

A DX and Contest-minded Amateur Radio Club serving the California coast north of the Golden Gate Bridge

VOLUME 30

CLUB OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT:

Alan Eshleman, K6SRZ 210 Nila Mae Way Penngrove, CA 94951 H (510) 540-8790 doctore@well.com

VICE PRESIDENT:

Jim Robinson, Jr., KE6UAR 16820 Lauri Lane Occidental, CA 95465 H (707) 874-3958 jcr3jr@yahoo.com

SECRETARY:

Doug Bender, WW6D 3638 Hemlock Court Santa Rosa, CA 95403 H (707) 526-5131 ww6d@aol.com

TREASURER:

Jim Selmi, K6JS 7470 Monique Place Rohnert Park, CA 94928 H (707) 664-9769 jselmi@hotmail.com

DIRECTORS:

Al Burnham, K6RIM 409 Summit Drive Corte Madera, CA 94925 H (415) 924-6783 k6rim@pacbell.net

Ron Castro, N6IE 1355 N. Dutton Avenue, Suite 225 Santa Rosa, CA 95401 ron@n6ie.com

Bob Magnani, K6QXY 1500 Los Alamos Road Santa Rosa, CA 95409 H (707) 538-3801 k6qxy@aol.com

CONTEST CHAIRMAN & WEBMASTER:

Doug Bender, WW6D 3638 Hemlock Court Santa Rosa, CA 95403 H (707) 526-5131 ww6d@aol.com

EDITOR:

Steve Bertsch, K6SAB 673 Plum Street Novato, CA 94945 H (415) 898-5159 sabertsch@gmail.com



NUMBER 7

JULY 2009

Visit our Web Site at http://www.redxa.com/

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at Mister McGoo's Restaurant, Petaluma. If you need directions, please call one of the club officers.

6 pm — Social Hour in the Lounge 7 pm — Dinner and Meeting 8 pm — Program

PROGRAM: Our Program for the evening will feature a video of our Field Day 2009 by our President, Alan K6SRZ.

REDXA President's Report

After a hot shower and a good night's sleep, I am looking back on the 2009 REDXA/MARS Field Day. By all accounts it was a grand success: we had an excellent turnout of operators, our QSO totals were up over last year, and nobody got hurt. As the cliche goes, a good time was had by all.

This was my first Field Day with REDXA and I was mightily impressed. Setup went smoothly with the only snag being a temperamental 2-element SteppIR. After an emergency telephone consultation with our resident SteppIR expert Chuck, N6OJ, the offending antenna was brought down and a single broken wire in the control circuitry was identified and soldered back in place. With the antenna back up and aimed East, it helped us gather more than a thousand CW QSOs.

Our overall QSO total is about 3,000. The total was augmented by an extremely successful GOTA operation--using my own club and contest call W6PZ-- that contributed more than 400 QSOs. I had to smile late in the evening when I walked by the GOTA station and heard the operators running stations rather than doing the expected search and pounce. And adding to the GOTA point total–a hundred point bonus–was Josh's (W6XU)

6 year-old daughter Nikole [the spelling is inspired by Nikola Tesla], resplendent in her dramatic face paint (see the pictures at our next meeting) handing out QSOs on 20 M SSB.

"How old did you say you were?" asked one of her contacts.

"Six," she said, and without missing a beat added "CQ CQ W6PapaZulu..."

Right next door to the GOTA station, the SSB station logged 1500 QSOs with the rate-o-meter going over 100 per hour for several stretches and averaging more than 60 per hour for the entire event [I wanted to say "the entire contest..." but, as the ARRL says, this is not a contest. Yeah. Right.

The CW station contributed more than 1000 QSOs. CW had some impressive runs on 40 meters, demonstrating once again that a simple vertical with a few radials placed next to a body of salt water is a great performer.

One of the pleasures of Field Day is the chance to get to know each other a little better. I may be the president of REDXA for this year, but I'm a relative newcomer to the North Bay ham radio scene so I always appreciate the chance to have an eyeball QSO and to place a face and a name with a call sign. I also appreciated the chance to recruit a speaker for one of our fall meetings—more of that to follow in next month's column.

