

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

A Visible Membership

From time to time, I spotlight member achievements in a sidebar entitled *Kudos*. This month, my sidebar runneth over, and the attaboys move to the front page. The following members have earned the accolades of their peers:

- Dave Barton, AF6S, awarded the QST Front Cover Plaque Award for his article, *An Accurate Dip Meter Using the MFJ-249 SWR Analyzer*, November, 1993. The award, by vote of the ARRL Board of Directors, recognizes the best technical article of the issue. Dave is to receive his award at the October meeting from Brad Wyatt, K6WR, Pacific Division Director.
- Jack Troster, W6ISQ and Bob Fabry, N6EK, for their article, *The NCDXF/IARU International Beacon Network*, part 1 of which appeared in *QST* for October.
- Jim Muiter, N6TDC, awarded the Charles N. Fisher Memorial Scholarship to assist his studies at Dartmouth. Jim's picture appeared with those of other ARRL Foundation Scholarship winners in the September *QST*.

A sincere "FB" to these four members!

An Invisible Membership

Recent articles, letters and editorials in *The DXer* have spotlighted the Bay-Area centrality of the NCDXC. So I was pleased recently to encounter two members from a remote corner of California: Siskiyou County.

Ray Balch, K6VX, formerly of San Jose, now resides outside Macdoel, a wide spot on Hwy 97 on the way to Klamath Falls. Ray is constructing a major antenna farm on his 40 acres and having Big Fun doing it. Ray invited me to operate the California QSO Party while he assembled the full-size 3-element 40m yagi going up on *one* of his 160-foot towers. Needless to say, I jumped at the offer. I asked Ray how many linear feet of tower he had amassed, and he was unable to say. Confucius might have said: "a man who does not know how much tower he has has a *lot* of tower!"

Longtime member Ed Westbrook, WA6IUM, lives in Greenbrook, CA but has been inactive for a decade. Ed called me on 2m from the cab of his log truck on the Klamath River Road—then called me again when he associated my callsign with the DX Club. Ed says he used to work a lot of 75m DX (he has about 250 countries there) and promises to emerge soon from his self-imposed HF exile.

Knock, K6ITL has exhorted us to bring a member to the monthly meeting. Let's also make an effort to maintain contact with members who have left (escaped?) the Bay Area!

—Ni6T

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Get Well, Eric!

Eric Edberg, W6DU, longtime member, frequent officer, and current Secretary, is recuperating at home after surgery in late September. *The DXer* and his many friends worldwide wish Eric a speedy and complete recovery!

QRP Featured at October Meeting

The September meeting confirmed that the Dunfey Hotel is a good location for our meeting and the Italian buffet an excellent source of garlic, calories and other goodies. For these reasons, the October meeting will again be at the Dunfey.

The program will be a discussion and demonstration of QRP equipment and techniques by Wayne Burdick, N6KR.

That's Friday, October 14, with dinner available from 5:30 and the meeting starting at 8:00. This should give us lots of time for schmoozing, socializing and getting acquainted with new and old members whom we haven't seen for some time. *Don't forget to bring another member.*

Knock's Knews

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: Jim Knochenauer, K6TL
Vice President: George Allan, WA6C
Secretary: Eric Edberg, W6DU
Treasurer: Bob Wilson, NQ6X
Director: Jerry Griffin, W2MEP
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Club Repeater, W6TLR, (147.36+)

Trustee: Bob Valio, 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, KI6WF
Propagation: Al Lotze, W6RQ
Contest Manager: Rich Hudgins, WX6M
Westlink: Craig Smith, N6ITW
Swap Shop: Ben Deovler, W6FPU
933 Robin Lane
Campbell, CA, 95008
(408) 374-0372

QSL Information: Mac McHenry, W6BSY

W6TL DX Bulletin:

W6TL Station Trustee Bob Valio, W6RGG, transmits DX information at 0200 UT every Monday (Sunday evening local time) on both 7.016 and 14.002 MHz.

