



Newsletter

www.ncdxf.org Autumn 2002

Steve Thomas, N6ST, Editor

Northern California DX Foundation

XRØX SAN FELIX ISLAND, CHILE

March, 2002

by KK6EK

Tuesday, March 12, 2002. Day 1. Valparaiso. Aboard the *Chacabuco*, a warship of the Chilean Navy. We sail for San Felix, some 600 miles to the northwest. Two days and nights ahead. Our bunks are canvas rectangles stretched inside a metal hoop. The food is bland and boring. Our gear is in the container, clamped to the deck, for the most part inaccessible. We are deliriously happy. We think of the Deserving. "We're coming!" we say. "On our way!"

Thursday, Day 3. As we approach the island, we are awestruck by its size. Much bigger than we had been told. Much, much bigger than we had imagined. Bigger even than we needed in order to spread out our antennas. The airstrip will land a 737 jet.



We are overwhelmed by the geologic devastation before us. Immense lava flows, one jutting into another, overlapping, intruding into previous flows. Tumultuous red-umber-black-brown volcanic badlands. A carpet of wickedly

sharp cinders everywhere. Pyroclastic fragments and erratics litter the place. And dust. Fine, silty dust. The island is mostly black. The only other place I've seen like it was King George Island. The only real difference between that Antarctic island and this one is the weather. There, it was cold and wet. Here, it's balmy, slightly breezy, and dry. Dusty. Isolated. Dusty. But nice. Cliffs overlooking the ocean. Just like California. *Just right for radio!*

The helicopter lifts our tents, generators, water supply, radios, computers, food, and suitcases to the island, but we have to be content to come ashore by inflatable. The commandant of the garrison has moved our gear to their village, and invites us to stay with them. The prospect of hot showers, real toilets, and protection from the wind makes the decision for us. We join them, gratefully.

Saturday, Day 5. XRØX is QRV! Three radio sites are up and running, each with multiple antennas and radios. The CW site is directly to the north of the village, near the only beach on the island. It lies at the edge of a vast field of antennas, amid lava boulders and awash in the silty dust that roils into the tent and covers everything. The Battle Creek Special is anchored in lava dust. When we walk, the dust splashes.

The SSB and the RTTY/6m sites are more than a mile away to the west, at the end of the airstrip. We reach them with our nifty tractor—the one we took to Heard Island—and the two bicycles we brought with us. Usually we commute by foot. Both sites are at the cliff edge, looking directly at the Pacific to the north. A hundred feet behind the SSB site is the vertical ladder that will take you down the rocky cliff, to the large protected tidepool they call the “swimming hole.” Above, the only mountain on San Felix supports a light 200m above the water.

Monday, Day 7. The team is logging QSOs at a furious rate. More than 10,000 today. Before VKØIR, this was considered a feat; now it's common on well-prepared DXpeditions. I procured an 8-ft. board, and optimistically marked it off in increments of 10,000 QSOs. Each day, as new statistics come in, I fill in the “thermometer” to show the rising total. We have a lottery running to predict the projected total.

The chest freezer we brought with us is agreeably making ice. Not much, but enough to chill the gin and tonic in my glass. The 4x8-foot tables we assembled from the lumber we brought are terrific. One provides the focus for greeting, meeting, and eating. The other is strategically placed in front of the food cabinets to prevent nocturnal victual evaporation. My fears of running out of milk, coffee, cookies, and beer are apparently unfounded. My inattention to Dorito chips, propane bottles, and flytraps is proving regrettable; there's just not enough of them.

Wednesday, Day 9. We are well over 30,000 logged QSOs. The simultaneous operation on Ducie Island is causing some problems. Apparently some people are working one DXpedition thinking they are working the other (of all the silly things!). We feel sorry for Ducie, knowing that the Deserving are ravenous for a contact with XRØX. After all, new DXCC countries come along every year or so, but it has been more than 15 years since the last radio operation from San Felix!

Our expedition leader, Carlos NP4IW, has made a strategic change in schedules. From now on, the RTTY radio will be multiplexed with SSB

operations. This action emerged from analysis of the growing logs, and our desire to balance the band/mode distribution.

Today I went searching for specimens of the plants living on San Felix. In particular I am looking for a rare indigenous species last documented in 1937. No luck today, although I was pleased to find about 8 different plants, including one extraordinarily beautiful species with red-purple ice-plant-like leaves and delicate white daisy-like flowers. I also saw a caterpillar living on it, accounting for the moths we see abundantly. Several team members saw a mouse in the CW tent (the SSB guys were not jealous). And flies! Millions and millions of flies. They settle on our table like cinder rain, and when disturbed they disappear just long enough for you to lose interest, whereupon they float back and restart their settling.

Friday, Day 11. We're getting good reviews. Feedback from the Deserving, relayed to us through the satellite link, was uniformly complimentary. After struggling to upload our logs to the pilot on amateur frequencies, we capitulated and used the Iridium satellite phone. It took all of 5 minutes to upload a day's log. Each day, most of us use the phone to call our wives or sweethearts. No different from a cell phone. It's good to have a satphone on an expedition.

The QSO total has passed 65,000. Not a new record but approaching the top 10 alltime DXpedition totals. The distribution is good, with 10 m being the most popular. We agree that it is due to favorable propagation rather than emphasis in operating time. The QSO thermometer is now marked to more than 6 ft. high.

Monday, Day 14. Shut down the CW and RTTY sites, but left the SSB site up and running while the rest of the team tore down the camp. We are moving the gear to the village, and several loads have been taken out to the end of the runway to await the helicopter expected tomorrow. The garrison provided an air compressor, which we used to blow the dust out of the radios and computers. When a wheel bearing on the tractor failed, they took it to the machine shop, heat-

extracted it, and rebuilt it! I am staying cool with ice water and cold beer.

While the rest of the team labored with packing, six of us talked the commandant into taking us on the inflatable to the craggy (but beautiful) Cathedral Rock, about a mile away and an irresistible visual focus. The rock is a volcanic fantasy castle, topped by two spires that bear uncanny resemblance to the moai on Easter Island.

Back on San Felix, I conscripted two Chileans and we climbed the mountain—a steep, narrow, and slippery trail. A misstep here would send you sliding 500 ft. to your death. But the view was worth the risk. Near the summit we suddenly encountered an astonishing sight—about an acre of eastern slope was covered with perhaps a thousand absolutely bizarre plants. They formed small articulated bushes, perhaps 2 ft. high, with a bleached white skin that made them look like stacks of discarded antlers. On a very few of them, three bright green leathery leaves emerged from the tips. The roots were uniformly shallow, about the size and shape of a sweet potato, violating the rule that there is as much plant below ground as above. Without doubt, this is the elusive 1937 mystery plant. The adventure was straight out of Lost World.

Tuesday, Day 15. Waiting for the ship, now overdue from Easter Island. All our gear is piled on the runway, and we munch cookies and take photographs. Finally, late in the afternoon, the ship arrives, and the helicopter begins its beat. Our gear ascends. I stand at the end of the runway and shoot video of the ship standing offshore, bathed in a blazing cone of red-orange beams emanating from a dozen perforations in the dark cloud layer. Never, in my opinion, has such a sight been seen.

Finally, they call for us to leave, and we are on the inflatable. Darkness descends suddenly. We watch the silhouette of San Felix recede. The vessel looms, and we climb the rope ladder to the steel deck. Our gear is jumbled in the container, and we burrow to recover our belongings.

