWS helicopter flight landed with the rest of the FWS personnel and gear.

Our view approaching Navassa - looking east.
Lulu Bay in the foreground with small fishing boats.
Note the steep cliffs surrounding the island.
The lighthouse is 90m above sea level.

The first flight lands.

With only an hour or so of daylight remaining, our first goal was to set up a shelter. The recent recon photos provided to us by the U.S. Coast Guard showed what appeared to be large grassy areas around the lighthouse and keeper's house. Yes, they were grassy with knee high grass, but the terrain underneath was anything but smooth. Very uneven and rocky. There were many "invisible"

holes, and in an instant you could find yourself in a hole up to the middle of one's thigh. Extremely difficult for walking, much less setting up a shelter! **Mission……impossible!**

The old acetylene gas house next to the lighthouse was intact. We cleaned up the floor, and established this as our shelter for the first night. The lighthouse was open, but horribly dirty inside, with several inches of debris of all kinds on the floor….. a real mess. By the time we made a quick survey and protected our gear from rain, it was dark, and we were exhausted. We all retired early. That was the last night of good sleep for the next two weeks.

We were up before the sun on Sunday, and set to work cleaning out the lighthouse. It was extremely hot and extremely dirty and dusty. The gas house and lighthouse cleaned up quite nicely, and we decided these sturdy structures would be best for the radio operations, being protected from the elements. **Mission: Possible!**

It was extremely hot!!

WØGJ cleaning out the lighthouse.

Deteriorating condition of lighthouse staircase. The bottom of the lighthouse was worse, with several inches of debris, plus trash left behind over the years.

USFWS LEs had cleaned up a corner inside the keeper's house for their tents. Other areas of the keeper's house had brush growing up from every crack. Debris and rubble covered all of the floors. After removing the brush and cleaning up these areas, we had a nice level floor with walls to protect us some from the winds, but no roof to protect us from rain.

By the end of the second day, two of the FWS tents had been shredded by the wind, even though they were within the walls of the keeper's house. Our team back in Jamaica quickly went shopping for new tents, which arrived later. We assembled our shelters in the rooms of the keeper's house. When it rained, we would not get wet from above, but the floors turned into lakes. Survivable. **Mission…….possible, home sweet home!**

Looking down on the keeper's house.

On Sunday, after we had finished cleaning up the buildings, the first of two flights that day arrived, having to wait out ceilings that were too low for flying out of Jamaica. Three people arrived with more water, food, antennas, tables and chairs. Three tables fit perfectly into large "slots" in the lighthouse. Four tables easily fit into the gas house - perfect for seven stations. **Mission……possible!**

We were fortunate to have unrestricted access to the lighthouse. The stairs are getting quite rusty, but are still structurally sound. After running several lengths of coax up the lighthouse, we installed a full-size 160m dipole and a full-size 80m dipole at the 165-foot level. We had better low band antennas than 99% of our audience!

At the last minute before leaving home, I packed a 40m dipole. We put that up at the 100+ foot level. It really worked well on both 40m and 15m! Ralph brought a 20m dipole that was put up below the 40m dipole.

Perhaps a little difficult to see, but dipoles (sometimes two) were deployed out of each window. At the very top (on left) was the center of the 80m inverted-V and high end of the full-size 160m sloper.

By the time the second (and last) helicopter flight arrived on Sunday with three more people and the radios, we were ready for action. Before dark, we had five stations on the air. **Mission…..possible! Life IS good!!! The world is happy! It took 22 years to get to this point!**

On Monday (day 3), there were again some delays in leaving Jamaica, and only two flights arrived, but with the last of the team and with the SteppIR beams and masts. These were quickly erected and put on the air. The last of the seven stations were put on the air, and remained fully manned, until just before departure.

The lighthouse stations were a nice cool place to operate. The gas house stations were a little warm in the afternoon sun, but shading and a fan made things quite tolerable. **Mission….possible! Life is good, REAL good! The world is happy!**

Lighthouse ops WØGJ and HA7RY at night, using LEDs

Gas house ops K9CT, WB9Z, NA5U and K4UEE.

Honda 2000 generators.

We built the MEG (meeting, eating, greeting) tent at the base of the lighthouse, mostly on a corner of concrete. This is where we ate our meals, made coffee, and strategized. Our 6m rig was in the MEG tent set to beacon mode. Whenever someone would break the beacon, anyone could respond. Many contacts were made with meteor scatter that lasted literally seconds. We worked many North and South American stations and a few lucky people in Europe and Oceana! **Mission……possible!**

Relaxing in the MEG tent.
(l to r) N4GRN, KØIR, W6IZT and WØGJ.

MEG tent with K6MM, N2TU and W2GD.

Pre-dawn: MEG, lighthouse and gas house.

Mike, N6MZ in the lighthouse.

John, W2GD with Tomi, HA7RY in background.

Lou, N2TU

On Tuesday (day 4), the last two cargo-only flights arrived with mostly water, fuel and MREs. One last supply flight for the last of the water, food and fuel was scheduled for Friday.

We got down to business in the DXpedition mode with assigned 3- or 6-hour shifts, with hopefully at least one 6 hour break sometime during a 24 hour period. Signals were strong from everywhere. The pileups were some of the most intense I've ever experienced. On SSB, there could be an entire 20 kHz of a totally unintelligible din, unable to hear even one letter of one callsign. We tried to keep our spreads as narrow as we could. Working by the numbers is painful for everyone, and always someone feels cheated, no matter how hard one tries to balance the numbers. We did very little working by numbers, and concentrated on working the pileups down as quickly as possible. **Mission…..possible! We were having way too much fun.**

Ralph, KØIR.

KW 160m station.

Tomi, HA7RY.

On Friday morning, we were expecting our final supply run of water and fuel, both of which we were going through quickly. By noon, there was no helicopter. We called the pilots, who reported that Jamaica air traffic control would not permit them to fly, because Haiti air traffic control contacted them refusing permission to fly and because landing permission had not been granted by Haiti.

The Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority had all kinds of documentation from the U.S., USFWS and from Helidosa. But, still, Jamaica air traffic control was not going to let our helicopter land on Navassa until the international dispute was over. After 160 years, this was obviously not going to be resolved overnight, much less the weekend. Our supplies were dwindling. Someone in Haiti did not want us on Navassa, and was determined to get us off of the air and off of the island. Late Friday afternoon, all government offices were closed for the weekend.

We found it impossible to have a telephone answered in any office anywhere! Jamaica air traffic advised that permission would not be granted for any flights from Guantanamo Bay either, as Navassa was inside Jamaica airspace control. On all of the aviation maps, Navassa is properly identified as U.S. territory. The only way off of the island would be by off-loading onto the Electra, our support vessel. **Mission…..impossible!**

Rescue!

Again, we owe the members of JARA credit for the success of our mission! Several members knew various ministers and authorities. After explaining the situation to them, all were in agreement that everything was in order for all flights to resume as scheduled, regardless of whomever stirred up trouble in Haiti. **Mission…..possible!**

Our support vessel, the 94-foot Electra, equipped with advanced stabilization devices, found it difficult to remain near Lulu Bay at times. The Electra was available only about 40% of the time, as the rest of the time it was on the leeward side of the island hiding from the wind and heavy seas.