Club address: Box 608
Menlo Park, CA
94026-0608

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Just past the autumnal equinox. The days grow shorter and the bands come alive again—as much as the sunspots will let them! Not to fear: DX will rise again, maybe only a little on 10, perhaps a little more on 12 and 15. But just watch 17 and 20 meters come alive! If you don't have a 17 meter antenna, now is the time to beg, borrow, steal, build or even buy one, for lots of good DX with impressive openings. 100 watts will do a great job, and there won't be much QRM. Don't let the "dead-band" syndrome fool you: there are a lot of people listening, so call CQ DX and don't pay attention to the naysayers.

Did you know that the ARRL DX Contest competition between the Northern California DX Club and the Southern California DX Club dates back to 1950 and that the NCDXC has won the perpetual trophy 27 times? The results for the 1994 ARRL DX Contest should be known by the next meeting. If, as expected, NCDXC once again bettered its southern neighbors, we can expect them to mount a concerted effort to win the trophy in 1995. This is a call to arms to all NCDXC members to actively participate in the 1995 ARRL DX Contest to defend our honor. So get those antennas tuned up before winter sets in, dust off the desktop and get ready for the 'tests, next February and March.

Two of our very active members, Marilyn, N6VAW, and Rich, WB6UDS, will be DXpeditioning to the South Cook Islands this month. They want to qualify for the *California Award*, so get on the air and give them a QSO, and be sure to QSL! If we all really try, maybe they can work the required 220 Californians from among the membership...a first!

The membership survey should be tallied and the results available by the next meeting. The preferences you expressed about meeting locations, time, days, etc. will be used to guide us in planning future meetings. The issue of "Charlie" will also be settled.

Speaking of "Charlie," we express thanks to John, K6LLK, who has provided a dedicated computer, VHF transceiver and power supply, antenna and cables, and has paid the PG&E bill, for all the time that "Charlie" has been with us. John has maintained this service without any official assistance from the NCDXC. Regardless of the survey results—which I have not yet seen—we all should give John a tip of our collective hat for his contribution. Thanks, John!

Roster. I have just received a pre-publication copy of the 1994-95 roster and commend our super Publications Manager, Ron Panton, W6VG, for an excellent job. The typography is easy to read—even with my Mr. Magoo eyesight. The quality of the print is outstanding, and the new FAX number information is right where it belongs. Once again, Ron has not only produced a great roster, but did so well within the allotted time. Too little is known about the effort that goes into this and other matters that Ron takes care of, but we'll be sure to have a special feature on all his NCDXC functions and activities over the years in a forthcoming *DXer*.

That's the good news; now for the bad news. Perusing the roster, I noted 43 missing listings that were in the last roster. Although several members have become silent keys, the rest are presumed alive, well and living here in Northern California. Why did they not renew? If you know of a member who wonders why he/she did not receive this month's *DXer*, tell him/her to check with Bob, NQ6X, our esteemed Treasurer. Perchance, the dues were overlooked or the check got lost in the mail.

Don't forget to send your country totals for the 9BDXCC Achievement Award to John Brand, K6WC. He has taken over the helm from Chuck Vaughn, AA6G, who originated the award and had managed it since its inception. Thanks, Chuck, for a splendid job well-done.

—Jim Knochenauer, K6TL

General Meeting

The September meeting, at the Dunfey Hotel, was called to order by President Knochenhauer, K6ITL, at 20:10.

- W6CF introduced his guest, Bill, G3CAQ, from Wolverhampton.
- New member Frank Warwick, AB6MN, was presented his membership certificate and welcomed into the club by K6ITL.
- K6ITL reported that John Brand, K6WC, has volunteered to administer the 9BDXCC program.
- "Charlie" was returned to the W6TI repeater on September 8. The results of the questionnaire included in the September *DXer* will determine his ultimate fate.
- WA6O introduced Jack Troster, W6ISQ as our speaker for the evening. He presented, in forum style, "Alternatives to DXCC," an appropriate subject in these days of sparse sunspots and poor propagation. Jack called upon members in attendance to amplify and discuss some of his points. This participative touch, I believe, heightened the interest of his audience, which expressed its approval with a hearty round of applause. See more on Jack's talk on page 8.
- Bruce Wade, W6FKD, was unanimously approved as a new member.
- After correcting the minutes of the last meeting to read "KA6ING moved, seconded by KA6W, that Charlie be restored to W6TI/R", they were approved.
- KA6W reported that only one member had contacted him with ideas for the Future Planning Task Force. More inputs are urged.

