

Northern California DX Foundation

Newsletter

Summer 1989



XF4F Saves Two Lives via Ham Radio

Luis, XE1L, reports that Fernando, XF4F, military commander of Revillagigedo, operating the equipment donated to him by NCDXF, on June 13, 1989 managed to save two lives as he used the radio for emergency traffic to contact XE3EB asking the Navy to send a plane to the island to pick up a sailor with a lung problem and a lady who had a miscarriage. While official communications failed, it was possible through amateur radio to perform this life-saving act. Fernando was trained by the XF4L team members to become the first permanent ham operator on XF4.

Rotuma Update--QSL Cards

by Kip Edwards, W6SZN

The DXpedition to the new DXCC country of Rotuma Island took place last October-November, 1988. Ross Forbes, WB6GFJ, served as QSL manager for the expedition. In the last seven months, we have received and answered about 23,000 QSL cards. This massive amount of paper was dealt with by a group of NCDXF volunteers, who gave up weekends to make sure that you got your Rotuma cards promptly.

To put this in perspective, we got the first batch of 20,000 cards from the printer in early March. In three months, we handled cards at a rate of over 7,000 a month. Imagine the fun of responding to 234 cards every day of the month for three months. Since

we all work for a living, imagine dealing with 1,750 cards every Sunday for three months. This is not to say that we went into this project blindfolded, but I hope it gives some idea of the reaction of a QSL manager who gets a second batch of cards with a note saying "I sent my cards two weeks ago and haven't received a reply. Are you guys dumb, drunk, lazy or all of the above?"



Sending for cards so you maximize your returns and make life easier for the folks who answer them is not a new subject. Nonetheless, Rusty, W6OAT, asked me to write a few comments as a result of the Rotuma experience. So, here are a few (ten to be exact) "rules" that, if adhered to, ought to help.

Before getting to the "rules," let me describe how we handled the 3D2XX cards. While we were waiting for the QSL printer, we opened all the incoming cards and put information such as call, number of cards sent, SAE or SASE, green stamps, IRCs, etc into a computer. This effort made available a perhaps first-ever data base of cards received from an expedition of this magnitude, permitting all sorts of interesting statistics. If they look interesting enough, we'll publish an article in a future Newsletter. Meanwhile, all 34,700 QSOs in our log were put into a computer. Stating it in one sentence brings a smile, as I am reminded of all of the evenings and weekends spent "reading" callsigns while Rusty, Lou (K6TMB) or Ross typed away at the keyboard. Trying to decipher handwriting (including, I am embarrassed to say, some of my own) and recognizing the substantial possibility of input error strongly influenced the way we would later deal with cards that could not be found in the press-on labels produced from the logs.

Once the logs were in the computer, Bob Wilson, N6TV, worked his computer magic to produce thousands of sheets of labels in callsign order. It was Bob's program that made all of this possible and he deserves the thanks of everyone who has a 3D2XX card. Once the cards arrived from the printer, we began the seemingly never-ending task of sorting the incoming cards, finding the QSO in the labels, peeling the label off and affixing it to

a blank 3D2XX card, and putting it and an NCDXF stuffer into the envelope ready to be mailed. If we could not find a label on the first pass, the card went into the "NIL" box (not in log) to be checked against the original log. If this check didn't produce a match, the card went into the "SNIL" box (seriously not in log) where I checked each one, went forward and back a day, an hour, two hours, and, in some cases, looked through the entire log.

If you got your card back with a "not in log" note, it's because it was not there!

Searching for 23,000 QSOs produced the following "rules" for successful QSLing:

1. Make sure your callsign and the QSO data are on the same side of the card. If it's not (usually because the front side of the card has the callsign and the back has the data), write your callsign in big letters somewhere on the back of the card. The JA's seem to have the worst cards in this respect, although they have the best in all other respects.

2. See Rule 1 (also known as the "flip-flip-flip) rule.

3. Write legibly or, if you can't, type or have your wife, husband or children fill out your cards. This wasn't a big problem for us, with all the data in a computer-generated list of labels and the "primary" piece of information -- the callsign -- usually printed on the card. Some of the handwriting had to be seen to be believed.

4. Figure out some scheme that works for you that will tell you every time without fail the correct time and date. All serious operators keep their logs in GMT. That not only means that your local time will not be the same as GMT, but also that your local date will often not be the same. On Rotuma, for example, at high noon local time, with the midday sun blazing down and the ocean pounding away, it was "tomorrow" in radioland. Clocks that tell you the correct GMT are cheap and abundant. Get one, and remember that the date also changes at 2359Z. Most of the problems we encountered were an hour off, one way or the other, or a day off. Some were just bizarre, but we found most of them anyway.

5. The buddy system may work in other pursuits, but it really slows things down in responding to QSL cards. By this I mean the practice of sending your cards, your wife's cards, your next-door neighbor's cards, or (gasp) your entire radio club's cards in one envelope. If a volunteer is sitting in front of 500 cards with a "W" prefix, it really doesn't help to open the envelope and find a card for W1ABC and cards for KA1ABC (wife), KB1ABC (#1 son), and KB1XYZ (#1 daughter). This situation meant for us that the same envelope got passed around to four different people or, more likely, got put in a pile because we were not answering that particular prefix that day.

