

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

Once More into the Breach...

Yes, it's true—I am your Editor once again. (Some people never learn, I guess.)

As AI, W4RIM observes in his initial state-of-the-club comments (See *Rimshots* inside), NCDXC faces extremely serious challenges to its survival, for which some radical changes will be proposed and vigorously pursued. Not that it will be easy: meaningful change is rarely easily achieved.

In recent months, many of us had been discussing these issues and formulating an agenda, and were ready to mount a challenge to the Board's slate of candidates at the June election meeting. But the Nominating Committee, apparently of a similar mind, surprised by proposing many of the same candidates—a mandate for change, for sure.

Your new Board of Directors is profiled inside, and it is, IMHO, an energetic and impressive group. The first BoD meeting produced open exchanges and general and remarkable agreement about the direction NCDXC must take to survive and prosper into the next century. Anxious to roll up its sleeves and get down to business, the Board met again only a week later! This time, specifics were addressed, including the budget—done and presented within by N6ULU.

Why did I sign up for the ride? Because *The DXer*—still the only club activity touching all members—must be and will be a key factor in the club's renaissance. Stay tuned!

Thanks, Hal!

As he has done so many times in the past, Hal Godfrey, N6AN, stepped in when asked, and performed as interim Editor of *The DXer* for six months.

Hal is one of those rare guys who is always willing to do his bit, and I would like to join Knock and the previous Board in thanking him.

Conway Reef: the Book

One of the things your former and current Editor did during his hiatus from editing was to participate in the recent DXpedition to Conway Reef. While a *QST* article is in the works, it will likely be on the short side. Lacking a backlog of printable articles, I thought many of you might enjoy an in-depth commentary on what—for me—was a major DX adventure, replete with expedition-threatening disasters and personal danger. The serialized account commences in this issue.

I plan to present the slide show at a meeting later this year.

—NI6T

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Contributions Solicited for The DXer

No, we don't want your money: we already *have* that—or should have by the end of the month. We want your input: letters, stories, suggestions, arguments (hold the abuse). This is *your* newsletter—I just happen to get to play with it a lot!

—NI6T

August Meeting Presentation on DXPSN

The August monthly meeting will again be held at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo, on Friday, August 11, at 8 PM. Glenn, W6OTC plans a presentation is entitled "The DXPSN: Past, Present and Future."

The Dunfey is located on the northwest side of the junction of Freeways 92 and 101 in San Mateo. Take the Delaware St. exit from 92. Monitor W6TI/R for routing aid.

—NI6T



**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: Al Burnham, W4RIM
 Vice President: Glenn Vinson, W6OTC
 Secretary: Lloyd Cabral, AA6T
 Treasurer: Stan Goldstein, N6ULU
 Director: Eric Swarz, WA6HHQ
 Director: Rich Chatelain, AB6ZV
 Director: Jim Knochenhauer, K6ITL

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 Historian/archivist: Ron Panton, W6VG

Records Manager: Ron Panton, W6VG
 Publications Mgr: Ron Panton, W6VG

Club Repeater, W6TI/R

Frequency/offset: 147.36 MHz, +
 Trustee: Bob Vallio, W6RGG
 Comm. Chairman: Eric Swarz, WA6HHQ
 Club simplex: 147.54 MHz (suggested)
 Thurs. Net QTR: 8 pm local time.
 Net Manager: Randy Wright, WB6CUA
 DX News: Dave Pugatch, KI6WF
 Propagation: Al Lotze, W6RQ
 Westlink: Craig Smith, N6ITW
 Swap Shop: Ben Deovlet, W6FDU
 QSL Information: Mac McHenry, W6BSY

W6TI DX Bulletins:

W6TI Station Trustee Bob Vallio, 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
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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

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting, held at Brothers Deli in Burlingame was called to order at 19:13 by President Al Burnham, W4RIM.

Present were W4RIM, W6OTC, AA6T, N6ULU, WA6HHQ, K6ITL and guest NI6T. AB6ZV was on vacation in Oregon.

- W4RIM reminded the board of the urgency to present a finished budget. Treasurer N6ULU stated that the budget was complete except for current data regarding DXer publishing and printing costs. Stan and Garry to contact W6VG and present updated figures at the next board meeting.
- Future general meetings will continue at the Dunfey Hotel, but alternative locations are an option.
- W4RIM announced the appointment of Garry, NI6T as *DXer* Editor, and Ed, WA6CTA as Contest Manager.
- A By-Laws Revision Committee was created, headed by W6OTC.
- A DX Convention Committee was created, chaired by K6ANP, with W6OSP and K6ITL.
- BoD agreed to pursue a new NCDXC QSL design. A committee will be formed to research needs, design and cost.

