

SUNSPOTS



REDWOOD EMPIRE DX ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 750834, Petaluma, CA 94975

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July 2022

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Meeting Announcement

No meeting this month. See below

President's Commentary

I have nothing on the books for our July meeting and so we are cancelling the gathering until August.

As for future meetings, I still think we should consider only quarterly meetings in person. My reason is that maybe with fewer meetings the attendance would be greater. The sad reality is that there are fewer hams in our club, our attendance and participation is dwindling. Something needs to change if we are to remain as a club.

We are not alone in this predicament. I've talked to NCCC, the San Francisco ARC and the Mother Lode Club (MLDXCC). They are all having the same issues with attendance and getting people to step up in many areas. I have August/October speakers on the books and hopefully one more ready to commit. How shall we proceed beyond August?



REDXA/MARS Field Day...Back at Last!

It has been three years since our last Field Day event at the Marin Rod & Gun club, but after enduring the pandemic lock-down and generally mediocre band conditions, we came back in a big way in June, 2022.

Looking back on the event, I have some mixed feelings. First off, we were a bit shy on volunteers for setup on Friday, but with perfect weather and a reduced antenna farm from previous years, we were able to pull it off with no disasters, and we could have used several more operators during the 24 hours of the event, especially at night.

Our normal compliment of antennas included that 2-element 40 meter "shorty-forty" beam for SSB, but without access to a large trailer, we were unable to bring it, so instead, we put up the tower and substituted a 40-meter inverted V that I home-brewed on the spot. Luck was with me...without any adjusting, it resonated at exactly 7200 kHz with a 1.1:1 SWR! As it turned out, we never actually used it since conditions on 20 and 15 were so

good, that we only used those two bands on SSB. Another 40 meter inverted V that was brought by Alan, K6SRZ was rigged on the CW mast and bagged us 85 CW QSO's.

We were able to operate the two SteppIR 3-element beams, although with a strange twist. Fred, N6YEU tested the control boxes as his home QTH prior to Field Day and one of them 'let out its magic smoke' and went 'toes up'. To add to the problem, SteppIR no longer supports the old Fluid Motion devices and my spare that I brought, for some yet-unknown reason would not connect to the beams. But Field Day is about on-the-fly solutions, so we were able to shuttle the one working box back and forth between the CW and SSB stations whenever band changes were needed. We will be in the hunt for a replacement box, or a fix for the reason why my controller didn't work.

The Story of the BigIR

After years of trying, we finally solved the mystery of the SteppIR BigIR that had been plagued with poor SWR, especially on the low bands. In the past, we have tried a variety of ground systems and this year, after reading the extensive studies done by Rudy, N6LF, I decided to try a ground system made of fifteen 33' long radials, each wound on a home-brewed wooden reel for easy deployment, removal and storage. We set out to use the antenna on the FT8 station and found OK SWR on 15 and 10, but on 40 at night the SWR was awful and required an external tuner. QSO's were few and far between on all bands. What was wrong? I went home Saturday night to get some sleep, and actually dreamed about the situation. After extensive tossing and turning, I suddenly woke up at 4:00 AM in a sweat wondering if we had connected the main ground wire from the antenna to the beautiful new ground system. When I got to the site a few hours later, I discovered that we had not! After connecting the single wire, I checked the SWR on 40. 1.0:1 with no tuner. Wow! We finally made it work! I sent out a CQ FD and got an immediate response from Indonesia and Australia as well as a few state-side stations. This antenna will be a keeper for years to come in the future.

Operators were generally in short supply, but we did manage to keep operating for all but a few hours overnight with a total of 1,549 QSO's in the log. I'm happy to report that take down and cleanup was well attended and we were gone from the site shortly after 1:00 pm.

Lunch was available on Friday thanks to Marylin K6VAW. We had pizza delivered for Saturday lunch and there was enough left over for dinner that night. On Sunday morning, our friends at MARS brought bagels and hot coffee and later had a delicious catered breakfast was delivered with quiche, fresh fruit, and yogurt.

