

# SUNSPOTS



## REDWOOD EMPIRE DX ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 750834, Petaluma, CA 94975

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

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

### MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

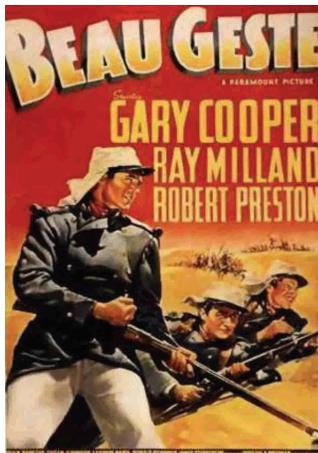
**Wednesday, October 14, 2009** at Mister McGoo's Restaurant, Petaluma. If you need directions, please call one of the club officers.

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

**PROGRAM: Our Program for the evening will be a video of Raul Island professionally produced by James Brooks 9V1YC.**

### REDXA President's Report

#### *Legion etrangere*



Having been on three major DXpeditions, I have a rule of never criticizing in public the behavior of anyone else's expedition. The reason is simple: unless one is actually present at the expedition site, it is impossible to know what is actually happening. It may seem, for example, that the expedition foolishly went QRT right in the middle of a great opening to your part of the world when, in fact, what really happened was a generator failure, a penguin knocking down an antenna, or God knows what else.

I am trying very hard to be faithful to this "prime directive" in the case of the FT5GA Glorioso Island DXpedition, but it's hard! Clearly, as of September 29 when I write this, something is happening on the island that is not so good for the world's DXing community—and this is especially so for those of us in Zone 3.

Now, full disclaimer: I *was* able to work FT5GA for DXCC #341. Further, I know that a few other members of our club were able to get through, mostly of 17M SSB.

But there are hints that this expedition is somehow unbalanced. When they are on the air, the tuners, the deliberate QRMers, and the DX cops are turning out in record numbers, a sure sign of widespread frustration. On the packet clusters, the nasty comments outnumber the actual spots and the language is replete with ethnic slurs against the French and the full range of words you can't say on the air. The kindest thing I've seen is a reference to "FT5 (G)one (A)way". The expedition frequencies hop about like a flibberty jibbet, often bearing no relation to the published frequencies on the expedition's Web site. Then, of course, there are those w--i--d--e splits, the clear preference for SSB, and the aforementioned unannounced abrupt QRTs.

Assuming that the expedition bears no special animosity towards the USA—that this isn't their revenge for "freedom fries" and Bill O'Reilly—what's going on?

What's going on is that this is a military operation. The announcement on the expedition Web site says:

*A reinforced team of 5 to 8 operators...will activate this rare island thanks to the authorisation of the armed forces under the high authority of general **Dominique LEFEUVRE**, commander of the French Signals and Graduate Studies School of Rennes, and the HQ of the Southern Indian Ocean Forces. Our host on the islands will be the **Foreign Legion**; there is no doubt this will be another exciting expedition.*

No doubt.

The expeditioners sent the following in reply to criticisms that they were not devoting enough effort to working Northern Europe:

*...the team is only 5 op's and 3 stations in shared time with military job, radio 2/3, job 1/3. After 5 years of lobbying [sic], it was this configuration or nothing.*

And on October 1 the European pilot added:

We don't have control of the time table and their [the military's] local organisation makes number of activities on the island for all residents (100%) at the same time. It is a compromise.

The pilot also makes this surprising revelation:

*FT5GA team is only 5 young completely inexperienced op's in low-band traffic, even not DXers, they are only pileuppers, on the wrong side of the island and with antennas away from sea coast, which means 10 to 20*

*db signal loss.*

Because the military is in control, we are not likely to be privy to all the decisions. Armed forces, in general, don't like to share their decisions with civilians.

