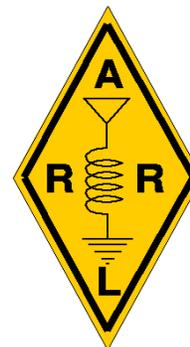


March-April-May 2015

"Ohio's First DXCC Field Checking Club"



# The NODXA RAG



## Fireside Chat With KB8NW

Fellow DXers,

The year 2015 continues to be an amazing year for DXers. During the first quarter of the year



we have seen some interesting/fun operations to work from Iran (EP6T Kish Island)\*, Navassa Island (K1N)\*, Juan Fernandez Island (3G0ZC), Cocos Island (TI9/3Z9DX), Eritrea (E30FB)\* Dem. Republic Congo (9Q0HQ), Trindade (PQ0T), Spratly (DX0P) and Clipperton Island (TX5P). NODXA has donated funds (\*) to at least 3 of the 9 operations. As this is being written in April, more major DXpeditions have been announced for 2015 and 2016. The VK0EK Heard Island DXpedition (Nov. 10th-Dec. 22nd) has announced that they will be visiting Kerguelin Island (FT/X) after their Heard Island operation. They are still working on permission to operate from there. Also, a Palmyra Island DXpedition Group (KH5) has been awarded permission to activate Cooper Island in the Palmyra Atoll during January 2016. Another very rare one that will hit the air waves in March of 2016, and has not been on for 12 years (since 2003), will be Juan de Nova (FR/J). If the years 2015 and 2016 keep this pace, it should be record years for DXpeditions.

As I mentioned in the last Fireside, it looks like the last quarter of 2015 will be a very interesting year. Starting with TX3X Chesterfield Island (October), VK0EK Heard Island (November-December), 3Y0F Bouvet (December) and now Kerguelin. Let's hope that May through September also brings us some interesting entities. We know already that early 2016 will have South Georgia Island (VP8/G), South Sandwich Island (VP8/SS), possibly another Bouvet (Jan-Apr) and now Palmyra Atoll (KH5) and Juan de Nova (FR/J). It should be an enjoyable winter season for DXers.

As you know, the main purpose of this club is to fund DXpeditions and promote DXing. That is why it is so important to renew your membership in May. In one month, March, NODXA has donated \$1100 to three DXpeditions (VP8G/SS, VK0H and TX3X). This is the most ever that the club has donated in one month, and as you can see from above, more donations will probably go out before the end of the year. In May, NODXA's treasury is usually at its lowest point. It seems that more money gets spent every year during the first 5 months of the year because of DXpedition donations and the NODXA Hospitality Suite at the Dayton HamVention. This is why it is very important to renew your membership. Our fiscal year goes from May to May.

"The Mission of the Northern Ohio DX Association is to promote and support Amateur Radio and the DX Community around the world."

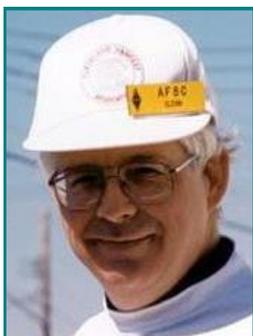
As always, I hope to see you in the coming weeks/months, possibly at the Dayton HamVention or NODXA's general membership meetings.

As a reminder, if you have a topic to discuss about DXing or contesting, bring it up at the meeting. Also, if you would like to put on a program of some interest for the club in the coming months, let us know so we can schedule you in for a meeting. We are always looking for a program.

73 and Good DX, de Tedd KB8NW

## Minutes of the February 2nd, 2015 NODXA Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7:30 p.m. by Tedd, KB8NW, with 9 members and guests present.



After the round of introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance, the undersigned recited the minutes for the meeting of January 5, 2015. A motion by Denny, WB8K, seconded by Tedd, KB8NW, to accept the minutes was passed on the vote. Mary, N8DMM, reported the treasury balance was Ka-Ching! A motion to accept the treasurer's report was passed on the vote. The repeater was reported as having a noisy squelch shutdown.

Dave, WD8IOU, reported that the newsletter is in progress. He could use gossip, photographs of QSL cards and other articles. He always needs articles and material. He tried an installation of Windows 8. The newsletter fonts were then distorted. It turns out that Windows 7 fonts will be distorted if viewed in Windows 8 unless the fonts are either locked into the document or Windows 7 fonts are used to overwrite Windows 8 fonts. Tedd said that Windows 10 will be a free upgrade from 7 or 8, but the user will benefit from use of the Cloud.

### Old/New Business:

As a note for the January 5 minutes, we donated \$250.00 to the E3 DXpedition group as a result of an additional contribution by Rick, K8ZH. Tedd announced the ARRL news that the FCC will stop routinely printing licenses as of February 17. The FCC database is now the default proof of license. The new Great Lake Division Director Dale Williams sent minutes of the most recent ARRL Board Meeting. ALL DXCC-rated card checkers can now check 160m cards.

Pete, N8TR, discussed the new Remote Operation Rules of the DXCC, which sparked some other discussion in the group. Tedd has received a few donation requests. E3 has no specific dates announced yet. Zorro is still negotiating with Eritrea as to the size of the team. The plan is for sometime in March, 2015. There is a group going to Juan Fernandez as 3G0ZC and they are looking for contributions. They would have 20 operators on all three main modes. The club members present showed no particular interest in this one. A third announcement was for a group going to Chesterfield Island as TX3X. This would be the same group that recently went to Mellish Reef. Of course they are looking for donations. The event would be October 1 through 12, with 12 operators, on 160 through 10m. Any action on this one was tabled for the next meeting.

A group will be going to South Sandwich and South Georgia in 2016. Those entities are rated as number 8 and 9 in DX Magazine. Rick, K8ZH, asked about the ON4WW group planning to go to Bouvet. Tedd said that another group is going there ahead of ON4WW. So, as Tedd said, 2015 will be a busy year. Rick, K8ZH reported on being invited to the Canton Radio Club banquet. where Mel, W8MV, talked on North Korea. A week later he was leaving for Colorado. Per Tedd, we will try to get Mel for a program at NODXA, Per Tedd, take note of the K6VVA YouTube videos on DXpedition Anti-Social Pileup Behavior. Also look at KQ8M's Reverse Beacon Network Web site.

