

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



NCDXC 50th Anniversary Celebration Begins!

Chuck Vaughn, AA6G

On October 10, 1996 the Northern California DX Club will celebrate its 50th anniversary. The anniversary day kicks off a year of on-the-air events for NCDXC members and DX stations alike. The goals are periodic operating activities for all club members, a year-long event for DX stations and suitable awards for all participants in the events.

Activities for DX Stations

Any DX operator who submits a log showing contacts with 50 different NCDXC members during the anniversary year will receive a certificate commemorating the NCDXC 50th Anniversary. QSL cards are not required. A contact with the NCDXC club callsign, W6TI, counts as ten QSOs towards the required 50. (More on W6TI callsign follows.) The usual log information (date, time, station worked and band) must be included. Logs should be sent to the club address:

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

Activities for NCDXC Members

On-the-air events are planned for club members throughout the year, in three categories:

1. *Work 50 different DXCC countries in a 50-hour period.* The 50-hour periods will be from 0000Z Saturday to 0200Z Monday on the first weekend of each month. Stations may be worked on any band and on any mode.
2. *Work 50 different DXCC countries on one band in one month.* Given the inherent difficulty of accomplishing this on 160m, 80m and 160m will be combined. Similarly, with the coincident solar minimum, 10m and 12m are unlikely to produce favorable conditions. Therefore 15, 12, and 10m will also be combined. The months in 1997 for the bands are:

160/80m	January	20m	July
40m	February	17m	September
30m	April	15/12/10m	November

3. *Work 50 different club members on the club repeater, W6TI, during the anniversary year.* The 50th anniversary year is an ideal time to promote increased activity on the repeater. With this activity in place for the entire year, members will have the opportunity for real QSO's with other members, while pursuing their 50

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N6BT Talks Antennas in September

The monthly meeting of the NCDXC will be held Friday, September 13th, at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo. Socializing and/or dinner commences at 6:30. The meeting is at 8 PM.

Have you completed all your antenna projects this summer? Antenna guru Tom Schiller, N6BT of Force 12 will discuss several novel antenna designs, including the ZR—Z-axis Radiator—design shown at Visalia, DDRR antennas, and anything else of interest to attendees. Bring your questions about antennas! Friday the 13th notwithstanding, you won't want to miss this one!

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 on 147.36 for routing assistance. Guests and interested parties are always welcome.

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: Ted Algren, KA6W
 Vice President: Doug Westover, W6JD
 Secretary: Peter Gerba, KN6BI
 Treasurer: Gordon Girton, W6NLG
 Director: Eric Swarz, WA6HHQ
 Director: Lloyd Cabral, AA6T
 Director: Al Burnham, W4RIM

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Contest Manager: vacant

9-Band Award: John Brand, K6WC

California Award: Rubin Hughes, WA6AHF

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

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
 Menlo Park, CA
 94026-0608

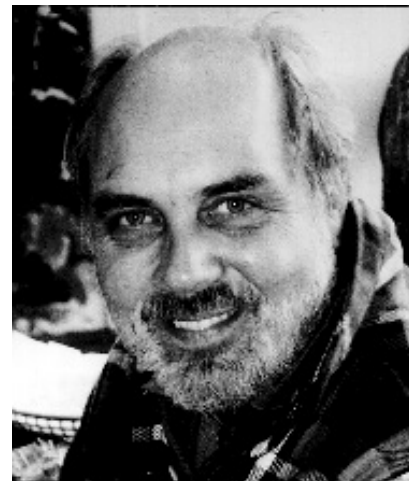
The DXer is published monthly by the Northern California DX Club and sent to all club members. Unless otherwise noted, NCDXC permits re-use of any article in this publica-

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors met on August 8th at The Good Earth in Los Gatos. The meeting was called to order at 7 pm by President Ted Algren, KA6W. Present were W6JD, W6NLG, and KN6BI. Garry, NI6T joined us later.