Starting our two-day sail back to the mainland, I stare pensively at the diminishing image of San

Felix Island. It's always the same: We loved being there. Loved working the pileups. Loved the ambiance. Loved the friendship, the logistics, the logging, the miracle of wireless communication. But I also know with almost complete certainty that I will never again see this place. While I revel in our excellent performance and my scientific collections, the awful fact of life's transience floods my thoughts, and the hue of my emotions is dark. Finally, I resolve my ambivalence with the surety that the XRØX logs are forever, and that DX IS! I retire happily to my canvas bunk.

My last thoughts before sleep are of the Deserving. We are standing on the island, facing an army of DXers. Thousands of 'em! Millions of 'em. We work 'em as fast as we can, but they keep coming, in droves and waves and hoards. And no matter how many we work, there are always more! We work violently and valiantly, working, working, working ... But the onslaught is too much, and we sink happily into that Good Night with all our friends, murmuring our mantra, at once a farewell and an invitation ... QRZ...QRZ...QRZ.

Basic information about the XRØX DXpedition

The team was led by Carlos G-Nascimento NP4IW/CE3AQI, and included Alan Brown K5AB, Doug Faunt N6TQS, Dick Hanson K5AND, John Kennon N7CQQ, Franz Langner DJ9ZB, Michael Mraz N6MZ, Max Mucci I8NHJ, Joe Owen KO4RR, Willy Ruesch HB9AHL, Robert Schmieder KK6EK, and Charles Spetnagel W6KK. Ricardo Menzel CEØYWS was the primary coordinator in Chile.

The team took full life support, including tents, generators, a pressurized water system, tables and chairs, lights, cooking facilities, and food. Members of the Chilean garrison provided significant help with moving gear, food preparation, gear repair, fishing and swimming.

Three radio operating sites were established, one each for CW, SSB, and RTTY/FSK/6m. Each site had two radios and a variety of antennas. All three sites were on the northern edge of the island, overlooking the ocean.

The first QSO was logged on 15-Mar-2002 at 1748Z, and the last QSO was logged on 26-Mar-2002 at 1415Z. The total number of QSOs logged was 68,895.

Operations were conducted at all times when there were band openings, on all bands 6-160m and modes CW, SSB, and RTTY/PSK. The strongest band was 10m, with nearly 15,000 logged QSOs, closely followed by 17m, with more than 13,000. More than 200 different countries were logged. The average number of QSOs per operator per day was 574.

QSL manager is John N7CQQ. Pilots for the DXpedition were Klaus DL1XX and Dr. Bill K6GNX. San Felix is DXCC CEØX. Its IOTA number is SA-013.

Total cost of the DXpedition was about \$30,000, of which 2/3 was paid by the participants and 1/3 by donations. Participant cost was about \$100/day, including transportation. Cost to the donors of a QSL-confirmed QSO was about \$0.50.

The XRØX team is very grateful to the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF) for a very generous donation. In addition, the DXpedition gratefully acknowledges the following major sponsors: International DX Foundation (INDEXA), Swiss DX Foundation (SDXF), German DX Foundation (GDXF), Chiltern DX Club (CDXC), OH DX Foundation (OHDXF), Lone Star DX Association (LSDXA), Six Italia Group, Southeastern DX Club, ICOM America, ACOM, Hewlett-Packard America, and Heil Sound.



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Niger
 N1amey
 K13 CL

SU1A	SU4R	SU8B
SU2K	SU5A	SU9C
SU3T	SU6W	SU0T

Niger 2002-2001 QSL card... The crew: 2001, SU1Y, SU1B, SU1C, SU1D, SU1E, SU1F, SU1G, SU1H, SU1I, SU1J, SU1K, SU1L, SU1M, SU1N, SU1O, SU1P, SU1Q, SU1R, SU1S, SU1T, SU1U, SU1V, SU1W, SU1X, SU1Y, SU1Z, SU2A, SU2B, SU2C, SU2D, SU2E, SU2F, SU2G, SU2H, SU2I, SU2J, SU2K, SU2L, SU2M, SU2N, SU2O, SU2P, SU2Q, SU2R, SU2S, SU2T, SU2U, SU2V, SU2W, SU2X, SU2Y, SU2Z, SU3A, SU3B, SU3C, SU3D, SU3E, SU3F, SU3G, SU3H, SU3I, SU3J, SU3K, SU3L, SU3M, SU3N, SU3O, SU3P, SU3Q, SU3R, SU3S, SU3T, SU3U, SU3V, SU3W, SU3X, SU3Y, SU3Z, SU4A, SU4B, SU4C, SU4D, SU4E, SU4F, SU4G, SU4H, SU4I, SU4J, SU4K, SU4L, SU4M, SU4N, SU4O, SU4P, SU4Q, SU4R, SU4S, SU4T, SU4U, SU4V, SU4W, SU4X, SU4Y, SU4Z, SU5A, SU5B, SU5C, SU5D, SU5E, SU5F, SU5G, SU5H, SU5I, SU5J, SU5K, SU5L, SU5M, SU5N, SU5O, SU5P, SU5Q, SU5R, SU5S, SU5T, SU5U, SU5V, SU5W, SU5X, SU5Y, SU5Z, SU6A, SU6B, SU6C, SU6D, SU6E, SU6F, SU6G, SU6H, SU6I, SU6J, SU6K, SU6L, SU6M, SU6N, SU6O, SU6P, SU6Q, SU6R, SU6S, SU6T, SU6U, SU6V, SU6W, SU6X, SU6Y, SU6Z, SU7A, SU7B, SU7C, SU7D, SU7E, SU7F, SU7G, SU7H, SU7I, SU7J, SU7K, SU7L, SU7M, SU7N, SU7O, SU7P, SU7Q, SU7R, SU7S, SU7T, SU7U, SU7V, SU7W, SU7X, SU7Y, SU7Z, SU8A, SU8B, SU8C, SU8D, SU8E, SU8F, SU8G, SU8H, SU8I, SU8J, SU8K, SU8L, SU8M, SU8N, SU8O, SU8P, SU8Q, SU8R, SU8S, SU8T, SU8U, SU8V, SU8W, SU8X, SU8Y, SU8Z, SU9A, SU9B, SU9C, SU9D, SU9E, SU9F, SU9G, SU9H, SU9I, SU9J, SU9K, SU9L, SU9M, SU9N, SU9O, SU9P, SU9Q, SU9R, SU9S, SU9T, SU9U, SU9V, SU9W, SU9X, SU9Y, SU9Z, SU0A, SU0B, SU0C, SU0D, SU0E, SU0F, SU0G, SU0H, SU0I, SU0J, SU0K, SU0L, SU0M, SU0N, SU0O, SU0P, SU0Q, SU0R, SU0S, SU0T, SU0U, SU0V, SU0W, SU0X, SU0Y, SU0Z.



CONGO 2002: THE AFRICAN ADVENTURE

by Núria Font, EA3WL
and Josep Gibert, EA3BT

“What are you going to do in the Congo?” This is the question that we had to answer many times when we were announcing that our next destination for 2002 would be this African country, which has a quite known name – who hasn’t ever heard of the comic called “The adventures of Tintin in the Congo”, for example?-, but a very unknown country for most of us.

