

DXer



N O R T H E R N
C A L I F O R N I A
D X C L U B

The Editor's Keyboard

Holiday Musings

Late DXers

Those who wait expectantly by the mailbox each month for *The DXer* may have noted its slipping arrival dates of late. Guilty! Alas, with the lowered SFI and not many New Ones available, the Contest Monster has captured your Editor big-time. Many are still wondering what to do in this time of reduced propagation, but contesters have figured it out.

Following a half-dozen contests in October and early November, Thanksgiving week was a contest sandwich, with turkey served up between the Phone SS and the CQWW CW. The ARRL 160 affair the following weekend was dessert. With impaired 10m abilities here in the canyon, I kissed off the 10m Contest and came up for air.

Home are the Hunters...

A serious reason for holding back this month was to await the return of our gallant warriors from Syria. With most of the YKØA crew hailing from our venerable DX club, *The DXer* wanted first dibs on this story! Tom McShane, NW6P, obliges us with *A YKØA Diary*, and Bob Wilson, N6TV, offers *Impressions of Syria*. Dxpedition scribe Eric Scace, K3NA is to craft the full-length story for the DX journals.

Anniversary

Last month began my second year as editor of *The DXer*. I am grateful for the variety of submissions from members and for the many suggestions and compliments received during the year. But I must add that member submissions—never overwhelming in number—have dropped off dramatically in recent months.

Perhaps members have been busy contesting! Perhaps it is time to remind you all—as I did when I first took the editorial reins—that this is *your* newsletter, and it can only be as good as *you* make it. In my first editorial, I wrote “My vision for *The DXer* is of a steady flow of member input...” For some months, there was indeed such a flow—but mostly from the same contributors. My and Hugh Cassidy’s bylines appeared *very* often this past year, but Cass and I—and Knock, Marilyn and Elliott—know that a wealth of untold stories and experiences resides in our large and diverse membership. I need anecdotes, product reviews, book reviews, member profiles—and *opinion!* Won’t you resolve now to share your knowledge, views and experience with the membership? And—if possible—submit by diskette (PC or Mac), PacketCluster™, Internet or modem.

Holiday greetings to all, and may the New Year bring health, prosperity...and FR5HG/g and 3V8BB in your logs.

—Garry Shapiro, NI6T

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Driftnet Buoys

Despite two UN resolutions banning their use, driftnets are still employed by the fishing fleets of numerous maritime countries. These hellish contrivances—some many miles in length—ensnare every hapless creature encountered and devastate large areas of ocean with each sweep. Concerted international action has lagged. Activist environmental groups such as *Greenpeace* have engaged in direct action at sea, cutting and capturing nets, and even boarding mother ships at great personal risk to dramatize the problem.

The fishermen use driftnet buoys operating from 1.6 to 2.0 MHz to track their nets. Transponder activation frequencies are 2079 and 2331.5 kHz. Although the use of these buoys is illegal *everywhere*, over 500 have been logged, and over 100 have been found in the 160m amateur band.

Most—but not all—reports have been from the east coast, but many operate in the Pacific. A west coast 160m operator eventually encounters them (I found three during the past three mornings), but they are not on for long, and many hams do not recognize what they have heard.

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N O R T H E E R N
C A L I F O R N I A
D X C L U B

Club Officers

President: Jim Knochenhauer, K6ITL
Vice President: George Allan, WA6O
Secretary: Eric Edberg, W6DU
Treasurer: Bob Wilson, NQ6X
Director: Jerry Griffin, W8MEP
Director: Al Koblinski, W7XA
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Trustee: Bob Vallio, W6RGG

Comm. Chairman: Ralph Hunt, AG6Q

Club simplex: 147.54 (suggested)

Thurs. Net QTR: 8 p.m. local time.

Net Manager: Ralph Hunt, AG6Q

DX News: Dave Pugatch, K16WF

Propagation: Al Lolze, W6RO

Contest Manager: Rich Hudgins, WX6M

Westlink: Craig Smith, N6ITW

Swap Shop: Ben Devolter, W6FDU
933 Robin Lane
Campbell, CA, 95008
(408) 374-0372

QSL Information: Mac McHenry, W6BSY

W6TI DX Bulletins:

W6TI Station Trustee Bob Vallio, W6RGG, transmits DX information at 0200 UT every Monday (Sunday evening local time) on both 7.016 and 14.002 MHz.

Club address: Box 608
Menlo Park, CA
94026-0608

The DXer is published Monthly by the Northern California DX Club and sent to all club members.

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Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting was held November 11, 1994 in the dining room of the Dunfey Hotel in Burlingame. Meeting convened at 6:00 PM. Board members present were K6ITL, W8MEP, N6ULU, NQ6X, WA6O and acting secretary W6VG. A discussion ensued on the task force suggestions. The board voted to spend no money on prizes for the Xmas dinner meeting. The meeting was concluded upstairs when the general meeting began.

—Ron Panton, W6VG, Acting Secretary

General Meeting

The November general meeting was called to order at 8:07 PM by president "Knock" Knochenhauer, K6ITL. Guests were introduced.