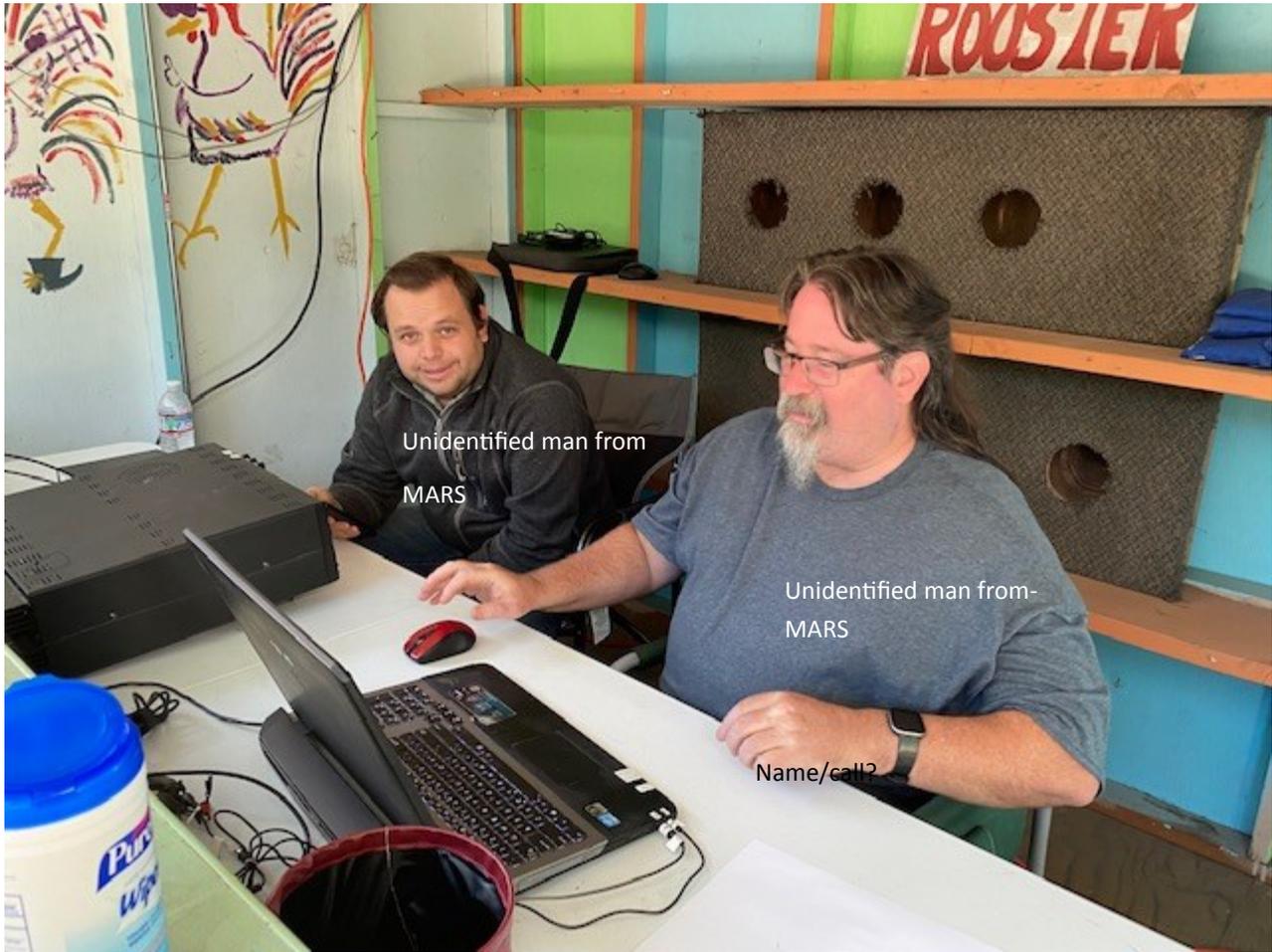
Where Do We Go from Here?

The somewhat anemic attendance leaves me wondering what will our Field Day events be like in the future or will there even be any? Next year will mark 60 years since my first Field Day, and I'm not ready to throw in the towel yet, but will we be able to continue with the same strong showing we have done prior to the pandemic? I realize that we are all getting older and more limited in our physical capabilities and there is no denying that Field Day comes at the prime time of summer when we all have a lot of other things, especially family things, that are competing for our time. There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into Field Day every year, not to mention the cost which exceeds \$2,000, split between us and MARS. With only 19 participants that I was able to count this year, that works out to over \$100 per person.

During the next year, we should have a discussion about what we want our Field Day participation to look like. I'm open to all suggestions, including not having it at all. I would love to continue and if we can get the commitments, we need during the next several months, we continue with what I believe has been the most successful run of Field Day activity by any club in northern California, if not, in the entire west coast. Please feel free to give me your opinions at the upcoming meetings, by email or if you happened to hear me on the air or on 146.49 which I monitor from time-to-time.

73,

Ron N6IE



Unidentified man from
MARS

Unidentified man from-
MARS

Name/call?