At first sight it couldn’t seem a quite interesting destination as it isn’t a remote country, but due to its unstable political situation – there have been three civil wars during the last 10 years, and the last one has been very bloody – the radioamateur activity has been nil since the last years. In fact, the country was situated in the 38th place in the “Most needed countries” list published in September, 2000 by the ARRL. So the demand had to be great.

After deciding our destiny, we started to work hard in the project. We made a great amount of telephone calls and sent a lot of faxes, till we discovered that we could achieve the licenses. About choosing our QTH, in fact we didn’t have many options as since the last civil war nearly all the hotels were destroyed and few decided to reopen. So we chose The Meridien Hotel, which is a perfect place as it is situated in the highest part of the capital, Brazzaville. We also decided to go to the capital and not to any other part of the country, as the only secure places in the country are the main cities and it is highly recommended not to move away from them because there are still some rebels that continue fighting in the surroundings of the capital and in the south of the country.

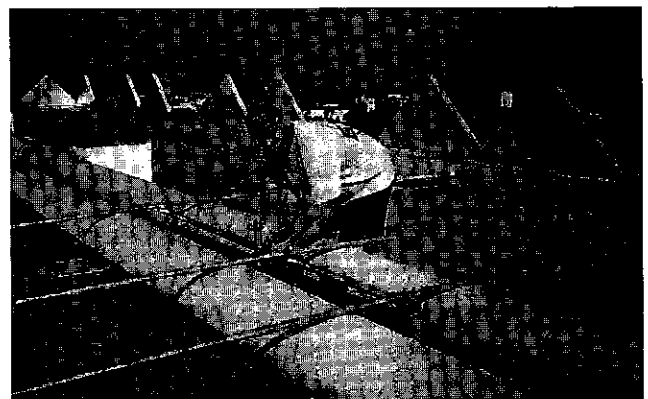
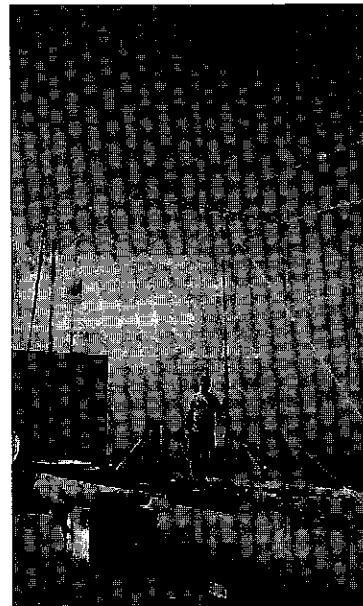
After several months of hard work, the day of departure finally arrived. It was 16th May when we went to Barcelona airport and took the plane that had to bring us to Brazzaville, after a short stop in Paris, with more than 150 kgs of luggage. As in our

last operation in Comoros as D68BT & D68WL, we wanted to install two complete stations, so we were carrying two transceivers, a linear amplifiers, two switched power suppliers, two laptops, two 3 elements beam antennas, wire dipoles for 40 and 80 meters, a 3 elements 6 meters beam, a Kam for RTTY, as well as more than 100 meters of coaxial wire, ropes, masts, tools, etc.

The journey lasted more than 12 hours but was a pleasant one. But, of course, things couldn’t go well at first sight. When we went to pick up our

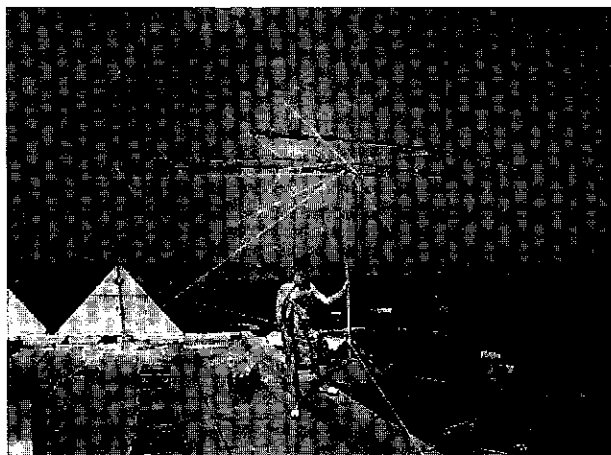
luggage we noticed that our luggage was not complete. In fact, we didn’t have any luggage as the only thing that arrived at Brazzaville were the two beams, and the equipment that we had carried as hand luggage, but nothing else. There was no coaxial cable, no masts, no ropes, and no clothes to change. NOTHING! And what was worse is

that the luggage was still in Paris and it wouldn’t arrive till the next flight and this wouldn’t happen till the next Monday. We were going to lose at least 4 precious days of operation. This was a great upset



for our plans. But we couldn't do anything so decided to go to the hotel and wait for better news.

Next morning, on Friday, we went to the Telecommunications Department and made all the formalities for the licenses. With the papers in our hands, we went back to the hotel in order to start



mounting the antennas and at least be prepared as soon as the rest of the equipment arrived. But a great surprise was awaiting us: there was a note in reception telling us that our lost luggage was already in the airport and we had to be there before 13.00 if we wanted to pick it up. It was 12.00 so we took a taxi and ran to the airport feeling happy about how lucky we had been. But, of course, things can go OK at first time: the man responsible for the luggage had gone home because there were no more expected international flights that day, so there was no reason to wait. Incredible, no? But that is Africa! We were told to come back on Saturday morning and that was what we did. But the man wasn't there either and wouldn't come until noon as there was an international flight expected for 16.00 hours. At midday we started our third journey to the airport and fortunately the man was there and we could finally obtain our luggage, at least two days before expected. We rushed to the hotel and started to build up the antennas. We worked hard until the light went off (dusk was at 17,00 local time, so we didn't have a lot of time), and continue on Monday morning.

Finally, it was 11:48 UTC when Josep sent his first CQ as TN3B in 10 meters, and the huge pile-up roared in his headphones. I immediately threw my CQ as TN3W in 12 meters and another pile-up came to my ears. We both smiled happy, said "goodbye" to each one and put hands on work. TN3B & TN3W were finally on the air and didn't stop till the noon of the 27th of May, after 7 complete days of operation of about 18-19 hours per day, just stopping for dinner – we didn't have either breakfast or lunch as the pile-ups didn't allow us to go – and for sleeping.

After that stressing week of radio, we could log nearly 26.000 QSOs just in 7 days with just two people, which must be a world record of some kind. With great satisfaction for our achievements, we closed down the stations on Monday 27th May at 13:31 Z.



- Callsigns used: TN3B & TN3W
- QSL information: Via EA3BT
- Logs available at: <http://www.ea3bt.com>
- Total amount of QSO: 26.000
- Days of operation: 7 days
- Used Modes: SSB, RTTY & CW
- Activated bands: 6, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20 & 40 meters.

We also want to thank all the associations and people that have given their support to this project:

- Northern California DX Foundation

- Indexa
- Clipperton DX Club
- Unió de Radioaficionats Andorrans
- Northern Jersey DX Association
- German DX Foundation
- URE – EA DX
- Delta DX Association
- European DX Foundation
- OH DX Foundation



- Chiltern DX Club
- Lynx DX Group
- Secció Cormarcal URE Garraf
- Sección URE Madrid
- Japan DX Lovers
- Western Washington DX Club
- Northern Ohio DX Association
- Secció Comarcal URE Alt Penedés
- EA4JW
- Consell Territorial d'URE de Catalunya
- Great Milwaukee DX Association
- Sección Comarcal URE Poniente Almeria
- Rochester DX Association
- Danish DX Group
- Consejo Territorial URE Madrid
- EA4TD.com
- Astroradio
- Dunestar
- EA7JX, for printing our QSL card

We also want to thank :

- All staff of The Meridien Hotel in Brazzaville for their kind hospitality
- To Pere Galimany, EA3AJI, for wasting so many hours of his valuable time with us
- To Xavier Pedrerol, EA3BHK, for keeping our web page updated while we were on the air.
- To Dr. Bill Avery, K6GNX, and Yuki Deguchi, JI6KVR, for being our pilots and accepting once again to be part of this project.
- To all those all who made the QSO with us made this become a great success.