So, what's the silver lining? Well, for one, there appears to be recharged interest in HF DXing. The troops are turning out even if there's not much action with respect to FT5GA. There have been several rare and semi-rare entities on the air, including C3, FR/T, and 3D2/C. This expedition also serves to remind us that DXing can sometimes take a bit of dedication and perseverance. This is definitely *not* a slam dunk kind of expedition such as K5D or VP6DX. The FT5GA ops specifically refer to VP5DX in the same correspondence quoted above:

*This operation is not VP6DX – 30 op's full time on top site and fabulous hardware. It was fantastic, (one more time congratulation to them). The problem is, now WW[wide world?] consider VP6DX style as minimum acceptable, now, always, and more next time, but DX is something else.*

The next two REDXA meetings will have a DX theme. For October—because I have finally struck out in my efforts to get a live speaker—we will watch one of 9V1YC's better (in my opinion) DXpedition videos, the 2007 ZL8R Karmedec Islands DXpedition.

In November our own Bruce Butler, W6OSP, will be reporting on the K4M expedition to Midway Island (KH4). For us west coasters, this will be a return to slam dunk territory. For all those EU stations that have worked FT5GA on 8 bands or whatever, this will be their own test. As one who has actually been to Midway, I can say that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be less of a problem than the *Legion etrangere*.

Our November meeting will also include the election for 2010 REDXA officers. Please let me know if you're interested in tossing your QSL in the ring.

And this coming weekend will be CQP, our chance to be treated as DX by the rest of the ham radio world. Everybody get on the air. Let's win the club championship.

Finally, if these tough economic times have you looking for a new line of work, take heart: The French Foreign Legion (<http://www.legion-recrute.com/en/>) is still recruiting!

Soixante-treize et mercies,

Alan/K6SRZ



## Treasurer Report

by Jim, K6JS

### REDXA TREASURER'S REPORT

8/31/09 Balance Forward		\$2,547.78
INCOME		
Raffle	42.00	
Steppir	100.00	
TOTAL INCOME		142.00
EXPENSES		
TOTAL EXPENSES		(0.00)
9/30/09 Ending Balance		<u>\$2,689.78</u>

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING SEPTEMBER 2009

by Doug, WW6D

The Board of Directors met at the QTH of club president Alan, K6SRZ on September 9, 2009 prior to the regular meeting. Meeting was called to order at 4:47 pm by Alan, K6SRZ. Board members present were Jim KE6UAR, Jim K6JS, Al K6RIM, Bob K6QXY and Doug WW6D. The main purpose of the meeting was to address upcoming election of officers, Field Day antenna upgrade, upcoming programs, membership and dues.

**Upcoming election of officers.** A nominating committee was formed composed of Alan K6SRZ, Ron N6IE and Doug WW6D. They will present their results at the November meeting.

**Field Day antenna upgrade.** The Board approved the purchase of up to one half of the share towards the upgrade of the 2 element SteppIR to 3 elements. The remainder (and potentially more than half) will come through private donations. This will be presented to the membership for a vote during the regular meeting that follows at Mr. McGoo's.

**Programs for the upcoming months.** Alan again requested that Board members direct any possible program of interest to him. He presented the breakdown for the next few months:

October – currently planned is a video of Raul Island professionally produced by James Brooks 9V1YC.

November – K4M Midway DXpedition by Bruce W6OSP.

December – Tradition Holiday Party and Raffle.

January – Joint meeting with NCCC.

**Membership and dues.** Everyone on the Board was encouraged to seek out potential members, including new retirees as well as younger people. Alan K6SRZ took on the task of setting up a presence for REDXA on Facebook. Dues, currently set at \$20, will remain the same and are due January 1, 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

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## SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

by Doug, WW6D

President Alan K6SRZ called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm, September 9, 2009 at Mr. McGoo's Restaurant, Petaluma, CA. In attendance were 23 members and guests. Guests included Ken W6HF, Lucy KL1WE, Skip AF6HC and Jerry WA6BXV (our guest speaker).