The next Board meeting will be on August 1 in San Francisco.

Meeting adjourned at 21:18.

—Lloyd Cabral, AA6T, Secretary

General Meeting

The monthly general meeting was held at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo on July 14, 1995 and was called to order at 20:08 by President Knochenhauer, K6ITL. Approximately twenty five people were in attendance.

- President Knochenhauer called upon the Secretary to give a short history of Stan Kaisel, K6UD, our fellow member who passed away some three weeks previously. The accompanying personal remembrance on page 3 is in addition to last month's coverage in *The DXer*.

President Knochenhauer called for a minute of silence in his memory.

- Keith Butts, KN6K was reinstated.
- Don Berticvich, KO6GI was voted into full membership.
- K6ITL briefly mentioned Marathon activity and suggested there is still lots of time left to participate.
- George Allen, WA6O gave a complete report on the 1995 International DX Convention.
- Former President Gerry Griffin, W8MEP, was presented with a plaque by K6ITL in recognition of his service to the club.

As there was no program for the evening there was an early adjournment at 20:55.

The club was then turned over to the new officers.

—Eric Edberg, W6DU, Outgoing Secretary

ARRL Awards Committee should delete Libya," he said. This got the proverbial "raised eyebrow" from me. "All those guys on the east coast were against Pratas and Scarborough 'cuz they didn't work 'em," said John. "It's only fair." I asked him on what grounds he would delete Libya. "Intervening Lids," he replied.

—NI6T

Dit for Dat?

John, KG6I and I were discussing the recent 5A1A DXpedition and the difficulties experienced in trying to work it through rowdy pileups seemingly including everyone else in North America. "The

RIMshots ... de W4RIM

The Future of NCDXC

As the NCDXC approaches its fiftieth birthday, we must contemplate its future. What is *your* vision of the future of our Club? I'll tell you mine: at best, it's cloudy; at worst, it's terminal.

Why? Look at the graying of our membership. When I joined the Club in 1963 at age 20, the average age of club members was probably around 40. Now flash to 1995—30-plus years later—and the average age is over 60! We certainly need the wisdom, experience and participation of long-time members, but we also need to expand our membership base. This situation is not unique to the NCDXC; these days, ham radio has lots of competition: computers, the Internet—and restrictive covenants (CC&Rs) and local ordinances make it increasingly difficult to erect antennas needed by serious DXers.

So what can we do to revitalize NCDXC? Is it even possible to attract and retain new members? Frankly, I'm not sure, but we need to make a concerted and serious attempt to do so. How? We need to *actively* recruit new members by making it *much easier* to become a member (not necessarily a full-member; I'm not suggesting eliminating the 100 country requirement for full membership), and we need to eliminate the long-entrenched rigamarole associated with applying for membership. This will likely require by-law changes, and, if so, your support is vital.

Our Greatest Asset

Our greatest asset is our membership—of all ages. We are fortunate to have dedicated and capable folks willing to assume leadership and other responsibilities for the NCDXC. I would like personally to thank Knock, K6ITL and his officers and directors for their dedicated service to the Club. Also, I salute Glenn, W6OTC, Lloyd, AA6T, Stan, N6ULU, Eric, WA6HHQ, and Rich, AB6ZV, for stepping up to the plate and agreeing to serve; we certainly face many challenges and issues.

I also salute Garry, NI6T, who has graciously agreed to resume as Editor of *The DXer*, effective with this issue. Additionally, I am pleased to announce that Ed, WA6CTA has volunteered to serve as Contest Manager.

Your Support is Needed!

Your new officers and directors need your support. How can you help? We have many issues facing the club, and your input will be solicited on all of them. Unless you respond to surveys, stand up at meetings, or communicate with us via radio, mail, email, FAX or packet, your point of view will not be considered —and you will have no cause for complaint!

Do you know someone who could present an interesting program? If so, contact our Vice President/Program Chairman, W6OTC.

Have any ideas for a club social event or other activity? Let us know; we'd like to do more than just an annual Christmas Party—if the membership is supportive.

Many members have expressed to me their delight that Garry, NI6T has resumed the editorship of *The DXer*. This involves a ton of work, and Garry deserves our full support. When Garry asks for articles or submissions from members, help him out! Remember that *The DXer* is the voice of the NCDXC and it is the only club activity that truly benefits *all* members. We must therefore support it— financially and otherwise.

Parting RIMshot



Stan Kaisel, K6UD, SK

Was Valley Pioneer

Stan Kaisel, K6UD, a longtime NCDXC member and a Silicon Valley pioneer, is a Silent Key. He was 73 years old.