- Gordon, W6NLG proposed to transfer the checking account to the Bank of America in Sunnyvale and \$20,000 in Life member funds to a 13-month CD at Great Western. Approved by vote.
- Ted, KA6W provided copies of a letter from Al, W7XA, who proposes changing the monthly meeting to a weekday night.
- Garry, NI6T arrived and commented on the minutes of the prior BoD meeting.
- DXer expenses were discussed. The Board authorized \$500 for purchase of a scanner, for which a partial rebate will be obtained from the manufacturer, Hewlett-Packard.
- The Board discussed the current status of the '97 DX Convention.
- The Board discussed possibly manning an NCDXC booth at Pacificon in October.
- The search for a Contest Chairperson continues.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.



General Meeting

The August meeting of NCDXC was held on the 16th at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo, and was called to order at 8 PM by Vice President Doug Westover, W6JD.

- A moment of silence was observed in memory of Gene Pera, W6DOT, silent key.
- Doug summarized the Board meeting, and W6NLG offered an overview of the Club's finances.
- Kip Edwards, W6SZN was reinstated by vote of the membership
- Apollo Taleporos, WA6HRK—nominated by Smitty, W6JZU (present) and Louese, KA6ING (absent)—was voted into membership.
- The program was a videotape of the 1995 German DXpedition to the Congo. Unfortunately, it was deemed uninteresting and terminated after about 20 minutes.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9 PM.

—Peter Gerba, KN6BI, Secretary



“Common sense is not so common.”

—Voltaire

Whiskey Shots...

Summer Doldrums

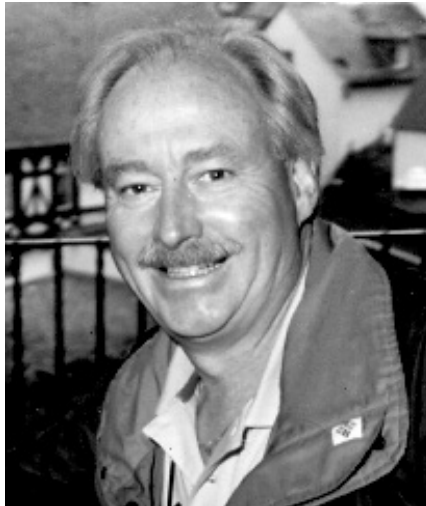
Summer doldrums? Sure seems so to me! Couple minimal summer DX activity with low sunspot numbers and we all wind up suffering from a bad case of DXus Minimus. (Where are the Palos Verdes Sundancers when we need 'em?) DXpedition activity is low, too. Did any of you in Radio Land work that P5 that promised to show this summer? "Not I, says me!" Many of you have worked VKØWH on Macquarie Island—good on you and congratulations. One great DX QSO keeps us all searching for that elusive new one.

Those of you in the "Convention Know," know that the Pacificon Convention will be held October 18-0 in Concord. Our Club has an opportunity to present a DX Forum to inform other amateurs about the Great World of DXing. Please consider lending assistance if you are asked to help prepare an appropriate presentation.

For the few of you that participated in the Club Marathon, submit your score to our P.O. box in Menlo Park for evaluation/judging. There will be NCDXC awards for the deserving.

Get ready for some fun as you join fellow Club members in events planned for our 50th Year Anniversary Celebration. Chuck, AA6G and his committee have some exciting things scheduled! Start by checking out page 1 of this issue and Chuck's web page on the Internet.

See you at the September meeting!



Bill Stevens, W6ZM, SK

Was ARRL Director, VP

Bill Stevens, W6ZM was probably my best friend in Amateur Radio over the past 30 years. As one of my closest advisors and colleagues, he was one of the group that convinced me to seek and win election as ARRL Pacific Division Vice Director and then Director.

Bill was the Pacific Division Director from 1978 to 1985, and was elected a Vice President of ARRL in 1986. Bill had been there and knew what he was doing when he convinced me to follow in his footsteps.

I first met Bill on the air when I lived in Salt Lake City in 1964. I visited him in San Jose when I returned for visits and when I moved back to Los Gatos in 1965. In those days, Bill was W6LCF—a call he had held since the 1930's. An Amateur Radio Operator's callsign is his identity and most important possession. In 1970, when some of us had the opportunity to change our callsigns to 2-letter calls, Bill became W6ZM and I obtained K6WR.