There was one good day early in the first week that we were able to off-load some needed supplies and extra gear. Several of us made many trips carrying items the ½-mile from Lulu Bay to the lighthouse. About 250 yards of the trail is very narrow and VERY steep. It was a very good daily workout to move supplies! **Mission….possible!**

Mike N6MZ (r) and George AA7JV working the davit (designed and built by AA7JV) to bring ashore water, gasoline and other needed supplies carried on the Electra. The davit is 16m above the water.

With our focus on operating with such intense and varied schedules, we didn't get a chance to use the AMSAT-supplied satellite equipment (FT-817 & Arrow antenna) until the last week. We were able to make 29 hams VERY happy with a very rare DX entity!!! **Mission…..possible!**

Satellite operation.

Because Navassa was so highly needed, particularly in Europe and Asia, we focused a lot of attention to the openings to these areas on the various bands throughout the day and night. Our pilots were very good at giving us hints and audience feedback for the best times and frequencies for various parts of the world. We know we have several antipodal stations in the logs on many bands and modes. We cannot thank the North American stations enough for patiently standing by, while we worked our "windows" of opportunity to propagation-challenged areas.

It's over!

It seemed like we were just getting into the groove, when we found ourselves discussing our departure plan. It is absolutely amazing how the days fly by when you are on the DXpedition end of things. Our SUP stated that we had to be off of the island with all of our gear by the morning of Sunday, February 15th. Knowing that we were never able to get the three planned helicopter flights in on any one day, due to weather or administrative delay, we had our first two team members leave late Friday afternoon of February 13 with some infrastructure gear and trash.

All stations were fully operational, until Saturday morning, when the SteppIRs and other beams came down. These antennas and a couple stations left with team members on the first flight….with more trash. Five stations were left on the air.

After the last flight on Saturday left, only Jerry, WB9Z; Craig, K9CT and myself were left with three stations and all of the wire antennas still up. The plan was to continue to operate until sunrise,

Jerry, WB9Z

Craig, K9CT

That's me, WØGJ, manning a RTTY station.

when we had to QRT. Saturday afternoon until Sunday morning was THE best opening into Asia that we had during the entire trip. The three of us put nearly 9,000 contacts into the log; the majority of which were Asia and Oceana.

One of the hardest things I've done in my life was to turn the last radio off at sunrise on Sunday morning, with a huge Asian pileup on 80 meters. I was not ready to go QRT, and could have stayed another week or two….. but please don't tell my wife or employer! **Mission: SUCCESS!!! Feeling good!**

Every few days, a small group of Haitian fishermen would come up the trail to the keeper's house to get "fresh" water from the cistern in the keeper's house. These poor souls live an extremely dangerous life, trying to eke out an existence, just to survive. They were barefoot with rare exception, and wore tattered clothes. When we were leaving, we distributed our extra shoes and clothing to them.

We gave them what we had left of our clean water, MREs, gasoline, shelters…. anything we didn't want. Even with the language barrier, they were "in heaven," and could not thank us enough. I will never forget the look of their faces, when they put their feet into shoes. They all but had tears in their eyes, as did I.

I gave one man the shirt I was wearing. He handled it like something precious. Jerry gave one man his coffee mug, who immediately found a scrap of rope and hung the mug from his neck. He had the proudest look of anyone! To me, personally, this was far more gratifying than sitting for hours at a radio making contacts for a hobby. To these fishermen, life itself is so very harsh. Our "trash" was treasure in their eyes! We complain that we missed this band or that band, this mode or that mode. To improve or brighten the life of someone on the edge of life is worth more than any radio contact…. ever. **Mission: OUTSTANDING SUCCESS!**

Feedback and Lessons

I learn a lot from every DXpedition I've ever been on. I've put together a summary of my two weeks of operation from Navassa. I'm sure all of my teammates will concur with what I've observed and learned.

European stations complained a lot for the "short time" we worked Europe. QUITE THE CONTRARY!!!!

This is a MOST interesting point of discussion! If you look at the times in our logs, we spent MORE time working Europe than working North America. Our Club Log statistics, however, show that North America had 58% of the contacts, Europe 32% and Asia 6%. WHY, then, if MORE time was spent working Europe, was Europe about half the number of North American contacts???

Simple answer: **RATE. Period**.

When you listened to us working North America, we could cruise right along at 300-350 Qs/hour, or more! I often saw the "rate meter" hanging around 500-600 Qs/hour. (I heard that someone on the team was clocked at 1,200 Qs/hour….. on 160m!!!!) When working Europe, we would be extremely lucky to see rates of 100 Qs/hour. European signals are as strong, if not stronger than North American signals, in the Caribbean. The

west coast U.S. is much harder to work than Europe. South American signals were among the strongest!

Here is a note I received after I returned home. It is from a well-known DXer in Europe:

"I listened to XXX working US pile-up on 80m. Fantastic, at least 10 QSOs per minute, and when he turned to listen for Europe, the rate was only 10% of that. Same on the other bands and modes."

The problem is THROUGHPUT. Rate. Efficiency. Cooperation. Whatever you want to call it. For the time we spent working Europe, we should have MORE contacts than with North America, but that did not happen. It COULD have happened!

No one more than me would like to have seen the European Qs outnumber North American Qs. For the "next one," I have some suggestions to help DXers, including myself, and particularly DXers in Europe, to be more successful. Here is what I see are the issues:

1. Not listening to the DX operator.
2. LISTEN to and LEARN the rate and rhythm of the operator.
3. LISTEN to WHERE the operator is listening, and to his PATTERN of moving his VFO. You MUST KNOW where he will listen next if you expect him to hear you! How simple is that? It is part of the hunt… and the fun of DXing…. and getting rewarded!
4. Learn to use your radio (split/simplex, etc.).
5. Do NOT jump to and call on the frequency of the last station worked. The DX station will NOT hear you, because the din is total unintelligible chaos. Move UP or DOWN from that frequency, as we on our end were continuously tuning up or down after each Q. So, if one jumps onto the last-worked frequency, we will not hear you, even if you were the only one there, as we have already tuned off that frequency.
6. TURN OFF ALL SPEECH PROCESSORS AND COMPRESSION! Do NOT overdrive ALC. There is a night and day difference in listening to NA/AS and EU pileups. The horrible distortion makes it impossible to copy many, if not most European callsigns. I don't know what it is, but I would bet that mic gain and compression controls are "firewall forward," all the way clockwise. There were MANY loud stations that we did not work, COULD NOT WORK, simply because we could NOT understand their terribly distorted callsign. Have you ever listened to yourself in a pileup? We gave many stations a "19" signal report. Very loud, but extremely unintelligible! You want to have INTELLIGABILITY, not distortion!
7. Give your callsign ONCE and ONLY ONCE! DO NOT KEEP CALLING! Call. Listen. Call again, if needed. Listen. Listen. We would tune on by those who did not stop calling. We are looking for RATE and getting stations into the log. You should be, too!!!
8. If the DX station comes back with your callsign, DO NOT REPEAT YOUR CALLSIGN, AS WE ALREADY KNOW IT, or we would not have answered you. Many stations (in all modes) would repeat their callsign two, three and even four times or more! This was so frustrating at times, that we would just move on to the next station. We ONLY want to hear "5NN" or "59" from you. Anything else is a total waste of time. Let me repeat, if we come back with YOUR callsign, DO NOT REPEAT it back to us! (Did I repeat myself?..... forgive me!) It CHEATS others out of a chance to get into the log. Only repeat your callsign if it needs correction, and then let us know it is a correction. Our propagation windows and time on the island are limited, and we need to maximize the opportunity for everyone. SPEED and EFFICIENCY ARE OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE!
9. LISTEN to the DX station come back to someone. IF THERE IS NOTHING CLOSE TO OR RESEMBLING YOUR CALLSIGN…… SHUT UP! SHUT UP!!!!! This needless interference slows things up, and lessens YOUR chance of getting into the log! We are focused on the callsign we heard and do not hear you, only your QRM.
10. Take some time to listen to the next DXpedition working North America, and listen to the rate and rhythm of the operator. It is fast, quick and efficient, and more people get into the log! Then listen to him work Europe. The wise op-

erator will catch on quickly to what it takes to get into the log!

