

The LongPath



A North Alabama DX Club Publication

From the President's Desk



Invite a Friend

I would like every member to make an effort to invite a friend to the upcoming NADXC meeting. Every time I hear a ham from North Alabama on the HF bands working DX, I make it a point to look them up on QRZ.com and send them an email to invite them to the next meeting. We have a great club comprised of a bunch of diverse individuals but beyond our circle of members, few know about the North Alabama DX Club. It's our duty to let others know about the club and what we have to offer. We have great programs, fun activities like Field Day and Hamfest related programs, members with a wealth of technical knowledge (and willing to share it!). We have Mike Maples, K4ADK who is our very own DXCC field checker and we have Jerry Cross, N4NO who is a field checker for the CQ-WAZ award. I hope to see everyone at the February meeting!

The ARRL DX contests are coming up soon.

The CW contest is February 21-22 and the SSB contest is March 6-7. It would be great if we could have a bunch of club members participate in these contests. I'm going to issue a challenge that everyone in the club try to make at least a 100 QSO's in these contests and submit a log showing NADXC as your club affiliation. If you can't send the log then send it to me along with a summary sheet and I will handle the submission.

73's Tim/**KU4J**

February 10th Program
"The Magic of 6 Meters"
by Tim Wininger, KY5R

7PM At Ryan's Steak House
1808 University Drive
Huntsville, AL

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"Short Skip" ...

Myron Manker, W4UR

ARRL Outgoing QSL Service . . . It was interesting to note that the ARRL's outgoing DX QSL service processed more than 1.2 million cards last year! Though a large quantity, the 2003 volume was noticeably lower than the volume in 2002, perhaps the result of declining propagation conditions and possibly some effect from implementation of the new Logbook Of The World (LOTW) program. The ARRL web site has specifics on how League members can take advantage of this reliable source of DX QSL card delivery. It may be slower than sending cards direct, but it works well . . . and it's much less expensive.



But What About the Incoming Service? . . . Since we're talking about the League's QSL service, let's not forget the many DX cards we receive through the ARRL incoming service. If you haven't done so recently, why not check with the incoming card sorter who handles cards for your call sign and make sure you've provided that person a couple of self-addressed envelopes with postage. Without the means to forward incoming cards to you, the service does you no good. The ARRL web site has a listing of the names and addresses of the people who handle the incoming sorting and forwarding. The incoming service is free and ARRL membership is not required in order to use it.

Time to Re-Focus on Wire Antennas? . . . With the current sunspot cycle now well-established in its declining phase, propagation conditions on the upper frequency HF bands will continue to worsen for the next couple of years. So, as the level of activity on the 160-30 meter bands increases, maybe we all need to devote some more attention to our trusty wire antennas. Single-band dipoles, trap dipoles, slopers, inverted vees, loops, G5RVs, and inverted-Ls should all prove very effective in bagging some good DX on the lower frequencies. They may become even more important to our DX success until we get past the forthcoming sunspot cycle minimum and return to more favorable propagation conditions a few years down the road. When more favorable "antenna weather" conditions return, it might be a good time to think about putting up some new "wires" or repairing those we already have in use.

New Amateur License Structure Proposed . . . The ARRL has announced its intent to submit a proposal to the FCC for a new amateur licensing structure that would result in three classes of licenses. The proposal would: (1) re-establish a Novice class with no code requirement and limited cw/phone operating privileges on 80/40/15/10M; (2) consolidate the existing Technician classes and General class into a single General class with no code requirement and some expanded HF operating privileges; and (3) consolidate the existing Advanced class and Extra class into an Amateur Extra class

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Minutes from the January 13th Meeting

Vic Holland, K4RVH

Meeting was called to order by Tim Pearson KU4J, 2004 club president at 7PM at Ryan's Steakhouse.

Twenty-Six DX'ers were in attendance including two visitors, Randy K4EHT and Colby K4LLA.

Various members briefly discussed some the DX they'd worked in the last month.

There were no official minutes to be approved from the previous meeting due to the fact the last meeting was the Christmas party with no official business meeting portion. However the new board was installed at that time.

Vic K4RVH reported the current balance on deposit was \$2146.26 and several members dues had been received but not yet deposited. Also presented was the following review of the 2003 budget, income and expenditures. The review covers transactions recorded during calendar year 2003 including some expenses carried over from 2002. This carry-over accounts for some line items over budget.

NADXC 2003 Actual & Budget Analysis

Cash Expenditures

	Actual	Budgeted	Variance
Hamfest Banquet	\$1,083.25	\$1,083.25	
Packet Cluster Hold-over	\$300.28	\$220.99	\$79.29
Repeater	\$51.00	\$100.00	\$49.00
Programs	\$37.74	\$50.00	\$12.26
Awards	\$191.97	\$150.00	\$41.97
Misc	\$25.00	\$70.00	\$45.00
Repr & Mail	\$68.09	\$60.00	\$8.09
Total	\$1,757.33	\$1,734.24	\$23.09

Cash Receipts

Dues	\$820.00	\$785.00	\$35.00
Hamfest Tickets	\$1,180.00	\$1,180.00	\$0.00
Contributions	\$100.08	\$0.00	\$100.08
Total	\$2,100.08	\$1,965.00	\$135.08
Net for 03	\$342.75		
Net for Hamfest	\$96.75		

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My Log's Hidden Treasures

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

For quite some time, when entering a QSO into my log database, I have gotten the feeling untold useful information held there is waiting to reveal itself. On a recent layover in the Atlanta airport, I pulled out the laptop to mine these riches.