Alan K6SRZ requested a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting and treasurer's report as published in Sunspots. The motion was made by Chuck N6OJ and seconded by Alan K6KLL. Motion passed.

**Old business.** None.

**New business.** Alan K6SRZ opened the meeting by re-capping the Board of Directors meeting that had just been held prior to this meeting. (See minutes elsewhere in the newsletter.) In particular, he presented for a vote the proposal regarding the upgrade of the 2 element SteppIR to 3 elements. Motion was made by Josh W6XU and seconded. Motion passed.

A Midway Island DXpedition update was given by Bruce W6OSP. There will be a total of 18 operators scheduled to leave KH6 and due to arrive on KH4 on October 9, and hopefully on the air by the 10th. They will be primarily using the SVDA's (Vertical Beams). The web site is [HYPERLINK "http://www.midway2009.com"](http://www.midway2009.com) [www.midway2009.com](http://www.midway2009.com); webmaster is ND1G. The operation will return home on October 19.

Other DX news: Adam KD6POC's father is currently stationed in Afghanistan; his call is T6AF. He hopes to be active when he has free time.

Equipment news: Josh W6XU reported that a new inexpensive headset is now available from Yamaha. It is built better and appears to be more rugged than Heil headsets. See Josh for more info.

Fred conducted the REDXA Raffle which brought in a total of \$84. The winner for the evening was Matt KE6LPO who took home \$42, leaving \$42 for the club.

The program for the evening was “Digital Modes for Ham Radio” presented by former member Jerry WA6BXV. It showed how easy it is now-a-days to get on the air with the digital modes assuming you have a relatively modern computer with a sound card. Building or obtaining a simple interface to your HF transceiver (or VHF for that matter), downloading free software, and the willingness to learn something new, and you’re on the air with the various digital modes. He demonstrated several including MMTTY, MMSSTV (yes, slow scan TV) and several others including CW! Do a Google search for these software packages and you’ll easily find them. Then, start experimenting with copying the modes first and work your way up to transmitting. Thanks, Jerry for a wonderful ‘hands on’ demonstration and program!

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

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## Contesting and DX News

by Doug, WW6D

This month, Dave AA6YX reports that he has received the plaque for ARRL Sweepstakes SSB 1st Place Pacific Division 2008 for Low Power Single Op -- Congratulations, Dave!

### CQ WW RTTY

Call	Category	Qs	St/P	DX	Zones	Score
K6SRZ	SOABHP	241	68	61	41	75,310

### NA Sprint SSB (September)

Call	Category	Qs	Mlts	Score
K6LRN	SOHP	88	31	2,728

### NA Sprint CW (September)

Call	Category	Qs	Mlts	Score
K6SRZ	SOHP	247	38	9,633
N6ZFO	SOLP	134	38	5,226

### Kansas QSO Party

Call	Category	CW Qs	SSB Qs	Mlts	Score
AA6YX	SOLP	63	52	70	20,710

### California QSO Party

Call	Category	CW Qs	SSB Qs	Mlts	Score
N6ZFO	SOLP	572	76	52	97,136
N6IE	SOHP (combined)	1529		58	211,178
K6CTA	SOLP	200	0	42	25,200
K6SRZ	SOHP	978	783	57	256,500
K6RIM	SOHP	1153	480	58	256,302
WW6D	SOLP	295	0	50	44,250

## Calendar of Upcoming Events:

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 CW
Dec 4-6	ARRL 160m
Dec 9	* REDXA Monthly Meeting
Dec 12-13	ARRL 10m
Jan 1	Straight Key Night
Jan 2-3	ARRL RTTY Roundup
Jan 13	* REDXA Monthly Meeting with NCCC
Jan 23-25	ARRL Jan. VHF Sweepstakes
Feb 20-21	ARRL Int’l DX Contest CW
Mar 6-7	ARRL Int’l DX Contest SSB

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## Monthly San Francisco Section News Summary

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

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MEETING: OCTOBER 14, 2009

