

NOVEMBER 2008





NOVEMBER MEETING

Thursday, Nov. 20th

Our Featured Speaker

Alan Maenchen, AD6E

P29NI

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Join us for another exciting evening at the Northern California DX Club. This month we are featuring a presentation by Alan Maenchen, AD6E who has just returned from P29 a week ago! You will not find a "fresher" presentation anyplace! Be sure not to miss this one as Alan will be sharing from his experiences and some great behind the scenes details of this exciting and recent journey to Papua New Guinea. Did you work him?

As always, plan to arrive early to get a great seat and to mingle over dinner with your fellow members beginning at 6:00pm.

Our program begins at 7:30pm. For meeting directions, as well as a listing of this month's great raffle prizes, turn to page 3.

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DX CLUB

A BIG NCDXC THANK YOU!

In an effort to increase the quality of the DXer publication for 2009, we undertook a project to find a couple corporate sponsors for the newsletter. We were blown away by the response.

We want to personally thank George, K6SV for renewing the Ham Radio Outlet (http://hamradio.com) commitment to the DXer for another year. We truly appreciate the continued support.

We are pleased to announce that we have added a couple new premier sponsors.

The first is ZeroFive Antennas (http://www.zerofive-antennas.com) of Bloomingdale, IL. A big thank you to their owner Tom, N9ZV for the support.

We are also welcoming Penninger Radio (http://www.penningerradio.com) of Chicago, IL. Thanks goes out to Charles, KC9DAO for the new commitment.

And finally we extend a hardy welcome Icom America (http://www.icomamerica.com) for their support. Thanks goes to Diane, KE7PCS for making this happen!

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Club Repeater: W6TI/R

Frequency/offset: 147.360 Mhz +, pl 110.9

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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: NCDXC

Box 608

Menlo Park, CA 94026-0608

The DXer is published monthly by the Northern California DX Club and sent to all club members via the web. Unless other wise noted, NCDXC permits re-use of any article in this publication provided the DXer, article's author and editor are credited.

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OUTGOING QSL CARD SERVICE

Doug, W6JD just shipped 11 pounds of cards to the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau this past month for our club members.

Be sure to take advantage of this excellent FREE service to club members. Just bring your outgoing cards to the next meeting. We take care of the rest!

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

Here we are still bumping along at the bottom of Sunspot Cycle 23 and Cycle 24 is trying to get going. We get a few small sunspots and then they fizzle out. So we keep waiting. It is a good time to catch up on your QSLing though. Remember the club will send your buro cards out at no charge to you. Just bring them to a meeting with your ARRL proof of membership.

The conditions were good into Europe for the CQ WW DX Contest (SSB version) on Oct. 25-26. I worked 3 new ones, 2 of which are already confirmed on Logbook of the World. Talk about instant gratification! I had fun in the contest: operating Search & Pounce (S&P), cherry picking the spots and doing some tuning around. I was also trying out a Super Antennas 2-element portable Yagi. It worked out well for me (more about that later on). I think that it made difference for several QSOs with weak signals.

The October club meeting was a great success! I have had very good feedback from several members on the meeting, both from "old timers" and newbies. We tried a new format for the main presentation of the meeting. Instead of a talk or a DX pedition video, we had a DX forum. The format was similar to the format used at Visalia.



There were four panel members: Rusty Epps, W6OAT, Garry Shapiro, NI6T, Russ Bentson, K6KLY and Steve Jones, N6SJ.

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President's Message (continued from page 3)

I served as moderator. We had four predetermined questions to get things going and then opened it up to questions from the floor. We all had a great time and we could have gone on for at least another hour except the restaurant would have kicked us out and we had to save time for the raffle. Thanks again to the panel members for making this a success!

Do to the overwhelming positive response, we will definitely plan on more forums at future meetings. If you have comments on the forum or suggestions for future forum topics, I would like to hear from you at ae6rr@arrl.net. If you have other suggestions for meeting topics, would like to suggest or give a talk, please contact me or Risto, W6RK.

The KP5 – Desecheo Island expedition is getting organized. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has selected the KP1-5 Project Team to be the first USFWS-approved DXpedition to Desecheo Island in fifteen years. This expedition is expected to take place in the first quarter of 2009 and specific dates will be announced soon. They have established a web site at www.kp5.us and are taking donations. If you need KP5, please consider making a donation, even a small one. Every dollar counts. Also, if you do make a donation, please indicate that you are a member of the NCDXC. Hopefully, we can all brag about our multiple band mode Qs with KP5 at Visalia next April! KP5 is currently the number 7 most wanted in world and 59 on the West Coast.

Finally, be sure to mark your calendars for the annual Holiday Luncheon at Michael's on Saturday, December 13. Additional details are elsewhere in this newsletter.

See you at the next meeting on November 20th.