6. Be patient! An expedition that makes 4,000 QSOs in a contest weekend can respond to cards much faster than one that makes nine times as many contacts. Our experience is that the mails rarely lose your cards, and the reason you don't have them yet is that we haven't gotten to them. Please, please wait a reasonable time before sending a second set of cards. It really created havoc for us, because once the label was gone, no one knew whether we had already answered the card or whether

it was not in the log. We opted to assume that we, not you, had messed up and all such cards were put into a big box and answered. As a result, many have duplicate cards, but only at a cost of lots of hours of work on our end. What's a reasonable time, you say? Well, I worked the Vietnam Dxpediton when I returned from Rotuma, sent cards right away, and still don't have replies (June 26, 1989). If I haven't heard by the end of the year, I'll start to worry. Oh, yes -- if you can't resist sending duplicate requests anyway, at least say so on the cards or on an enclosed note. That way we'll know what's what.

7. Take one of your cards and look at it as if you were responding to 34,700 QSL cards. Is the callsign easy to find? Are the time, band and date easy to find? If not, give some thought to choosing a different design next time you get cards printed. It is truly amazing how many cards seem to be designed to conceal information. A practice that some used, and I intend to use in the future, is to use a yellow highlighter on the callsign and band.

8. Send one card and one envelope in each outer envelope. Since we knew before we left how the computer would sort the labels, we got the word out that only one return envelope was necessary. That worked some of the time, but proved to be a mistake when we could not find all of the QSOs. If there were more than one return envelope, we sent back those cards we could find and put the balance in the NIL box. If there was only one envelope, everything went into the dreaded NIL box. Thus, cards were delayed, causing many to violate Rule 6 when all of their buddies got their cards and theirs hadn't arrived (because one could not be found in the labels and, when looked up in the logs, we found an input error, a busted call, etc.).

9. A note that says "thanks" or "great operation" works wonders. It doesn't mean that you'll get your cards any faster, or that you'll be in the log when you really are not. But it will make the person answering your card feel better. Pictures are great, and so are postcards, information about your radio club, or things about where you live. We collected all this stuff and put together a scrapbook for Eddie DeYoung, 3D2XX. I hope he likes it.

10. Sending money does not mean that you're entitled to special treatment, or that we should bend the rules for you and "find" you in the log when you're not there. A contribution over and above the cost of postage to return your cards is warmly appreciated (these expeditions aren't cheap), but you should make one only because you want to and not because you expect (demand) to gain from doing so.



Behind The 3W8 Video

The Foundation just added a great new VHS videotape of the recent 3W8CW and 3W8DX DXpedition to its library. Have you ever wondered just what goes into making one of these tapes? Well read on because we think you'll find the following letter from Dan Whitsett, W4BRE, to Foundation Librarian WB6ZUC fascinating. Dan volunteered to edit nearly seven hours of raw video shot by the Hungarian operators. Zoli, HA5PP, sent the original tape to Pierre, F6HIZ, who forwarded it to Lou, K6TMB, who passed it to Jo, WB6ZUC, who sent it to Don. This is Don's letter enclosed with the edited tape he sent to Jo for inclusion in the library.

"Dear Jo:

Will wonders ever cease? Here is the final, edited tape!

The rest of the world will never know ... they'll watch it and think what a terrific DX program, ... or probably they won't even *think* about the "program," ... they'll think what a terrific DXpedition!! Only you will know. Since I won't get to tell anyone else, let me pass along my little story to you [Ed note: little did Dan count on the investigative talents of your Newsletter editor!].

Let me recap a few of the events leading up to the finished tape:

- 1) I received the tape. The length of it alone, seven hours, would take quite a while to edit, even if it had all been in English.
- 2) The tape had "technical breakups" all through it. This probably was caused when it was transferred from the European system to the American standard NTSC. Some machine along the line had a servo problem, causing terrible drag or "wow" every few seconds. I could tell this was going to be a major problem because in my editing I need a stable signal for several seconds before the part I want to "take" so my tape recorder has time to lock onto the signal.
- 3) I knew in advance that the tape was long and I believed the audio was in Hungarian. I had planned to hire a Hungarian translator. What I didn't realize was that there was absolutely no narration! It was all just natural sound; the camera just followed people around.

I was able to find only one person in the entire city who could speak Hungarian. Unfortunately, that person could not speak English!

The important parts that I needed interpretations for had such low audio that my translator was not able to pick up much, but the translator was able to give me the general description of what was being discussed at important conferences. This part alone took two weeks of work.

4) I got a local Hungarian to translate into Hungarian a letter I had written requesting information about the DXpedition which I mailed to each of the operators. I drew a little storyboard of things I needed explained. Unfortunately, I never received a reply from any of them. One thing that was particularly important to clear up was the actual number of Hungarians on the trip. The DX bulletins all had said there were three, and yet I clearly saw four. I didn't feel I could do a program about three Hungarians going to Vietnam if there really were four, and there were.

5) I decided to call one of the HA5 DXpeditioners in Budapest on the telephone and tried day after day to obtain a number. Budapest telephone information had no listing for either of the two names I obtained.

Finally, though, I was able to get a couple of phone numbers, but I could not get anyone to answer. I tried calling all hours of their day and night, from their 7 AM to 11 PM. At last, someone answered but had no idea who I was asking for and hung up on me. I continued trying to reach them by telephone for the next four or five weeks.

6) I thought surely I could run across someone in Budapest on the radio who could help me reach them. I was told that 7:00 a.m. was the best time to work Hungary, which, unfortunately, was midnight my time. So, I scanned the bands from midnight until 1:00 a.m. for three weeks. Lack of sleep finally caused me to abandon this approach.

