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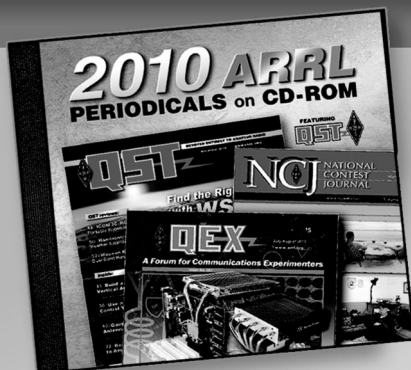
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Author: Martti Laine, OH2BH/4O3B

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W3UR

HOW'S DX?

The Story of Montenegro — DXCC Counter 336

Martti Laine, OH2BH/4O3B

What would you do if one morning you woke up in a new DXCC country?

On the morning of May 22, 2006 Ranko Boca, YT6A, a leading DXer and contesteur in what used to be Serbia-Montenegro, got up on the always beautiful and sunny coast of the Adriatic Sea and looked over the crystal clear waters of Kotor Bay. The previous day's popular vote was close, but Montenegro was now ready to declare its independence as the fifth spin-off (joining 9A, S5, T9 and Z3) of the former Yugoslavia. Most importantly for the international Amateur Radio DX community, it was a brand new DXCC country. The historical background suggested that this would indeed happen, and so it did that morning. Subsequent events unfolded at a record pace, and United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan was on hand to hoist a new member nation's flag outside the UN headquarters building in New York.



18 year old Nikola, YZ6AMD, made the first QSO at 403T straight from the opening ceremony.

How Would You Go About It, If You Were Ranko?

One option is to resign from the job, send the family to see their grandparents and start running a steady stream of pileups day in and day out. And, maybe appoint a few assistants to get folded QSL cards out the following day. You would see happy smiling faces all over the world, but is this something that would serve your country at large?

Ranko had good foresight, and he introduced the concept of an International DX Festival, one to be implemented in a highly meaningful and positive manner. A DX Festival...we surely know "DX" and we do know "Festival," but how about the two together?

Here is Ranko's Approach...

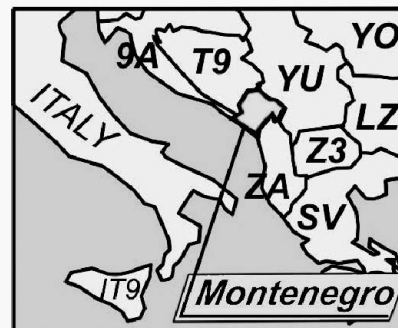
Yes, get Montenegro QSOs rolling, and even elevate it all into a world-class event with a QSO count never seen before. And, launch an International DX Convention with all the desired phases — for country club types as well as military camp troops,

plus everyone in between. Also, let those existing local Montenegrin hams meet people from all over the world at their own doorstep; it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have all these hungry DXers arrive in this tiny newborn Republic. Also make a fine, fresh start, realizing that a national Amateur Radio society as well as many regulatory issues need to be sorted out locally. Therefore the required knowledge and needed practices must be evaluated and enhanced for the benefit of this new Republic.

Ranko used his existing foreign contacts, particularly those he had met and found as true friends of his new Republic, and smartly worked together with these people. An Organizing Committee was quickly formed and all the needed elements were in place. Finally, it was time to raise the curtain, ie, to open the event for members of the public in a manner consistent with the objectives discussed above.

Montenegro in a Nutshell

- A country of 631,000 people, Serb majority.
- Capital: Podgorica, population 136,000.
- Mountainous coastal state, 14,000 sq km (5400 sq mi).
- Adriatic Sea coastline 293 km (182 mi), beaches 73 km.
- Income: tourism (68%) and industry (30%).
- Referendum held May 21, 2006, turnout 86.5%.
- Majority vote for independence 55.5%.
- UN membership gained June 28, 2006.



403T Organizing Committee

Ranko, YT6A; Dragan, YT6Y; Kele, YT3T; Linda, KA1ZD; Dave, K1ZZ; Bob, N6OX; Wayne, N7NG; Martti, OH2BH, and Hans, PB2T.

More People Behind Your Montenegro QSOs

9A6AA, DJ7EO, DJ9ZB, DL3DXX, DL7FER, F0CYT, F5MOO, G3TXF, I1JQJ, I8NHJ, IK1ADH, IK1PMR, IK8HBA, K2LEO, K2WR, W6OSP, LZ1JY, LZ2UU, OE8SKQ, OH2BE, OH2RF, OH2TA, OK3AA, ON4IA, ON5TN, ON6NL, PA0R, SP3BJK, SP5XVY, SQ3RX, T93J, T95A, UA3AB, UA4HBW, UA4HOX, Z32AF, Z35G, YT1RX, YZ1AU, YU1AB, YU1EW, YU1ZZ, YU6A, YU6AY, YU6GS, YU6YL, YU6ZD, YU6ZZ, YT6PS, YT6ZMG and YZ6AMD.