There have been a few postings to some of the other amateur radio reflectors to which I subscribe in which the posters grumble about the lack of skill of some of the operators that they encounter during Field Day. Now I can certainly understand the impulse: if you're a seasoned contest operator, it can be painful to copy a slow, halting CW exchange filled with errors, startovers, and extraneous content [a couple of the operators I worked actually sent in CW "please copy..."]. But to grumble about this is to miss the point. Field Day is all about learning, teaching, and preparation. Give credit to the operator who sent that laborious CW exchange: he (or she) was actually communicating by Morse code. And give credit to all those folks throughout the USA and Canada who took less than 24 hours to convert a city park or a beach or a parking lot at the Marin Rod and Gun Club into an off-thegrid communications center able to communicate all around the world.

I am editing the video I shot at Field Day and will have something to show at our next meeting. In the meantime, you can go to

http://marilyn.mediatunnel.com/album.php?a=249, our own N6VAW's Web site, and see the excellent

photos she took at the event. Jim Robinson, KE6UAR, who so capably coordinated all our efforts [preparation!], has contributed another Field Day report elsewhere in this newsletter.

The second Wednesday comes early this month. I'll see you all at Mr. McGoo's on July 8th. In the meantime, I am editing video as fast as I can.

73, Alan/K6SRZ

Treasurer Report

by Jim, K6JS (out of town)

REDXA TREASURER'S REPORT

4/30/09 Balance Forward INCOME	l	\$3,011.49
Dues Raffle TOTAL INCOME	20.00 21.00	41.00
EXPENSES Insurance (Marsh) USPS - PO Box	320.00 58.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES 5/31/09 Ending Balance	20.00	(378.00) \$2,674.49

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING JUNE 2009

by Doug, WW6D

NO MEETING WAS HELD.

Field Day 2009 Photos

Marilyn N6VAW was kind enough to make her photos of Field Day 2009 available to all of us so soon after the event. Here is a link to the photos:

http://marilyn.mediatunnel.com/album.php?a=249

Thank you Marilyn for capturing everything. Great photos.

Jim KE6UAR

JUNE MEETING MINUTES

by Marilyn, N6VAW

Board Members Present:

Alan Eshleman, K6SRZ, President, Jim Robinson, Jr., KE6UAR, Vice President, Jim Selmi, K6JS, Treasurer, Ron Castro, N6IE, Director, Bob Magnini, K6QXY, Director

Absent: Doug Bender, WW6D, Secretary, Al Burnham, K6RIM, Director

Minutes taken by: Marilyn Bagshaw, N6VAW

Alan, K6SRZ, called the meeting to order; minutes & treasurer's report were approved as written in Sunspots.

Guests introduced: Rick Sealock, N6RXA, and Pia Ilonummi, N6PIA

New Member approved: Rick Sealock, N6RXA

New Business: None

Announcements: Josh, W6XU, reminded us of the contest this coming weekend

Alan, K6KLL, hopes that all of us will pick up brochures from Bruce, W6OSP, and distribute them to our local high schools, someone on the staff, to stimulate amateur radio among the younger generation.

Alan also acknowledged Chuck, N6OJ, for finding our current meeting location, Mr. McGoo's, to a round of applause.

Fred, N6YEU, collected \$76 in raffle proceeds. The winner of \$38 was Alan, K6KLL.

The remainder of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion and decisions surrounding Field Day, led by Jim, KE6UAR, REDXA FD Chairman.

Topics covered:

Stations:	GOTA, SB & CW, possibly a RTTY
	station
Antennas:	2-Element SteppIR, 3-Element
	SteppIR, Shorty Forty, 2-inverted Vs
Schedule:	Friday, June 26, 1100 hrs. set up begins
	Saturday, June 27, 1100 hrs. begin 24
	hour operation
	Sunday, June 28, 11:00 hrs., begin take
	down
Food:	Marilyn, N6VAW, lunch for set up
	crew on Friday
	Dave, KG6TČJ, & Jim, KE6VGV,

Special Event:	dinner Saturday, breakfast Sunday Jim, K6JS, has invited Search &
1	Rescue
Video:	Alan, K6SRZ, will capture our Field
	Day operation

Contesting and DX News by Doug, WW6D

Dave AA6YX continues to be recognized for his contesting spirit. Last month, he received the plaque for "Outside 7th Area Single-Op Low-Power Mixed" in the 7th Call Area QSO Party. Nice going, Dave!