11. SPREAD OUT! Our highest rates (for any continent) were working the center and far edges of the pileup, where there was less QRM. Weak stations were much easier to work than loud stations in the middle of the pileup. If we say, "Listening 200 to 210," 70% of the pileup sits exactly on 200 in an unintelligible din, 25% of the pileup sits on 210 and is almost as bad. 5% of the pileup will be spread out somewhere between 201 and 209, making them very quickly put into the log. S P R E A D O U T ! ! ! ! Dare to be different! Dare to be heard!
12. LOUD is NOT better! MORE AUDIO/ COMPRESSION is NOT better! Finding the spot to be HEARD is the MOST important thing you can do to get into the log. My biggest thrill (and I'm sure on both ends) is finding the lone weak station and getting him into the log, quickly.
13. LISTEN to the DX operator's INSTRUCTIONS! As we would constantly tune our VFO, if we find a clear spot, we would often say, "33" (meaning for YOU to transmit on 14.033, 28.433, etc). A few would listen, and get into the log very quickly. You cannot hear these hints if you keep calling calling calling calling …… Many times, I would say, "listening 200 to 210," and after a while, would say, "listening 240 to 250." Often 30 to 45 minutes, even and HOUR later, I would find MANY still calling on the original "200 to 210"….. of course, they would never show up in our log, as I was not listening there. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN and LISTEN SOME MORE. The less you transmit, the better chance you have of getting into the log. You must know where I am listening, if you really want to get into the log.
14. LISTEN to the "good" guys who make it into the log. Study how they do it! It is not easy to find the "good" guys, as they are quick and efficient and are in the log and gone, long before anyone can find them. They don't transmit much. They are listening.
15. LISTEN to the "bad" guys. It won't take you long to find them. They keep calling and calling. They aren't listening to find out where to transmit, or they wouldn't be calling. How simple is that? Being LOUD helps, but not if the DX is not hearing you!

    If you don't want to get into the DX log, just ignore the above suggestions, and keep calling, calling, calling….. I wish you the best of luck. You'll need it.

Antennas

We had queries asking why we didn't put up "better" antennas. What is simple and what is EFFECTIVE? A high dipole is far more effective than a low beam (of any size). A dipole is +2.1 (or so) dBi over a vertical, and can be up to +15 dBi at height.

We had a full-size 160m sloper at 165 feet. We had a full-size 80m dipole at 163 feet, broadside to EU. We had a 40m dipole at 100 feet, plus other dipoles hanging out almost every window on both sides of the lighthouse. We found these as effective (or better) as the 2-el SteppIRs at 18 feet high. We had no verticals. We did have them in the container, should we not have access to the lighthouse, or if we were unable to get up very high. For the low bands, we had better antennas than 99% of our audience! Beverages reduced our ambient noise from about S9 to S2, making for very workable conditions on the low bands. In the mornings, we pointed the SteppIR to Europe. In the afternoon, we pointed them to Asia. **Mission: success!**

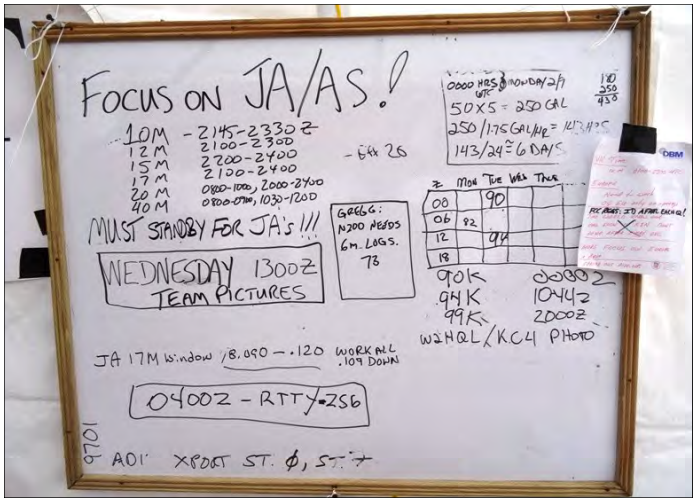
Four 2-element SteppIR beams on 7-meter masts.

Pilots

Our pilots were: Bob, **N2OO** chief pilot; Nodir, **EY8MM** Central Asia; Jorge, **HK1R** South Amer-

ica; Toshi, **JA1ELY** and Yuki, **JH1NBN** Japan and Asia; Tony, **K2SG** North America; Col, **MMØNDX** Europe; Andre, **V51B** Africa; Lee, **ZL2AL** Oceana; Val, **NV9L** social media; and Brandon, **KF5NYQ** youth pilot.

A great deal of the success of our operation goes to the off-island pilot team. These individuals probably worked MORE hours and had MORE headaches than any of us on the island. Each of the pilots received input/suggestions/criticisms from their area of the world, condensed and summarized the issues and needs and forwarded these to N2OO, who further distilled and summarized the needs and suggestions. Bob, N2OO sent numerous daily emails to me on the island. We learned which transmit frequencies to avoid on the low bands, which rare long or short path openings were available, etc. This information was posted daily (or more often as needed) on the white board in the MEG tent for everyone to see. Every DXer owes these individuals a lot of thanks for their endless hours in making our operations successful. **Mission: Success!**



White board notices.

ClubLog and our Website: www.navassdx.com

Chaz, **W4GKF**, a 1974 veteran of Navassa, is our webmaster. Almost daily, I would summarize the activities, challenges and plans, and upload them to Chaz. The DX world and news outlets grabbed and distributed this information, daily. George, N4GRN uploaded pictures to Chaz, daily, so the world could see our side of the action.

We had a LAN network to each station computer. A Raspberry Pi computer was fed every contact from each station. Every five minutes, the Raspberry Pi would see if an internet connection was available, and, if so, upload the logs to a server. From our end, when the BGAN terminal was operational, the log uploads were near real time. On the server end, sometimes it would be a few hours before logs would be merged and uploaded to Club Log.

Scheduling

Ralph, KØIR was in charge of our lives on the island. We lived, breathed, ate, operated and died (maybe "dropped dead" is a better term) at the whim of Ralph. His responsibility was daunting. He took the propagation forecast data from Stu, **K6TU**, our pilot reports, our personal abilities and desires for various modes and bands, the number of stations and antennas, and manipulated the data in a Scheduling Spreadsheet created by Bob, **KØRC** back home in Minnesota. This amazing spreadsheet program coordinates each station, each antenna, each operator and propagation into a workable plan.