Stan had been involved with radar during WWII when he served under Fred Terman at the Harvard Radiation Lab. In his early twenties at the time, he was sent to the Pacific to help develop countermeasures against Japanese radar and is given much of the credit for the development of radar “chaff.”

Kaisel was invited by Professor Terman to Stanford after the war and received his Masters and Doctorate degrees there. After working for some of the local microwave tube companies for some years, he founded his own company, MELabs, which provided many traveling wave tubes for use in radar countermeasures. He was active as a consultant to the government and the microwave industry until his death.

Active Ham

Radio helped shape Stan Kaisel's life. A ham since his high school days in St Louis, he was an avid DXer. He served the club in many capacities, including coordinating anti-jamming efforts a decade ago. He served for many years as a director in the Northern California DX Foundation where his efforts will be remembered and appreciated.



continued on page 10

Board Profiles

Here are your new officers and directors, largely as described by themselves. Also serving as Director this year, of course, is Jim Knochenhauer, K6ITL, our immediate past President, who needs no introduction.

Al Burnham, W4RIM, President

Al Burnham, W4RIM, an attorney, is 52 and lives in Tiburon. He is married and has four children, ages 15 to 23. Al grew up in the San Mateo area, and was licensed at age 15 as K6RIM. He began DXing almost immediately and joined the NCDXC in 1963. He has previously served as club Secretary.

After an 18-year sojourn in Memphis, Tennessee, Al and his wife Pat returned to the Bay Area in January, 1992.

Al has been a Volunteer Counsel for ARRL for many years, and was successful in getting the City of Memphis to rewrite its antenna ordinance to comply with PRB-1.

Glenn Vinson, W6OTC, Vice President

Glenn Vinson, W6OTC hails from Dallas. He received a BA from Columbia in 1967 and his JD from Harvard Law School in 1970. His international law career has taken him to San Francisco, Hong Kong, back to San Francisco, Dallas, New York and San Francisco once again. Glenn was first licensed in 1957 as K5KWB, along with his father, K5KVE. Now 51, Glenn is married to Joan, a Singapore Chinese, and has a daughter, Claire, 6.

Well-known as a RTTY DXer, Glenn is a regular contributor to the Digital Journal, and has been an annual DXpeditioner since 1992. A member of NCDXC for two years, this is his first Club office.

Lloyd Cabral, AA6T, Secretary

Lloyd Cabral, AA6T grew up in a farming family from Niles. As a teenage ham, he built much of his early gear. Now 44, Lloyd has worked for what is now Pacific Bell in Santa Cruz for 23 years. He has been active on HF—mostly CW—for most of that time. He enjoys restoring and using old tube gear and has “a shack full of fine old boat anchors.” The QTH for the past 18 years is in the hills above Watsonville, shared with a “menage of critters and beasts.”

Lloyd is lying low at the sunspot minimum, rebuilding his antenna farm with new towers and monster antennas. He regards his XYL, Karen, NS6G as “the best thing I have going.” Lloyd joined NCDXC in 1982.

Stan Goldstein, N6ULU, Treasurer

Stan Goldstein, N6ULU, was born in Brooklyn in 1950. He first became interested in ham radio in junior high, but let the code scare him off. His family moved to the Maryland DC suburbs in 1962 and Stan joined the Air Force in 1968, working in ground radio repair. He graduated from San Jose State in 1976 with a business degree and a concentration in accounting, and earned his CPA in 1980. He established his business partnership the next year.

Stan became re-interested in radio thanks to the “gift” of an AM CB set; licensed in January, 1989, he passed his Extra only six months later. Stan began DXing in 1990, and made Honor Roll this year! Currently infatuated with QRP, Stan has worked 111 countries on 40m with his little transceiver. He resides on a Watsonville hillside with his XYL Kat, daughter Lacey and a 90-foot tower. A member since 1991, this is Stan’s second year on the Board.



Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ, Director

Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ grew up in the East Bay and was first licensed at age 14 as WN6HHQ. He upgraded that same year (1971). Eric reports that he spent a substantial portion of his high school years in his hamshack, “chasing DX, building radios and repeaters, and nearly getting killed by HV supplies.” Now 38, Eric is “chasing the holy grail of Silicon Valley” with his own start-up company, Verisys, Inc., which makes engineering tools for the computer design and support industry.

He still finds time for DXing and numerous other radio and computer-control interests. A QRP enthusiast, Eric has 81 countries worked on 40 CW with 4 watts. An avid SCUBA diver, Eric tries to combine diving and DX and has operated as ZF2TL and VP5VEX. He is married to Lerma, KD6ANH—who now understands that “*DX Is!*” Eric joined NCDXC two years ago and this is his first club office.



