



Northern California DX Foundation

www.ncdxf.org

Summer 2012

60ØCW Somalia 2012

Silvano Borsa, I2YSB

SOMALIA, KNOWN FROM ANCIENT times as Puntland, was included in the Ethiopian kingdom since the second century BC. It was invaded many times by different people and split into numerous small nations until 1887, when it became an English protectorate under the name of Somaliland. Between 1915 and 1941, it was part of Italian East Africa together with Eritrea and Ethiopia. In 1960, it became independent and civil wars began. Signs of Italian presence are still evident: culture and infrastructure from Italy helped to develop Somalia during the last century. Many of the older people speak Italian and most have

a good opinion about Italy.

After the previous regime collapsed in the early 1990s, tribal wars divided Somalia into three states: Somaliland in the north, Puntland in the center, and Mogadishu to the south. There is a “federal government,” even if the situation is not calm. In the south, there is the presence of Al Qaeda militias and African soldiers from Ethiopia and Uganda to help keep order.



The Italian DXpedition Team (from left) Marcello, IK2DIA; Vinicio, IK2CIO; Angelo, IK2CKR; Stefano, IK2HKT; Silvano, I2YSB, and Gino, IK2RZP.

ated the country in 2005 and 2006), but without hesitation he indicated that it was too dangerous and risky. Sadly, terrorist attacks in October and November 2011 confirmed this. One of the attacks was against Radio Galkayo, a local short-wave broadcasting station that we helped with antennas

Galkayo, located in Puntland, is close to the southern border and is considered a dangerous area. There our friend, Dr. Jama, lives and works. In 2011, during a Skype conversation, we asked him if it was the right time to visit Somalia again (some of our group already had visi-

ted the country in 2005 and 2006), but without hesitation he indicated that it was too dangerous and risky. Sadly, terrorist attacks in October and November 2011 confirmed this. One of the attacks was against Radio Galkayo, a local short-wave broadcasting station that we helped with antennas

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 2012
CUPERTINO, CA 95015-2012
USA

www.ncdxf.org

President.....RUSTY EPPS, W6OAT
w6oat@sbcglobal.net

Vice President ..GLENN JOHNSON, WØGJ
vjohnson@paulbunyan.net

SecretaryKIP EDWARDS, W6SZN
kedwards@tlo.com

TreasurerDON GREENBAUM, N1DG
don@aurumtel.com

Directors.....KEN ANDERSON, K6TA
k6ta@arrl.net

STEVE MERCHANT, K6AW
smerchan@sonic.net

JOHN MILLER, K6MM
webaron@gmail.com

NED STEARNS, AA7A
aa7a@cox.net

GLENN VINSON, W6OTC
w6otc@garlic.com

AdvisorsBRUCE BUTLER, W6OSP
w6osp@aol.com

TIM TOTTEN, N4GN
n4gn@n4gn.com

NCDXF Historian ..ROSS FORBES, K6GFJ
k6gfj@comcast.net

PETER JENNINGS, VE3SUN/AB6WM
IARU LIAISON, BEACON WEBSITE

STEVE LUND, K6UM
BEACON TECHNICAL SUPPORT

CHARLES MASON, W4NJK
BEACON OPERATOR LIAISON

Video LibraryDICK WILSON, K6LRN
k6lrn@arrl.net

Webmaster.....JOHN MILLER, K6MM,
webaron@gmail.com

Member Services.....DOUG BENDER, WW6D,
newsletter@ncdxf.org

Managing EditorDEBI SHANK
itsdebi@sbcglobal.net



From the President's desk

W WE HAVE SOME CHANGES TO TELL YOU ABOUT ... starting with this newsletter. Our Managing Editor, Debi Shank, and our Secretary, Kip Edwards, W6SZN, believe we have enough material available to justify increasing the publication frequency from two to four issues per year. We expect the new quarterly newsletter to be a bit shorter than the old semi-annual newsletter, but it will provide you with more timely reports from the DXpeditions we sponsor as well as keeping you more current on what is happening within the Foundation. And of course, if any of our readers wish to write an article for publication, we invite you to submit them to Debi (itsdebi@sbcglobal.net) for consideration.