7) I located a Vietnamese family in town and took the tape, my video cassette player and my television over to their house. I hoped they could interpret the original Vietnamese that was being translated into Hungarian on the tape. Unfortunately, they had the same problem of not being able to hear the audio well enough. Plus, they were from South Vietnam and had trouble understanding the accents from the North. But they were able to pick up some new things for me. They heard the Hungarians telling the Vietnamese about trying to operate from "some small islands." They heard them describe Germans who tried to land on the islands and tell how one of them was killed by gunfire. I asked if they heard the word "Spratley" mentioned since I knew that was where all this had happened, but they only heard "small islands."

8) Believe it or not, I was getting so desperate and so much time had gone by without my being able to get the information I wanted, that I took part of the tape to an intelligence group for help.

9) I heard HG5A on the air during a recent contest and thought maybe this was a club station to which the DXpeditioners belonged. They were working stations so

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NCDXF Show Reunites Old Friends

Dear Josephine,

I am returning the KX6DS slide show to you in a separate package. It was borrowed by the Columbus, Indiana, amateur radio club. Through a series of wonderful coincidences, which I will explain, I ended up with it. Columbus is my place of birth and boyhood home. When I returned from Kwajalein, I went to Columbus to visit my parents. While there, I was listening to the two meter repeater in town. The club members were talking about the program scheduled for the club-meeting that week. It soon became apparent that it was my slide show which they had gotten from the NCDXF library! I broke in and told them who I was and offered to come back for the meeting. They were astounded, to say the least. Gary Davis, who is the program chairman for the club, is an old schoolmate of mine. In fact, I started the high school radio club and gave him his novice test over thirty years ago!

The night of the meeting there were about thirty members and visitors present. Some members from the Seymour, Indiana, club drove twenty miles. I was a member of that club and in fact, took the novice test at one of their meetings 32 years ago in March of 1957. Another friend I hadn't seen in 21 years drove 25 miles to be at the meeting. It was almost like a "This is Your Life" episode. It was a wonderful evening for me as well as them.

I asked them to let me borrow the show and return it for them later. I then brought it back to Lexington, KY, where I now live and work. I showed the slides to the people I work with and also to a group of seven amateurs in the Lexington area who make up the "hard core" DXers in the north central Kentucky area. Included in the group was N4AR, N4WJ and K4FU who drove 75 miles from Louisville to be there. It was a great way to be introduced to the area DXers.

I moved to Lexington three weeks ago, ending my stay at Kwajalein. KX6DS is now QRT after five and one-half years and 83,000 QSOs. The QSLs will continue to go to the same address until the end of the year. After that, they will be sent to my new address as K4TO -- wherever that is. I don't have a new home yet, but I am looking madly.

I will always cherish the experience I had as KX6DS. I won't be going overseas again for a while, but I am ready to go on a short DXpedition as an operator if any opportunities arise. I will miss the thrill of being sought after by the deserving, but am looking forward to finding a home and getting back on the air as K4TO. Presently I am on the HF and 2 meter bands from the mobile. I hope to see you on the air soon. Until then...

73, 88 and DX

de Dave, K4TO (ex-KX6DS)

Unsigned Letter Sent to NCDXF

"Gentlemen:

Just a few months ago I confirmed my 100 countries to earn my DXCC and my primary interest in amateur radio is now DX.

I recently was in a DXer's home where I saw a copy of your newsletter containing a well deserved complaint about the QRMing of DXpeditions. I wonder if you realize you are responsible for some of this by apparently requiring those you help to favor W6-land.

You do not have to be in DX very long before you know that propagation from Europe and Africa moves from east to west across the United States. A look at the map shows most of the eighth call area to be surrounded by or directly over the fourth area and the ninth and zero call areas mostly over the fifth. So many times I have heard an expedition or rare country work the first four areas then jump to the sixth with the excuse that the sixes have such a hard time. If they would look at the DXCC Honor Roll they would find more six calls than any except the huge fourth area so it seems the sixth area is not suffering too much.

The SORASD and M-V Island operations are prime examples of what I mean. As I recall, SORASD worked the first four call areas and then jumped to the sixth and stayed with them until propagation was lost to many other areas. I don't remember the call used on the M-V Island operation, but the same thing occurred then. Every night I heard them work sixes until the propagation to our area was completely gone so it appears this was required. During both of these operations, there was much QRM from nines, zeros and some fives because they were being ignored. I suppose eights were doing the same thing although I could not hear them.

I am sure this letter will change nothing but I just felt like pointing out that you are responsible for some of the QRM and fairer operations would eliminate a portion of it on some of these DXpeditions.

73,

No signature for I want to be sure I get my XF4L card."

(Response de W6OAT: Just for the record, the NCDXF did not sponsor either the SORASD or the 4J1FS expeditions. Further, quoting from the material NCDXF sends to individuals requesting support, "NCDXF makes no rules for your operation. If you operate under our sponsorship, we recommend that you treat all equally and show no favoritism for any nation, area, club or local affiliation." Finally, although the Foundation is not handling the XF4L QSLs, this 8-lander can rest assured that we never would withhold a card because he expressed a critical view of our activities.)

