



The DXer

May 2011

The Official Publication Of The Northern California DX Club



MAY MEETING

Kabul Update & DXpedition Preview

- Republic of South Sudan -
by Paul Ewing, N6PSE

Thursday May 19

6pm - 7:30pm Dinner/Social

7:30pm Club Meeting

at Holder's Country Inn

998 S. De Anza Boulevard

San Jose, CA

MAIN RAFFLE PRIZE

Icom IC-2200H 2M Transceiver

Amateur Radio Technology Day

Saturday, June 11

8am to 6pm

At SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory

<http://www.fars.k6ya.org/amtechday>

President's Letter

May 2011

By Richard Crouch, N6RC

Amateur Radio Tragedy - T6AF - Silent Key

Amateur Radio has suffered a great loss in the tragic assassination of James McLaughlin, WA2EWE/T6AF, in Kabul. This sad turn of events impacted NCDXC in multiple ways. First and foremost was Jim's obvious passion for the hobby – he lived for ham radio in his free time just as we all do. We need hams with his enthusiasm in our hobby to help build the future of ham radio!

For many of us who worked him on the air just a month or two ago, even though we have never met him in person, we all felt like we had a new friend that we would meet in person in the not too distant future. That's how all ham radio relationships begin. Many evolve into a lifelong friendship. For me this is best illustrated by my friendship with Martti, OH2BH, who I first met via a CW QSO in 1963. I then met him in person in Helsinki when my navy ship, the USS Newport News (CA-148) docked there for a visit in 1970. Over the years thereafter we worked many times, met multiple times here in the US over a 30 year period, and on the air via hundreds of SSB QSO's. Today we are very close and meet often in person and on the air. Plus, he has introduced me to some wonderful new friends like Juha, OH8NC, and many others.

(continues on page 3)

See us at Dayton Hamvention - Booths 20, 21, 22 & 23



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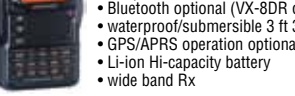
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I can only imagine the pain felt by the Intrepid DX Group and the pain we all feel due to the forced cancellation of this month's DXpedition to Kabul. Jim was the group's eyes and ears, logistical planner, and Paul's "Afghan co-mentor" for a successful DXpedition. Although many in Kabul offered to still support the event which would have been conducted in the memory of Jim, too many fears were elevated by this senseless shooting. As Jerry, K6MD said, we are at war, and that changes things in a big way. We can at least be grateful, however, that people like Jim dedicate their lives every day helping the Afghan people in hopes of them being able to achieve a high quality of life in the future without us.

IDXC 2011 – a great success!

Wow, the 2011 IDXC was great fun! The place was packed and enjoyed by everyone. I want to thank again, John Miller, K6MM, and Kevin, K6TD, for the amazing job that they did in the overall management of the event. Many others made major contributions – Phil, W6PK, 2011 Guidebook; Steve, K6SJ, publicity; Russ, K6KLY, prize booth; Bob, W6OPO, exhibitors; Rob, K6RB, overall logistics and decisions on programs and event calendar;, and a number of others. The prizes were legendary, \$50,000+, and created a great deal of excitement, not to mention a great sendoff that will bring people back next year!

NCDXC Club Member of the Year (CMOY)

It was my great pleasure at the IDXC to present this year's award to Russ Bentson, K6KLY! I have known Russ for 30+ years and his commitment and enthusiasm for ham radio has never wavered! Russ has done so much for this club over a long period of time, Director, Club Officer, W6TI net coordinator, DXCC card checker, IDXC workaholic, and much, much more. When you see him, tell him how much he is appreciated, not only for what he has contributed to the club, but for amateur radio as a whole, and as a friend to all of us – thanks, Russ!

Special Award for Meritorious Service – W6KM

Another long time contributor to the success of our club is Dick, W6KM. For 14 years he was the registration chairman for the IDXC, a committed member of the club whose attendance at club meetings has probably set a record, perhaps matched by only K6KLY, and great guy to talk to, and without a doubt one of the best ham shacks in ham radio. As you can see from the photo below, Dick is proudly displaying his plaque on the wall of his shack. When you get a chance, congratulate and thank him. It just might get a conversation going that will lead to a long lasting ham radio friendship!

