



NCDXF newsletter

www.ncdxf.org

Winter 2020

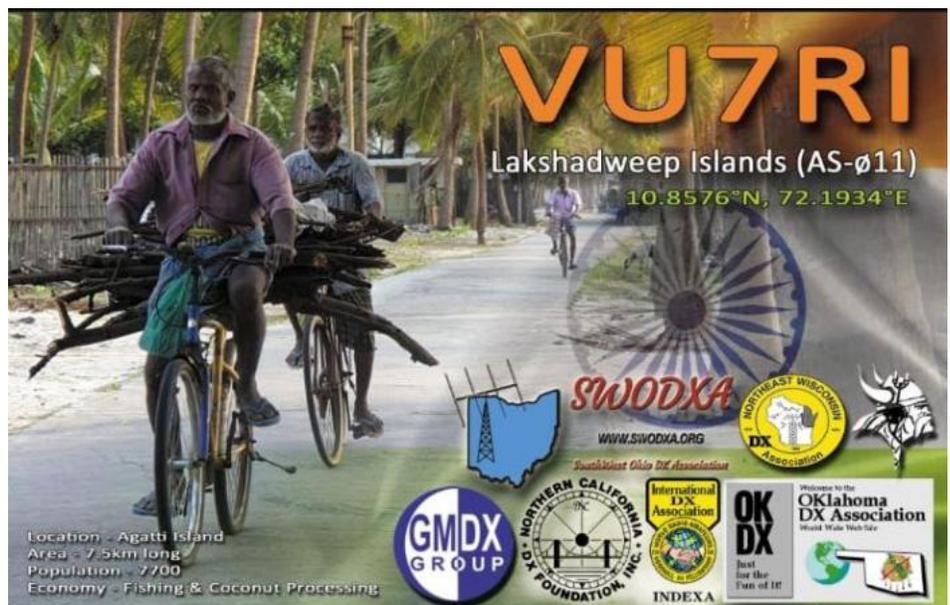
VU7RI – Lakshadweep DXpedition

Shabu Ramakrishnan, MØKRI

I REALLY ENJOY REMOTE PORTABLE operating and, having spent a couple of weeks operating holiday-style down in Burundi as 9U4RI in 2019, I thought that I would like to go somewhere a bit more exotic.

There were many considerations: choosing a destination that was fairly high on the DX most-wanted list; when to go and with whom; what equipment and antennas to take, and the logistics of traveling to a remote site, just to name the key ones.

Being from India, it made sense to me to look at some rare but familiar locations around the Indian sub-continent, such as islands in the Arabian Sea or Indian Ocean. The location I settled on was Agatti Island in Lakshadweep (VU7), one of an inhabited group of 36 atolls and coral reefs off the coast of Kerala, India — and No. 55 on the Club Log’s “Most Wanted List.”



The team

Having chosen a destination, I shared my enthusiasm with an old-time home

QTH friend T.K. Sreekumar (Sree), VU2OB, who works for a national newspaper in Delhi. He seemed very keen on the idea, but was uncertain

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The VU7RI team.

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NCDXF

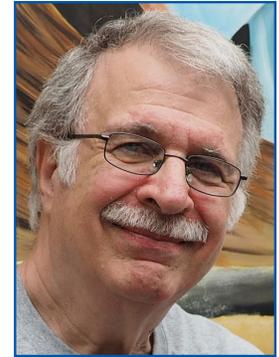
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From the President's desk

It's 2020! HERE'S HOPING FOR A NEW DECADE OF excellent DX experiences — and a few sunspots along the way, too!

Since last summer, NCDXF has been busy reviewing and approving grant applications for a number of DXpeditions and DX-related activities. The Board approved grants to financially support trips to **VU7RI** Lakshadweep Island (October '19); **E44CC** Palestine (February '20); **TI9A** Cocos Island (February '20), and **W8S** Swains Island (March '20).



NCDXF also awarded a grant of \$4,000 to **Club Log** to support important IT system upgrades and help move their system into the future. We believe that Club Log is a real asset to every DXer and DXpeditioner and, in fact, plays a major role in ensuring that DXpeditions are successful both during and after an event.

We gave \$500 to the new Zero Falls Alliance — a new organization led by Jim, K1IR, dedicated to reducing tower-related accidents through a series of local and national seminars and presentations.