President's Report

NCDXF President, Rusty Epps, W6OAT, presented his annual report to the Foundation's Board of Trustees during the Visalia DX Convention. Below are some of the highlights from Rusty's report:

DXpedition Support

NCDXF has supported sixteen DX operations with nearly \$25,000 in cash or equipment grants in the last year. We made grants to:

DJ6SI for Abu Ail, A15AA

DJ6SI for TY9SI

SM0AGD for Sao Tome, S9AGD

G4JVG for Cocos Keeling (VK9YG) QSLs

W7SW for Cocos Keeling (VK9YT) and Christmas Is. (VK9XT) QSLs

DJ6SI for Niger, 5UV386

W6SZN for Rotuma Island, 3D2XX

9X5AA for a 40/80 meter antenna

N4NW for 9Q5NW and TN4NW QSLs

HA5PP to purchase rig for abortive XW8 operation

ZS6PT for ZS8MI equipment

ZS6BCR for ZS3Z and 3DA0/ZS6BCR QSLs

VE3IEO for Mellish Reef (VK9ZM) and Willis Island (VK9ZW)

OH2BH for XF4L

PS7KM for St. Peter and Paul Rocks, ZY0SW

DL1VU for T22VU and 3D2VU QSLs

SM0AGD for equipment for C9MKT

Shows

In the last 12 months, NCDXF has supplied 337 35mm slide shows or videotapes to 284 different clubs. This compares with only 137 clubs using our library service last year. Thirty-eight new clubs have been added since we published the January newsletter. Some of the clubs using our shows have given the Foundation wonderful write-ups in their local bulletins and newsletters. Some clubs also have proved to be a source of new Foundation members and/or have made substantial financial donations in their own names. We still need to work harder to obtain new, high quality shows. This past year we added only 4 slide shows and 6 videotapes to the library. The quality of many of our offerings leaves a lot to be desired.

Organization

Bob Ferrero, W6RJ, resigned as President and Trustee, and Ernie ZumBrunnen, WB6UOM, resigned as Treasurer and Trustee. Rusty Epps, W6OAT, was elected President to succeed W6RJ. Stan Kaisel, K6UD, was elected Vice President to succeed W6OAT. Stan also is

acting as interim Treasurer. John Cronin, K6LLK, was elected Trustee. There presently exists one opening on the Board for another Trustee. Jim Maxwell, W6CF, has transferred the membership data base files to Trustee Lou Beaudet, K6TMB.

Beacons

Eight beacons presently are on the air: 4U1UN, KH6O, JAZIGY, 4X4TU, OH2B, CT3B, ZS6DN and LU4AA. The Stanford beacon, W6WX, was stolen from its site in late summer. NCDXF spent \$1,000 to purchase a replacement transceiver for Stanford, but because of a problem getting a part for the controller, W6WX returned to the air more slowly than originally expected. The equipment sent to Colombia as the HK beacon disappeared in transit and is unaccounted for. The ZS6DN beacon was struck by lightning but has been repaired and returned to operation.

W6QHS has received renewal of FCC permission for NCDXF to operate W6WX on 14.1 MHz, and temporary authorization to operate beacons on 21.1 and 28.2 MHz. NCDXF has authorized W6QHS and his committee to implement a 3-band beacon network and they now are designing the controller. Estimated cost of equipment will be about \$1,500 per beacon. We might expand the network to 15 locations, but specific additional sites have not been determined. We have not set a date for activation of the new network.

Other

We have renewed the W6WX license for ten years and changed the trustee from Lee Shaklee, W6BH, to Dave Leeson, W6QHS.

NCDXF has purchased a computer system to handle membership files and generate mailing labels.

W6OSP investigated the feasibility of establishing a "976" number as a DX hotline and concluded it is not practical.

The Board decided to present Peter I pictures to any donor making a contribution of \$100 or more to the Foundation.

Visibility

We have decided to promote the Foundation and its activities more aggressively than we have in the past. To this end, we are going to be represented with formal booths at Visalia and Dayton, and Mike Weiler is distributing literature for the Foundation at a DX gathering in Germany. We have prepared a new multi-color brochure, new membership receipt forms, and pin-on buttons. The DX Bulletin has donated a full page NCDXF advertisement in its Dayton issue. We have acquired a convention travel display thanks to WZ6Z. N6BIS is preparing "beginning" and "ending" 35mm slides for

our library programs which credit the availability of the programs to the NCDXF. We have NOT issued press releases throughout the year and thus have missed opportunities for additional publicity.

New DXCC Rules Wording

New DXCC rules wording announced by the ARRL Board of Directors in 1988 opened the possibility for the addition of new countries to the DXCC list. NCDXF involved itself aggressively in this matter believing that it will breathe some much-needed activity into the DXCC program. Various NCDXF Trustees participated in drafting the first new country (Rotuma) petition and in explaining the new wording to DXAC members and at the ARRL National Convention. Rotuma, Marquesas, Australs, Conway Reef and Banaba (Ocean Island) all have had new country status petitions filed with the DXAC. The Foundation acted as QSL manager for the 3D2XX Rotuma operation which has been approved officially for new country status.

Newsletter

Steve Thomas, N6ST, has taken over editorship of the Foundation newsletter. His capability to including graphics permits us to capitalize on a "quality" look. We need a minimum of two issues per year. The last newsletter, entitled "Winter, 1989" was mailed in January to everyone who had contributed to the Foundation since January, 1986.

"Honor Roll" Contributors

We received exceptional financial support from a number of individual members and organizations this past year. As of the end of April, 1989, NCDXF had received contributions of \$100 or more from: Heard Island DX Association, South Florida DX Association, 5N0WRE (KB4EPK), AF6S, AI6V, DL8WX, JA1EM, K4CTD, K4TKM, K5VT, K6DC, K6ILM, K6OZL, K6TMB, KA6W, KE6LT, LA7XB, N6HVZ, NK2D, NV6Z, OH5NQ, W1PCD, W5AE, W5BOS, W5FS, W6AXH, W6ISQ, W6OAT, W6OSP, W6PVE, W6YFW, W7MAP, W7NCO, W0CD, W0IR, W0MLY, WB2CHO, WB6JXU, WB6QMD, WB6WCW, WB8JEY, WG6H and WM5G.

