

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

Visalia!

It's that time of year again!

The 1994 International DX Convention will be the happening thing at the Holiday Inn in Visalia, April 15-17. The Convention is sponsored this year by the Southern California DX Club.

Those who plan ahead—far ahead—have had their rooms reserved at the Holiday Inn for almost a year. For those who have suddenly awakened like sprouting fruit trees, it is time for that last-minute scramble for a room.

This year, the organizers went for the tried-and-true: the Convention program is heavy with DXpedition presentations! The list of expeditions includes VK9LI and KH9/AH6MM (Friday), AH1A, KH5K, 5X1XT, 9G1XA and 3YØPI (Saturday) and E31A on Sunday. This should serve to remind those with short-term memory loss that there was a lot of good DX on this past year, despite the falling solar flux index.

Many other events are on the program as well, including *DX Jeopardy*, presented by the San Diego DX Club. If you can qualify, here is a chance to regale the multitudes with your DX knowledge, in competition for attractive prizes.

There will be DXCC card-checking with a few gotchas: no more than 110 cards/person and no 160m cards. It seems there has been a problem with forgeries...

Of course, there will be the traditional banquet and cocktail parties, as well as a Ladies' Luncheon and Program, Contest and DX Fora, and prize drawings. For the early and idle, the Eighth International DX Convention Golf Tournament tees off at 0800 on Friday.

Hey, it's Visalia: more fun than you thought you could have with your clothes on! We'll see you there!

East Bay Meeting in May

The May meeting of the Northern California DX Club will be held Friday, May 13 at the Blue Dolphin, 30 San Leandro Marina, in San Leandro. Attitude adjustment commences at 6 PM, with dinner at 7.

This is the annual East Bay dinner meeting and we especially hope to see members from the East Bay and Central Valley who have not made it to NCDXC meetings lately. Directions and a reservation form are inside this issue. Be sure to reserve your seat(s) with Craig, N6ITW, by May 10.

Prizes will be raffled off as part of the evening's festivities.

Due to the Visalia Convention, there will be no April meeting. Let's turn out in a big way for this one!

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Coming Events

- International DX Convention, April 15 -17, Holiday Inn, Visalia.
- Livermore Swap Meet, 1st Sunday each month, Las Positas College, Livermore, 7 AM-noon
- Foothill Flea Market, 2nd Saturday, each month, Foothill College, Los Altos, from 7 AM
- Dayton HamVention, Dayton, OH, April 29-May 1
- West Coast VHF/UHF Conference, Sheraton Cerritos Hotel, Cerritos, April 29-May 1
- East Bay NCDXC Meeting, Blue Dolphin, San Leandro, May 13
- CQ WW WPX CW Contest, May 28-29



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

Club Officers:

President: George Allan, WA6O
 Vice President: Craig Smith, N6ITW
 Secretary: Ron Panton, W6VG
 Treasurer: Dewey Churchill, KG6AM
 Director: Bob Artigo, KN6J
 Director: Jim Knochenhauer, K6ITL
 Director: Lonese Bloom, KA6ING

DXer:

Editor: Garry Shapiro, N16T
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 San Bruno, CA 94066
 (or via DXPSN)

Roster Manager: Garry Shapiro, N16T

Club Repeater, W6TI/R, (147.36+)

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 Lotze, W6RQ

Contest Manager: Rich Hudgins, WX6M

Westlink: Craig Smith, N6ITW

Swap Shop: Ben Deoviet, 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 2:00 zulu 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.

Unless otherwise noted, NCDXC permits re-use of any article in this publication—provided the DXer and the article's author are credited.

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board meeting was held March 16, at the home of W6VG.

Present were: WA6O, KA6ING, K6ITL, KG6AM, and W6VG. Guest was N16T, Garry Shapiro, *The DXer* editor. *In absentia* were N6ITW and KN6J. Meeting opened at 7:33 PM by President George Allan, WA6O. Correspondence was read and discussed.

