



Bulletin



December 2019

From the Prez



Dick K5TF

Looking forward to seeing everyone (50 attendees) at the 57th Fighter Group Restaurant Thursday evening. It should be a grand evening judging from the list of folks planning to come. Ham Radio Outlet has donated a gift certificate again this year that will go to the lucky holder of the winning ticket, and Vaden McDonald NN4K, SEDXC member and President of CW Ops, will present a program celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the founding of CW Ops.

73,

Dick K5TF ❖

This Month's Meeting

There will be **no meeting** at the Rich Auditorium this month. Instead, there will be a Holiday Party December 19th with details at www.sedxc.com.



VP's Corner



Mike ND4V

Happy Holidays to all!

As the year winds down, it is time to reflect on what the past year gave us and to set some goals for 2020. We lost some of the giants of the DX world this year. Thank you for your friendship and rest in peace: Bill Ronay, Larry Price, Martha Henson, Paul Newberry, and Lloyd Coursey.

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Treasurer's Journal

Current checkbook balance (12/3/19): \$14,670

Payments made during November: *None*

73,

Jeff K1ZN ❖

Announcements



VP6R: From a Rookie's POV

Editor: The following was received from Mike WØVTT. The PDF he mentions is attached to the Bulletin.

Thank you for supporting the VP6R DXpedition. Many contributing clubs asked for a story about VP6R for club newsletters. The file is attached as a PDF document.

The file size with pictures was too large to email so the pix are posted in a Google Photos album. Use as many as you need to fill your space. Pictures for the article may be downloaded from here:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/cMTwbrtdSmPGV96s6>

The pictures are copyrighted by Nodir Turson-Zade EY8MM. You have permission to use them in your club newsletters, either in print or on line, but you may NOT post them individually on their own. Thank you for your understanding.

Thanks again for supporting VP6R.

Mike WØVTT ❖

Around the Shack

de N4GG



Station Notebooks

Those of you who have had the good or bad fortune to sit through one of my 45 minute presentations have heard me speak of what I call my "Engineering Notebook." I mention that item nearly every time I speak. I mention it whenever I am Elmering. I mention it a lot because I use mine a lot. In my humble opinion it is a key piece of every ham station, no matter how simple that station might be.

On reflection, there are probably better names than "Engineering Notebook." That term is a hold-over from my days as a practicing engineer. Technical Notebook, Station Notebook, or just "Log" is a better name.

You will need a memory that goes far back to remember the name Jim Lawson, W2PV. Jim wrote the book on Yagi design, literally: *Yagi Antenna Design*, published by the ARRL, 1986. It is out of print but easily found on the internet. I mention Jim because an anecdote about his "station notebook" got me started keeping mine.

W2PV was an extensive, sophisticated multi-multi contest station. One night in the middle of a contest, one of the rotors stopped working. Ardent contesters are a gung-ho breed, and several volunteered to climb the tower and fix the rotor – sometime after midnight. Jim calmly got out his "Station Notebook" and checked the resistance from every wire to every other wire at the shack end of the rotor cable. Casual measurement uncovered a short – careful measurement indicated it was near the shack. The problem was fixed on the ground – but only because that notebook had prior measurements to compare to.

Continued on p. 4

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VP Corner (cont.)

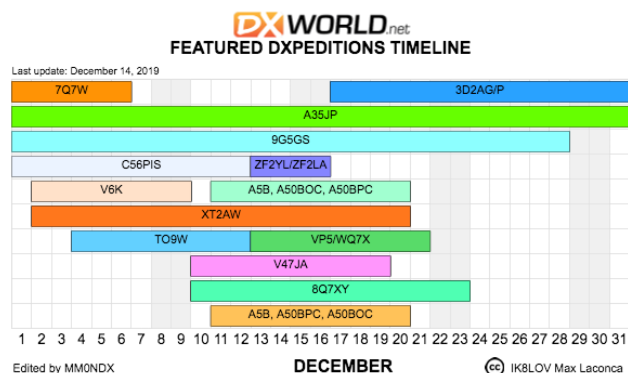
With regard to 2020, it's time to set some goals. Not being a rag chewer, I need some goals to get me BIC (butt in chair). Let's see: 40 wpm CW on RUFZ ... 2000 in the Challenge ... a few new ones on six meters ... that should keep me BIC! What will you do next year to keep your interest in our hobby up?