NCDXF also committed \$2,500 to the **Youth-On-The-Air Region-2 Convention** taking place this July in Cincinnati. YOTA's mission is to build skills and foster lasting friendships and mentors with younger hams.

In other news, we are making very good progress on developing a unique dual-band discone antenna for our Beacon program. This antenna will eventually be deployed in all locations after final testing and production.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that 16 individuals have included NCDXF in their estate plans. The goal of the **Cycle 25 Fund** is to double NCDXF's endowment through significant estate gifts from current DXers, which will allow NCDXF to continue its mission throughout sunspot Cycle 25 and beyond. See the separate Cycle 25 update on page XX.

On a personal note, I thank each of our contributors for your continued support. You are the backbone of NCDXF. We could not do what we do without you. A full list of individual and club contributors is always shown on our website (www.ncdxf.org).

As always, if you have comments or suggestions to help improve NCDXF, please contact me directly. I would love to hear from you.

73 and Good DXing!

John K6MM

CONTRIBUTIONS NCDXF relies heavily upon the generosity of its contributors to fund various projects. We ask you to consider making an annual contribution of US\$50 or its equivalent in foreign currency. However, we do not wish to exclude anyone from the **FOUNDATION** for financial reasons. If \$50 is not within your budget, then please give what other amount you can. Naturally, we welcome contributions in excess of \$50! NCDXF is an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law for U.S. taxpayers. Send your contribution to: **NCDXF**, PO Box 2012, Cupertino, CA 95015-2012, USA. You may also contribute and order supplies online via our secure server, visit www.ncdxf.org/donate.



One of the uninhabited islands as seen from the air.

if he could join me because of work commitments. However, Sree was very willing to help procure the VU7 license and provide moral support.

I really needed at least three people for the team, so I asked another friend Samson, VU3XTG, who was quite excited about the prospect of working a pile-up of stations from a remote island. He was able to help me procure local assistance on the island in terms of accommodation, but due to personal circumstances, Sam was unable to join us for the DXpedition.

Then I invited A.T. Ashraf, VU3MTY from Calicut, a close friend of Sree's who is a passionate amateur radio operator. He goes beyond the hobby and actively participates in disaster relief projects on an ongoing basis.

None of the three of us had any real DXpedition experience, but we all had enough operating skills to form a good team. We decided that October was a good month to go for several reasons, not the least of which was that it coincided with the school holidays in the UK. Another consideration was that the monsoons would be over and we would be able to enjoy blue skies (ideally), plus we could expect HF propagation to be good.

The license

To secure a license to operate from VU7, we needed to obtain a "Notice of Variation" from the Ministry of Communications in Delhi. Secondly, even an Indian citizen requires permission and sponsorship to visit the island, which also must be granted from Delhi. There are no regional- or state-level centers that could grant this, so getting there and operating in VU7 was a long process.

Samson Thundiyil, VU3XTG, finally made a contact from Kavaratti Island who offered to help us and

arrange accommodation and the local logistical support. However, we also needed that contact to sponsor us and, in order to do that, he needed to regularly communicate with the officials.

The sponsorship did not seem to be forthcoming. Our contact simply said, "You will get the help when you arrive." In other words, we needed to have official permission to go there and to have arrived before we would receive local assistance.

At that point, Sree, VU2OB, said it would help our cause to have the Member of Parliament for Lakshadweep sponsor us for "entry on to the island." As it happened, elections were taking place in India and we needed to wait to see who we could approach to request the sponsorship. When the dust settled, the Honorable Member of Parliament, Mr. P.P. Mohammad Faizal, helped us with this aspect. Since Sree was in Delhi, he was able to obtain the temporary license from the Ministry of Communications to operate as VU7RI, so it all came together nicely in the end.

Equipment and antennas

After my experience with my solo DXpedition to Burundi, I realized it

was important to carry an HF amplifier when visiting exotic places like VU7. If I were to make the most of a rare call sign, it was important that my signal be heard using directional antennas and the legal limit of power.

Naturally, there were weight considerations, especially as the small aircraft taking us from Kochi to Agatti Island in Lakshadweep would only allow 15 kg (33 pounds) of luggage per passenger and it was unclear, because of safety constraints, if we would be allowed to exceed that limit. Therefore, large commercial HF amplifiers were out of the question.