As an experiment, we enclosed with the Winter newsletter a membership renewal reminder in the form of a "bill." It seems to have been accepted well. Numerous members enclosed notes thanking us for jogging their memories. During the first quarter of calendar 1989, we received nearly \$15,000 in the form of 388 membership renewals and 99 new members.

DX Packet Spotting Network

Jay O'Brien, W6GO

Over 500 amateurs in Northern California and Nevada are using the new "DX Packet Spotting Network". There were 245 countries reported from June to Sept., 1988! This included 6325 announcements of 3049 different DX stations. Similar networks are operating in Colorado, New England, Georgia, and many other places.

DXers and contesters find this system useful in spotting "new ones" and in keeping in touch with fellow DXers.

Remember Me When I'm Gone!

Several members have told us that they intend to make bequests to the NCDXF in their wills. While we're not anxious to see these folks depart any time soon, we nonetheless think the idea of a bequest to the Foundation is wonderful and we wanted to pass along just in case any of the rest of you are planning to redo your wills. What a great way to put a bit back into the hobby which gave us so much pleasure while we were here!

3D2XX Returns NCDXF Contribution

The operators of the 3D2XX DXpedition to Rotuma have returned the \$2,500 contribution made by the Foundation. Kip, W6SZN, one of the expedition operators, presented a check for \$2,500 to NCDXF President W6OAT at the conclusion of the Rotuma slide show which was the main feature of the Saturday night banquet at the Visalia DX Convention.

According to Kip, the world's DXers proved most generous in sending contributions along with their QSLs. So generous, in fact, that the DXpedition recovered almost all of its out of pocket expenses. Thus they decided to return the Foundation's \$2,500 contribution so that it could be used to support expeditions to other rare DX locations. The 3Y1EE/3Y2GV expedition to Peter I Island and the 1986 FO0XX expedition to Clipperton Island are the only other operations to return a substantial portion of the Foundation's funding for use on future expeditions. The Foundation's grants, incidentally, are outright grants with no requirement for repayment.

To the Rotuma operators, VK8XX, W6SZN, K3NA and KN3T, the Foundation extends a big THANK YOU!

Northern California DX Foundation

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New Treasurer

NCDXF's new Treasurer is Rich Stempien, WA9WYB. Rich was born near Chicago and was first licensed as WN9SZN at the tender age of 16. He is a member of the ARRL and the Northern California DX Club. He holds DXCC with 301 worked and 292 confirmed, and divides his time about equally between cw and ssb. Rich earned his AAEE degree while working as a police officer in Chicago. He moved to San Francisco in 1983. Rich and his XYL Robin have their QTH overlooking the Pacific Ocean which explains why he is so loud on the long path! Rich is the manager of the Ham Radio Outlet store in Oakland, California.



Rich, WA9WYB, new NDCXF Treasurer at his operating position in San Francisco

Africa In the Computer Age

by Don Greenbaum, WB2DND

"Do That For Me"

As many of you know from working Tom Gregory at 9Q5NW, TN4NW, TL8TG, etc, he is instantly able to identify those stations he has previously worked despite a log database of over 50,000 QSO's. Tom is one of the more active hams in Africa (maybe the world) and since 1982 when he arrived in the Ivory Coast he has logged over 75,000 QSO's in all types of operating situations: contests, DXpeditions and plain old ragchewing.

I have known Tom for many years and together we gradually upgraded our computer gear, Tom for radio and I for business. As I would tell Tom of the latest and greatest things I was doing in dBaseIII+ he would say, DO THAT FOR ME!!!! In June, 1987 we were ready with our first try, a 200 line program that would simply log the minimum info while checking for dupes. There have been over 30 changes since that time as each contest, trip or bug generated more "ideas" from my main beta user. The program is now over 2000 lines of code and has taken two years of programming. Think of all the time not spent chasing new ones.

Aid For The QSL Manager and More Contacts For Us

After Tom got the good news that the TN license had been granted we knew that all the programming of the last two years would get a real workout. In three trips across the Zaire River Tom logged over 15,000 QSO's without any glitches that cost anybody a contact. In addition, Tom refused to log anyone more than once per band/mode and actually told off more than one insurance contact. More importantly, the logs were sent by disk to AL7EL who actually was able to respond to QSL requests within days of the first operation. AL7EL, Tom, has responded to over 30,000 QSL requests over the past two years. He claims he would have given up the task long ago without the use of the computer to search for the call and print labels. By typing even a partial call, all QSO's are shown for the station and the labels can be generated from that one screen. No more flipping through logs with questionable penmanship. Even incorrectly entered callsigns can be found by browsing the chronological features of the program. One other benefit to the QSL manager is the ability to see the status of prior QSL requests. In an instant they can verify whether or not they received and answered a card request.

The greatest benefit to all of us, however, can be seen by analyzing 9Q5NW's logs before and after my program was put in use by him. His QSO rate increased tenfold. The average turnaround time from his manager de-

creased from 8 weeks to 2-3 weeks (when AL7EL is not away on business). Tom's operating time increased by 50% as he no longer dreaded working the pileups and generating reams of paper to send stateside. He also liked having prior QSO info on-line as he talked to stations again on other bands and modes.

Marion Island

Others using the program now include 3DA0AH, 9Q5XX, ZS6P, ZL3AFT, VP2MO and most recently, ZS8MI. ZS8MI, Peter, is logging completely by PC. With the help of ZS6P, ZS6BZJ and others we have devised a way to take computer logging to the limit using all the resources available to hams.