Bill took on my QSLing from 1974 to 1977—when I lived in Europe. Although conditions were at a solar minimum then, as they are now, we did manage a few contacts. I brought Bill into the West San Jose Kiwanis Club in late 1979. I had been in Kiwanis since 1964, until I moved to Europe. He is remembered by many of the West San Jose Kiwanis old timers as "Bill Smith" from an incident involving a former president who wanted to introduce Bill but forgot his name. Bill helped each year with our Kiwanis golf tournament and the K-Bell (Kiwanis-Bellarmino) Classic track meet for young people.

I will miss Bill on the air and in person in both the Amateur Radio world and the Kiwanis world, and as a friend and colleague! 73, Bill—thanks for the opportunity to know you and to have you



Roster Changes

Al Burnham, W4RIM
409 Summit Drive
Corte Madera, CA 94925
H (415) 924-6783
FAX (415) 924-6678
email w4rim@ix.netcom.com

Miscellaneous changes

Ed Hardin, WC6U (was WM6B)
delete work number
email edhardin@pacbell.net

Steve Merchant, W6EMS (was N4TQO)
now Absentee Member

Reinstatement

G. Kip Edwards, W6SZN (E)
1700 Sand Hill Road #406
Palo Alto, CA 94304
H (415) 321-7097
W (415) 327-4287
email kedwards@pacbell.net

New Full Member

Apollo Taleporos, WA6HRK (A)
747 Arroyo Rd
Los Altos, CA 94022
H (415) 967-2567

Change of Address

The Editor's Keyboard

Vanity Callsigns

The DX and Contest communities are abuzz since the announcement that the long-awaited Gate 2 in the Vanity Callsign program opens this month. Gate 1—the initial stampede—allowed amateurs to reclaim callsigns previously held by themselves or by close relatives. Several NCDXCers, including K6OP (NG6X), W6EMS (N4TQO) and K6MD (W8MEP) availed themselves of that opportunity—great callsign, Dr. Jerry!

A listing of the changes is available from several sources, including the World Wide Web and it was interesting to examine the list from several perspectives. Not the least interesting was the substantial number of 2x1 callsigns turned in, many for 1x3 and 2x2 callsigns.

It is unclear to me why so many seemed to think their 2x1 callsigns were bad news—perhaps someone who shares that view can illuminate me. I *do* understand the inherent problems with a callsign like WOØG or WØOG, and with almost-all-dit callsigns like WS5H. And, for those whose callsigns have become notorious, a change offers an opportunity to hide for a while.

When I came back to the fold in '82, after a lapse of 16 or 17 years, I took all the tests one morning in SF, and my friend Pete, W9DHK, who had talked me into it, told me I would probably get NI6-something. "What kind of @\$!%! callsign is *that*?" I asked. He had to explain it to me. Had I *not* lapsed during the Smokey '60's, I think I would have been just short

on seniority when the first callsign circus came to town, as I was licensed in '56.

I *like* my 2x1 callsign. The "I" can be a problem on CW, and there are too darned many six tangos—out of 90 possibles—contesting and DXing. (Four, in fact, are in the NCDXC.) But the callsign is short, and can be stuck like a dagger into a pileup. I see little benefit in changing it—and it looks like there will be a fearsome struggle for what good ones are available. I also have always liked the fact that there are no ghosts with such a callsign—nobody else has held it. I guess nobody else will, for a while: I plan to sit this one out!

—NI6T

patients and friends in looking forward to his safe and early return from the Balkans.

—NI6T



Operation Joint Endeavor in support of the efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is an unexpected and total surprise; due to his position as a hospital commander, he was exempt from mobilization in a non-war situation. However, (due to) the few physicians in the reserve, and family and financial hardships created by this mobilization, the list was very short, and they were not able to meet their quota unless physician leaders like Dr. Griffin were also mobilized.

Dr. Griffin will work half-days from August 5-13. He reports to Oakland Army Base on August 15, to Ft. Benning, Georgia on the 18th, and to Germany on the 24th of August. We expect him to be back in the office after 140 days, by mid to end-January, 1997.

Since Dr. Griffin has chosen to be a part-time soldier in support of our nation, it is important that you Join Hershey Medical Group and its providers to support him in this new challenge and wish him the best...

NCDXC joins Jerry's family, colleagues.