To everybody, TNX and hear you perhaps in the future....!!

**From Aug 5 Daily DX - 22 and 23 year
NCDXF members:**

SILENT KEYS

W9NN, Bob Baird (ex-W9JJ) passed away August 1. He died peacefully in his sleep. Wife Betty was at his side along with a hospice nurse.

There will be a cremation and memorial service at the Boston Funeral Home in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. A memoriam will be set up for the Quarter Century Wireless Association's scholarship fund. Bob was a charter member of QCWA. Bob was a major supporter of and the founder of the W9DXCC Convention. He worked for broadcast station WGN in Chicago for 36 years. Thank you, W9XF, Steve, for this information.

G3NOF, Don was one of the UK's top DXers and was high on the DXCC roll and was a former president of the ISWL, where he gave up his office in May due to his on-going poor health. A friend of his describes him as "another one of the real 'old DXers,' who had forgotten more about ham radio than some of us will ever know."

Laura Sobon AD4PU, NCDXF Scholarship Winner

In the fall of 2002, I will be entering the University of Colorado at Boulder as a freshman in the Honors program. I have not yet declared a major because I would like to spend a semester discovering more passions and talents. I am looking forward to Honors Biology and have an interest in medicine and math.

My Ham Radio career really began when I was six when I watched my dad, NØT talk to foreign countries

and operate CW. Two years later I earned my novice and by the age of 10, I had my extra class. I have my DXCC and WAS, and enjoyed the role of net control for the Raleigh Amateur Radio



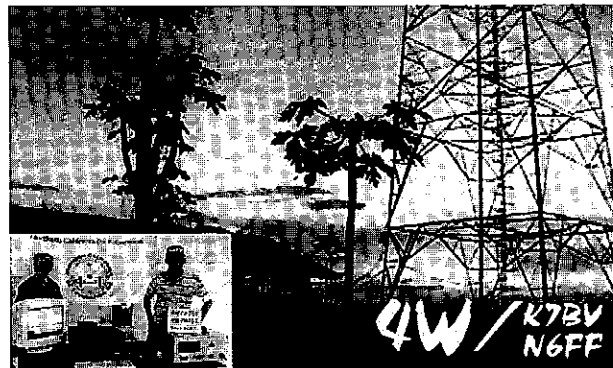
Society 2 meter net. As a member of the North Texas Contest Club and the Mile High DX Association, I liked operating CW at field days. I have volunteered, using Ham Radio to help the meals-on-wheels program at Christmas and Easter time.

Outside of Ham Radio, I love to dance. Last year I was a member of the Ponderosa High School POMS dance team. We worked hard and placed first in the Colorado State competition, 2nd at Nationals, and were shown on ESPN2.

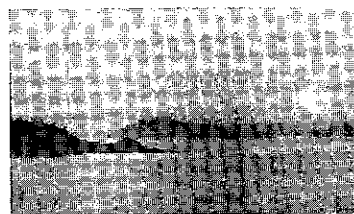
Thank you, once again, to the Northern California DX Foundation for choosing me as the recipient of this scholarship.

To the FAR and the Northern California DX foundation
Thank you very much for the generous scholarship. I feel so lucky that you chose me as the recipient. This money will certainly help me with college costs this fall when I attend the University of Colorado at Boulder. Thanks again!
73's

Laura Sobon AD4PU



XZØA



Thahtoy Kyun Island, Mergui Archipelago
UNION OF MYANMAR



XY3C - XY5T - XYØTA MYANMAR 2002

by Greg Fismer, DF2IC

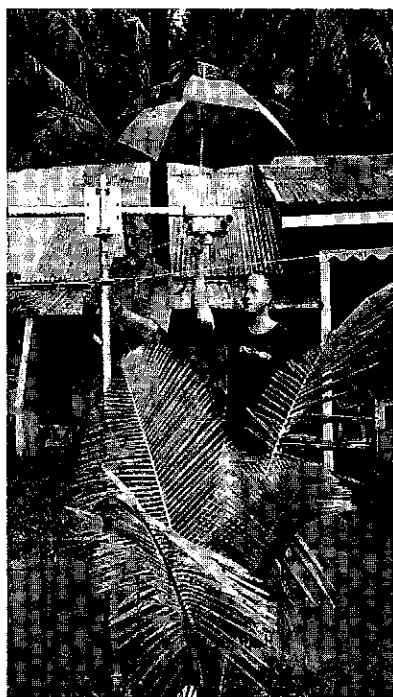
The plan to go to Myanmar slowly developed in 2001 after a successful DXpedition to Cambodia by Frank, DL4KQ (XU7ABR) and his friends. Contacts were made and the tedious process of getting the permission to set up an amateur radio station in Myanmar began. The progress was slow partly due to the difficulties in communicating with Myanmar. Telephone and FAX very often would not work and e-mail is very limited. We built upon the experiences made by previous DXpeditions and the guidelines and hints they gave us were of invaluable worth. The Burmese authorities were



most helpful and there were no serious problems getting the permission once you knew with whom to talk. Since most of our sponsors came from the USA we planned to make use of all band-openings to the US whenever possible. For that, we had separate transceivers for all modes, a total of four power amplifiers, three beams and various wire-antennas. All in all, we had about 500Kg of equipment and cables.

The team was quite international, coming from Germany, Italy, Japan, Indonesia and the USA: Frank, DL4KQ; Bernd, DL5OAB; Juergen, DF7KP; Greg, DF2IC; Fabrizio, IN3ZNR; Mauro, IN3QBR; Jani, YBØUS; Hiroo, XWØX; and Joe, AA4NN. The European group arrived in Yangon on Sunday, 05 August, and were met by the others

who had arrived two days earlier. We stayed at the Inya-Lake-Hotel, an amateur friendly place with an easily accessible flat roof. A window and an end-fed wire for 40 to 10m were up in a few minutes and XY3C and XY5T handled their first pile-ups. The take-off to USA from 10 to 12 UTC was very good.