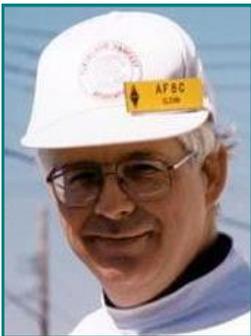
Wrapup:

The next meeting will occur on March 2. Mary, N8DMM, suggested a "Pot Latch" meeting occur sometime. This will be reviewed again at the March meeting. It could be kind of a "Gorme Hamfest". Joe, N8QXC moved, and Ron, K8DZO, seconded to close the meeting. All activities closed at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully, Glenn, AF8C, Secretary

## Minutes of the March 2nd, 2015 NODXA Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7:31 p.m. by Tedd, KB8NW, with 21 members and guests present. After the round of introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance, the undersigned read the minutes for the meeting of February 2, 2015. A motion by Karl, K8BCK, seconded by Bruce, N8DJX, to accept the minutes was passed on the vote. Mary, N8DMM, reported the treasury balance was Ka-Ching! A motion to accept the treasurer's report was passed on the vote. Tedd reminded us that the club dues deadline is coming up. We are getting requests from Dxpediton groups so we need the financial support. Per Dave, WD8IOU, the next newsletter is almost done. Rick, K8ZH, invited Mel, W8MV, to our April meeting to discuss Cuba and P5. Mel has traveled and operated from dozens of DX entities. His talk will take about 30 minutes.

Old/New Business:

Tedd, KB8NW, had several donation requests to cover. The 3G0ZC operation is over and was easy to work. The TX3X group will operate on the three modes with six stations and twenty operators. On ClubLog they are 24, and 26 in DX Magazine, and the group is asking for funding. Pete N8TR moved and Bruce N8DJX seconded to donate \$100.00 to the TX3X group, and this motion passed on the vote. South Sandwich and South Georgia will run sometime during January and February 2016. That kind of trip is very expensive, with an estimate of \$425,000. They will have 14 operators for 10 days on each island. Their previous experience was the South Sudan operation. Tedd indicated that we will return to discussing this operation later in the meeting. We have a request from the group forming up for Heard Island, expected to occur for 20 days during November to December 2015 as VKOEK, with a budget of \$800,000 and led by K3EL. Tedd read some of the list of operators for VKOEK. That prefix is rated as number 6 on ClubLog and number 5 on DX Magazine. Dave, WD8IOU, moved and Dwaine, K8ME, seconded a motion for a donation of \$250.00 to the Heard Island operation. Bruce, N8DJX, announced he will add his personal support to boost that donation to \$500.00. That motion passed on the vote.

Returning to the South Sandwich and South Georgia, Bruce, N8DJX, then moved and Dwaine, K8ME, seconded that we donate \$250.00 to the South Sandwich and South Georgia operation. Again Bruce, N8DJX, announced he will add his own \$250.00 to that donation. The motion passed on the vote. Per Tedd there is a rumor of "something big" in DX to happen in 2016. No names were discussed.

Per Dwaine, K8ME, the CARS Dayton bus seats cost \$50.00 and there are 41 seats. Checks should be made out to CARS. Metro, W8MET, handed out sheets listing items for sale from the estate of KC8ZBL. Tedd said that the operating dates for E30FB have been announced as March 6 through March 17. E3 is ranked 12 on the DX Magazine list. Next the business meeting moved on to nominations for club officers for the next year. Dwaine K8ME nominated Mary, N8DMM, as club treasurer. Bruce N8DJX nominated Glenn, AF8C, as secretary. Dave, WD8IOU, nominated Dwaine, K8ME, as vice president. Bruce, N8DJX, and Metro, W8MET, jointly nominated Tedd, KB8NW, as club president. (Tedd started in this position in 1991.) Then Bruce, N8DJX, moved to close the nomi-

nations. The officer's election balloting will occur in April, 2015.

Tedd has videos from past Dxpeditions. One or more of the videos could be a basis for summer meeting programs. George, K8KR, pointed out that this was the last meeting for our waitress Kayla who is moving on to another career. George moved and Bill, W8BG, seconded that we give Kayla a \$25.00 going-away cash gift. That motion passed unanimously. Kayla happily received her award.

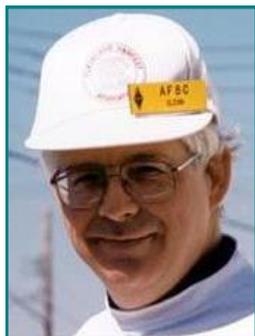
#### Wrapup:

The next meeting will occur on April 6. Linda, N8LRS, moved, and Karl, K8BCK, seconded that the meeting be adjourned, and this motion passed. The 50-50 raffle basket was \$30.00 and the raffle winner was Jim, KC8VTF, who donated his half back to club. All activities closed at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully, Glenn, AF8C, Secretary

## Minutes of the April 6th, 2015 NODXA Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7:30 p.m. by Tedd, KB8NW, with 25 members and guests present. After the round of introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance, Tedd requested that the business portion of the meeting be quick so we could hear the discussion on North Korea by Mel Vye, W8MV, who was the guest at the meeting. The undersigned read the minutes for the meeting of March 2, 2015. Those minutes were accepted with one correction. Mary, N8DMM, reported that the treasury balance was Ka-Ching! Denny, WB8K, moved that the treasurer's report be accepted, and this was seconded by Gary, NI8Z, and passed on the vote.