Fortunately, Fred Curtis, G3SVK, kindly agreed to loan me his Expert 1.3 FA amplifier, which was considerably lighter than most other commercial HF amplifiers. We also decided to take a Kenwood TS-480 SAT, Icom IC706 MK2G, Yaesu FT-857D and a Furuno HF amplifier. In addition, we took a DX Commander and a G3TXQ Hexbeam as well as other off-center-fed dipoles for FT8 low power digital operation, inverted-V dipoles for 80M/160M. Between us, Sree and I carried more than 60 kg of equipment.

After some careful negotiation, ad-



The shack, 10 meters from the ocean.

ditional permission and the payment of US\$9 per additional kilogram, we were allowed to take the extra baggage. This was in addition to the extra baggage fees I had already paid Gulf Airways for the flight from London to Kochi and return. A 100 kg worth of accessories were coordinated by Ashraf, VU3MTY and sent via cargo on a passenger ship from Calicut, India, a week or so prior to our travel. These accessories included all sorts of tools, earthing spikes, wires, cables, etc., that were too heavy to hand carry by aircraft.

Planning

It was important that all the equipment be tested prior to departure, because once we were on the island there would be nowhere to buy additional cables, plugs or sockets, etc. An inventory was constructed to ensure that we took everything we needed at the remote site.

Laptops with logging software were a main priority, along with power supplies and leads. We carried out some last minute testing to ensure that the main rig would key the amplifier correctly through the CAT and ALC leads.

We set up a website giving full



Cyclone Maha hits the island.



Building the hexbeam.

details of the 19-30 October 2019 DXpedition (www.VU7RI.com), including a schedule showing when we intended to be active on the various bands, but was designed to be flexible to accommodate local band conditions.

We knew we wouldn't have an Internet connection on the island, so uploading logs would be difficult; however I was able to send text messages from my cell phone and remain in contact with the outside world. My mobile bill increased by £150 that month to cover the cost of these texts.

Accommodating locals

The hotel owner was a well-educated guy with a Masters in physics from Kerala University, but he decided to help his father run the family business.

Sawad, the caretaker, was a friendly but sharp guy, who pointed the Special Branch police to me, as they were a little suspicious about the six-meter-wide Hexbeam we had erected at the beach. I politely explained that it was only a hobby and didn't concern security; my explanation was sufficient as the policemen went away.

The housemaids at the hotel were two girls who did all our cooking.

The locals on Lakshadweep were very friendly, loving and caring and some of our neighbors even prepared snacks and brought them to us. We even had a visit from a local policeman with an interest in radio communication.

On 29 October we gave a radio

presentation and demonstration to a group of 40 students and staff from the high school, introducing them to Amateur Radio. The demonstration and presentation were well received by the staff and students and their appreciation was very evident.

Radio operations

After our long journeys, we decided that we would erect a simple off-centered dipole and get started using FT8, and in less than half an hour we were on the air. After some excellent instruction from various articles, I soon got to grips with FT8 using DXpedition mode and thoroughly enjoyed working more than 1,000 stations in the first couple of days — at least until the laptop's clock went out of sync. That was a real challenge, as we had to guess the accurate time in seconds and tweak the FT8 settings to bring it back in sync.

On the second day, we decided to erect the DX Commander multi-band vertical antenna. The wind was quite strong, so we tied it to a nearby coconut tree, which worked OK. The top did sway about, causing the VSWR to fluctuate, affecting the amplifier.

We heard absolutely nothing on the bands between 0900 (local) until 1300 every day, but between 1400 and 1800 15M started to open, allowing us to use either CW or FT8. Between 1800 and 2000 20M opened, which wasn't a very large operating window. We used SSB and some CW during this opening.

From 0200 to 0700 40M opened, allowing us to work some CW and SSB, and between 0700 and 0900 we could only work mainland India on SSB.

We managed some 80M during the night. I was mainly operating on CW and FT8 keeping the bands busy as much as we could, while Sree was operating mainly SSB.

On our first excursion onto 40M CW, there was a very strong station pirating our call sign, and as his signal was very strong, it was likely that he was transmitting from the Indian mainland. I sent a text message to Fred, G3SVK, back in the UK, asking that he put the information on the DX cluster to alert stations that our call sign was being pirated, which he did straightaway, and soon the pirate stopped transmitting and I was able to resume my operation. From then we were able to keep to the schedule that we had advertised on our website.

