



P.O. Box 6421 Auburn, CA 95604

January 2016

<http://w6ek.org> info@w6ek.org

At The Key of SFARC:

PRESIDENT

Orion Endres, AI6JB
ojendres@outlook.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Al Martin, NI2U
Amartin4@wavecable.com

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anderson51@wavecable.com

TREASURER

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sharron@usamedia.tv

DIRECTORS

Birton Gilbert, N6UG
Bob Brodovsky, K6UDA
Andrew Silvester, N6REW

FIELD DAY CHAIRMAN

Mark Graybill, W8BIT

REPORTERS

Satellites: Greg, KO6TH
History: Gary, KQ6RT
Sunshine: Richard, WA6RWS

WEBMASTER:

Birton Gilbert, N6UG

REPEATERS

145.430 (-0.6 MHz/PL 162.2)
440.575 (+5.0 MHz/PL 162.2)
223.860 (-1.6 MHz/PL 110.9)

CLUB NET

Thursdays, 7:30PM, W6EK/R
145.430

CLUB MEETINGS

Second Friday of the month,
7:30PM at the Auburn City Hall,
1215 Lincoln Way, Auburn CA

CLUB BREAKFAST

Last Sat of the month at Mel's Diner
1730 Grass Valley Hwy, Auburn 7:30AM

NET CONTROL OPS

Dave Jenkins, WB6RBE
Norm Medland, W6AFR
Bob Brodovsky, K6UDA
Al Martin, NI2U

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Barbara Anderson, W6EVA
anderson51@wavecable.com

ARRL PIO:

Carl A Schultz, WF6J

VOLUNTEER EXAMINER

Al Martin, NI2U



Calendar of Events

January 1st, 2016:

New Year's Day

**January 8th:
Club Meeting**

**January 19th:
Planning Meeting
for the Hamfest (in March)**

**January 30th:
Club Breakfast**

Inside this issue:

- *From the Cookie Jar*
- *Christmas Party Photos*
- *The NCDXF App for Android*
- *Operating Portable*



We encourage members to receive Sierra Signals via email to save the Club the cost of reproduction and mailing

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From the Cookie Jar

By Orion Endres – AI6JB, President

Hello All and Welcome to the New Year!

It is that time of year to start anew, and a new Board we have! I look forward to working with Al, Bruce, Sharron, Birton, Andrew, and Bob. As the newly elected President and relatively new member of the club, I look forward to working with you.

We already have many exciting events planned for the Club. In March, our 2nd Annual Hamfest is scheduled for March 12th at the Historic Train Depot in Loomis. We still have a few key positions that need to be filled. If you are interested in helping out, please let me know. **Our next planning meeting is scheduled for January 19th, 2016, starting at 7 PM in the Newcastle Denny's.**

The Hamfest is in need of Raffle prizes. If you have a prize you would like to donate or you have a lead on a business that might be willing to donate, please let me know.

As your President, if you have any suggestions, concerns, or issues regarding the club, I would love to hear them. Feel free to catch me at a meeting, send an email, or call me anytime. I am here to help and ensure the success of our club. If you would prefer to speak with someone more familiar, I am sure Al, Bruce, Birton, and Bob, longtime club members, would be more than happy to help too.

73

Orion Endres





L to R: Jeff – AK6OK (Donor of the Year), Mark – W8BIT (Outstanding service for organizing field day 2015), Orion – AI6JB (President Elect), Bob – K6UDA (Outstanding service for organizing the 1st annual SFARC Ham Swap 2015), Richard – WA6RWS (Holding his “Islands” gift card), and Tyghe – W6TJR (President)

The SFARC Christmas Party (no Board or General Meeting) for December commenced at 1830 hours at the Veteran’s Memorial Hall in Auburn. All Officers, Board members, and other SFARC staff were present, as well as newly elected officers for 2016.

After an amazing feast of turkey, ham, and many, many side dishes, President Tyghe-W6TJR welcomed the club members and their families followed by an introduction of Officers.