The meeting was adjourned at 21:57.

—Eric Edberg, W6DU, Secretary.

Treasurer's Report de NQ6X

	Credits	Debits	Balance
<i>Bank of America Checking Account</i>			
Beginning Balance (Aug 1, '94)			\$3,089.47
Receipts			
Dues received & deposited	\$2,535.00		
Account interest	2.57		
Subtotal	\$2,537.57		\$5,627.04
Expenditures			
DXer printing, postage & expenses		\$589.41	
President's plaque/postage		77.64	
August room rent		140.00	
Storage locker (annual fee)		270.00	
Subtotal		\$1,077.05	
Ending Balance			\$4,549.99
<i>Eurekabank Savings Account</i>			
Beginning Balance (Aug 1)			\$18,840.43
Account interest	\$37.28		
Ending Balance*			\$18,877.71
*Includes \$3500 set-aside for 1995 IDXC			
<i>EurekaBank Life Members Fund</i>			
CD value at 4 March '94)			\$10,432.73
(matures 4 Nov '94) no activity			

Survey Results Delayed

The DXer regrets that the results of the NCDXC Membership Survey will not be published until next month. Al, W7XA, mailed a diskette to the editor before embarking upon a business trip. Unfortunately, Al's file arrived partially damaged. Murphy lives!

Notice Concerning Alleged TV Interference

- You have complained of amateur radio interference to your TV reception.
- The interference you describe is not caused by amateur operations, as amateur stations cannot cause TV interference. This station is *not* an amateur station.
- Be advised that the government has levied a \$500 excise tax on all television receivers. Because it is difficult to obtain a complete list of TV receiver owners, the government has established a network of TV jamming installations, of which this is one. TV owners who make themselves known to these installations are immediately added to the tax rolls.
- Thank you for turning yourself in: you will be among the first to be taxed. You have also verified that this jamming installation is operating properly.
- We have noted the time and channel you reported. This information will be provided to TV program rating services.
- So that you will not be the only TV set owner to be taxed, please be patient while we continue our TV jamming operation.

—Adapted from the Crawford Key,

The Information Superhighway is Still Under Construction

Garry Shapiro, NI6T

Everyone from Al Gore to our club's digital gurus has been hyping the Coming of the Information Superhighway. Judging from my own recent experience, sections of the road are still pretty bumpy. Especially the on-ramps.

Several months ago, not wanting to miss the Revolution, I posted a DXPSN message to *All* requesting opinions on the best (read *cheapest*) way to access the Internet. I was flooded with responses, and soon learned that there was *E-Mail* access and *full* access. The latter allows access to the entire digital universe, including downloading of software and other binary files, and *presumably* costs a lot more.

E-Mail was what I was after, I thought. I wanted access to several *Reflectors* (user forums), particularly those for DX, Contesting and Ham Newsletter Editors. E-Mail access is available through all the competing on-line services, but the cost schemes vary. A number of respondees were using MCI Mail, which was said to cost \$35/year for unlimited downloads and \$.50/message for uploads. Since I anticipated an enormous ratio of downloads to uploads, this seemed to fit the bill.

I called MCI Mail in the wee hours of a Thursday. The wee-hours strategy avoids the computerized booby-trap that now awaits callers to almost *any* customer-service number: "All of our representatives are busy...Please hold...Your call is very important to us." A pleasant lady signed me up and told me my password would be available in just 48 hours—Saturday morning. It seemed so easy.

