

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



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Editor's Choice

I had prepared a editorial for this month, but Bill, W6TEX, sent me his input, which is much more positive than mine would have been. Let us all take Bill's words to heart and start off 1998 with a great turn out at the next meeting. Ted, K6XN, promises a big program for the January 9 meeting.

Just a few words I hope will get more attendance at our meetings. We would get up to 70 or 80 at our meetings in the past. And I know some things have changed, but think we need to get people out to support the club.

WE MISS YOUR DX FELLOWSHIP!

Cry, whine and complain, but low power dxing in poor location is still fun and provides many hours of enjoyment. Guess who? Yes W6TEX is still complaining about the location with the big hill to the north.

However I must say regardless of my complaints, I still enjoy the hobby working dx and even an occasional new one. Also checking out propagation condx, LP and contest condx. During a contest is the best time to have fun with a low power station as the contester is looking for one more QSO point. And Sunday late is ideal to work many contest DX stations. And in some cases you might even receive a QSL.

Propagation is on the rise and we will all be working the world with a "calibrated frog leg".

Once a month meeting to support your hobby and meet with fellow hams to contribute to the DX community and activities of a first class DX club is good time spent. So make an effort to attend the next meeting and bring a friend. Meetings are the second Friday of each month and currently being held at Palo Alto Hofbrau (Muni Golf Course) Directions and program info can be found at: www.ncdxc.org.

See you there.....Bill de W6TEX sk ..

The very best to you and yours for the coming holiday season. May the New Year give you calm winds and a following sea.

CANCELLED

December meeting Cancelled

Next Meeting

January 9, 1998

**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 Park, K6XN
- Vice President: George Allan, W6YD
- Secretary: Ron Pantan, W6VG
- Treasurer: Keith Butts, KN6K
- Director: Ted Algren, KA6W
- Director: Gordon Girton, W6NW
- Director: Garry Shapiro, NI6T

The DXer:

- Editor: Dave Earnest, K7JJ
15200 Monterey Rd
Morgan Hill CA 95037
(408)779-6662 ext. 203
Fax machine ext. 209
k7jj@garlic.com

- Printing, Mailing: Jerry Bliss, K6III
- Web Page: Chuck Vaughn, AA6G
<http://www.ncdxc.org>
- DX Ladder: Dave Bernstein, AA6YQ
- 9-Band Award: John Brand, K6WC
- Contests: Doug Westover, W6JD
- California Award: Rubin Hughes, WA6AHF
- Historian/archivist: Ron Pantan, W6VG
- Records Manager: Ron Pantan, W6VG
- Publications Mgr: Ron Pantan, 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, W6CUA
- 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 publication—provided The DXer and the article's author are credited.

QRM de K6XN



Ted had a busy work schedule and was unable to get his words to me in time to get them in the DXer before I had to get the copy to the printer.

Ted has told me we will have a couple of very exciting meetings in January and February to kick off the club's new year.

Guest speakers with programs of interest to all are promised. We will even have a joint meeting with the Northern California Contest

Club.

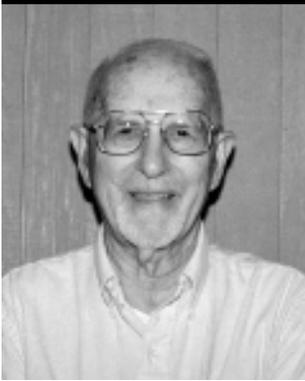
Ted wishes you all the best for the holidays and good hunting on the bands

Board of Directors Meeting

There was no board meeting in November.

General Meeting

Treasurer's Report



MINUTES OF NCDXC MEETING, NOVEMBER 14, 1997

The meeting of November 14, 1997, was held at the Palo Alto Golf Club. During the imbibing and dinner hour, new membership rosters were given out to a large

Ron Panton, W6VG

turnout of members. The November meeting was called to order by club president, Ted Park, K6XN, at 7:49 PM. Our guest speaker was introduced by Garry Shapiro, NI6T. Guest speaker being Bill Snider, K6KM. Bill showed wonderful slide pictures of the DXpedition to Willis Island. along with the slides he gave a very good explanation of the whole operation and boat trip. Web site manager, Chuck Vaughn, AA6G, gave out 50th Anniversary mug awards to the deserving members who were present. After the Willis Island program, most of the members left, leaving the die hards to handle the business section. Minutes of the last month and a report from the treasurer were not deemed necessary to be read. There being no other pressing business, meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM. The Board of Directors meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 18th, at the home of W6VG.