When is the last time you logged onto NCDXF's website (www.ncdxf.org)? We've made some changes there, too. Our Webmaster, John Miller, K6MM, has upgraded the site's "look and feel" and made navigation easier for you. We added new sections to recognize our financial contributors, both domestic and international. Those lists also let you know if you are current with your contribution to NCDXF because everyone who has contributed within the last 15 months is listed there. Another new section has been added to recognize Major Contributors — those individuals, clubs and businesses who provide a level of extraordinary support to NCDXF. We've updated the Video Library section to list all the new DXpedition DVDs available for loan at no charge to you. These DVDs make great programs for your local radio clubs. We've also significantly revised our Financial Grant Application form by including a Budget Worksheet to aid NCDXF's Directors in evaluating requests for Foundation funding.

NCDXF's Board of Directors has undergone changes, too. Two of our long time Directors, Chuck, N6OJ, and Tim, N4GN, retired as of June 30, 2012. We owe these guys a huge debt of gratitude for the hard work and countless hours they have contributed to the Foundation. Fortunately for us, both Chuck and Tim have agreed to remain available to offer advice and help us with special projects from time to time. I'll look forward to introducing two new Directors to you in our next newsletter.

NCDXF was invited to attend the Northern California DX Club's annual picnic in mid-July. At that event, NCDXC's president, Russ, K6KLY, presented us with a check for \$4,000. This is the largest single contribution the Foundation has ever received from a club group. Thank you, NCDXC.



The International DX Convention in Visalia and the Dayton Hamvention now are behind us. NCDXF's booths at these events attracted lots of attention and became THE place to hang out and talk about DXing. NCDXF Treasurer, Don, N1DG, presented a program about DXpedition financing to a packed audience at the Dayton DX Forum. Don emphasized that DXpedition costs these days — particularly costs for DXpeditions to the really rare Southern Ocean and Antarctic entities — have

Pictured (from left), are Russ Bentson, K6KLY (NCDXC President); John Miller, K6MM (Board Member of both NCDXC and NCDXF), and Rusty Epps, W6OAT (NCDXF President).

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and an Acom 1000 power amplifier during our last visit. No one was hurt in that attack, but a more serious event took place a few days later, when two humanitarian volunteers were kidnapped. A couple of months later, U.S. intelligence found the terrorists' base and a special forces operation rescued the hostages; the terrorists were killed. From that day on, the atmosphere was more relaxed and calm, and visitors' safety was better guaranteed.

A change in plans

Initially, we didn't want to go to Somalia as we were aiming for other destinations. The planning of activity for a group like ours, though, needs to consider different destinations at the same time because unexpected events may require quick changes and sudden cancellations. That was the case with our 2012 DXpedition to Mali. Two days after we bought airplane tickets and paid hotel deposits, a civil war between the Government Army and Tuareg northern militias forced the Malian Ministry to call us and abort the DXpedition. That's how Somalia became our new country.

In the beginning, we only needed local logistical help because all our team members held lifelong Somali licenses, and in a country like Somalia, local logistical help is mandatory. Some contacts did not produce results, so we got in touch with Dr. Jama who was in Italy for a neurosurgery conference. He reassured us about the local situation, but said that if we wanted to go, it had to be in May because that was when he would be in Galkayo; without his presence a DXpedition would have been impossible.

We immediately started our planning and the doctor found a good location for us: the villa of the former (now deceased) President was sometimes rented to Europeans who needed to stay in Galkayo (there are no good hotels in that area). Despite the high cost, we accepted the offer because the large garden would be ideal for our antennas. There was also a 70-meter tower for microwave links and we were already dreaming about hanging a 160M beam from it!



I2YSB and IK2RZP visit the Red Crescent.

Everything seemed to be going right until Mr. Murphy stepped in. Just after we purchased the (new) airplane tickets, Dr. Jama called us. The President's heirs wanted a full year's rental: \$45,000! It was clearly unaffordable.

After a couple of hectic and painful days, Dr. Jama called to say that he had found a hotel near the university, and that the rector agreed to give us some rooms for our radios and allow us use of the roof for our antennas. It was also a good solution for our safety, given the close proximity of the hotel from our radio stations. We searched for pictures or descriptions about this location on the Internet, but found no information. With no other alternatives, we confirmed the reservations.

The flights were not simple to organize either. Our previous DXpeditions were made through a local airline company that was no longer in business. So, thanks again to our wonderful friend Dr. Jama, we located a carrier with a connecting flight from Nairobi, Kenya, to Galkayo.