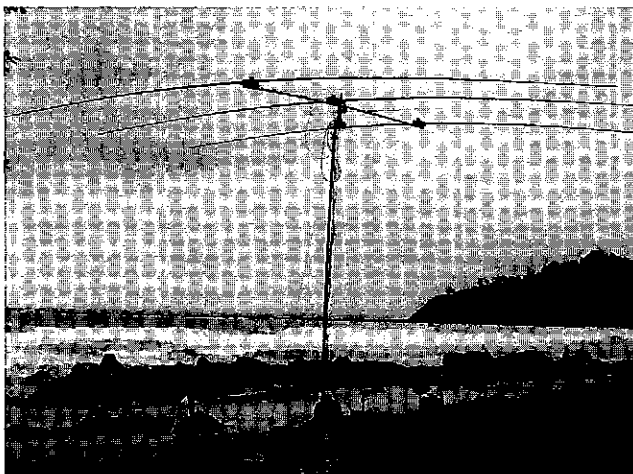
On Tuesday, 07 August, part of the group started for a sightseeing tour to Bagan, a place you simply must visit when going to Myanmar. There are countless temples and pagodas, fantastic food, beautiful sunsets over the Ayerwaddy river and lots of souvenirs. OK, been there, seen that, got the T-shirt — now we

were ready for the pile-ups! The group that stayed at the Inya-Lake in Yangon had arranged for the transport of the equipment to Ngapali, our Beach QTH for the coming two weeks. Transportation had to be done entirely by airplane because of the very bad road conditions during the Monsoon season. The General Manager of Air Mandalay offered us a very moderate price for the transportation of our 500Kg.

On Friday, 10 August, we arrived at Ngapali and were greeted by the manager of the "Linn Tharoo" (www.linntharoo.com) lodge and most of the staff.

Two separate rooms, one for CW and the digital modes and one for SSB, had been reserved and we quickly began to set up the stations and connected simple end-fed wires to them for the first QSOs. The beach looked much different from what we had expected from the pictures that YBØUS had made in April. Now, most of the beach was washed

away and the staff warned us not to try setting up antennas on the beach. The rain was particularly strong this year. Please bear in mind all the flooding that happened in Bangladesh and Korea at the same time and you get an idea under what circumstances we had to work. Behind the lodge, running from north to south, is a dam, and we planned to put our directive antennas there. We climbed the dam in heavy rain and found it very difficult to install antennas on top due to the slippery underground, and because of the long runs of coax we would have to use, we decided to abandon this idea. A G5RV was secured between two trees and reached an apex height of about 15 metres. Located only 10 metres away from the sea, it worked



very well.

The next thing up was the 2-element SteppIR Yagi, an innovative new Yagi design by K7IR, that we placed on a strip of grass between the radio-shacks and the beach, reaching a maximum height of about 6 metres. For the low bands, Frank DL4KQ, made his first attempt to set up a vertical on the beach, secured by heavy ground anchors and extra-thick nylon ropes. The antenna worked great for about 3 hours then a huge trunk from a coconut tree — washed in from the sea — smashed it into pieces. We worked in shifts until about 6 o'clock a.m. local time, then the sun rose and the bands went silent. In general, the conditions were fair to good on the bands 20 to 12m, with occasional very long openings on 15 and 17m. The low bands had to be watched constantly for short openings, and due to the bad weather we had problems setting up an

effective low angle radiator. The 3 element SteppIR Yagi, with an extra element for 6 metres, was placed on a sandy strip between the street and the beach. During the day we connected a CW keyer in beacon-mode to one of the 6m capable transceivers and let it run throughout the day. But conditions on 6 metres were sporadic and poor, so we made only about 250 contacts.

To be able to use three stations — with amplifiers — simultaneously, the electrical wiring for the two shacks had to be replaced. After the replacement, the voltage remained stable under full load. Power came from two Mitsubishi generators that were responsible for the power consumption of the complete lodge.

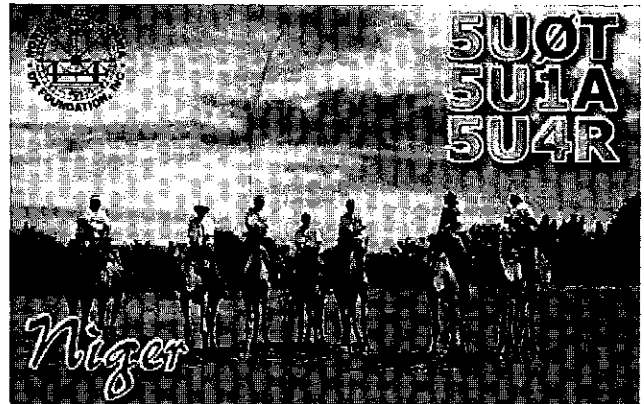
Frank, DL4KQ, made another heroic attempt to put up a good low-band vertical on the beach, but this time it lasted for only about one hour before a sudden gale smashed it to the ground again. So most operation was done on the high bands.

In parallel, the preparations for the IOTA activation from Apaw Ye Kyun Island began. An accommodation for the expedition was found in an abandoned wooden Museum building and we arranged for the transportation of a generator and the equipment, and — very important — a huge container with beer, a local cook and one of the hotel servants. We had two stations running using a windom antenna behind the house and a Sommer beam on top of a nearby hill. The takeoff to the USA was particularly good and XY0TA received excellent reports from all over the world. We were contacted by an IOTA committee member and were allowed to sign as IOTA AS-165, Arrakan Group. The operation lasted for three days and operators were changed daily. We made roughly 5,000 contacts back in Ngapali, the group decided to put up the Sommer beam on top of the nearby dam to improve the stateside QSO numbers. To keep coax cable lengths reasonable, we had to move one of the shacks, which wasn't a big problem because we were the only guests at that time. The weather had improved considerably so that for the last week we had three directive antennas for the high bands and — finally — a very well working vertical for the low bands together with

the G5RV. Jani, YBØUS, was very busy serving the demand for RTTY, PSK31 and Pactor contacts.

So, after more than 20,000 QSOs we had to leave this wonderful place. The SSB guys made about 60% of the overall contacts, but only because two CW Ops had to leave one week earlier. In order to keep our costs for transportation as low as possible, we left behind most cables and some equipment. One station kept on operating until just an hour before departure.

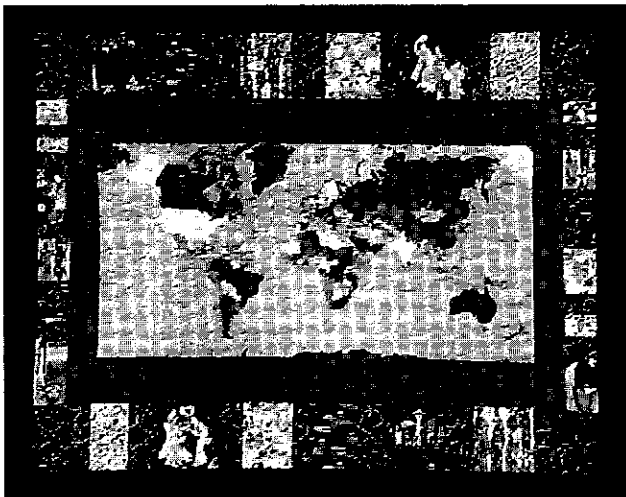
We wish to thank all groups and individuals that supported us and special thanks to the friendly people at Myanmar Travel and Tours who had helped us in any respect and made this DXpedition a trip to remember. A tour to Myanmar can only be recommended, the people are very helpful and friendly, the food is a delicate mixture of Indian and Thai cuisine and there are many great places to visit. Ngapali beach is considered to be one of the most beautiful beaches of Southeast Asia, which we were able to confirm.



THE NCDXF QUILT

by Carolyn Wilson, K6TKD

I made this quilt for the Foundation to raffle off as a fund raiser. My thought is that hams and their XYLs or partners would enjoy such a quilt in their home. Tickets can be obtained by writing to me at P.O. Box 273, Somerset, CA 95684-0273 or any of the club meetings to which we bring the quilt. The tickets are 1 for \$1, 6 for \$5 or 13 for \$10. Checks should be made payable to the NCDXF.



