

DXer



**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
DX CLUB**

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DXer Profile: WB6OTB, Dick Mercer



Dick Mercer, WB6OTB



**General Meeting
January 12, 2001**

**American Legion Post 105,
651 El Camino Real,
Redwood City**

Program

**No Information Available
at Press Time**

NO DINNER

Social Hour 7:00 P.M.

Meeting at 8:00 P.M.

**Directions to the Meeting
(See Map on Page 5)**

From the North or South:

**Take the Woodside Road exit
west off Highway 101 and turn
right on El Camino Real. Drive
about one half a mile to 651 El
Camino Real (on the right).**

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: Chuck Patterson, K6RK
 Vice Pres: Don Anastasia, AA6W
 Secretary: Keith Butts, KN6K
 Treasurer: Bill Maurer, WB6JJJ
 Director: Dick Letrich, W6KM
 Director: Bud Bane, W6WB
 Director: Rolph Stoddard, W6TWO

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9-Band Award: John Brand, K6WC

Contests: Doug Westover, W6JD

California Award: Robert Bickel, K6FX

Historian/archivist:

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: Robert Smithwick, W6CS

Club simplex: 147.54 MHz (suggested)

Thurs. Net QTR: 8 pm local time.

Net Manager: Randy Wright, W6CUA

DX News: Net Control Operator

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.

President's Comments



I hope everyone got what they wanted for Christmas. I feel sorry for the guy still running around saying: "there's got to be a pony around here somewhere!" It's been a great Christmas, but not much in the way of DX. 160 meters has been a bust so far this season - too many sunspots and too much absorption.

I just received word that our member Jon, AD6FX has been officially confirmed as a DX QSL card checker by ARRL. Congratulations, Jon.

Our next meeting on Jan. 12 will serve as a good forum for further discussion on the matter of the DX'er on line. I repeat my earlier comments that it is my intention to always continue the mailed paper version for those who are not on line.

Once more, if you know of a good program for one of our meetings, or if you can put one on, let Don, AA6W, our vice-president know about it.

How time does fly! A little over three months until Visalia! How about that!

73, Chuck, K6RK



W6VG and W6WB Swapping Stories

NCDXC Dues Information

Full and Associate Members;

<u>Date Dues are Paid</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Family Rate</u>
1 July thru 30 September	\$24.00	Plus \$15.00
1 October and after	\$24.00	Plus \$15.00

*Members who have not remitted dues by the 30 September deadline are considered dropped from the membership roles. Those desiring to renew membership may do so anytime, but will not be included in the new issue of the NCDXC Roster .

Absentee Member Dues are \$16.00 per year.

Innovative DXing by Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD

Once, in a time long gone, the honorable secretary of the NCDXC asked the long remembered W6WX to tell who would audit the club's books as secretary's term of office was ending. The reply is still remembered, the trust of those long gone days often not seen in recent decades.

"Audit?", Dave Baker said, "we never audit the books. DXers are trustworthy. There is no need to think the books might need to be audited".

But one can still be trusting but wondering about things that still leave shadows on the back trails of DXing. Some are not even shadows but are definitely of more substance though not of financial matters. These are matters of DXCC credit.

DXing expanded in the Fifties and the Sixties. It is difficult in these enlightened days to remember that DX was once a side bar to the great world of amateur radio, amateur radio then being lodged solidly on the true virtues of TRAFFIC HANDLING and EMERGENCY PREPARATION.

And the ARRL was then composed of THE COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT and QST. Nothing else. And the two areas of capitals in the above is to mark what then was the truly anointed. DXers were considered a minor irritant to the true faith. And you had better believe that.

But DXing did thrive on its own. Soon there were needed new fields of endeavor. Maybe something like a special mode DXCC, maybe single band DXCC.

In the early years of DXing, the ARRL issued a Phone DXCC as a separate certificate from the true blue and unvarnished DXCC. It might be surprising to note that the Phone DXCC numbers were well below the straight DXCC. Much below.

But times change and so does DXing. And the ARRL saw the light and created a CW DXCC. For those who were true to the key and the code. An award for CW operators.