Difficulties and challenges

Our first obstacle was not having Internet where we were based. The island does have Internet at about 64kbps, but it's not on every part of the island. That also meant using data modes were out of the question as none of our cellphones could connect to the Internet. Fortunately, I was able to send SMS spasmodically.

On most evenings, I had to bicycle to a local teacher's home at 2100 to time-sync the laptop with his Internet connection — a very time-consuming endeavor.

We also had a weather-related challenge. There is a seasonal rainfall during the month of October, which is usually fairly light and not as strong as the monsoons of June and July. However, the Thulavarsham, as it is called, or northeastern monsoon, was very different in 2019, bringing with it Cyclone Kyarr and hit part of the island.

The weather caused the antenna to sway wildly, badly affecting our VSWR. Without an external antenna tuner, we were unable to use the HF amplifier for several hours, so we resorted to using QRP and could only work Europe on SSB. As we were unable to do that for very long, our

operation was then limited to very low QRP and thus only FT8. Our other fear was that the high winds would blow down the coconut tree that anchored our vertical antenna.

A local kerosene-fueled generator provides the island's electricity and I can only guess that the Indian Government spends thousands of dollars per day to keep the generator running. As a result, the power regulation was quite poor, and we were restricted to 400 watts RF power before the voltage dropped and the lights flickered in sympathy with our CW keying. Fortunately, we were the only tenants in the hotel, so it wasn't too much of a problem.

On a positive note, we did not have to contend with local manmade noise problems, and the band noise was relatively low.

Then, eight days into the operation, Cyclone Maha developed and Lakshadweep Island was in its path. We had early warnings of its approach and the 100mph wind gusts were quite frightening.

We wanted to erect the Hexbeam but, while I was studying the construction details, the papers were blown nearly 200 meters away! I had to run after them before they reached the ocean. Eventually, we erected the Hexbeam in between cyclones and we were able to boost our QSO score a little.

Conclusion

Looking at the logs, we made a total of 1,555 QSOs on FT8 and 1,842 QSOs on SSB and CW giving a grand total

of 3,397 QSOS. That doesn't sound too impressive out of context, but contending with two cyclones and the time-sync issues had a huge impact. However, it did serve as a wonderful experience and a steep learning curve for next time — when we hope to return to the island for a second DXpedition!

I believe we fulfilled our mission statement, which was "to make as many QSOs as possible on all three modes." At least we did so to the best of our ability, and in the face of adversity. Through those experiences we learned how we should do things very differently and better on our next visit. We will also benefit from the friendships we made while there.

We express our sincere gratitude to all those kind people and organizations that supported our DXpedition both financially and through the loan of equipment, etc. We are indebted to them. NCDXF, INDEXA, SWODXA, GMDX Group Scotland, Twin City DX Association, OKDX Association, North East Wisconsin DX Association and the many individual sponsors.

Also, thanks to Callum's DX Commander and Anthony's G3TXQ Hexbeam for their antennas at a reduced tariff; Angelo, MØOJD for QSL card design and printing, and to Fred, G3SVK, for the loan of his Expert 1.3 FA HF linear amplifier.

Thanks to you all for the QSOs. We hope that we were instrumental in providing some with a new DXCC entry. 



MØKRI on the air.

Western Kiribati and Nauru

Juris Petersons, YL2GM

IN THE SUMMER OF 2019, I DECIDED TO carry out a DXpedition to Nauru (No. 54); however, flights to Nauru from Latvia are very distant and expensive, so to be more efficient, I opted to visit a second DX entity as well: Western Kiribati (No. 68). The DXpedition was set for 5-23 September, so we had three months for preparations.

After receiving the licenses, we booked flights for the team. Europe's large airlines have downsized baggage limitations, and additional weight units significantly increase expenses. I chose UAE's Etihad Airlines to Brisbane, Australia, and continued on to Nauru on Nauru Airlines. I submitted expedition support applications to both airlines for sponsorship of an additional 50 kg baggage; only Nauru Airlines approved the application and we had to pay extra for our baggage between Riga and Brisbane, which added up to more than an additional passenger ticket.