- Member Survey questionnaire results were discussed. 84 ballots were returned.
- Garry Shapiro, NI6T, presented a summary of the task force suggestions from overhead slides prepared by Ted Algren, KA6W. Ted was unable to attend. A full summary is planned for a future *DXer*. Some of the ideas were: more fun; more exciting meetings; CA award; DX tests; Marathon; 9 Band DXCC; IOTA DXpedition sponsorship; run club contests within ARRL/CQ DX tests; CA Award Month; DX treasure hunt with NCCC during ARRL/CQ DX tests; promote 50th anniversary of NCDXC in 1996 (opportunity for 50/50) award; more informal meetings; use W6TI for communicating ideas and to unearth new members; create a "collection pool" of unused equipment/texts for underdeveloped countries; bring back "associate" membership; hold roundtable discussions on club activities and hot subjects, such as the repeater, Charlie, DX.
- A copy of the impressive California Award certificate was passed around.
- After the break NW6P, N6TV and WØYK spoke of their planned DXpedition to YK. See coverage elsewhere in this issue.
- First readings were held for Philip Noyes, KM6RM and George McWilliams, KM6RR.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 P.M.

—Ron Panton, W6VG, Acting Secretary

Knock's Knews

Chestnuts roasting in an open fire, snow falling in the high Sierra, leaves piling up in the front lawn, and Santa and his reindeer soon to be flying over the land. It's almost winter, with the longest nights and best lowband propagation still to come.

Task Force report

At the November meeting, the Task Force report was presented by Garry, NI6T, filling in for Ted, KA6W. For those who weren't there, we will give a little review of some of the more interesting suggestions for expanding club activities. First, though, Ted was amazed at the underwhelming response from the membership at large and disappointed in the lack of response to his many pleas over the past four months for suggestions. He and the other members of the Task Force did come up with many excellent ideas, some of which can be undertaken now and others that will have to wait a bit. Ted raises some questions as a result. "Are the members so satisfied with the current level of activity that they don't want any changes? If not, why didn't we hear from them...are they too shy and retiring to suggest new activities?"

It's unlikely that either is correct, but who can tell? At the outset of the new year for the present officers, the major thrust was to find out what the membership would like to see done and, if practical, do it. We can't introduce new activities if we don't know what you want!

continued on next page

From previous page

The Task force did make several strong suggestions that can be implemented with little difficulty to increase club activity. The first is a major effort to promote the *California Award* to all foreign DXers. It has been suggested that, for one month each year, all members emphasize the award with all DX stations. This could occur in May, a month of relatively low contest activity, with recognition of those members who make the most QSO's or whose call appears most often in the submissions. Each NCDXC member should include the requirements for the California Award with each QSL sent—another reason to use the official club QSL cards. Award requirements are on page 7, including the text currently appearing on the club cards.

The second suggestion is based upon the upcoming golden anniversary of the founding of the NCDXC on October 16, 1946. Using the example of the recent ARRL activity, we could sign our calls with "/50" during the year beginning October 10, 1995 and ending October 10, 1996. Special certificates could be issued for the first 25 NCDXC members worked with endorsements up to 250, which would qualify for a super special California Award. Special recognition could be given club members for certain achievements, *a la* the 40th anniversary activity a few years ago. Details have to be worked out and publicity initiated through the various DX publications to get this underway. This would also lend itself to a major announcement at the International DX Convention in Visalia next April. Obviously, these two activities require a couple of "sparkplugs" to get them underway. This is the time to raise your hand and volunteer! Give me a call and we'll get started.

Erratum: In the narrative preceding the presentation of the budget for 1994-95 there appeared a serious typo! The sentence read: "Bob's figures, adjusted for anticipated but unnecessary expenditures, suggest a deficit of approximately \$4,144." Holy Toledo! It should have read "necessary expenditures."

Did anyone else catch the error? (I did not think it *was* an error—*Editor.*)

Happy Holidays and a very good and rewarding New Year to all, with lots of good DX, better propagation and peace on earth to men of goodwill.

—"Knock" Knochenhauer, K6ITL

Treasurer's Report de NQ6X

	Credits	Debits	Balance
<i>Bank of America Checking Account</i>			
Beginning Balance (Oct 1, '94)			\$4,748.90
Receipts			
Dues received & deposited	\$177.00		
Refund-Branham Storage	97.90		
Account interest	3.76		
Subtotal	\$278.66		\$5,027.56
Expenditures			
DXer printing, postage & expenses		\$764.67	
October room rent		100.00	
Subtotal		\$864.67	
Ending Balance			\$4,162.89
<i>Eurekabank Savings Account</i>			
Beginning Balance (Oct 1)			\$18,916.27
Account interest	\$35.02		
Ending Balance*			\$18,951.29
*Includes \$3500 set-aside for 1995 IDXC			
<i>EurekaBank Life Members Fund</i>			
CD value at 4 March '94			\$10,432.73
(matures 4 Nov '94) no activity			

Roster Changes

License upgrades

John McConnell, KC6ESL (A)

Charles (Chuck) McConnell (E)

Send changes to NCDXC, Box 608, Menlo Park, CA 94026-0608

from page 1

Driftnet Buoys

"Most buoys run a series of three callsigns and DAID and then are silent for four minutes," says *The Lowdown*, from the Longwave Club of America, in its December, 1993 issue. The ones I heard preceded the callsign with a one-second carrier. "They (run) three or six watts. Short vertical. Rotary keyer with...a maximum of six characters. 5000 hour battery life." Callsigns consist of three alphanumeric characters, such as 2TD, K55, etc. While the estimated range is 150 miles, some have been recorded in Arizona! Although illegal to use, they are sold by *Taiyo Musen* and others through at least 250 dealers in the US. Prices are \$1995-2495 each.