Report as of Nov 1 for month of October:

Income:

823.00	Dues
600.00	Ad Revenue
1423.00	Total

Expenses:

74.52	Badges (S&S Trophies)
357.33	DXer Mailing-sept/oct (K6III)
492.04	DXer Printing-sept/oct (Vasona Copy)
172.50	ZS8IR Travel Costs
58.43	Misc Postage-Supplies (W6VG)
41.60	Procedure Manual Printing
332.00	ARRL Liability Insurance (Cigna)
1528.42	Total

Note: Fees for badges, late dues, and sales of N6BT's book deposited after nov. 1

Cash:

32,954	Bank of America Checking (as of 11/4 stmt)
9,300	(approx) Cal Fed CD (Life Mbr) Nov stmt not received
1,280	(approx) Bank of America-Repeater (no stmt)
43,534	Total

Don Berticvich, KO6GI.....SK

Don passed away, November 10th. He was 59 years old. Don is survived by his wife Eleanor and his daughters, Cindy and Debbie.

Don had done yeoman service for the club as newsletter print and mailing coordinator through July. His service to NCDXC is greatly appreciated.

73, Don.....rest easy.

Letter from K5YY

Dave K7JJ,

I was the 21st inductee into the HOF in January 1983, having been given the award in Visalia later that year. I am equally proud of my selection as an honorary Member of the NCDXC back in 1983.

Through the years I have written the DXer concerning DX matters when I was Chairman and long time member of the DXAC. W6RJ and I were best friends through those years. Throughout the 50's and 60's we DXers all knew the "California Kilowatts" as avid and classy DXing individuals. In the 70's and 80's, I could see the increased contributions being made by certain NCDXC DXers and now think it is only fitting that you article has called attention to their deeds. I've been proud of my association with the California DXers and especially those in the NCDXC. You all know how much I've enjoyed the 6 or 7 conventions I've attended either in Fresno or Visalia. Having personally known all of the NCDXC HOF inductees gives me an extra warm feeling inside. Each of those DXers has definitely deserved this rarest of DX awards!

My last 14 years have been totally devoted to family and educational concerns, and now my last child has only one more year of college remaining. Perhaps I can again look forward to DXpedition activity. I only hope that SOME joy still remains in this crazy DXing hobby of ours. Things HAVE changed quite drastically over the past 14 years. HI! HI!

Sincerely,

/s/ Sam

Sam Hutson K5YY (ex: K5QHS)

PS I enjoy the DXer each month. Good to keep tabs on the guys.

Willis DXpedition, September 1997

Hello, fellow NCDXers! I'm no longer a member of NCDXC because of the long distance to meetings, but I hope that many of you will remember me as a former member, from 1971 until recently. This is the second article I've written about the 1997 expedition to Willis, the other is to be published in the NCDXF newsletter. That article featured the geographical and physical aspects of the operation, and this one will feature the ten hams and operational aspects of the operation.

WHO? I joined the DXpedition late, and missed the early planning stages. But, after all of the dust had settled, the team consisted of:

VK4FW, Bill Horner from Gympie, Queensland

VK4MR, Bob Dixon, Woody Point, Queensland

FK8GM, Eric Esposito, Noumea, New Caledonia

VK2AEA, Vlad Huzevka, Northmead, New South Wales

IV3FSG, Elvira Simoncini, Mossa, Italy

7K3EOP, Noriko Tokura from Tokyo, Japan

AF7O, Darryl Hazelgren from Sandy, Utah

WA1S, Ann Santos, from Milford, New Hampshire

VE5RA, Doug Renwick from Clavet, Saskatchewan

And me, K6KM Bill Snider from Yankee Hill, California.

HOW DID THIS COME ABOUT? Darned if I know. An "operator wanted" posting to the DX reflector was the first I heard about the 1997 Willis operation. Inquiries led to a commitment, and whoopee there I was arriving at Cairns, Queensland, Australia at midday, September 8. Bill and Bob were there; I had met Darryl at LAX and Ann showed up just a few minutes after we arrived. We got quick showers at Bill/Bob's motel and went straight to the good ship Floreat. That's the way this whole thing started!

THEN WHAT? Floreat already had fuel and water stores lashed to the deck when she arrived at the Cairns pier. We added six generators, huge quantities of food, all of the radio equipment and our personal baggage that afternoon. It was a big job. We cleaned up aboard Floreat and got to know each other a bit better at a nearby restaurant that evening. We also found time to apply for and receive our souvenir VK4 call signs. Nine of us slept aboard that night. The next day we picked up our final team member, Eric FK8GM, added some last minute supplies and saw a bit of Cairns. We headed out to sea at 5 p. m. on September 9, planning to reach Holmes Reef the next day.