The obvious statistics were easy to determine, and for the most part unsurprising. I knew the bands and modes which accounted for the most QSOs, and had a pretty good feel for QSL return rate, and which countries and call areas were best represented. With slightly more imagination, I checked out relationships between output power and signal report, and for a given power level, variations in signal report by band by time of day and day of year.

These investigations wasted a good bit of time, but it was a

long layover, so I turned my attention to the log's "comments" field. I always write my QSOs on paper and then transcribe into the log, even when working contests (I'm not much of a contester). This allows me to give some thought as to what I can squeeze into "comments".

Most of my QSOs are CW rag chews, so the first QSO with a station often includes weather and equipment information along with the operator's name. The weather rarely makes it into the log, unless it's unusual. Name, rig, and antenna are almost assured. As the QSO proceeds, we generally cover age and number of years licensed. When not pre-empted by more interesting information, or lengthy rig/antenna description (RX is Rohde & Swartz and TX is von Feldenhammer-

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ARRL DX Bulletin

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by NC1L, the OPDX Bulletin, The Daily DX, 425DXnews, DXNL, WA7BNM and Contest Corral from QST. Thanks to all.

MALAWI, 7Q. Harry, G0JMU will be QRV as 7Q7HB for a couple of months beginning February 8. QSL direct via G0IAS.

MALTA, 9H. Chris, G0WKJ is QRV as 9H3CT and is here until February 13. He will participate in the FOC Marathon. QSL to home call.

WEST MALAYSIA, 9M2. Rich, PA0RRS is QRV as 9M2/homecall from Kuala Lumpur until February 9. QSL to home call.

EAST MALAYSIA, 9M6. After his West Malaysia operation, Rich, PA0RRS will be QRV as 9M6/homecall from Keningau from February 9 to 20. QSL to home call.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, A6. Dave, K2GM is QRV as A61AJ and has been active on 160 meters around 0050 to 0300z. He has also been QRV on 80 meters around 1500z. QSL via K2UO.

SOUTH ORKNEY ISLANDS. Henry is QRV as AY1ZA and has been active on 15 meters around 1800z. He is also active on 40 meters around 0500z. QSL via LU4DXU.

BAHAMAS, C6. Ivars, KC4PX will be QRV as C6APX from February 7 to 13. Activity will be on 40, 20, 17, 15 and 6 meters. QSL to home call.

AZORES, CU. Nigel, G3TXF is QRV as CU4/G3TXF using only CW from Graciosa Island, IOTA EU-175, until February 10. This includes an entry in the FOC Marathon. QSL to home call.

CAPE VERDE, D4. Simon, IZ7ATN will be QRV as D44/IZ7ATN from February 7 to 13. Activity will be during his local daytime on 40 to 10 meters using SSB. QSL to home call.

PERU, OA. Look for Jorge, OA4BHY, Pablo, OA4DJW, Sergio, OA4SJ, Marcial, OA4DM, Hildebrando, OA4BHN and Manual, OA4AHW to be QRV as OC3I from Los Chimus Island, IOTA SA-074, from February 11 to 16. Activity will be on 80 to 10 meters using CW, SSB, RTTY and PSK31. QSL via OA4DJW.

EUROPEAN RUSSIA, UA. Yuri, UA1ONY is QRV from the

Frank McGonigal, W6DSQ



South Island of the Novaya Zemlya Islands, IOTA EU-035. QSL via RZ3EC.

IRAQ, YI. George, K7YMA is QRV as YI9YMA and is here until April 15. Activity is on 20, 15 and 10 meters as his time permits. QSL to home call.

The following UA4WHX/AC4LN 2002/2003 operations are approved for DXCC credit:

In 2003: V63MB from May 13 to 20. T88VV, May 21 to 26. KH0/AC4LN, May 27 to 31. V63MB, June 2 to 10. V73VV, June 12 to 20. 5W0VB, June 26 to 30. ZK2VB, July 1 to 4. A35VB, July 10 to 18. ZL/UA4WHX, July 19 to 31. P29VVB, August 4 to 17. H44VV, August 18 to 23. H40VB, August 24 to 30. YJ0VB, September 5 to 18. FK/AC4LN, September 21 to October 3. 3D2VB, October 4 to 6. 3D2VB/R, October 8 to 14. 3D2VB, October 16 to 20. T30VB, October 21 to 28. T20VB, October 29 to November 5. 3D2VB, November 6 and 7. ZK1/AC4LN, November 9 to 15. ZK1/AC4LN, November 18 to 26. FO/AC4LN, December 2 to 7. FO/AC4LN, December 11 to 13 and FO/AC4LN from December 16 to 25, 2003.

In 2002: V31VB from May 25 to 30. YS1/AC4LN, June 5 to 9. HP8/AC4LN, June 26 to July 1. J6/AC4LN, July 17 to 20. HH2/AC4LN, July 23 to 27. 9Y4/AC4LN, August 2 to 7. 8R1/AC4LN, August 9 to 14. J73/AC4LN, August 20 to 23. J3/AC4LN, August 27 to 30 and FW/AC4LN from September 27 to October 3, 2002.