K6MD off to Bosnia-Herzegovina

The life of a citizen-soldier is no bed of roses. When George Bush decided to reclaim Kuwaiti freedom and—incidentally—Kuwaiti oil from Saddam Hussein, many Reserve units were activated and shipped overseas. Among these was the Army hospital unit commanded by Col. Jerry Griffin, K6MD/ex-W8MEP. Jerry returned home from the Persian Gulf to find his practice in emergency medicine and pharmacology usurped by a colleague with whom it had been left in trust. This was a bitter pill for a man newly returned from a war! Jerry has since settled in and rebuilt his practice—so it must have been a shock to be called to the colors again. Patients of the Hershey Medical Group in Salinas received the following letter last month.

Dear Patient:

Dr. Griffin has been mobilized for

Contest Season

September brings shorter days, longer nights, better conditions and the onset of contest season. Not that contesting ever really stops—there are contests all summer long. But, here at the bottom of the solar cycle, only the most intrepid warriors sally forth through the summer QRN, weak paths and short or nonexistent openings. So the return of longer nights is, for many, the cue to get ready for the upcoming battles.

Those of us who contest have our own club—NCCC—with its own newsletter, well-edited by George Daughters, AB6YL. But it is fair to note here events of importance to or involving NCDXC members.

A group of well-known RTTY DXers, led by our own Glenn Vinson, W6OTC and Steve Stark, KE6FV will be QRV from Benin for the CQWW RTTY contest on September 28-29. Glenn and Steve will be

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Contest Sea-

joined by Eddie Schneider, W6/GØAZT—a familiar hanger-on on W6TI—and Ray Ortgiesen, WF1B, author of the celebrated WF1B/RTTY software.

Another noteworthy event is the California QSO Party on October 5-6. Sponsored by NCCC and embracing both CW and SSB, it is the largest and most successful of all State contests. CQP attracts contesters, DXers and county hunters worldwide—NCCC works hard to ensure that *every* county is QRV and the prizes include teeshirts and commemorative bottles of *good* wine. It is also an opportunity—in our anniversary year—to show the flag for DX stations seeking the California Award.

Of course, these early affairs are great shakedowns for the Mother of All Contests—the CQ Worldwide DX Contests in October (SSB) and November (CW).

And—by the way—the NCDXC still needs a Contest manager. This worthy individual manages the Summer Marathon and the interclub rivalry during the ARRL DX Contests, and writes an occasional column for *The DXer*. Won't someone



The Case of the Empty Condenser

Clayton "Bud" Bane, W6WB

Many strange things occurred in the early 'twenties, among which was calling a capacitor a *condenser*. The now-familiar molded tubular capacitor with axial leads was not yet conceived, nor were the disc ceramic or electrolytic.

The "condenser" at the heart of our story consisted of two narrow strips of tin-foil—perhaps two feet in length—separated by wax paper. The assembly was then folded to form a roll about one by two inches. Leads were connected to the two foils; the assembly was flattened and inserted into a molded bakelite case, and the leads from the two foils connected to two binding posts. The case was then sealed with a bakelite covering. At this late date, I do not know the precise procedure for assembly, other than that the final result was a fully-sealed black bakelite case with two binding post connectors. There was no way of knowing what was inside the sealed container.

The following story was told to me by the owner of the largest radio parts store in the Bay Area during the 'twenties and 'thirties. Perhaps as strange as the story is the fact that the person who told it to me was not noted for his sense of humor. He was usually concerned with making a sale and had little time for small talk. I can only surmise that above-normal sales that day may have triggered his good humor.

It seems that, as a young man in the early 'twenties, he worked for a manufacturer of wireless parts and equipment. His main job was operating a lever-compression press for molding assorted bakelite articles. On this occasion, he was assembling, connecting and sealing paper-foil condensers—a tiresome process made more so by a piecework pay-basis.

On this particular day, nothing had gone right. He was making all kinds of mistakes in the course of inserting, connecting and ultimately sealing the paper-foil unit in its case. (At this point the normally-sour storyteller was overcome with laughter as he continued his tale.) Disgusted with all the trouble he was having this day, he said to himself, "What the hell, who will know the difference?" He then proceeded to seal up the next fifty or so units without the condensers!

Many decades later, I wonder how many hams who bought those empty containers

big beam and a commanding signal on 20 meters. Who is he?

answer on page 6

Mystery Photo!