After each 50 QSO's or so Peter will copy the database file to a program which will compress the data into a text format. These files are further compressed through an archiving program. These small files are then sent by HF packet back to South Africa where they are used by ZS5E who uses another copy of my program to add the new logs to the master program. Note: QSL to ZS6PT's callbook address as ZS5E is not in the callbook.

In contrast to the usual 6 month to 1 yr delay you might expect from a remote South Atlantic operation, cards have been in the mail as soon as one week after received at Peter's home QTH. Peter is very sensitive to "insurance" QSO's in his first months of operating. Hopefully, those who have a habit of proving week after week that they can bust the pileup for the same "rare one" can give some of the rest of us a chance.

The Program

The program is menu driven and includes the following features:

- Current Log:** instant duping once the call sign is entered
on-line module enters date/time automatically
entry screen keeps rpt sent/rcvd, band, and mode from last QSO
autobackup to floppies
manual entry module that strings same as on-line plus date/time user toggle for serial numbering rpt sent
sub-menu with 8 print options including ARRL and CQ contest formats (THIS IS NOT A SCORING MODE)
ability to generate QSL labels at same time you log
update to master log module to consolidate multiple logs

Master Log: look up entry from any of the current

logs

all QSO's shown under one inquiry, partial call search

print QSL labels & auto update of QSL sent/rcvd fields

print master log, QSL outstanding rpt, partial log by dates

10-10 Net tracking system

An SASE to me at the address shown below will bring you details of the program. Thank you NCDXF and keep up the good work.

Don Greenbaum, WB2DND
250 Standish Street
Duxbury, MA 02332 USA



Reminder: Signed Peter I Prints Still Available!

by Patty Winter, N6BIS

The beautiful 20x22-inch prints of the 1987 ham encampment on Peter I Island are still available. You'll receive one as a thank-you with a \$100 or greater donation to the Foundation.

The prints feature a photograph similar to the one used on the 3Y QSL card: orange tents and a red Norwegian flag above a carpet of snow, with a snowy hill and beautiful blue sky in the background.

These limited edition prints were matted behind light-gray artists' board, then personally signed by Einar Enderud, 3Y1EE (IA1EE). This truly makes them a collector's item.

Peter I might not exist as a DXCC country today had it not been for the Foundation's \$30,000 donation for the DXpedition. Show your appreciation for the NCDXF's efforts--and your pride in Foundation membership--by putting one of these stunning prints on your wall.

NCDXF's New Display Gets Rave Reviews

by Patty Winter, N6BIS

If you were at Visalia or Dayton this year, you had a chance to see our beautiful new four-panel tabletop display. It highlights Foundation activities very effectively, and drew lots of attention at both conventions.

The display was a joint effort of Foundation director Lou Beaudet, K6TMB; his daughter Diane; Foundation advisor Howard Brainen, WZ6Z; and me. Lou provided overall project guidance and was our liaison with the Board of Directors; Diane gave us invaluable graphic design advice; I wrote and typeset the text; and Howard and the staff at his photo lab did the final preparation and placement of the text and graphics.

All of us participated in choosing the content and design of the display, which we then presented to

the Board for approval. We decided to devote one panel each to the Foundation's DXpedition support, our beacon network, the Peter I commemorative prints, and a general summary of Foundation activities. Here's a description of the finished display.

Across the top is the Foundation name and logo. On the left panel is one of the beautiful matted photographs of the 3Y1EE/3Y2GV encampment on Peter I island that we've been using as a fund-raiser. Each matted print is personally autographed by Einer Enderud, 3Y1EE (alias 1A1EE). (In case you've forgotten, a \$100 donation to the NCDXF will bring one of these gorgeous prints to you.)

The second panel consists of QSL cards from DX operations we've assisted. Each card is accompanied by one or two quotes thanking us for supporting that particular effort. It was important to me to show the appreciation we get not only from DX operators, but from the hams who work them: there are more of the latter than the

former, and they're our real constituency. So on the display, in addition to quotes from grant recipients, you'll see quotes from several hams and one SWLer thanking us for sponsoring DXpeditions and equipment grants to rare countries.

An aside to this part of the display. I read through years of Foundation newsletters--and several handfuls of recent member letters--to find quotes about the Foundation that would be good for the display. I then wrote to the authors asking their permission to use their quotes. This was one of the most enjoyable parts of the project because I received such warm and enthusiastic letters in return. Not only was everyone happy to lend their names

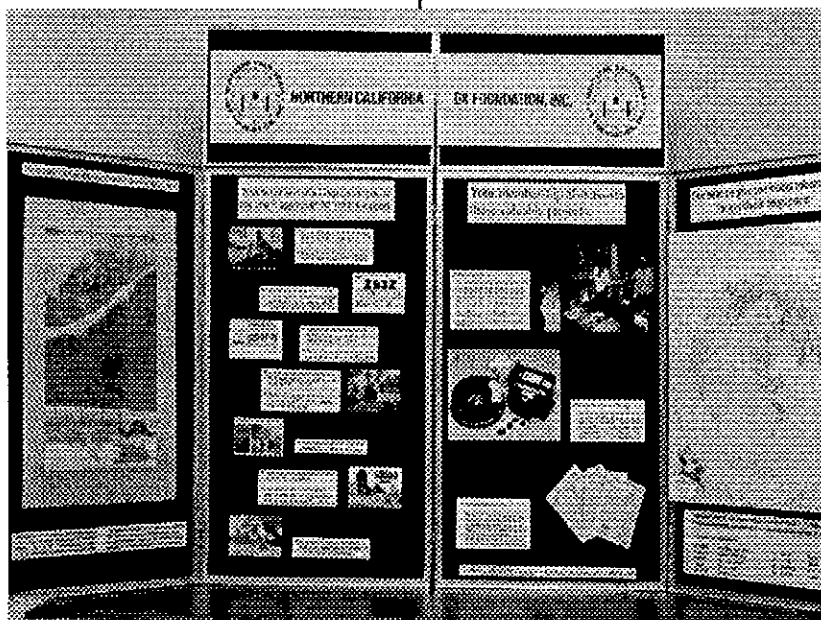
to help the Foundation, but many of them made such glowing remarks that we now have an even larger collection of wonderful quotes for future use! Thanks to all of you who helped us with this.