The Longwave Club of America is a clearinghouse for driftnet buoy information. 160m operators should send logs of buoy encounters; all operators should forward newspaper clippings dealing with buoys, buoy news from any source, or their own suggestions and speculations. Send all material to Al Underwood, 3892 Silver Springs Road, Silver Springs, NY 14550.

—Garry Shapiro, N16T,
with thanks to Jack Troster, W6ISQ

Kudos

Congratulations to:

- Jim Maxwell, W6CF: elected a Fellow of the Radio Club of America



A YKØA Diary

Tom McShane, NW6P

A day-by-day account of the mostly-NCDXC Syria DXpedition

Sunday, November 20, 1994

Depart USA at 2:20 p.m. local time for Frankfurt.

Monday, November 21

West Coast DXers meet K3NA in Frankfurt for flight to Damascus. We arrive 7 p.m. local time and are met by Omar Shabsigh, YK1AO and Marwan Midani, YK1AU. Operators have no problems getting luggage through Syrian customs in Damascus. Our Syrian hosts transport us to the Al Jalaa Cham Hotel located about a mile from our operating site. Omar and Marwan discuss the DXpedition over coffee and beer and review our itinerary for the next week.

Tuesday, November 22

Tom, NW6P, Rusty, W6OAT, and Omar depart for the airport to clear our advance shipment of equipment through customs while the rest of the team assembles Omar's station and 2 beams which shipped two weeks before.

Clearing customs is an uneventful but lengthy process. We first go to center-city Damascus to get the air shipment paperwork from Lufthansa; then to the Syrian Telecommunications Establishment to pick up an engineer who will verify that the equipment is actually what we are authorized to bring into the country. Next we go to Customs to get the import license that is shown to the Syrian National Bank, where we pay an import license fee, then to Customs where we get paperwork allowing us to proceed to the Cargo area where the goods are inspected by the STE Engineer. After he records the serial numbers and signs off on the documents, we get a final OK to remove our goods. We rent a truck to carry 20 boxes weighing 371 kg to the YKØA site.

1:30 p.m.. When we arrive to offload the gear the rest of the team are asking where we have been for so long! While we were at the airport the team had assembled one C-3 and the 40 meter 2-element beam that had arrived in Damascus 2 weeks earlier.

The computer gurus—N6TV, K3NA, and WØYK—assemble a local area network of 4 PC's interconnecting the 3 radios. The 4th PC is to monitor all three radios. In the next room are members of Syrian State Security and STE personnel who will be monitoring all transmissions from YKØA and recording them on audio tape! Ed Muns, WØYK demonstrates our PC network and offers to add the Syrian monitors as a node on our network if they can obtain an IBM -

compatible PC. They are very interested in doing this and set about having a PC brought to their room.

The rest of the afternoon is spent erecting the two Force 12 C-3's and 40 meter beam and networking the PCs. Late in the afternoon the Syrian monitors bring an IBM PC to their room and Ed adds them to our network. They soon realize that there is no need for the audio recordings as they can digitally log all QSOs. By early evening we are QRV on 40m and 30m. N6TV and K3NA operate through the night. The monitors stay at their posts.

Wednesday, November 23

20 meters opens at dawn. By 8:00 a.m. local time the night shift is relieved and antenna work proceeds: K6ANP, W6OTC, W6OAT, and NW6P put up a full-size 80m loop and assembly of the Battle Creek Special begins. By noon, it starts to rain. This is not supposed to happen in the desert but we have a good ol' midwestern downpour in spite of this. The loop is up but the Battle Creek Special is not finished. Glen, W6OTC gets going on RTTY—a first from Syria. We are on the air from 80 to 10m with 3 rigs and 2 amps. There seems no end to the number of Europeans and Asians calling YKØA.

Thursday, November 24

More rain—we have to get the Battle Creek Special erected. It goes together very nicely but it takes 5 of us to get it up and guyed properly. We lay out the radials. Interference between the two C3's affects the SWRs and causes us to relocate one as far from the other as possible. Unfortunately, there is not enough coax to enable maximum separation, but performance is acceptable. We are soaked from the rain and chilled from the cold. It is snowing on nearby Mt. Hermon and in the Golan Heights, 40 miles away.

Tom, Rusty, and Ed join Omar and Hikmat, YK1AM, for a meeting with the head of the Syrian Telecommunications Establishment, Mr. Obied—the person who signed our licenses. He is very cordial and states that the STE intends to keep the callsign YKØA active as a club station to be built at our operating site. They will allow visiting hams to come to Syria as guest operators at YKØA. We are very encouraged by the STE's positive attitude toward amateur radio.

First West Coast 40m contacts are made that evening. QSOs continue through the night. We are on 80m and 160m with the Battle Creek Special. Received signals

are weak at our end. Operators ascribe the low signals and quiet band to conditions and the vertical antenna. N6TV is told on 40m cw that "half the USA is calling YKØA on 80 and 160, why do we not respond?" It turns out that the front end of one radio is shot.