But all was not happiness overflowing from the CW operators on this award, all were not satisfied that the needed CW QSL's for #1 on the first CW DXCC were quite legitimate.

Such cards, not many but some, were showing for CW contacts from a DX station in a rare one and the operator of the station in some instances was not a CW operator, did not know the CW code and did not even have a key. But contacts were being listed on QSL's showing CW contacts.

There has been and will always be a low level under current among the elder statesmen of DXing, doubt about some credited operations, concern about the possibility that QSL's could be bought for some operations, doubts that some QSL's submitted for credit were only technically valid and definitely not the honored and traditional ones expected. Doubts were there but often muffled, some of these operators are now long gone. Some have moved to other fields.

DXing possibly should be placed in two eras. The first was that of universal and unflagging trust in All DXers. The second was the question of credibility. Or, to put it roughly, before Don Miller and after Don Miller. That can be considered a watershed in DX history is often the thought of many DXer types.

Anyhow, the race was on for the first CW/DXCC. The simmering pot of doubt among many DX groups was that there was the mark of the bar sinister on the QSL's of some operators. Some DXers verbally, sometimes otherwise, passed on their concerns to their directors. The matter was brought up at one of the ARRL Board of Directors meetings.

You have to understand that in those early days the traffic and emergency types dominated the ARRL Board. DXers were weird. And, though the matter was brought up, there was no great understanding of the plaint among the enlightened members of the Board.

Simply put, here was the practice that rubbed. One operator, possibly more, getting in on a good thing, would contact a really rare DX station by phone, make a contact and then ask for a CW contact.

The DX operator might say that he was not a CW operator and was not able to copy code. The one seeking the QSL would say not to worry, just listen for his code transmission, when it ended to acknowledge. And to be sure to mark the QSL as a CW operation. That might seem far out but that essentially was what was happening. Remember, back then code was not required for a license in many countries, then and possibly now.

The ARRL Board got stuck on this, not really understanding what was going on. Then one of the Board remembered that a vice-director from one ARRL division was present at the meeting and actually was waiting outside while the board was in closed session. It was suggested that this DXer, knowledgeable as all DXers are on the arcane, be brought in to give his views on the matter. And he did.

The advice to the board that this was but a manifestation of the jealousy among DXers, that these others were belly-aching because they had been beaten out for a rare and needed new one for the CW DXCC award. Thus they were nothing but denigrators, and low denigrators at that, unjustly accusing others because of the others greater DXing skill and accomplishments.

That made sense. Of course it did. Who could not understand this situation. Nothing but sore, sore losers trying to bolster their self-esteem by pointing unwarranted accusatory fingers at those who had been better operators. Pure and simple jealousy!

Not mentioned in this high level discussion was that the one called in to give expertise on the matter was one about whom the other DXers were complaining. He was the one who had the non-key DX station listen for his not understood CW transmission and then would

(Continued on Page 4)

Innovative DXing (Continued from Page 3)

ask that a QSL card confirming a CW contact be sent.

Believe that? You had better, because that was the way it happened.

At the next Board of Directors meeting a better informed group again considered the matter. The better informed group moved to quickly have the requirements changed to mandate that the single mode QSL cards submitted for CW DXCC must state that it was a two-way contact, CW at both ends. And that is the way it happened, and that's the way it was changed.

Years back, say thirty five or so, the club at a regular meeting had a world traveler who spoke on his DXCC contacts, these being validated by his bundle of DX QSL's.

He was an interesting speaker, but midway along in the program the knowledge started to sink in that these were in person visits to a DX station, not contacts via amateur radio. He had QSL's from well over a hundred countries in his memorabilia.

Lloyd Colvin got me off to the side and noted that this fellow had enough

QSL's to join the club, the club's criteria for membership only saying that an applicant needed but to show contacts with amateur radio operators in 100 or more countries and that this fellow did clearly meet the criteria. The club rules did not specifically name how the contacts be made. Amateur radio was not mentioned in the criteria. Alas, Lloyd never did carry out his plan but it would have been interesting if he had.

It was a time for trust. Trust and you will be welcomed. But eventually it was learned that some are more trustworthy than others. Some even more so.