The NCDXF App for Android

By Mark Graybill, W8BIT

The Northern California DX Foundation (<http://ncdxf.org/>) promotes DX operation all over the world by providing assistance to DXpeditions, educating operators, and supporting a number of beacon stations on five HF bands. The NCDXF app for Android provides a visual display of the beacon locations on a world map to make it easy to see which beacon is currently transmitting, which ones are currently offline, and which stations will soon be transmitting again.

The Beacons

There are currently 18 beacon locations world-wide. They all transmit on the same frequency on each band, but at different times in a round-robin fashion. Each station identifies itself in code, but at 22WPM, so even many hams who know code may not be able to easily copy their call off the air.

Also, I've found that when I'm at my station, there's just enough time in the cycle between the beacons going around the world for me to get distracted and start fiddling with something else in front of me while I'm waiting to hear a beacon come in on the receiver. Then, after two or three beacons have gone by, I realize I haven't been listening to see which ones they were. There are 18 beacon locations (currently) around the world.

The beacons and their frequencies are:

10m: 28.200 MHz
 12m: 24.930 MHz
 15m: 21.150 MHz
 17m: 18.110 MHz
 20m: 14.100 MHz

At any given time, one or two of the beacons will be off the air. Sometimes they'll also be using a fill-in antenna that has a directional pattern until the omnidirectional antenna is back in commission.

(Continued on page 6)

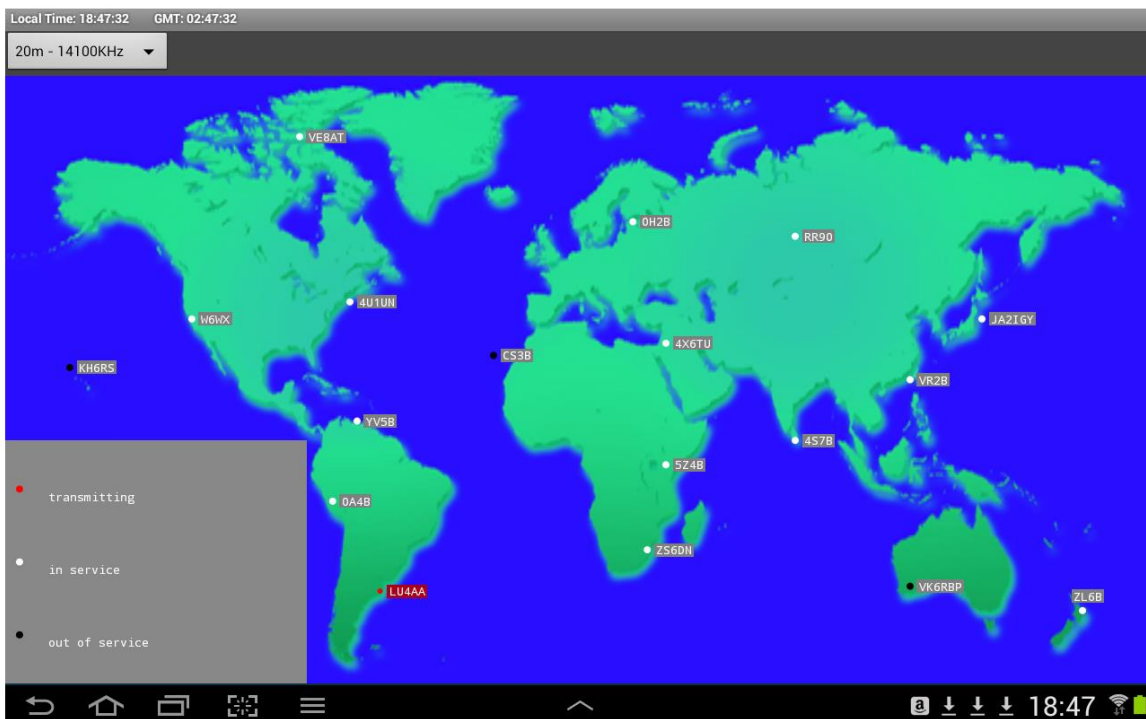


Fig. 1—The NCDXF App Main Screen (with the 20m band selected.)