This gangly, crewcut teenager—shown tuning his pre-war HRO—is today a prominent member of NCDXC. Note the WRL map (a rough QTH clue) and the homebrew kW+ with the Groth counter—a personal trademark. Then, as now, he had a



Just Why DXers Are the Best!

Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD

The Old Timer was by last week. The late Spring days are warm, the sky is blue and we were at ease. We deserved everything we got and enjoyed—DXers always think that way and we expect it to continue. So we sat and talked about things DXing.

Over the years one learns that the Old Timer does not push ideas on you, he just hangs them out for you to see, to recognize and—hopefully—to remember. Later on, we had to realize that perhaps we had started all the discussion that ensued. We were pitching, the Old Timer batting.

Long ago, we learned that DXers are the smartest, the tallest, the best-looking and are always noted for their grasp of philosophy and psychology. DXers understand things. We learned that years back, when we read it in a DX bulletin—and we never forgot it. It comes with the DXCC certificate; it is there even if at times we have to stop to ponder why.

Why are DXers so blessed? We asked the Old Timer, thinking that he might have some ready answers. If he did, he was not letting them loose; so we continued on our own. “Years back,” we said, “we would think that DXers are the top due to their behavior—always so ethical. Except for a few backsliders, that is. Their judgment is good, their behavior exemplary and they are always seeking the right action, the right decision and the right and correct approach to any problem. Right?”

The Old Timer grunted, then said: “You mean DXers are noted for their sanctimonious righteousness?” Those were his words, but it was not what his eyes were saying. That was not what we meant at all! We knew there was something there in our thinking that was right, but it was eluding our efforts to define it in words. We had to try harder. “We know that it is there,” we continued, “and we believe that other DXers feel it and recognize it as we do. But what is it? And why is it? Do you know?”

The Old Timer did not speak for a bit and we waited. Finally, he spoke. “DXers

generally will recognize something special about DX early-on, and will spend their early years enjoying it but really are not able to define the DX Mystique. It is not easily done.” He relapsed into silence. We were left waiting at the Door of DX Knowledge and were not being invited inside.

Finally, the Old Timer spoke again. “Have you ever considered that DXers might consider DXing as a superior activity? Something that one does not just to

kill time but rather to reach out around the world and communicate with others who think as a DXer does? Have you never noted that this international fraternalism is implied even in the preamble to the FCC regulations? That part about the fundamental purposes of amateur radio. And especially the item about ‘...the continuation and extension of the amateur’s unique ability to enhance international good will.’ Don’t you recall that?” Of course we did. We have remembered that statement for almost forty years, and we know that it is absolutely true.

Eventually, one learns that no DXer ever comes as a stranger. Never! And, if you are a DXer, you have friends all around the world. “One need only go to a DX convention—even just a plain amateur radio convention—to find that every DXer there is his friend. And that feeling might be an unspoken realization that DXers are different,” the Old Timer continued. “This need not be said, just recognized. DXers occupy the high ground without needing all the embellishments of phrases, adjectives, slogans, signs, T-shirts and horn-blowing. DXers are good and that alone says all that needs to be said. Right?”

Of course, the Old Timer was right. That was just what we had been trying to say

We finished up a bit lamely, as the Old Timer was listening, a small, quizzical smile on his face.

“You say you knew these things but could not put them into words. But would it be better just to know that you are in a group which—because of its actions and activities—is obviously superior? Or is it necessary to find suitable words to explain what DXers already know and act upon? In short, do you value the words or the actions?”

We again were in the learner’s role. We had understood it all the time—it was just that we could not find the right words to express it.

The Old Timer was soon gone, leaving us in the quiet of a warm early-summer afternoon. But we were still thinking—thinking that a little afternoon nap might be merited after all our heavy thinking. Our brain muscles were aching just a bit. They often do after the Old Timer has been around.

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Mystery Photo

The Young Gun is NCDXC President Ted Algren, KA6W and ex-WØQYE. Ted is shown in his shack in St. Paul, MN in the mid-1950’s.

Despite relatively modest circumstances, Ted had a six-element Telrex monobander on a telephone pole and operated 20 meters exclusively. “If I heard it,” he says, “I could work it!” He still can.

Want to stump the stars? Send *your* photo to *The DXer* and achieve immediate and lasting fame.