I called 50 hours later: so sorry, the computer is backing up; please call back in a few hours. I did so: a pleasant young man informed me—so sorry—it was not 48 hours, but *two business days*: please call on Tuesday. I called on Tuesday: another pleasant lady informed me that it really *was* only 48 hours, but there was a problem in the administrative computer

system; neither new-connects nor status-change requests from on-line customers had been processed for five days! She gave me the supervisor's direct number, but when I called it on Wednesday morning, I was routed back into the queue: "All of our representatives are busy...Please hold..." I finally reached the supervisor: yes, it was 48 hours—except on weekends; yes, there was a computer problem; yes, he would have me processed manually (what did *that* mean?)

Later that day, a less-pleasant lady called with my eight-letter password and seven-digit ID number. I could sign on the next day, Wednesday, she said. Since my system manuals would not arrive for (who-knows-how-long?), I asked for Help info and how to make my Internet mail address utilize my radio callsign, *i.e.* NI6T@MCIMail.com. She replied that I could not do that! I pointed out that a number of subscribers—including all of the people who had recommended MCI Mail to me—were doing precisely that; she insisted that they were not. "Are you saying that my Internet mail address is and must be 6860332@MCIMail.com?" I asked. "Yes, sir, that is correct," she replied, with a pugnacious finality. "I don't think so," I said, hopefully. "I suggest you call the supervisor again," she taunted, and that was the end of our conversation.

On Thursday, I called the supervisor again, reaching him after only 17 minutes of recorded reminders that help was available 24 hours per day. I repeated my objective to him, and he went away—to talk to the less-pleasant lady, as it turned out. When he returned, he told me that—since I had given them "NI6T" as a username, it was a done deal. I could be reached by either the 7-digit ID number, my username, or my literal name. He cautioned that only the ID number was unique, and therefore was recommended.

I pointed out that my callsign was also unique. I wondered why he—a supervisor—had to go ask a subordinate to answer such a basic question about the network. At any rate, I was connected!

My joy at being connected was short-lived, for I quickly discovered that my literal name had been misspelled. Mail to MCI Help brought a change, two days later, to the correct spelling—attached to a second account number. My next inquiry questioned this "solution" and, two days later, my correct name was joined to my original account number. Two days after that—for no apparent reason—my name was changed to another incorrect spelling. Yet another message—considerably more irate—finally restored the correct spelling.

So, after two weeks, six calls to five people, and a series of escalated mail messages, I was connected, correctly identified, and on the Information Highway, doing 9600 bits/sec.

But wait, there's more. Again, the object of the exercise was to "subscribe to" (*i.e.* join) several "reflectors" (*i.e.* forums) catering to DXers, contesters, and even radio newsletter editors. After subscribing, one receives all the mail addressed to the group list—and it can be overwhelming. One may also send mail *to* the group list, but this disclosed an interesting and ultimately fatal problem.

The mailing lists included other MCIMail subscribers—a lot of them. It took a while for me to learn and for MCI grudgingly to acknowledge that they were flagging these and charging for each, separately, as they were delivered from the Internet. In other words, they wanted their \$.50 for *each* MCIMail subscriber receiving the mail, not just a single charge for sending the message *to* the Internet. I was not pleased to learn this: after all, I was sending my messages to a *single* mailbox—the Internet. I was also dismayed to peruse the first bill and find that a \$.50 "message" was

So I now have access to the whole digital world. But the Internet veterans whisper a caution: it can be addictive.

500 characters—about 100 words—or less; longer messages cost progressively more.

My concerns ré the first bill—for a partial month—escalated into horror upon receipt of the next one, for I had been so reckless as to send several messages or replies to an entire list—for about \$20/comment. That did it! When I had first showed up, I had received several messages from knowing veterans of the digital wars, predicting my quick departure from MCI mail to a full-service access, once I realized what the score was. How right they were!

There are many full-service Internet providers, especially in the urban/suburban counties. In addition to Email, one may indulge in such services as Gopher, Finger, FTP and Usenet. The names alone have a certain allure! I chose Netcom as my provider and was offered two access options as an individual user: a Unix shell or their NetCruiser™ software for Windows.