(Continued from page 5)

The App

With the NCDXF app, you can just look at the screen to see which station is marked as transmitting right now, and, once you know the order, know which ones were recently on the air (fig.1). Finding out which stations you can hear, and which you can't, will give you a quick read on current other operators in that part of the world.

There is a menu to set which band you are monitoring in the app (fig. 2). The display of each station on each band's map shows if that station is operational or not, and whether it is operating in an unusual fashion (e.g. a directional antenna.)

The NCDXF app is free on the Google Play Store. Unfortunately, it is not available on the Amazon Appstore for devices that don't have access to the Play Store. Similar apps are available for iOS at the Apple App Store. They are HF Beacons and BeaconAid-HF, at 99 cents apiece.

The app has been a useful little thing for me to have. It makes it so that I've got something to let me know how long until the beacons I can expect to hear will be coming on, and it gives me something to watch to keep from getting too distracted before I hear them.

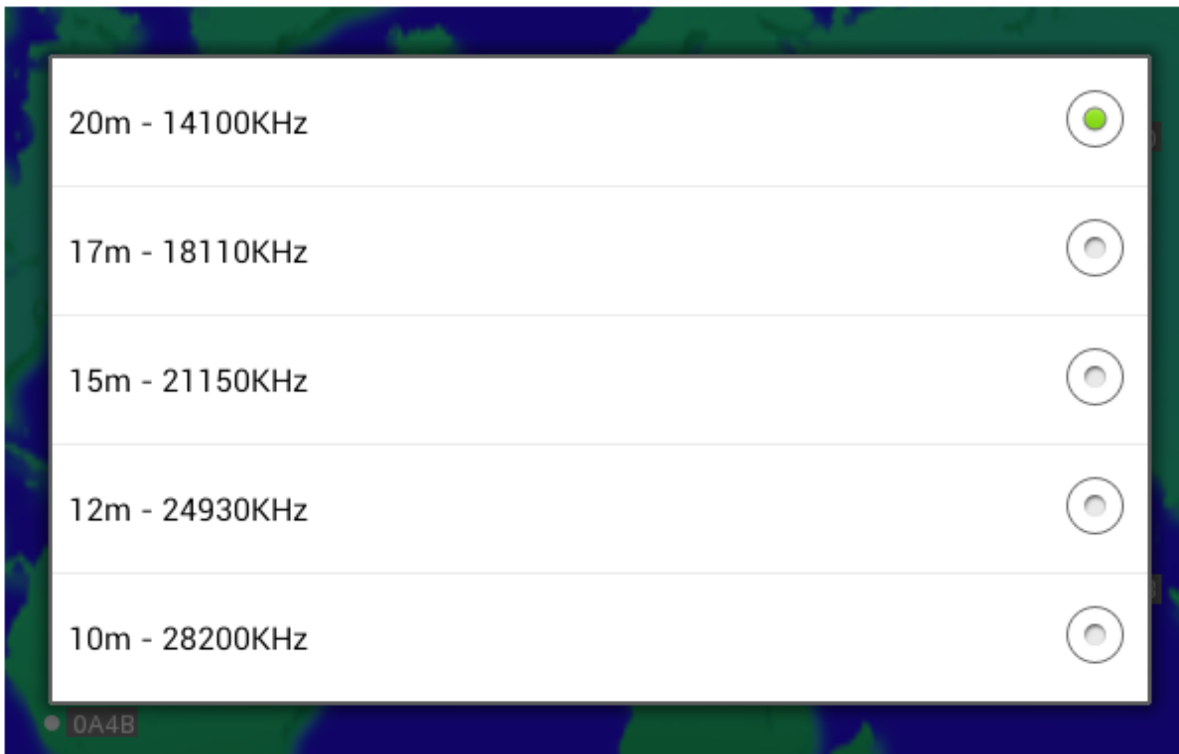


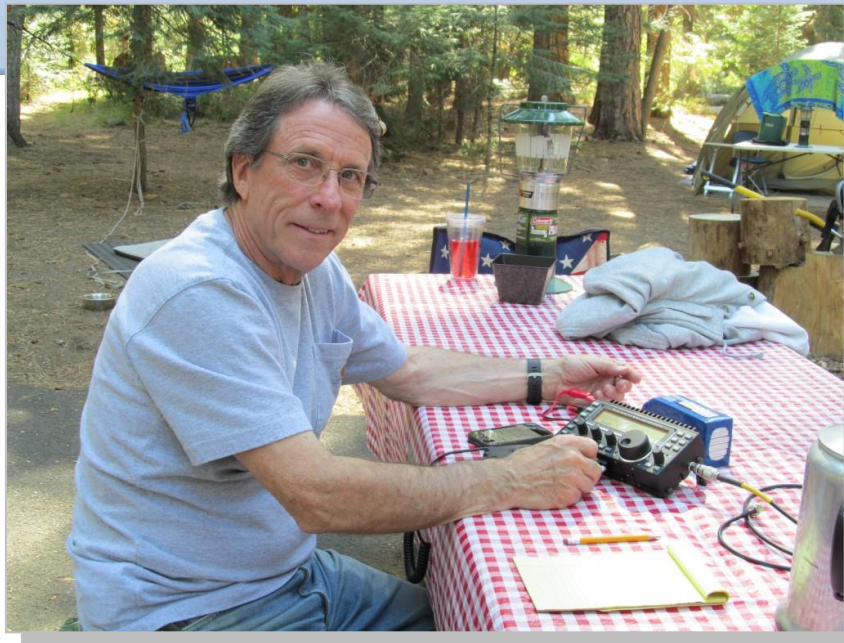
Fig. 2–The NCDXF Band Selection Menu

The California QSO Party (CQP) is now behind us, but the memory of my portable operation from a campground in Siskiyou County remains as a pleasant reminder of how much fun you can have while portable. Siskiyou County turned out to be a "rare one" as there was only one other call registered for the event in the county ... I never heard them on. Most of the 315 casual contacts I made thanked me for a "new one".

I operated my Elecraft KX3 on 40m exclusively on battery power, CW and SSB, from a 40m resonant inverted-V attached to a 1:1 voltage balun and fed with 75 feet of RG8X. The apex was supported about 60 feet up by a limb in a fir tree with legs about 30 feet off the ground. That lofty perch was "fished" with a stout fishing rod and 2-oz. sinker attached to 20 pound line used to pull the antenna guy rope up and back down to the balun for hoisting. This has been a very effective method for getting a line over a limb, high in a tree and proved successful for Field Day this year as well.