Armed with that information, we got in touch with Enrico, 5Z4ES, who lives in Nairobi. Enrico and his wife, Lisa, were really kind and, with their help, we got our flight information, ticket reservations and even negotiated overweight charges (more than 130kg

in excess). They came to the Nairobi airport and helped us with visas and Customs, and organized a very pleasant night in Nairobi with dinner and a hotel. It's great to have friends like Enrico and Lisa in countries where the smallest problem can cause huge unpleasant consequences.

Getting there

At Milan's Malpensa Airport, Gino and Stefano took charge of check-in and baggage and, thanks to a very professional hostess, all procedures were completed. It was Sunday, 7 May, 0700 when we took off, landing in Nairobi at 1830 local time.

We met Enrico and Lisa at the airport, and then went to a restaurant sporting all kinds of meat — including crocodile and ostrich — with the added bonus of an African dance show. After a few hours of sleep, we were back at the airport for our early flight on a very, very old airplane (African Express Airlines, ever heard of them?).

Enrico personally took care of our baggage to avoid any surprises and bade us farewell. As we boarded the narrow plane, we were a bit concerned. It was dirty and the smell in the air was hard to describe, and it showed no sign of maintenance for many years! We tried to fix Angelo's seat, as well

as a door dangerously swinging, and the window gaskets were out of place.

After a 4-hour flight, we landed on Galkayo's clay runway. Dr. Jama, together with our friend Hussein and a delegation of the Crescent Moon (the local Red Cross), were waiting for us.

Setting up operations

After quick Customs formalities, followed by lunch, we went to explore the university roof. Unfortunately, the space was insufficient, but the hotel owner agreed to let us use part of his roof, just a few meters away. We tried to take maximum advantage of the available space, but in the end we would have not more than 10 meters distance between antennas. This caused a lot of interference and the only solution was to find clean frequencies and operate on different bands, bearing each other. Of the two rooms given us by the university, the smaller one was dedicated to SSB; the larger to CW, RTTY and 6M.

We started by installing a Spider-beam in a torrid 38°C temperature, and we had to stop often to rest in the shade and to drink water. At 1500 UTC the first station was on the air, but we didn't want to stop until the 40/80 vertical was up. At 1700, two stations were operating.

Mr. Murphy began his duty too, as we had no Internet connection despite all our efforts. We decided to delay the first log uploading until the following day. We awoke early the next morning to take advantage of the mild temperatures and, by the end of the day, all antennas were installed and all four stations were operating.

We had huge pileups to face and we also had many commitments with local authorities, Crescent Moon, etc. Our Internet troubles, caused by censorship filters, were always with us, but after a call to our friend Giacomo, IH9GPI, we quickly received a software update for our online log with a solution to bypass censorship.

On the air

There were problems that affected our operation, such as a blackout due to a storm and a shortage of operators

because of dysentery, but we always managed to reach an average rate in excess of 5,000 QSOs per day. We considered this to be a very good result, taking into account that one station was only a beacon for 6M and, in case of propagation openings, we stopped the RTTY activity in order to try contacts with this band. So, in reality, we had three stations and five operators.

About propagation, we realized that it was very variable on the higher bands, with sudden openings and strong signals from Europe or Japan, forcing us often to manage the JA pileups by numbers. We also had very strong QSB in the morning, which caused strong problems and in some cases we had to interrupt a QSO. During the night we had good openings to USA, mostly on 18 and 21 MHz.

The propagation to the USA started at about 2200 UTC and lasted until about sunrise. During the day we received Europe and Asia. Erratic night openings characterized propagation on the lower bands, 80M in particular. This band was mostly silent. We did not have noise but we could not hear anyone! Signal strength was close to zero and the few QSOs made were completed under very difficult conditions; 40M CW was not too bad, but SSB was almost impossible. Gino and Stefano worked hard to make just a few hundred tiring contacts; 80M SSB was totally impossible, owing to S9+10 noise.

It's probable that we could have logged some A6 or HZ with 5kw, but we soon realized that our location was not suitable for the low bands. We made every effort to satisfy requests, but we regret that the final result was disappointing. About 160M, we did not have enough room on our roof, so we asked permission to place some antennas on another building close to

the university but after much negotiation, permission was denied.

Local flavor

As previously mentioned, the general situation in town was apparently calm, but there were still some problems. During antenna installation, some people threw stones at us and many times we heard gunfire; we were not too worried because Dr. Jama provided us with four bodyguards (not contractors, but well-trained Somali soldiers). Local law requires that every visitor have one bodyguard; our team of 6 had only 4.