Tedd reported that the DXpedition funding donations were sent and that the club's logo has shown up on those sites. Heard Island's donation via PayPal would have cost an extra 7% fee, so he sent a check instead. The "something big" reported in last month's minutes has been revealed to be 3Z9DX going to P5 for only a few days. The repeater was reported as working fine. Denny, WB8K, reported that he looked at the repeater and it is fine. The owner of the pole has had the loose tuning wire problem repaired. Dave, WD8IOU, reported that the newsletter activity is ready to start and he needs material. Email material to [wd8iou@roadrunner.com](mailto:wd8iou@roadrunner.com). Gary, NI8Z, complimented Dave on the quality of the newsletter.

#### Old/New Business:

It was time to complete the business on the new officers election. Gary, NI8Z made a motion to accept the slate listed in the March 2 minutes, and this was seconded by Bruce, N8DJX. That vote passed. It will be the 30<sup>th</sup> year for Mary, N8DMM, as treasurer! Tedd stated that at the May 4 meeting the club will vote on paying for the hospitality room at Dayton. Tedd had one request for donations, that from a Palestine operation, E44Y, with 13 operators. Tedd read the entire list of operator names. A vote on this request was tabled for the May 4 meeting. Tedd reported that the pre-contest luncheon at Mulligan's on March 27 drew 14 people. The next pre-contest luncheon could happen for the CQ WW SSB contest in October. Pete, N8TR, again has a selection of embroidered NODXA baseball caps at a cost of \$7.00. There are no callsigns on the caps this time.

#### Program:

Mel Vye, W8MV, is a professor at Akron University. He helped with 3Y0X in 1996. He was first licensed in 1958 and has been an Extra since 1966. His very interesting presentation on North Korea was first used in 2013. Tonight's talk was very valuable for understanding the situation in that country.

Wrapup:

The next meeting will occur on May 4. At 7:54 p.m. Bruce, N8DJX, moved, and Ron, K8VJG seconded, a motion to close the meeting. The motion passed. For the main raffle and a door prizes, ticket stubs were drawn. KC8VTF had donated a digital multimeter from Harbor Freight. The raffle winner was Nelson, K8DJC, who donated his half back to club. The donated multimeter was won by Jim, K8MR. All activities closed at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully, Glenn, AF8C, Secretary



Mel Vye, W8MV, and NODXA President Tedd, KB8NW. Mel give a very interesting slide presentation on his trip to North Korea.

## Tromelin 2014 FT4TA (Part 1) By Seb, F5UFX

"This project actually started in February 2013, under the scorching heat of Uganda. I was in Entebbe involved with the 5X8C DXpedition alongside the other F6KOP operators. A long series of unanswered calls got suddenly interrupted by the ringing of my phone. Because the call was coming from Réunion Island I quickly answered it. This conversation was the first exchange with the prefecture of the TAAF (French Southern and Antarctic Lands) about a radio expedition project in the southern territories or the Scattered Islands. I had impatiently been waiting for this contact after I had sent a file to St. Pierre, the seat of TAAF, a few months earlier. "

Seb, F5UFX, Organizer & Team Leader FT4TA

This is the story of this DXpedition.

### Project Genesis

In 2000, during the DXpedition to Tromelin organized by the Lyon DX Gang team, Météo-France was the main contact; as for the permissions they were issued by the Ministry of the overseas territories. Since 2005, things have changed with the attachment of the Scattered Islands to the TAAF prefecture.

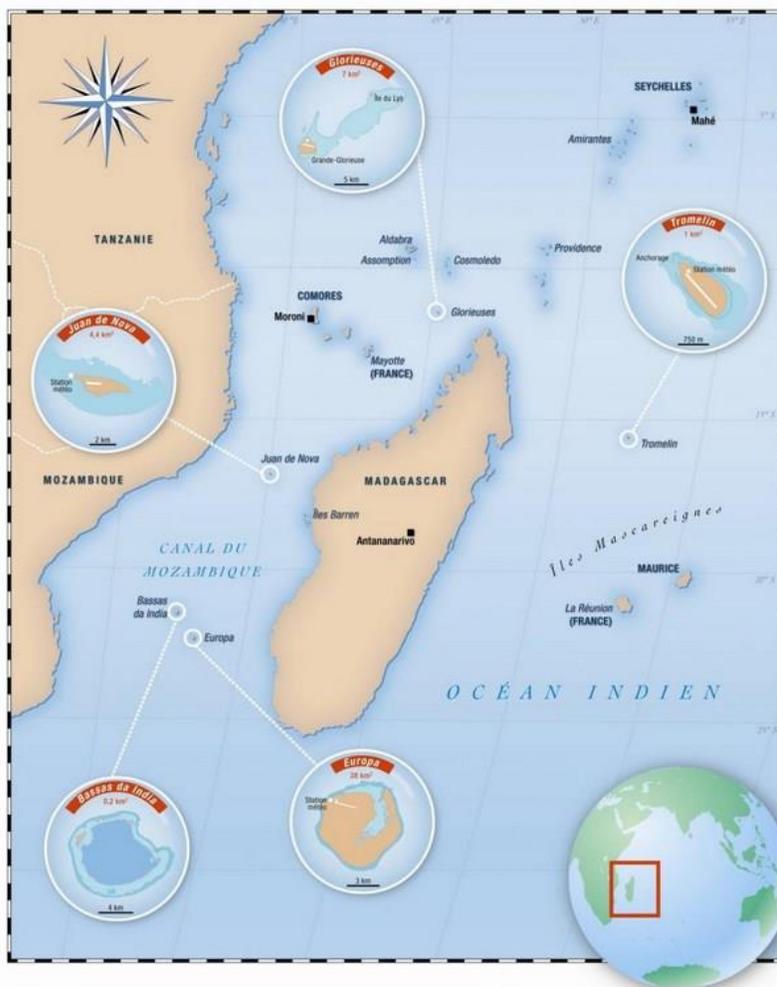
The first step of our project was to compile a complete dossier to establish a first contact and explain key aspects of our project: what amateur radio is, who ham operators are and more specifically the members of our team, why such an interest for the TAAF and the Scattered islands?