Our May Meeting – May 19th

Don't miss this month's meeting! In addition to having a great meal at Holder's in Cupertino, a chance to socialize with friends, learn who's working DX and who isn't, and two interesting programs "in one" presented by Paul, N6PSE. He will begin with a period of quiet in memory of James McLaughlin, an update from Kabul as to what has transpired in the aftermath of the tragedy, and a preview of the upcoming DXpedition to the Republic of South Sudan (the newly chosen name).

Nominations will be presented for June's elections. The most important slot to fill is that of Vice President succeeding Phil, K6TT, whose two year term is expiring. Make a point to thank Phil for all his hard work bringing us quality programs month after month and for his leadership skills. As you know, Phil & Myla have their new baby boy, Michael, so the timing is right for Phil to move on. However, I know we will see the entire family at our future meetings. It brings back memories to the time when Kandis and I used to bring both of our girls to NCDXC meetings at Harry's in Palo Alto back in the early to mid 80's. Hopefully Phil will do better than I in terms of Michael becoming a ham. I tried but my girls had other interests, especially ballet and modern dance.

DX DX DX

If you haven't already been tuning the bands, day or night, you should begin doing so as Cycle 24 is producing some great conditions. S9+20 signals on all HF bands, 3.0 Mhz – 30 Mhz are teaming with very strong signals from all points on the globe! Set yourself a goal to accomplish in 2011 for your DXCC award status. Better yet, pick another DXer for a friendly competition!

Well, that's it for this month!

See you on the 19th!

73's,
Dick
N6RC



N6RC Presenting Club Member of the Year Award to K6KLY (Photo by N6ZS)



W6KM's Award for Meritorious Service On Display in the Ham Shack

Anatomy of a DXpedition That Was Cancelled

by Paul Ewing, N6PSE

This was supposed to be an article about a successful DXpedition to Kabul Afghanistan for May 4th-16, 2011. Instead it is the anatomy of a DXpedition that due to changing circumstances was cancelled hours before our travel to Afghanistan was to begin.

Our quest for our next DXpedition location started immediately after the April 2010 YI9PSE DXpedition. Someone called us the Intrepid DXers after our trip to Iraq and the name stuck, so we now call ourselves the Intrepid-DX Group.

In the subsequent weeks and months, we would try to gain permission in Yemen, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Syria and Malpelo (Columbia). Bangladesh and Syria at times looked promising, but eventually we realized they weren't workable due to complexities.

Shortly after we concluded YI9PSE, I received an email from WA2EWE, Jim McLaughlin who was working in Kabul, Afghanistan and operating as T6AF. Jim had operated as YI9EWE in 2005 and he paid a compliment to our operation. Over the course of many months, we would become friends and communicate on Skype on a regular basis.

As our plans for other, rarer locations fell through, we began to look at Afghanistan as a possible venue for our next DXpedition. Jim-WA2EWE would become our counsel and adviser. He helped me get the Afghan Ministry of Communications to issue a license as T6PSE. Jim would later scout locations for us and he was really excited about the possibilities of the Hotel Intercontinental, which is located high on a hill on the western edge of Kabul. The take off angles towards North America were simply amazing!

Soon, I was negotiating with the hotel and forming a team to go to Kabul in the spring of 2011. I was very pleased that most of the members of my YI9PSE team were interested in doing another DXpedition under my leadership. Sadly, our Iraqi team member, Heathem Sabah-YI1UNH was attacked when he returned to Baghdad and was unable to join us for this trip.

As I started seeking donors and raising money for our DXpedition, I could clearly see that the economy in 2011 was much different than it was in the later part of 2009 and early 2010. Afghanistan was just as rare as Iraq was, but our fund raising efforts were hampered by the bad economy. Nevertheless we persevered and moved forward. We realized that we would have to contain our shipping costs as best as possible.

