

SUNSPOTS



REDWOOD EMPIRE DX ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 750531, 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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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

Bill Hillendahl, KH6GJV
PO Box 4151
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
H (707) 544-4944
kh6gfv@arrl.org

John Tagliaferri, KE6ZSN
2515 Linda Vista Avenue
Napa, CA 94558
H (707) 255-3698
karzmmrnn@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



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

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Wednesday, August 13, 2008 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 by
our own Bob Magnani who will speak on "Sporadic 'E'
The Great Mystery".**

REDXA President's Report

August 1, another day devoid of sunspots.

A glance at the DX clusters shows that most spots are sporadic E QSOs on 6 meters, which is certainly apropos of our next meeting. For the August 13 meeting, our own Bob Magnani will speak on "Sporadic 'E' The Great Mystery".

Despite the dismal HF propagation, there is still DX to be worked. Before sitting down to write this column, I managed to crack the EL2DX pileup on 20 M.

August will see the summer versions of the North American QSO parties for CW (August 3-4) and SSB (August 16-17) and the (W)orked (A)ll (E)urope CW contest (August 9-10). WAE CW is a good test of your CW operating skills. With the points given for QTCs. What's a QTC? According to the contest rules:

"Additional points can be achieved by QTCs. A QTC is the report of a contest QSO back to a European station A QTC contains time, call sign and serial number of the reported QSO. Example: "1307/DA1AA/431"

means that DA1AA was worked at 1307 UTC and sent serial number 431”

If this sounds confusing, it is. Fortunately, if an EU station asks you for QTCs, you can always send QRU or NO or SRI.

It will be old news to many of you, but the best source of contest listings is the WA7BNM Contest Calendar: <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/> And, as a complement, there’s K0AX’s Contest Update Newsletter (formerly the Contest Rate Sheet) <http://www.arrl.org/contests/update/>

Don’t forget the August 9 social gathering for REDXA at the San Francisco Yacht Club in Belvedere. I attended my first REDXA SFYC gathering last year and can report that it featured good food, good fellowship, great views, and a full bar.

Special thanks to Marilyn (N6VAW), Jim (N6IE), and Bruce (W6OSP) for putting together the story of the REDXA/MARS Field Day effort and submitting it with lots of great photos to QST. The article will be included in the next issue of “Sunspots”. And while we’re at it, check out Marilyn’s photography on her Web page <http://marilyn.mediatunnel.com/>

There are only two months remaining until the 2008 running of the California QSO Party. Will this be the year that REDXA takes the club championship for this event? We’ve certainly got the horses for this race. Every year I swear that I’ve gone on my last county expedition for CQP and every year (since 1999) I load up the wagon and head for Trinity County.

I’ll see you all at Mr. McGoo’s.

Treasurer Report

by Jim, K6JS

REDXA TREASURER’S REPORT

6/30/08 Balance Forward		\$3,471.95
INCOME		
Dues	40.00	
Raffles	27.50	
TOTAL INCOME		67.50
EXPENSES		
Field Day Expenses	133.69	
Insurance	320.00	
Marin Rod & Gun Club	150.00	
Meals	22.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		(625.69)
7/31/08 Ending Balance		<u>\$2,913.76</u>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING JULY 2008

by Doug, WW6D

NO MEETING SCHEDULED.

JULY MEETING MINUTES

by Doug, WW6D

President Alan K6SRZ called the meeting to order at 7:42 pm, July 7, 2008 at Mr. McGoo’s Restaurant, Petaluma, CA. In attendance were 29 members and guests. Guests included Ken N6KM, Todd and his wife Michele who visited us at our Field Day site, Skip KF6HC, Jerry KG6PT, and John KG6QJJ.

Motion was made to approve the minutes from the June meeting and Treasurer’s report as printed in Sunspots. It was noted that Bill KH6GJV’s call was incorrectly listed and duly noted. With that correction, motion was seconded and passed.

Old business. Reminder that the San Francisco Yacht Club Social will be held on Saturday August 9. Details are on the web site redxa.com.

New business. President Alan K6SRZ noted the passing of club member Allen Ferrera K6MXI. In addition to being a REDXA member, he was also a member of SCRA (Sonoma County Radio Amateurs), the Radio Club of America and the ARRL. In 1983 he established Ferrera and Associates, a communications planning and engineering company and CalSites, a telecom site management company. In 2006, he became President and CEO of Pogowave Communications, Inc. which is Sonoma County’s largest wireless ISP. He will be greatly missed.