- A letter from W6WB, Bud Bane, was read by WA6O, and much discussion ensued over our monthly meeting place. Cost of dinners, program content, restaurant cost minima, and location were all discussed. The president will write a letter to Bud Bane with our thoughts on his timely suggestions.
- Treasurer KG6AM presented a printed report on the financial state of the club. In the future, this report will also be sent to *The DXer*. The last complete report from a treasurer was in the August, 1992 *DXer*. The Board will meet in special session to determine the new budget after the files are received from Vince Chinn.
- The co-chairpersons for the 1995 DX Convention will be NG6X and WA6O. WA6O will soon appoint the nominating committee for the June election of officers.
- WX6M will be listed in *The DXer* as the handler of all contest info. Send all contest info to Rich, *not* to Box 608 or to other club members.
- Expenses incurred in publishing the DXer received a great deal of discussion. The Procedures Manual does not spell out the "target guidelines" for the editor to follow. These will be delineated in the next budget meeting. The Board voted to reimburse expenses submitted by Garry Shapiro.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

—Ron Panton, W6VG, Secretary

By George! de WA6O

The Northern California DX Club is a lot like many other clubs and organizations. All have a reason or purpose for existence and are guided by rules, regulations or a procedures manual. The procedures normally cover routine business functions and other matters pertaining to running the club. However, they don't normally cover matters pertaining to the basic rules of personal conduct. In particular, it is expected that club officials will act with a certain modicum of decorum and not "hold up the club's laundry for the world to see."

With this principle in mind, your current BoD chose not to "go public" with some of the matters we face at this time. I still prefer that we keep them out of the "limelight" and deal with them at the Board level. One of these has impeded our ability to produce a budget for 1994. But, despite the lead editorial that appeared in the March *DXer*, I have no intention of going public with the matter that caused the delay. It will suffice to say that the BoD will complete a budget for the 1993-1994 year, even if it is produced at the end of its term. At least it will be accurate and our successors will know where things went.

We are presently looking for those successors. The Procedures Manual requires that the process be started in early April. If you are asked to serve, please give it serious consideration. NCDXC needs you!

Hope to see everyone in Visalia!

—George Allan, WA6O



Treasurer's Report de KG6AM

	Credits	Debits	Balance
<i>Bank of America Checking Account</i>			
Beginning Balance			\$918.30
Receipts			
Dues received & deposited			
Account interest	\$0.85		
Dinner checks, Feb. mtg.	76.00		
Cash received, Feb. mtg.	357.00		
Awards check	2.25		
Proceeds from 1993 Convention*	6,676.67		
Subtotal	\$7,112.77		\$8,031.07
Payouts			
Cash to Bold Knight, Feb. mtg.		\$357.00	
Check to Bold Knight, Feb. mtg.		181.25	
Account service charge		9.00	
DXer printing & mailing, Feb.		436.58	
DXer expenses		102.38	
Badges		25.24	
*Check to EurekaBank Savings		3,000.00	
Subtotal		\$4,111.45	
Ending Balance			\$3,919.62
<i>EurekaBank Savings Account</i>			
Beginning Balance			\$15,129.87
Account interest	\$31.86		
*Check from B of A Account	3,000.00		
Subtotal	\$3,031.86		
Ending Balance			\$18,161.73
<i>Repeater Fund</i>			
Balance			\$1,641.59
per AG6Q (10 Feb)			

General Meeting

The NCDXC monthly meeting was held on March 11 at *The Bold Knight Restaurant* in Sunnyvale. The convivial hour was enjoyed by all, until serving of the dinner started at 7:17 PM. At 8:10 the meeting was called to order by President George Allan, WA6O. Guests were introduced.

- Knock, K6ITL is soliciting nominations for DXer of the Year.
 - There will be no general meeting of the club in April due to the DX Convention in Visalia.
 - The May dinner meeting of the NCDXC will be at the Blue Dolphin Restaurant at the San Leandro Marina.
 - Larry Word, NF6S, gave an excellent demonstration and talk on DSP filters.
 - There were no first or second readings.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

—Ron Panton, W6VG, Secretary

Ol' Billy-Bob Does It Again

DXer Billy-Bob Lee
Ran a DXpedition for three.
They partied on board,
Drank rum from a gourd,
But the radio fell into the sea.