Rich Chatelain, AB6ZV, Director

Rich Chatelain, AB6ZV has resided in the Santa Clara Valley since 1962. He has owned a precision machining business in San Jose since 1979, which serves the satellite communications, medical and fiber optic industries. Now 50, Rich was first licensed in 1964 as WN6LQA. More recently signing WB6JPY, he obtained AB6ZV after passing his Extra last year.

Rich is a well-known 80m DXer, with 80m yagis at both his San Jose and Oregon homes contributing to a superb signal. For the past year, he has been chasing DX on CW. Rich met his wife, Barbara, a teacher, when both were in high school; they have been married 28 years. He has been in the NCDXC since 1992 and this is his first club office.

No photo provided!

outages. Note that “RFI problems” include both new and continuing problems which have not been addressed adequately (or at all) by your local PG&E facility.

So, if you are tired of trying to extract that weak 5A from the S7 buzzsaw to the northeast or can only hear signals loud enough

RFI and PG&E: the Saga Continues

Interference to our ham radio operations from RFI generated by PG&E hardware is a continuing and frustrating problem for many NCDXC members. Locating the problem poles and insulators is the first step in the abatement process—and usually the smoothest. Some of us are fortunate to encounter Company personnel who are

highly motivated to assist ham customers. Sometimes, the afflicted DXer can locate the offending hardware himself. But getting the time and resources allocated to *fix* the problem is another matter. Rarely is this accomplished without considerable personal initiative.

There is no one best way to ensure a reasonably prompt response to an RFI problem. Much depends upon the mindset and service philosophy—or lack of it—of Company personnel. Officially, PG&E espouses a philosophy of response to customer inputs. In reality, a growing scarcity of personnel and resources pushes maintenance and repair further down the priority list. Unfortunately, many foremen and supervisors consider RFI and

TVI problems to be nuisance work, of no importance, and hams to be a pain in the toolbelt. Getting through to these people can be a big problem, if not impossible.

Some DXers have gone up the chain as far as the President of PG&E to get a pole or two repaired. Others spend considerable time and effort cajoling and harassing local PG&E supervisors until they are served. Now there *may* be a way to a noise-reduced future.

According to our sources, PG&E will be collecting, routing and analyzing complaints received at its new, centralized customer service facility over the next three months. Customers with RFI problems are encouraged to call 1-800-743-5000—the same new number now used to report



Conway Diary

The first full account of the 1995 Conway Reef DXpedition. *Part 1: Genesis*

Garry Shapiro, N16T

Sunday, March 19, 1995

We are poised for the Great Adventure. Poised, but not yet quite ready. I have yet to see the sun! After weeks of almost continuous rain in "sunny" California, I deplane in Nadi on Thursday in the predawn darkness to the patter of rain. In the three days since, it has rained, drizzled, and occasionally tantalized us with the promise—always broken—of eventual clearing. The wind is supposed to have cleared this front, a stubborn cell of low pressure, squeezed between two highs. The experts blame the retreating El Niño and the lack of cyclones this season. The atmosphere holds too much heat, they say, heat undiminished by conversion to the kinetic energy of violent storms. But the low pressure region, supposed to have been blown to the northeast by 40-knot winds, has moved slowly. Episodes of heavy rain have caused flooding around the big island of Viti Levu. On a food-shopping expedition yesterday, Mats and I passed a rugby pitch flooded two feet deep—and filled with local kids of all ages, cavorting in the water. An impromptu community wading pool, to be savored.

Jun, JH4RHF, with Auckland Is., Navassa and Guam under his belt, sent his application via Internet and was welcomed aboard. Now we had a truly international crew, from four countries.

Mats sent a FAX: "SIXTEEN DAYS TILL DEPARTURE!" How could that be, so soon? Larry, NF6S stepped up to turn 1100 feet of coax into finished cables, and lent a laptop, as well. H/T's arrived, along with individual and club donations; the money was now being spent at least as fast as it arrived.

Now all this *stuff* had to get to Fiji, and here Mother Nature intervened: it was raining in California, hard and long. Power went out in the Santa Cruz Mountains, where I live, for over two days, in the midst of packing. My emergency generator ate a valve. A rented replacement had no regulation. Both computers and a FAX machine were dead and quiet. We lit candles and continued to pack. The Highway Patrol closed the highway to my house! The last box of antennas, shipped "overnight" to Los Angeles to be brought to Mats and Nils at the airport got lost for three days. Thanks to Pete, NØAFW, it was finally shipped separately—and expensively—to Fiji. Another shipment—including the Alpha—was sent via air freight, supposedly to be awaiting me in Fiji. (*I have been here four days and am still waiting. We hold our collective breath and hope to see it tomorrow.*)

I stayed up all of one night to do my taxes. By departure I was running on adrenalin only. Trying to carry as much as

the reef, safe access is usually possible only at high tide. The only creatures to be found are boobies and sea swallows, a few land crabs, a huge number of hermit crabs, and bird ticks. The latter had caused considerable physical discomfort to the previous two DXpeditions, and we were not savoring the prospect of dealing with them.