Other DX Rumors and News

Frank McGonigal, W6DSQ

DXCC RULE CHANGE

Wayne Mills, N7NG, ARRL Membership Service Dept. Manager, sent out the following ARRL News Release (Dated January 20th): At its January meeting in Windsor, Connecticut, the ARRL Board of Directors removed paragraph 1.c) from the criteria for determining a DXCC Entity. This provision, implemented in 1998 as part of the DXCC 2000 Program, had provided that "An Entity will be added to the DXCC List as a Political Entity if it ...has a separate IARU Member Society." Since that time, the rule has allowed for the addition of four new DXCC Entities and the retention of one existing Entity.

At the time it was not expected that this would create difficulties with the administration of the IARU. Unfortunately, the provision has had the unintended consequence of stimulating applications for IARU membership that do not further the objectives of the IARU, creating an unfortunate and unnecessary administrative burden.

The rule change will have no effect on those Entities created by or as the result of the rule. According to DXCC Rule II, 5. C), "A change in the DXCC Criteria shall not affect the status of any Entity on the DXCC List at the time of the change."

The other two criteria for the determination of a Political Entity for DXCC continue in effect:

- a) The entity is a UN Member State,
- b) The entity (except international organizations) has been assigned a callsign prefix block by the ITU.

The text of the Board resolution reads:
WHEREAS, the DXCC 2000 program adopted by the Board in 1998 included changes to the criteria for a DXCC entity, and

WHEREAS, one of the new criteria makes separate IARU membership the basis for determination of a "political entity," and

WHEREAS, this rule has served a constructive purpose with respect to existing IARU societies, but WHEREAS, the rule also has had unforeseen consequences in creating an incentive for the creation of proposed IARU societies that do not further the objectives of the IARU, and

RECOGNIZING that elimination of the rule has no effect on the DXCC entities that already have been created as a result of the rule,

RESOLVED, that the DXCC rules are hereby amended by deleting IARU membership as a basis for determination of a "political entity."

DXCC NEWS

Bill Moore, NC1L, ARRL DXCC Manager, wants to remind everyone that the deadline to be shown in the next **DXCC Honor Roll list** is March 31, 2004. Submissions must be postmarked March 31, 2004, for your submission to count for this listing. The DXCC Honor Roll list will appear in August 2004 QST. There are 335 entities on the DXCC list, and you must be within the numerical top 10 DXCC entities to qualify. The current minimum requirement for Honor Roll is 326 current entities.

Bill Moore, NC1L, ARRL DXCC Manager, states that the following operations are **approved for DXCC credit**:
Juan de Nova/Europa - **TO4E and TO4WW** (from November 25, 2003 to December 21, 2003)
Iraq - **YI/N2OBM** - Starting January 2004
YI9ABL - Starting December 2003
YI3Q - Starting January 2004
YI9YMA - Starting January 2004
YI9ZF - Starting January 2004

DX CONVENTION

The DX Convention in Visalia will be held April 23-25th. For details and updated information, please visit the following Web page at: <http://www.scdxc.org/visalia/index.html>

9M6, EAST MALAYSIA

Nakamura, JE1JKL, will be active as 9M6NA in the ARRL DX CW Contest (February 21-22nd) as a Single-Op/Single Band (80m) entry. Outside of the contest, look for him on 160 and 80 meters. QSL via JE1JKL. E-mail requests for Bureau QSLs are OK via: 9m6na@jsfc.org Visit his Web page at: <http://jsfc.org/je1jkl/9m6na.html>

4S7, SRI LANKA

Members from Lufthansa Amateur Radio Club(LARC) will be here from February 3-8th (not March as first announced). So, look for the team to be active this week on all bands on SSB and CW. Operators will be Frank/DJ3FK, Bernd/DK7TF, Karl/DL4FP and Rudi/DK7PE. If possible, Rudi, DK7PE, will try some 160m, depending on the antenna's possibilities. Rudi tells OPDX that callsigns are not known yet, but they should be: DK7PE (4S7PEG), DK7TF (4S7DLG), DL4FP (4S7**G not known) and DJ3FK (4S7**G not known).

9M2 & 9M6, EAST AND WEST MALAYSIA

Rich, PA0RRS, will be active as 9M2/homecall, from Kuala Lumpur, West Malaysia, February 6-9th. He will then be active as 9M6/homecall from Keningau, East Malaysia, February 9-20th. QSL via his home callsign, direct or via the bureau.

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"Short Skip" ...cont'd

retaining the current 5 wpm code requirement, but no additional HF operating privileges. If adopted, this would be the first amateur license restructuring since 2000. See the League's web site for a complete description of the proposal.

Financial Support for DXpeditions . . . Based on a purely personal motivation (not representing an official position of NADXC) I try to contribute some modest financial support each year to a couple of organizations that provide financial assistance to DXpeditions. Although several worthy organizations exist to do this, I have chosen to be a contributing member of the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF) and the International DX Association (INDEXA). It's very expensive to finance DXpeditions, and NCDXF and INDEXA member contributions really do help offset the costs of providing many great DX opportunities for all of us. If you would consider helping either of these particular organizations, or any others you favor, please give it some thought. A little money from a lot of people can make a big difference, and I'm sure they will appreciate all the support they can get.