So what should you do? Be a doubting DXer? That would hardly be a prudent stance. Rather one should work 'em now, worry later. More than once a strange prefix has turned out to be treasure, and more than once a solid, four square QSL turned out to be none other than Slim of 8X8A fame on Cray Island. Remember that one?

Work 'em now, worry later!

Hugh Cassidy WA6AUD
November 2000

My 2 meter rig was on a slide mount so I could transfer it in a flash from car to truck and visa versa. It was just as slick as a whistle.

Well, recently I was lucky enough to acquire a very low mileage 1987 Chevrolet El CAMINO - a much bigger truck with lots and lots of room for the rig. But I have been really busy. So I have a cup holder that my 2 meter ICOM IC-02at drops into and I have a speaker mic. So, with this combo I have been able to carry on until I felt that there was enough time to properly install the slide mount and KENWOOD. Well, the time has come and I have some free time set aside. But I have some doubts about the need to install the 2 meter rig. Do I need the extra power output? If I do install it, what will I use it for? I only hear "CHARLIE". I have to turn the squelch down to be sure that the batteries haven't run down. There is just no activity on the club repeater - especially any real human voices any more. So I keep asking myself, "WHAT DO I DO NOW?"

WHAT DO I DO NOW? by Dick, W6KM

Most club members that have known me personally over the last 12 years may recall that I've been driving a small white imported mini pickup truck. It was nearly new when I acquired it back then. Right away when I got it I just had to hurry up and install my 2 meter rig and slide mount for my little KENWOOD TM-201A. Geeze! I didn't want to miss out on all the local DX gossip and juicy reports of the day. I wanted to hear all about what was going to happen the next day. That way, if a needed one, or if a good DX-pediton was on and I thought I might get a chance to nab it, then I would try to arrange to work near the home QTH to get home for lunch. If nothing else, I could, at least, get home more quickly at the end of the day. Man what a grand time the club was having. I chatted with lots of club members as I traveled all over Northern California with my work and the rig was ALWAYS ON. I didn't want to miss a thing.

One great feature was, as some may recall, we had repeater links in Sacramento and also up near Santa Rosa. The coverage was out of this world. Well, the links went away because of the "jammers" and it now seems that no one gives a damn about them any more. If you recall, I had hopes of getting a link up and running in Fresno. But, Alas! The Ham who offered to set it up was all wind. Oh, well...!

(Continued, next column)



Mike, N0LZF and his YL



Rolf, W6TWO and Jenny, his XYL

World Radio Conference, 2003 by Jim Maxwell, W6CF

(The following is an excerpt from the Pacific Division Update which Jim Maxwell regularly sends via E-Mail. I found it interesting. I hope you do, too. -Ed.)

Almost before the memory of the Istanbul World Radio Conference (WRC) has faded, preparations are underway for the next one, probably to be held in Geneva sometime in 2003. Several matters scheduled for consideration at the conference will have a profound effect on the future of Amateur Radio. A good summary of issues can be found on the International Amateur Radio Union's (IARU's) web site at <http://www.iaru.org/cal-181.html>. Of major importance is a proposal to "harmonize" worldwide Amateur assignments on the 40-meter band; that is, have (perhaps!) a single exclusive worldwide assignment for Amateur Radio rather than the patchwork arrangement we now have.

Also of great importance to many is the matter of Morse testing for Amateur HF licenses. This may well turn out to be the Great Debate of 2001. Here's the story.

Article S25 of the ITU regulations governing worldwide Amateur Radio require that all Amateur operators demonstrate proficiency in sending by hand and receiving International Morse code by ear in order to be licensed for operation on any Amateur band below 30 MHz. This is old stuff, but there is a new wrinkle: we've expected for years that S25 would be reviewed and perhaps modified at an upcoming WRC, but it's now really coming: a review is on the preliminary agenda for the 2003 conference. In anticipation for such a review, member societies of the IARU have been working together for several years to establish an Amateur position on the various elements of S25. These preparations have been discussed within the pages of QST on a number of occasions.