Besides radio, the other goal of our trip was to check the progress made thanks to the help that we had provided during previous DXpeditions. We were honored at many different ceremonies, but the one most important to us was at Galkayo Hospital, where Vinicio, IK2CIO, received the nomination of his son Andrea as Ambassador of Peace. Andrea, with his personal donations since he was 5 (now he is 12), helped in building and refurbishing a children pavilion of the hospital. Another important visit was at the local Crescent Moon facility. There, about 200 prostheses per year are manufactured and

given to children who have lost legs or feet due to mine or bomb blasts. We also attended a dinner with local authorities (mayor, hospital manager, members of the parliament) and the request was always the same: "HELP US."

No contact

Going back to radio matters, the greatest disappointment was the 6M band, a new one for almost everybody. We were informed by Sergio, IKØFTA, that that period was not good, but expectations were very high anyway. Every morning we tried the beacon

QSOs BY CONTINENT

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Europa | 32,978 |
| N. America | 9,500 |
| Asia | 9,466 |
| Oceania | 522 |
| Africa | 367 |
| S. America | 196 |

QSOs BY COUNTRY

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| USA | 8,708 |
| I | 6,849 |
| JA | 5,628 |
| DL | 4,363 |
| UA | 4,285 |
| Total QSO | 53,127 |
| Unique QSOs | 18,307 |



Our aircraft with a wheel to be replaced.

with the antenna to JA, but we received no answer back. In the afternoon we tried again to EU, with the same result. Sergio informed us by email of openings to 3B8, FR and ST2. We immediately went on RTTY with 500w, but got no answer.

Only one day, during the afternoon, we had a good opening for an hour and we worked about 70 stations, mostly SV. During the last three days, there was absolutely no propagation and our team was reduced by 50% because of health-related issues. We knew there were high expectations and we were deeply frustrated, but we take comfort for the 100 operators to whom we gave a new one. In any event, it's an interesting result because it creates the first statistics for that country in that period on this band.

Heading home

Soon enough it was time for our departure. We had to uninstall and prepare all the material for our journey back to Italy and Murphy hit our team again. With Silvano, Marcello and Gino suffering from fever, vomiting and dysentery, Vinicio, Angelo and Stefano stood up bravely to the job.

After so many years spent in DXpeditions installing and uninstalling the same radios and antennas, we can ready all containers and luggage in a few hours. Arriving at the airport, our surprises were not over. There was a delayed landing for the incoming air-


craft, something not so unusual, but on touchdown, a tire exploded! Luckily, there was a spare wheel in the trunk and it was replaced while we waited under a tree.

We flew south, landing near the Kenyan border for Customs and a safety check before proceeding to Nairobi where Lisa again helped us with African bureaucracy before hav-

ing our material safely loaded onto a Swiss airplane. We were tired and as soon as we were on the plane, we fell in a sort of hibernation!

This was the first DXpedition in which we were happy to get back home. Somalia is a fascinating and mysterious land, with an old history and full of contradictions. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, and having lived for a dozen days in awful hygienic and health conditions we realized what everyday life can be for that brave people. We hope, with your help, to be able to alleviate their sufferings. Check our website www.i2ysb.com where you will find information about the next humanitarian steps we could take.

Many thanks


We thank all our friends who made this DXpedition possible: Dr. Jama and Hussein; Enrico and Lisa; Giacomo, IH9GPI; Arturo, IK7JWY; Sergio, IKØFTA; NCDXF; Sezioni ARI and their donations, sponsors and amateurs who contributed to make the financing of this DXpedition possible. 

NCDXF VP inducted into CQ DX Hall of Fame

ON MAY 18, 2012, NCDXF VICE PRESIDENT, DR. GLENN JOHNSON, WØGJ, was formally inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame, joining a group of 60 famous DXers such as Gus Browning, W4BPD, Lloyd and Iris Colvin, W6KG and W6QL, Martti Laine, OH2BH, and, of course, NCDXF's President, Rusty Epps, W6OAT, and Treasurer, Don Greenbaum, N1DG.

The presentation was made at the DX dinner held in conjunction with the Dayton Hamvention. Chip Margelli, K7JA, made the presentation to Dr. Johnson, witnessed by a crowd of approximately 500 DXers. Two other well-known DXers — Carl Smith, N4AA, and Don Chesser, W4KVB(SK) — were also inducted.

Dr. Johnson's professional and personal accomplishments would fill this newsletter (you can read about them at www.ncdxf.org/officers/w0gj.html).