How's DX? We appear to be at the sunspot minimum. That may be bad for 15, 12 and 10 meters but conditions have been pretty good on 160 meters. I picked up 4 new ones (and they confirmed via LOTW) to get my 160-meter DXCC endorsement during the CQWW CW contest.

I always need suggestions for programs for 2020. I've already hit Gregg, W6IZT for a report on the Pitcairn adventure. Hopefully Bob, K4UEE will give us the scoop on his Marquesas trip.

73 es gud DX,

Mike ND4V❖



Around the Shack (cont.)

I don't think I need to dwell on the value of a station notebook. Have one – you will use it. Maybe some examples of what's in the N4GG station notebook will give you some ideas:

- The SWR vs. frequency measurement of every antenna currently in use. Also, of every retired antenna, going back many years. How much did the resonant frequency change when I cut off eight inches? What is the resistance (DC – think ohmmeter) at the shack end of the coax with the antenna connected? Hint: You might expect a dipole to measure infinity, but usually it doesn't. How about with the other end of the coax shorted (should be one to three ohms). If the SWR is different than a year ago, why? Is the coax going bad? I can tell by referring to past measurements.
- Performance numbers for my K9AY receiving loop. Signal strength readings for local BC stations and non-directional beacons, for each of the four directions of the K9AY. Note: This convinced me poor performance wasn't band conditions – I wound up replacing the terminating resistor in the K9AY that had shifted from 470 ohms to 1,100 ohms over time – a slow subtle change. Measurement of the SWR of the K9AY over a wide frequency range, in each of the four directions. While doing that, I realized the MFJ-259 I was using to measure the K9AY was transmitting a small signal. So, I measured the signal strength of the K9AY as a transmit antenna as received on every other antenna, for all four directions, on every HF band. That took 20 minutes. It's great data for every antenna on the property. Also, the resistance of the shield of the coax feeding the K9AY to station ground. It's supposed to be open circuit. Is it?
- A pictorial on how to tie a bowline knot. For 57 years I tied up the support lines on wire antennas with a random collection of slip-knots. Most held – some didn't. Many were impossible to untie later. The bowline is THE correct knot. I can't remember how to tie one, but the instructions are in the notebook.
- Just like W2PV – the resistance of every rotor control wire to every other. Also, the resistance of every rotor control wire to station ground (important!).
- A pictorial of the microphone connector for my Yaesu rig.
- The table of coax types and properties. This is handy. I chose to feed my inverted vee for 80 meters with RG-59/C rather than /B or /A, despite higher loss. Know why? (Next month's subject).
- The table of ferrite cores for sale from Palomar and others. Need to choke off some RFI? Building a current balun?
- Etc., etc., etc.

You can start your station notebook today – it's simply a question of discipline.

Bill of materials:

Pencil
Paper
3-ring binder
3 hole punch

Do you have one? We are here and it is now – get started!



Ha! N4GG❖

The VP6R DXpedition

From a Rookie's Point of View

by Mike Cizek W0VTT

Most DXers probably dream about going on a DXpedition some day. I know I did, but never thought I'd get the chance to actually do it. For me, the next best thing was going to Dayton and the DX conventions where I could rub elbows with the "Big Boys" who go to all of these strange far away places. I enjoyed getting to know a number of the guys who went to top ten countries, and really enjoyed the rare occasion when one would call me by name in a big pile up. After chasing DX for 30 years, I was content with my place in the DX game and had stopped thinking about ever operating from someplace rare or exotic.

Receiving an email from Ralph Fedor K0IR in September of 2018 inviting me to the VP6R team was quite a shock. Ralph explained that he wanted to do a trip to someplace fun with a team that combined some seasoned DXpeditioners with some new folks like me. I emailed back immediately expressing my thanks, but also expressing my doubt that the plan would be approved by the family comptroller. The shock from receiving Ralph's email was nothing compared to my wife giving her blessing to the trip: "I think you should go." After a few emails and phone calls, I was added to the team. Learning who the other team members were impressed me to no end. These were the guys I had worked from all over the world; the guys I looked up to and respected. Now I was going to go out to play radio with them. The experienced team members were mainly from the previous year's 3Y0Z operation and they wanted to go some place a little nicer than Bouvet. Almost every email Ralph sent out ended with "...let's have some fun", and that became the motto of our DXpedition. Our team email reflector was named "No-Ice Island". The wheels were turning...