The third panel is a summary of other Foundation activities. It mentions our equipment grants to rare countries, our DXpedition slide show/videotape

lending library, and our newsletter. Thanks to Diane Beaudet for creating an excellent photograph that illustrates our slide shows and videos.

The last panel is an updated version of Erik (SM0AGD) Sjolund's beacon network map that has been used as a Foundation display for several years. This panel caused quite a bit of hair-pulling because it's impossible to find a world map in a vertical format! We finally purchased a slightly larger display than originally planned so that we could fit a square great-circle map onto the display. We were a bit reluctant to use the great-circle map because it's centered on the U.S., but it was literally the only solution we had available. We don't intend any chauvinism!

The map uses the same clever electronics originally developed by Erik. A small LED light bulb pokes through the map at the location of each NCDXF beacon station. A timer turns on each LED in turn as an accompanying audio tape goes through the exact sequence of IDs and tones you would hear if you were listening to that



beacon.

So that's the new NCDXF display. It's a thoroughly professional piece, and we're very pleased with it. I think it helped attract some of the 78 new members and \$4715.00 in donations that we logged at Visalia and Dayton.

What next? You tell us: where should we use the display? We don't want to leave it sitting in its carrying case until next April! What conventions are coming up that attract DXers? If you can staff a booth with *at least* one person all the time the exhibit area is open, we'll loan you the display. We can also provide you with Foundation brochures, newsletters, buttons -- even donation receipts! Please tell us if you know of a good show for the display. Not only will you be helping the Foundation, but it will give you a chance to enjoy this beautiful new display yourself!

New Board Member

Josephine Clarke, WB6ZUC, has been elected to the NCDXF's Board of Trustees to fill the slot vacated when Ernie, WB6UOM, stepped down a few months ago. Jo is certainly no newcomer to the Foundation as she has served as our Librarian for a number of years, building that program from its infancy into an almost full time job today.

Jo claims Boston, MA, as her home town. She earned her teacher's credentials from Washington State College and the University of Washington. She was a major in English literature and taught English in high school.

Jo's introduction to amateur radio came through her son, John, WB6YAK, way back in 1968. As Jo describes it, "I decided that it would be fun to surprise my family with an accomplished-fact Novice License. So without telling anybody, I started practicing the code and studying theory. I found a local ham who was home during the days when everyone was out, and he gave me the test. Six weeks later the license for WN6ZUC arrived. I telephoned WB6YAY, a friend of son John's, and with his help we stunned the family. I went to his house where he tuned in the novice frequency and called John. He told John someone was calling him and would he get on. John did, and I called him. It took about fifteen minutes to convince him this really was his mother at the key!"

Jo is an avid cw operator, and for years snagged her DX using just a Drake pair -- R4C and T4XC -- with no linear. However, she threw in the sponge on not using a linear after failing to crack the Bouvet pile-up in 1987 and now owns an Alpha 76A. "Just wait until the next one!" she vows. Jo's antenna farm is a TH7DXX at 45 feet. She recently joined the ranks of the cw DXCC Honor Roll.

Vietnam Video

continued from page 3

fast that when I contacted them, it was tough to get them to give me a second in which to ask a question. Perhaps they were having trouble understanding what I was asking, but I finally got them to say that one of the DXpeditioners was sitting right there, at that very moment. I got them to give me the club telephone number.

I called the club station and talked for 45 minutes. It took an extra long time because there was so much noise in the room with them working the contest and because the operator didn't understand English well.

10) Feeling I now had all the information I was likely to get, I wrote the script for the program. I went through and edited out a lot of footage and then did a "shot sheet" (numbers indicating where all the particular scenes were) on the remaining footage. This took seven hours on a Sunday.

11) I got the graphics and special effects put together for the program and then had Don Phelps, a local news anchorman, record the narration. Finally, Morrison Martin and I started laying in the audio and editing the video to match. I put on the full audio from the Vietnamese video tape, and the narration audio, to be mixed later. Up until this time, the "natural sound" from the tape and the narration both were at the same audio level. I edited the tape for six hours the first day, from 3 until 9 PM, and for ten hours the second, from 3 PM until 1 AM, but finally it was done. The next day a friend transferred it all over to a one-inch tape, putting on the graphics and fonts as he went, and mixing the audio. He lowered the "natural sound" audio each time the narrator spoke, and mixed the two audios to the right level. This took another three hours.

Was it worth it? Now that it's finished, one tends to forget all the bad parts. The excitement of having what I think is a great program really makes me feel good.

One thing that I don't know if people who have never done something like this notice or not is the matching of the video with the audio. Jo, when you view the tape, you will see numerous places where just as the narrator says something, it will co-ordinate to the split second with the video. Notice, for example, when the Hungarian Embassy guys come in, and the narrator says "They keep telling each other to be quiet." Or notice the Swedish Embassy guy at the radio when the narrator says "Have his picture taken for posterity." Or, the two different places where he refers to the "snake." And of course, the rat! You will see these things all through the program. It takes hours and hours of extra time to do this, but even if viewers can't really put their finger on "why," I hope this will leave them walking away with the feeling

that they have seen a great program.