The Directors and Advisors of NCDXF join in extending their congratulations and appreciation to Dr. Johnson. 



Dr. Glenn Johnson, WØGJ, and his wife, Vivien, KL7YL.

NCDXF mourns the passing of Dave Pugatch, KI6WF

THE DX COMMUNITY LOST A treasured friend on 9 March 2012 with the passing of Dave Pugatch, KI6WF; he was 83. Dave was an NCDXF Director until recently, when he chose to resign to care for his ailing wife.

Dave grew up in San Rafael, California, and developed an early interest in science and electronics. He attended the College of Marin, specializing in electronic engineering, and worked in various fields of electronics and biomedical electronics engineering. Dave also taught at Diablo Valley College. Retiring at the age of 55, Dave discov-

ered Amateur Radio and got hooked on DXing. It was, as Dave said, a wonderful opportunity to get to know many people from different cultures and parts of the world.

Dave was on the DXCC Honor Roll and held 5BDXCC, WAZ, WAC and WAS. Although he never participated as a DXpedition operator, Dave supported DXpeditions by building computer interface cables for the 1996 DXpedition to Wake Island and the 1997 VKØIR Heard Island DXpedition.

On a personal note, 23 years ago

Dave made the trek each weekend for several months to my home in San Carlos, CA, to participate in answering QSL cards from the 3D2XX Rotuma Island DXpedition. Dave was a long-time and loyal NCDXF supporter, as evidenced by the contribution to NCDXF of his entire station following his passing.

In addition to NCDXF, Dave was a member of the Northern California DX Club, Northern California Contest Club, Heard Island DX Association, INDEXA, Alameda County ARES/RACES, Contra Costa County Sheriff's Posse Emergency Radio Unit, Islam Temple Amateur Radio Club and Hiram's Amateur Radio Society. 🌐

*RIP, old friend,
Kip Edwards, W6SZN*

President's desk *(continued)*

soared. These costs have become so prohibitively large that it's unreasonable to expect individual DXpeditioners to be able to cover more than a small percentage from their own personal resources. If the DX community wants to see continued activity from places like Bouvet, Heard Island, South Sandwich and Peter I, then it is going to have to open its collective wallet and be very generous in its support of organizations like NCDXF and of the individual DXpeditions themselves. Don's message must have resonated with the audience, because NCDXF noticed a nice spike in new members and contributions in the week following Dayton! Don is preparing an article for an upcoming issue of this newsletter, so those of you who missed his Dayton presentation will still get an opportunity to read some of what he had to say.

As always, thank YOU for your support of NCDXF.

73,



*Rusty Epps, W6OAT, President
w6oat@sbcglobal.net*

Heavy Hitters 2011

Due to a mix-up in the paperwork, the last issue failed to acknowledge the contributions of Richard Hill, NU6T. Our apologies, Rich.

We sincerely thank these supporters of the Northern California DX Foundation for their generous contributions during the calendar year 2011.



\$2,000-plus — Northern California DX Club; The YASME Foundation; Northern Illinois DX Association, and Southern California DX Club.



\$1,000 to \$1,999 — K2PLF, Martin Green, Jr.; KU9C, Steve Wheatley; W6JZH, John Galli, and Southeastern DX & Contesting Organization.



\$500 to \$999 — K6IPV, Donald Lisle; K6RIM, Al Burnham; K7CMR, Carolyn Ratajack; K7MTR, Mark Ratajack; MDØCCE, Bob Barden; N7ZA, Bruce Wade; W5DNT, Dan White; W6OSP, Bruce Butler; W6XK, Chet Jensen, and W8QID, Kirk Swallow.



\$250 to \$499 — DM2XO, Rudolf Zerbe; JA1EM, Yoshihiko Akimoto; K1FK, David Bowker; K6GFJ, Ross Forbes; K6GRJ, Gary Johnson; K6LRN, Richard Wilson; K6SY, Mel Hughes; K6TA, Ken Anderson; K6UM, Steve Lund; K7HC, Clay Brown; K8GG, George Guerin; KC6BIF, Daniel Seright; KF7E, Jim Henderson; KM4H, Mike Henry; N4JJ, Marion "Jack" Jackson; N6OX, Robert Grimmick; N6PSE, Paul Ewing; NE1RD, B. Scott Andersen; NN6L, Dennis Dreier; NN6W, Gary Field; WØGJ, Glenn Johnson; W5IZ, Al Baker; W5WT, David Aldridge; W5ZPA, Michael Mayer; W6FF, William Gross; W6HF, Ken Farr; WB9Z, Jerry Rosalius; NU6T, Richard Hill; Albuquerque DX Assn. (W5UR); Mississippi Valley DX and Contest Club; Redwood Empire DX Assn., and Twin City DX Assn. (WØTDX).