YT6A contest QTH with stacked beams 600 meters above sea level.

Bernie McClenny, W3UR

3025 Hobbs Rd, Glenwood, MD 21738-9728

w3ur@arrl.org

Selected Logistical Model

It was expected that many DXers would like to attend during the three-week session — yes, it was a three-week show — but it was also expected that they would only be present for the first week. Accordingly, people



(L-R) Martti, OH2BH; Hans, PB2T, and Dave, K1ZZ, had an organizing role at 4O3T in addition to making QSOs.



(L-R) Pertti, OH2RF; Bob, N6OX; Rich, K2WR, and Nigel, G3TXF, enjoying international camaraderie. Seated, Pekka, OH2TA.



Ranko, YT6A, with his charming daughter Bojana closed the three-week event with a smile on their faces.



A highly active local, Rajko, YU6DZ, had handed out more than 6500 QSOs using his 30 year old, trustworthy Yaesu FT-101B. Bruce, W6OSP, and Martti, OH2BH (standing), saw an opportunity to furnish Rajko with a more modern FT-847.

had to be encouraged to come at different times. The plan was to establish three sites with a minimum of two stations at each site; therefore a lot of equipment was needed for the three-week period. The logistical effort was not perfect, but at last several cars started arriving from Bulgaria, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy. They brought in what was needed. Some got stuck at Customs, while others got lost — but surely a DXpedition to a brand new DXCC country could not entirely avoid a bumpy road....

The planned lineup of people was flexible, to say the least, but ultimately there was always one person from the Organizing Committee present, and things got sorted out in the true ham spirit. Consequently, 4O3T signals were there for the world to reach.

As always in DXpeditioning, some towering characters of great stature would surface, and this one was no exception. QSOs can be made by people at different speeds and with different levels of clarity. The variety and the range can be huge. But the true personalities are those who make a difference. Caring about others is an approach that will pay off. The list would be too long to be presented here, but we certainly wish to recognize the efforts of Nicoletta, the wife of Rein, PAØR, who stepped forward to look after the well-being of a lot of people when such help was most needed. Since Nicoletta is a nurse, her contribution came quite naturally. Accordingly, every mega DXpedition should add a nurse to their personnel.

Similarly, Ranko employed a large group of people to work on the necessities of life — such as our camp assistant Dado who was there to look after the well-being of a full camp of people. This guy had probably never cooked before but he had a natural desire for hospitality with a smile. In no time the DXpedition had introduced him to Dutch and American cuisine and a survival military menu, all served with a caring heart. No one went hungry.

Are We a Social Bunch, or Do We Just Make DX?

It was just like one continuous stage show — Montenegrin style. The events were generated with no fixed agenda at a moment's inspiration — but they always came through with no formalities needed. Bruce, W6OSP, named it "Ranko time which always considers the pleasures of life and the intensity of Adriatic sunshine." A new experience for too many business types; if you need something, just go ahead and get it organized the way that will best serve you and the group.

All this was captured in the events involving local hams, foreign radio amateurs, radio regulatory people and military officials gathered around a good cause — doing

Final Count

Yes, all the goals set for this DXpedition were met and exceeded. If you did not contact Montenegro during the three weeks, you are probably not active at all. While 4O3T made 117,000 QSOs, adding to those made by others — YU6AO, YU6DZ, YZ6AMD etc — during the same period, well over 200,000 QSOs were handed out from Montenegro. In the process, strong ties were forged to ensure Amateur Radio's future and to safeguard its role in serving society as a whole. Montenegro will have one vote — just like the United States — when it comes to deciding the many challenging issues that face us in the years to come. One more country under our belts.

things together for the benefit of Amateur Radio. The days of an earthquake in the city of Bar were still on everyone's mind, and so was the role of Amateur Radio in providing emergency communications during the disaster. Foreigners who had never met before demonstrated the dynamics of this activity: learning from one another and demonstrating the best of group dynamics as an asset to society at large. Here DX was the common denominator and the hallmark also on the social front.

Visit Montenegro? — You Bet!

This country is unbelievably beautiful, clean and safe. People are as hospitable and friendly as you can meet in any corner of the world. Yes, they make their living along most of a 293 kilometer long seacoast — land that has all the topography you can hope for, be it at sea level or up the steep mountains. In point of fact, the YT6A location was 600 meters above sea level overseeing Kotor Bay, one of the most beautiful scenes you can think of.

The city of Bar is a treasure; here we used a vacant coastal station for low-band transmissions and, on the low-band front, surprised many stateside people with potent 80/160 meter summer signals. Our host in Bar was Dragan, YT6Y, a mover and shaker who may take several months to adjust to non-Festival life. We also visited Rajko, YU6DZ — a most active local ham since independence and experienced in local customs and hospitality of not letting people go home hungry but endowing visitors with local delicacies to take away.

Please check out this Web site featuring those beautiful scenes and places worthy of your visit: www.visit-montenegro.com/. Also, don't forget to read more about the 4O3T experience at www.yu6scg.cg.yu/montenegro_2006.html. **QST**