We were soon trading planning messages on our team email reflector. I always knew there was a lot of preparation required, but for the first time was getting an inside look at the details. I had little or no experience in most of the requisite subject areas, but found one place where I felt able to contribute: fund raising. I know how to type and send emails so with a little direction from Ralph, I took on this task. If you are reading this in your DX club newsletter, your club was one of our contributors. Thank you!

Other team members contributed in their areas of expertise. K0IR kept contact with the folks on Pitcairn, Nigel Jolly of the RV Braveheart, the licensing authorities in New Zealand, and kept tabs on the rest of us. Craig K9CT took care of assembling, testing, and networking the radios, computers, and amplifiers. He was also our treasurer and QSL manager. George N4GRN runs a construction company and knows about international shipping and customs. He handled this area and calculated that we would need to have all of our gear ready and packed in a sea container by 1 June. We all had plenty to do, and it was still over a year before we would leave. I kept typing emails and sending them to every DX club I could find.

Most of our equipment was from the 3Y0Z operation. It was still packed in the sea container from Bouvet and was sitting in K9CT's company parking lot in Peoria IL. Some of the team gathered there in December 2018 to do a quick inventory and a few of us went in March 2019 to assemble and test the EME antennas. The weekend before Dayton most of the US team members assembled in Peoria to load the container. Our task was to unload the 40' container from the Bouvet trip, do a complete inventory and assessment of everything, decide what we needed to take to Pitcairn, and pack it properly in a 20' container. We also needed a comprehensive itemized listing of what equipment was in each box in the container. Two days later we were finished. George almost wore out his laptop typing in every item as we packed and loaded it. The container was sealed and would be picked up in a few days to begin its journey. More than a few cold 807s were hoisted in celebration that evening. I was getting my first taste of DXpedition team fellowship. This is going to be a fun trip.

<Container>Loading>

All of our equipment was on its way, but we still had plenty to do in preparation. Ralph was still finalizing details of our stay on the island and trying to get permission to operate 60 meters; a first from VP6. He found amazing accommodations for us; one of the islanders agreed to house and feed us for a very reasonable fee. Check out Pitcairn on Google maps, look for Andy's Pizzeria, and you can see where we stayed. Look at the terrain view and you can see our take off angle to NA, EU (both NE) and JA (NNW). It was an amazing site. We also received permission to operate from the old commercial radio station ZBP, just a short walk from Andy's house. We would be operating from what were probably the best two locations on the island. Glenn W0GJ was coordinating our travel and lodgings en route. We were getting close to departure.

There were a few changes to the team during the year from initial planning to departure due to work, family, or medical issues. Real life has a nasty habit of interfering with our ham radio plans. The real shock came just a few days before our departure when our team leader K0IR told us he had a medical issue and would not be able to go with us. Ralph immediately named Glenn W0GJ our new team leader. Glenn picked up the reins, kept us moving ahead, and we hardly missed a beat. Our final team was now EA3HSO, EY8MM, JR4OZR, K0PC, K9CT, K9NW, N4GRN, N6HC, SM5AQD, W0GJ, W0VTT, W6IZT, AND W8HC. It was time to go.

Did I mention that this was my first DXpedition? I'm not a seasoned traveler, and was more than a little nervous about the trip. Fortunately, I had company every step of the way. On Saturday afternoon 12 October, W0GJ and I met in Rochester MN to take the shuttle bus to the Minneapolis airport. There we met K0PC and K9CT; the four of us would all be on the same flight to Los Angeles. In LA, we met most of the rest of the team and were all on the same flight to Tahiti. We landed early Sunday morning and walked across the street to the Tahiti Airport Motel where we met the remaining two team members. JR4OZR and SM5AQD were waiting for us in the motel lobby. Since there is only one flight a week from Tahiti to the Gambier Islands where we meet the

Braveheart, we allowed an extra day, just in case there were any delays. We now had an extra day to play tourist in Tahiti and everyone headed in to town for the day.