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50th Anniversary Celebration

contacts.

There are two levels of awards:

- Any member who completes *one* of the three categories will receive a basic NCDXC coffee mug. Completion means working 50 countries in a 50-hour weekend period *or* 50 countries on one band in the appropriate month *or* 50 club members on the W6TI repeater during the anniversary year.
- Those who complete one activity from *each* category will be awarded a special NCDXC 50th Anniversary commemorative coffee mug. This will differ from the basic NCDXC mug.

Only one mug will be awarded per member. Mugs will be given out after the completion of the anniversary year. Those members who cannot work through the W6TI repeater may substitute a second activity period from category 1 or 2. Those claiming this exemption will be considered on an individual basis: those who cannot work the repeater with a 10 watt radio and an outdoor antenna are likely to be exempted; inability to work the repeater with an H/T will not earn an exemption.

W6TI Club Callsign

Individual Club members will be able to use the W6TI callsign for a week from their home stations during the 50th anniversary year. Bill, W6TEX will coordinate; sign-up is on a first-come/first-serve basis, so give Bill a call. Although there are no QSO quotas, you are expected to actively pursue DX QSO's during your week, since DX operators will be looking for W6TI for a 10-QSO credit toward their required 50 QSO's with club members. Multioperator use of the callsign must be reported to W6TEX, and all participants must provide either a hard copy or digital copy of their logs to W6TEX for QSLing purposes. The operators will *not* be required to make out the QSL cards.

Spreading the Word to DX Stations

DX station award information has been sent to *QST* for the *How's DX?* column and to the DX bulletins. Information is

also available via the Internet DX Reflector, direct e-mailing and a special web page. The club roster (callsigns and names only) will be posted to the web page, providing readers of newsletters and bulletins around the world with the means to identify NCDXC members on the air.

Help Requested

Much has been done but there is still more to do! We need designs for the commemorative mug, the certificate for DX stations, and for special W6TI QSL cards. We also need a volunteer to coordinate QSLing. Contact AA6G if you can help.

In closing...

If you would like a small picture of you, your station or antennas to appear alongside your callsign on the 50th anniversary web page, please send a slide or negative to AA6G with an SASE. If you can scan it yourself, send it in TIFF, GIF or JPEG format, by mail on a diskette to AA6G, or by e-mail to aa6g@aa6g.org.

To make it easier for DX to identify you as an NCDXC member, feel free to add /NCDXC or /50 after your callsign during the anniversary year.

For those with Internet access, the URL for the NCDXC 50th Anniversary page is <http://www.aa6g.org/ncdxc50.html>.

Send questions and comments to AA6G.

Club Members

August 30, 1996

Charter	4
Honorary	10
Life	32
Family (5x2)	10
Associate	5
Absentee	24
Full	<u>235</u>
Total	320

—W6NLG

Treasurer's Report

July 1 to August 31, 1996



Gordon Girton,
W6NLG, Treasurer

Income:

Dues		\$5,444.00
New Member(s)	x3	15.00
Re-instatement	x1	10.00
Paid '97-'98	x3	72.00
(AC6NF, W6RGG & W6XP)		
Badge(s)	x5	55.00
Gift(s)	x2	<u>9.00</u>
Total		\$5,605.00

Expenses:

DXer		
Copy Cost	\$297.48	\$594.96
Postage	102.62	205.24
W6VG Labels	21.51	43.02
HP 4P Scanner		538.74
W6NLG Misc.		25.01
Storage Annual		363.00
Post Cards (Dues)		24.20
Badge(s) \$11.92		59.60
Meeting Room@ \$50		100.00
Dinner, if <50 persons, add \$50.00	x2	100.00
AA6T Misc.		<u>31.94</u>
Total		\$2,085.71

Income	\$5,605.00
Expenses	\$2,085.71

CD's

Great Western Bank 6%	\$20,000.00
I st Nationwide Bank 5%	9,970.53

Checking (B of A):

Club	\$11,418.80
Fresno DX Convention	<u>200.00</u>
Total cash	\$41,589.33

—Gordon Girton, W6NLG

FIRST CLASS

P. O. BOX 608
M E N L O P A R K, C A
9 4 0 2 6 - 0 6 0 8 U S A