After several years of research and exploration, a contact was at last established in February 2013. Very soon we understood and apprehended our respective constraints. Several telephone meetings and email exchanges followed. A month later, a meeting in the building of the TAAF in Paris allowed us to finalize the destination and dates of operation. Tromelin will be back on the air at the end of October 2014, after 13 years of radio silence.

The ham community was then informed of the existence of the project through a press release widely reported and disseminated on many media. Right away we received encouraging thoughts and feedback, how exciting! The work done so far discreetly could finally begin to be displayed.

### Let's do it!

Such an adventure could not be improvised, and although the timing seemed relatively large, we knew from experience that there was no time to waste.



As soon as TAAF agreed in principle we engaged in a thorough preparation both administratively and logistically, without neglecting the human side too often underestimated. This fact is of paramount importance, even more so when the DXpedition takes place on an uninhabited island. Conditions can quickly become extreme because of the climate, the isolation and sleep deprivation, not to mention the tensions that can occur in case of technical failure or accident.

From the first exchanges with our interlocutors, it appeared as obvious that this DXpedition could only be conducted with a small group especially as the environmental and logistical constraints increase exponentially with the number of visitors. An experienced and multidisciplinary team was formed by taking into account both the skills of each person as well as the personality of every member. All operators knew each other perfectly well after being part of many expeditions together.

Several employees responsible for specific topics helped us. Some were there from the beginning, while others have been integrated as needed. This small size close-knit team has allowed us to be efficient and responsive.

### Transport and logistics

The green light from the authorities was subject to several conditions, including management by our team of transport and logistics. Aware of its complexity, we expected to deal with a difficult issue, but we were miles away to imagine that it would mobilize us daily until the very last day of the operation.

Located 450 km east of the coast of Madagascar and 650 miles north of Réunion, the island is very isolated geographically. Access by sea is practically impossible due to the fringing coral reef which almost eliminates the chances of landing, even with small boats. While this option had been studied, we quickly dismissed it. Don't forget that the TAAF had to validate the transportation plan and no doubt that a dangerous solution would have been denied. Therefore, air access was our only chance to set foot on Tromelin. In theory, we only had to find an aircraft and a pilot likely to land safely on the runway that crosses the island from end to end.

Our specifications provided transportation for 6 operators and equipment from Réunion Island to Tromelin in a minimum number of rotations. Transport via the military aircraft being not possible, we embarked on the study of other possibilities: private and public flights.

Plan A was soon arranged with an aircraft based in Réunion. It seemed appropriate for this type of mission, although it had only a low carrying capacity for the equipment. It was up to us to



optimize space and weight allocated to our equipment (200kg) to stick to two or three planned rotations. Two meetings with the pilot were held in January and May 2014, visits during which we were able to discover the plane and to fully appreciate its characteristics while flying over Réunion island.

In parallel to the transportation component, logistics was organized. Although each of us had made some of their own equipment available to the shipping, some key pieces were missing. As it was, our budget did not allow for the purchase of such equipment. However, after being asked, several manufacturers and hardware vendors came forward to help us, not counting those who spontaneously contacted us to provide their assistance. Thanks to this mobilization, we had access to loan equipment or on preferential terms of purchase.

Our original plan was to operate three radio stations 24 hours a day, which already seemed ambitious for a team of 6 people for 10 days. For harmonization purposes, we opted for identical configurations: transmitter, computer, cw-digi interface, each piece of equipment being able to be connected at any time on any station. Each transceiver could be used regardless of the mode or band used.

The preliminary study of the land and especially the location agreed to our radio site on the island led us to consider the use of VDA (Vertical Dipole Array) for the higher bands. The ratio weight / efficiency for these antennas is interesting and superior to what you get with yagi antennas, especially when installed on the beach. Low weight and small footprint when folded was an undeniable asset that met our expectations. In addition, verticals were to be used for 30/40/80/160m.

The feasibility of mounting each antenna with respect to the available space was studied by considering the coaxial lengths and the wind load. On the island trade winds blow constantly and large antennas would have represented a risk during the assembly as well as during the strongest wind gusts. With his experience, Vincent F4BKV took over the manufacturing of VDA while Flo, F5CWU, focused on antennas for the low bands. In order to respect the total weight allocated, we had to optimize each element keeping in mind the following criteria: robustness, reliability, light weight, performance.

While part of the team was preparing the equipment, we had to take over the transportation issue, our plan "A" being questioned after a few months.

Although the pilot and his aircraft were OK, some administrative rules made this solution "complicated" and difficult to

be approved by the authorities. The irony is that the same plane with another pilot or the same pilot with another aircraft would have been accepted, but not the combination of both. Considering this complexity, we quickly got some help from a few experts in France, as well as the competent authorities on Réunion Island.

The transportation component thus became a daily concern that gave us sleepless nights until the departure. Due to these complications we had to deal with the aviation regulations (type of aircraft, characteristics, engine, pilot qualification).



We crossed out Plan A and made some room for plans B, C, D, E, F, etc! Whatever would happen, we had to make sure that we had a valid solution both technically and administratively.

Using a very good network, we became aware of which aircraft and pilots of the Indian Ocean area may offer a solution. After contacting them, each option was studied and several options were in place.

The final solution came from the Comoros. It is in this small country that a company named Interîles will soon take over the whole space in the Indian Ocean zone. Although slow to implement, our exchanges helped to ensure that the aircraft and crew were able to secure a flight to Tromelin. Yet we will have to wait until the day of departure, on the tarmac of the airport in Mayotte for the latest documents to be signed! More later.

### Visit of Réunion Island

In May 2014, Michel, FM5CD, and Sébastien, F5UFX, went to Réunion Island for a working week. After a tour of the permanent exhibition in the premises of the TAAF in St Pierre, meetings were held at a high pace: update on the burning issue of transport, exchange and training with the people in charge of environmental protection, validation of administrative aspects, discussion with the head doctor, logistics and communication. The schedule of these days was very dense. Each topic was discussed exhaustively with appointments very well prepared in advance, and contacts perfectly mastering their area of expertise.