HOW WAS THE TRIP? Not too great. Just about the time Australia disappeared behind us, the seas got rough and people turned green. The spacing between waves was about the same as the length of the Floreat, which was partly to blame for the rough ride. Our crew, consisting of Marcus, his dad Gordon and our cook Patricia didn't seem to mind a bit. In fact, it turned out that Patricia is a fan of Southeast Asian foods, as

Continued on next page.....

I am. The rough seas didn't bother me very much, and I looked forward to her every culinary creation. During the early stages of the trip, Bill Horner started passing out nicknames. Ann became "Annie" and sometimes "Annie Get Your Gun;" I became "Billy." To minimize confusion, the nickname "Captain Billy" was issued to Horner.

HOLMES REEF There are many reefs at "Holmes Reef." They are solid coral and my guess is that the largest reef was around one meter out of the water at low tide. It disappeared before our eyes as the tide rose, so we scratched Holmes as a potential site for an IOTA operation on our way back to Cairns. Just as well, as it looked both dangerous and uncomfortable to me.

SOUTH WILLIS This is where all previous VK9W operations have taken place. Four Australian meteorologists live there on six month volunteer assignments. They have several buildings for their meteorological activities and living, and they have internet access! The island is of coral sand and rocks with some salt-tolerant grass and low scrub brush. Unlike the other Willis islets there are also trees. Boobies and terns were everywhere; they didn't seem to mind us tourists milling about. We delivered some supplies, toured the facilities and took a lot of photos, then returned to Floreat for the last leg of our outward trip. Or so we thought.

NORTH WILLIS We had all the documentation necessary to operate from North Willis Islet, but after a lot of soul searching we gave up on that plan. We just couldn't get Floreat very close to the islet because of shallow seas and many coral heads ("bobbies"). Even in the somewhat protected lee of North Willis, the sea was very rough and we didn't want to chance losing our little aluminum boat ("tinny").

MID WILLIS ISLET, OUR TEMPORARY HOME Captain Marcus was able to get Floreat within a couple hundred meters of Mid Willis. There were plenty of bobbies to threaten the tinny and there was only one relative safe landing location. This spot was much more appealing than North Willis, but we had the problem with documentation and landing permission. Marcus and Bill Horner made the decision to take our chances with the authorities and go for the much safer landing on Mid Willis. No one opposed that decision.

LANDING AND SETUP ON MID WILLIS. After a brief exploratory trip in the tinny, we sent eight operators ashore with the large housekeeping tent, sleeping bags and a bit of food and water. Ann and I stayed aboard to bring supplies on deck for transport to the islet. By nightfall the new islanders had the 24 foot square tent up and anchored against the strong prevailing wind. The next morning we landed the rest of our supplies and operators, and set up our first HF station. VK9WY hit the air with an FT-1000MP feeding a multiband vertical. That was sometime on September 12, Australian time. In the next couple days we set up a three element tribander, a three element 20M Yagi, a three element WARC band Yagi and a couple more verticals. None of the Yagis was more than twenty feet above the coral sand. For a few days we had only two tiny operating tents, each about 150 meters from the housekeeping tent. When a third, much larger operating tent was added, we were sometimes able to operate as many as five stations simultaneously.

OPERATING FROM VK9W: RECOLLECTIONS

Here are some more or less random recollections from my air time. I operated CW almost exclusively, so I have only one comment on SSB operation. The serious SSB and RTTY ops may have other observations.

