



Bulletin



April 2014

From the Pres

Norm WA4ZXV

Hello SEDXC!

GA QSO Party was a lot of fun this year. If you had some good friends along, there was plenty of time to share stories. Thanks to all who participated. If you worked K4I, a special thanks.

We've got some business for this month's meeting. The board has unanimously voted to raise dues by a modest \$5 to \$25 annually. Given the skyrocketing costs of supporting DXpeditions, this small increase will allow us to continue to support the DXpeditions that the membership desires. A vote of the membership will be taken at the meeting. We also hope to receive an update from nominating committee.

There is another great program that Wey has lined up for us this month: FT5ZM with Bob Allphin, K4UEE. You really do not want to miss this one. Attached to this Bulletin is a report by the Team Leader Ralph, KØIR.

continued on page 2

Veep's Report

Wey K8EAB

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

At our March meeting, Lou Dietrich-N2TU told us how the K9W Wake Atoll Commemorative DXpedition happened. Details are here: <http://wake2013.org/>

THIS MONTH'S MEETING www.sedxc.org/april14.htm

Program: FT5ZM - The Amsterdam Island Story

Presented by: Bob Allphin, K4UEE



Our program for April will indeed be special. Bob Allphin - K4UEE has recently returned from the Amsterdam Island DXpedition. This team made just over 179,000 QSO's.

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 From the Pres; Veep's Report
- 2 Activities; Treasurer's Journal; How's DX?
- 4 The FT5ZM Story
- 7 DXpedition Funding Request

How's DX?

Wey K8EAB

By the time you read the bulletin, several expeditions will have gone QRT.

Mellish Reef (VK9MT)

28 March – 9 April. Details are here:
<http://vk9mt.com/>

Austral Islands (TX6G)

20 March – 1 April. Details are here:
<http://tx6g.com/>

Chatham Islands (ZL7AAA)

20 March – 1 April. Details are here:
<http://www.qsl.net/zl7aaa/index.htm>

I hope you were able to put these expeditions in your log.

For Summaries Of All DXpeditions:
nq3k.com/misc/adxo.html

REMINDER

Expeditions to rare DX entities get more expensive each year. The annual individual SEDXC membership amount of \$20 is one of the more reasonable expenses most of us ever incur in this hobby. Please consider renewing your membership before the end of the fiscal year so that our funds available for contributions to DXpeditions are maximized.



Pres (cont.)

Our Dayton SEDXC dinner will be at the Amber Rose restaurant in Dayton. Reservation is for Thursday PM as usual, and it has been tested out by one of our members. It is an Eastern-European ethnic menu, can seat 45 and the menu reads like a DX adventure! (Thanks Wes)



Treasurer's Journal

Mike ND4V

March 2014

RECEIPTS

Dues & raffle	\$ 126.00
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DISBURSEMENTS

Norm Schklar – map prints	(27.00)
Chaz Cone – GQP Plaque	(30.00)
Lou Dietrich - mote	(128.82)
<i>Total disbursed</i>	(185.82)

NET ACTIVITY IN March	(59.82)
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Beginning Balance	5,982.09
Ending Balance	\$ 5,922.27

Activities Chairman

Bill AA4OC

The next hamfest activity will be the Atlanta/Kennehoochee Hamfest Saturday **June 7**. Details will be forthcoming. Be sure and put this on your calendar!



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Club Communications

SEDXC Webpage: www.sedxc.org

SEDXC Chat Room: details on webpage

SEDXC Reflector: details on webpage

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Veep's Report (Cont'd)

Before this trip, Amsterdam Island was the 6th most wanted DXCC entity in the world. Check it out at www.amsterdamdxc.org.

MAY MEETING

There will not be a speaker for May meeting because many of our regular meeting attendees will be going to the annual Dayton Hamvention.

Member assistance in contacting potential meeting speakers is always welcomed!

PICNIC

The SEDXC Summer Picnic will be hosted by Ken and Trish Byers at their home on Lake Lanier. The date is **August 9th**. We will be asking for volunteers to bring food dishes, provide supplies, and to help with picnic chores. Details will be forthcoming.

CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY PARTY

Gael Cone and XYM Chaz will host this event at their home on **December 6th** between 7 and 10 PM. The cost will be \$25/person ALL-INCLUSIVE. This means you pay your money and you show up. No one will be asked to bring side dishes or other items. Details will be forthcoming.

Member assistance in contacting potential meeting speakers is always welcomed!