Field Day 2009 is now history but truly a memorable one! Look for a summary by Jim KE6UAR elsewhere in this issue.

The last major DX contest of the season is this month, July 11 and 12 -- the IARU HF World Championship. While not quite the level of the CQ WW contests, this event generates a lot of activity, especially in Europe.

ARRL June VHF QSO Party

	Category SOHP	Qs 249	Grids 60	Score 15,720	
CQ WV	W WPX CW				

Call	Category	Qs	Pfxs	Score
N6YEU	SOABLP	181	157	74,104
	(Tri/Wires/A)			
N6IE	SOABHP(Á)	970	484	904,596
K6RIM	SOABHP(A)	601	390	526,500
WW6D	SOSB(20m)HP	132	115	30,475

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Jul 8	* REDXA Monthly Meeting
July 11-12	IARU HF World Championship
Aug 1-2	NA QSO Party CW
Aug 12	* REDXA Monthly Meeting
Aug 15-16	NA QSO Party SSB
Aug 29	* REDXA SFYC Social
Sep 9	* REDXA Monthly Meeting
Sep 26-28	CQ WW RTTY
Oct 3-4	California QSO Party
Oct 14	* REDXA Monthly Meeting
Oct 24-25	CQ WW SSB
Nov 7-8	ARRL Sweepstakes CW
Nov 11	* REDXA Monthly Meeting
Nov 21-22	ARRL Sweepstakes SSB
Nov 28-29	CQ WW CŴ
Dec 9	* REDXA Monthly Meeting

NCDXF Press Release

26 June 2009

From: NCDXF

Subject: W0YK, Ed Muns, appointed to NCDXF Advisory Board

The Northern California DX Foundation Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Ed Muns, W0YK, as an Advisor to the NCDXF Board of Directors. Ed's primary duty, along with Doug Bender, WW6D, will be working with the NCDXF website: http://www.ncdxf.org

Ed became interested in ham radio in high school, working 40 meter CW into Asia in the early morning hours before school. During college, his license expired and he rejoined DXing ten years later in the early part of his 32-year career at Hewlett-Packard. Ed's interest in DXing quickly morphed into contesting where a lot of DX participates. All of his ham radio time today is spent contesting, chasing DX and joining DXpeditions occasionally. Favoring CW, Ed can sometimes be found on SSB as well.

Thanks to his contest club's (NCCC) campaign to win the club competition gavel in the 2004 ARRL RTTY Round-Up, Ed got started in that mode. He holds the SOHP world record in the contest, operating with his P49X call sign, having broken the world record in 2006, 2007 and 2009. In CQ WPX RTTY, Ed also holds the SOHP world record, having broken it in 2007, 2008 and 2009. In 2008, he operated the CQWW RTTY contest, winning SOHP.

Ed was on the YK0A team in 1994 and has operated as 6Y0A and 6Y4A as well as holding the 7J1ACJ call sign. From Aruba, where he holds a permanent visitor license as P49X, he has operated nearly a dozen times, primarily CW and RTTY contests. He has operated from the HC8N mega-station in a M2 operation in the CQWW RTTY, winning the world. He recently joined the Radio Expeditions team, of VP6DX fame, on the management team with specific focus on funding.

Ed has taught the RTTY curriculum at Contest University at Dayton in 2008 and 2009 as well as at Contest Academy at Visalia in 2009. He is the contest manager and log checker for the NCJ NA RTTY Sprint and both CQ RTTY contests: CQWW and CQ WPX. He serves on the CQ Contest Advisory Board. For the NCCC, Ed manages the NCCC, CQP and NCCC Sprint web sites as well as the club's various email reflectors. He has published several articles in the NCJ. be needed to keep the NCDXF website a dynamic and useful website for DXers.