- It took seconds to learn that VOX was useless; too much wind noise. I made perhaps 10 SSB QSOs, all using a footswitch designed for an elephant. How did the SSB ops do it?
- As one might expect, JAs were LOUD. ALL JAs were loud. I decided to work 'em all before going for the weaker EU and Eastern U. S. signals. That approach tweaked a few Euros, but it worked for me. After three days I had so few calls from JAs that I could just work 'em in a few seconds and get right back to the weaker signals.
- Even with the large Heil headset wind noise often made CW copy difficult. Increasing audio gain nearly to the pain level helped but was very fatiguing.
- Never again will I attempt to operate from a folding chair planted in coral sand. It just doesn't work. No matter how well the chair was positioned at the start of a four hour stint, it just kept sinking in the coral sand. I was positioned such that the keyboard and paddle were above eye level.
- Totally surprising to me, it was easier to pick out callsigns using 2400 Hz bandwidth than with 500 Hz bandwidth. Weak signals were often copiable at either very high pitch or very low pitch. Is that a sign of old age or have younger ops observed the same thing?
- The world looks very different from downunda. USA is about 60 degrees beam heading, Costa Rica is due east but PY is about 120 degrees, not much different from our own heading for PY right here in the Bay Area! ZS is 240 degrees and short path EU is around 330; JA is pretty much the same direction as short path EU. Long path EU is over South America. We all had little great circle maps to help us visualize this strange new world.
- On 20 meters, Southern Europe was always short path and Northern Europe was almost always long path.
- My technique for dealing with unruly operators was to ignore them. Once in awhile it took several minutes to complete a QSO because of people ignoring my "KN" requests, but once I got a partial call, that guy was going to get in my log.

Continued on next page....

- A tiny, simple keyer that runs on 12 volts would have been a lifesaver. My borrowed Curtis "Li'l Bugger" didn't quite cut it mechanically and it needed a lot of 9V battery replacements.

CT was the mandated logging program; it suited the purpose but I'm a bit more comfortable with TR. Logs from our individual laptop computers were periodically merged into one master log. No one except Captain Billy has the master log although I kept copies of all logs made on my own computer. I suppose that everyone else did the same. The reason for handling logs in this manner was to keep the emphasis on team operation rather than individual operation. No one except Captain Billy knows who made the most QSOs, who had the best rates and that kind of stuff. We can brag about our own accomplishments, but we can't compare them numerically with those of the other ops.

THE RADIOS We had four FT-1000MP transceivers and four FL-7000 amplifiers provided at special prices by Yaesu. Personal equipment included FT-920 and FT-990 transceivers and an FL-2100 amp. Although the 2100 had problems, probably due to misuse by ops unfamiliar with it, everything else performed flawlessly. The FL-7000s were treated as "heavy boxes that made us louder," meaning that all we had to do was hook 'em up and forget about 'em. Even in the high temperatures of our tiny tents, everything ran cool. The 7000s were never asked to give us any more than the 400 watts maximum legal output allowed for all VK locations.

GOING HOME We weren't looking forward to another rough trip, but we were very lucky. The seas were absolutely calm for our entire trip. Even the most seasickness-prone operators enjoyed the return trip! We stopped off at South Willis Islet to offer the meteorologists our leftover supplies, then headed straight for Cairns. We arrived at exactly the same time that my XYL Ginny (N6RER) was to land at the Cairns airport, and I caught a photo of her Qantas 747 on its final approach. She came straight to the Floreat, met all of the operators and the crew, and joined us for a farewell dinner that night.

COMMENTS FROM OTHERS We didn't have internet access, so we didn't have benefit of the comments that others sent to the Oceania DX Group reflector until after we returned. Two of those comments are addressed here.

- Full Calls Only, Please! One EU ham asked that we not reply with partial calls. If I had seen this comment while we were still on Willis, I probably would have hollered and thrown things. But, now that it's all over, it's humorous. HEY, podnuh, when we could copy full calls, we replied with full calls! I guess this particular guy didn't stop to think about how wild the pileups can become!
- Not Enough 160M QSOs. This one came from a guy I consider to be my friend, here in Northern California. Perhaps he, too, failed to visualize the effort that was put forth out there on our sand pile to accommodate 160 meter buffs. Between Bill Horner and Eric Esposito, about

Willis (finale)

one man hour was expended for every 160 meter QSO. They worked tirelessly to overcome antenna problems, and they gave up many hours of their own operating time even though 160 activity was not one of our primary goals. Several W6 stations are in the 160 log, so it wasn't impossible. Better luck next time!

SUMMARY I had a ball! Meeting and working with neat people, learning about another new part of the world, having a huge amount of fun "playing radio" and touring VK and ZL afterward were all great thrills. Many thanks to all of the supporters who contributed money and/or equipment that helped make this mission possible. The official paperwork, allowing the operation from Mid Willis, is now in VK4FWs hands, so that worry is behind us. Would I do it again? Just watch!

Bill K6KM and now, VK4AWS

50th Anniversary Note

I have given out at club meetings or mailed out all the 50th Anniversary mugs and coasters to those who qualified. If you think you were missed please contact me. If you have yet to send in your entry please do so as soon as possible.