For now, 73 and good DX!

- Craig, AE6RR

CLUB MEETING

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 20th



6pm – 7:30pm Dinner/Social 7:30pm Club Meeting

Special Featured Presentation

Alan Maenchen, AD6E

P29NI

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Our Meeting Location:

Holder's Country Inn 998 South De Anza Blvd., San Jose, CA 95129 - (408) 244-2798

CHECK OUT THIS MONTH'S BIG RAFFLE PRIZES!!!



1st Prize: Icom IC-2200H 65W 2 Meter **2nd Prize:** Kill-A-Watt Measuring Device

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Listen!

Yogi Berra is reputed to have said, "You can observe a lot by just looking." Well, to paraphrase that wise old man, "You can hear a lot by just listening."

Let me give you an example. Sometimes, when I'm tuning around, I'll pick up a copy of QST or World Radio, that's lying on the desk. I was just doing that a minute ago and almost missed a DX QSO.

As I tuned to 7024, I heard WA3RLP calling CQ. He was kind of weak, and I almost continued tuning around, but for some reason, I decided to leave it right there. The station didn't get a reply to his CQ, so he started again. This time, I really listened and got a surprise. It wasn't WA3RLP at all. Instead it was RA3RLP! I had to call him a couple of times, but he stuck with me and we had a nice QSO.

So, the moral of the story, I guess, is to put down the magazine and really listen to what's on the radio. Who knows what I've been missing all these years. You can really hear a lot if you just listen.

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU - www.kb6nu.com

DXing on 75 Meters

The following verse was formulated after a long weekend of Low Band DXing and is dedicated to those hardy souls who give up many worldly pleasures to achieve their goals.

Winter months are the time of year, Low Band DXer's try to hear, Those weak ones mumbling in their ears, If only that noise'd disappear!

Breaking the East Coast is a fight! Some of them are so impolite. But for Zeroes - it's a common plight, They are all 3 by 3's tonight!

Looking for country ninety-five, Can ruin your love life - that's no jive! Feeling like a Zombie - not alive, That's DXing on 75!

Mike Crabtree, ABOX, Kansas City DX Club - DX WAS VOL I



Happy raffle winners from the October meeting

DX Information

ANTARCTICA. Nicolas, F4EGX will be QRV as FT5YI from the French base "Dumont d'Urville" on Petrel Island, IOTA AN-017, from November to mid December. Activity is on the HF bands using SSB in his spare time. QSL to home call.

BRUNEI, V8. Ian, G3YBY will be QRV as V8FKT from November 9 to 21. Activity will be on 40 to 15 meters using mainly SSB and RTTY. QSL to home call.

LATVIA, YL. Latvian amateur radio operators will use the special prefix YL90 during the month of November in celebration of the 90th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia.

MAURITANIA, 5T. A group of volunteers that are part of an aid program are QRV as 5T5JA from Nouakchott until mid November. Their activity is on 40 to 10 meters using CW and SSB. QSL via JA1BAB.

KUWAIT, 9K. Operators DL9RCF, DM5TI, DL9NDS and DL5NAM are QRV as 9K2HN until November 17. Activity is on all HF bands using CW and SSB. This includes an entry in the Worked All Europe RTTY contest. QSL via 9K2HN.

BHUTAN, A5. Members of the Clipperton DX Club are QRV as A5100A from Thimphu until November 17 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Kingdom of Bhutan. In addition, Pradan, A51PN is active as A51PN/p from three different southern regions. Activity is on all HF bands. QSL via operators' instructions.

EASTER ISLAND, CE0. Merv, N6NO is QRV as CE0Y/N6NO until November 16. Activity is on 40 to 12 meters using mainly CW. QSL to home call.

GRENADA, J3. DL7CM and DM2AYO are QRV as J3/home-calls until November 25. Activity is on 160 to 6 meters using CW, SSB, RTTY and PSK with both stations active simultaneously. QSL to home calls.

LEBANON, OD. Jean, ON4JM is QRV as OD5/ON4JM until the end of December while here with the United Nations. QSL to home call.

The following was approved for DXCC credit: Iraq, YI9PT, 2008

Information from the ARRL DX Bulletin

Product Review: Super Antennas YP-2 Portable Yagi

By Craig Bradley, AE6RR

The Super Antennas YP-2 Portable Yagi is a 2 element (reflector and driven element) HF beam in a bag. Its parts all fit in a 3 foot long soft bag about 6-8 inches in diameter. The beam can be assembled for any band from 20 to 6 meters. It is a shortened Yagi with loading coils in the elements for 20 through 12 meters. It is full size on 10 and 6 meters. Assembly time is about 15 minutes (or less if you have done it before). This antenna is designed for temporary field setup and is not intended for permanent installations. It does not require any tools for assembly and tuning, only a wrench to bolt it to the mast.