The NCDXF Board of Directors wants to thank the many individuals who have contributed support to NCDXF. We realize that these financial times have put a strain on many of us, but think about the thrill of working a "new one" or band counter and its impact on your country totals – priceless, right? If you are currently not a member, please consider contributing to support future DXpeditions.

Since May 2008, NCDXF has provided financial help to the following DXpeditions:

4W6R Timor Lorosa'e VK9XWW Christmas Island VK9CJW Cocos-Keeling OJ0B Market Reef VK9DWX Willis Island A5100A Bhutan E44M Palestine (Bethlehem) FW5RE Wallis & Fortuna K5D Desecheo Island VK9LA Lord Howe Island S04R Western Sahara

Hopefully you worked one or more of these DXpeditions!

Contributions can now easily be made on-line using our SSL secured web server: HYPERLINK "https://www.ncdxf.org/donate" https://www.ncdxf.org/donate

Glenn Johnson, W0GJ Vice President, NCDXF

Sitting Around The Global Campfire

In the June 1994 issue under the heading of the Op-Ed column I read an article which really hit the nail on the head as far as my philosophy of amateur radio. I printed out a copy and have saved it all these years. I recently sent an email to the author, Jock Elliott/KB2GONM asking for permission to reprint it in Sunspots. Having not received a response I basically thought "screw you" I'll print it anyway! His article really says it all as to my reason for ham radio and I'm sure many of you also. Thanks, Fred/N6YEU

As the son of a professional soldier, later turned itinerant teacher, I've seen enough of packing crates and moving boxes to last a lifetime. A medley of new schools, new friends and new locales was interesting as a child, but it has underscored my need as an adult for deep roots and stability.

Yet, at odd times, my contented life as a husband,

We think Ed will have a lot of insight for what will

father and high-tech publicist is occasionally punctuated by vagabond cravings. Without warning, ancient wanderer genes kick in, triggering an itch to travel beyond the horizon, to share a campfire in some exotic place, to swap stories with other carefree spirits. Still, there's nothing I treasure more than an evening with my family by the familiar hearth. Ambiguity reigns supreme: I'm a nomad who wants to be home for dinner, an adventurer who'd rather not stray far from the armchair.

Radio has come to my rescue. It lets me wander the globe at will from the cottage on Pickering Lane. My family can even share the adventure if they want.

For the broad view, international broadcasting is perfect: I can hearrr the news from across the oceans---direct, without the interference of stateside news analysts---virtually any time I want. BBC, Radio France International, Deutsche Welle, Radio China International, Radio Habana Cuba: I have my choice of languages, cultures, perspectives and correspondents. I can sample the smorgasbord of world events from any angle I choose.

Yet, good as it is, international broadcasting has one major limitation --- as a listen-only medium, it lacks the personal touch. I can't interact with the person on the other side of the microphone.

Fortunately, there's Amateur Radio. With a few vards of aluminum tubing, a modest investment in electronic gear and enough electricity to power a bright reading lamp, I can set off on the Great Adventure on my own. I key the mike, call CQ and launch into the unknown. There's no telling where my signal will be heard or who will hear it. When another ham returns my call, or I respond to a signal, it could be from down the street, across the continent or half a world away.

We're like traders on an ancient caravan route, not knowing what chance encounter may take place at the next watering hole. Nomads of the airwayes, vagabonds of the ether, we travel light --- all we have to offer others is our call sign, a signal report and what we might reveal of ourselves. We meet on the airwaves and gather at the global campfire. We can choose to tarry by the fire and swap yarns, or we can give the radio amateur's version of a nod and acknowledgement. But whatever the exchange, the currency has been a moment of mutual understanding and connectedness.

I savor the different accents I hear on the air. Often I try to picture the other person I am talking to and what his or her physical environment is like. Sometimes I look in an atlas to try to get a better idea. Having swapped pictures a time or two with other hams, I find my imaginings are almost always wrong, but the exercise is fun nonetheless.