Several very pleasant surprises regarding logistics were announced. The first was the opportunity to take advantage of an extra rotation of the Marion Dufresne (a research and supply vessel) in the Scattered Islands to get our equipment to Tromelin, eliminating the limit of 200kg imposed by the aircraft. The second is the provision of a reliable and redundant solution for the supply of energy. Those who have organized this type of project will appreciate this opportunity to its true worth. Although these proposals led to new costs involved, they provided a definite plus to the project.

The exchange ended by defining all the actions to be implemented to enhance our activity and ensure a high level of communication for the TAAF.

Several areas were identified:

- Philatelic operation
- Exchanges with schools on Réunion Island
- Highlighting the project in the media: internet, social networking, news

That work week concluded with a meeting with Mr. Pascal BOLOT, prefect for the island. Together, we discussed our future mission and discussed our amateur radio activities. Michel, FM5CD, who had freshly returned from Amsterdam Island, also addressed FT5ZM.

This trip to Réunion Island was utilized to purchase various equipment and tools that would be loaded directly on the Marion Dufresne. Only the last day allowed us to do some sightseeing, guided by our friend Axel, FR5GS, who would play a key role in the organization of exchanges with schools.



### Communication

From the draft of the introduction dossier to the records and the press releases, particular attention was paid to the explanations.

The media and means of communication were numerous; yet they needed to be used wisely. To do this, we were assisted by Cedric, F5UKW, website development specialist. His technical work, combined with the content we had provided him allowed him to upload our website in late 2013. He regularly updated it with articles and reports. Since its launch, we have recorded nearly 125,000 visits, with peak attendance during the stay.

In addition to the presentation of our radio project, we wanted people to learn more about the history and the peculiarities of this tiny speck. To do this, several articles were published in journals, so as to reach the greatest number. Thanks to this hype, it would have been hard to miss the event.

The conclusion we can draw from reading the comments received so far is that the project was a wonderful means of communication. This enthusiasm for our mission on Tromelin has spread far beyond the amateur world. From ecology to philately and schools, the island became the intersection for a multitude of enthusiasts, experts and travelers who can now locate Tromelin on a map.

### Budget

Such a project required a very large budget. Although partly assumed by the operators nothing would have been possible without the mobilization and the generosity of all the amateur radio community. Dozens of sponsors were solicited and we gave everyone the opportunity to contribute to the project in the form of an online donation.

Only minutes after sending the press release announcing the expedition, the first donations were recorded, often accompanied by a word of encouragement. These were spread over the entire period of preparations and until we returned from Tromelin.

Concerning clubs and associations, the INDEXA was the first to support us, soon imitated by many others. An exceptional grant from the NCDXF made the project possible. At this stage, we were confident! If on one hand the donations continued coming at this pace and on the other hand our expenses were contained, the budget should be completed on our return. With this in mind, we are compelled to control the expenses. The fact that we could balance our budget thanks to all was definitely a plus but at the same time it added extra pressure to do well. There was no room for error!

### Logistics, the sequel!

The TAAF offer to transport our equipment with the Marion Dufresne dramatically changed the profile of the operation. This opportunity, however, forced us to speed up the collection of funds, and testing and packaging of our equipment. Everything had to be completed four months earlier than



originally planned. Informed of this program change, our sponsors reacted very quickly. Flo, F5CWU, surrounded himself with a small group for all preparations. The boxes were manufactured, coaxial cables cut, connectors were welded and each item tested many times in real conditions before being packaged. All equipment lists were checked and rechecked before the boxes were sent to the logistics provider for TAAF in Marseilles: departure for Tromelin via Réunion Island. The weight and size of the crates were intended to ensure safe transport by ship, but also unloading by helicopter to Tromelin.

It's in late August that we were informed that everything had arrived and was stored on the island. A very important step had been taken. Only sensitive equipment (transmitter, computers) were retained and were to travel with us as carry-on.

Concretely, compared to the planned 200 kg of equipment, it was ultimately about 800 kg that were shipped with notable improvements on amplifiers, low loss coaxial cable, antenna, and emergency equipment. Looking back, we do not see how we could have done otherwise.

Therefore we were able to install up to 6 stations simultaneously. No equipment was unnecessary because on several occasions we found ourselves using all of them. Similarly, we never fell short of a connector, a tool, or a meter of cable. It was a flawless preparation and we did it.

#### Focus on communication actions

The preparation of the main communication operations was also a daily activity throughout the year before the mission.

Philately is for TAAF both a source of income (7-9% of the budget) and an excellent communication tool. Each year, about fifteen stamps are edited, presented at special fairs and marketed through several distribution channels.

The dates and location of our operation were set to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the first amateur radio link from Tromelin. Naturally, the idea of a commemorative stamp was used. The team was actively involved in the realization of it by providing a rich documentation to the artist responsible for creating the model. Under the leadership of the head of TAAF philately, this project became a reality. The aim was to present it to the fall philatelic exhibition in Paris.

The dates of the exhibition and DXpedition being concurrent, it was suggested that contacts between amateur radio

operators on the TAAF stand and Tromelin Island should take place. We entrusted this technical challenge to a radio club team (F6KOP) in Provins. The challenge was complex! First it was necessary to remove the many administrative constraints on the installation of antennas in the heart of Paris, even temporarily. Furthermore, the system had to be reliable and efficient enough to ensure daily radios



transmissions of several thousand kilometers. In addition to these demonstrations, we were asked to present our activities to visitors throughout the event.

This activity around the block of mint stamps was a publicity stunt for TAAF, but also an excellent opportunity to promote our amateur activity with a large audience composed of collectors, officials and journalists.