All of our plans were going very smooth. In April of 2011, Jim-WA2EWE came home to the Bay Area to visit his family. I was fortunate enough to get to spend a day with him and we solidified our plans for the DXpedition. It was so exciting to me that Jim was so helpful and supportive of our plans to come to Kabul. He was excited about coming to our hotel and operating from an elevated position, with large Yagi antennas and good amplifiers. We talked a lot about security issues and the various events going on in the region. Jim gave us very clear & explicit security guidelines for us to follow.

In the next few days, I would ship a significant amount of our equipment to Jim at his location in the “Green Zone” of Kabul. I would ship some larger items to our hotel to be held upon our arrival. Shipping to Kabul is expensive as you can imagine. It cost \$7000 to ship our gear to Kabul. We knew that we would have to leave some of it behind, but it felt good to know that Jim and others would benefit from our antennas and coax.

On April 26th, I received an email from Jim that he was back in Kabul and our amplifiers had arrived. He emailed me a picture of the two of us sitting in his “shack” at his home in Santa Rosa.

The next day, I was stunned to learn in the news that Jim and eight other NATO trainers were killed in an attack by an Afghan pilot at their base in the Kabul airport. It was hard for me to imagine what had transpired because Jim told me that he felt safe in Kabul and enjoyed his work very much.

Jim’s sudden death brought our trip to Kabul into question. Jim had become our friend, adviser and honorary team member. Jim’s family helped me get in touch with his co-workers at the NATO base. They conveyed to me that Jim was so excited about our DXpedition and was really eager to see us succeed in our plans. Jim’s co-workers offered to step in and assume the role that Jim was playing and help us come to Kabul if we were still interested. I checked with my team overnight and the next day I relayed that we would still like to come and that we were dedicating our DXpedition in Jim’s memory. Jim’s co-workers were all retired military men like he was. The amount of camaraderie that was displayed was amazing. Jim had always seemed very congenial and unassuming. I was very surprised to learn after his death that he was a retired US Army Lt. Colonel.

A few days later, the Taliban would announce their “Spring Offensive”. I talked about that with the security experts and they said that is typical and rather meaningless. We continued to move forward with our plans to fly to Kabul in a few days. On Sunday night, we learned that Osama Bin Laden was killed in a raid in his compound in Pakistan. I went to bed that night wondering if Kabul would erupt and derail our plans. On Monday, I was to fly with my group to Dubai and then onto Kabul. As I awakened to the news, I saw Americans celebrating in Times Square, West Point and other places. I knew that this would not be well received in the region we were travelling to, and I made the decision to cancel the DXpedition. We had always hoped to activate Afghanistan before the troop pullout and our dates of May 4th-16th were our best and only chance. We are greatly disappointed that our Afghanistan DXpedition did not happen, but I felt that there may be instances where our safety may be at risk. We were prepared in every way for this trip, greatly due to the assistance that Jim had given us. We knew however, that there would be circumstances that we could not control or foresee. We really did want this trip to happen, but we feel confident that we made the best decision with the changing situation that we were faced with.

Aftermath. We spent \$7000 to ship \$40,000 in equipment to Kabul. As of this writing, I am uncertain as to whether I can get any of it back or what the shipping charges would be to return the equipment. We are grateful for the generous donations and sponsors for this trip

and we are making every effort to recover any funds that we can obtain. We are now moving forward with our plans to activate the new country of the Republic of Southern Sudan for July, 2011.

T6PSE DXpedition Donation Refunds
The Intrepid-DX Group
3052 Wetmore Dr
San Jose, CA 95148 USA
paul at n6pse.com

Dear T6PSE DXpedition supporters:

Please accept our sincere regrets for having to cancel the DXpedition. This was a very difficult decision for us to make, particularly after we shipped all of our equipment to Afghanistan. We cancelled just hours before our flights to Kabul were to begin.

The tragic Death of Jim McLaughlin WA2EWE and the fear of reprisals for the killing of Osama Bin Laden made our security situation in Kabul very uncertain.

Due to our significant shipping costs, we do not have all of the donation money available to refund. The DXpedition team members have increased their contributions and at this time we are refunding 90% of all donation money that was received.

If this is not agreeable to you, please let me know.

Please accept our gratitude for donating to this DXpedition.

Sincerely,
Paul S. Ewing-N6PSE
Co-Leader T6PSE DXpedition.