Timor-Leste — the 4W6A story

Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX (G4JVG, 4W6AA)

A WELL-KNOWN DXER RECENTLY told me that he rarely reads DXpedition reports in radio magazines or DX clubs' journals. He said they were all the same: "we traveled to an unusual place, we made lots of QSOs, we came back." To some extent this is true, but what does interest me in a report about a DXpedition are the details that are unique to that particular location; the sort of information that might help me if I wanted to organize a DXpedition to the same place. This may include licensing, why the location was chosen, what went wrong, what went right. And so that is what I will concentrate on in this article.

Licensing

Licensing in Timor-Leste (East Timor) is now very straightforward indeed. It is still not widely known, but in 2008 Timor-Leste adopted the "Class License" system, based on the Australian model. The "Instruction manual for filling AT applicant notice form," available on the ARCOM (Timor-Leste licensing authority) website, states: "In accordance with the Class License Overseas Amateurs Visiting East Timor, 2008 Overseas Amateurs could operate an amateur station up to 90 days from their arrival

to Timor-Leste without applying for Amateur License."

What this means in practice is that any amateur can operate as 4W/own call (or own call/4W, it is not clear which standard ARCOM favors) without even having to apply for a reciprocal license at all.

However, for this DXpedition we wanted to use a "proper" 4W callsign and so three of the team members put in applications for full Timor-Leste licenses, each with a choice of three requested callsigns. Here, we must thank Geoff Williams, 4W6AAD, an Australian amateur working in Dili, who took time out of his busy schedule to take our applications personally to the ARCOM office, chase up progress and, eventually, collect the completed licenses for us. This whole procedure took several weeks but eventually we received our individual callsigns. We were particularly pleased that a single-letter suffix was issued for us

to use on the DXpedition.

The licenses were issued free of charge and are valid for one year.

Location

Two main factors influenced our choice of location. Firstly, we had heard from several amateurs that downtown Dili had high

levels of electrical noise, so we wanted to be well away from the town center. Secondly, since we planned to use mainly vertical antennas, we wished to have access to a beach so the antennas could be located within a few meters of the ocean, thus providing us with extra low-angle gain. Although Dili is located on Timor's north coast, the main east-west road runs right along the coast, and all accommodation is on the "wrong" (landward) side of the road; it would be impossible to put antennas on the beach if we were located in Dili.

We therefore looked at the island of Atauro and quickly found that it ticked all the boxes. Firstly, there was no main electricity at all on the island, so we figured it should be electrically quiet. Secondly, the only accommodation available to visitors on Atauro, a small ecolodge known simply as Barry's Place, offered 150 meters of ocean frontage, allowing us to line up all our antennas along the beach at the high-tide mark.

From an Amateur Radio point of view, Atauro Island also had the advantage of having a separate IOTA reference from the main island of Timor. OC-232 had only been activated once before, by 4W6GH/P way back in July 2000, and had been claimed by only 17.9% of IOTA chasers prior to our operation.

Barry, the owner of the lodge, is



The team (from left) Oliver, VK8DX; Steve, 9M6DXX; Bernd, VK2IA; Stuie, VK8NSB; John, 9M6XRO; Tim, MØURX, and Ant, MWØJZE.

an Australian married to a Timorese lady, and they could not have been more helpful. We were accommodated in two two-story wooden chalets. All four stations were on the ground floor of one chalet, with one bedroom above. Four of the operators slept in the other chalet, while two operators opted to sleep in tents (also supplied by Barry).

The accommodations at Barry's Place were basic but comfortable. There was a shared ecofriendly composting toilet and an adjacent shower room, called a *mandi* — a tub filled by a natural spring from which you scoop water over yourself. Later in the day the temperature of the stored water would rise somewhat, but at 0630, the *mandi* might best be described as “invigorating.”

With no main electricity, illumination in the shack and elsewhere was by solar lighting. This is not designed to operate continuously throughout the 12 hours of darkness though, and

the lights would simply switch off at around 0300 when they ran out of stored energy. From then until sunrise, all operating was done entirely with the light from laptop screens.