The Unix shell is just a dumb-terminal interface to the Internet: one must learn a set of basic commands to obtain the desired functions, and pays a flat \$17.50/month. For \$2.50 more, one can have NetCruiser, which allows mouse or keyboard control under Windows. I chose NetCruiser. Unfortunately, as is now all-too-common, NetCruiser appears to have been released not quite bug-free. I soon discovered that files printed with it line-wrapped at about 70 columns. "We're working on it," said Netcom. I also found that uploaded messages occasionally produced an error message (something about an infinite loop) before dumping me out of mail mode and negating *all* operations performed to that point. "We haven't seen that one," said Netcom. And Lisa, KD6BLK, informed me that her office was bailing out of Netcom, because NetCruiser worked not at all with Windows-for-Workgroups, and FTP access did not work, either.

I guess it never ends!

Meanwhile, the three Reflectors to which I subscribe—and particularly the Contest Reflector—pour 60 to 80 messages into my mailbox *per day*. One must be ruthless and focused in selecting what to read—or answer. There is a real risk of inundation. I had been doing reasonably well, but then went north to fish and to scout my California QSO Party location. Since returning, I have not dared to log on!

So I now have access to the whole digital world. But the Internet veterans whisper a caution: it can be addictive. "Don't worry about me," I say with forced bravado. "I can handle it." Now, what is this thing called "Gopher?"

Garry Shapiro, NI6T, can be reached at ni6t@ix.netcom.com—if he reads his mail.

DX Ladder

It's Ladder time again! Larry, KD6XY, wants your updates for the DX Ladder, to be published next month. Submit your list of *confirmed* countries and zones—total and by mode and band—to Larry by October 25. Check the July *DXer* for the format. And, of course, do *not* send QSL cards!

—NI6T



Knock, K6ITL pins membership badge on new member Frank Warwick, AB6MN

Speaking of QSLs

Reg Tibbetts, W6ITH, a Charter member of NCDXC, recently sent along his Roster update, and included QSLs he used for several of his well-celebrated Caribbean DXpeditions in the 1950's. Reg's cards are unusual—slightly oversized and bearing reproductions of original paintings created by his wife. Reg was well-equipped in the Caribbean, but was awesomely equipped at the home QTH—check out the Mystery Photo in the April *DXer*!



Letters to The DXer

Troster on W6TI/R

Dear Ed, errr, Garry:

Congratulations on another fine issue of *The DXer*, and thank you for bringing Cass out of retirement. I was beginning to think he was devoting all his time to chasing bees. His nostalgic pieces have been fun to re-live. Now get him to tell stories about Ole Buddy, Gus Browning, Dubbya Foh BPD! And that was a good series on the Man from Force 12; ditto the Tube Man, George Badger, W6TC. I couldn't stand the suspense after part 1 of the latter, so I called George to find out what happened in the second episode!

Also, thanks for your comments about the non-use of W6TI. Agreed, it is not very active, at least not when I have monitored the channel. I've had 2m rig problems and went several months without monitoring. When I finally could monitor again, the transmit side was dead, so when I worked something I could not relay it over W6TI. But I did have packet and put things out on that mode, hoping Charlie would repeat it for W6TI listeners.

Why did I drag my heels repairing the 2m rig? Because I never heard much on the frequency! Not even Rubin was checking in much—he had gone over to chat on the Contest Club Repeater on 24/84 where chatter is encouraged—or at least not castigated as it has been on the NCDXC repeater.

You might recall that some years ago, when 10m was hot, it was announced policy that nothing should pass on the repeater unless it was Big DX. The Caribbean was considered kid-stuff and not to bother with it. There was always some policeman ready to alert any offending intruder that this was a DX channel for Big DX only. Even Uncle Vern, W6ERS, usually would draw a blank when he came on with his familiar "What have I been missing?"