W4OZK is new Alabama Section Manager . . . As many of you may already know, Greg Sarratt (W4OZK) has been elected the new ARRL Alabama Section Manager, replacing Bill Cleveland (KR4TZ). Greg, a resident of Harvest, is well-known to many North Alabama hams.

73 es gud dx . . . W4UR

Minutes of January 13th Meeting ...cont'd

No old business was recalled for action.

New business brought before the membership included:

- Requests for sponsorship from three DXpeditions T33C, 3B9C, and 5V7 to be reviewed by the board.
- Acceptance of membership for Rutherford Johnson W4TCD, Barry W4WB's son.
- Request to check with Steve Carroll regarding cluster status.
- Call to membership for input to the budget planning process with no input given during meeting.
- John Morris discussed a book on 3Y0PI that he would make available to the membership when he has completed reading.

- Barry W4WB gave the status of an equipment procurement for Robert 3B9FR for a PC and software to improve the operating state at 3B9FR. Barry also asked the club to fund procurement of an Idiom Press keyer kit to help 3B9FR as well. This was voted on and passed. Also a request for a surplus iambic key was made with Don NN4S and Bill W4RK offering to help with a key they no longer were using.

This closed the formal business portion of the meeting followed by a video presentation of the recent BQ9P Pratas Island DXpedition.

Respectfully submitted by Vic **K4RVH**

Other DX Rumors and News...cont'd

DU9, PHILIPPINES

Jon, DU9/N0NM, from Davao City, Mindanao, Philippines, reports that he is on regularly on 160 meters once again. Look for him to show up on 1828.3 during the U.S. East Coast sunrise and his own sunrise. He states the noise is still high and has worked many EU dupes. QSL via W4DR.

FO, CLIPPERTON ISLAND

Dave, K4SV, informs: "A DXpedition to Clipperton Island will take place on or about March 8th, 2004. A multi-national team of experienced operators will leave San Diego, California aboard a ship bound for Clipperton Island and will be operational for 8 to 10 days. A WEB site and callsign will be announced just prior to leaving for Clipperton. Clipperton Ranks high on the most wanted DX lists worldwide. Activity

will be on all bands 10-160 meters on CW, SSB, RTTY, PSK and also AO-40 (CW and SSB) using five stations with amplifiers and beam/ vertical antennas. ICOM America has agreed to sponsor the DXpedition and will be providing transceivers. Donations from DX clubs and individuals for the DXpedition would be welcome to help cover costs." The team is led by Dave Anderson, K4SV, and the group consists of an International team of operators from several countries. Operators are: Dave Anderson, K4SV; Neil King, VA7DX; Gerard Jobcot, F2JD; Bob Grimmick, N6OX; Arnie Shatz, N6HC (team doctor) and Hiro Miyake, JF1OCQ (Several more checking on availability). For more information or if you would like to make a donation, please contact Dave at his E-mail address at: K4SV2@Charter.net. QSL via K4YL.

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Pratas Island Revisited

Tom Russell, N4KG

At the January 2004 meeting of the NADXC, a video documentary of the latest Pratas Island DXpedition was presented by Tim Pearson, KU4J. This was the seventh DXpedition operation from this island entity located 244 miles (West) of the southern end of Taiwan and 145 miles from the coast of mainland China / Hong Kong in the South China Sea. Pratas Island serves primarily as a military base for the Republic of China (Taiwan / Formosa) and was established as an independent DXCC entity following the initial operation on January 5, 1994 as BV9P. Subsequent operations occurred as follows with bands and modes worked (or heard) in Alabama by N4KG

BV9P January 5, 1994

BV9P March 21-25, 1994

BV9P May 25-June 5, 1995 - 25,000 QSO's by 19 operators

CW 30, 20M

SSB 20M

BQ9P November, 1998 - 37,000 QSO's by 15 operators

CW 40, 20, 15M

SSB 75, 20, 15M

BQ9P April 5-12, 2000 - 10 operators

CW 80, 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12M

SSB 20, 10M

BQ9P June 4-13, 2002 - 7 operators

CW 30, 20, 17M

SSB NIL

BQ9P April 5-12, 2003 - 25,000 QSO's by 9 operators

CW 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12M (80, 10M heard 339)

SSB 17M (only band worked on SSB this trip)

From Alabama, Pratas Island has clearly been more available on CW than SSB, often with 'weak but workable' signals. This was especially true for the interesting Long Path openings around our sunset (22-23Z) on 40, 30, and 20 Meter CW which were often found with the assistance of European or Asian spots posted on DX Summit from the internet. The more common openings occurred around our sunrise (12 - 14Z) on 80, 40, 30, and 20 Meters and in the early evenings on 17, 15, 12, and 10 Meters. BQ9P was surprisingly good copy (55) on 75M SSB one morning in Nov. 1998 on the delightful Skew Path to the SW that randomly occurs during our Winter months. During the last (2003) operation, BQ9P was heard weakly (339) on both 80 and 10M CW but not worked there. Only one 10M QSO has been made by N4KG and that was during the April 2000 operation on SSB (Thanks to opr W9ZR).