With less than two months to departure, there was no time to lose. FAXes salvoed daily between California and Sweden. Funding was sought—and quickly received—from NCDXF and INDEXA. The DXpedition was announced to the DX world via the weekly DX bulletins, PacketCluster and Internet. Manufacturers were contacted for equipment, either to be borrowed or bought.

I worked closely with Tom Schiller, N6BT of Force 12, who provided most of the DXpedition's antennas, some custom designed for our purposes. We settled on linear-loaded verticals for 160-30 meters, DXpedition versions of the C3 and WARC yagis for 20-10m, and 28-foot lightweight masts, all shipped in 4-foot lengths. 7 antennas and 3 masts in all, totaling only 180 lbs.

Mats, meanwhile, was coordinating from Sweden: equipment lists, licenses, landing permits, boat payments, generators, travel itineraries, shipping information, customs information, boat coordination, Fiji liaison, hotel

possible for free. I showed up overweight at San Jose airport. The Alpha's transformer wound up in a separate box, and I almost missed the flight to LAX. Then, taken to dinner in Los Angeles by well-wishing DXers, I almost missed my flight to Fiji, and was personally escorted aboard after the line was closed! Mercifully, the plane



was not full. I had three seats and slept the sleep of the Deserving.

I had whined to my long-suffering wife that all this had happened before the adventure had even started. Her reply was right to the core: "You don't get it! This *is* the adventure: it has already begun. It began when you decided to go!"

Nadi Airport at 4 AM was uneventful. I cleared customs easily, without duty charges. The ride from Nadi to Suva was long—190 km!—and cost F\$100 (about US\$72). It rained heavily for virtually the entire trip to Suva. It was great finally to see

“Conway is an uninhabited, waterless, treeless, banana-shaped islet roughly the size of two football fields.”

An appropriate subtitle for this account would be “A funny thing happened on the way to Kanton Island,” for that is where we originally intended to go. For me, T31 was a logical destination. Difficult to reach except by a long boat ride, it had climbed to the top ten of Chod Harris’ “Most Wanted Countries” list for Europe. Recently, improvements had been made to its airstrip to enable access by flights from Honolulu, bound for Tarawa and Nauru via Christmas Island. The establishment of a fishing/diving camp meant a source of food, shelter and electric power, greatly simplifying logistics. One needed only to bring radios, antennas, and perhaps a flyrod.

When I spotted Mats, SM7PKK at Visalia in April, 1994, I spilled the plans to him. I knew that Mats, just returning from his latest trip to Banaba as T33KK, would know about the new air access and would be planning a T31 trip, and I thought a cooperative venture made sense.

But new developments would create unanticipated changes. The first was a reversal by the head of the fish/dive development group, a Seattle lawyer. At first he had shown interest in a new revenue source—occasional groups of DXpeditioners. But his ardor had cooled with the arrival of numerous advance reservations for his primary activities, and the prospect of all-night operation by crazy DXers did not appeal to him. Next came a letter from Mats, advising that he and his friends were planning a T31 trip in April, 1995, and inquiring of the status of my trip. Mats had generators and other equipment from his prior trips stashed around the Pacific, and his plans did not include the Seattle lawyer. Clearly, I was flanked.

I advised Mats of our withdrawal, but added that I still very much wanted to go, whereupon Mats invited me to join his group. It looked like a good deal for all. Mats and his colleagues—Nils, SM6CAS and

expeditioned together, but all were in Scandinavia. From my California location, I could deal effectively with equipment procurement and other organizational tasks. Since we anticipated commercial travel right to Kanton Island, we planned no major funding requests to DX group or foundations.

We soon became aware that all was not well with Kanton Island commercial air access. In fact, there was none! Air Nauru had decided not to fly its new aircraft until all runways along the route were sealed, and no firm plans were in place to do this. Kanton was once again accessible only by boat or private air charter. A German couple did in fact avail themselves of the air charter option to do a small-scale operation, with limited results. But Mats had an alternative plan. “We will go instead,” he said, “to Conway Reef!”