Jim KE6UAR presented a wrap-up of our Field Day efforts. We operated 2A with a GOTA station and accumulated a grand total of 7994 points (includes 1250 bonus points). The highlight of the Saturday activities was the landing of the REACH Air Medical Services Helicopter almost exactly on schedule at 3:00 pm. A landing zone had been previously set up by the San Rafael Fire Department. Our thanks go out to both organizations for a wonderful display of their capabilities and public service.

Jim also thanked the 50 plus people who came out over the 3 days to help. The set up on Friday went relatively smoothly and the site was ready to go by 6:00 pm. Saturday at 11:00 am, the first QSO was made and both “2A” stations were manned for the full 24 hours. The GOTA station also had several “Elmers” who were assisting the newcomers and the oldtimers who had not been on the air in recent years. A hearty meal was organized by Dave of the Marin Amateur

Radio Society (MARS) and other club members. The antennas for unused bands started getting taken down around 10 am Sunday morning and all was packed up and ready to leave by noon. It is hoped that we can use the same site next year. Thanks also to the Marin Rod & Gun Club for their hospitality and to MARS for their cooperation.

President Alan K6SRZ announced his involvement with a project being run by the NCCC, headed by the current vice president K6YC Jim Brown who has spoken to our club on numerous occasions. This project is called the "vision project" and seeks to provide help and "elmering" to those individuals who are trying to assemble a station, offer a station for contest use, antenna assistance, help with software, etc. It also includes a station matching program which has the goal of coordinating operators and stations well in advance of a specific contest. If you would like to participate in this project or have questions, please contact Alan.

Alan K6KLL had a query for the membership regarding the old Press Wireless service (I think I have this right). Please contact him if you have information on this.

Long time member Javier NM6E is moving out of 6 land due to a change in job assignment. He would rather sell his station equipment than keep it in storage so please contact him if interested in his equipment. He passed out a list at the meeting.

Bruce W6OSP recognized the contributions of our Field Day Chairman Jim KE6UAR - and a round of applause followed.

Fred N6YEU conducted the REDXA raffle. \$55 was collected. The winning ticket was Doug WW6D who won \$27.50. The club thus retained \$27.50.

The program "Propagation 101" was presented by Dean Straw N6BV. Using modern propagation tools and numerous diagrams, Dean showed the basics as to how the ionosphere makes HF propagation possible and provided insight into the upcoming solar cycle. His slide show is currently available on the club web site - look under the What's New section.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Contesting and DX News

by Doug, WW6D

North American QSO Party -- RTTY

Call	Class	Qs	Mlts	Score
K6RIM	SOABLP	116	54	6,262
K6SRZ	SOABLP	353	120	42,360
WW6D	SOABLP	17	14	238

IARU HF Championship

Call	Class	Qs	Mlts	Score
K6SRZ	SOABHP-CW	340	?	58,344
WW6D	SOABHP-CW	107	38	11,362

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Aug 9	San Francisco Yacht Club Social
Aug 13	REDXA Monthly Meeting
Sep 10	REDXA Monthly Meeting
Sep 13-15	ARRL September VHF QSO Party
Oct 4-5	California QSO Party
Oct 8	REDXA Monthly Meeting
Oct 25-26	CQ WW Phone
Nov 1-3	ARRL Sweepstakes CW
Nov 12	REDXA Monthly Meeting
Nov 15-17	ARRL Sweepstakes SSB
Nov 29-30	CQ WW CW
Dec 5-7	ARRL 160m Contest
Dec 9	REDXA Monthly Meeting
Dec 13-14	ARRL 10m Contest

What Makes Field Day So Special?

We all know that Field Day is a wonderful event - the great chow (especially the Saturday night dinner), the camaraderie of amateur radio operators all sharing a common interest and the thrill of radio and with it the ability to talk with fellow colleagues in all 50 states and nearly all Canadian provinces.

Now combine that with the opportunity for two clubs to pool their efforts at an ideal location and you have a happening! Field Day 2008 for the Redwood Empire DX Association and the Marin Amateur Radio Society were led by co-chairs Jim Robinson KE6UAR, Bruce Butler W6OSP and Rich Carbine W6UDS. Planning began nearly a year in advance with final plans announced at the REDXA meeting on June 10.

The goal of both clubs was to operate in category "2A" which signified 2 transmitters operating simultaneously for the 24 hour period under emergency power. One station would be dedicated to SSB; the other to CW. Set up was to begin Friday June 26 at 1100 PDT with the arrival of Jim and his trailer full of antennas, portable towers, coaxial cable and other necessities. A site plan with the tower layout was presented. 3 towers, which had been secured in previous years from the military surplus market, were to be erected; one tower would hold the club's 3 element SteppIR beam for 20-10 meters, another tower would hold a borrowed "shorty 40" meter 2 element beam, and the third tower would hold a borrowed SteppIR 2 element beam for 20-10 meters.