Tom Russell, **N4KG**

RV Nomad

This third installment of the “RV Nomad” column will include updates on “RV Communication Central” project activities, short summaries of amateur radio operating activities and end with brief travel logs including “local color” comments. I will try to keep the column focused on those things our members have expressed an interest in.

The time spent from November 6th until leaving Huntsville on January 14th was dedicated to setting-up the motor home and spending time with relatives and friends. So, our journey to Mobile was the beginning of our “see the U.S.A.” adventure and our switching-over to “RV Time.” Leaving the Huntsville Space and Rocket Center RV Park was a bitter-sweet experience. It’s a great little park and served us so well during our stay.

After attending the January NADXC meeting, I decided to add one more step to my RV check-list--verify that none of the NADXC members had stowed away in the motor home’s basement. Thanks again for all the fun, feedback and support at the January club meeting!

RV “Communications Central” Update: The station console described in the last column is working reasonably well, but a few minor adjustments are in order. I had to re-route wires between the shelves to make it easier to stow equipment after operation (hard to close the door). I also decided that it made sense to not include the digital interface equipment in the cabinet to allow more room for storage and access of the basic gear. These adjustments made station set-up and storage quick and easy.

I have included a picture of me installing a 500-Hz filter into my ICOM-703+. (It’s amazing how many screws and gyrations you have to go through to simply stick a filter into these rigs—not for the inexperienced.) The last picture is of me collecting states on SSB from the “RV Communications Cen-



tral” main operating position.

These changes concluded the “Communication Central Station Console” project and established my next project challenge—how to create a DX/Contest-grade quick-connect, external equipment cube that easily integrates station accessories and provides expanded digital communication capabilities. This “Nomad Equipment Cube” would include an MFJ-1275M Sound Card Radio Interface unit, a GAP “Hear-It” in-line DSP unit, a TNC, audio/accessory switching controls and high-quality speaker(s). It would also be designed for portable use to complement my QRP rigs, etc..

Stay-tuned--I hope to have most of this project completed (and perhaps an antenna project) in time for the March “LongPath.”

On-the-Air Adventures!

Getting back on-the-air was great fun—rag-chewing, collecting states and countries. Several contacts enjoyed sharing their RV/camping experiences and provided useful travel information. I managed to work 16 States and 5 Countries, despite poor band conditions and modest equipment. Logging was done by pen and paper. I later transferred this contact information into my PocketPC using a program called MobileLog. This will also allow me to import it into DXBase later.

A QSO with Dudley—D22JE in Harare, Zimbabwe on 15-meters was an operating high point. DX skills enabled me to beat-out a significant pile-up. Shared operating skills facilitated a nice, sustained QSO. It never fails to amaze me as to what can occur when there’s limited activity because band conditions are perceived to be poor.

The Kenwood TS-480SAT and Maldol HVU-8 antenna set-up seemed to work reasonably well. As you can see from the picture, the vertical antenna is very compact and, so far, it has been “RV Resort Compatible, not drawing too much attention.

I hope to reach minimum totals of 35 states and 35



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RV Nomad...cont'd



countries prior to the March LongPath. I might do significantly better if I can get some better antennas up and/or operate in some contests--it's time to turn up the heat another notch!

Joining the Adventure: Several NADXC'ers (including Tom-N4WBS) mentioned plans to go camping soon. I'd be interested to know what their set-ups will be and what kind of operating goals they will have for their adventures. I would also like some feedback on what kind of goals/activities you think I should consider while traveling extensively. Perhaps we could set-up a weekly contact schedule.

My e-mail address is craigb44@msn.com. Drop me a few lines when you can and let me know how you're doing with your projects and operating efforts too.

72/73 & DX,
Craig W. Behrens—NM4T

Short Travel Log (for those interested): The five days at rustic Chickasabogue State Park (near Mobile) gave us a chance to hike, ride bikes and settle-down for the adventure. Since we know Mobile so well, we day-treked, visiting our favorite spots in Fairhope, Gulf Shores and Foley--busy, but nothing like in tourist season.

Our next stop was two days in Baton Rouge. I took one picture as we approached the Argosy Casino complex before we were approached and was told they were enforcing a "NO Pictures" policy due to terrorist activities. Inside, Pam and I played the quarter slot machines and both came out ahead--we left while the getting was good. The high point was our tour of the Destroyer U.S.S. Kidd. The 38-points of interest tour was outstanding, an excellent restoration job with a plethora of added memorabilia.

Next stop--a week in Houston. Oil refinery plants were everywhere. Although they appeared ugly in the daytime, they sparkled like Christmas displays at night. For shop-a-holics, the three-level Galleria Mall is something to behold, including its large indoor ice skating rink. In addition to sight-seeing, we went bowling and saw the movie "The Return of the King." A high point was our attending a televised Lakewood Church service, led by Minister Joel Osteen. Approximately 8,000 people attended and they have acquired a new facility, formerly the Houston Astros Center, that will eventually hold up to 16,000 per service. And...I finally started HF operation and chased DX. We left Houston for San Antonio just as the Pre-Super Bowl partying was reaching a fever pitch. Apparently, Texans take this event seriously as there were a lot of related shootings, stabbings and fights in the news. Ticket scalping had some prices exceeding \$5,000--Amazing!