As we draw closer to the next WRC, efforts of member societies of the IARU are intensifying. Recently, IARU Region III met in Darwin, Australia. One of the topics of

discussion was S25, including the Morse requirement. (The ARRL is a member of the Region III organization by virtue of its possessions in the west Pacific.) It was proposed at the Darwin meeting that the Morse requirement be eliminated from S25. The proposal passed with only one dissenting vote. That negative vote came from the ARRL representative, Rod Stafford, W6ROD. He voted against the proposal as a consequence of a Standing Order of the ARRL Board of Directors which opposes any change in the international Morse requirement.

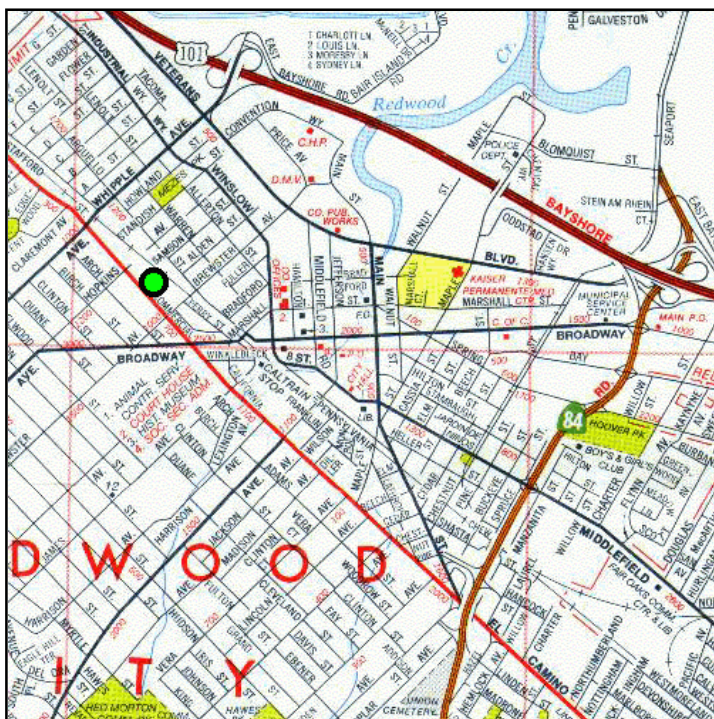
IARU Region II will have a similar meeting in 2001, and the same subject will undoubtedly be discussed.

Now comes the question! Is the ARRL policy that opposes any change in the S25 requirement for Morse testing still appropriate? This question will almost certainly come up at the ARRL Board meeting in January.

What are your views, pro and con? Note that this ongoing discussion related to S25 concerns the ITU requirement ONLY. The question of whether or not Morse should be required for a FCC issued HF license is a separate, although related, issue.

Vice Director Vallio and I would appreciate hearing your views on this matter. Please email your thoughts to me at w6cf@arrl.org, and to Bob at w6rgg@arrl.org.

Map to Meeting Site



**Thanks, Doug, for arranging a
Lovely Christmas Party!**



Doug, W6JD & XYL

9BDXCC Endorsements Applied For

The NCDXC congratulates the year 2000 Participants in the 9BDXCC Awards Program. Below is a table listing members and top endorsement applied for in 2000. Thanks, K6WC

<i>Call</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>10</i>
AA6G					280		280		280
W6YHM			200			100	260		
KI6WF		150				100	300		270
W6ISQ				150		200			
KI6T			150	150	280		270	200	200
DJ6RX		280						300	300
AI6L		200	290	250		280	290		270
K6UM					300		280		260
W6JD				150	300	150	250	100	200



Granddaughter & XYL of KI6WF



Dave, KI6WF



WB6JJJ, W6OD, XYL of WB6MME and WB6MME



N6VAW, Anne (XYL of KI6WF), W6UDS and Pat (XYL of W6KM)