Conway Reef had not been activated since May, 1990 when a group led by Martti Laine, OH2BH and Wayne Mills, N7NG, had made 47,000 QSO’s. Mats and Pekka had both been part of that group. The Reef had since climbed back up the Most Wanted list, and was #7 in Europe. Demand was also high on the low-bands, WARC bands, and RTTY. It seemed a good choice, but the stakes were now higher.

The weather instability translates into sullen seas and a probable rough passage to Conway Reef. This in itself is a joyless prospect, but its logical extensions—mal de mer, a difficult transition of cargo from boat to beach, and a wet setup for our camp— are equally uninviting. Many lessons have already been learned on this DXpedition, the foremost an appreciation of how difficult it is to construct a complex undertaking in a short time. It has only been two months since the decision to go to Conway Reef!

A tiny islet of broken coral, on top of



and surrounded by a formidable reef, Conway is 300 miles SW of Suva, Fiji and accessible only by sea. That meant funding from DXers and DX foundations, and more intense planning in the little time available. Pekka had been planning a return to Conway, but he had been unhurried and deliberate about it—until Kanton fizzled. He had already written to the Royal Suva Yacht Club seeking a boat, and had received two responses. One looked quite promising—a 20 meter diesel-powered ketch called *Te Ni*, captained by Arnold Kapitein. But there was a catch to the ketch. The boat was already chartered for the Easter timeframe we had targeted. The trip would have to be moved up two weeks, shortening our planning time and putting us closer to the edge of hurricane season in the South Pacific.

We went for it. We would depart Suva around 21 March and be QRV on Conway Reef from 24 March to April 3, including the CQ WPX SSB Contest—probably more a nuisance than a blessing. While Kanton—in the equatorial Phoenix group—is inhabited and covered with coconut palms, Conway is an uninhabited, waterless, treeless, banana-shaped islet roughly the size of two football fields. Fringed by

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Conway Diary



travel. Mats, 28, is an engineer and already a veteran of many Pacific trips. I am older than both his parents! Nils is several years older than I. Trained originally as an engineer, he is now involved in antiques and just purchased an auction company. Nils operates 100% SSB and has little use for either CW or RTTY. A longtime DXer, he has worked them all—all but one on SSB. His DXing passion for the past several years has been IOTA, and he has activated a few New Ones himself.

Jun showed up a few hours later. 31 years old, he is a particle physicist, on the research and teaching faculty at Osaka University. He has an impressive list of DX credentials, having been on many DX-peditions and contest expeditions. Jun was nailed for \$1000 in overweight charges at Narita—almost the price of another seat on the airplane. The shock of this was partially offset by the \$3000 he brought from JA contributors. I handed out teeshirts and showed the flags. We went out to the first of many dinners together.

It has not rained today, nor has it cleared, but the sun has occasionally and weakly stabbed through thin spots in the the cloud cover, and there are a few streaks of blue sky. Sunday is a quiet time in Fiji: stores are closed and Fijians are in church. Mats, Nils and Jun have hauled antennas, Kenwood amplifiers and other gear to the boat, leaving me here to write. We hope for a Tuesday departure, but much remains to be done. We have not found a great variety of food items. The objective is to have some variety, and occasional

treats, without making food preparation a major time and energy sink. I have bought a wok and a bamboo steamer. I really hope to catch some fish to steam!

Saturday, March 25

Almost a week since the last entry: an indicator of how busy we have been. More shopping, more rain. Pekka has sent a FAX: his Air Pacific flight from Sydney has been cancelled, and he will be delayed a day. He and Taina show up on Monday evening. Pekka, characteristically, is looking for a cold beer, so we help him find one and spend the next few hours getting acquainted, both in the local bar and at the hotel. Taina turns out to be quiet; she understands English but does not speak it, so I have no opportunity to get to know her. We record the event—the first assembly of the entire team—with everyone's cameras.

Pekka is, of course, a well-known DX-peditioner, SSB contesteer and antenna builder. He had brought his homebrew 160/80 vertical, packed in a long ski-bag. A sort-of *Aki Special*, it would deploy as a full-size quarter-wave vertical on 75m and a drooping inverted-L on 160. He also brought a nifty homebrew solid-state kW amplifier.

I bought an autotransformer for our 115VAC accessories and started to hook up the RTTY station, using the FT990. I went to plug in an audio lead and drew a substantial arc! For a moment, I thought I had lost the FT990. I hadn't, but the relief was short-lived: it looked as if I had lost the computer's serial port! After a long, stunned moment, my brain resumed functioning, and I determined the port merely to be asleep! We measured 230VAC between the chasses of the computer and transceiver and I realized it was caused by the surge protection components in the American-side outlet strip. Pekka and I decided to test the hypothesis by forcing a ground between the two chasses. The result: a carbonized outlet strip; point made. We cut the protective circuitry from the

remaining outlet strip, connected ground to ground, and the problem was solved.