San Antonio has become a tourist and "snow-bird" Mecca. I plan to pop-up the antenna today and get on the air this week, in between all the tourist activities. More later in the March "RV Nomad" installment which I hope to submit from Tucson, Arizona.



Other DX Rumors and News...cont'd

HF0, SOUTH SHETLAND

Voytek, HF0QF, is currently active from Poland's Henryk Arctowski base station at Rakusa Point, King George Island until December. Activity will be on all bands (80-10 meters) CW/SSB. He was spotted on 40 meters SSB (7056 kHz) and 80 meters CW (3513 kHz) this week. Wanda, SP7IWA, handles his QSL cards. She is having them printed, so please be patient.

JW, SVALBARD

Rag, LA5HE, will once again be active as JW5HE from February 12-18th. There will be an emphasis on the low bands and CW. QSL via his home callsign.

LZ35, BULGARIA

Gosho, LZ1ZF, will be using the special callsign LZ35ZF to celebrate his 35th anniversary of being active on the Amateur Radio bands. The special callsign LZ35ZF will be available until December 31, 2004, on all bands and modes. QSL to LZ1ZF via the Bureau.

OH0, ALAND ISLAND

Operators Raimo/OH3BHL, Perti/OH7WW and Juha/OH9MM will be active as OH0I during the CQ/RJ WW RTTY WPX Contest (February 14th) as Multi-Single entry. QSL via OH3BHL.

OX2, GREENLAND (Special Event)

Look for Allan, OX3KV (OZ8A), to use the special callsign OX2KAN during the rest of the year to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Kangaatsiaq municipality. Activity will be on all HF bands (mainly CW). Allan is only using a G5RV antenna right now, but once the snow is gone, he'll put up some more antennas. OX2KAN will also be active from NA-134. QSL via the OZ Bureau or direct to: BOX 551, 3955 Kangaatsiaq, Greenland.

PJ7, ST. MAARTEN

Bill/W8EB and his wife Dorothy/W8DVC will be on the island from February 15th through March 21st. Activity will be on 160-10 meters, CW, SSB, RTTY and PSK31. Bil's callsign will be PJ7/W8EB. His activity will include a Single-Op/All Band entry in the ARRL DX CW Contest as PJ7/W8EB and a Multi-Op/High Power entry (with K8RLM) in the ARRL DX Phone Contest as PJ7B. QSL both contests via W8EB.

VK9L & VK9NB, LORD HOWE AND NORFOLK ISLANDS

Babs/DL7AFS and Lot/DJ7ZG will be active as VK9LB from February 16-27th. They inform OPDX that they currently have a problem with transportation to Lord Howe Island as they are limited to only 14 KG per person. This means that they will have to leave some antennas and equipment at Brisbane. They state, "Of course to charter a private flight is a possibility. That is, however, too expensive for us." Activity

will be on 80-6 meters on SSB, RTTY and PSK. Starting on March 1st, they will be active for 2 weeks as VK9NB from Norfolk Island. They hope their activity will be without restrictions from there. All QSLs are via DL7AFS. For more information, please visit their Web page at: <http://www.qsl.net/dl7afs>

YV0, AVES ISLANDS

Reports indicate that the upcoming DXpedition to Aves Island is now delayed until late February or (possibly) March.

XU, CAMBODIA

Remember to look for Peter, NO2R, to be active as XU7ACY from Sihanoukville, February 2-8th. He plans to be active mainly on 160 meters and 80/40 meters. QSL via K2NJ, direct.

YI9, IRAQ

George, K7YMA, informs OPDX that he will be operating from Iraq as YI9YMA now through April 15th. He will be operating on 10, 15 and 20 meters SSB only as duties permit. QSL is via the W7 Bureau or his home callsign K7YMA. The K7YMA and YI9YMA information has been updated on QRZ, Buckmaster and the WM7D websites. George states that he will submit the log to LoTW upon his return home. He also mentions that his operation has been accredited by ARRL DXCC Desk.

YI9, IRAQ

Dwayne, KE4RVT, is currently working here and is active as YI9RVT. However, Alex, AI2Q, received and E-mail from Dwayne stating he has developed a problem with his Radio Shack 22-510 PS and blew the electrolytic capacitors. He is currently looking for a copy of the schematic and is running/operating by battery and minimal antenna. He is still waiting on antennas to arrive. There were two QSNs reported as this was being typed. Dwayne was spotted on 10107 kHz at 1953z and 28025 kHz at 1153z.

73,

Frank, W6DSQ

My Log's Hidden Treasures...cont'd

Oberdorfer would certainly be allocated space), this age information makes it into the log. I currently have about 3300 entries with almost five years on the air now, and several hundred of these have age information.

Given this background, here are my log's two cents on the graying ham population:

Average age – 58
 Average years licensed – 28
 Average age when licensed – 26

plus these extremes:

Oldest – 96
 Youngest – 12
 Longest time licensed – 66 years
 Shortest time licensed – 3 days (I was privileged to be his first QSO)
 Youngest when first licensed – 8
 Oldest when first licensed – 72

What these numbers don't tell are some of the stories that came along with age information – or the tales I was told on the repeat QSOs I've had with many of these operators. That information is in my head, or scratched on the back of QSL cards.