Finally, Jo, if I knew back then what I know now, would I do it all over again? You bet I would!

73,

Dan, W4BRE"

If Dan's letter makes you think your club might want to see this outstanding video, well get your request off to Josephine right away because there already is a "waiting list" forming! Be sure to give Jo several alternative dates when you could show the video and she'll do her best to work out a schedule that fits with one of your meeting nights. You can reach Jo by sending a letter to Josephine Clarke, WB6ZUC, 207 Evergreen Drive, Kentfield, CA 94904, USA. There is no charge for using the NCDXF video library, but we do request that you reimburse the Foundation for its postage costs.



N7NG, OH2BU, XE1L, W6RGG, JH4RHE, OH2BH, XE1XA and XE1OH upon landing at Revillagigedo



Josephine Clarke, WB6ZUC, new NCDXF Trustee and Librarian on a during a visit to Saana, Yemen

XF4L DXpedition 1989

by Jarmo Jaakola, OH2BN

The Reviallagigedo Islands are located 450 miles off the coast of Mexico in the Pacific Ocean. The archipelago consists of three small islands and two adjacent rocks. The island of Socorro is 24 miles long and 9 miles wide; its volcanic peak rises slightly over 3,700 feet. The island is manned by a small military garrison situated behind the island radiowise from Europe. XF4 has always been considered a mysterious place, especially by Europeans, of whom only a handful had made contact with the island before.

Following a four hour flight, our Beechcraft KingAir plane touched down in strong tailwind, barely managing to pull up on Socorro's short runway. A total of 6,600 pounds of gear and supplies were set up at three separate sites high up on the volcano to provide clean operating simultaneously on CW and SSB and to take full advantage of narrow propagation windows. The tent and generator-based XF4L was in action.

The final tally of 49,943 QSO included 15,000+ Europeans but it also involved what could also be considered the ultimate in DXpeditioning. Amateur radio was established permanently on Revillagigedo while the island's commander was trained and made operational. When you hear Fernando, XF4F, give credit to ICOM and NCDXF - they provided a complete station for him.

While not on operating duty, XF4L team members participated in a variety of activities all the way from fishing and climbing the peak of the volcano to socializing with residents of the local naval base.

Making the XF4L operation possible relied on worldwide support on at least three continents.

Full-color XF4L QSL cards from the printers are expected shortly. The initial proofs of the cards certainly look good. Log data for all 47,000 contacts are currently being fed into computers for the printing of QSL labels.

Mailing Labels

Take a look at the label on this issue of the Newsletter. The year on the label is the last year we received a contribution from you. If the date is 1988 or earlier we would certainly appreciate receiving a contribution from you. An envelope and form are enclosed. If you have recently contributed, Thank You. Just pass the envelope on to another DXer who may wish to join the NCDXF.



1989 Contribution

The Northern California DX Foundation relies heavily upon the generosity of its members to fund its various projects. We urge each member to consider making an annual contribution of \$25 U.S. or its equivalent in foreign currency or IRCs. However, we do not wish to exclude anyone from the Foundation for financial reasons. If \$25 is not within your budget, then please give what other amount you can. Naturally, we welcome contributions in excess of \$25! 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 United States taxpayers.

Name: _____ Callsign: _____

Address: _____ Contribution: \$100
_____ \$50
_____ \$25
_____ other

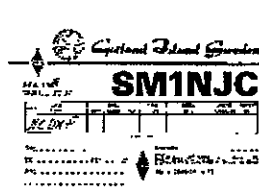
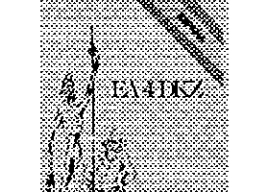
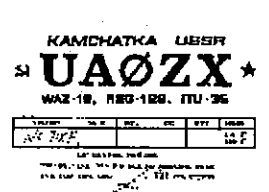
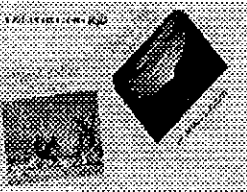
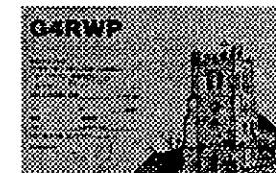
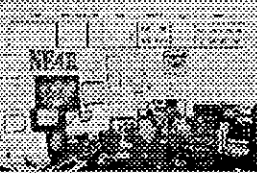
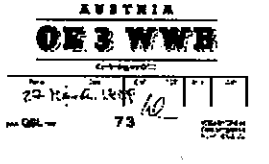
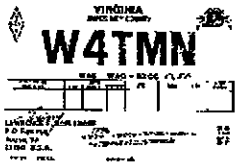
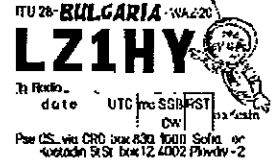
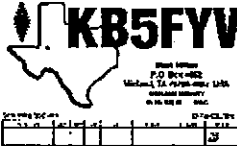
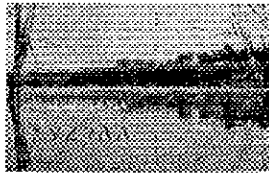
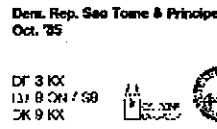
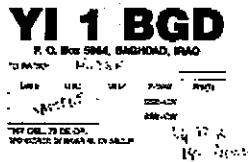
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