There are some exceptions, of course, and thank goodness! One Old Boy who regularly defies the ban on chatter is Sam, W6TSQ, the King of All-Night 40m DX. Sam likes to have a short chat if anyone is around.



Jack Troster, W6ISQ

A 2m ragchew will not disrupt DX announcements for long. During the Thursday evening club meetings on 147.36, DX announcements squeeze in nicely without disruption.

Here is a contrasting observation. Many years ago, before we had a repeater, NCDXC had a 2m AM simplex net. It seemed there was always someone talking about something of interest. If the subject was not DX, it was receivers, transmitters, new antennas, or new gadgets. The Big Event for me was Sunday nights, when Bud Bane, W6WB, and Tom Hall, W6SC, would talk about the changes each had made in his 75A4 that week. Both usually had soldering irons in hand and were changing resistors even as they chatted. This brought forth comments from others. I often noted their changes and tried them, too! I think that open-net type information exchange, moved to the present, is the way W6TI should be used—even if we don't hold hot soldering irons over transceivers any more.

I'd also like to put in a rousing cheer for Charlie! I like to turn up the volume and listen when I am working around the shack or outside. His first announcement gets my attention and tells me that some-thing is on; then I listen for the second announcement

for content, and then either go to the rig or keep working. My thanks to John, K6LLK, who keeps Charlie wound-up and active. This is a fascinating electronic device which I think serves us well.

How often does Charlie pierce the thundering silence on W6TI? I would say *not very often*. Packet is not exactly boiling over with Big DX news, lately.

I am aware of some factors that some people dislike about Charlie. But I would rather listen to a mechanical-electronic marvel like Charlie than not have him at all. Again, three big ones for the OB!

Fortunately, I detect a breath of life and sense that some of our DXers are waking up and using the net more—a distinct improvement over the somber "no talk" era. I even heard a rag-chew the other day and I personally chatted with Sam for about five minutes. I hope this trend continues.

My plea is for sensible use of W6TI. Club members ought to contribute more than cold, short blasts about a DX station to offset the pervasive dead silence. Use W6TI to call out DX and to spot DX for others—the traditional uses. But also use it to exchange ideas and talk about ham radio without fear of chastisement. The repeater is ideal for this activity—and packet is not! And keep Charlie chattering for the benefit of those who are not always front of the rig.

We may not lose it, but at least let's use it.

—Jack Troster, W6ISQ

Rudi on the Congo

Hello Garry,

Thank you for your letter. I am very pleased to confirm you (on) three bands (from) TNØCW.

Yes, conditions were not too good so I was happy to work the West Coast at least down to as far as 80m. 160m was only possible to W9-land. The day you heard me on 30m was the day when I finally had my 80m sloper fixed. This will explain that I had to run to this band before my sunrise. Indeed it is very difficult to serve all parts of the world on

all bands. But I knew about the great demand of TN on the West Coast and paid attention to it.

I might be in Visalia next year, but at the moment I can't really say this for sure. Anyway, I will try, because it's even better (than) Dayton in DX matters at least...

—Rudi Klos, DK7PE

Remembering Uncle Vern

Happy, W7SW, sent this letter from an Italian rifugio 2600 m high in the Alps. Ciao Garry, NI6T!!

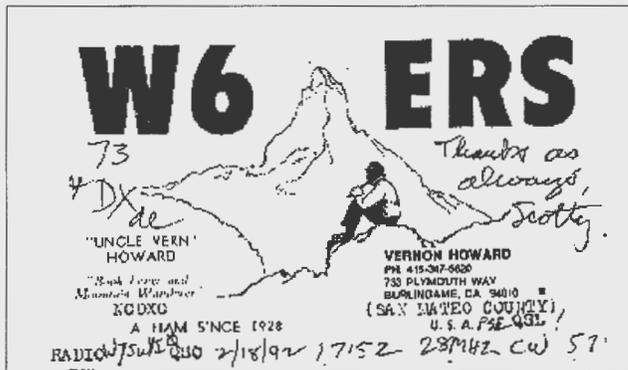
I'm here relaxing and catching up on my reading—and correspondence.