Wire antennas would be strung from the towers for 75 and 80 meters and a Butternut vertical (HF2V) would be set up on the shoreline near the Richardson Bay (part of the greater San Francisco Bay). A GOTA station would be established if there was interest. Jim then provided directions for getting to the site.

Fast forward to Friday July 26 and Jim arrived on schedule and the setup plans all went according to plan! On Saturday morning, last minute checks were made of all the antennas. A wireless computer network was set up using the N3FJP logging software. A Ten-Tec Orion 1 was used for the SSB station, coordinated by Ron Castro N6IE, using the 3 element beam. An Icom IC-746 was used for CW, coordinated by W6OSP, using the 2 element beam. Both of these stations were checked out and at 1100 Saturday June 27, we were ready to go!

Activity was generally focused on 20 meters and periodically checks were made to see if 15 meters was open. Forty meters proved to be productive and even more so during the evening hours. After midnight, 75 and 80 were explored but much activity remained

on 40 m. Anyone who wanted to operate was given the chance - and even the casual onlookers were motivated to jump into the fray.

One of the interesting bonus points categories, as listed in the rules, is "Site Visitation by a representative of an agency... as a result of an invitation issued by your group." Jim went truly *above and beyond* in coordinating this visit. Jim invited the REACH Air Medical Services to drop by the site. They accepted our invitation -- and they certainly did drop in! (It certainly helped that Jim's stepson is a pilot for REACH.)

REACH provides air ambulance services for the citizens of Northern California. A key element in their mission is to respond to requests for air transport of medical emergencies despite weather conditions. This is because of their ability to use instrument flight rules (IFR) when necessary.

In addition to IFR, they have developed Global Positioning System (GPS) routing and approaches to some hospitals in Northern California. The use of GPS routing and approaches allows them to respond under some adverse weather conditions which would have otherwise prevented response even with IFR.

On accepting our invitation, REACH advised us that an official landing zone (LZ) needed to be established since the visit was to be done under non-emergency conditions. For that reason, the San Rafael Fire Department obliged and visited our site to establish the LZ. (Do two agencies' visits qualify for extra bonus points?)

Like clockwork, at very close to the announced 1500 arrival, a helicopter started circling the Field Day site. Using non-amateur radio (CALCOORD) frequencies, communication between the SRFD and REACH was established and the pilot made a couple of passes to assess the LZ. Then, as gracefully as the seagulls on the shoreline near us, he slowly brought in the Agusta 109 helicopter right on target!

On board were the pilot, of course, and two nurses. At a minimum, each flight must have a pilot, nurse and specially trained paramedic. The three gave us a tour of the aircraft and we responded by giving them a tour of our site. We were all mutually impressed! As a footnote, two thirds of REACH's calls are from one medical facility to another (smaller hospital to a trauma center, from an out-lying clinic to a major hospital, etc.) and about one third of the calls are on-scene to pick up a patient in the field. REACH is one of the largest and most highly rated air ambulance services in the country. It is based in Santa Rosa and has bases in Lakeport, Concord, Lodi, Grass Valley,

Redding, the bases in Oregon and now El Centro in Southern California.

After saying our good-byes, the REACH helicopter pulled away and the SRFD departed. The day then continued with a great BBQ provided by Dave (need callsign), who also satisfied our hunger Sunday morning with a terrific breakfast. After some dinner socializing, it was back to the radios and both Ron and Bruce managed to keep the stations going all night.

By Sunday morning, the SSB station had already passed 1000 QSOs and the CW ops set a goal to accomplish the same - and they made it before the 1100 deadline. Several of the "tear down" crew were already hard at work at 1000 packing away the 75 and 80 meter dipoles. Later, all the antennas would be safely stowed away again on Jim's trailer and another grand Field Day finished with a sigh of relief and a wonderful sense of accomplishment.

So what makes Field Day so special for REDXA and MARS members? Great location, great antennas, exciting public agency visits and, of course, the people who make it all happen! Just wait 'til next year...

673 Plum Street
Novato, CA 94945

MEETING: AUGUST 13, 2008




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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**HAM
RADIO
OUTLET**

Mark Nowell
Manager
W7YN

2210 Livingston Street
Oakland, CA 94606
(510) 534-5757 • 800-854-6046
(510) 534-0729 Fax

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