Shifts were three hours long. Some were six hours. Some breaks were for three hours, some for six hours. The program insured that no one would be scheduled more than six hours, without appropriate breaks, and also give everyone one six-hour break each 24 hours. The program also considered our output power, and predicted our fuel consumption. Each person was given their personal daily schedule to plan their activities, including naps and breaks. Most of us operated a minimum of 12 hours each day; some more, some less. The program also knew the previous day's schedule, so that there would be no more than two consecutive shifts when starting the next day's schedule. It really helped Ralph to have most of us on the team be trilingual (CW, SSB & RTTY). **Mission: Success!**

Finances

I would like to comment on DXpedition funding. Even though Navassa is in the "back yard" of North America, the extreme difficulty of access to the island requires a helicopter as the only predictable and safe way to access the island. The nature of the helicopter business requires money up front, and complete payment before completion of a project. Also, the USFWS regulations now require anyone accessing refuges in the Caribbean and Pacific areas, to pay IN ADVANCE the costs of accompany-

Daily schedule for Feb. 8th.

ing personnel and their transportation as the basis of the SUP fee. In this case, these total costs UP FRONT were in excess of $300,000, before we left our homes! This does not include any DXpedition equipment or infrastructure. Our team members contributed half of this cost. We now have all of our "usual" DXpedition expenses to recover, so please be generous when QSLing by whatever means.

To those who donated BEFORE the DXpedition started, your LOTW contacts have already been uploaded. These donors will also get the first of the QSL cards when they go out. This is our way of saying thanks for helping make this DXpedition possible. We did not advertise this. **Mission: Success!**

So, next time a DXpedition needs support …..hint, hint….., if you want a quick QSL/LOTW, please help them out BEFORE they leave. There are several very expensive southern ocean and Pacific DXpeditions in the works for the next year who would all be grateful for your support. These DXpeditions have huge deposits and fees to pay up front before they even begin their journey or set foot on the ground.

Summary

We have reviewed the fascinating history of Navassa, along with all of the political intrigue associated with getting permission, the international hurdles and operational logistics involved with getting to a U.S. possession that WAS at the top of The Most Wanted List. Navassa is so near, yet so far, politically and physically.

More man-hours of planning, appeals, hearings and paperwork have gone into the K1N operation than any DXpedition in history, bar none!

Of all the DXpeditions I have been involved with, without question, this has been THE most dynamic operation ever, with rules, logistic challenges and political intrigue, not just within the United States, but within Jamaica and Haiti; changing on a daily and even on an hourly basis. There was unprecedented harassment from someone in the region focused on discrediting our operation, and trying to strand us without food and water. In stark contrast, we can never give adequate thanks to the members of the Jamaica Amateur Radio Association for their time and efforts to make K1N such a huge success. THAT was the true spirit of amateur radio: helping each other to succeed! We learned that planning and decisions needed to be flexible to deal with the "Challenge du Jour."

Fifteen dedicated men managed nearly 140,000 Qs in a 14 day period, becoming the #9 ranking DXpedition on the Mega-DXpedition Honor Roll. An amazing 35,649 unique callsigns were worked, many of which were all time new country contacts. Truly a team effort for teams both on and off of the island!

Going home: NM1Y, W2GD, KØIR and N4GRN.

Lastly, we cannot thank enough the 3,000+ contributors who put their trust in us before we even set foot on the ground to meet our financial challenge. We thank everyone who worked us, and who contributed to the DXpedition. The foundations like NCDXF and INDEXA and many, many clubs, organizations and individuals boosted our morale with contributions, and put the onus on us to perform.

Our sponsors were extremely generous and helpful. Without the dedicated Helidosa Helicopter pilots, crew and administration, we would still be waiting for a ride to the island. The Electra and it's crew were of invaluable support and help. And, we have a very special thanks to the dedicated men and women of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, who helped make this DXpedition possible, and worked side by side with us. We can't wait to do it again!

Mission: Possible!!! Mission: COMPLETE! Does anyone have a candy bar? I'm missing two.

73, and THANKS for your support and THANKS for working us at K1N, Navassa Island!!!

Glenn, WØGJ

NEWSLETTER CONTENT
If you have an interesting story and/or photos you would like to share with our readers, please send the content to k0juh@comcast.net

We edit all content for accuracy, style and length.

Thank you!

Member News

VP5S - 2015 ARRL DX CW

Three TCDXA members ventured to VP5 for the ARRL DX CW contest in February. Scott, **KØMD**; Bill, **ACØW** and Pat, **KØPC** teamed up to score over 5.4 million points (5,284 QSOs) in the Multi-Single High Power class. We operated from the "Hamlet" owned by Jody, **VP5JM**. Scott brought along his IC-7600 and Acom 1010 amplifier for use in the contest.

Outside of the contest, we kept busy on the bands, working over 2,500 QSOs; mostly outside NA. KØPC made over 1,000 QSOs with his KX3, running 5 to 10W. The Ministry of Communications sent a photographer to document our operation for a video they are producing. An unexpected bump upon arrival was a 7.5% customs duty on the transceiver and amplifier (the KX3 flew in under the radar).

Bill, ACØW

Pat, KØPC

Scott, KØMD

CE2/KØMD

Scott Wright, KØMD, operated the first half of 2014 CQWW CW from home at the KØMD superstation. Not being one to waste an opportunity, he traveled to Chile (for work) on Saturday, arriving Sunday morning of the contest weekend. He had made arrangements to put up a dipole and operate at Dale, **CE2AWW**'s place for a few hours on Sunday afternoon, thus, becoming one of only a few hams to operate the same contest from two separate continents during the 48 hour period. Scott told us he wished the airline had in-flight wi-fi so he could have remoted back to his station to operate during the 12 hours of travel from the USA to Chile, and not lost the contacts!

He said his score was "low," as one would imagine, but, the fun from the experience was worth the effort. Apparently, Dale then got on with the dipole he and Scott made, and finished the contest himself. The staff at the *GrayLine* salute KØMD for promoting the Vikings, while he was in Chile. The Wilf family had no comment on whether there are any ticket sales from Chileans at this point.

Member News

A group of DXers and contesters from southern Minnesota, western Wisconsin and northern Iowa meet and often do webinar-based programs. At the last meeting, the guest speaker was Glenn, WØGJ, who gave an update on the KP1-5 Project. And, Fred, K4IU gave a talk on N1MM+ hints and kinks.

Back row (left to right): Tom Vinson, **NYØV**; Pat Cahill, **WØBM**; Grant Kesselring, **K1KD**; Steve Wiebke, **WØSTV**; Stewart Lewis, **WØSHL**; Richard Mercer, **W9YAC** and Bill Lippert, **ACØW**.

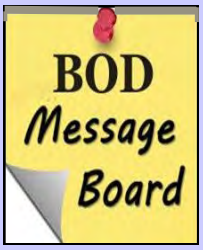
Front row (left to right): Fred Regennetter, **K4IU**; Terry Van Benschoten, **WØVB**; Michael **Cizek, WØVTT**; Roger Wise, **KIØF** and Glenn Johnson, **WØGJ**.

*Photo by Judy Regennetter, **KØUH***

In Memory of Ken Anderson, NØAS

Ken, **NØAS** of Ames, Iowa passed away on January 10th. He was 58, and had been in declining health for several years.

Ken was first licensed in 1993 as **NØZEM**. He received NØAS in 1996. His primary radio interest was DXing, using CW, SSB and RTTY. Ken was one of the early Volunteer Examiners for amateur radio licenses.