I purchased mine about a year ago and assembled it once for a quick test in a neighborhood park. This was mainly an assembly test on a 15 ft. mast and a quick SWR scan on 20 meters. I decided to give it a real try during the CQ WW DX SSB contest over the weekend of Oct. 25-26. The setup was at our vacation home in Truckee, CA. which is at 6000 ft. elevation near Lake Tahoe. This location also has a clear RF view to the North (Europe).

As the antenna is a single band (at a time) antenna, I needed to pick a band. The conditions were poor and I didn't think that 15 meters would be very good, so I decided to assemble the antenna for 20 meters. I mounted it on a Hy-Gain ATM-65 aluminum push up mast at about 35 ft. The mast was on a ground mounted Hy-Gain AR-40 rotor.

I started the installation by driving a 4-foot section of 1 ½ ID galvanized water pipe (treaded on one end) into the ground. To locate the pipe, I suspended a weight from the deck railing with a cord. I treaded a standard pipe cap onto the pipe to avoid flattening the end of the pipe, before driving it two feet into the ground with a sledge hammer, making sure that it was perfectly vertical with a level during the process. Then I removed



Photo 1 - Rotor Mounting

the end cap and mounted the rotor on the pipe. See Photo 1 for details on the rotor mounting.

The lower sections of the mast were then extended to about 16 ft. and mounted on the rotor. At that time I went up on the deck to complete the installation. I first secured the mast to the deck railing with a piece of nylon cord, taking care not to tie it too tight to prevent excess binding during rotation. As the top 3 sections of the mast (.875", .750" and .625" OD) are too small to mount the antenna on (and probably too small to be extended with weight of the antenna anyway), I removed them from the mast. I mounted a floating guy ring on the second section from the top. Then I attached 3 rolls of 3/16" black antenna rope to the guy ring.

Next I started the assembly of the antenna. I adjusted the length of each element section according to the chart in the manual and tightened the thumb screws to secure them. You even get a measuring tape in the bag with the antenna in case you forgot to bring one. I set the length of the boom to the 20 meter setting (click stop connectors) and mounted it on the top section of the mast. Then I assembled the elements onto the boom. This was very simple as the elements are treaded and you just screw them into the fittings on the boom and the loading coils by hand. I found it easier to assemble the first section of each element to

the boom with the loading coil attached first and then add the outer (tip) section.

When the antenna was completely assembled on the mast, I attached a length of RG-58 coax cable with BNC connectors to the antenna (the antenna has a BNC connector). I used a BNC to UHF adaptor to then attach a 100' RG-8X cable with UHF connectors.

The next step was to extend the mast. I started with the smallest (top) section, pushed it up to about 5 ft. of extension and tightened the hose clamp (supplied with the mast). Be careful not to over tighten the hose clamps, you can easily strip them as I did with one of them. Fortunately, I had a spare clamp in my vehicle tool box. I repeated the procedure until all of the sections were extended. The antenna was about 35 ft. above the ground at this point. I quickly secured two of the guy ropes to the deck railing and one to a stake driven in the ground behind the deck, just in case that wind might pick up. I was able to do this by myself as there was no wind at the time. If it is windy, you might require some help to hold the guy lines while pushing the mast up.

Then time to get a cold one and stand back to admire the installation for a few minutes. See picture 2 for a view of the installation (not the 807). Total setup time was about 2 hours, not including pre-setup tasks such as soldering the connector on the rotor cable and assembling the mast.

I did have one other problem while extending the mast; the last section to be extended from the deck level froze up at about 3 ft. of extension. It turned out that there must have been some dirt between the sections and it galled the aluminum. This mast is shipped with every other section nested to avoid problems. On initial assembly you need to take them all apart and renest them in the correct order. I did mine on the garage floor, not a good idea. I would advise assembling the mast on a clean surface and wiping each section with a clean rag before inserting it in the mast. Maybe some lubricant would be good also. The mast did not come with any assembly instructions. Later after the mast was taken down, I was able to get the two sections apart. I put the larger section in the sun with the smaller section in the shade, after the sun heated the larger section; it expanded enough so that I was able to

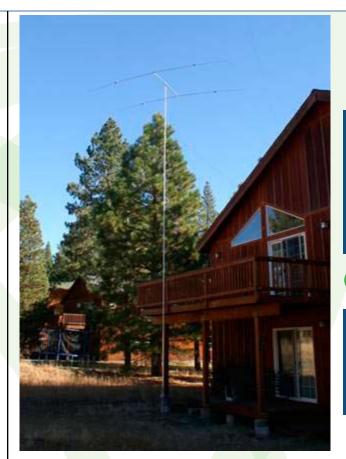


Photo 2 - Installation View

pull them apart. The outer surface of the smaller piece was badly scratched and will need to be polished or replaced before I use it again.