Visas & licenses

Everything went smooth for Nauru, and our visas were granted quickly; however, Kiribati was quite the op-

posite, and was delayed until our flight day. The response from authorities was that everything was in process and that we should just wait.

On the day we were on our way I received an email from the representatives informing me that, because of bank transfer charges, they received

only AU\$145 instead of AU\$160 and asked which team member should be declined for the visa?

There was no opportunity to immediately transfer additional funds, which was also risky because we could have been restricted from boarding the plane without visas in hand. In the end, I contacted the hotel's owner, who paid the additional AU\$15 for us and, by the time we landed in Brisbane, the visas were in my email.

Australian transit visa applications were processed online, where it was necessary for me to fill out 12 pages and submit seven documents. I never had to fill out so many documents for a visa, not to mention that this was just a transit visa! Three of us received our visas the following day, but, after a 2-week wait, the fourth one was declined. I resubmitted the documents and the fourth visa was granted a week later.

I submitted applications for operating licenses and the response from Nauru was that I could only get the license when we arrived in the country and that I could get only a 2-letter suffix call sign, requiring us to change our call





Dreamers Guesthouse, our T3ØL QTH.

sign to C21WW. Nauru also granted operations on the 60M band.

The response from Western Kiribati was that we had to obtain our visas before we could apply for a license. When the T3ØL license was granted, the 60M band wasn't included, and I got no response from a second application.

Team and equipment

Our team consisted of myself, Juris, YL2GM; Kaspars Uzticis, YL1ZF; Jack Shahov, YL2KA, and Kristers Misa, YL3JA, who is our new hope for WRTC 2022. Additional support was provided by Kaspars Pētersons (coordinator); Ziedonis Knope, YL2GN (QSL manager); Agris Belasovs, YL2VW (webmaster), and Oleg Ostrzigallo, YL3DW (technical advisor).

Our transmitting equipment consisted of three Elecraft K3 transceivers; three SPE Expert 1.3K-FA power amplifiers. Our antennas consisted of an 18-meter-high RA6LBS vertical with capacity hat (160/80/60/40/30M bands); two spiderbeams (20M/10M); 2-phased vertical (40M); EFHW-8010 (80M-10M), and Beverages for receiving.

Three months of preparations went by fast and before we knew it, it was 4 September. We met at the Riga International Airport for our flight to Brisbane, Australia, via Munich and Abu Dhabi, then on to Kiribati via Tarawa aboard Nauru Airlines.

Kiribati operations

We landed in Kiribati at 0630 (local) on Thursday, 5 September, where a youngster holding a poster for Dream-

ers Guesthouse (our hotel and QTH for T3ØL) greeted us. We loaded our bags into his car and tied our antennas to the roof and he drove approximately 15 km to the hotel. We got acquainted with our driver, Adda, during the trip, and learned that he was also the hotel's chef and would be preparing our meals during our stay.

After arriving, we moved into our room and then checked our surroundings to determine where the antennas could be set up. As the yard was not very large, we were only able to set up one spiderbeam; setting up guywires was quite challenging because the yard was only 12x12 meters, and one of the cords had to be attached to an old log at the shore. In a palm tree next to the yard we hung our EFHW-8010 antenna and pulled its wires toward the lagoon's shoreline. During the night we had to lower the spiderbeam to prevent it from breaking from the tide.

The following day, we fixed guywires and erected the spiderbeam to its intended height, and prepared a space behind hotel for the low band RA6LBS 18-meter vertical. We fixed three guywires in the sandy beach, while the fourth had to be fixed in the tide area. We had a problem with the poles in the sand, as they weren't suited for that ground, but we fixed that by hammering wooden poles into the sand and covered them with stones. By midday we had finished that vertical montage and decided we had burned long enough in the hot sun so we postponed the remaining antenna installations until the next morning.

On Saturday, we finished the second spiderbeam and the second station was

operational on SSB. Kristers operated in the AADX SSB contest on 20M and 15M, while Kaspars was on CW 20M, 17M and 15M.

We set up the 100-meter Beverage toward the USA, intending to work on 80M during the night, however that night we lost electricity and all DXing capabilities.

Although there was a 3kW generator, the owner wasn't on site so we had to wait it out. Eventually, the electricity came back and we operated on low bands with JA and USA, and got some QSOs with EU.