Take The Time to Fill Out Your QSL Cards!

Just a quick heads up to those of us that have procrastinated filling out the DX QSL cards for the last month or so. Remember that the club meeting is just a week away and I will be looking to send a batch of QSL cards to the Buro. So if you put it on your list of things to do, you will not be rushed at the last minute. Hope to see you then.

73, Dick, W6KM

Electronics Flea Market in May Rescheduled

The May flea market has been rescheduled for **May 21st**, the third Saturday, instead the usual second Saturday. See <http://www.electronicfleamarket.com/schedule>.

IDXC 2011 Photos

Photos By N6ZS:



K6MM



K6MM, K6KLY Delivering Prize



N6TV



N0AX



G7VJR - Author of ClubLog



K6YP, N6SJ



K3LP, N6PSE

Photos By N6TV:



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ND2T, W6OAT, XE2K, K6RB, Other Contest Forum Attendees



NI6T filming for recuperating NW6P, K6ANP



ND2T



W6EB, N6BV



PY5EG/PP5EG, K6IDX, W6RGG, WC6H



KX9X, K3LR



W6NF, K7MKL, K6TD, K6TU



JA1WSX, JE2K



W6CYX, W9KNI



NA6G, W6DPD, K6MI



N6DQ Operating Special Event Station N6V



N6RC, WC6H



K6YL

NCDXC Members Needed In ClubLog!

About Club Log

Introduction by Michael G7VJR

Club Log is a web-based application that analyses log files from radio amateurs all over the world. Using the logs, Club Log offers you a wide range of reports for your own benefit, and identifies large scale trends from the sum of all activity in the database.

If you participate in Club Log by uploading your log you will receive:

- Personal **DXCC reports** and league tables
- **Detailed analysis** of your log, using researched DXCC information
- **Zone charts** for your log, again based on detailed research
- A **personal timeline** of your activity (DXCCs per year, band and mode info)
- Your own **log search tool**, eg. to link from your web page or QRZ profile
- A filtered **DX Cluster** which only tells you about DX you still 'need'
- A say in the Club Log **most wanted report**: your log is part of the trend data
- Access to **propagation and activity predictions**, using everyone's logs
- **QSL suggestions** to help you send out just the cards you need
- Satisfaction from taking part in and improving a free DXing resource.



Michael G7VJR - Author of Club Log



Alan 5B4AHJ - Database Manager

T31A Leaderboard - Band/Slots of Registered NCDXC Members

1	K6MM	18
2	K6TA	17
3	K6KO	17
4	K6RIM	17
5	K6XN	14
6	N6NKT	6
7	AE6RR	6
8	W6OPO	5
9	KC6AWX	5
10	K6TD	5

- 11 [W6PK](#) 4
- 12 [I2VGV](#) 3
- 13 [K6PU](#) 3
- 14 [N6BM](#) 2
- 15 [N3RC](#) 2

ClubLog DX Leagues - We're Down at #19

Position	Club Name	Members in Club Log	Average Years QRV	Average DXCCs	Average slots
1	RRDXA - Rhein Ruhr DX Association	31	19	195	1118
2	CARS - Cyprus Amateur Radio Society	12	9	188	863
3	TCDXA - Twin City DX Association	35	19	182	812
4	FRA - Føroyskir Radio Amatørar	12	14	173	712
5	GMDX - Scotland's DX Association	58	12	172	932
6	URE - Union de Radioaficionados Españoles	32	13	172	881
7	GDXF - German DX Foundation	65	14	171	981
8	BCC - Bavarian Contest Club	31	17	171	943
9	FOC - First Class Operators Club	36	14	169	1062
10	CDXC - Clipperton DX Club	66	12	169	855
11	PMTDX - Purple Mug Team DX Group	17	5	168	634
12	CDXC - Chiltern DX Club	226	16	162	820
13	SSA - Föreningen Sveriges Sändareamatörer	24	16	161	802
14	EUDXF - European DX Foundation	26	12	155	774
15	ARI - Associazione Radioamatori Italiani	83	12	149	711
16	RSGB - Radio Society of Great Britain	266	14	147	709
17	LWDXG - Lake Wettern DX Group	10	16	146	745
18	BARTG - British Amateur Radio Teledata Group	40	11	146	569
19	NCDXC - Northern California DX Club	20	19	142	625
20	30M Digi Group	121	12	139	585
21	G-QRP Club	31	13	136	631
22	ARRL - American Radio Relay League	445	14	128	607
23	DigitalRadio Club	26	11	125	517

