

An Open Letter to the DX Community

from Krassy Petkov, K1LZ
21 October 2025

As many of you know, it was both my dream and my honor to join the team planning to activate 3Y0K Bouvet Island in February 2026. To make this possible, I recruited K3JO, LU9ESD, RN5M, and JT1CO to join me in this effort, and I personally contributed \$120,000 to cover both their participation and mine.

In addition, K3JO, LU9ESD, RN5M, and I built all the Yagi vertical antennas, towers, and supporting equipment that were to be used at 3Y0K — representing an additional personal out-of-pocket expense of about \$100,000. It took us over three months of hard work and dedication to complete everything.

I also secured major sponsorships and equipment deals:

- From Icom America, twelve IC-7610 transceivers and four IC-7300s.
- From ACOM, twelve amplifiers.
- I personally provided a full set of antennas for both camps, including fourteen Yagis, two verticals for 160 m, two 4-square arrays for 80 m and two for 40 m, verticals for 30 m, tribanders, dual-banders, filter sets for all bands, duplexers, triplexers, and more — plus nearly 30 waterproof cases, all purchased out of my own pocket.

All this equipment was shipped to Norway for loading into the container that is now en route to Bouvet. I took full responsibility for ensuring the technical success of this expedition — and I fulfilled 100% of that responsibility.

Over the past several months, I repeatedly asked Ken (LA7GIA) to share with the team a financial statement — including a cash-flow report and a profit-and-loss summary — for the 3Y0K expedition. My intention was simple: to ensure transparency for all team members and to organize a collective meeting to review the final preparations — and, if necessary, to coordinate financial or logistical support.

Instead of responding to these reasonable requests and calling a team meeting, Ken asked me for an additional \$90,000 to cover a supposed budget shortfall. At other times, he also asked for extra contributions of \$7,000 per operator from K1LZ, LU9ESD, K3JO, and RN5M. I agreed to this second request because he said that all team members would be asked to do the same.

These questions apparently made the leadership uncomfortable — but I asked them because I began to feel that what they really wanted from me was my name, my contacts, and my money. Sadly, it seems I was not wrong.

Additionally, I asked LA7GIA several times to disclose to the entire team the names of the

private donors and the specific contractual terms under which they were contributing to 3Y0K — reportedly at a level of \$800,000.

Isn't it concerning to travel to such a remote and dangerous island with people whose names, identities, and intentions are completely unknown to us? Don't we have the right to know who they are, what role they will play, and how they will provide the \$800,000 pledged to the expedition?

Let us not forget that a similar situation occurred during another expedition a few years ago, which had to be terminated prematurely due to serious internal conflicts between the amateur radio team and an external group.

I also requested that a team doctor be added to the roster — something that, to my knowledge, every major expedition of this magnitude has always included. Having a medical professional should be an absolute priority. We must not forget that serious accidents have already happened in past operations — I almost lost my life after falling from a tower that had been improperly secured by an inexperienced person.

Finally, I asked for confirmation regarding the second, higher camp location that had originally been planned for better propagation toward North America.

I was later told that this second site was no longer being considered, even though it continued to appear on the official 3Y0K website. In reality, from a topographic and propagation perspective, both sites are nearly identical — and unfortunately, both are among the worst possible locations on the island.

The supposed “North American camp” appears to have been nothing more than a marketing narrative to attract NA sponsors. Without that story, it is doubtful anyone would have trusted the same leadership team that had already failed once before in their previous Bouvet attempt.

That is why I decided to get involved — because, whether the leadership likes it or not, my team specializes in this field. We build some of the most successful radio stations in the world. We are not better than anyone else — we simply have experience and proven results.

If anyone felt offended by that, I sincerely regret it. But the facts speak for themselves: Roman (RN5M) has been doing this professionally for over 25 years, and Manu (LU9ESD) has worked alongside him for the past four. Velimir (K3JO), with his background as an electronic engineer, has been a pioneer in radio station automation and is the only person I know who can solve absolutely any problem that arises in that field.

In past expeditions, he has repaired transceivers, amplifiers, and all kinds of electronic equipment, allowing us to continue operating without interruption. But I don't need to say much more about them — the whole world knows these names, and they have earned the respect of the community for what they have done and continue to do for amateur radio.

In all the above situations, I was met with resistance and silence. Ken refused to provide the requested information, yet continued to pressure me for an additional \$90,000.

That amount originated from an informal conversation we had last year in Friedrichshafen, where I mentioned that if funding was still short toward the end, I might be able to help. Since the leadership group failed to raise the necessary funds — perhaps due to their damaged reputation and lack of trust within the community — Ken later included that \$90,000 as a contractual obligation for me, adding a special clause in the agreement.

It was a bold and calculated move — one that, in hindsight, seems to have been part of the plan from the very beginning. My biggest mistake was signing that contract without carefully reading it, believing that among teammates, we would never deceive one another.

Neither I nor anyone on my team ever received an invitation or communication to attend the workshops or participate in the container loading in Norway, which makes it clear that our presence was never truly welcome.

This past week, I was officially informed that I am no longer a member of the 3Y0K DXpedition, because I refused to provide the extra \$90,000 and because I was “asking too many questions.” I was told my personal \$30,000 initial contribution would be refunded, and I was instructed to publicly announce that I was leaving the expedition “for personal reasons.”

Since that statement is not true, I have chosen not to comply with this request.

K3JO, LU9ESD, RN5M, and JT1CO have been told they may still participate if they wish, and I will fully respect whatever decision they make. As of this writing, however, it appears that none of them will be going to Bouvet.

Still, I find it highly suspicious that this decision came immediately after the leadership group received everything they had been waiting for — the antennas, the radios, and all the equipment I personally ensured reached them. Once they had everything they needed, I suddenly became expendable.

Obviously, I am deeply disappointed by this outcome. I want to sincerely thank the many members of the DX community who supported me and looked forward to seeing my team and me on Bouvet — particularly on the low bands, where we were committed to ensuring complete worldwide coverage.

I share the same disappointment that many of you will feel after reading this. But please believe me — I, too, feel used, deceived, and profoundly disillusioned.

To all who have supported me for decades: thank you for your confidence, friendship, and faith in my team. Those who know me understand how much I love this hobby, and that for

many years I have been helping and contributing to make it better and better — but from now on, with far greater caution about who I choose to work with.

My name, honor, and dignity remain intact — as does my love for amateur radio.

**73 and see you on the bands,
Krassy Petkov, K1LZ**