Cass, WA6AUD, was right when he observed that "One lives as long as one is remembered" (*The DXer*, January, 1994).

Uncle Vern, W6ERS, loved to tell me stories about his hiking around here in the Italian Alps. His eyes would sparkle and his enthusiasm would mount as he reminisced about the high places he loved! Many times this week, I have thought about my old friend Uncle Vern!

I vividly recall receiving his QSL cards and always smile when I read "Mountain Wanderer" on them. Now, in the evening and after hiking all day, I spend an hour or so playing CW as W7SW/I1 from the Alps—the National Park of Gran Paradiso—and wish I could again hear the slow CW of W-6-E-R-S.

—Happy Scott, W7SW/I1



NCDXC DXpeditioners

Rich, WB6UDS, and Marilyn, N6VAW, will be operating the CQWW SSB contest from ZK1 in Raratonga, South Cook Islands. They will be QRV from October 24 to November 5. They will be traveling among the islands but hope to be on the air 3-4 hours per day in addition to their contest effort, 10-80 m, CW and SSB.

Rich and Marilyn are looking for the California Award and would appreciate NCDXC contacts and—when heard—packet announcements.

SGI Team Seeks \$\$

The South Georgia Island DXpedition team urgently solicits contributions for their January 4-19 operation. Al, WA3YVN, Jan, WA4VQD and Vince, K5VT will operate three HF stations on all bands on CW, SSB and RTTY.

While support has been good, \$20,000 more is needed by December and "no donation is too small." They stress that all donations will be used for non-personal expenses. Donations should be sent to: SGI DXpeditions, PO Box 2235, Melbourne FL 32902. QSL via W4FRU.

Roster Changes

Silent Key

William (Bill) Hurd, W6CTL

New Member

Bruce Wade, W6FKD (E)
574 Rider Ridge Road
Santa Cruz, CA 95065
H (408) 423-0575

Change of Address

William (Bill) Woody
505 Chenery St.
San Francisco, CA 94131
H (415) 452-9350



The DXpedition

Elliot, Cal, and Pat the Vet were off on their annual DXpedition to the Arctic wilderness. As weight was a concern, they divided their preparation for the trip. On departure day, Cal showed up with a ten-pound bag of provisions for the two weeks. Pat brought a QRP transceiver and a solar panel for power. Elliot brought four antenna tuners, 800 m of hardline, power amplifiers for each band, three sections of Rohn 25G, N6NSQ to rub his back on cold nights, and four bushels of oatmeal.

Distrubed by the amount of weight, the pilot asked Elliot: "Do you need all that gear? There's no way the plane can take off with that much weight!" Elliot fumed, "You're just a chicken pilot. Last year, we brought *four* sections of Rohn and the pilot wasn't afraid."

Stung by the outburst, the pilot loaded everything aboard. He thought, "If they did it last year, I'm gonna try it this year." As it rolled for takeoff, the airplane strained to become airborne, but instead slid off the end of the runway into the bushes.

As the defeated DXers were struggling free of the wrecked craft, Elliot was heard to say "What a success! We made it a quarter of a mile further than last year!"

—Max Cornell, KØMC, republished in Scuttlebutt, NPSARC, August, '94

The ISQ Alternatives

In his presentation at the September meeting, Jack Troster, W6ISQ discussed a multitude of DXing pursuits as antidotes to the downturn of the solar cycle. Eric Edberg, W6DU, took copious notes...

WARC Bands. Jack suggested that presently the 30 meter band was perhaps the most interesting but 17 also offered worthwhile openings periodically and 12 was almost never occupied.

YLCC. Many club members, including WA6AHF, K6RQ and KI6WF have been pursuing the YL Century Club award for some time.

Russian Oblast Award. This possibility was offered but audience comments indicated that it had been discontinued since the dissolution of the USSR.

German DOK awards. The DOK is an alpha-numeric symbol which identifies a location and a radio club. Many German amateurs include this information in contacts and on their cards. There a great number of awards offered for various combinations of contacts.