Friday, November 25

Ed Muns has a TS-50 in his suitcase which he brings to the shack to replace the defunct radio. An amplifier power supply blows up. Repairs are made but the microprocessor board is also shot. We are now down to 1 amp and the 50w TS-50 instead of the original radio. Murphy strikes again! W6OTC concentrates on 20m RTTY and gets a good opening to West Coast USA. Marwan makes his first DX QSO. It is a station in Indonesia whom he contacts on 40 meter SSB. Marwan is thrilled at his success. Contacts proceed on all bands.

Teams are designated for the contest. K3NA, W6OAT, W6OTC, and K6ANP will take the first 6 hours then WØYK, WA2TMP, NW6P, and N6TV will operate for 12 hours, then the other team is on for 12, etc.

Saturday, November 26

Contest begins at 2 am local time. 40, 80 and 160 are all strong through the night. 20 opens at dawn, followed by 15. There is a great 10 meter opening from about noon until 7 p.m. We use the 80m delta loop on 10 while the two C3's are on 15 and 20. 40 meters is open from 2 hours before dusk all through the night. 80 and 160 meters are very active all night long. We keep the amplifier on 40 and run barefoot on 80 and 160. The Battle Creek Special is really a terrific antenna and well worth having brought to Syria.

Sunday, November 27

20 and 15 are strong all day. 10 meters opens from about noon until dark but less strongly than on Saturday. 40, 80 and 160 meters continue very active. We miss having the other radio and amp. Tonight we use the one remaining amp on 80 and 160, and run barefoot on 40.

Monday, November 28

Contest ends at 2 a.m. local time. We have about 7,500 QSOs for 11.7 million points—good for a win in our area and probably in the top two or three worldwide. Glenn, W6OTC operates RTTY for a few hours before calling it a night. We're back on the air with 2 transmitters from about 8 a.m. We try to concentrate on Japan but Euros and Russians don't cooperate.

Omar tells us he just learned that Customs requires our gear to be at the airport 48 hours before departure. This will close down 2 stations Monday and the third one Tuesday at noon. This is two days ahead of plan but we cannot do anything about it. All but one station

is packed for shipment. Omar says the outbound weight has to be the same 371 kilos as inbound. We are 40 kilos short. We buy hammers to ship home to add to the weight! First they are autographed in Arabic—maybe we can auction them at Visalia. Hand luggage is added and finally we are at 371 kilos. Shipping cost is about \$6.20 per kilo!

Keeping the one remaining station on the air pays off as we get a brief (and weak) 20 meter short path opening to the West Coast and get more NCDXC members in the log.

Tuesday, November 29

N6TV and WA2TMP leave for the States at 5 a.m. NW6P and K6ANP are on 20 meters for the band opening, determined to get some SSB contacts. Len quits after 20 minutes saying, "Life is too short for this!" Tom takes over, listens to the huge, unruly pile and QSY's to CW after 15 minutes! The Euros just cannot be controlled, at least not by these CW ops. Glenn verifies that Omar's PK232 works, and the last YKØA station goes QRT at 11 a.m. We pack up the remaining station and antennas.

Omar arranges for a shopping expedition in the Damascus "Souk." It's the world's largest flea market! Great fun.

Wednesday, November 30

We travel 200 km to Palmyra, an ancient city at a large oasis in the desert northeast of Damascus. Palmyra is 5 times as large as Ephesus in Turkey. No one in our group had ever seen any ruins this huge. Rusty compared it with Luxor in Egypt. Tom, Ed, and Len make fools of themselves riding camels. We are the only tourists there and have the whole place to ourselves. Palmyra is definitely worth the trip.

Dinner that night with YK1AO (Omar), YK1AN (Michelle), YK1AM (Hikmat), and YK1AU (Marwan). This is a Syrian feast that starts with 15 appetizers including lamb brains and testicles! Rusty is the only one who can eat the bright red chili pepper paste that Syrians spread on pita bread. He actually likes it!

Thursday, December 1

At 7:30 a.m. we fly to Frankfurt where Eric, K3NA departs for Washington, DC and the rest of us are met by several members of the DLØWW Contest Club. YKØA team members are treated to dinner with lots of German beer and a meeting with about 20 members—most of whom worked us on 5 or 6 bands.

Friday, December 2

We leave Frankfurt at 10:30 a.m. for the USA. YKØA is temporarily QRT. 16,500 QSOs are in the log.

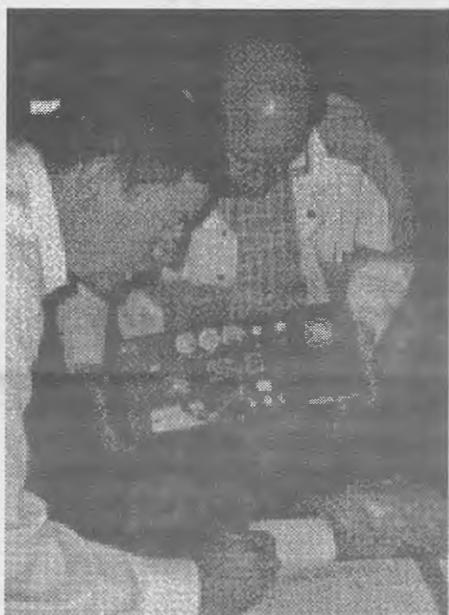
Impressions of Syria

Bob Wilson, N6TV

"TV Bob" shares images of Damascus and YKØA

We Arrive

"Tom McShane, Tom McShane" cries a voice from a corner of the Damascus Airport passport area. "I hear my name!" says Tom, NW6P. The call comes from a head poking through a square opening in a wooden door. The scene is not unlike the one in *The Wizard of Oz* where the man with the long moustache first greets Dorothy at the door to the Emerald City. "Tom, I don't think we're in Kansas any more!"