Those of you with many more thousands of QSOs under your belts may wish to mine your logs. I'm afraid, though, the average age number might be the same!

73 de Tom Duncan, **KG4CUY**

Bill Gerth, W4RK Named ARES EC of Williamson Co.

February 2, 2004 Bill Gerth of Brentwood, TN was recently named the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Emergency Coordinator for Williamson County by Steve Ewald, Field Organization Manager for the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) in Newington, CT. ARRL is the national organization of over 175,000 FCC-licensed amateur radio operators in the United States. Amateur Radio has a rich tradition of providing emergency radio communication in times of natural disaster and at other times of public need.

As Williamson County ARES Emergency Coordinator, Gerth will be responsible for the organization, training, and utilization of the 300 amateur radio operators residing in the county in providing emergency support to existing response organizations such as the Red Cross. In this position, Gerth will report to Tom Delker, ARES District Emergency Coordinator for Middle Tennessee and Sheila Tallent, Tennessee State ARES Emergency Coordinator.

According to Delker, "Bill Gerth, FCC callsign W4RK, brings extensive career experience in technology research, technology management, and business to this position." First licensed as an amateur radio operator in 1954 while in high school, Gerth served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, worked in biomedical computer research at Vanderbilt University and Washington University in St. Louis, and, most recently was a

founder and senior manager at ADS Security until his retirement in mid 2003.

In addition to Gerth's leadership as Emergency Coordinator, he is assisted by an active Planning Committee consisting of Bill Jorgensen of Leiper's Fork, Tom Neill and Allen Lovett of College Grove, and Jack Cox of Brentwood. Also assisting in an advisory capacity are former Williamson County Emergency Coordinators, Gene Pentecost of Palm Desert, CA, and Dr. Randy Oakes of Brentwood. Williamson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (WCARES), is a volunteer organization and seeks participation from all Williamson County licensed amateur radio operators.

For information, contact: Bill Gerth, 615.377.0149

[Editor's note: In addition to Bill being named EC for Williamson County Chris Reed, KF4MMF was named EC for Madison County. Congratulations to two NADXCers, who are working hard to keep the service aspect of the amateur radio service active.]

Is the Band Dead . . . Or Is Everybody Just Listening? *Myron Manker, W4UR*

How many times have all of us tuned to 20 meters or a higher frequency band to see what good DX opportunities might be available at that time, only to hear no signals? Our immediate conclusion is that the band must be "dead." But wait a minute - does hearing nothing always mean we can't communicate with anybody, or could it mean that everybody else is just listening too? After all, if nobody is talking there is nothing to hear! The fundamental question we're really dealing with is how to verify what propagation paths, if any, are open on a particular band. There are several available tools that can help us answer that question, such as packet cluster spots, Internet spots, WWV propagation broadcasts, and propagation software. Some or all of these can help, but there's another important resource we often neglect to use, and that's the NCDXF/IARU international beacon network. This network of 18 HF beacon stations around the world transmits 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on the upper frequency HF bands and is a very reliable indicator of what parts of the world may be "open" at any time. At our March 2003 NADXC meeting Barry Johnson (W4WB) presented a very interesting program on the beacons, and it might be well to mention them again.

The International Beacon Project (IBP) was originally funded in 1972, primarily by the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF). NCDXF still maintains the network in cooperation with the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU), and with additional support from Kenwood and Ham Radio Outlet. The 18 beacon stations in the network transmit in sequence on the same specific frequencies in the 20-meter, 17-meter, 15-meter, 12-meter, and 10-meter bands on recurring 3-minute intervals, according to a specific time schedule. Each beacon station's transmission starts with a 22-wpm cw identification of the station's call sign, followed by a series of four separate one-second steady carrier tones at power levels of 100 watts, 10 watts, 1 watt, and 100 milliwatts, respectively. By listening on one of the five beacon frequencies, in just three minutes you can monitor transmissions from all 18 beacons and tell what paths (if any) are open to any of the locations.

Each of the beacon stations has the same basic equipment (a Kenwood TS-50 transceiver and a Cushcraft vertical antenna) to maintain consistency among the transmitting locations. An accurate controller manages timing of when each beacon station transmits on each frequency and the output power sequencing. The timing is very accurate, so your station clock needs to be accurate, too. If you haven't already done so, try periodically listening for the beacons on a regular basis for awhile ... you might find yourself listening for them routinely. To make it even easier, you can load the five beacon frequencies in your transceiver memories for ease of recall.

There are also more than two dozen computer programs and several pieces of hardware that are available to provide the beacon listener with assistance in identifying the beacons or automatically monitoring the beacon signals. These can make beacon monitoring even more enjoyable. Please check out more beacon details on the NCDXF web site at www.ncdxf.org/beacons.html and get better acquainted with this very convenient and informative propagation evaluation tool.

As long distance communication becomes progressively more difficult on 12 meters and 10 meters over the next couple of years, the beacon signals on these bands may be heard less and less often. But, the beacon signals on the lower three bands should continue to give reliable indications of current propagation conditions.