<Tahiti Airport Motel>

Glenn called a team meeting for Monday morning at the motel so we could discuss our arrival and set up plans. He stressed the need to get set up quickly since we were arriving on Thursday morning and there was a large rain storm forecast for the weekend. Tuesday morning we left Tahiti on the four hour flight to Totegegie in the Gambier Islands. After landing at the VERY small airport (one gate, one plane), we took a short ferry boat ride to Mangareva Island where we boarded the Braveheart.

<Braveheart>
RV Braveheart

The legendary RV Braveheart! This ship had been there and done that, all over the southern hemisphere. I had seen the pictures and read & heard the stories, and now I was finally getting a chance to board her. Matthew Jolly, the captain, welcomed us aboard. He knew many of the team members from their earlier voyages with him; the greetings were warm and heartfelt. Matt introduced us to the crew, and to his wife Rachel and their son Finn, who were along for the ride. Three year-old Finn wasn't quite sure about these crazy ham operators at first, but he finally decided we were OK. I asked him if he was going to be the next captain of the Braveheart, and he very confidently said no, he was going to be four. After a quick safety briefing, plates of sandwiches from the galley appeared and we had a nice mid-afternoon snack. A short time later, we cast off and were underway. I spent a while exploring the ship, then settled down on one of the upper decks to enjoy the view and the fresh sea air.

<Underway>

We arrived off of Pitcairn Island early Thursday morning and sat off shore waiting for the islanders to come out in one of their longboats to bring us to shore. We were all pretty excited now and eager to get ashore and get started. We were very fortunate that because of the Braveheart's schedule with other charters, our equipment had been placed on to the island a month earlier. ALL of our radio gear was there waiting for us. After a short welcome at the dock on Bounty Bay, some of the islanders loaded us on to their ATVs and we headed up the "Hill of Difficulty" to Andy's house.

<Bounty_Bay> <Longboat>

Once we all arrived at Andy's house, station setup started directly. We had our plan, formulated in our Monday morning meeting, and everyone got right to work. Once again, I was impressed at how quickly things happened. Everybody seemed to know what they were doing and by supper time, we had set up five Yagis for 10-20m, two verticals for 30 and 40m, and four complete, networked stations. K9CT made our first QSO on 30m CW with N7XM at 0200z (6pm local time). VP6R was on the air.

<On_the_Air>

The next day we set up our low band antennas at ZBP, the old commercial radio station site. Our main project was erecting a 90' (27m) tall vertical for 160 meters; 70' of aluminum tower with 20' of mast tubing and top loading wires. This required the entire team working together. The antenna is mounted on a hinged base and we used a 40' falling derrick to raise it. The biggest folks handled the pull up ropes and pushed up the tower; the rest of us held the guy ropes to guide it up straight; W0GJ directed everyone, telling us when to pull or when to let up. The antenna went up in just a few minutes.

<160m_on_Ground> <160m_Base>
160 meter Vertical

We also installed verticals for 30, 40 & 80 meters and a second 20m Yagi. That first night on 160 meters Nodir EY8MM made over 700 contacts. He came back to Andy's house shortly after sunrise with a big smile on his face, and promptly went to sleep.

A number of people had told me "you won't believe the pileups" on the DXpedition. I've been a DXer for 30 years and have been in plenty of big pileups, but never from the DX side. I had been practicing from home mostly by listening in the big pileups on other DX stations and picking out callsigns, and thought I was ready. I wasn't! I like to think I'm a pretty good CW operator, but the pileups on the first few days were just too much for me. I retreated to FT8 and let the more experienced ops handle CW. After a few days, things slowed down a bit and I was able to do better. I now have an even greater respect for the ops who have the ability to pick out callsigns quickly and consistently in these huge pileups.

Once I got going, operating from the DX side was a real blast. It was nice to get a good rhythm of steady QSOs going and especially rewarding to work friends from around the world and call them by name in the pileups. It was fascinating to experience propagation from another part of the world. Naturally, we had propagation predictions and most of the team had operated from the south Pacific before, but there were still plenty of surprises. 30 meters was open all over the world most of the night. We would often work all continents within a five minute period. We had a regular path on 10 and 12 meters to CT, CN, D4, EA, and EA8 for a few hours almost every day. Sometimes these signals were surprisingly loud.