Glenn, W6OTC and Bob, N6TV

The man in the door is Omar, YK1AO, our host and the key figure with whom all our Damascus dealings have been. It is a greeting I shall never forget. We breeze our way through Customs and out the airport door. There, amidst all the double-parked cars and honking horns, we hear a very loud "Dahdidahdit dahdahdidah" tapped out on a car horn by Omar's friend Marwan, YK1AU, a 33 year-old USC-educated biomedical engineer who speaks perfect English and drives a brand new extended-cab Japanese pickup truck. Off we and our luggage go into the damp Damascus night.

First Night on 40

What a Mesopotamia! Eric is running USA for hours on 40 CW. "Want to try 40?" he says. "Sure!" I say, jumping at the chance. As I sit down at the keyboard, Eric warns, "I think I've managed to p.o. a whole bunch of Europeans." Hmmm! I find he's programmed CT's "thank you" button with "TU USA UP." I can't press anything without "USA" coming out.

Sure enough, for each "USA USA" there is a bunch of Europeans clamoring "EU EU EU." After a while, it becomes clear that it is getting late in Europe and they are tired of hearing YKØA work nothing but Americans. USA stops calling. What's wrong now? Rats! Europeans are QRMing my transmit frequency! I try a quick QSY to 7023 and call CQ USA. No answers. Some European has decided he will sign YKØA back on 7003! What a mess! I give up and start working Europeans.

This seems to placate them: the incident is never repeated.

The Mysterious 240 MHz signal

Contacts with 4X are strictly prohibited. The Syrian government has decided to monitor and tape record every single QSO we make. They set up three ancient nixie-tube Racal receivers, the size of large bread boxes, in the adjoining room. The poor monitoring guys are told to log every QSO we make. They are busting calls left and right: they can't hear who we are working and our CW is just too fast for them. Finally, we decide to add them to our own CT network. They happily supply a PC on which we install CT, and up they come. They are delighted. They can see immediately which frequency each station is using for transmit (thanks to the Alt-J window). They are getting a complete log of every QSO we make, which they can print any time. Everything is working great, and the monitoring guys are all smiles.

However, there's this one "thing" about the CT network: each PC gets a "frequency," because it is presumed that each is controlling a radio. We have one extra laptop with no station attached. To keep it "out of the way," we set its frequency to "24 MHz." Unfortunately, K3NA mistypes and it comes out as "240 MHz," a satellite frequency (DXpedition mode supports logging of Satellite QSOs). At the time, the monitoring "chief"—a scary looking guy in a black business suit—happens to be in the next room. He notices the 240 MHz frequency, and dials it up on his AOR-3000 scanner (a very good scanner and by far the best piece of equipment they have). He finds a carrier on 240 MHz and demands an explanation. "Why are you transmitting a carrier on 240 MHz?"

After a few long minutes, we power off the Syrian-supplied PC, and the carrier goes away. Now try to explain to people who barely understand English how a PC can transmit a carrier on 240 MHz! This is not easy, and things are getting a bit tense. "The computer screen shows 240 MHz, and there is a signal on 240 MHz." Eric explains that this was just a coincidence. The chief finally laughs and everything seems to be OK. Later that night, the chief makes a report of the day's events to *his* chief. *This* chief is not happy. He wakes

up Omar in the middle of the night, demands an explanation, and says he'll be by the next day to personally witness a demonstration of the mysterious carrier. In the end, the chief's chief never shows up, and everything blows over. It sure is scary while it lasts, however.

From that point on, we are very careful always to place the unused PC on 30 MHz.

Operating Highlights

For me, two things really stand out. My first hour on 15 CW in the contest nets 195 QSOs, almost all Europeans. That is *fun!* The other is a QSO with HC8N, who is nowhere near as loud as the Europeans I am working at the time. They makes it through with a perfectly timed tail-end over my previous QSO. All I get is "C8," but that is all it takes. The QSO is over in a flash, and HC8N is in the log.

The Syrian People

The thing that strikes me most strongly is how wrong the Western impression of the Syrian people seems to be. From television, I imagine them all as fanatical terrorists. I am not prepared for Western-looking, soft-spoken, extremely generous people who repeatedly go out of their way to give us whatever we need to make our operation a success. Hikmat, YK1AM, wires a special high capacity 220V circuit just for us. Marwan and Hikmat go all over the city looking for capacitors to fix our bandpass filters. Omar and Marwan taxi us back and forth between the Al Jalaa Cham hotel and the operating site. If anyone seeks an example of ham radio serving the cause of international goodwill and friendship, they need only to look at our experience.

Sounds of the City

The most memorable sound is neither the QRM nor the pileups, but the call to prayer that echoes from the hundreds of mosques scattered throughout the city. At about 4:30 a.m. local time, the sound of the songs from the mosques are particularly haunting and beautiful. We started thinking of it as the call to the sunrise opening to JA on 20. K6ANP manages to get some of it on tape. I hope he will play it at a club meeting some day.