TCDXA PROGRAM SCHEDULING FOR 2015

TCDXA program committee members Tom, **ABØJ** and Gary, **WØARW** have been hard at work on some great programs for the March, April, May and June meetings. Tim Duffy, **K3LR**, COO of DX Engineering, is scheduled to appear via Skype at the March 16th meeting, and share with us the story about DX Engineering and their impressive product line.


Tom, ABØJ

At the April 20th meeting, Ralph, **KØIR** will join us and present the **K1N**, Navassa Island DXpedition program. Mark the date on your calendar now, as you won't want to miss this meeting. The May and June programs are still "under construction," and will be announced at a later date.


Gary, WØARW

Now that the K1N, Navassa Island DXpedition is history, one word describes it best – **WOW!** The operators did a remarkable job working the massive pileups. As usual, the frequency cops helped out with their chorus of "split" for those who were guilty of human error.

Navassa's proximity to the U.S. insured good signals on all the bands, and provided many with an ATNO (All Time New One). TCDXA is honored to have been a sponsoring club, and we send our congratulations to the K1N team on a job well done.

Mike, KØBUD
President, TCDXA

Meet Your 2015 TCDXA Board of Directors

President
Mike Sigelman, KØBUD

k0bud@arrl.net

Vice President
Tom Lutz, WØZR

telutz@earthlink.net

Secretary-Treasurer
Pat Cain, KØPC

k0pc@arrl.net

Director &
DX Donation Manager
Matt Holden, KØBBC

k0bbc@arrl.net

Director
Rich Goodin, WØDD

good8palmer@yahoo.com

The MWA Contest Corner

ARRL Contest Advisory Committee (CAC) Update

by Al Dewey, KØAD

How the CAC Works

I recently stepped down as the chairman of ARRL's Contest Advisory Committee CAC). While I still represent the Dakota Division for now, I have turned the reigns of chairman over to George, **K5KG**. For this month's column, I thought I would take the opportunity to update the club on what has recently been happening with the CAC.

First of all, I think it is important to clarify what the CAC is, and what it is not. Quite often, I hear statements like "The CAC should change the rules of that contest to do this or that." The CAC does not set contest rules. It is just what the name implies – an advisory committee.

From time to time, the CAC receives a "tasking" from the ARRL's Program and Services Committee (PSC). A tasking is usually the result of contesters in a division contacting their director with a suggestion (or suggestions) on how to improve a contest. If there is a sufficient outcry to division directors or directly to the Contest Branch, itself, to address an issue related to one or more of the contests that the league sponsors, they contact the PSC. If the PSC feels the idea has merit, they would then typically generate a "tasking" for the Contest Advisory Committee, asking for its recommendations related to a specific contesting issue. For example, maybe the Contest Branch and/or a number of directors are contacted by contesters in their division suggesting that a separate category be set up for Single Operator – Two Radio (SO2R) operation. If it was felt the idea had merit, the idea would be discussed with the PSC. If the PSC wanted to evaluate this proposal further, it would prepare a "tasking" for the CAC, asking the committee to evaluate the pros and cons of such a proposal, and provide a recommendation. The PSC would then decide whether it wanted to implement the CAC's recommendation. Except for minor issues, the PSC would seek approval from the ARRL Board, before directing the Contest Branch to make the change.

Having said all this, sometimes ideas for contest changes DO originate with the CAC. From time to time, the PSC will contact the CAC, asking if there are any contest issues which they feel should be addressed. The CAC then has the opportunity to bring forward to the PSC any topics that it feels are worth discussion. Note that, at this point, these are topics for study – not final recommendations. The PSC will then look at these suggested topics, and decide whether it wants to officially task the CAC with studying any of these issues and provide a recommendation. So, feel free to contact me if there is an ARRL Contest issue that you think needs to be addressed.

Some Recent Recommendations

I thought I might summarize a few contest issues that have been addressed by the CAC over the last few years. Some of the CAC's recommendations have been accepted, some have not, and some are still pending. In 2012, the CAC looked at a number of proposed changes to the ARRL DX Contest. It made a number of recommendations on how results should be reported and awards issued. Sometimes, what is most significant is what the CAC advises against. In addition to recommendations on better results listings and awards, the CAC discussed and recommended ***against*** the following changes to the ARRL DX Contest:

1. Allowing DX to DX Contacts,

2. Implementing a distance-based scoring method,

3. Reducing the maximum allowable 48-hour operating time for single operators,

4. Adding a 24-hour category for single operators,

5. Changing contest exchange from State/Province to ARRL Section,

6. Reporting W and W/VE results, separately,

7. Adding multipliers for XE states,

8. Adding a high band/low band category.

The mantra "If it's not broke, don't fix it" often comes into play in the CAC discussions.

In 2013, the CAC made recommendations to the PSC to add "Single Operator Unlimited Categories" to the ARRL 10 Meter Contest, the ARRL 160 Meter Contest, ARRL RTTY Roundup and the IARU Contest. Prior to these changes, single operators who used spotting assistance during any of these contests were put in the multi-operator category. Many contesters pointed out that it did not make sense for single operators to be grouped with multi-operators, just because they were using spotting assistance. The CAC agreed, and the League accepted these recommendations. The changes were implemented in the 2014 rules (except for the IARU Contest).

In 2014, the CAC addressed the following questions:

1. Recommendations on if and how a 24-hour category should be added to the ARRL DX Contest,

2. Recommendations on whether ARRL Contest Logs should be made public (like the CQWW contest does),

3. Recommendation on any suggested scoring changes to the ARRL 160 Meter contest – especially whether Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and other KH/KP islands should continue to be treated as 2 point ARRL Sections or 5 point DX contacts.

This time, the CAC ***did*** recommend that a 24-hour category be implemented for Single Operators in the ARRL DX Contest, and that such a category be implemented with minimum off times, much like Sweepstakes. We recommended that this category be available to all Single Operator All Band categories.

The CAC also recommended that SO2R (Single Operator – 2 Radio) operation be allowed in these new categories. This is in contrast to the "Classic" category that was recently introduced in the CQWW DX contests. Note that that 24-hour category would not do away with the existing 48-hour category, nor would it apply to multi-operator entries.

The CAC also recommended that the League begin making ARRL Contest logs public, beginning with the ARRL DX Contest, followed by ARRL Sweepstakes. Some concerns expressed about this policy were reluctance by big winners to reveal their strategy, possible "embarrassment" to new contesters and the potential for DXCC abuse by attempting to get a QSL out of a rare station, if their log contained a call similar to yours. Despite these concerns, the committee felt the overall transparency and the ability to study propagation using these logs outweighed these concerns. Considerable discussion took place with Randy, **K5ZD** about how this policy has been implemented at CQ.

On the ARRL 160 Meter Contest, the CAC was surprisingly split down the middle. On a vote of 8 to 7, the CAC recommended that the scoring for the 160 Meter Contest ***not*** be changed at this time. But, there was considerable support for changing Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and KH/KP entities to be classified as DX, rather than as ARRL Sections. The most persuasive argument was that stations in the Caribbean like VP, P40, PJ, etc. were all treated like DX, but their neighbors in KP4 and KP2 were not.

None of the 2014 recommendations by the CAC have yet been acted on by the PSC.

Some References

If you are interested in the details of any topic considered by the CAC and how they arrived at their decision, the CAC's semi-annual reports to the ARRL Board of Directors are available on the

ARRL website. Just go to www.arrl.org and enter "CAC Board Report" into the search engine.