Before breakfast on Sunday we took down the Beverages and maintained the QSO logs, but lost electricity again because of the maintenance work required after the previous night's storm damages. We requested to have the generator turned on so we could operate, and did so until the electricity came back on that evening. Propagation was very bad; we couldn't hear a single station on SSB and QSOs were minimal on CW. Some amateurs turned to FT8 mode during that time, as it was our only chance for operating.

Propagation didn't improve the following day. On higher bands, there was only noise and we couldn't make a single QSO, but on 17M, we made QSOs in CW and FT8 mode, and on SSB we had just over 500 QSOs.

We could only hope that propagation would improve in Nauru.



The 18-meter-high RA6LBS vertical for 160M/80M/60M/40M/30M.



Three of the operators (from left): Kristers, YL3JA; Yuris, YL2GM, and Kaspars, YL1ZF.

On Tuesday, we saw some improvements with Europe, with 8% of 8,700 QSOs, but we lost electricity again and had to work with the generator until the evening.

We sent logs on Wednesday and noted that we crossed the 10,000 QSO mark and saw that statistics with Europe improved to 9.8% of total QSOs. We also made our first QSOs on 10M and 12M, mainly with Japan.

The following evening we began dismantling antennas and packing for Nauru as we continued to work the low bands with the RA6LBS vertical. Before breakfast on Friday, we took down the RA6LBS vertical and, around midday, the last spiderbeam.

In total we made 13,644 QSOs from T3ØL.

On to Nauru

At 1400 hours on Saturday, 14 Sept, we landed on Nauru where I booked two rooms at the Menen Hotel, but after checking in and searching the surroundings, discovered that hotel wasn't suited for our operations. The rooms were in the middle of the hotel and there was no place for our antennas.

There were three other hotels for us to check out; the most suitable of which turned out to be the Budapest Hotel, right on the beach on the island's north side.

The following morning after the first spiderbeam was finished, Kaspars began operations on CW while the rest of us continued with the RA6LBS vertical. We were able to start working on low bands that evening, but had some



Jack, YL2KA, and the spiderbeam.

Band/Mode breakdown T3ØL

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	FT4	Total	Total %
160	370	121	0	0	491	3.6%
80	847	1100	0	0	1,947	14.3%
60	0	0	0	0	0	0%
40	817	1,323	457	0	2,597	19.0%
30	1,033	1,020	0	0	2,053	15.0%
20	1,488	2,043	704	108	4,343	31.8%
17	579	764	17	0	1,360	10.0%
15	329	381	74	0	784	5.7%
12	0	52	0	0	52	0.4%
10	0	17	0	0	17	0.2%
Totals	5,463	6,821	1,252	108	13,644	100%

Band/Mode breakdown C21WW

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total	Total %
160	473	136	0	609	2.2%
80	1,361	882	0	2,243	8.3%
60	42	50	0	92	0.3%
40	1,769	1,553	1,305	4,627	16.9%
30	1,253	1,260	0	2,513	9.2%
20	3,811	1,760	3,150	8,721	31.9%
17	1,623	1,634	1,361	4,618	16.9%
15	1,062	1,213	758	3,033	11.1%
12	262	201	23	486	1.8%
10	127	243	3	373	1.4%
Totals	11,783	8,932	6,600	27,315	100%



The QTH and antennas for C21WW.

problems with the radials' placement.

Just before midday on Monday we completed the second spiderbeam and 2-phased verticals for 40M and began operations on SSB; by that evening we had 1,000 QSOs (5,000 in total). Overall, the noise levels were high, so we couldn't anticipate what results we would get on the low bands.

The propagation on Nauru was much better than on Kiribati, evidenced by the daily QSO count. In addition, the Beverage toward the USA gave good results, but we couldn't set one toward Europe as anticipated.

As our operations continued, we got into a usual routine, and, by the end of our nine days on Nauru, we had made 27,315 QSOs. Everyone was tired and longing for home; two DX locations in one expedition is exhausting.

Wrapping it up

We made a total of 13,644 QSOs from T3ØL and 27,315 from C21WW.

For additional statistics, visit our

Club Log. For C21WW, visit <https://clublog.org/charts/?c=C21WW#r> and for T3ØL, visit <https://clublog.org/charts/?c=T30L#r>

This was a tough DXpedition because of the long flights and that we had to build up and tear down the sta-

tions twice. Propagation wasn't on our side either, but with this being our first Pacific DXpedition, we were satisfied.