The California Award

- A. The NCDXC sponsors an award for radio amateurs in countries outside the continental United States to further DX interests, promote international goodwill and publicize the NCDXC. This award is known as the California Award.
- B. The award is in the form of a certificate, suitably designed and printed.
- C. Requirements:
 - 1. Applicants must submit proof of confirmation of QSOs with 220 different California stations, 20 of which must be confirmed contacts with members who held valid membership at the time of the contact.
 - 2. All contacts must be dated after October 10, 1946. Confirmations may be for any band or mode(s).
 - 3. Submission of cards is not necessary; cards may be checked and confirmation certified by an officer of any recognized amateur radio society or club.

Text on NCDXC QSL Cards

"KH6, KL7, KP4, etc. and all other hams outside the continental U.S. are eligible for this free, handsome certificate by the NCDXC. Proof of QSO is required with 220 California hams, of which 20 or more were NCDXC members at the time of QSO. Make list in alphabetical order with UTC date/time accompanied by QSL cards confirming contacts. Have it certified by an officer of any recognized ham society or club and send it to NCDXC, Inc., Box 608, Menlo Park, CA 94026-0608. If you send cards, send IRCs enough for return postage. All QSOs must be after October 10, 1946 when the NCDXC was formed-

THE FIRST INCORPORATED DX CLUB IN THE WORLD."

Those DL Managers...

Given all that has been written and said about DX QSL managers and postal costs, I was intrigued by a note that accompanied a QSL received via the American APO from a German manager:

"I'm using APO to avoid rip-off by German Postal Service. Remaining postage is used for mailing cards to C.I.S. amateurs."

German managers have been utilizing all sorts of tricks to circumvent ever-higher German postal rates, including mailing from adjacent countries (Baldu uses the Czech Republic), and bulk-shipping to other countries (including the US) for re-mailing. But this is a new one on me!

—NI6T

The DXer Interview

Refugee!

The DXer talks with Enes Ceric, T94EC, about Bosnia, the War, and coming to America. Part 1 of 2
by Garry Shapiro, NI6T

A young Bosnian radio amateur, Enes Ceric, T94EC, recently left his war-torn homeland and came to the United States. Settling in San Francisco, he sought out the company of fellow hams and DXers—and eventually showed up at an NCDXC meeting. *The DXer* interviewed him in August, 1994.

Tell us about yourself, your family and where you came from.

I am 24 and a ham radio operator since 1983. I'm a Bosnian Muslim and the only child in the family. Actually, I have a stepbrother but he never lived with us. It was just my mom, father and I. I used to live in a small town in the western part of Bosnia close to Banja Luka—the old YU4. From Sarajevo it's about 160 kilometers northwest.

I finished elementary and high school. I have an electronics background, primarily high voltage but because of ham radio I know a lot of electronics also. I was in the army in 1988 and 89 and then went to the university in Sarajevo to study math. I only finished my first year.

You were working on a degree program?

Yes, in math. After some time here I will probably go back to college.

So where were you when the war broke out?

I was back from Sarajevo a half-year before the war started. I was in my town—which is named Jajce—in the army communications center when everything started. The war actually started May 27, 1992 in my town, but in Bosnia it started April 6th, during Ramadan. Earlier, some things happened in Eastern Bosnia.

Your town and your part of Western Bosnia is all Muslim?

In my town the difference between Muslim and Croats was one percent on the Muslim side.

So your town was Muslim and Croat: not many Serbs?

Just 8% Serbs. All the Serbs had already left, had already gone from the town. My town actually had some free

territory which the Muslims occupied at that time because in all the land further north and further west the majority were Serbs.

That seems strange to me because Croatia is north of you.

Yes.

So you had Serbs between you and Croatia?

Yeah, the part of Croatia west of Bosnia has a lot of Serbs. So—I'm sorry I didn't bring a map.

Okay. I have a mental picture of it now.

When the war started, I was in the BIH (Bosnia/Herzegovina) Army communication center. Over there you have the BSA, the Bosnian Serb Army and you have HVO which is like Bosnian Croat Council of Defense. When the war started, HVO and BIH were together against the Serbs...until last year, sometime in April, when everything blew up and everybody fought each other. But in 1992, I was in the communication center. There were 15 of us: all my friends from the radio club.

You were in the army then?

Yes. Some of our ham friends were Serbs, and had already gone to the other side. Some of them stayed with us. Of course, I trusted them because I knew them ten years, but some people didn't trust them. So they tried to kick them out or give them some kind of unimportant job.

We just divided the work among ourselves. I did things like exchange of prisoners over the radio, made appointments with the other side...On the other side was a guy who most of the hams know, YU4EU.

He was on the Serb side?

Yes, he was on the Serb side and is still over there. He was actually chief of the communication center.

Were most of the guys who were in communications hams?

Yeah. Everybody was using hams because they have experience in radio and they know frequencies and they know how to figure out who the enemy are, and how to jam.

They know how to jam?

Yeah.

You weren't working for the UN? You were on the Bosnian side?

Yes. That was in 1992. My town fell on October 28, 1992.

It fell to the Croats or the Serbs?

To the Serbs. So I was moved to central Bosnia.

What happened to your family when the town fell?