—K6ILM



An Ancient Tale of the Fresno Bus...

Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD

Professor Cass takes a wistful look at a long-gone NCDXC institution.

This is a story heard mostly from elderly DXers. As they tell the story, having grown old since those great days of which they speak, there is a smile, a shake of the head, a shrug; the heat and pain alike has faded out of those scenes which once meant so much to them. They speak of the Fresno Bus and their regrets that they did not then stop the clock and hold those long-gone golden moments forever.

The Fresno Bus? Some may yet think that the DX Convention is the highlight of a DXer's year. In other years the trip there and then back home on The Fresno Bus was the thing of which memories were made. Even this far down the slope of the years there will still come queries from travelers from distant points asking if the "Bus" will run this year. The "Bus" has not run for a good many years. Some say that the DX world is less because the bus does not run. They may be right.

About forty years ago—give or take a decade—the "Fresno Bus" came to life. It was called the "Fresno Bus" because the DX Convention was then held in Fresno. And the meeting was officially called: "The Annual Joint Meeting of the Northern California DX Club and the Southern California DX Club at Fresno." An imposing title: solid, catchy and one which just rolled off the lips of any DXer speaking of the event. There was one little annual difference: the host club led off in the announcement. It was a title steeped in tradition, rituals and the memories of "The Fresno Bus." And it was a Northern California tradition; the lesser people of Southern California had nothing to match it. The bus planning was developed and brought into being by Joe Horvath, W6GPB, once the editor of *The DXer* and an early member of the DXCC Honor Roll. Joe worked as a Master Mechanic for the Greyhound Lines. He thought up the idea and each year made it a howling success. Insiders can do such things.

The bus started at the Greyhound Terminal in San Francisco. It came loaded, with wet bar and other essentials, that is. Someone from the club had to be the Bull of the Woods for the trip; that noble DXer was there at the bus terminal to check aboard the true believers and rode shotgun all the way to Fresno to handle

all the passenger manifests and things like that. In short, he was the Purser and Tour Guide for the Fresno Bus. The Good Shepherd. The bus ran down the Peninsula, the joy and hilarity and anticipation growing at every stop. Burlingame, San Mateo, Palo Alto, Mt View, San Jose—there were the DXers eagerly waiting the arrival of the Fresno Bus.



Professor Cass

Usually the bus was finally loaded at San Jose. It was then a non-stop run to Fresno. Down Highway 101 to Morgan Hill, over the Pacheco Pass on Highway 152 and then down U.S. 99 to Fresno. Interstate 5 had not yet been built in those days. En route there was nothing but joy, vivacity, good humor and good times. The bus carried a banner: "Northern California DX Club." Someone would always bring their two-meter rig for liaison with those using lesser modes of transportation.

The fare for the trip included—reasonably—all you could drink. It was wild and unforgettable: it was the famed "Fresno Bus." It was a time when it was the liquid that mattered, not the pot. Often the thirst was stronger than the head. Those early arrivals at the designated hotel in Fresno would anxiously await the arrival of the Fresno Bus. Many would line up at the hotel entrance to see the bus arrive and disgorge the passengers. Usually there were some who just flowed out of the bus. Some of these would just be flowed up to their hotel rooms and rested there until it was time to depart. At times strength and stability were slow in returning. But it was fun and joy and a trip to remember. Some still do.

The bus has not run in recent years. Some say they miss it and would gladly patronize it should it ever be resurrected. There were a number of problems: there are few things in life and DXing which do not have problems. Yet there are still those who remember, remember and ask wistfully about the Fresno Bus and those great journeys of other years.

First, someone had to be in charge. Someone had to take hold and make the arrangements, make sure that the bus was well stocked with DXers and other things. A schedule had to be made and each jubilant DXer checked off the passenger manifest on his loading. In short, while most of the crew were busily having their annual time of their lives, someone had to be the Good Shepherd. This one, naturally, was expected to answer every question, plaint and problem. One can easily understand that a lot of DXers are still young at heart. How many times would you like to be asked: "When do we get there?"

continued on next page

from page 4

An Ancient Tale...