Despite the efforts of the ARRL to cloak radio in rational scientific explanation, the truth is deeper: Radio is almost magical in the way it affords us the opportunity to communicate with people we would probably not otherwise meet. I used to believe that contesting and rapid-fire DXing were a supreme waste of the power of Amateur Radio, but I've changed my thinking. When a contact takes place, whether it's a long conversation or a quick swapping of signal reports, whether the signals are booming or so difficult to copy that it requires endless patience just to exchange call signs, in that instant, something special happens --we enlarge the global campfire.

In his excellent memoir, Phillip Caputo relates a tradition of the desert nomads of North Africa. The wanderers of the desert hold that the hospitality of the campfire is sacrosanct. No matter what bitter enemies you might be, if you ride up and claim the campfire, the keeper of the fire is obligated to grant it to you. And you, in turn, are obligated to visit no ill on your host --- you are an honored guest at the fire. When you meet again, you may choose to do each other in, but not when the hospitality of the fire has been claimed and granted.

I think this is a tradition that should be honored in ham radio. When we fellow Gypsies of the airwayes meet at the global campfire, through long-haul DX or the local repeater, we should treat each other as honored guests, regardless of licence class, irrespective of previous radio background.

In listening around the bands, it seems that most hams behave that way, treating each other with extraordinary courtesy. A few, however, do not, and I think it hurts all of us. So, when we meet again on the air, I hope we will offer each other the hospitality of the campfire and extend it to others. Look for me, I'll be the one in the armchair.....

Field Dav 2009 by Jim, KE6UAR

Now we can rest, we have ARRL FD 2009 behind us and lots of memories.

We had a great turn out from Marin Amateur Radio Club and REDXA members to set-up, operate and tear-down our 2A contest Stations. We had a good dinner Saturday evening with visitors and a good breakfast Sunday morning for the operators.

Our visit from the Marin Urban Search and Rescue was enjoyed by many and Scott and Dave enjoyed visiting our operating stations. Dave particularly recalled with fond memories seeing his uncle operate during his youth.

Josh, W6XU brought his daughter Nicole who operated and got us some extra points for youth participation. She is only 6 and did a great job. Josh will have some competition for his ham shack in a few years.

The CW station logged over 1000 qso's, SSB logged over 1400 gso's and Gota over 450 gso's. Although we were prepared for RTTY, our digital effort was our NTS Traffic handling. Jerry WA6BXU provided

us with packet to send a message to Bill KH6GJV our SF Section Manager and 10 other lucky hams for 222 points. It is too early to give the exact numbers and our calculated score. Hopefully by meeting time.

I'm sure several of the hams taking pictures will be sharing them in the days to come, and Alan K6SRZ will have his promised video at July's club meeting. I wasn't doing photography this year so will depend on others to get copies of photos for documentation for my submission to ARRL for the contest.

I want to thank Ron N6IE, our SSB Station Captain, Bruce W6OSP, our CW Station Captain, Rich W6UDS our Liaison with Marin and Dave KG6TCJ, the Marin Cochair and Gota Station Captain for all their help.

I want to thank everyone for their help, assistance, knowledge, support and participation in all manners for a great Field Day effort. We couldn't have done it without you!

Random Thoughts about Field Day 2009 and Ideas for Next Year by Ron, N6IE

Great planning, coordination and an amazing turn-out helped propel our Field Day efforts to stellar levels! As good as we were, we can learn from this year's experience and apply what we learn to next year. Here are a few thoughts I have as the sunburn fades slowly from the back of my neck:

We found that the SSB station still had **interference** from CW when operating on the same band with the Steppirs located in line with each other. I measured an astounding +20 dBm (that's 100 mW!) on the SSB station antenna. It's not overload...just that the solid-state circuitry on the CW transceiver probably tranmits self-generated, broad-band noise of around 100 dB below the carrier that extends to the limits of the external band-pass filters we used, which would show as -80 dBm on the SSB antenna. That's just below S-8, which is exactly what we were reading on both the Orion II and the Perseus SDR!