The most interesting opening I experienced was on 12 meters one morning. I was calling CQ on what appeared to be an empty band. Around 1730z (0930 local) I heard a very weak and watery SM2 station. I worked him and was called by a second SM2. The opening spread into OH and southern SM, but not into LA or UA. A little later some North Americans appeared, then some stations from southern EU, then more and more USA until at 1800z the Europeans had disappeared completely. This one wasn't on our propagation prediction charts!

Remember the storm that was forecast for the weekend? It rained sideways for four whole days with wind gusts up to 50 mph. We were pleasantly surprised that our 160m vertical survived, but we lost both 20m beams and an element off of the 15m beam. Fortunately, only a few pieces of tubing were bent and we had spares. Once the storm had passed we had everything repaired and back in the air in short order. Once again, it was amazing how quickly and efficiently the team worked together.

VP6R was a multi-multi entrant in the CQWW SSB contest. We shut down our N1MM DXpedition mode logs a few hours before the contest and were ready to start in contest mode right at 0000z. Since I'm mainly a CW DXer, I asked to do 10 meters during the contest. I thought it would be interesting just to see what propagation we would have over the course of the contest. The contest started at 1600 local time and 10m was pretty slow at first. After only three QSOs in the first hour, the band finally opened up with a nice JA run that lasted almost two hours. I was up bright and early Saturday morning calling CQ, but the band didn't open until 1600z (0800 local). We had a strong opening into Zone 33 and I got a good start on my "Worked All EA8" award. I had no idea there were so many stations in the Canary Islands! After a handful of Zone 33, it was all North & South America, all day long, until around 0000z when the opening shifted to JA. It was almost like someone throwing a switch; propagation changed that quickly. By the end of the contest, we had 1050 QSOs on ten meters. I never had so much fun operating sideband before! The final numbers haven't been published yet, but I'm pretty sure we took first place for multi-multi in VP6.

All too soon it was time to put our toys away and go home. We took down the low band site on Thursday 31 Oct. Our last QSO was with Jerry WB9Z our chief pilot station on 17m SSB at 1800z on Friday 1 Nov, after which we took down the antennas at Andy's house. Everything was packed up and ready to go by lunch time that day. Once again, we had allowed extra time, just in case, but everything went very quickly. We now had some time to play tourist and do a few good deeds for some of the local hams.

We helped Meralda VP6MW and Mike VP6AZ get back on the air by providing antenna parts, supplies, and some technical assistance. Meralda was already active before we left the island, and let's hope that Mike is on soon. I was especially happy to help Meralda because she was my very first Pitcairn Island QSO back in 1989.

<VP6MW>
Meralda VP6MW

This trip would not have been possible without a lot of help from a lot of people. First and foremost, thanks to ACOM, DX Engineering, and Flex Radio. These three companies were VERY generous with their support. We also had other corporate sponsors, 38 different DX clubs and, hundreds of individual DXers who helped us out. Thanks to all of you on behalf of the entire VP6R team.

No DXpedition report would be complete without some numbers. We made over 82,000 QSOs on all bands 160 through 6 meters. We were pleased to have 21% of our QSOs

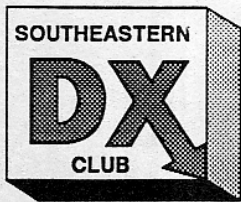
come from Europe, a very difficult path from the South Pacific. We were also happy to make nearly 900 QSOs on 60 meters and 36 EME QSOs on 6 meters; both were firsts from Pitcairn. For a complete analysis of our operation please see the statistics page on our Clublog DXpedition Chart.

The trip back home was remarkably similar to the trip out to Pitcairn, but with greatly different feelings. Going out was filled with anticipation, excitement, and more than a little trepidation; I really didn't know what to expect. Going home was mostly gratitude for having such a wonderful experience. There was also a bit of regret at having to leave such a beautiful place, but it was mixed with the desire to return home and resume my "normal" life. This was truly a once in a lifetime experience for me. It was wonderful to visit a strange far away corner of the world, to meet new people, and to finally experience the radio conditions on the "other" side of the pileups.

The travel and radio experiences were wonderful, but for me the most rewarding aspect of the trip was experiencing the wonderful fellowship among our team members. Being a part of this team was an honor and a pleasure I will remember for the rest of my days. From the very beginning of planning, K0IR kept saying "let's have some fun", and that's exactly what we did. We hope you had fun, too.