FT5ZM – The Amsterdam Island DXpedition

Ralph Fedor – KØIR
Team Leader

The Amsterdam Island DXpedition had its origin in 2012. I had my sights on a Heard Island DXpedition for 2014 with a core group of team members, a ship, and a green light from the Australian Antarctic Division in place. I made no public announcement since I had not finalized the finances. When another party announced their intent to activate Heard in 2014, I decided to re-focus on another project and selected Amsterdam Island. The cost of doing Amsterdam would be somewhat greater than the Heard project and the logistics quite different, but the ship and team would not need to change. In late May of 2012 I began working intently on the Amsterdam project.

Over the next 15 months I spent over 2000 hours on the project. There was a landing permit to secure, customs and shipping to coordinate, transportation to re-arrange, equipment to secure, a team roster to complete, and contracts to negotiate. I worked with Stan, SQ8X, to create our website and I asked my good friend and fellow DXpeditioner, Bob – K4UEE, to handle our finances. George, N4GRN, helped with storage and shipping while Gregg, W6IZT, worked on our IT system. These four gentlemen made an enormous contribution to the project.

I found myself dealing with four currencies and governments: the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and France. Fluctuations in the value of the U.S. dollar complicated our cost projections and I struggled with translating correspondence into French to communicate with TAAF (Australes et Antarctiques Francaises) which administers Amsterdam Island and ultimately issued me a landing permit and amateur radio license. The people at TAAF were very courteous and responsive, but I was always uncertain about us really understanding each other. Then in September of 2013 a miracle happened.

New personnel rotate onto Amsterdam Island every September. I emailed the new Amsterdam base commander to brief him on our upcoming DXpedition, putting my email in English followed by Google Translate's French version. The base commander replied promptly saying that he had gone to school in Canada and had worked for two years in New Zealand and that we could do this in English. He was interested in the DXpedition and offered to help in any way that he could. The commander, Eric, was a godsend and we worked through the final details of the DXpedition very smoothly. I briefed him on the weight and cubic meters of cargo we would bring with us and he and I began organizing the logistics of getting it all ashore.

Meanwhile, a team of VK6 DXers offered to help us acquire hard to ship supplies, most notably, 30 light weight ten ft. tower sections to support our ten Yagi antennas and some medical supplies. The Braveheart sailed from New Zealand on December 26 loaded with the supplies we had shipped to them in October and met our team in Fremantle, Australia on January 12th. We loaded the additional tower sections and medical supplies aboard the RV Braveheart in Fremantle and our team of 14 began our sail to Amsterdam on January 15th. At first light nine days later we were looking at Amsterdam Island and again a little uncertainty crept into our minds. How would we be received by the 20 people there? Would we be viewed as intrusive and disruptive? Would they help us willingly or unwillingly? As the day brightened, those questions were answered in short order.

My jaw dropped a bit as I saw a dozen or so people on the island making their way to the jetty which protruded into the open ocean. Following them were two four wheel drive John Deere

tractors, two flatbed trailers, and a large Terex crane. When I climbed out of the zodiac and onto the jetty I was met with smiles and handshakes, and the French team and our zodiac drivers began working together as a cohesive unit. It didn't take long to get our gear ashore and to feel welcome in this place.

Our equipment containers were all color coded, blue would go to the shelter near the Amsterdam base (the Mataf shelter), and red to the shelter 2.2 KM southwest of the base (the Antonelli shelter). We assembled in the Skua Café for a welcome luncheon and more handshakes and smiles. Afterwards, the two tractors, one with a fork lift, and the two trailers made quick work of moving our generators, fuel, and radio gear to the appropriate shelters and we began assembling our stations and putting up antennas.

We were able to deploy our equipment essentially as planned. We had to make some adjustments to deal with the size of the shelters and the rugged terrain for the antennas, but we were able to use everything that we had planned to use. The Braveheart crew helped us enormously and the base personnel were always willing to lend a hand. But, we were in for a great deal of work. The walk to Antonelli was a winding uphill and downhill path rising 600 feet and not the straight 2.2 KM line between the two sites. Grasses at Antonelli were chest high making antenna placement, laying radials and running feed lines runs a real chore. It was common to see someone's head and shoulders suddenly disappear from view above the grass when he stepped into a hole or stumbled on a hidden rock. In a few moments the man's head and would poke out of the grass again and he would resume his task. After the first day at Antonelli, Jerry – WB9Z, summed it up by saying, "Nodir worked my rear end off!" That's not Jerry's exact quote, he described his anatomy somewhat more graphically. Nodir was not shirking either; it took him five hours of trudging through the tall grass to pull 1000 feet of ladder line for a bidirectional Beverage. Despite the challenges, both the Antonelli and Mataf sites were operational within 36 hours and the DXpedition was on the air on all bands at 0914 UTC on January 26, with eight K3s, four KPA500s, four OM Power amps, ten monoband Yagis, and seven verticals.

