

## The Jordan River Beverage Expedition

Nick Hall-Patch

It all started some months ago when Dan Sys wrote to me asking about Beverage sites on the west coast of Vancouver Island, so that people attending the Golden West DX'ers Association get-together in Vancouver this summer could see what one of these antennas is like. My wife Susan and I went out to Jordan River, a little west coast logging town, to reconnoiter, and found what looked like a good spot along a disused logging road which ran from the highway to the sea. At this point, the sea is the western end of Juan de Fuca Strait, just before it meets the open Pacific.

So Dan arranged the date of the DXpedition and I set about getting wire and supports for the antenna. On the afternoon of July 7, Bruce Portzer, Colin Newell and I met the GWDXA contingent of Dan Sys, Peter Nolan, Eddie Ryan, Earl Carlson, Doug Miske, and George Greene. We set out for the chosen site in three cars plus my pick-up truck. Things started to go wrong quickly--I left the cables for my receiver's digital readout at home; the weather looked damp at Jordan River, even though it was dry in Victoria; and upon arrival at our logging road, we found it had been blocked due to the forest fire hazard (we presume).

Fortunately, a few hundred feet down the road we found an open road into the same area and found a convenient place to park the cars. A convenient site for an east-west Beverage was available at this point. However, the wire would not be running beside a convenient road, as previously planned, but through a burnt-over area with about four feet of new growth on it--all soaking wet. Pete, Dan, Colin and I moved out into the bush with wire and support posts and were soon as soggy as the plant life we were thrashing through. The animal life consisted of mosquitoes and black flies. Curses filled the air, and the sanity of DX'ing was questioned. Rain began to fall as we staggered back to the listening site after having put out about 1100 feet of wire. We didn't terminate it because I had forgotten to bring the grounding rod and resistor out into the bush, and none of us were willing to make another trip along the wire.

By now, one of the tents was up and the other soon was under Dan's instruction. But an essential set of car keys had gotten locked into the car's trunk along with much of the essential beer. Earl and George went off to Jordan River and came back with a couple of local guys (apprentice car thieves?) who managed to open the trunk from the inside (!) and who seemed quite tolerant of people who set out long lengths of wire into the bush.

While the wire was being strung, Bruce had clipped the end of it to his car radio antenna and set the radio to 1230 kHz. As the wire length was increased, various stations faded in and out apparently with the changing directive patterns of the wire, though we're not sure of this. Nothing was ID'd.

The wire was then hooked up to Bruce's FRG-7 with Collins filter and Colin's DX150B. Both these were in Bruce's car while my transmogrified DX150A sat in my truck. We'd planned to set up the receivers outside, but frequent rain showers prevented this. Interesting directive patterns were noted: KNBR-680 was much weaker than KBOI-670, but KFAX-1100 in the same city was stronger than I'd ever heard it. Also KING-1090 was one of the strongest stations on the dial--a real feat as any northwest DX'er will tell you that KING is nearly DX anywhere but Seattle. But as for real DX? Not really that great unfortunately. The Chief Joseph TIS station on 1610 was noted; better was a Pacific City, OR TIS station on 530, for a first time logging as far as any of us were aware. Later, Costa Rica-825 was there, good even on the TRF. But the wire was pointing east-west and we were really getting nothing much worthwhile from the east.

By 1 AM PDT, most of the GWDXA crew had sacked out, due to lack of sleep for 2 or 3 previous nights. Things were getting ridiculous as rain began to steadily pour down in true west coast fashion. However, Hawaii, Oceania and even New Zealand were making their presence felt--but only on channels we'd heard at home. The first sign of things unusual was carriers on 1116, 1179, 1206 and 1233. Bruce noticed a het from 729 on CKLG-730 at 1:30 AM. Then two stations audible on 1026, audio on 873. By 3:30 AM things were becoming quite pleasantly crazy as carriers were turning up on splits where only 2 kw DU stations were listed. The next two and a half hours were bedlam. At many points, it seemed that there were more DU voices than domestics on our radios. ID's like 2KY, 2UW, 2GB, Hauraki, 2NZ etc. etc. tumbled in--many with loud entertainment quality signals (we were indeed entertained). We thought we should shoot for every station in Sydney, but didn't succeed.

The sun rose at 5:18 AM PDT, but the many DU voices didn't stop for at least another 45 minutes. There were some pretty pie-eyed DX'ers by this time, and we figured it was time to break camp and go home. So I reeled in the wire, getting soaked once again in the process and we left the soggy environs of Jordan River behind, just as the sun came out from behind the cloud banks. Exactly one week later was the hottest, clearest day of the year...sigh.

Everybody now says we've got to have another beverage DXpedition, maybe to check for 1 kw Japanese, but maybe we'd better look into some good waterproof gear in the meantime!

The Portzer DXmobile with Bruce about to fall out of it after 8 solid hours of DX'ing

Dan Sys in the Hall-Patch pick-up DX truck, logging the last Australian.