Another task that the CAC completed last year was an update to the "HF Contesting Guidelines Document" on the League's site. This document had been completed a number of years ago by a previous CAC. The Committee felt that this document needed an update for readability, as well as for some recent advances in contesting technology, such as skimmer, remote operation, etc. The updated document can be found at:

http://www.arrl.org/hf-contesting-guidelines.

Final Thoughts

One thing I have learned on the CAC is that virtually all contest rule changes proposed to the CAC have two sides, even when one might think the recommendation might be obvious.

CAC members have different approaches to getting feedback from contesters in their division when a topic is being discussed. My preference is to directly contact a cross-section of contesters in the Dakota Division, as well as discussing the proposals at club meetings. I prefer to ***NOT*** discuss these topics on any reflectors. There have been too many instances when the discussions have gotten out of hand, especially when they are leaked to the CQ-Contest reflector.

The CAC/PSC/ARRL Board process described above can seem cumbersome and time consuming. In some ways, this can seem frustrating. On the other hand, the structured process assures that changes to the rules of ARRL Contests are not easily made. I think this is a good thing.

Finally, if there is some issue that you think needs to be addressed in an ARRL Contest, feel free to contact me or Greg, **KØGW** (ARRL Dakota Division Director) at any time. See you in the pileups.

Al, KØAD

Wisconsin QSO Party
Sunday, March 15th, 2015
1:00mm CDT (1800z) to 8:00pm (0100z)
see http://www.warac.org/wqp/wqp.htm

ARRL CAC

Contest Advisory Committee
Current List

Atlantic Division– Charles D. Fulp, Jr., **K3WW**

Central Division – Greg W. Clark, **K9IG**

Dakota Division – Al Dewey, **KØAD**

Delta Division – Stan Stockton, **K5GO**

Great Lakes Division – Dave Pruett, **K8CC**

Hudson Division – Dr. George Tranos, **N2GA**

Midwest Division – Jim Cochran, **KØRH**

New England Division – Dennis Egan, **W1UE**

Northwestern Division – Jim Cassidy, **KI7Y**

Pacific Division – David B. Ritchie, **W6DR**

Roanoke Division - Don Daso, **K4ZA**

Rocky Mountain Division – Robert Neece, **KØKR**

Southeastern Division – George Wagner, **K5KG** (*Chairman*)

Southwestern Division – Glenn Rattmann, **K6NA**

West Gulf Division – James K. George, **N3BB**

RAC Division – Samuel A. Ferris, **VE5SF**

Board Liaison – Donald D. Rehman, Sr., **K4AC**

Staff Liaison – Matt Wilhelm, **W1MSW**

Administrative Liaison – Sharon Taratula

TCDXA Member Profile

John Baumgarten
NØIJ

I was born and raised in Duluth, and except for four years after graduating from college, I have lived here all my life. I graduated from Duluth East in 1959, and from UMD in 1963 with an accounting degree, and quickly realized I didn't want to be an accountant! It was, however, an excellent knowledge base for eventually becoming a small business owner.

My first interest in radio developed in my teenage years with my next door neighbor, John Syck, **KØIJP** (SK) - probably as an offshoot of learning the code for Boy Scouts. Our mothers bought each of us a used S38D, and we were off. Before long, we were licensed as **KNØIJL** (me) and John as **KNØIJP** in January of 1957. I also had another friend, Don Wright, who became **KNØISJ**. But the greatest influence was Don's dad, who was Art, **WØGKM**. Art was a true Elmer to me, and planted the real seeds of getting on the air. Art was a lifetime friend, who my wife and I visited with weekly, up until he became a SK two years ago at the age of 100.

I was never much of a tech, but the code came easy, and I could copy 20 WPM when my Novice license arrived. I was, however, a station builder, and got started at an early age. In those days, the Novice license had a non-renewable term of one year, and I used it all up before upgrading, but not before working lots of DX and WAS. I even entered my first of 57 CW Sweepstakes (SS) contests that year (1957).

I decided I wanted a tri-band beam. When I had just turned 17 and my folks were out of town on a trip, a friend, Ron, **K8OAN** and I decided to install an early version Hy-Gain TH3 (think coffee can traps) on the top of the family house. The house was a 2-1/2 story unit, with a fairly steep (4/12) pitch roof and the peak at about 35 ft. Without family permission, a 25-ft Rohn 6 tower was installed with two guys next to the chimney, topped off with a small rotor and the TH3. Naturally, I just screwed threaded hooks into the roof edge for guy anchors and, somehow, it never fell over. When my dad got home, I thought he was going to pass out. I think he was so amazed I could ever engineer something like this that he couldn't get too mad.

Ron, K8OAN and I installing Rohn 6 tower at my parents house.

After college, my wife Kathy and I were married, and we're still together after 53 years. I didn't get to do much hamming during college and early work assignments, but I still managed to get something together for SS every year. I spent four years in St. Cloud working for an insurance company, and moved back to Duluth

in 1967 to help expand our family wholesale lumber business, which became my career. I like to think that one reason why I have always maintained such a high level of passion for this radio hobby is that I have never had time to operate enough to get tired of it!

One thing I missed in those days was the lack of other local contesters with similar interests to work with. All that changed in 1968, when I got a phone call from this nice guy that had an unbelievable station in Virginia, MN, only 70 miles away. It was Paul, **WØAIH**. He probably saw my score for SS in QST. He invited me up to operate his station.

I met not only Paul, but other top ops from the Twin Cities: Bob Schoening, **WØBE** (SK); Fred DeZiel, **WØHP** (SK); Tod Olson, **WØIYP** (now **KØTO**) and a couple others I can't recall. These guys were good, and I learned a lot in a hurry from them. The highlight, of course, was the beginning of a now nearing 50-year friendship with Paul and Mary Bittner. Mary thought I was OK, because I played the piano during my off hours for her and the girls. So, as far as Elmers go, the very most significant was Paul, WØAIH.

My first rig was a Heath DX-35 and a Hallicrafters S-76 feeding the aforementioned TH3, plus a couple of dipoles. I bought and rebuilt an old plate modulator for the DX-35, which worked pretty well, a least a lot better than the built-in screen modulator in the Heath. The biggest problem with that modulator was that it shorted the HV to ground, almost electrocuting me! (750 volts at 250 ma.)

After that, and about the time I met Paul, I moved up to a Heath Apache and, after a lot of horse trading, a used Collins 75S-3. Boy, was I in hog heaven with that receiver. After that, I found a guy desperate to sell a 32S-3 transmitter, and I was really set.

Today's operators can't conceive how much better the Collins stuff was than any other gear on the market (save the Signal one stuff when it came out). I loved this gear, but, after a few years, I switched to a Drake C-Line, just to get the flexibility it offered. This pair eventually moved on to be one of the many pairs at the now relocated WØAIH station in Eau Claire.

Following the Drake C-Line, I went back to Collins for the KWM-380. That was not the best decision of my life! Fortunately, I held on to it long enough, so that I didn't suffer too big of a financial loss. I sold it during a period of relative inactivity, trying to run two businesses, raising three kids and doing volunteer work.

Two years after the first visit to AIH (in Virginia, MN), Tod, WØIYP (KØTO) called one day and asked if I would like to help him in an adventure! This was to be a Field Day trip to Isle Royale National Park in Lake Superior, and to restart the Minnesota Wireless Association. Tod had secured the old club call, **WØAA**, which had been long dormant, and we would first use it as **WØAA/8** on the trip. This turned out to be a fantastic adventure, and truly a "life experience." The story of this trip could be an entire article in the *GrayLine*, all by itself!