Thank you to all our supporters and amateurs who worked with us. For more info, visit www.lral.lv/c21ww_t30l. 

Hams with Hearts

We conducted a Hams with Hearts activity on Western Kiribati, to support young students and local schools with needed goods. We went to local shops and acquired books, pencils and other school things, wrapping a total of 50



packages for the schoolchildren.

Hams with Hearts is a radio amateur humanitarian aid project organized by INDEXA; for more info, visit <http://indexa.org/hamswithaheart.html>



50 Years Ago A Blast From the Past

**West Coast DX Bulletin
published every week by the Marin County DX Group
January 20, 1970**

"35 inches of rain here in the last few months. QRPers who feel that they can walk on water have the opportunity right now...right in their shacks. The Jacques Cousteau of the QRPers will shortly report on his underwater operations if it does not stop raining. \$7.00 for a full year of WCDXB...soggy reports when in season."

NCDXF Director Profile

NAME & CALL SIGN: George Wallner, AA7JV, C6AGU

PAST CALLS: VK2NU, VK2GQB, HA7JV

CURRENT LOCATION: Hibiscus Island, Miami Beach, FL

WHAT ARE YOUR PREVIOUS QTHs? Sydney, Australia and Phoenix, AZ

IF YOU'RE WORKING, WHAT IS YOUR CAREER? I am a working engineer/entrepreneur specializing in electronic payments. For 25 years I ran Hypercom, a corporation I founded in 1978. More recently I created MST, which became the basis for Samsung Pay and other mobile payment methods.

NCDXF LEADERSHIP POSITION: Director

CURRENT DXCC STATUS? C6AGU: 160 m 107 confirmed (in three months of actual operation, mostly RIB testing)

DXPEDITION EXPERIENCE: VK9WWI, Willis Islets, 5K0T Serrana Bank and Bajo Nuevo, VK9GMW Mellish Reef, TX3A Chesterfield Reef, PT0S St. Peter and Paul Rocks, N1K Navassa, KH1/KH7Z Baker Island.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING ABOUT CONTRIBUTING TO NCDXF? DXpeditions keep DX-ing alive and NCDXF helps to keep DXpeditions alive.

AS AN AVID DXER WHAT SORTS OF TRENDS DO YOU SEE? Since the late '60s DX was steadily becoming easier because of improvements in transceiver and antenna technology. We have heard complaints that it is now too easy to work DX, and that the magic is almost gone. More recently, however, the increase in noise has started to reverse that trend, making DX more difficult. This is mostly due to modern digital power systems moving from industry into residences. While it may not bring back the magic, amateurs are creatively responding by developing new technologies to compensate for noise. The rise of FT8 is partly due to its ability to work DX through noise. There is also a rise in the use (and abuse) of remotely-controlled stations. We will probably see new receiver and RX antenna technologies that will help us to deal with noise. The challenge is back!

ANY TIPS FOR DXERS? There is absolutely no excuse for tuning up anywhere near a DX or its pile up.



DESCRIBE YOUR SHACK AND ANTENNA SYSTEM: My latest shack is pretty simple. One Maestro and two laptop computers and they control a box in the garage, which I call the RIB (Radio In a Box). The box contains the radio (Flex 6700) the PA (homebrew), power supplies and a remote-controlled computer and data acquisition system.

The RIB was designed to allow DXpeditions to operate from rare locations where camping is not allowed or is just too dangerous for operators. While waiting to use the RIB on the next rare one, it has become my station. I also use it for my Bahamas "simulated DXpedition" operations. I just put the RIB on the boat with some portable antennas, pack up the Maestro and the laptop and off to the Bahamas. The RIB and antennas go onto the island and I operate from the boat via a 900 MHz radio bridge.