2002 VP8GEO & VP8THU DXPEDITION TO SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS:

A PERSPECTIVE

by Trey Garlough, N5KO

An Idea is Born

How do DXpeditions come about? In January 1999 I participated in the ZL9CI Campbell Island DXpedition as a last minute replacement for one of the team members who had to drop out. Two other participants were James Brooks, 9V1YC, and Declan Craig, EI6FR. I already knew James quite well from our university days in Austin, Texas and I met Declan for the first time in Wellington, New Zealand just days before we departed for Campbell.

On a sunny day at the end of our stay at Campbell Island, the three of us set off hiking. Under the influence of the relatively nice weather and the high spirits of a successful expedition winding down, one of us said, "Hey, we should organize an expedition to some other interesting sub-Antarctic island."

Another outstanding individual we met on the trip was Nigel Jolly, the owner of the *Braveheart*, the Wellington-based vessel that later transported us from the Falkland Islands to South Georgia and Southern Thule and back.

Is It Worth Doing?

Based on our experience with ZL9CI we had a clear understanding of the work that Ken Holdom, ZL2HU, had put into organizing the permits for the Campbell Island trip. Even though Ken spent over a year presenting various scenarios to the New Zealand Department of Conservation, the Department would not grant the expedition permission to remain overnight on the island. Ultimately this meant there were two choices: a limited operation or no operation. Fortunately, common sense prevailed and the DXpedition went forward.

The recent history of applying for permits to visit places such as Campbell Island, the Kermadec Islands, South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands and Heard Island indicates things are not getting any easier. The civilized world is exerting more influence on these precious islands than it did as recently as just 20 years ago. Environmental, safety and liability issues have come to

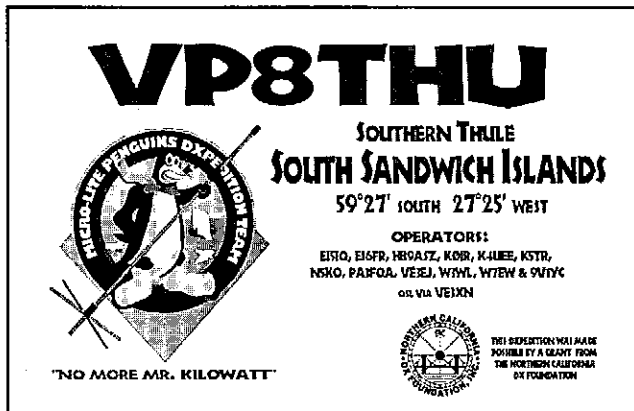
the fore, and each of these has to be addressed to the satisfaction of the authorities before permission will be granted.

Though such limitations can be infuriating, James, Declan and I came to view them not as show stoppers, but as interesting challenges to be overcome.

Why South Georgia?

South Georgia was Declan's inspiration. It's a beautiful, interesting and historic island. It is the final resting place of the legendary Irish explorer Ernest Shackleton, and was the starting and finishing point for his epic Antarctic journey of 1914-1916. It was #11 on the most wanted list, so it had a lot of DX-appeal. I would go back to the place even as a tourist, and indeed many tourists visit the island every year on large cruise ships.

As Declan began working the permit issues, it became clear there were going to be many restrictions. One important restriction was that we would be required to have a support vessel with us at all times. This precluded



use of the drop-off/pick-up arrangement used by the 1997 VKØIR Heard Island and 1992 VP8SSI South Sandwich expeditions. Because we knew Nigel and the *Braveheart* from the 1999 Campbell Island trip, they were the natural choice for our expedition vessel.

Why South Sandwich?

When Declan sent an information packet to James and me before one of our regular conference calls, I couldn't help but notice that the permit application prominently said PROPOSAL TO VISIT SOUTH GEORGIA & THE SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS (SGSSI).

Even though we had earlier dismissed SSI as a desired destination, the fact that the paperwork trail was the same for both destinations started us thinking about it

again. We decided that not applying for permission to visit SSI would be tantamount to squandering an opportunity, especially considering the relatively small incremental cost above and beyond what we were already committing to the South Georgia operation. We decided to try for both SG & SSI.

Is It Worth Doing?

As Declan continued to work on permits it became clear the environmental, safety and liability issues were again going to be an issue. We learned that no permit of any kind — scientific or otherwise — had been issued for the SSI group of islands during the preceding three years, nor are permits ever considered for any island in that archipelago other than Southern Thule Island.

Concerns about volcanic activity on neighboring islands and weather conditions are paramount, and it was made clear to us that no permission would be granted for any expedition to South Thule that included ponderous quantities of materiel.

There would be many caveats to any permit granted, the most important being that in the face of threatening weather or volcanic conditions we were to remove all of our people and all of our gear, tents, trash — everything — on short notice. We were not to bunker ourselves in and wait for the trouble to pass.

Ultimately this meant there were two choices: a limited operation or no operation. Rather than viewing this restriction as a deal killer, James, Declan and I took it as an challenge to be overcome and proposed a lightweight expedition using vertical antennas, lightweight 100-watt radios, small 900 watt generators and lightweight fast-strike arctic shelters.

The lightweight, low-impact approach was to be a fundamental tenet of our operation, so we built a team of highly experienced, first rate operators who through savvy and creative thinking could manage the pileups in spite of our limited equipment. As we spoke to potential team members we made sure they understood and accepted our overall expedition program before they were invited to join.

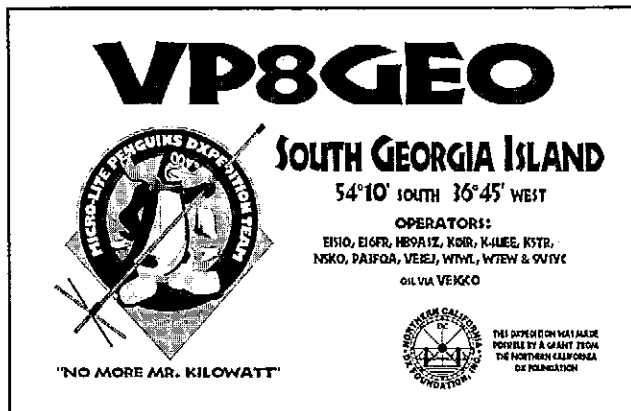
Ultimately our proposal of a lightweight low-impact amateur radio expedition was accepted, and we were granted permission to land on Southern Thule Island for five days and on South Georgia for 13 days.

How Are We Going to Pay for This?

The trip was paid for in full by the team members themselves and by a generous grant from the Northern California DX Foundation which understood and endorsed our lightweight, low-impact approach. There were no commercial sponsors.

The cost of chartering an Antarctic-qualified vessel is prohibitive for individuals, and the amount of money contributed by the team members themselves was equal to the charter costs of the *Braveheart*, including relocating her from New Zealand to the Falkland Islands. Team members also paid their own travel expenses to and from the Falklands, and all radio equipment used was personal gear lent to the expedition by its members.

The NCDXF grant covered most of the expense of the campsite and survival equipment, generators, antennas, shipping costs, and permit costs. All told the expenses



involved were a stretch for many of the expeditioners as it was, and without the NCDXF's support the expedition would not have been possible.

In addition to giving us much needed funding, the NCDXF board members we worked with during the planning phase of the expedition were extremely knowledgeable and generous with their advice and assistance throughout the entire process, and we thank them for their contributions.