Fred, N6YEU

Bart, KK6BC

N6YEU and



Josh, W6XU



Fred, N6YEU

We fought the law and the law won (exactly \$212)
Here follows the saga of how REDXA was held up for money.

Here, from Fred, N6YEU a summary of what's been happening:

As I'm sure most of you have seen the emails about our using a Bizzaro cartoon for a past Sun-spots without official permission. We were contacted by the company and we would face legal action if we didn't pay the fee or fine. Bill WX6B contacted them and they reduced the cost to \$212 which Bill paid through his personal PayPal account. I feel the club should reimburse him but need to get the OK from the other BOD members. This was an unfortunate incident but it seems we had no other recourse than to pay their exorbitant charge blood money!

Not everyone agreed, but the money was sent.

KJ6MKI wrote "I think this payment may have been wrong. One time use, not for profit, public interest. Let them litigate. Should have asked for legal opinion first. They know the cost of defending any action would far exceed the amount in question. At a minimum should have them/claimant on record for legal statutes and case laws."

Ron, N6IE wrote "Yes it's a racket, but. *these guys were legitimate (Google PicRights.com) and although they are not attorneys, they can refer the case to a US law firm for civil litigation for infringement of copyrights. Yes, it's a racket, but it's perfectly legal and it's become a cottage industry. They get agreements from publishers to allow them to enforce their rights, then use 'crawlers' like Google uses to find digital matches to images, videos, music, written material and even software and they can always find a lawyer who will take the case for a contingency fee. If they handed it to a lawyer, even if we had settled, we would have had to pay \$5,000 or more and if it went to trial, our legal fees alone would exceed \$100,000. We would likely lose and be on the hook for their legal fees as well as statutory damages assigned by the law which can be substantial. Of course the club wouldn't be able to pay that, but since we are not a corporation, they could collect the judgement from any or all of the individual members.*

As I commercial radio broadcaster, I'm familiar with this since many radio stations have been sued for using common album cover art of the artists they play on their websites. My company's lawyers have warned us repeatedly to use only material we have permission to use. "Fair Use" would likely not protect us and the cost for an attorney to look at this would have been way more than we wound up paying.

Not being a commercial enterprise does not shield members from liabilities unless the organization is a legitimate 501(c) corporation and even then it could still get sued for copyright infringement. For instance, Public Broadcasting System is a non-profit, but they can't broadcast an NFL game without permission although Fair Use may allow them to broadcast short snippets for news or documentary purposes.

NCCC in recent years became a 501(c)(3) for protection and so that they can accept tax-deductible donations. REDXA used to carry Errors and Omissions insurance but I'm not sure that they still do. You would need to ask your insurance agent about coverage by a home-owner's policy. I carry a 'personal umbrella' policy that might give me coverage, but I have never checked.

Ron, N6IE

For now, Bill will be reimbursed and "Sunspots will choose illustrations on a case-by-case basis.



Treasurer's Report

Balance as of 31 May: \$3,460.27

Expenses:

NCDXF Annual donation \$250

Second payment to Marin Rod and Gun Club \$425

key deposit to be returned to REDXA) \$100

Field Day food for Friday setup (Marilyn, N6VAW) \$50

Saturday evening food \$30

Balance on 31 June: \$2,244.73

Pending expenses:

Balance as of 31 May: #3,460.27

Pending expenses:

Field Day expense coming out during July:(to Ron N6IE for FD receipts/ costs) \$510.43

\$212.00 (reimbursement to WX6B Bill for the fine paid to the parent company for the unauthorized use of a Bizzaro cartoon in *Sunspots*.)

REDXA account balance as of 7 July is: \$1734.30

We did receive one family dues and one individual dues for a total of \$45.00 to add in.
Submitted by:

Fred N6YEU Treasurer

World traveler N6YEU

On July 19 my wife Debbie and I flying to Rome, Italy with our daughter and her girlfriend. We will be taking the train to Florence stopping there two days then north to near Lucca where we will be walking a segment of the Via Frangigena pilgrimage to Siena.

We will be covering 58 miles in 5 days of walking. A commercial company will carry our luggage and has booked rooms for us each night. We will spend 2 nights in Siena and then the girls will head home. Debbie and I will then take the train to Switzerland stopping in the small village in Vallemaggia near Locarno called Moghegno (where my grandfather came from) for 4 weeks. I will be bringing a small QRP radio (Xiegu 6100) but only expect QSOs with EU at best. I have also been invited to visit IW3IBK Simone who lives west of Venice. If I can guest op there I'll be a big gun.

I will be leaving the club checkbook with a responsible member before leaving. We are really looking forward to the great adventure!

73, Fred