<Ninja_Dance>

JR4OZR Teaching EA3HSO the Ninja Dance



SOUTHEASTERN DX CLUB W4NT

THE
SOUTH'S
PREMIER
DX CLUB

December 1994

NEXT MEETING TIME & LOCATION

NO DECEMBER MEETING!!!
Next meeting in January!!! Happy Holidays!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

-Delaine McCarthy, KM4FV, President

Remember that the club voted not to have a December meeting. I will miss everyone, please have a safe and happy holidays! The motto of HAM RADIO '95 is "Not just another hamfest." Let's support it. See you in January!

CUL, 73 Delaine - KM4FV

VEEP BEEPS

by Dick Bentley, K2UFT, VP

Delaine gave me the month off as searcher for programs so I get to talk about my latest adventure on Grand Cayman. The part that pleased the XYL was the spacious apartment (2 King sized bedrooms and a third convertible sitting/bedroom plus living room, kitchen and dining room) at Colonial Club, Seven Mile Beach - 300 feet of sand, gentle waves, five days of sun, and never more than 15 people on the beach at any time, most of them keeping to themselves. The club is managed by John Darby (ZF1DJ) and his wife Suzette. We both enjoyed 6 mile daily round trips walking in the surf and on the sand, watching stingrays "fly" by and packs of Jacks chasing what we would call minnows, collecting sea shells, all that neat stuff you do at the beach.

For the OM, of course, was the opportunity to play radio and generate a pile up or two. Thanks to Vern, W8BLA, I hooked his Yaesu up to the antenna farm owned and maintained by Andrew Eden, ZF1EJ using the Cayman Amateur Radio Society shack that Andrew built on top of a water cistern. Despite urging from Vern, the

microphone never left the packing case but I gave my new Logikey a real run for its money. I concentrated on early morning or late evening operating times so as to not put a big dent in family time.

I operated about 17 hours over 4 days, logging some 1400+ QSO's, maintaining an overall rate of 84 QSO's per hour with the Yaesu barefoot. The QTH plays like a Stradivarius. During openings to Japan on both 20 and 40 meters, the rates at times were over 125 per hour using 100 watts. During one opening to JA on 20 meters, it became evident after about 60 or so QSO's that I was not controlling the pile up. That's when I realized that the antenna switch was still set on the 80 meter inverted vee from the night before! A quick flip to the PRO77 solved the control problem and yielded another 150 JA QSO's before the band crashed. Just like the sunrises and sunsets on Cayman, the bands seem to open and close like a quickly deployed vaudeville curtain, none of that wimpy fading off into the sunset stuff!

It was a great experience for both the family and the ham! If you'd like to know more about hamming/vacationing opportunities in Cayman, ask W8BLA or myself for details.
-73 Dick, K2UFT

LOOSE ENDS

-Rick, N4XMX

- 1) Club voted to skip the December meeting because of the proximity to Christmas. CU in January!
- 2) Be sure to turn in your CQWW scores, no matter how big! (Yes, I'll turn in my couple of QSOs too! -ed)
- 3) 160m Contest: Frankfort beat us by less than 2 million points last year. Please try to get on and help out! Anyone needing help getting up on 160m talk to our usual lowband experts for help.
- 4) Ron, AB4RU, asks how many people would be interested in a CT or NA computer class given either at HAM RADIO '95 or earlier. It would be sponsored by the Fourlanders VHF/UHF Contest Club. Let Ron know.
- 5) Roster will be printed in January.

The SEDXC Newsletter is published monthly by the Southeastern DX Club. All opinions expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, officers, or club. We welcome your opinion.

(Ed. note: The following was supplied by Dick, K2UFT. Continued from last month.)

From the diary of KT5X/US0Q, June, 1994

by Fred Maas, KT5X

Through interpreters, we learned that we were the first foreigners to visit here, and it was obvious that they considered our coming to be of great importance. Our visit to the Russian Orthodox Church wasn't complete until we had met with the Bishop and arranged to carry his letter of goodwill to churches in America.

In the afternoon we were taken to the University of Zaporoshye. There we met with classes of students training to be elementary school teachers.