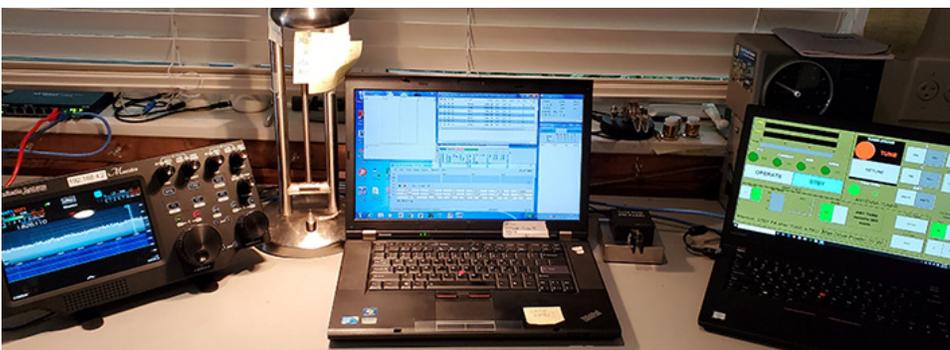


The future of DXpeditions, I think. My antennas are two verticals located on the edge of saltwater. I use homemade, remote-controlled antenna tuners to make these verticals work on all HF bands.

MARRIED? Not really. **KIDS?** 1

GRANDKIDS? Not yet.

ANY OTHER HOBBIES BESIDES HAM RADIO? Boating and boat building; diving; fishing.



Cycle 25 Fund & Cycle 25 Society



TO HELP SUPPLEMENT NCDXF's mission to provide necessary financial support for well-organized DXpeditions to rare and financially demanding DXCC entities, NCDXF established the Cycle 25 Fund in 2016. The goal of the Cycle 25 Fund is to double NCDXF's endowment through significant estate gifts from current DXers, which will allow NCDXF to continue its mission throughout sunspot Cycle 25 and beyond.

NCDXF Director, Craig Thompson, K9CT, who oversees the Cycle

25 Fund, has established a Cycle 25 Society for those who participate. Thompson said, "The Cycle 25

Society is for honoring those special individuals who commit to estate giving before the next sunspot maximum. When you let us know your plans, we will honor you on our website and send you a special Cycle 25 Society pin as a memento of your thoughtfulness."

Craig invites DXers interested in the Cycle 25 Society to visit the NCDXF website www.ncdxf.org/pages/estate.html for more information. You can also contact Craig to discuss Cycle 25 Fund funding options, includ-

DXPEDITION LENDING LIBRARY

NCDXF has a number of VHS/DVD videos and Microsoft® Power Point presentations on CD-ROM available for loan to organizations

wishing to show them at their meetings. There



is no charge to use the programs in the FOUNDATION'S

library, but clubs borrowing materials are responsible for postage in both directions. To view the complete listing of programs available for your club's use, visit our website, www.ncdxf.org, and click on "Videos."

ing specific bequests, designation of IRA beneficiaries and purchase of an annuity or life insurance.

Since the announcement of the Fund, the following individuals have made estate-planning commitments:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tom Berson, ND2T | Alan Rovner, K7AR |
| Al Burnham, K6RIM | Bob Schmieder, KK6EK |
| Bruce Butler, W6OSP (sk) | Rich Seifert, KE1B |
| Rusty Epps, W6OAT | Charles Spetnagel, W6KK |
| Rich Haendel, W3ACO | Ned Stearns, AA7A |
| Glenn Johnson, WØGJ | Randy Stegemeyer, W7HR |
| Hardy Landskov, N7RT (sk) | Craig Thompson, K9CT |
| Ed Muns, WØYK | Dan White, W5DNT |

Show your support for NCDXF

NCDXF offers several ways for you to show your love for DXing! Impress your friends with a gold lapel pin (\$7), show up at your next hamfest sporting the NCDXF hat (\$12) or don a NCDXF T-shirt (\$15) to set up your Yagi on Field Day. Send out your QSLs with an NCDXF label (roll of 500, \$7). Mail in the attached form or visit www.ncdxf.org to order today.



Contribution & Order Form

YES! I want to contribute to NCDXF!

Contribution \$ _____

YES! I want to show my support for NCDXF. Send me the following supplies (shipping included):

____ T-Shirt(s) @ \$15 each \$ _____

(indicate size M / L / XL / 2XL / 3XL)

____ Hats @ \$12 each \$ _____

____ Lapel pin @ \$7 each \$ _____

____ Roll(s) of labels @ \$7 each \$ _____

Total contribution & supplies \$ _____

Call sign _____ Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Email _____

Check enclosed or Charge to Visa / MC / AmEx

Card number _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____

Mail to NCDXF, PO Box 2012
Cupertino, CA 95015-2012