I did a sweep of the antenna with a Palstar ZM-30 Digital Antenna Analyzer. The best SWR was at 14.280 MHz (about 1.2:1). It was below 2:1 at 14.200. I thought about bringing the antenna back down to retune it lower in the band, but as two of the mast sections were frozen together, I decided to use it as is and not risk additional problems. I have an auto tuner and that would keep the SWR down for the amplifier. Besides, the contest was starting by now and I wanted to get down to the shack. It did turn out during the contest that there was a lot of European activity in the high end of the band though.

After hooking the feed line up to a coax switch with my G5RV on the other input, I turned on the rig. 20 meters was alive with contest signals, the big guns were all on. I turned the rotor all of the way from stop to stop while watching the guy ropes and the feed line to be sure that there

were no problems there. All was OK.

I started by doing some A/B tests between the G5RV and the beam on various signals. The G5RV is oriented towards Europe with one end at 80 ft. in a pine tree and the other end on the back of the house at about 30 ft. (on the peak of the house to the right of the Yagi in the picture 3). Some signals were a couple of S-units higher on the Yagi and some were about the same. I also noticed a couple of S-units lower noise on the frequencies of these stations while using the Yagi. The front to back ratio was definitely helping. Around this time it was getting dark and 20 meters started to die, I was hungry and I decided to go have dinner rather than fight out the first night of the contest on 40 meters. Let the big guns have at it first.

Saturday morning the band was open to Europe! I started working the EUs on the Yagi and forgot about the G5RV for a while. I was running about 1300 Watts into the Yagi and I didn't seem to hurt it at all.



Photo 3 - Positioning to house

Super Antennas says that the antenna should be good for a KW, but I think that this is an estimate. After disassembly, I inspected the loading coils and they looked just like new.

After getting a good sampling of the EUs into the log, I did a few more tests. Turning the back of the antenna to EU dropped the signals several S-units and doing A/B tests on them definitely confirmed that the signals were stronger and had a better signal to noise ratio on the Yagi. I could hear the Caribbean stations well with the antenna on Europe, but turning it 60 degrees to the Caribbean did peak them up some. With a 2-element Yagi, this is about what I would expect. I did some listening with the G5RV tuning around the band look for new stations, then I would point the Yagi to the DX and switch to it. In most cases the signal would definitely improve. I found that I was working most stations on the first call and I know that I worked a few that I probably would not have logged with the G5RV. These tests were not scientific but I was very happy with performance of the antenna, it might have been better yet if I had tuned it lower in the band though. I also found that I had it pointed to Europe for most of the contest. If the band is open to EU, you probably don't need a rotor.

Sunday morning the band seemed to be even better into Europe! Also, the big guns had all worked each other and the pileups were gone. I had a ball tuning the band and logging almost everything that I heard. I did bag 3 new countries in the contest with the Yagi, TF3W in Iceland, GW4BLE in Wales and two E7s in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I worked 16 zones and 36 countries on 20 meters with the YP-2. The best DX (distance and path wise) was SV9, Crete. This was all in search and pounce and I did use spotting.

After the contest, it only took me about an hour to take it all down, disassemble the antenna and store it in the bag.

In summary, I am sure that I worked a few that I would not have logged without the Yagi. I would like to try it on 15 or 10 meters if we ever get some sunspots back! It should work even better on these bands as it is closer to full size on 15 and is a full size Yagi on 10 meters. (continued)



YP-3 photo from www.superantennas.com

The Antenna is available from HRO at a list price of \$359. Super Antennas does not currently show it on their web site for some reason, but they do show the new 3-element version, the YP-3. It is the same design with the addition of a driven element. If you are looking for a portable Yagi that can be carried in a bag and setup quickly, I would recommend giving the YP-2 a good look.

Upcoming DXpeditions



KP5 Desecheo Island - The 7th most-needed DXCC entity worldwide is coming up in early 2009. Check out their website **http://kp5.us**



1S Spratly Island - Operating from Pulau Layang Layang March 2009. Visit their website for more information http://www.spratly2009.com

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HOLIDAY PARTY INFORMATION

The NCDXC Holiday Luncheon will take place on December 13th between 11am and 3pm at:

Michael's at Shoreline
2960 N Shoreline Blvd,
Mountain View, CA
(650) 962-1014
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Our Theme This Year Is "Most Treasured Moments of My Ham Radio Journey"

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- 4. Grilled Vegetable Brochette...17.00

All meals include salad, entree, french rolls, dessert, tax and tip.

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FT-2000 HF + 6M tcvr

- 100 W w/ auto tuner
- built-in Power supplyDSP filters / Voice memory recorder
- 3 Band Parametric Mic EQ 3 IF roofing filters
- **Call Now For Low Pricing!**