6,000 km away from Paris, Réunion Island was also in turmoil. Thanks to the help of a teacher, relay with TAAF, Tromelin became a work topic for several schools: history, geography, fauna and flora were to be studied. This work resulted in numerous exchanges of letters and emails prepared by the students and their teachers, along with highly relevant issues related to the adventure that was coming up: our means of transportation, living on site, waste management, water, etc.

In order to extend these exchanges, we enlisted the help of amateur radio operators from Réunion's ARRA to establish temporary radio stations in several schools in order to make "live" connections with our team on the island of Tromelin during the expedition.

### Conclusion on the preparation

Throughout that year of preparation, work files were numerous, all very important and time consuming. Everything had to be absolutely completed by October 30, the date of our departure. Thanks to the hard work of the whole team, this goal was achieved.

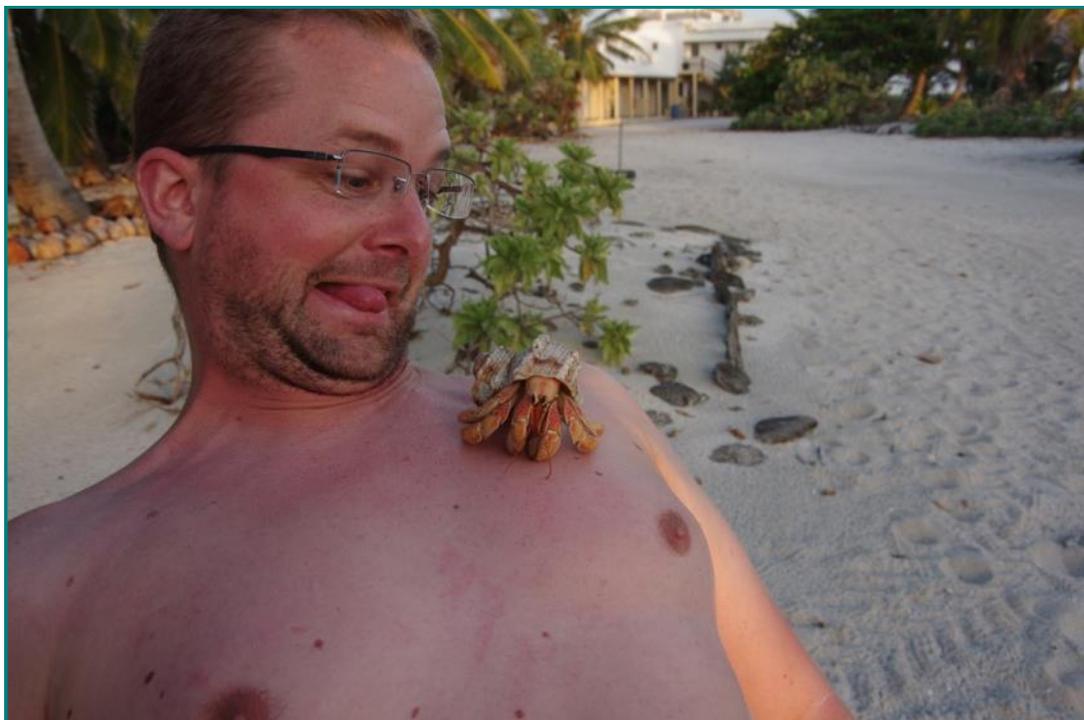
Our three crates arrived and were stored away on the island. The on-site TAAF staff decided to test the generators and ensure fuel supplies. To transport the remaining equipment in our possession each operator was given a full station to get used to it and become familiar with the equipment before departure.

Still, there remained some concerns: a missing signature to install the antenna at the philatelic exhibition, the announced visit by a DGAC (FAA equivalent) inspector in Mayotte for a final check of the aircraft before our departure, a technical stop in Madagascar...enough potential worries for more sleepless nights.

### The team is expanding

The first exchanges with Interîles had suggested the ability for the aircraft to perhaps transport one or two extra people. For their part, the TAAF had endorsed this possibility. In anticipation, the medical records of our two extra operators were submitted to the Chief Medical Officer for approval.

The news came just a week before departure. We asked Guillaume, F4FET, to join us in Mayotte. This additional person



was definitely a plus to the team.

### Departure

Last week of October finally came! Seb, F5UFX, Flo, F5CWU, Frank, F4AJQ, and Fred, F5ROP, left France to rally Mayotte. Michel, FM5CD, whom we briefly saw in Paris, flew on another airline. We were greeted by Vincent, F4BKV, on site as he had been there for a few days to participate in the CQ WW SSB. At the hotel, we met with Guillaume, F4FET.

The decor might have suggested holidays of some sort but the pressure was at its peak. We took these final moments of respite to retest the equipment, control configurations, probably a way to occupy our minds and manage stress. Some contacts were made with each transmitter to make sure none suffered any damage during transport.

The last briefings were long and studious. The whole team sized up the stakes of what was expected. Each item and set was detailed, checked and reviewed. We needed to live up to expectations! Personally I knew from day one that the team was perfectly capable of managing the "radio" aspects once there. The little time left was fully used to recheck each document with all the authorities and the various providers to ensure that our aircraft could take off and bring the team on Tromelin as scheduled on October 30. All systems go, but experience has shown us that a turnaround can happen.

By late afternoon, Claude, F5GVA, in charge of the team that must intervene at the philatelic exhibition informed us that the mast and antenna will indeed be installed in Paris, a happy ending for a last minute administrative imbroglio.

Our last evening in Mayotte was spent with our pilots and co-pilots. They too were excited to land on Tromelin as this privilege is usually reserved for the FAZOI (French Armed Forces in the Southern Zone of the Indian Ocean) pilots. They informed us that the mandatory technical stopover would be done in Tamatave and not in Sambava as we had expected. In addition to a change in the flight plan, this change was going to lengthen the travel time by a few hours and delay our arrival on the island.