Power and transportation

The disadvantage of operating from Atauro was that since there was no electricity we had to rent generators. We rented two Honda 3kVA gas generators in Dili at a cost of US\$1,200 (the US dollar is also the currency of Timor-Leste).

A passenger ferry runs between Dili and Atauro once or twice a week at very low cost that the locals use to go to Atauro's weekly market. There is also a water taxi that runs when required but, with seven operators, around 600kg of equipment, plus the generators, it was too small for our use. Therefore, we had to charter a larger boat to take us to and from the island and we made arrangements for generator fuel to be delivered by water taxi when required. Petrol cost \$1.90 per liter, three times the cost of petrol in Malaysia.

Noise!

One of the main reasons for choosing Atauro as the DXpedition location was that with no electricity we assumed there would be no electrical noise. Wrong! Imagine our surprise, not to say disappointment and even shock, when we first turned on the rigs and heard S9+30dB noise across the whole of 160, 80 and 40 Meters!

Where could this noise be coming from? It was too late to investigate on our first night, so we operated on the higher bands plus made a few QSOs with the strongest stations through the noise on 40M. Late in the night, the noise disappeared but the following day it was back again.

It took two days to track down the source of the noise. It turned out to be a Chinese-made inverter that Barry used from time to time to power a 220V fridge, freezer and satellite television from batteries. Grounding the inverter helped a little, but 160M was still completely unusable. Barry was as helpful as could be and agreed to



Our hosts, Lina and Barry, outside their home at the lodge.

switch off the inverter and use his generator instead. What a great host!

With 160M and 80M now quiet, apart from the occasional static crash, we thought the local QRM problem had been solved but, the next evening, just as the East coast of North America was being worked on 160M, a strong buzzing noise came up on the band. This continued until after 2300 local time, and then went off. The next day we discovered this was the television that was now running off Barry's generator.

This, and an Earth noise loop from our own equipment, continued to plague 160M and 80M operations for the whole DXpedition. The noise situation was what might be expected in a large city but not on a remote island with no permanent electricity supply!

Propagation

Propagation conditions can only be described as superb, especially on the higher frequency bands. The experience of team members in VK8 and 9M6 led us to think that all the bands would be very quiet from an hour or so after sunrise until a couple of hours before sunset each day, but nothing could have been farther from the truth. For the first time since the previous solar cycle, 10M and 12M really opened up, with superb signals from North America — even the east coast and Caribbean area — as well as South America, Europe and Africa.

EQUIPMENT

Three Elecraft K3 transceivers, one Elecraft K2 transceiver, two Elecraft KPA500 linear amplifiers, one Acom 1000 linear amplifier and one Yaesu FL-2100Z linear amplifier.

ANTENNAS

160M, Titanex V160E with 24 ground radials; 80M, quarter-wave wire vertical on 18 meter Spiderbeam pole with 16 quarter-wave ground radials; 40M, Ripplettech (Australian-made) quarter-wave ground plane with four elevated radials; 30M, Ripplettech quarter-wave ground plane with four elevated radials; 17M, Ripplettech quarter-wave ground plane with four elevated radials; 15M, half-wave vertical wire dipole on 12 meter Spiderbeam pole; 12M, half-wave vertical wire dipole on 10 meter Spiderbeam pole; Butternut HF6V-X vertical for 10M, 15M, 20M, 30M, 40M and 80M with 18 ground radials, and G3TXQ Hexbeam (by MWØJZE) 2-els on 10M, 12M, 15M, 17M and 20M.

Band/Mode breakdown

| Band | CW | PH | RTTY | Total |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| 160 | 508 | 0 | 0 | 508 |
| 80 | 985 | 1,298 | 0 | 2,283 |
| 40 | 1,802 | 1,423 | 0 | 3,225 |
| 30 | 2,422 | 0 | 0 | 2,422 |
| 20 | 1,448 | 4,552 | 0 | 6,000 |
| 17 | 2,006 | 3,018 | 1,181 | 6,205 |
| 15 | 3,433 | 5,477 | 27 | 8,937 |
| 12 | 3,472 | 2,040 | 8 | 5,520 |
| 10 | 2,878 | 3,383 | 0 | 6,261 |
| Totals | 18,954 | 21,191 | 1,216 | 41,361 |

On 15M, 17M and 20M we had excellent long-path openings into Europe and all the high bands — even 10M — stayed open until well after midnight local time every night. Simply unbelievable! After sunset all nine bands from 10M to 160M were open simultaneously, but with only four stations available (and only seven operators) we had to make some difficult decisions on which bands to use. We figured that 4W was most wanted on 160M, 80M, 12M and 10M, so these were the bands we favored when they were open.