Field Day, 1968: WØAA/8 at Isle Royale National Park
Front (kneeling) Tod, KØTO; Bob, WØBE (SK) & me, NØIJ.
Back: Ron, AE5E; ??; Frank, KØII and Dick, WØZHN (SK).
photo courtesy of KØTO.

After this adventure, I participated in a couple of MWA Field Days with the group, but mainly did SS only, as far as contests go. I built a 100-ft Rohn 25 tower at my home with a TH7 on it, and I kept busy with family and business things. Living far from the cities, the lack of MWA meetings and no reflector, I became detached from our contest group.

In the 80s and 90s, Kathy and I made three trips to VP2V. I operated there all three times - mostly from a sailboat, when it was attached to a dock. I had the call **VP2VHI**.

In 1990, I had the opportunity to go on a Rotary volunteer trip to the South Cook Islands to build a

clinic/apartment on the small island of Atiu. I was very fortunate to be able to make this a mini DXpedition, and secured the call **ZK2XN**. I was there for a month. We built the clinic, and I still had time to make over 8,000 contacts, as well as make my first serious DX contest entry in the CQ WPX phone test. I made the top ten world with low power, even though it was all one power class at that time, and I was really hooked on DX contesting. I wrote about this adventure in an earlier *GrayLine* (June, 2004). The rig on this trip was a Ten-Tec Omni 5, which became my main transceiver at home, and started a long term love of Ten-Tec transceivers.

My ZK2XN operation - March, 1990

After the Cook Island trip, I upgraded the tower to Rohn 55, largely patterned after WØAIH's set up at his home in Eau Claire. This was 110 ft of tower with a 20-ft, 1/2"-wall mast (5 ft in tower, 15 ft out). This tower first held a pair of TH7s. I then switched mostly to Force 12 antennas, eventually ending up with a C31XR at 110 ft, 180C (84-ft long rotary dipole for 80m) at 117 ft and a big Mosley 2-element 40m at 125 ft. Two other F12 C3s were at 55 ft on a rotating gate mount and at 80 ft fixed SE. An Alpha Delta DXA sloper was also on that tower and worked very well on 160m.

Although this was a very effective system, it still had some shortfalls, due mostly to near-field hills above me, and to some interaction between the antennas or with the two sets of guys. This all came down in 2003, when I moved to my current home overlooking Lake Superior. There was no way I was going to install such an array in this "view" location, so I sold everything but the two C3s (one actually a C4). I have used these two antennas as the basis for my current contest station, located at our family cabin near the village of Lake Nebaga-

My 110-ft Rohn 55 stack.
(See the story for a description of the antennas.)

mon, Wisconsin on Lake Minnesuing. I also sold my beloved Omni 6s, and moved to Elecraft K3s.

Starting in 2004, I have built this station up to where it actually outperforms the old, much larger station. The key here is that the property is spread out and has a gradual down slope in all directions. Plus, it is extremely quiet, electrically, and there are no neighbors calling about getting into their baby monitors or audio equipment.

Clearly, I didn't want to consider doing the amount of climbing I had to do at the old station, and I wanted all antennas to be low maintenance. It's hard to believe, now, that back then at age 63, I was climbing the MAST to get at the 80 meter rotatable dipole at 117 ft to make adjustments, or renting a self-operated 125-ft JLG-type bucket lift to work on the 40 meter beam. No More!

Presently, I am using my two K3s, each with older Alpha amps: 87A and 89. The main go-to 10-15-20 antenna is the stacked F12 C4/C3 at 82 ft and 55 ft on a US Tower 71-ft tubular power-up tower, with an 11-ft mast. This tower is self supporting, rotates from the bottom with an M2 Orion rotor and powers down to 23 ft. It also tilts over, and has no other antennas on or near it.

I built an 80 meter 4-square with packaged verticals from DXE, and also a 40 meter 4-square with DXE aluminum. All 8 verticals have 36 quarter wave radials on ground. The 160m antenna is a home-made top-loaded 36-ft vertical radiator, with 9-ft elevated feed and four elevated radials. This antenna comes down each spring when the place

reverts to a family vacation home, as it's right in the yard, and don't have a 12-month kitchen pass. I also have two bi-directional short Beverages (each 290 ft).

Two Force 12 C4/C3 at 82 ft and 55 ft on a US Tower 71-ft tubular power-up tower, with an 11-ft mast.

Tuning one of the 80 meter 4-square elements.

The two bi-directional Beverage antennas require yearly maintenance.

As a backup and second station high band antenna, I have a 56-ft Rohn 25 tower with a rebuilt A4, which is located 350 ft back in the woods. The two 4-squares are also spaced about 400 ft away, out in the woods and about the same distance apart.

The rebuilt A4 on a 56-ft Rohn 25 tower, which is located 350 ft away, back in the woods.

The thing that made this all work out was locating 1,500 ft of 7/8" Heliax to feed it all: three 500-ft hunks with connectors, all purchased as scrap. Building the lake station has really been fun, and was done with the cheerful assistance of **WØBV**, **NØIM**, **AF9T**, **AAØAW**, **KØMPH** and **KSØT**, which was mightily appreciated.

"Recycling" a used length of Heliax.

The lake station as been primarily used in a M/2 format. I have a Dunestar 600 band pass filter that works great when I remember to power it up. (Gary, **KØGX** just finished repairing one K3 that suffered from too much RF when the BPF was not powered up.)

The two high band antennas are positioned so that when pointed at Europe the element tips are pointed at each other. The two stations can operate without any detection of the other signal, except on a harmonically-related frequency, and can actually work on the same band, if necessary, when we stay 15 kHz apart. Credit the K3s for this.

After a few years of primarily doing contests, I now have the station operating remotely, so I can get back into more serious DXing and casual single-operator contesting from home. I can utilize the entire station, except when I am not there. I never leave the tower fully up, due to the wind loading on it. I usually leave it at around 50 ft, and even in the reduced spacing stack position, there is gain.

I can rotate both beams using N1MM rotor software. The 4-squares and the Beverages can be switched to all four directions. The Alpha 87a is easily controlled with the old Alpha Remote software. I have a **WXØB** 6-Pack for antenna switching, and a Palstar KW auto tuner, which I only have to use when I'm on 12 and 17 with the C4/C3. These antennas work very well on 12/17, but need to be tuned to run through the Alpha.

As I write this in early March, I am devastated by the loss of my good friend and key operator, John Anderson, **AF9T** who passed away just a week ago. John was a fabulous operator, and a go-to guy on technical issues. He was clearly the brains behind finding our very serious line noise a few years back, which the power company completely fixed. We can now say that we can actually hear a pin drop in either Tokyo or Moscow. The nice thing was that we were able to present the problem to the power company in such a way that the president of the company responded to me with thanks for finding the problem. I suspect they spent hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars in material and labor making the correction.

John and I always finished up the contests on Sunday night with a high five, and usually a last minute multiplier or two! It's just not going to be the same.

John, AF9T (SK) and I operating M/2 in the CQWW DX CW. John was a fabulous operator.

I received the call NØIJ in 1996, when they re-opened the vanity system. I chose this call, due to the proximity to my call of 40 years, KØIJL, and my admiration of **KH6IJ** (SK).

My wife of 53 years, Kathy, and I have three children, and we raised a granddaughter from age three. She is now 27, and has a son of her own, so we are, **gasp,** great grandparents!