### Thursday, October 30

The night was short as a result of the excitement that we were experiencing due to the deadline approaching. We were all ready at the time agreed the day before. A quick taxi ride took us to Dzaoudzi airport that had just opened its doors. At this early hour, few flights were scheduled which allowed us to check our bags and go through the controls smoothly. The crew that we met on arrival was confident that the departure time, estimated at 7:30, was still on although an umpteenth control by the DGAC and gendarmerie



was scheduled before takeoff. All these checks were OK, but they delayed us by 2 hours.

The first stage of the journey took place peacefully, each of us waiting to take off again from Madagascar to relax. This technical stop left us just enough time to stamp our passports and go to the restroom. Once the aircraft is filled up, we immediately set course to Tromelin that appeared on the horizon after about two hours of flying. What a thrill! The approach was conducted camera in hand to capture this moment so long awaited. The landing was perfect with applause aplenty.

As soon as the aircraft stopped, Patrick, Henri and Eugene, the three TAAF officers stationed on Tromelin came our way and helped us unload the luggage. The crew did not linger. The aircraft flew back to reach Madagascar before dark. From our side we let ourselves be tempted by a good coffee before hitting the assembly part. Without further delay the equipment was unpacked. Our three crates were positioned before we arrived on the steps of the Malagasy house, our lodging for the duration of the mission. Each antenna, cable, radial was labeled. We engaged in a race against time to install the maximum possible antennas before dark. Everyone knew exactly what he had to do. Priority was given to the 160m antenna and the 2-element multiband Step-Ir. Other verticals were summarily installed so as to use several bands on the first night. The mounting of other antennas, requiring more time, was postponed until the next morning especially since they could not have been completed before dark. We agreed to have a break for dinner. This was an opportunity to receive safety instructions and information on the life of the station. We did not linger. The stations were wired, the computer network set up.

Sébastien, F5UFX, started with V51B followed by OE3GCU. The 5 stations got operational and were soon triggering huge pile-ups.

### Friday, October 31

The first night QSOs allowed us to achieve more than 2,000 contacts with surprising results including 160m, even though no receiving antenna had been installed. The pile-ups would have been endless, but we remained reasonable and some of us slept for a few hours in order to be fully fit for the setup the next days ahead.

Right at sunrise, we began the assembly and installation of the 4 x VDA, the 4-square for 40/30m, and the 80m vertical. Each antenna was positioned at a location approved in advance by the TAAF. We adapted to the natural environment (bird nests, turtle nesting holes).

Working long hours under these conditions was not without risk. Michel, FM5CD, was mandated to remind everyone on a regular basis to hydrate and protect themselves from the sun. This simple task



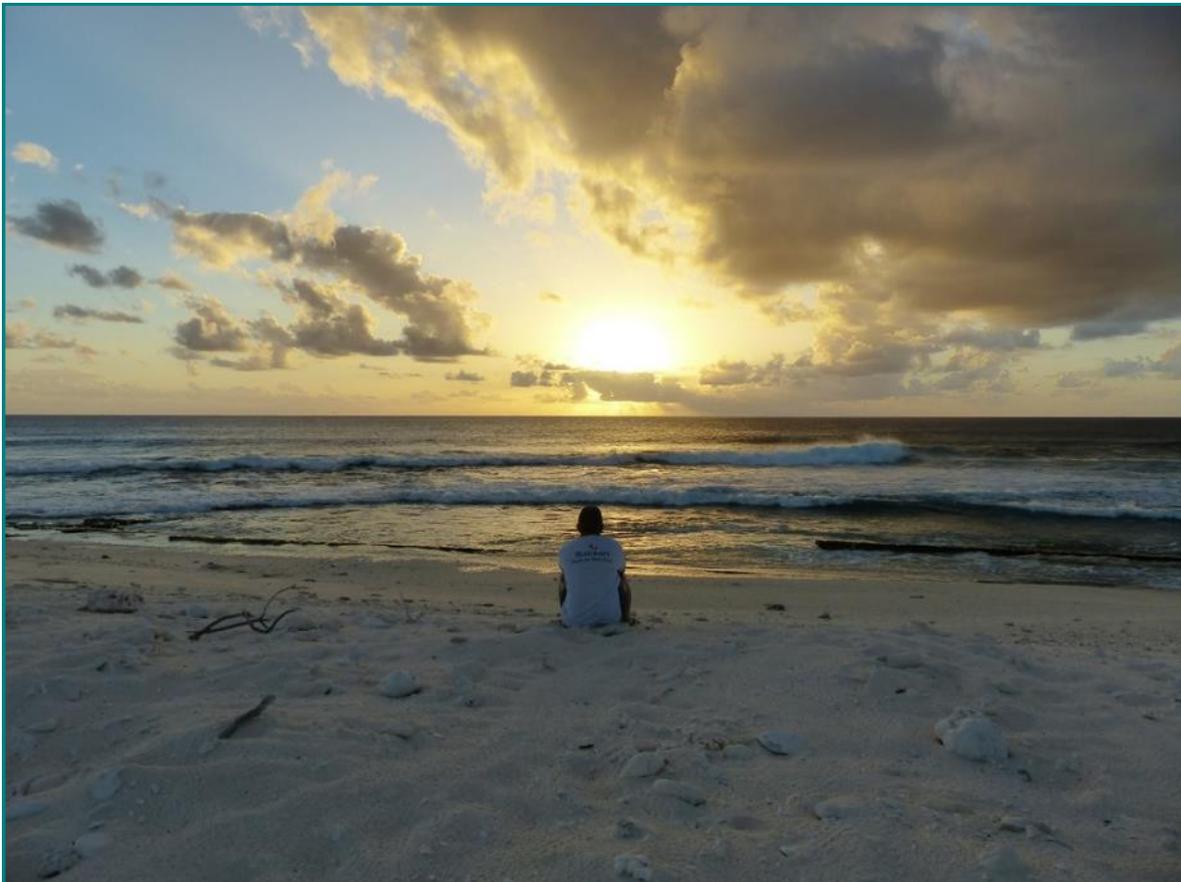
would spare us from sunburn and sunstroke, which would obviously have affected the result of the operation. We postponed to the next morning the installation of the 20m VDA, 6m yagi and the second 80m vertical as the heat became intense.