Oh, by the way, here's one last thought. There's no real substitute for being a "beacon" yourself by calling CQ on what appears to be a dead band. You never know how many other stations are in the listening mode too, and just might respond to your call.

Myron, W4UR

NADXC 2004 Proposed Budget

Cash Expenditures	Budget
60 x \$18 Hamfest Banquet	\$1,083.00
Travel Expenses (spkr)	\$200.00
Packet Cluster	\$200.00
Repeater	\$100.00
Programs	\$150.00
Awards	\$150.00
Misc	\$200.00
Repr & Mail	\$50.00
Total	\$2,133.00
Cash Receipts	
Dues	\$785.00
55 x \$25 Hamfest Banquet Tickets	\$1,375.00
Contributions	\$0.00
Total	\$2,160.00
Packet Cluster includes replacement of Ft. Payne radio \$175	

Upcoming Programs

Barry Johnson, W4WB

NADXC Program for February 10

"The Magic of Six Meters"

presented by Tim Wininger, KY5R

Ever thought about getting on six meters? Is the operating protocol like HF? How do you know when the band is open and to where? Antennas? Equipment? What is 6-m DXing like? Tim will answer these and many more questions in a lively presentation.

NADXC Program Preview for March 2004

"Mobile HF DXing"

presented by Barry Johnson, W4WB and Don Wolfe, AA4VN

Barry and Don will discuss a variety of issues that should be considered when constructing a quality mobile HF station. These include such topics as selection of the radio, antenna choices, installation fun and folly, speaker, and noise suppression. Operation of a mobile station safely and efficiently will be covered, including logging and CW. A variety of relevant "stuff" will be shown, some SOA and other nostalgic.

DX Contests for the Coming Month

Chuck Lewis, N4NM

XE International RTTY Contest (RTTY), 80-10 meters

Feb 7, 1800Z to Feb 8, 2400Z
Exchange: RST & Serial No. or XE state/district
See page 103, Feb. QST

CQWW RTTY WPX Contest. (RTTY), 80-10 meters

Feb 14, 0000Z to Feb 15, 2400Z
Exchange: RST & Serial No.
See <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/>

RSGB 1.8 MHz Contest (CW only), 160 meters

Feb 14, 2100Z to Feb 15, 0100Z
Exchange: RST plus Serial No. (& UK district)
See page 103, Feb. QST

ARRL Intl. DX Contest. (CW), 160-10 meters

Feb 21, 0000Z to Feb 22, 2400Z
Exchange: RST plus State/Province; DX send RST plus pwr
See page 96, Dec. QST

CQWW 160 Meter Contest (PHONE), 160 meters Feb 28,

0000Z to Feb 29, 2359Z
Exchange: RS plus State/Province/DXCC Entity
See <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/>

REF French Contest (PHONE), 80-10 meters

Feb 28, 0600Z to Feb 29, 1800Z

Exchange: RS plus Serial No.
See page 98, Jan. QST

UBA (Belgium) Contest (CW), 80-10 meters

Feb 28, 1300Z to Feb 29, 1300Z
Exchange: RST plus Serial No.
See page 98, Jan. QST

ARRL Intl. DX Contest. (PHONE), 160-10 meters

Mar 6, 0000Z to Mar 7, 2400Z
Exchange: RS plus State/Province; DX send RS plus pwr
See page 96, Dec. QST

OTHERS:

Asia-Pacific Spring Sprint, CW 1100Z-1300Z, Feb 14

DARC 10-Meter Digital Contest
1100Z-1700Z, Mar 7

RSGB Commonwealth Contest 1000Z, Mar 13 to 1000Z, Mar 14

AGCW QRP Contest 1400Z-2000Z, Mar 13

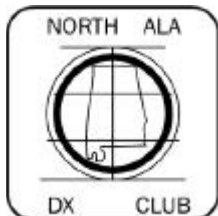
Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals; beware.

Chuck, N4NM



A North Alabama DX Club Publication

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*We're on the
Web:
www.nadxc.org*

***How to Join:** Come to a club meeting; or send in application by mail
(form on www.NADXC.org); or call Vic Holland at (256)721-9106*

Editor's Soapbox

Hope everyone had an opportunity to take part in all the Groundhog Day holiday festivities this year! It looks like Monte Sano Maurice did not see his shadow even though his cousin up in Pennsylvania did. I guess that means an early spring for us and maybe more winter for the folks up north.

This month we had a lot of good local content in the LongPath. Please let our contributors know how much we appreciate them taking time to write for the LongPath.

That's about it from me for this month!

73, Jared Cassidy, KQ4VT

Annual NADXC member dues for the year 2004 are payable as of January 1, and we ask everyone's cooperation in getting them in early. There has been no change in the dues for this year . . . \$15.00 for individual memberships and \$20.00 for family memberships (those residing in the same household). That's only \$1.25 per month for individuals, which is a great deal.

If you're able to attend the February 10 meeting, you can pay your dues then. Or, if you prefer, you can mail a check (payable to NADXC) to Vic Holland (K4RVH), Secretary/Treasurer, at the following address:

Vic Holland— K4RVH
219 Cedar Pond Drive
Madison, AL 35757-7633

Thanks to all our members for your continued support. It's what keeps NADXC alive and well!

Your 2004 Board of Directors