We think that when we did the first test the 2-L may have been backward and pointing right at the 3L. When we turned the antennas 90 degrees so that they were "tip to tip", the interference was negligible. If the Front-to-Side ratio is about 30 dB each antenna, 60 dB less signal would have cut the CW station noise to -140 dBm, which is below the RX noise floor. Even if F/S is only 20 dB, the noise would be -120 dBm, which is about S-1, well below the generator hash.

So next year, we want the antennas side-by-side, with a line between them running 350-170 degrees T and

the beams pointing 80 degrees. I measured the spacing of the antennas this year and found them to be 170' apart. If we put the 2L in front of the CW shack (in the east picnic table area) and the 3L as close to the water as possible, we can get nearly 200' separation.

The **2L Steppir had a wiring problem** that caused it to be erected three times before it was fixed, and even then, we weren't sure if we got it right. We need to go over the entire wiring detail and internal mechanics, possibly replacing connectors and planning for normal stresses encountered while assembling and raising it.

The **Shorty Forty** had excellent SWR on the ground, but went up to 2:1 when raised. Frequency was right at 7.190, but we saw high impedance at the end of 100' of RG-213 when raised. At the lowest SWR point, I saw 96 +j0 Ohms which should correlate to around 44 +j35 at the feed-point according to TLW. I'll let the experts conjecture about why that was, and why we had to set the element lengths for the CW band. We did find a bad balun, and I'm not so sure the replacement, an old BN-86, was fully up to par, but it worked. Need more research and testing on this one!

The **40 meter vertical** worked super for the CW station, and we found that there was no problem when GOTA ran 40 phone at the same time. Maybe another vertical for 20-10 next year?

We had a **problem with the server** that caused the CW station to lose its database, so we had to restore it and stop using the server. We believe the problem was that the server got too hot. The temps were in the high 90's and the sun was beating right on the server and the wireless switch. Next year, we should put it in the back corner of the room. An external fan would help too...and a couple extras for the ops!

The **office chair** I brought was superb after I nearly wrecked my back last year with a junky folding chair. Definitely will bring that again next year! I opted not the bring the Swing Chair since it takes some getting used to and requires adjustment for each individual operator...would have been a distraction. Besides, my \$100 Staples 'Herman Miller knock-off' did the job.

We never got a chance to run **RTTY**, but since we were always able to keep our Q-rate above at least 50 per hour, there was really no need. Maybe if we ever run 3A.

SSB QSO's improved from about 1,100 Q's last year to 1,540 this year, largely due the exceptionally skilled operators (!) and partly due to 15 being open until nearly midnight and not having to share 20 with CW

(interference problem).

The SSB Schedule Board and changing ops at the top of each hour worked very well this year and gave everyone a good chance to operate and plenty of time to relax between shifts. Special thanks to Dave AA6YX, President Alan K6SRZ, Frank KD6KVL, Pia N6PIA, Matt KE6LPO, Josh, W6XU, Fred N6YEU, Jim (our fearless leader of FD!) KE6UAR, Ron AF6MO and Jerry WA6BXV who all got to KB on the SSB station!

WA6BXV did a great job with his 2-meter packet and was able to not only deliver the ten QTC's we needed for 100 bonus points, but he sent one to me that showed up on my I-phone in less than one minute! Ain't technology great?

It was gratifying to see the **GOTA** station manned (...and wo-manned!) nearly around the clock with both operators and mentors. Watching **Josh's 6-year-old daughter Nikole** working stations was a real kick!

We're all anxiously awaiting the **"Official Field Day Video"** being prepared by **K6SRZ** that will be premiered at the July meeting. Today, Mr. McGoo's...tomorrow, HBO!

This was probably the best Field Day in years. We couldn't have asked for nicer weather, and it was a

673 Plum Street Novato, CA 94945

MEETING: JULY 8, 2009



great social event, a learning experience, a teambuilding exercise and it bettered our operating and technical skills, readiness and resourcefulness...all of which could be called on **"when all else fails"! KB!!**

Monthly San Francisco Section News Summary

Here is the link for the News Summary: http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=SF