In any case, if you've never operated during CQP I highly recommended it. The "event" is not really a "contest", but can be a lot of fun trying to catch all the counties in California. Operation is casual and friendly with an easy exchange of consecutive number and county abbreviation (maybe some fishing or hiking in between?). I hope to hear you on next year ... I'll be portable again, probably from a campground somewhere in Siskiyou County.

73,
Dennis - WU6X



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Ryan Tollefson
District Manager

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2016 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SIERRA FOOTHILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
P.O. Box 6421, Auburn, CA 95604

Name: _____ Call: _____ Class: _____ e-mail: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Associate Name: _____ Call: _____ Class: _____ email: _____
Phone: _____ Cellphone: _____ Application is: (Circle) New Renewal

Dues / Donations:

Membership: yearly* \$22.00 or 20x _____ Name Badge: \$ 7.00 Yes (special name) _____
Associate: yearly* \$ 7.00 Repeater Donation: \$ _____
Auto Patch Donation: \$ _____ Newsletter Booster: \$ _____
Misc. Donation: \$ _____ Christmas Donation: \$ _____ ARRL member? (circle) Yes No

TOTAL: \$ _____ Please add \$1 if paying via PayPal

*Prorated dues for NEW Members/Associates Only

July	\$ 20/6	October	\$ 14/3 + following year
August	\$ 18/5	November	\$ 12/2 + following year
September	\$ 16/4	December	\$ 10/1 + following year

New---New---New---
Multi-year DISCOUNT Membership
****\$20 per year for 2 or more years (new or renewal)**

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Date: _____	Treasurer: _____ Secretary: _____ Roster: _____
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