WPX Award. With the proliferation of new prefixes, this is a never-ending chase. Norm, N6JV, has worked an astronomical number of them.

Rag Chewing. Get on the air and talk to old friends or make new ones. Have contacts which are not of the hackneyed pile-up type. Try it: you may like it.

IOTA. Since so many of the older DXers have had the chance to work them all, the Islands-on-the Air program may well provide new goals to strive for. There has been a great upsurge in activity in recent years. This program originated in England some time ago. Directories providing identifying numbers for given islands are obtainable from RSGB.

QRP. Instead of warming your shack with your amplifier on wintry nights, consider turning on your furnace. QRP contacts are limited to 5 watts and QRPP contacts to 500 milliwatts, and growing numbers of hams are experiencing the thrill of working out well with low power. A local QRP club is located in Livermore. They have been doing missionary work by speaking to local groups and also demonstrating some interesting and novel

equipment that can be home-built. Our fellow club member, Bob, W6CYX, has built a clever rig covering 160 to 10 meters using plug-in coils and modules. Chuck, N6OJ, of NCDXC has worked 271 countries on QRP.

Contesting. Jack extolled contesting to expand one's operating skills and acquaint one with many operating aids. As there are so many combined NCCC/ NCDXC members, he suggested that those having interest get together.

CQP. This, of course, is also contesting but the California QSO Party is the biggest and most successful of all of the state parties and drew some 350 entries last year. It is sponsored and administered by NCCC. Those seeking the Worked All California Counties award look forward to this early-October event. NCCC arranges for all counties to be represented, often by mobiles or temporary stations in rare counties. They also sweeten the pot by offering bottles of California wine and T shirts for winners. If you are free for even a few hours during that weekend, consider giving out a few contacts.

Satellite. While the early Project Oscar Operation was based at Foothill College and much help was provided by local hams like Bill Eitel, Walt Ash, Ross Forbes and others, the administration was moved to the east coast and has been continued by a group of NASA hams. Satellite operation offers interesting possibilities to many. Fortunately antenna sizes are not difficult to handle and modest power is adequate to work through this mode. It is interesting to hear your own signal return from the bird—not a side-tone from the transceiver, but the real thing!

County Hunters. County hunter nets are found both on SSB at 14335 kHz and CW at 14056 kHz. Club-member Ace Jensen, N3AHA, currently writes a column on this subject for World Radio. Other members who have been involved include W6CF and our speaker.

Six Meter DXing. Even though we are on the short end of the sunspot cycle, there are occasional short-skip openings on this band. Louese, KA6ING does a good job of monitoring those fleeting openings and reporting them to other aficionados.

Moon Bounce (EME). This is for the few who are not limited either in space for large antenna arrays or the necessary funds to support this operation. Much EME is done in cooperation with commercial or educational facilities which have the required large high-gain antennas. Some of the original ham microwave efforts were by Eimac hams many years ago, and by former clubmember Bob Sutherland, W6UOV. W6PO did some work from his San Mateo home, perhaps belying the contention that you must have large lots to participate.

Lowfers. This appellation is for those who work at VLF—1750 meters—using very low power. They often demonstrate their work at flea markets and, while a small group overall, are quite well organized.

160 Meters. While one can work many local stations by loading a hunk of wire, this band requires an extensive antenna system to be competitive. Quite a few NCDXC members get on 160, sometimes for a contest multiplier, but the most successful are those who have a lot of wire up very high, and a quiet location. One reasonably simple antenna approach is to feed a tower which is normally top loaded with a beam or beams. Most important is to do all that can be done to reduce noise input to the receiver. KA6W mentioned that he had greatly enhanced receiving conditions by using a directive antenna phasing system, which made it possible to hear signals that previously could not be discerned. 160 offers both challenge and satisfaction if some of the previous mentioned problems can be accommodated.

It seems the lesson that Jack was teaching was: *go try something!*

—Eric Edberg, W6DU

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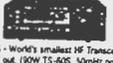


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