Secondly, many who rode the bus would wait until the last final moment before signing up. Even though a cut-off date several weeks in advance of the trek was set, many waited until the last possible moment to make reservations. Others did not want to make reservations. Some of those making reservations did not want to put any money down; those not making reservations expected that their last minute decision was enough to ensure themselves a seat on the bus.

Many of the foreign DXers coming to the DX Convention looked then to the Fresno Bus as the way to find their way to the anointed spots in the outer wilderness. The Energy Enclaves. This was a plus and all one needs to do these days is to try to explain how to find the hotel at Visalia to gain an understanding of the difficulty a foreign traveler has in getting to the convention. Visalia is hardly a center of the civilized world and often it is a problem for the long distance traveler easily to find his way there.

The Fresno Bus also required the commitment of funds. Money! Words are not enough for the transportation company, a little bonding with cash helps. An unwritten but often evident club dictum was that the bus should not lose money. Any deficit at all was a sign of incompetence with the Good Shepherd held responsible for an explanation of why he screwed up. With reluctance of the riders to post the fare well in advance, there often was a conflict between the lack of cash coming in and the need to put a good bit of bonding cash into the hands of the transportation company. In short, who would wish or want the responsibility? In the early days W6GPB handled the chore; later on the needed essential posting was often slipped onto some unsuspecting victim, this done with a full knowledge of the guile involved. Seldom was an unsuspecting victim caught twice.

As things often are, the whole effort was fun except for the above minor exception. If you were on the cruise, you had nothing but praise and glowing endorsements for the effort. It was the way to go. Most of those who did go never were the same again. But it was fun. Always. The world changes but memories do not. And you will yet hear questions asked about the Fresno Bus and why it is no longer zooming down the freeways. Some even say they will not go to another convention until the bus returns. For these it has been a long wait, a long time of denial.

The fare for the trip included—reasonably—all you could drink. It was wild and unforgettable: it was the famed “Fresno Bus.”

The next DX convention is still a year off. One of those still longing for the days of other decades has, at times in the past, stoutly voiced his willingness to underwrite a revival of the irretrievable yesterdays and the Fresno Bus. Possibly it is time to again think of when there was a time for the Fresno Bus, and how that time went and did not come back.

But why shouldn't it? Why should those who never rode the Fresno bus be denied the joys and advantages now known only to the elderly. Those who do remember may be tedious in telling of their ancient joys, as old men are wont to be, but that does not mean they are unknowing or unfeeling. They rode the DX ranges together in those other days. They want to ride again.

As with many of the club's efforts, the bus operation generally progressed without any real definition of what had to be done and when. The unfortunate volunteer for the post of The Good Shepherd was pointed in the right direction—south—and from then on all that was wanted from him was full reports on the great things he was doing in organizing things. All this with no expense to the club.

This may work, once or twice, maybe even three times. It is not a scenario for a continuing effort. With the better part

of a year for planning until the next great DX convention, why should not the possibility of reviving the Fresno Bus be explored, the cost figures collected and an outline of the essential steps be listed so the possibility of a bus *hegira* can again be considered? Acknowledging that the Fresno Conventions used to start around Saturday noon and adjourn by Sunday noon, it is expected that some of the old routines and schedules may need changing. Starting planning early will not entail any expenditures: it will be a time for thinking. It will also be a time to determine if there is support for a revival of the Fresno Bus, a time to get the word to those coming from any distance that there may be transportation from SFO to the wilds of Visalia.

The Bus should roll again! Life has not been the same since it slowed and finally stopped. It never should have happened. DX historians may protest, club logicians may rave, but they cannot alter the fact that any kind of DXer, once touched by the romance of the Fresno Bus, was removed from all categories and is only comparable with those who lived in the legendary times. The Fresno Bus is a legend, a club legend. Let the good times roll—again!