**You Can Help Move Up Our ClubLog DX League Standing
 Register at <http://www.clublog.org> and Upload Your Logs
 Questions? Get Answers on NCDXC's Chat Email List**

Tribute to Jim McLaughlin WA2EWE

Jim McLaughlin loved “being the DX”. In a meeting with him only a week before his death, he told me that he loved his two year civilian contracting assignment with the ISAF/NATO forces in Kabul. He enjoyed teaching and mentoring the Afghan Air Force officers. I laughed when he told me that he would try to avoid going flying with them. His work was “on the ground”.

He loved getting up early in the morning and working CW or RTTY. On the very rare days when propagation would allow, he could work North America and that was really exciting to him. His call sign was T6AF. He printed his own QSL cards from his desk in Camp Eggers and sent cards out almost daily. Jim loved tweaking his antennas and getting them to perform at their optimum levels. I think the only aspect of Amateur Radio that Jim didn't love was operating “phone” or with a microphone.

One morning, we were conversing on Skype and we were enjoying a very nice CW opening to North America in late February. When there were no more CW takers I asked him if he wanted to try phone. He grumbled a bit about having to pull the microphone out of the drawer. He said that every other operator in Afghanistan does phone, so he wanted to be different and focus on RTTY which was his favorite mode. I would learn at Jim's funeral from his friends and peers just how much he loved ham radio and in how much he was looking forward to being a part of our DXpedition, which was planned to start only a few days before Jim was killed. Jim was looking forward to having a bigger signal with the assistance of an amplifier. He really liked the ACOM 1010 that I shipped to him and was briefly able to get it on the air just hours before he was killed.

Years earlier, Jim operated from Iraq as YI9EWE. He was kept fairly busy as a US Army Lt. Colonel so he wasn't as active in Iraq as he was able to be in Afghanistan. We talked a lot about family, service, the Boy Scouts and Amateur Radio. Jim was a man of principle, high ideals and honor. It was my privilege to know him and work him.

Jim was laid to rest in the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery on Monday, May 9th.

Paul Ewing-N6PSE



George "Wes" Johnston - W6YWH Silent Key

George Wesley Johnston of Mariposa, California, died on April 6. He resided in Mariposa since the late 70's and was 88 years old when he passed away.

George pursued amateur ham radio as a hobby which over the span of his life, managed to contact and receive a postcard from every country in the world where he contacted as a ham. North Korea was the hardest, but finally he did make contact and receive a card before his passing. He had DXCC #1 Honor Roll.

73,
Charles McConnell W6DPD



2010-2011 Northern California DX Club Officers:

President: Richard Crouch, N6RC
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Secretary: John Eisenberg, K6YP
Treasurer: Bob Lanning, W6OPO
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DXer Editor Phil Verinsky, W6PK
(dxer at ncdxc.org)
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Database Admin Risto Kotalampi, W6RK

Club address:
NCDXC
Box 608
Menlo Park, CA 94026-0608

Club URL: <http://www.ncdxc.org>
Club Repeater: W6TI/R
Frequency/offset: 147.360 Mhz +, pl 110.9
Trustee: Richard Crouch, N6RC
Control Operator: Richard Crouch, N6RC
Maintenance: Peter Grabosky, W6OOL
Club simplex: 147.54 MHz (suggested)
Thurs. Net OTR: 8 pm local time.
Net Manager: Russ Bentson, K6KLY

W6TI DX Bulletins:

ARRL Pacific Division Director Bob Vallio, W6RGG, transmits DX information at 0200 UT every Monday (Sunday evening local time) on both 7.016 and 14.002 MHz.

About the DXer:

The DXer is published monthly by the Northern California DX Club and sent to all club members via the web. Please obtain permission from the author to re-publish any article in this publication.

See You At The May 19 Meeting