Meanwhile, Phil, KB5BSI, visited Vlad, UY5ZZ. Phil installed software for packet and other radio related purposes. He provided Vlad with a TNC and helped him with the connections. Phil spent the evening on 20 meter phone with Vlad and Nick, UY5QQ.

In the late afternoon my wife Debby was taken to meet a group of artists with whom she had dinner, while I was driven to the Technical Institute. We arrived in the parking lot at the base of yet another towering, but featureless, Stalinesque high-rise. My driver, who spoke no English nor was he a ham, sent "FRED" in Morse on the horn! In a moment two heads appeared out a seventh story window and then disappeared. Sergey, UR5QSK, and Henry, UR6QA, arrived breathlessly at the ground floor, greeted me and we squeezed into a tiny locally made car called a Zaporozhyette.

In a moment we were careening through rush hour streets crowded with cars, pedestrians, trams and electric busses. Every few blocks we stopped to pick up another excited ham; Igor, UT7QF, Sergey, UR3QM, and Vlad, UT2QT. Now our tiny car was dragging bottom and leaning precariously in the curves beneath the weight of six people, joyously communicating in four languages; English, Russian, Ukrainian, and Morse!

We crossed the Dneiper River to Hortitsa Island, stronghold and last refuge of the Cossacks. We soon came to our destination, the house of US9QA, Vlad. I stepped out of the car to be greeted by several more operators already there, but I was held spellbound by the antenna farm. Casting shadows over the house and a miraculous vegetable garden, were three towers adorned with quads. On one tower was a six element quad for 10 meters. On the next tower was a six element quad for 15 and 20 meters. The third tower hefted the crowning achievement of this industrious group of testers; a four element 40 meter quad!

Amid a flurry of excited Russian, I was led into a tiny room in an out-building which housed the station. Half of the room was taken up by a single bed, the other half by a table with the station. There was an IC-725 driving a homebrew 200 watt amplifier, the legal limit in Ukraine. There was a homebrew PC with an early version of CT, a homebrew electronic keyer with, as I was to find out, no dot memory, a paddle made from a hacksaw blade,

and a motorized globe with wire pointers to three dimensionally display the beam heading.

First they set me up on the low end of 20 meters with CT to do the keying. An automatic CQ from CT brought a quick response, but I couldn't type in the call of the answering station. The number keys on top of the keyboard did not type numbers, the keyboard itself was in Russian and the letter locations did not correspond to the locations on our keyboards!

Horrified, I reached desperately for the home-made paddle. Now I discovered the lack of dot memory and, if that wasn't enough, RF feedback into the keyer caused random changes in speed as well! More stations continued to call me, while my hosts climbed over and on top me, wrapping wires around toroidal cores to defeat the feedback. I gave up.

Shell shocked, culture shocked, embarrassed, I was led out of the shack in a daze. Outside a table had been set up for dinner. There was goat cheese and freshly made bread, sliced vegetables and borsch. There was vodka, cognac, port wine, and Crimean champagne. Well, my next encounter sending CW from Ukraine might be painless!

Later I returned to the shack, alone at first. I practiced, desperately trying to adjust my timing to insert the 30 wpm dit without dot memory. I never reached a point of satisfaction, but the night was no longer young. My Ukrainian friends filled the room and everyone piled onto the single bed. They took turns manning the computer to log for me, while I painfully forced the hacksaw blade and keyer to do the talking. Vlad's enormous antenna was causing forest fires across northern Europe.

My receiver was overwhelmed and the log began to fill. It became easiest to pick out three and four calls from a single QRZ, then answer them each in turn, filling the log at a rate of two to four per minute. As the European signals were thinning out, American stations could be heard underneath.

Two hours and 250 QSO's later, there was silence in the receiver and I stood up, finished. My partners and builders of this incredible station broke into spontaneous applause, not for me, but for us. We were cheering each other, eyes damp, warm with a sense of brotherhood from the meeting that had been denied us for 70 years.