Before the DXpedition we were told that no one on the East coast of North America had ever worked 4W on 160M. John, 9M6XRO, was therefore on 160M every evening at sunset, during the very short opening to the East coast. Propagation did not play ball every night, but, when there were good openings, QSOs were made with KV4FZ, N3XX, N4WW, NX4D and N4IS. Many more North American, Caribbean and South American stations were worked on 80M, both on CW and SSB, as well as Europeans and a number of stations in southern Africa.

We made over 41,000 QSOs in total.

Sponsors

We are very grateful, and were somewhat overwhelmed, by the superb response to our request for sponsorship. A few DX clubs and foundations even volunteered sponsorship without

Breakdown by Continent

| Continent | Total | % |
|------------|--------|-------|
| Africa | 273 | 0.7% |
| Asia | 14,619 | 35.3% |
| Europe | 14,297 | 34.5% |
| N. America | 9,668 | 23.4% |
| Oceania | 2,052 | 5.0% |
| S. America | 452 | 1.1% |
| Totals | 41,361 | 100% |

Continents by Band

| Band | 160 | 80 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 10 | Total |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| AF | 1 | 26 | 34 | 15 | 58 | 31 | 58 | 20 | 30 | 273 |
| AN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| AS | 200 | 911 | 1,367 | 801 | 1,664 | 2,065 | 3,400 | 2,322 | 1,889 | 14,619 |
| EU | 112 | 360 | 667 | 616 | 2,647 | 2,164 | 3,868 | 1,358 | 2,505 | 14,297 |
| NA | 138 | 789 | 873 | 913 | 1,317 | 1,619 | 1,127 | 1,516 | 1,376 | 9,668 |
| OC | 57 | 191 | 229 | 61 | 235 | 257 | 400 | 249 | 373 | 2,052 |
| SA | 0 | 6 | 55 | 16 | 79 | 69 | 84 | 55 | 88 | 452 |
| Totals | 508 | 2,283 | 3,225 | 2,422 | 6,000 | 6,205 | 8,937 | 5,520 | 6,261 | 41,361 |

our requesting it from them. What wonderful ham spirit!

Sincere thanks, then, go to: CDXC (Chiltern DX Club), LA DX Group, Oceania DX Group, Northern Ohio DX Association, German DX Foundation, Northern California DX Foundation, RSGB DXpedition Fund, European DX Foundation, GM DX Group, IREF (Island Radio Expedition Fund), Clipperton DX Club, Nippon DX Association, Northern Illinois DX Association, Twin City DX Association (Minnesota), Western

New York DX Association and Swiss DX Foundation.

In addition, we received sponsorship from seven commercial companies and donations from around 90 private individuals before the DXpedition took place. All are thanked most sincerely: their names and callsigns can be found on our website at www.4w6a.com/ sponsors

All the operators paid their own airfares from the UK, Malaysia and Australia to Timor-Leste, plus their own accommodation and food and drink costs both en route and in Timor-Leste

itself. Thanks to the sponsors, though, we did not have to worry too much about the cost of shipping the bulk of the heavy equipment, including linear amplifiers, antennas and coaxial cable, from Darwin, Australia, to Dili in advance of the operation. Without the sponsors we would also have thought twice about the high cost of hiring and fueling generators, and of transporting everything in a specially chartered boat. Finally, sponsors are helping to pay the cost of providing high-quality color QSLs for those who worked 4W6A. 🌐

CONTRIBUTIONS The **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION** relies heavily upon the generosity of its members to fund various projects. We urge each member 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! 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 U.S. taxpayers. Send your contribution to: **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION**, P.O. Box 2012, Cupertino, CA 95015-2012, USA. You may also contribute and order supplies online via our secure server, visit www.ncdxf.org/donate.

NCDXC picnic



NCDXC presents a check to NCDXF. Pictured, from left: Phil, W6PK; Paul, N6PSE; Bob, W6OPO; Russ, K6KLY; John, K6MM; Rusty, W6OAT; Al, K6RIM, and Ross, K6GFJ.

DXPEDITION LENDING LIBRARY

The **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX FOUNDATION** has a number of VHS/DVD videos and Microsoft® PowerPoint 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, please visit our website, www.ncdxf.org, and click on "Videos."

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