Tuesday brought a flurry of last minute crises: Mats ran all over greater Suva looking for spark plugs for one generator. Another generator, reserved months before, had not been started in five years, and did not run. This unit—which Kiyoko Yamakami had used on her 11-country Pacific trek in 1990—was torn apart and rebuilt in an hour and 20 minutes. Noone remembered to buy garbage bags or fire extinguishers.

Much gear was already on the boat, which had been gradually loaded during the past week. We met Captain Arnold at the departure lunch at the Yacht Club. Knowing our diet for two weeks would largely consist of quick noodles and rice, we mostly opted for steaks.

Arnold is Dutch, lean, craggy, and bearded. He has been a sailor all his life. His Danish wife, Jytte, 3D2AJ was in Denmark for medical treatment. After 25 years at sea together, they bought a farm on Vanua Levu—the second-largest island in Fiji. But he still does trips and they still live on the boat—even at home.

We loaded Arnold's tiny tender to the gunwales and putted out to the boat, leaving the others to deal with the (latest) generator crisis. I got my first look at *Te Ni*. She is not a new boat, but quite a sturdy one. A 20 meter ketch, of Dutch origin, *Te Ni* is 30 years old and of steel construction. She has two Diesels and a full complement of sails. As I came aboard, I noted that she was already quite stuffed with our equipment. Plastic containers of gasoline and diesel filled the stern. Storage spaces already held boxes of supplies and equipment. Two generators were already aboard, as was another dinghy and two outboard motors.

Arnold and I transferred the small tender's contents to *Te Ni* as Arnold's German Shepherd barked a noisy welcome. I scurried to find places to store our gear: boats like *Te Ni* utilize almost every cubic inch of space. I chose a midship to page 110

June Treasurer's Report

Cumulative, for the 12 months ending June 30, 1995

1995-96 Budget

For the 12 months ending June 30, 1996

Receipts

Dues	\$8,905
QSL cards	25
Advertising	500
Dinners/meetings	1,150
Miscellaneous	128
	128

Total receipts \$10,708

Disbursements

Dinners/meetings	\$690
Christmas party	1,150
DXer printing/postage	6,136
Awards	984
Convention seed	1,500
Badges	113
Insurance	329
Storage	270
Bank/check charges	79
Postage	143
Miscellaneous	74
	74

Total disbursements \$11,469

Net cash flow, fiscal year (\$761)

Receipts

Dues	\$8,280
Donations	500
DX Convention	8,217
Interest Income	423
	423

Total receipts \$17,420

Disbursements

Meetings	\$700
DXer	7,000
Awards	1,000
Roster	750
Badges	150
Insurance	400
Repeater	500
Telephone	100
Storage	300
Bank fees	120
Postage	200
Miscellaneous	200
	200

Total disbursements \$11,420

Estimated surplus \$6,000

The above statements present actual cash flow for FY1994-95 and projected cash flow for FY1995-96.

—Stan Goldstein, N6ULU, Treasurer

Roster Changes

New Members

Robert J. (Bob) Zavrel, W7SX (E)
117 Locatelli Lane
Scotts Valley, CA 95066
H (408) 335-4709

Philip J. (Phil) Nunez, AC6HY (E)
23655 Parker Rd.
Salinas, CA 93908
H (408) 455-1630

Kenneth D. (Ken) Millman, K1ZKM (E)
510 Lawrence Expressway (HRO)
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
B (408) 736-9496

Don Berticovich, KO6GI (A)

163 Vista Del Monte
Los Gatos, CA 95030
H (408) 356-0628

Reinstatements

Val D. (Val) Quinn, WN6R (E)
1130 Needham Dr.
Vacaville, CA 95687
H (707) 446-7866
B (707) 446-7866

Edward Anselmo, KW6N (E)

770 Coronado Road
Sacramento, CA 95864
H (916) 489-6185

Keith Butts, KN6K (E)
409 Bundy Ave #8
San Jose CA 95117
H (408) 248-3489
B (408) 224-7425



DXPSN Users Group-an Overview

Tom McShane, NW6P

When The Northern California and Nevada DX Packet Spotting Network first started in the late 1980's, the costs for the hardware and software at the local nodes and their interconnections with other nodes were paid for entirely by those who created the system. By 1990, the popularity of DXPSN had so increased that the cost of maintaining the system was outstripping the ability of its creators to fund continued expansion.