A Modern Fable

A senior local DXer went to his doctor for a physical. Two days later, the doctor phoned and said “get down here right away. I have *bad* news and *horrible* news.”

When the DXer arrived, he said “OK, Doc—the horrible news first.” The doctor told him he had AIDS. The DXer absorbed this blow, then asked; “what's the bad news?” “You also have Alzheimer's Disease,” said the the doctor.

The DXer started laughing, dancing around and singing.

“Why are you so happy?” asked the incredulous physician.

The DXer replied “I am so relieved! I thought you were going to tell me I had AIDS!”

—brought from the North by W6BJH and relayed by NG6X.

Mystery Photo



This ham started out with the call letters 6PD in the mid-twenties and still holds the record for most consecutive years as Sweepstakes national champ on phone! He designed and maintained the elaborate VHF communications systems used during construction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. His personal station was always an awesome row of remotely-controlled rack panels feeding relay-switched rhombics and other wire beams.

Who is he?

Answer on page 7

Ice Cream Club

Dreyers Ice Cream now has an exclusive club for California residents aged fifty and older. All you have to do is send proof of age, name and address to:

Silver Scoop Club
Dreyers Ice Cream
5929 College Avenue
Oakland CA 94618.

In about four weeks you will get a membership package that includes a card, discount coupons and the first edition of the SILVER SCOOP newsletter. And in the package will be a safety whistle, note pad (to remind you that you need ice cream) and a Dreyers key chain. Wow!

Now there's an offer for which at least 70% of our members are eligible and which hardly any will be able to refuse. The whistle alone will be worth the cost of the stamp. Act today! Be the first on two meters with your own tooter.

—From the Mission Trail Net BLAZER

“At Sea Near A4...”

A letter to The DXer from W7SW

Sorry I won't see all your smiling faces at Visalia this year. I'm now playing Radio Officer on America's largest vessel—a supertanker called the *S/T Bridgeton*. We carry over 125 million gallons of oil and with only thirty of us aboard we keep busy!

We've just finished circumnavigating Africa with a trip through the Suez Canal (the “toll” cost us a half-million dollars one-way!) and the Red Sea. After filling up again in 9K-land it's back around ZS-land up to EU again.

Have a great time in Visalia—sorry I won't be with you.

—73 de Happy, W7SW/MM

P.S. There is just nothing like antennas at 135 feet over “non-stop” salt water in all directions!

Submitting Contest Logs on Disk

Computer logging has virtually taken over contesting. One potential benefit of this revolution is that logs can be sent in on diskette, thus levelling the contest sponsor's paper mountain and reducing contester postal costs. Unfortunately, current sponsor requirements are not uniform, and do not necessarily ensure the attainment of these benefits.

CQ Magazine's Contest Committee requests MS-DOS disks, and prefers CT.BIN, N6TR.DAT or .DBF formats. The disk label must have the entrant's call, included files, mode and category. The committee may *require* disks for high-scoring entries, and does require a summary sheet, as with paper entries. However, “disks *must* be accompanied by a paper log satisfying all logging instructions.” This peculiar requirement appears to obviate any benefit for the entrant who sends a disk!

ARRL has a “Suggested Standard File Format For Submission of Contest Log Data.” In contrast to *CQ*, ARRL insists upon *ASCII-formatted* MS-DOS disks, and a disk label containing call, contest name, entry class, and contest date. ARRL does not require a paper log, but does want a paper summary sheet. The log file must be named (or renamed) *call.LOG*.

Further requirements include “no headers, footers, page breaks or other non-ASCII characters.” This and such stipulations for *each* QSO line as “complete exchange sent” are inconsistent with the *CT* contest.ALL file—the paper-log ASCII file generated by the *WriteLog* command. *Contest.ALL* files contain headers and footers for each page of QSO's, and do not include the transmitted exchange. However, the *CT WriteARRL* command *will* generate the appropriate file for disk submission to ARRL.

Send a diskette and save a tree!