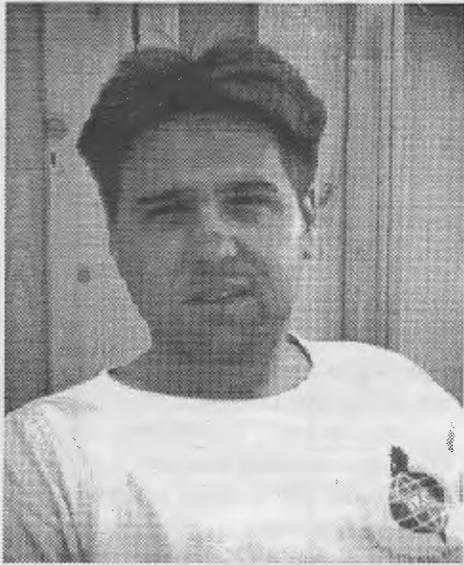
We went to Zenica (YU4EZC) where I have a lot of friends. YU4MA helped me a lot. They gave me one room in a three-room flat to put my family—my mom's father, grandmom and uncle, that's mom's brother, and I came two days after. So this friend...

Your family was saved?

Yes, was saved and he took care of us at that time. So...

In your town, before the war, did you have problems co-existing with the Croats?

Never. Never. None at all. A month before the war, Serbs had started to go. They left: nobody kicked them out. They just decided to go and then they wanted to come back by force. Even you will take a gun and defend yourself



Enes Ceric, T94EC

and your town. That's where most of the fighting started.

After that, when I moved to Central Bosnia, I tried to provide some safety accommodations for the friends there because I knew that town would be mostly safe. So this other friend of mine who does not have a ham license, but used to work in the communication center rented me—he actually just gave me—his house. So I put my family there and it was great. Then I decided to go to the south to see my roommate from the university from Sarajevo, YU4SY, who was also a member of the YU4ACU club. We used to be close. We had lived together. I moved to his flat with his family and his family accepted me like their own child.

You weren't in the army any more?

No. At the time, no. That place was close to Croatia. It was in December, 1992 and in 1993, just after the New Year. I got a job with the IRC (International Relief Committee), which is not a government organization, but from New York, but they are very close with the UN guys.

I got a job as an interpreter and radio operator. We used to have *codem* systems which were packet-radio. You sent a message by pressing "Call"...I worked down there a year and a half.

This was in southern Bosnia?

It's the southern part of the country: Herzegovina. Fruit trees. You have

orange, lemons and other such because it's so hot. During the summer you have 40 degrees which is 100 Fahrenheit. It's like that for three months...

So I worked for the IRC for a year and a half. In the meantime I got in touch with a lot of hams.

Was there any fighting in Herzegovina?
Just in that part I mentioned. The western part of Herzegovina was quiet mostly—except Mostar which is the biggest place and was the capital at that time.

Mostar is in Herzegovina?

Yes. Now Mostar is a divided town between Muslims and Croats because the politicians want it that way. The Neretva River is between the Croats and Muslims and a hill is between the Muslims and Serbs.

I was working down there and I met a lot of hams working there also. I met another ham that worked in Metkovic (south of Mostar), the main warehouse for UN people. He worked in the convoy office: everything was done by VHF. Most of the system was VHF and it was all Yaesu and Icom. They had a SITOR network between the offices and the vehicles...

What was the kind of work that you were doing there?

I was working as a personal interpreter. After that, I was a warehouse manager.

Interpreting for whom?

First, for the lady who was taking care of our facilities.

Interpreting between the local people and the IRC people?

Yes, just a translator. Then I was in Croatia for about three months. I was there illegally. When I went to Croatia I just showed my UNHCR I.D. But if the police stopped you in town, they asked you for papers. You show that and in most cases they say okay. "How long you going to be here?" "For a week for vacation." No problem. The problem over there is that you can recognize Muslims and Croats by the name. My name is a typical Muslim name.

They can differentiate by name?

Yes, they can. By the first name.

Croats, sometimes, and Serbs. By the family name, no, because you have the

Croats that are named the same way... most of them are similar...
During all this time you were in contact with your family?

Yes, I was and I am still.

Where is your family?

They are on the BIH (Bosnian Army) side. *They haven't gone home yet?*

No, because my hometown is still controlled by Serbs, but the place where they been moved is further east—about 120 km.

Do you think that your parents will be able to return to your homeland.

Everything depends on politics. If they make this deal—what they're trying to do is to give the Muslim and Croat federation 51% and the Serbs 49%.

That's when my town will be given back, but who knows? (*That was last August, and the deal fell through—Editor.*) But 75% of Bosnians are Serb people and 75% of the country is being held by the Serb camp.

I don't think that this deal will happen because, first of all, my town was very desirable. There are three hydroelectric dams which are the main sources for mostly the western part of the country.

It's a mountainous area?

Yes. There are five lakes.

It must be very beautiful!

Yeah. We have two natural lakes and the other three are from the hydroelectric dams. There is a factory producing salesium.

Selenium?

No. Silicon. I call it salesium in my language.

This is raw silicon for semiconductors?

Yeah. For the chips and other stuff.

They sell it to Germany or other countries. There were a lot of textile factories over there also. There was a wood factory, a carpet factory and other stuff. It was a beautiful town, of course. It was a beautiful place. We had a waterfall which was 30 meters high in the middle of town. My town was like it was 500 years ago during the Turkish Empire. When the Turks arrived, they killed the last Bosnian king, and that

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Refugee!

was in my town. It was the capital at that time.