I stepped outside into a cool, dark night, and inhaled the damp island air. The Ukrainian operators surrounded me, and excitedly we exchanged QSL cards. After a few minutes another of the operators came out of the shack, pressed through the crowd, and handed me a stack of torn and crumpled papers. They were my scratch sheets written during the heat of the pileup. I looked at the papers in my hand not comprehending. My interpreter whispered in my ear, "He says that the computer glitched and a file wasn't saved." "Your log," Sergey said. We all looked at each other for a moment. Then I burst out laughing, and everyone was laughing and hugging and pounding each other on the back. A perfect ending to another a "lifetime in a day" in Ukraine! -KT5X

TREASURER'S REPORT

-de John Tramontanis, N4TOL

Balance 10/31/94 (Checkbook)	\$2,734.22
Deposits:	
Raffle & Shirts	170.17
Memberships	130.00
160 plaques	80.00
Total Receipts	<u>380.17</u>
Subtotal	<u>3,114.39</u>
Expenses:	
Newsletter (Nov)	84.94
Raffle prizes	87.89
South Georgia	500.00
Bank Charges	10.44
Total Expenses	<u>683.27</u>
Balance Checking 11/30/94	<u>\$2,431.12</u>

Of this ending balance, \$770.00 is earmarked for the cluster fund, resulting from voluntary contributions from the club membership at renewal time. Also, \$119.00 has been donated by club members for the South Georgia DXpedition, the amount of which the club will match. Please help contribute to this cause by mail or at the next meeting as a donation of \$500.00 or more will allow for club recognition on the QSL card. As you all know it was very nice to see our logo on the 3YØ card. The club is also holding \$440.00 for 160 meter award plaques.

- 73 de N4TOL John

TAKING ON THE BIG GUNS WITH A PEA SHOOTER

© 1994 - Jay Pryor, K4OGG

I tried to make sure that I was ready for the 1994 CW Sweepstakes. My station is far from being a "big gun;" with my TS-520 and wire antennas, search and pounce is my life. But it's fun and that's what it's all about.

I have a modest station and modest goals. Last year's effort brought 365 QSOs with 65 sections in 18 hours of operation. My goal for this year: 500 Q's and 70

sections. I planned to go for the burn, operating the full 24 hours and taking a day of annual leave on Monday to recuperate.

A key ingredient of this year's preparation was the purchase of a new computer. My daughter went to college this fall, taking her computer and my DXBase and CT software. Two weeks before the contest, I made my purchase, loaded CT and was ready to log the contacts.

Next came the antenna work. Thinking I would do better on 80 meters with an inverted V than with the all-bander I typically use, I put the dipole together and paid a visit to the Wire Man on the morning of the contest for a new piece of 213. Two PL-259s later, I was in business. As it turned out, the new inverted V was no improvement over the all-bander. Oh well.

So now I had the computer ready, the antennas ready, the space heater standing by to make the cold basement more comfortable, the keyer programmed, and the left-over Halloween candy conveniently relocated next to the rig. Bring on the big guns!

It's interesting to observe the positioning before the Sweepstakes. Thirty minutes before the contest, the big guns were parked on "their" frequencies, running stations for signal reports, making sure everything was set up correctly, and fine tuning their operating skills. A couple of minutes before the start, you hear the long CQs, followed by the station call, followed by more CQs. Then, when the clock's second hand hits the appointed hour, you finally hear "SS" tagged on the end of the CQ and pure, unadulterated pandemonium breaks out everywhere. What a wonderful hobby!

At 9 a.m. Sunday, I was pleased with my progress. I had already matched my section total from last year, and my QSO total was in the 260's. It looked like I would make my goal. I had just worked a K5 station when, for me, the Sweepstakes ended. My new computer started making a strange clicking sound. I shut it down. I turned it back on. The clicking sound continued, and it wouldn't let me back into CT. I was not a happy camper.

I had to wait until the computer store opened at 11 a.m. to talk with a technician. After running a diagnostic program I learned I had "physical damage to the hard drive." By afternoon I had a full refund for the new computer and was thinking seriously about what I can do to put out a better signal on 80.

My first Sweepstakes was in '59 and '94 was not my last. Watch out, big guns. I'm making plans for '95!

- Jay Pryor, K4OGG

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K4JRB 6/30/95

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DX PACKET FREQ. (2400 baud)

W8ZF	145.63
K4KG	144.91
N4UCK	145.65, 144.97 (ARCDX)
KK4JF	145.71 (also 1200)

DX COMMUNICATION FREQ.

Simplex	147.54
Melvin	147.51
K4JPD Repeater (tone 7)	147.795/T-195/R
W8BLA/R	442.075+

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER!!!
Next meeting in January