We knew we would not be able to travel between the Antonelli shelter and the base during the night. Operating shifts there were essentially 24 hours long. Walking there and back in the same day was not an efficient use of our time. The two bunks at Antonelli allowed us to catch some sleep during our 24 hour shift. What we did not know is that we would not be able to walk between our sleeping quarters at the base and the Mataf shelter at night. The walk was not long, but was hazardous at night because of the rough terrain and the fur seals that moved onto the path after nightfall. Therefore, shifts at Mataf ended up being 12 hours long. We were initially concerned about these 12 and 24 hour shifts, but we actually settled into this routine quite easily.

We went into this DXpedition expecting sunspot numbers in the mid 60's. We were treated with sunspot numbers in the mid 80's. This made 10 meters a fantastic band, yielding more QSOs than any other band. The long, phenomenal European openings produced over 84,000 QSOs. North Americans were rewarded with over 42,000 QSOs and Asia almost 38,000. I have to thank Stu, K6TU, for his assistance with propagation predictions. He confirmed that our three-element Yagis would have a 10 dB advantage over SVDA arrays. Thanks to Stu we knew when openings should be occurring and tried to be there. The Yagis really helped to select optimum paths; we heard well and I think we were heard well. The Elecraft K3s and KPA500s worked great for us and the OM Power amplifiers never blinked.

Our 160 meter operation is a story in itself and whatever measure of success we may have enjoyed on 160 meters is largely due to two factors: Nodir, EY8MM, and DX Engineering.

Nodir was tireless and relentless in his pursuit of excellence on 160. He was not satisfied with our initial 18 meter high transmitting antenna and took it down the second day, converting it into a 28 meter high flame thrower. Almost singlehandedly he laid out the DX Engineering Beverages and DX Engineering Four-Square Receive Array. He knew and briefed everyone on propagation and essentially set the table for the rest of us. We tried to be loud on 160 and benefited from multiple directional receive antennas and the band opening before sunset and remaining open until well after sunrise. We netted 3,578 QSOs from our 160 site at Antonelli.

Our team of DXpeditioners functioned as a unit. I could not have asked for a better fit of complementary skills, emotional stability, physical endurance, and tolerance. A number of us had special duties and all of us rotated through what the base personnel called "Petite Marie." This involved assisting with the daily cleaning chores in the dining hall and recreation area – washing down the tables, vacuuming, dusting, and assisting with serving. We were truly a part of the base team.

The base team, in turn, became a part of our team. We presented them with T-shirts celebrating their 65th mission on Amsterdam, gave them a 30 minute slide presentation about amateur radio, and held an "open house" so they could get a close look at what we were doing. When we made our 100,000th QSO, they hung a large celebratory banner to mark the event and repeated this for our 150,000th QSO. And, I think we have one new ham in the making as a result.

DXers and DXpeditioners perceive things differently. DXers hear what's happening on the DXpedition's transmit frequency, DXpeditioners hear what's happening on their receive frequency. My perspective is this: Callers were generally courteous and orderly. If I struggled with a call, others generally stood by until I completed the QSO. I experienced no jamming on my receive frequency. If I called for a specific continent, I generally experienced cooperation. Of course there is an exception from time to time, perhaps just a simple mistake. So, in my personal experience, pileups were a pleasure to work ---- worldwide.

Time passed quickly for us and soon it was time to leave. We began dismantling Antonelli on Feb.11 and Metaf on Feb. 12 with deteriorating weather conditions. We essentially "made a run for it" on Feb. 13th with waves breaking over the jetty as we moved our equipment and the team from the island to the Braveheart. Nine days later we were back in Australia with over 170,000 QSOs in our log.

There are so many to thank for our success. The Northern California DX Foundation tops the list with its \$50,000 of support. Then there is INDEXA, the Colvin Grant, and the hundreds of club and individual sponsors. The Twin Cities DX Association gave an extra measure of support, including a "pallet" of Coke products from KØJUH, and for that we thank them. Please visit our website and click on the SPONSORS tab to see a complete list of those who helped us. Also note our commercial sponsors and consider them for your next purchase.

Most of all I need to thank the 13 men who joined me on this DXpedition – the team. Each of them invested a large amount of money, time, and trust to produce those 170,000 QSOs. When you hear them on the air, tell them "Thank you." They are the ones who made FT5ZM happen.

DXpedition Funding Requests

None at the writing of this Bulletin.