The team split for meal breaks. They were an opportunity for lengthy exchanges with our hosts. We asked them many questions to which they responded with passion. We told them about the purpose of our mission and our activity. Eugene, our cook, had been a regular on Tromelin for decades. Upon our arrival, we had recognized him since he appeared on videos from the previous operation (FR/ F6KDF/T). Besides, he perfectly remembered that DXpedition and mentioned some details and anecdotes about the radio activity of the meteorologists, including those of Jacques, FR5ZU. Seb discovered with Patrick aka "PP" the weather station facilities and learned the procedure to send the logs and emails via satellite. The tour ended in the room where the generators were installed. Patrick provided supervision and maintenance. For an expedition to an island so isolated, our conditions were ultimately more comfortable than expected which is good since this allowed us to focus entirely on radio activities.

### Saturday, November 1

The work done so far by the 7 members of our team was huge, despite difficult conditions. All of the equipment provided was operational. No antenna needed adjustment, proof if any were needed that careful preparation is not superfluous. Propagation forecasts prepared by Vincent were displayed and instructions were stated a last time. From now on, we needed to satisfy the greatest number! Between two radio sessions, we conducted tests to improve reception on the low bands. The 5 main stations were on the air. We used the backup station installed on the bench outside as a beacon for 6m. We soon needed to assign an operator to that station because the band opened up. The first openings were towards the Middle East.

(Part 2 will be in the next newsletter)



## Ten-Tec and Alpha Sold to RKR (Press Release)

(April 2, 2015) RKR Designs, LLC of Longmont Colorado has announced that they have acquired the assets of Alpha Amplifier and TEN-TEC brands from RF Concepts. RKR plans to expand the product line, while continuing to service their customers that have enjoyed their products over the years.

The principals of RKR Designs are Richard Gall, Ken Long and Rich Danielson (Gall and Danielson of QSC Systems, Longmont, Colorado have been a successful contract manufacturer, for over 20 years). Ken Long, N0QO has over 20 years in the electronics and amateur radio industry. Long will be President and CEO of the new company. QSC has been building Alpha amplifiers for over 5 years. They have also been building boards for TEN-TEC since their purchase by RF Concepts last year. Mr. Long said "QSC has always been a fantastic contract manufacturer, and has the expertise and knowledge that will allow us to bring down costs, while increasing quality and reducing manufacturing times."

When asked for comment, Michael Seedman, AA6DY said "I can't think of a more capable group of people to take over the 45 year Alpha Amplifier/TEN-TEC legacy. Ken Long has been involved with the industry for years, and has a great feeling for products and operations. He has the manufacturing and engineering resources available to deliver quality products that our customers demand". Mr. Seedman went on to say "Alpha and TEN-TEC have always had a warm spot in my heart, and I am thrilled that RKR Designs will be able to continue the operations of the business. I wish them the best".

Ken, Richard and Rich have been working very close over the past several years and feel that this new relationship will benefit the company and customers moving forward. This closer relationship to the contract manufacturer will allow a more consistent process and delivery of quality products along with significant cost benefits.

RKR Designs LLC is privately held, and terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

## For Sale

200 FOOT OF NEW HEAVY DUTY 8 CONDUCTOR ROTOR CABLE-  
CERTIFIED QUALITY WIREMAN LONG LIFE, UURES. ROTOR P/N 302  
601008. \$150.00/BEST OFFER.

MIRAGE RF AMPLIFIER MODEL-A1015G 50-54 MHZ, 10W IN- 150W  
OUT, WITH CABLES/MANUAL, \$300.00

CUSHCRAFT X-9 BEAM 24 FOOT BOOM/ 20-15-10 METER NINE  
ELEMENT BEAM. *BOOM SLIGHTLY BENT*, GOOD SHAPE. EASY TO  
ASSEMBLE WITH MANUAL-- \$300.00

CONTACT: DWAIN K8ME at [k8me@sbcglobal.net](mailto:k8me@sbcglobal.net)



## Meeting Information

*NODXA* Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at the *Gourme Family Restaurant* at 15315 Pearl Road (Rt. 42) just west of Interstate 71 and south of Rt. 82 in Strongsville at 7:30 PM. Come early and have dinner and meet your fellow DXers and enter the 50/50 raffle.

## NODXA Information

NO8DX: Special Event Callsign  
 W8DXA: NODXA Repeater 147.360

Web-site: <http://www.papays.com/nodxa.html>  
 Newsletter Submission: [wd8iou@adelphia.net](mailto:wd8iou@adelphia.net)

## NODXA Club Officials for 2015-2016

President: Tedd Mirgliotta, KB8NW (440-237-2816)  
 V. President: Dwaine Modock, K8ME (440-582-3462)  
 Secretary: Glenn Williams, AF8C (440-835-4897)  
 Treasurer: Mary Michaelis, N8DMM (440-236-5426)  
 Newsletter: David Autry, WD8IOU (440-238-0417)



## DXCC Info

As of February 2012, the current DXCC Entities total is: 340.

## NODXA Application and Renewal Form

The Northern Ohio DX Association is a non-profit organization with a primary interest in DXing. We encourage all DXers to join our group and share the interest and fun of DXing.

Please complete the application below and send along your appropriate dues or renewal to:

NODXA, P.O. Box 361624 , Strongsville, Ohio 44136

First Time Membership/Renewal (U.S. and DX) \$20.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Callsign \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 ARRL Member? \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ DXCC Member? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Interest \_\_\_\_\_

## Newsletter Contributors

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this months edition: N8TR, N8DMM, KB8NW, K8YSE, AF8C, K8BL, K8ME, KB6NU, N3FJP, K5KAC, and [www.hamhijinks.com](http://www.hamhijinks.com),