This town has a lot of history.

Yes. There's a lot of history. You can see the capital and something like the walls around the capital and other stuff. It's a really old town. I really don't know whether this deal will make it or not. But they still believe they will be back at home. My father is already 60 and mom is close to that. When I decided to go to the United States, that's when I tried to quit...

How did the opportunity to go to the United States come up?

I was in Croatia, and three of my friends had already gone, and they are in New York now. One of these guys is still working for IRC. When they were in the program, they explained to me what was going on and how to do it, and I decided to go because I had no better opportunity. If I went back into Bosnia, I could have stayed with these guys and worked as long as there was a job, but if they left, what then? There was the Army but I didn't want to fight. I was more interested in helping people. I got into the program because I was a part of the IRC. They helped me put the papers together.

Then the guy from the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) showed up. He looked a long time at the file and everything was fine and great, but there was a mix-up on one piece of paper. So they took my file to Rome and they call up and say this case is pending. When you are pending, you don't know... In the meantime I got a job in my agency's office in Split (Croatia) to work on the radio. My main duty was answering the radio messages and answering the phone. Then in September they called me and said, listen, your file is great, but we must close it for the time being. Just put dusty come down.

What?

Dusty. You know! We used to have that expression: when there is a lot of noise

about something, we used to say there is a lot of dusty around. So just put dust come down.

You mean "let the dust settle?"

Yeah, let the dust settle.

You went back to Bosnia last October?

What did you do then?

I worked in Medjugorje. This was a place where the visionary showed up like ten or fifteen years ago.

Visionary? You mean the Virgin Mary?

They call it like that. Madonna.

We have a few of those around here.

I mean, I don't know about the Virgin Mary. I didn't know that Christians

There was a lot of sniping fire, especially 7.62 mm. But they used anti-aircraft guns like artillery. I don't know how they set them up to shoot single rounds. But they do it. They shoot low... It's amazing how large those bullets are...

believe in that. There were a lot of pilgrims going there. I was working in Medjugorje which was a half-hour drive west from Mostar. Mostar at the time was a very, very bad place to be because the Muslims and Croats were fighting each other. That's the town where the old bridge fell down. Most of the people in America saw how that bridge fell down.

Mostar is south from Sarajevo, about 120 kilometers. So I was working and it was causing a lot of trouble. I'm Muslim, living in the Croat area, but, you know, because I work for the UN guys, it's more or less okay. So I was helping the Muslim side and the Croats. There was a lot of mistrust. There were 55,000 people in this 20 km-long territory and this bay around 2 km long. There was a hill; behind the hill were Serbs. So Muslims were between two slices of bread, just like cheese. So

we helped them a lot, because at that time they really needed help.

Were you getting shelled at that point?

Yes, being shelled a lot, and we were just lucky to survive sometimes.

Did you have some close encounters?

Yeah. The procedure over there was that, if you're going to a very dangerous place, you must wear the flak jackets, the really heavy ones, like, 15 kilos or something like that, and the helmet and you're in an armored vehicle. But when you were in the convoy the old trucks are not armored.

Were there snipers?

There was a lot of sniping fire, especially 7.62 mm. But they used anti-aircraft guns like artillery. I don't know how they set them up to shoot single rounds. But they do it. They shoot low... It's amazing how large those bullets are...

The phone call from the reassessment office in Split came some time during January. The lady who called is a very good friend of mine. She is in Boston right now; her husband is working for the IRC there. He's also from Sarajevo and she is from Split. She called me and said "can you come by one day to finish the formalities about the papers and have another interview?" So I decided to go the next day because it was just a two hour drive from Split.

But when I went in December, we were having problems with the convoy issue and then Croats—HVO—they put the whole convoy in jail. I was in that convoy, too, and that helped me a lot in the case because I was a Muslim being held prisoner by Croats, which was very good for my case with the INS! *So you were actually captured by the Croats?*

Yes. I was captured by the Croats, but in Bosnia, not in Croatia. It was a very strange experience.

(Part 2 of the interview will appear in the January *DXer*.)

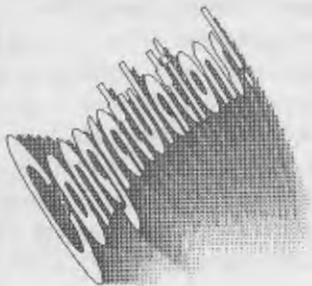
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WD6EKR	0	0	0	0	250	0	200	0	150
K1ER	0	100	150	100	250	100	200	100	200
AA6G	0	0	200	150	200	200	250	200	260
NT6G	0	0	0	0	100	0	100	0	0
K6ILM	0	100	200	150	280	200	260	200	200
KA6ING	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	250
N6IP	0	0	100	0	150	0	150	0	150
W6ISQ	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	0
K6ITL	0	0	0	0	300+	0	300+	0	300+
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K6SIK	0	0	0	0	150	0	150	0	150
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K6TMB	0	0	0	0	150	0	100	0	100
K4UVT	0	0	0	0	200	0	200	0	150
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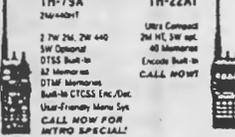
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