Late that year, Smitty, W6JZU and Tom, NW6P put together an organization called The Northern California and Nevada DX Packet Spotting Network Users Group. DXPSN-UG, as it came to be known, was primarily intended to raise funds to offset the cost of maintaining and expanding the increasingly popular DX Packet Spotting Network. This article provides a brief summary of UG activities. A subsequent article will describe future UG projects.

The term "Users Group" was probably not a good name to select, since it suggests a support group for users—like the software and hardware users groups that are common in the PC marketplace. To date, DXPSN-UG has existed for one purpose: funding.

from page 8

Conway Diary

Jun and me: it was small and dark, but I figured its location very near the boat's center of gravity would be helpful at sea. I already had ceremoniously exchanged Scopalamine patches with Pekka. ("Scope" is no longer available in the US, but Pekka showed up with 20 of them.) After several more shuttles, the team and all its gear were aboard. Captain Arnold fired up the engines and raised the anchor. At 0600 UTC on Tuesday, March 21—local sunset in Fiji—*Te Ni* quietly cruised out of Suva Harbor, crossed the

reef, and headed southwest into the Pacific toward Conway Reef.

There have been three fund-raising drives by DXPSN-UG: from November, 1990 to May 1991; from June to November, 1992; and from July to November, 1993. The funds were raised by solicitation letters to those who had connected to DXPSN during the previous six months.

Many connectees were merely casual listeners who just dropped by to see what DXPSN was all about. But most were regular users who were asked to support DXPSN-UG by making a cash donation that would be used to fund primarily system-wide projects. About half of regular connectees have contributed to the User Group. Funds received total approximately \$25,000.

DXPSN-UG purchased all network packet software and upgrades now in continuous operation. UG-owned hardware is inventoried by location, serial number, and the responsible "custodian." The UG-owned equipment list is nearly three pages long and includes a wide range of radios, components, and related equipment. UG funds also pay for site rentals, tower and antenna work, equipment maintenance and replacement, and system software.

In the next instalment, the team reaches the Reef, encounters disaster, and almost aborts the DXpedition.

The voyage to Conway Reef

The first miles were exciting for all. After a week of almost continuous rain, the weather had broken, and we were treated to a beautiful tropical sunset. *Te Ni* cruised on her diesels at a leisurely 5 knots. The day



In order for UG funds to be used for projects, an application must be submitted in writing to the UG Board describing the project, including an equipment list, cost breakdown and timetable for completion. The project cannot just benefit local users, and must fit within the overall plan for DXPSN. To ensure that the project has merit, the User Group Board asks DXPSN's Technical Committee to review the proposal. If they agree that the project is worthwhile and will meet its technical objectives, the UG Board determines if sufficient funds exist.

The most recent project was the system backbone upgrade from 2400 to 9600 bps. The throughput increase and overall DXPSN reliability enhancement have benefited all users. Without these upgrades, the system would bog down and become virtually useless during busy times.

Recently Len, K6ANP has joined the UG Board to assist Tom and Smitty with upcoming projects. With Len's help we hope to expand UG activities to include some technical support, particularly to new users.



from page 3

RIMshots

I am honored to have been elected as President of the NCDXC; my allegiance to the Club goes back to my joining in 1963. I have many fond memories of a vital club with interesting meetings, lots of fellowship, and a great cooperative spirit amongst its members. Those were the days before packet and even before repeaters. Many of you can remember that we used two meters to actually *talk* to each other, to pass along DX information, advise, BS, etc.

I'd like to see all that happen again. How about you?

—Al Burnham, W4RIM

Dues and Roster Update Time!

NCDXC's fiscal year commenced July 1, and dues became due and payable then.

If dues are not received by August 31, *you will be dropped from membership*, deleted from the new Roster, and will have to apply for reinstatement.

Dues for full members are \$24/year; absentee members are \$16. Family members are \$24 for the first member plus \$15 for each additional member.

August 31 is also the closing date for changes to the Club Roster, including address, telephone numbers, license class and membership type. Also, as we did last year, we ask for FAX numbers and on-line/E-mail addresses. The on-line/E-mail addresses *shall* be included in the Roster this year.

—N16T

NCDXC Dues/Roster Update Form

Name _____ Callsign _____

Type of membership: ___ Full ___ Absentee ___ Family

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please provide *new* or *changed* information.

Nickname _____ License class _____

Address _____

Phone numbers:

Home _____ Work _____ FAX _____

E-mail or On-Line address _____

Send this form *before the end of August* to:

Northern California DX Club
Box 608
Menlo Park, CA 94026-0608

Better still: *do it now!*

P. O. B O X 6 0 8
M E N L O P A R K, C A
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FIRST CLASS