Because of the uncertainty involved in such an expedition, we did not solicit sponsorship from any other foundations, individuals or radio clubs in advance. However if you would like to make a contribution to the 2002 SG & SSI DXpedition, I urge you to send a donation directly to the NCDXF in the name of "VP8THU & VP8GEO".

The good news is that the 2002 SG & SSI DXpedition finished slightly under budget, so your contributions to

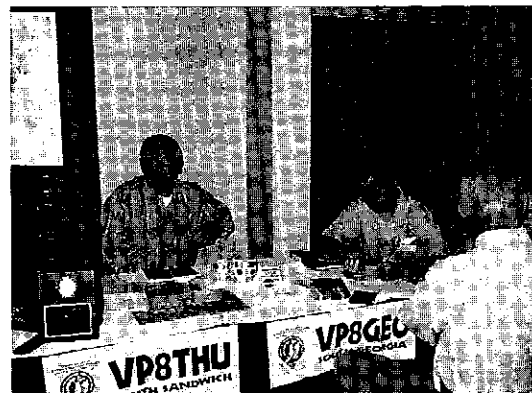
the NCDXF will be used to fund future DXpeditions that are coming down the calendar.

Conclusions

Because of the lightweight approach mandated by our permit and because of our seaside position on both islands, we opted for vertical antennas on every band. The beam heading for the US is northwest, for Europe northeast, and for Japan southeast. By using verticals there was no favoritism toward any particular region. All contacts were made on a first-come first-served basis, and at times we were hearing and working all continents simultaneously. No time was wasted fretting over which direction the antennas should be pointed, and none of the expedition members was required to trod upon fur seals for the sake of rotating antennas.

Another decision we made in advance was to print the QSL cards and have them in the hands of our manager, Garry Hammond, VE3XN, before we set sail. Within months of our return Garry had opened 10,500 envelopes, responded to all the requests therein, and had whittled the turn around time for QSL requests to a matter of days. Since we were activating two separate DXCC entities and two separate callsigns on a single trip, we established separate QSL routes for VP8GEO and VP8THU even though the same individual was handling the cards for both operations. In retrospect this was a tremendous time saver for Garry and was a key factor in getting the QSL requests opened and answered in a timely fashion. Thanks to everyone for their cooperation in QSLing via the distinct announced routes.

In summary, we made a plan, we executed it, we made a lot of QSOs, everyone returned home safely, we met our budget, and we learned a few things along the way. We fulfilled our permit requirements, and in doing so we hope to have made a positive enough impression on the South Georgia and South Sandwich authorities as to leave the door open for future operations from these locales.



VIDEO LENDING LIBRARY

Clubs borrowing materials are responsible for postage in both directions. The amount can be learned from the postage on the package when it comes to you, and is usually about \$3.20. Please give the name of your club, the day of the month you meet, and more than one choice of programs in case there is great demand for the item you want. Please return all material promptly, so it will be available for others. Request should be mailed to: Dick Wilson, K6LRN, P. O. Box 273, Somerset, CA 95684-0273. E-mail to k6lrn@arrl.net

