

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

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Wednesday, April 9, 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 feature Dr. Robert Uhrhammer (WB6VEX), emeritus researcher from the University of California Berkeley Seismology Laboratory, speaking on the general topic of "earthquakes".

REDXA President's Report

This month's meeting features Dr. Robert Uhrhammer (WB6VEX), emeritus researcher from the University of California Berkeley Seismology Laboratory, speaking on the general topic of "earthquakes". Bob's talk comes just nine days before the 102d anniversary of the great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire. This promises to be a fascinating evening.

The days surrounding the Equinox have been good for DXing despite generally mediocre propagation. Most of us have been able to feast on the likes of VP6DX (Ducie), TX5C (Clipperton), 5T5DC (Mauritania), and 9X0R (Rwanda). A successful DXpedition can be a lot of work for the expeditioners, and often includes a generous helping of physical and emotional stress. When I worked TX5C on 10 meter CW, the operator, my friend Arnie N6HC, sent "this is hell..."

The good news for me is that the terrible QRN that has plagued me since October (when I moved to my new QTH in Penngrove) has ceased.

In October I first noticed it on 20 meters, a loud (S9+ 20 dB) 60 cycle arc that came in bursts of several seconds with a few milliseconds of silence between the bursts. It started early in the day and persisted until late at

night. Sometimes it lasted all night

Using my yagi, I located the source somewhere to the north. Len, K6ANP, who is 1.5 miles north of me couldn't hear it when he pointed his beam to the south. Driving around the neighborhood, I was able to narrow the source down to maybe a 50 yard stretch of road about a quarter mile north. So I called the usual suspect: PG&E.

PG&E came and pronounced their poles in perfect condition. I called PG&E again. This time their telecom expert came and made recordings of the noise from my shack. Then he took off with his RDF gear. An hour later he called to tell me that the source was a private home (which is a few feet from where I had originally tracked the source).

While I listen on 20 meters, the telecom guy tells the homeowner that there's a problem somewhere in his house—a problem that might be a fire hazard—and could he please pull the main breaker to see if it solves the problem. The homeowner, who turns out to be a very nice guy, says OK. The breaker is pulled and instantly the noise stops.

Using the “sound recorder” utility in Windows XP, I made a 60-second recording of the QRN. Dean, N6BV, forwarded the recording to Mike Gruber, W1MG, an engineer at ARRL HQ. Within 24 hours I got Mike's reply “methinks it's a doorbell transformer”.

So I contacted the homeowner to tell him what I've learned. I explain what we need to do next, specifically that we should start switching off breakers, starting with subpanels and working back to the main panel, to isolate the circuit that serves the noise source.

The homeowner had a different idea. He heads straight up to his attic, burrows through layers of blown insulation, and finds the transformer. It's such an innocent looking little thing. The homeowner severs the wires and holds it up like a dead rat. I drive home and with trembling fingers switch on my radio. Twenty meters is quiet save for the pileup for 9X0R. Case closed with a big thank you to Maggie Brown and John E. Johnson of PG&E, to Ira, K2RD, and to Dean, N6BV, and Mike, W1MG, at ARRL.

Alan/K6SRZ

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MARCH 2008

by Doug, WW6D

NO MEETING SCHEDULED.

MARCH MEETING MINUTES

by Doug, WW6D

President Alan K6SRZ called the meeting to order at 7:38 pm, March 12, 2008 at Mr. McGoo's Restaurant, Petaluma, CA. In attendance were 25 members and guests. Guests included K6JS Jim's daughter Devin, N6KM Ken, and KG6FTP Ron.

Motion by Bob K6SEM was made to approve the minutes from the February meeting and Treasurer's report as printed in Sunspots. Motion was seconded by Chuck N6OJ and passed.

There was no old business.

New Business. Jim KE6UAR presented an initial report on the upcoming Field Day event this June 28-29 – so mark your calendars. If you would like a Field Day T-Shirt, be sure to let Jim know your wishes. He will be assisted by Bruce W6OSP and Rich W6UDS. Coordination with the Marin Rod & Gun Club in liaison with the Marin Amateur Radio Society has begun. Ron N6IE has already volunteered to be a Station Captain for one of the stations.

Al K6RIM conducted a short poll of interest in the annual REDXA Social at the San Francisco Yacht Club this summer – the interest was unanimous. He will pursue a date and present in the near future.

The newsletter editor and others were thanked for promoting the Valley of the Moon Hamfest coming up on Saturday May 3.

Fred N6YEU conducted the REDXA raffle. \$58 was collected. The winning ticket was Bob K6SEM who won \$29. The club retained \$29.

Bob Vallio W6RGG, ARRL Pacific Division Director, presented the evening's program “Getting the Most from your ARRL Membership”. Bob outlined many of the membership “perks” and benefits beyond the monthly QST magazine. As members, you are entitled to take advantage of these. For example, there are several on-line courses now available including Emergency Communication, RFI, Antenna Design, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Treasurer Report

by Jim, K6JS

REDXA TREASURER'S REPORT

2/29/08 Balance Forward \$3,382.70

INCOME

Badge 12.00

Dues 2008 100.00

Raffles 44.00

TOTAL INCOME 156.00

EXPENSES

Badges 10.80

Meals 22.00

TOTAL EXPENSES (32.80)

3/31/08 Ending Balance \$3,505.90

Monthly San Francisco Section News Summary

Here is the link for the News Summary:

<http://www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=SF>

Contesting and DX News

by Doug, WW6D

A couple of events are coming up -- DXers and Contesters take note! The 59th International DX Convention will be held April 25, 26 and 27 at the Holiday Inn in Visalia, California. This year, it will be sponsored by the Southern California DX Club. It will include several programs about DXpeditions that have taken place this past 12 months, DX Forum, Contest Forum, and several vendors showing off their wares. Pre-registration deadline is March 23 which will save you \$10 off of the full convention price.

The other event of interest is the upcoming Valley of the Moon ARC Hamfest Saturday May 3rd from 8am to 1pm. I personally can attest that they have the best Hamfest breakfast in Northern California! Of course they will have their Swap meet so bring your unneeded stuff and set up a table! Also, included will be a VE Testing session, station demonstrations and a fox hunt. For more information, go to vomarc.org and click on Hamfest.

ARRL International DX -- CW

Call	Class	Qs	Mults	Score
K6ANP	SOABHP	798	298	612,864
K6RIM	SOABHP	422	220	278,520
WW6D	SOABHP	164	87	42,804

North American QSO Party, RTTY

Call	Class	Qs	Mlts	Score
K6CTA	SOLP	148	72	10,656
K6UM	SOLP	144	66	9,504

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MEETING: APRIL 9, 2008