← N6RO and the Devil Mountain Jazz Band

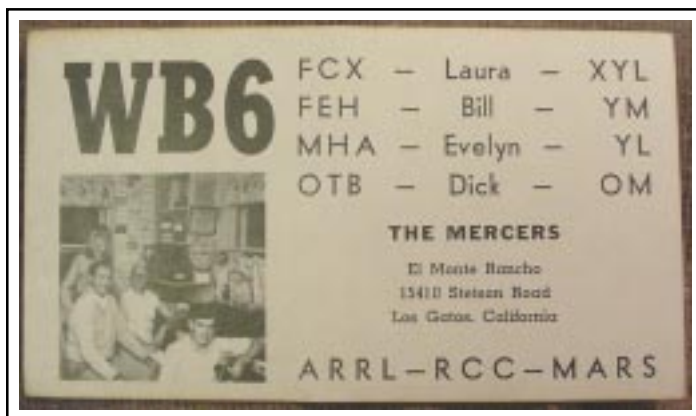
DXer Profile: WB6OTB, Dick Mercer

Do you have the exclusive WAM certificate? Not too many do. But this month's DXer profile is not only about Dick Mercer, WB6OTB, but it includes the entire Mercer family. WAM stands for "WORKED ALL MERCERS." As an electrician, Dick has traveled all over the world, including the famous Alaska pipe line. Early on, Dick decided there was no better way to keep in touch with the family when he was away on a job, than Ham Radio. Not just SSB, but CW. Wife Laura can bang out CW with the best of them and she did so for many years. She also hosted several CW nets. Not to be left out, their two children (now adults) also got into the act. Dick's call is WB6OTB and his XYL's is WB6FCX (you have to be good just to send that call on CW). Son, Bill is WB6FEX and daughter, Evelyn's call is WB6MHA.

Dick was first licensed in 1963 and joined the NCDXC in August of 1983. His basic station consists of a KENWOOD TS-950S and the linear is a Heathkit SB-220. The backup rig is a KENWOOD TS-440. The tower is up at 55 feet and is topped with a KT-34a. Being a retired electrician, he has a cheap source of wire. And, of course, as you might expect, he has it hanging everywhere. He has the station backed up with a deep charge battery system. His total country count is about 334.

It has been fun visiting you and your shack, Dick. Many thanks to both you and your wife for a very pleasant visit. I hope the pictures of the old family QSL cards will print out okay, as they are really proof of a real together family.

73, Dick, W6KM



Editor's Choice

Well, here we are in the new millenium. Sylvia and I are still getting settled into our new home in Los Banos. It's a whole new environment for us. As an example, I tried to buy a printer cable (rather than trying to find the box I had packed it in) and could not find one in the City of Los Banos for under \$19.95! Needless to say, I found the box, instead!

We're also challenged by not having DSL available. So, everything we do on the internet has been at a maximum speed of 33.6 Kb! REAL BUMMER!

But, we're "survivors" so we'll adapt to it! We ARE about an hour and a half closer to Visalia, though. So, it will be a bit easier for us to get down there to work with staff on the Convention.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to this issue. In particular, I want to recognize the following;

Hugh Cassidy, WA6AUD
Dick Letrich, W6KM
John Brand, K6WC
Jim Maxwell, W6CF

Contributed articles make our job much easier. And W6KM's contributions (*DXer Profiles*, great pictures, contributed articles and labling and mailing the *DXer*) are a HUGE part of getting the *DXer* out every month. Thank you, Dick.

So, as we enter the new year, I would like to encourage everyone to contribute. Sometimes, you have a story, but don't know it. Anything you want to share with the Club is GOOD material. So, don't hold back. That's what the *DXer* is for. You'll look good in print.

On behalf of the entire *DXer* Staff, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very healthy, happy and prosperous New Year. May you be loud in the pile-ups and work the "new ones" you need on the first call.

Very 73,
George, W6YD

12 Store Buying Power!



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510 534-5757
1999 804-8046
2000 804-8046
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ARIZONA, CA
1915 Lawrence Ave., #102
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• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM

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(800) 854-8046

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TH-07A **2000**



• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM



IC-2750SP **in-Touch**
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM



DL-5417/DL-5111
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM



TM-0700A **Standard Operator**
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM



IC-7750SP **in-Touch**
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM



DX-77E0 **dx Transceiver**
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM

YAESU



VX-9R
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM
• 100W RTTY
• 20W FM



FT-1000MP **dx Transceiver**
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• 100W RTTY
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