I am very involved in rowing, both for exercise and enjoyment, and also as a board member and treasurer of our 150-year old Duluth Rowing Club. I have a shell at my lake place, as well as at the rowing club. Civically, I'm a long-time Rotarian, and past President and past board chair of St. Luke's Hospital Foundation. I'm also active at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Duluth, as well as a former lay leader.

I am two entities short for "worked 'em all" (Glorioso and Crozet). Missing FR/g a few years back was one of the main reasons I built the remote system. I have had several memorable DX moments. Surely, the most significant was finally working Zone 21 on 80m for the last one needed for 5BWAZ. But, working Glenn, WØGJ on Heard Island on 80m, and then having him call me on the sat phone to confirm; and working Nodir, **EY8MM** from **FT5ZM** on 160m are also up there, as well.

What a great hobby! I am honored to be a part of such a great group of folks.

de John, NØIJ

TCDXA Welcomes Our Newest Members!!

Brian Carlson, **NØATQ** - Indianapolis, IN

Jerry Cushing, **NØGC** - Minot, ND

Catherine Hagen, **KDØWLZ** - Robbinsdale, MN

Christopher Hildreth, **KDØAGE** - Independence, MN

Jim Janke, **K9DU** - Lakeland, MN

Join TCDXA

Our mission is to raise *Dollars for DX*, used to help fund qualified DXpeditions.

Our funds come from annual member contributions (dues) and other donations.

TCDXA is a non-profit organization, as described in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions from U.S. residents are tax-deductible.

Becoming a member is easy. Go to http://tcdxa.org/ and follow the instructions on the home page.

All contributions (including annual dues) may now be paid on our secure site, using PayPal or credit card.

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, or at http://www.dailydx.com/trial.htm.

TCDXA Treasury Report

February 16, 2015

For FY 2015: September, 2014 to August, 2015

Income:	
Carryover from FY 2014	$6,162.67
2015 dues and donations	3,878.81
Door prize ticket sales	427.00
Donations (estates, wills, etc.)	0.00
Total YTD income	**$10,468.48**
Expenses YTD:	
Membership Recruitment	(158.25)
Website	(0.00)
Office supplies, guest dinners and misc.	(102.07)
Flowers (SK and hospital)	(0.00)
Holiday Party 2014	(278.57)
ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund	(0.00)
NCDXF Donation	(0.00)
MWA Plaque	(75.00)
DXpedition Donation, T30D	(250.00)
DXpedition Donation, VU4KV	(500.00)
DXpedition Donation, 3W3O	(200.00)
DXpedition Donation, K1N	(1,500.00)
DXpedition Donation, EP6T	(500.00)
Total YTD expenses	**($3,563.89)**
Current Checking Balance	$6,789.59
PayPal balance	0.00
Cash on hand	115.00
Total current funds	**$6,904.59**

TWIN CITY DX ASSOCIATION (TCDXA)

CLUB FACT SHEET

Who We Are:

The Twin City DX Association (TCDXA) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit amateur radio organization, whose members have an interest in DXing and in supporting the club mission: Dollars for DX. Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation govern the club's operation.

Club Mission:

The club mission supports major DXpeditions with financial donations. The source of operating income for this activity is an annual contribution (dues) of $25 from each member.

DX Donation Policy:

The policy supports major DXpeditions that meet our requirements for financial sponsorship. All requests must be approved by the Board of Directors. Final approval is by vote of the full membership. Over fifty DXpeditions have been sponsored since 1997. Details are available on the website at: http://www.tcdxa.org/sponsoreddxpedtions.html#MenuBar1.

Club History:

The club was formed in the early 70s by a small group of DXers from the Twin Cities area. Over the years, the club has changed; most notably by opening its doors to anyone interested in DXing - from the casual to the very serious operator. Our membership now resides in numerous states and several countries, and numbers 167.

Requirements for Membership

We welcome all hams who have an interest in DXing and hold a valid FCC Amateur Radio License. It doesn't matter whether you're a newcomer, or an oldtimer to DXing; everyone's welcome!

Meetings:

The club meets on the third Monday of each month (except July & August) at PUB 42 Restaurant in New Hope. Members gather early in the bar for Happy Hour, and move into a private room at 5:00pm for dinner and a short business agenda, 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 officers, plus one additional member make up the Board of Directors; currently: President Michael Sigelman, **KØBUD**; Vice President Tom Lutz, **WØZR**; Secretary-Treasurer Pat Cain, **KØPC**; DXpedition Funding Manager Matt Holden, **KØBBC** and Director Rich Goodin, **WØDD**.

Website:

We maintain a website at www.TCDXA.org that provides information about a variety of subjects related to the club and DXing, The site is maintained by our webmaster Pat Cain, KØPC.

Newsletter:

The ***GrayLine Report*** is the club newsletter, which is published on a quarterly basis. We're proud of the fact 99% of the content is "homegrown" – written by our members. Past issues are on the website at: http://www.tcdxa.org/newsletter.html.

How to Become a Member:

An application for membership can be completed and submitted online, or printed and mailed in. (See http://www.tcdxa.org/Application.html) Contributions may be made by check or via the PayPal link on the homepage at www.TCDXA.org.

Visit us at a Meeting:

You are most welcome to attend a meeting, and look us over, before joining. Meetings are held at the PUB 42 Restaurant at 7600 Avenue North in New Hope (http://pub42.com/). Join us for happy hour at 4:00pm with dinner at 5:30pm, followed by the meeting at 6:30pm.

VKØIR	K5D			K4M	XU7MWA
ZL9CI	VK9DWX			TX3A	S21EA
A52A	FT5GA			KMØO/9M6	J2ØRR
T33C	3D2ØCR			YS4U	J2ØMM
3B9C	E4X			YI9PSE	BS7H
TX9	CYØ/NØTG			ZL8X	N8S
CP6CW	VP8ORK			4W6A	3B7SP
3YØX	VU4PB	AHØ/NØAT	3W2DK	T32C	3B7C
K7C	STØR	5X8C	FT4TA	HKØNA	5JØA
5A7A	3D2C	K9W	VK9MT	7O6T	VP6DX
VU4AN	3CØE	XRØZR	VK9DLX	NH8S	TX5C
VU7RG	TT8TT	T3ØD	VU4KV	PTØS	9XØR
VK9DWX	9M4SLL	3W3O	EP6T	FT5ZM	9U4U

TCDXA DX DONATION POLICY

The mission of TCDXA is to support DXing and major DXpeditions by providing funding. Annual contributions (dues) from members are the major source of funding.

A funding request from the organizers of a planned DXpedition should be directed to the DX Donation Manager, Matt, **KØBBC**, k0bbc@arrl.net . He and the TCDXA Board of Directors will judge how well the DXpedition plans meet key considerations (see below).

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

Key Considerations for a DXpedition Funding Request

DXpedition destination
Ranking on *Most Wanted Survey*
Most wanted ranking by TCDXA Members
Logistics and transportation costs
Number of operators and their credentials
Number of stations on the air
Bands, modes and duration of operation
Equipment: antennas, radios, amps, etc.
Stateside and/or foreign QSL manager
Website with logos of club sponsors
QSLs with logos of club sponsors
Online logs and pilot stations
Up front cost to each operator
Support by NCDXF & other clubs
LoTW log submissions
Previous operations by same group
Valid license and DXCC approval
Donation address: USA and/or foreign

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

- end -