—Garry Shapiro, N16T

It Pays to Have Friends

Dick Dievendorff, AA6MC lives in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose and recently erected an imposing all-band antenna system, with rotary aluminum from 80 through 10 meters on an 89-foot motorized tower. The completed project quickly drew fire in the local *Willow Glen Resident* from one disgruntled neighbor.

Regrettably, such occurrences are not isolated. However, the next issue printed a letter from another resident, pointing out that Dick and others volunteer "their time and talent during disasters and emer-

gencies,...(thus) making a valuable contribution to society...

"The picture...does not do Mr. Dievendorff's antenna justice. It is, in my estimation, something of an engineering marvel, which becomes obvious when it is viewed up close.

"By the way, Mr. Dievendorff is not making enemies of his next-door neighbors. I know—I live right next door."

AA6MC is one lucky ham!

—N16T, with thanks to Al Koblinski, W7XA

Contest Logs for NCDXC

NCDXC solicits logs or log summaries from members for intramural competition (i.e. the Marathon) as well as for club competition in certain major DX contests (such as the ARRL DX Contest). These logs or summaries should be sent directly to our Contest Manager, Rich Hudgins, WX6M, at PO Box 159, Vacaville, CA 94563.

Do not send them to the Club address, which requires Ron, W6VG to forward them, wasting both the club's money and Ron's time. In other words:

*Send logs to Rich and not to the Club:
That's the correct way to do it, Bub!
If you send your logs to good ol' Rich,
Ron will be happy and will not...complain.*

—N16T

from page 6

Mystery Photo

The photo is of NCDXC Charter Member D. Reginald (Reg) Tibbetts, W6ITH, of Moraga.

—Submitted by Elliott Pisor, K6ILM

Jacky, 3B8CF



In January, we printed a letter to Jack, W6ISQ from Jacky, 3B8CF, in which Jacky spoke of his recent serious illness. Jacky sent this photo to Jack so we can see for ourselves (as well as hear) that Jacky is very much QRV again!

Radio Station MGY

Robert A. Duerr, AA8FK, Kettering, OH.

It is Sunday evening in April, and John Phillips, chief radioman of shipboard radio station MGY, attempts to work his way through the backlog of messages to and from station MCE at Cape Race, Newfoundland. At 2140 hours, Phillips' Cape Race contact is interrupted by a message from another ship, warning of ice in the area. Phillips chooses to "spike" the message. He has already carried several general ice warnings to the bridge.

At 2300 hours, as he strains to hear Cape Race, a loud spark signal hurts his ears. A freighter only 20 miles away sends, "MGY DE..." But Phillips reaches for his key and interrupts the intruder. "QRT DE MGY QRL QRL."

The only radioman aboard the nearby freighter, Cyril Evans, exhausted after his long work shift and now angry at being rebuffed, secures his equipment. Evans places the undelivered message on the console and turns in for the night. The message is an attempt to warn Phillips that the freighter is stopped and surrounded by icebergs.

At approximately 2340 hours, the coffee in Phillips' mug ripples slightly. Soon the surface of the coffee slants to one side. The ship, having struck a berg, lists to starboard and is down by the bow.

At the direction of his captain, Phillips sends the old distress signal "CQD CQD CQD DE MGY MGY MGY..." Later the captain tells him to use the new distress signal, "SOS." Phillips continues to send distress signals long after the "abandon ship" order is given.

At 0220 hours on April 15, 1912, radio station MGY slips beneath the cold, uncaring sea and Radioman Phillips perishes with 1,520 others. The ship that carries the radio call letters MGY also bears the nameplate "TITANIC."

from the July '93 Triple States RAC "TSRAC Bulletin"—Ralph McDonough, K8AN, Editor

— FLASH! NOW 12 STORE BUYING POWER! —



HAM RADIO OUTLET

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I-880 at 23rd Ave. ramp

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Tom, KM6K, Mgr.
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Claremont Mesa

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Tom, KB6LUC, Mgr.
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So. from Hwy. 101

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(818) 988-2212
(800) 854-6046
Jon, KB6ZBI, Mgr.
San Diego Fwy.
at Victory Blvd.

DXer

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FIRST CLASS

April 1994