73, Chuck - AA6G

W6NW: NEW INTERNET WEB PAGE

Gordon, W6NW, has a new web site highlighting links to information on VEC and FCC news. Check it out at:

<http://www.amateur-radio.org>

ARRL PACIFIC DIVISION UPDATE
DECEMBER, 1997

by Brad Wyatt, K6WR, Director, Pacific Division, ARRL

WRC 97 Wraps Up in Geneva:-

The 1997 World Radiocommunication Conference concluded its talks in the early morning hours of November 21 in Geneva, Switzerland. Amateur Radio survived WRC-97 largely unscathed, but the stage has been set for renewed spectrum battles at WRC-99. The Little LEOs (non-voice, non-geostationary mobile satellite interests)—which put a huge scare into the ham radio community in 1996 with their proposals to share ham radio VHF and UHF bands—were unable to muster much support for new allocations at WRC-97. However, they came away with up to 3 MHz of additional spectrum on a regional basis, in the bands between 454 and 460 MHz. The Little LEOs also got a resolution calling for urgent studies in preparation for WRC-99—what some at the conference called “a hunting license” for additional VHF/UHF spectrum. A second issue that will recur at WRC-99 is finding a place in the 420-470 MHz frequency range for the Earth Exploration Satellite Service (EESS). Synthetic aperture radars (SARs) using frequencies in this range are said to be capable of penetrating the rain forest for mapping purposes.

Two significant ham radio-related issues failed to make the cut for consideration at WRC-99. For budgetary reasons, the WRC-97 delegates had to limit the WRC-99 agenda only to the most urgent issues. Pushed back to the tentative agenda for WRC-2001 were the possible realignment of the 40 meter band to resolve a conflict between hams and broadcasters in part of the band (along with possible expansion of broadcasting bands between 4 and 10 MHz), and Article S25 of the international radio regulations. Article S25 contains the international regulations specific to the Amateur and Amateur-Satellite Services, including the Morse code requirement for operation below 30 MHz. WRC-97 delegates approved a resolution (called the Convention on Disaster Communications) encouraging administrations to facilitate the use of ham radio and other “decentralized means of communications” (including satellites) for disaster mitigation and relief operations. This resolution eliminated the need for Resolution 640, which defined how certain ham bands could be used for international disaster communications by non-amateur stations, so Resolution 640 was suppressed. (The term “suppressed” in this context means that the Resolution was deleted and will no longer be in force. It has gone away!) WRC-97 delegates did agree to upgrade the Earth Exploration Satellite Service from secondary to primary at 1215 to 1300 MHz, which should have only minimal impact on amateur use of 1240-1300 MHz. The presence of EESS there also reduces the possibility that incompatibility between wind profiler radars and other radio applications at 440 to 450 MHz or 470 to 494 MHz (only in some Region 1 countries). In this case, too, the amateur-satellite segment is protected. Several Region 1 (primarily European) countries deleted footnoted exceptions to the international table of allocations in the 1810 to 1830 kHz range, expanding the usability of 160 meters for ham radio. North Korea was persuaded to drop its bid for footnoted exceptions to the allocations table that could have affected some ham radio bands in that part of the world.

Amateur Radio was represented at WRC-97 by a multinational team of International Amateur Radio Union officials, including Secretary Larry Price, W4RA, Vice President Michael Owen, VK3KI, and Region 1 Vice Chairman Wojciech Nietyksza, SP5FM. They were assisted for a time by Tafa Diop, 6W1KI, and Eduardo Estrada, HC2EE, who are members of their respective regional executive committees. Numerous radio amateurs attended the conference in official capacities on behalf of their national administrations, including ARRL Technical Relations Manager Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, who served on the US delegation.

In all, 1801 delegates from 142 countries registered at the conference. Another 141 observers from regional and international organizations also attended.

Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD, Recovering

Cass was hospitalized in November, but now is recovering nicely, according to Virginia. The doctors say he will make a complete recovery from the current problem. Send Cass a card or note. He is at the Kaiser Hospital, 99 Montecillo Road, San Rafael CA, 94903. He will go to a nursing home for therapy, once released from Kaiser.

— K7JJ

Redwood Empire DXA Election Results

The results of the recent election for the Redwood Empire DX Association (REDXA):

President.....K6RIM
Vice President.....N6AD
Secretary/Treasurer.....WA6IKQ
Director.....K6ANP
Director.....N6YEU
Director.....N6OJ

REDXA meetings are regularly held on the third Wednesday of the month at Carrow's in Petaluma. Visitors and guests are welcome! For further details, contact any member of the BoD.

73,

Al, K6RIM