We have the following VHS programs

1. XU1SS (plus BVØYL & BVØJA), (35 mins.).
2. 7J1RL, Expedition of 1976 & 1978, (includes ZK9ZR, Mellish Reef).
3. VK9ZR, Expedition of 1978, (plus Ogasawara, 1978).
4. Frankford Radio Club ARRL phone parody, (plus JH7YFL WW CW).
5. JF1IST/7J1, Expedition to Okino Torishima of 1979. (25 mins.).
6. Australian travelogue, Climbing Big Ben, Heard Island. (55 mins.).
7. Ham Radio In The South Cook Is., by ZK1CA & ZK1CT. (70 mins.).
8. VR6 by ZL1AMO & ZL1ADI, copy of above slides by Jim Hurt, W Geo College & W4VWA.
9. Looking Up In Rio Linda, 1986, by W6GO/K6HHD. (45 mins.).
10. Revilla Gigedo, XF4DX, of 1987, Produced by WA8MAZ. (15 mins.).
11. North Texas Contest Club, towers and testers, by K5TCK. (45 mins.).
12. It Started With A Broken Fence - JH3DPB's Tall Tower Tale. (15 mins.).
13. Pile-Up Busters, by W8TN, ABØ1 & NØFVG. (10 mins. & usually sent with #12).
14. FG/W2QM/FS, French St. Martin, DXing Senior Style - Another wrinkle to DXing.
15. 1984 Laccadive Is. DXped, VU7WCY, plus 1983 VKØHI from TV. (about 60 mins.).
16. The K6UA contest station story. (25 mins.).
17. HKØTU DXped of 1983, Malpelo. (25 mins. with audio tape translation by KB6MZC).
18. The Ship That Shouldn't Have - VKØJS Heard Is. DXpedition. (90 mins.).
19. The New World Of Amateur Radio. (28 mins.).
20. SØRASD, The Western Sahara Story, 1987, by the Lynx Group. (37 mins.).
21. Auckland Is., 1988, by ZL1AMO, ZL1BQD, N7NG. (60 mins.).
22. Dr. Owen Garriot's first talk to hams about the Space Shuttle.
23. Russian Ham Radio Tour by WA6WXD, Oct. 1986. (45 mins.).
24. 3Y DXpedition, 1987, copy of slides by Jim Hurt, West GA College & W4VWA. (40 mins.).
25. Peter I, 1987, video from JA7ARW.
26. 1979 Spratly Is. DXpedition, by K4SMX, K1MM, VK2BJL, N2OO, N4WW & KP2A.
27. 1988 Malj Vysotskij Is., OH2BH, UZ3AU, OH5NZ, UR2AR, OH2RF, UW3AX. (23 mins.).
28. 3W8DX & 3W8CW by HA5WA, HA5PP, HA5BBC, Nov. 1988, Produced by W4BRE.
29. Aruba, P4ØV, CQ WW Test 1988. (12 Mins.).
30. A Message From Barry Goldwater, K7UGA. (12 mins.).
31. Navassa of 1988, by N2EDF, K2SG, KE4VU, KD2NT, N4GNR, KT2Q & W3GH. (38 mins.).
32. Rhodes, SV5, by N2OO & SVØAA, April 1989. (40 mins.).
33. NØIZ/KH1, Howland Is., 1988, by NØ1Z, 7J3AAB, TR8JLD, VK9NS & VK9NL. (20 mins.).
34. Boeing ARC at the Electronic Convention and Great Wall Of China. (audio tape for VHS, 30 mins.).
35. K C Club DXpedition to Tonganoxie Is., a spoof. (30 mins.).
36. Tuvalu, 1989, by K6EDV & AL1AMO. (27 mins.).
37. Visalia Convention of 1990, recorded by W6NLG. (2 hours).
38. Rotuna, 1988, copy of the slide show by Jim Hurt, WGC & Henry Owen W4VWA. (73 mins.).
39. XW8CW & XW8DX, 1989, by HA5PP & HA5WA, Produced by W4BRE. (27 mins.).
40. XU8CW & XU8DX, 1990, by HA5PP & HA5WE, Produced by W4BRE. (25 mins.).
41. All China Amateur Radio Direction Finding Competition, plus BY1PK. (32 mins.).
42. ZS8MI, by ZS6PT, partial copy of the slide show. (40 mins.).
43. Jim Smith, A51JS, visits the Bay Area, videotaped by WA6BXY. (80 mins.).
44. R9ZF/NN7A, NN7D & W7YS, August 1989, Lake Teletskoye, Siberia. (30 mins.).
45. VU7, Laccadive Is., 1984. (65 mins.).
46. VU4, Andaman Is., 1987, by Combatore Radio Club. (30 mins.).
47. 3Y5X Expedition, 1989, Video by JF1IST. (In Japanese, good photography, 35 mins.).
48. VR6TC speaks to the Turlock ARC, 1/8/91, VHS by K6IMN. (125 mins.).
49. 1990 World Radiosport Team Championships in Seattle. (25 mins.).
50. ICOM's More Than Radios, The Legacy We Leave To The Young. (25 mins.).
51. T3BR-T3BT. Banaba, Nov. 1990, SM7PKK, TF3CW & OH1RY. (22 mins.).
52. This Is ATV, by Western Washington AT Society & Seeing Is Believing, by AEA. (47 mins.).
53. New Horizon: South Pacific Adventure, by AA6LF. (55 mins.).
54. YB3ASQ: Indonesian Stations and Sightseeing, by W7TSQ. (25 mins.).
55. XF4L of 1989, by JH4RHF, XE1OH, XE1XA, OH2BH, W6RGG, XE1L, OH2BU & N7NG. (25 mins.).
56. ET2A, by W4IBB, Jack Reeves, May 1991. (12 mins.).
57. ISØXV, by UW3R, et al, July 1990. (35 mins. or a 2 hour version, your choice).
58. Jarvis 1990, from K3NA & KN3T. (35 mins.).
59. 3CØCW, Annobon, 1991, by the Garrotxa Club of Spain. (20 mins.).
60. Araucaria DX Group, Brazil, Contest Station and Operators. (30 mins.).
61. 9L1US, by Dave Heil, K8MN, ed. by Jim Hurt, West GA. College & W4VWA. (45 mins.).
62. Dave Heil, K8MN visits Finland, edited by Jim Hurt & Henry Owen, W4VWA. (35 mins.).
63. Penguin Is., 1990, from a slide show by N7NG, Wayne Mills, produced by MoBre. (15 mins.).
64. PJ9W, 1990, Spirit Of Victory, Radio Team Finland, produced by WA7LNW. (48 mins.).
65. Empire Of The Air: The Men Who Made Radio, recorded by K16YB. (110 mins.).
66. Contest Night Live, by the Kansas City DX Club. (30 mins.).
67. DXing Kansas City Style, by the Kansas City DX Club. (30 mins.).
68. VP8ANT/G3CWI, Adelaide Is., Antarctica. (45 mins.).
69. H44, May 1991, by G3WVG, G3IXT & G3SXW. (12 mins.).
70. VP2EOH, Anguilla Is., by Northern Ohio DXA, 1992. 29 mins.).
71. T32T, Christmas Is., WPX SSB Test, Mar. 1990, narrated by VP2ML & video by JH1LBR.
72. VP8SSI, South Sandwich, 1992. (26 mins.).
73. More About Radios, Zman Productions, (How To Get Started In Amateur Radio). (28 mins.).
74. Navassa Is., Jan. 1992, by WA4DAN, AA4VK, NØTO, KW2P & AA4NC. (25 mins.).
75. Getting Started In DXing, by CQ Communications, Inc.. (52 mins.).
76. The Radio Ham, starring Tony Hancock, English comedy. (26 mins.).
77. Project Irma: The DX Truth-O-Meter, Northern Cal. DX Convention, 1993. (25 mins.).
78. ZL9DX, Auckland Is., by ZL1OK, ZL1AVC, ZL2TPY, JH4RHF & JR4DUW. (28 mins.).
79. CYØDXX, Aug. 1989, Sable Island by the Breton DX Group. (18 mins.).
80. V63-KC6-P29, by KQ1F & K1XM, slide copy by Jim Hurt & Harry Owen, W4VWA. (25 mins.).
81. Desecheo, KP5, 1992/3, with KW2P, NØTG, WA4DAN, WØRJU & AA4VK. (28 mins.).
82. E35X, Eritrea, May 31 - June 10, 1993, by LA6VM, LA1EE, JF1IST, LA9DL & LA7XK. (17 mins.).
83. AH1A, Howland Is., 1993, by ON6TT, WØRLX, K9AJ, WØCP, KØEU, W9IXX, K4UEE, F6EXV & G4LJF. (45 mins.).
84. 9G1AA, Ghana, by PA3AWW, PA3FUE, PA3FUE, PA3ERA, PA3DEW & PAØTJK. (55 mins.).
85. 9MØS, Spratly Islands, 1993, N7NG, WA6AUE, OH6DO, JA5DQH, OH1NYP, 9VIYW, 9M2FK, OH2MAK and OH2BH. (30 mins.).
86. Journey to Peter I, 1994. (30 mins.).
87. ZD9SXW, Tristan da Cunha, 1994, by G3SXW. (18 mins.).
88. Last Voice From Kuwait, 9K2DZ. (25 mins.).
89. Malj Vysotskij Island, 4J1FM / 4J1FW, October 1992, by AHØW ex 4J1FM. (43 mins.).
90. 3CØGD, Annobon, 1989 by LA8PV. (20 mins.).
91. IAØKM & HV4NAC. (30 mins.).
92. H44IO, South Pacific DX-pedition, by DL7IO ex DL7VTM. (46 mins.).
93. The Congo, TN4U & TN2M, 1995, by DL7IO ex DL7VTM (40 mins.).
94. 3V8BB, 1994 (17 mins.).
95. Mission to Jordan, The joint Israeli/Jordanian DXpedition, JY74Z, in July '95. (43 mins.).
96. The Kermadecs DX Adventure, ZL8RI - DX AT ITS BEST (30 mins.).
97. World Radiosport Team Championship, 1996 (23 mins.).
98. VKØIR Heard Island 1997, by Peter Casier ON6TT (51 mins.).
99. Bell Lab's video. "Similarities in Wave Behavior" (27 mins.).
100. "Eric Edberg, W6DU Memorial Pacific DXpedition" by WA4FFW
101. Legends of Amateur Radio - W6EA, W6HX & K6OJ - Southern California DX Club (42 mins.).
102. DXpedition to the Spratlys - 1996 - Slide show on video (30 mins.)
103. H40AA, The Temotu DXpedition - April 1998 - (10 mins.)
104. 3B9RF, Saint Brandon, 1998 by K5KG (38 mins.)
105. ZL9CI, Campbell Island, 1999 by 9V1YC (60 mins.)
106. FOØAAA, Clipperton Island, 2000 by 9V1YC (60 minutes)
107. A52A, Bhutan 2000, Written & Filmed by James Brooks, 9V1YC (60 mins.)
108. XZ0A, Union of Myanmar, 2000 DXpedition, Central Arizona DX Association (35 mins.)

2002 Contribution

The Northern California DX Foundation relies heavily upon the generosity of its members to fund various projects. We urge each member to consider making an annual contribution of \$50 U.S. or its equivalent in foreign currency. However, we do not wish to exclude anyone from the Foundation for financial reasons. If \$50 is not within your budget, then please give what other amount you can. Naturally, we welcome contributions in excess of \$50! The NCDXF is an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law for U. S. taxpayers.



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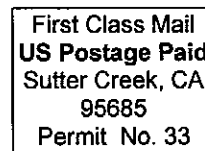
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