

# 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

Volume XXI

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

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Wednesday January 9, 2019

**Program: Solar Observations and the Importance to Radio  
Leif Svalgaard**

**Leif has studied solar physics for more than 40 years and is currently a research scientist at Stanford University. He is currently working on reconstructing the historical sunspot number series.**

**Here's a link to his research page: <https://leif.org/research/>**



## REDXA President's Commentary

It is my honor once again to be leading this fine organization. I've been a member of REDXA for over 25 years and enjoy all aspects the club has to offer.

As most of you know, I was born and raised in San Rafael and started in amateur radio during the summer of 1973 at the young age of thirteen. Originally Elmered by REDXA member W6FQS (SK) and received my novice license in 1974 with my original call WN6IKQ. Two years later upgrading to General at the FCC offices on 555 Battery Street in downtown San Francisco. I can still remember the ferry ride to the City and then sweating through the written and CW tests like it was yesterday.

I have stayed active in radio throughout the years from different locations in Northern and Southern California. I eventually settled in Petaluma in the early nineties. I heard about REDXA and decided to attend a meeting in the early-nineties. I was immediately welcomed by all and knew I had found a great bunch of folks. One of whom, Chuck, N6OJ mentored me to Extra class status. (continued next page)





## President's Commentary (cont.)

I always look forward to our socializing time before our meetings as it is full of opportunities to meet with old friends and develop new ones who possess a wide spectrum of personalities and talents. Let's continue to welcome new members and make them feel as welcome as each of you did for me many years ago.

Our club has been in existence for close to 40 years; quite a feat. We have so many high-quality ops in our ranks who have helped build us from a small group of founding members to our thriving membership of today. We owe them a debt of gratitude, as well as to our current members who are our future. It is important to recognize the accomplishments of the past club officers who have made a personal investment in REDXA over the years. You gave your time and energy to make REDXA a better club. Every one of you deserve our thanks and gratitude.

I'd like to congratulate Gabe, KJ6AZU and his crew for a job well done throughout his tenure as president.

*Sunspots* is the most widely received communication vehicle for our club. Every member gets a copy and we all look forward to receiving it every month by email. Feel free to submit an article for publication in *Sunspots*. We are always looking for more content. Potential articles should be received before the third of each month. We also have our Yahoo! Groups Email reflector, REDXA1, that has become a fairly active communication tool for many of us. Consider signing up for this group if you haven't done so already. Lastly, some members monitor and chat on 146.49 simplex, join us if you happen to be in range.

Better yet, come to a meeting for some old school social networking in person.

I hope to see you all in January for *Solar Observations and the Importance to Radio* by Leif Svalgaard.

My last term as President we were looking forward to Cycle 24. We can now all look forward to cycle 25 and continuing the fine traditions of this club.

Happy New Year,

73, Jim K6JS



## REDXA Wins CQP 2018 Small Club Category

We finally won a CQP club competition! Congratulations to all the REDXA folks who got on the air for CQP 2018 back in October. We entered in the small club category, which is 10 logs or less. We had 14 logs entered and they choose the highest 14 logs. I think we've finally found a club category that fits our contesting activity. We have around 10-15, give or take a few, active contesters in the club. The small club category offers us a way to compete as a club. The ARRL has several contests with club competitions and I'll be sure to let everyone know when they are.

REDXA had 1,281,512 points, beating the 2<sup>nd</sup> place West Valley ARA by over 800,000 points.

REDXA members set 5 new all-time county records and we also had 7 top ten finishes in 6 different categories. Additionally we activated 8 different counties. We had 3 plaque winners KG6N, W6PZ and W6BX(KU6F) for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes in their category within the state in the top ten category.

We also had 2 members in the top 20 CA Single-Op stations that will receive a coveted personalized bottle of NCCC Private Reserve California wine.: N6ZFO (8<sup>th</sup> in State) and yours truly K6JS (17<sup>th</sup> in State).

### Top 10 - Single Operator, HP

Place	Callsign	QTH	PH	CW	M	Score
5	N6ZFO	LAKE	630	1007	58	248,298 (New SOHP record)

### Top 10 - Single Operator, LP

Place	Callsign	QTH	PH	CW	M	Score
3	K6JS	SONO	165	922	58	179,568 (New SOLP Record)

### Top 10 - Single Operator - Assisted, HP

Place	Callsign	QTH	PH	CW	M	Score
6	K6MM	SCLA	233	790	57	161,652
8	N6IE	SONO	305	407	56	102,536

### Top 10 - Single Operator - Assisted, LP

Place	Callsign	QTH	PH	CW	M	Score
2	KG6N	SONO	278	611	57	136,173 (Plaque winner)(New SOALP Record)
3	K6RIM	MARN	102	585	57	111,663(New SOALP record)

### Top 10 Single Operator Expedition

Place	Callsign	QTH	PH	CW	M	Score
6	N6YEU	TRIN	448	217	56	86,632 (Low Power)

### Top 10 Multi-Multi Expedition, HP

Place	Callsign	QTH	PH	CW	M	Score
1	W6BX	SBEN	1347	1295	57	381,582 (KU6F and others)
2	W6PZ	MEND	444	934	58	214,020 (Plaque winner) (High Power)

Ops - K6SRZ, K6DAJ, AF6SA, AA6YX, N3RC

### All-Time New records

Call	Category	County	Score
N6ZFO	S/O HP	Lake	248,298
K6RIM	S/O A LP	Marin	111,663
W6PZ	M/M HP	Mendo	214,020
K6JS	S/O LP	Sono	179,568
KG6N	S/O A LP	Sono	136,173

### CQP Club competition

Category	Club	Score
Small Club	REDXA	1,281,512







Here is objective proof that not every good deed is punished! This spectacular quilt is the work of Saraj, KU6F. Saraj made this as a thank-you gift for yours truly [editor] and XYL. During her stay at the K6SRZ QTH Saraj also helped pilot W6PZ (KU6F and K6SRZ) to first place plaque winner Pacific Division in the 2017 ARRL Sweepstakes Phone contest. The low table with the black non-skid strips is a step for geriatric Annie the Dog (and, yes, we cover the quilt with a dog-proof blanket before she hops up. )

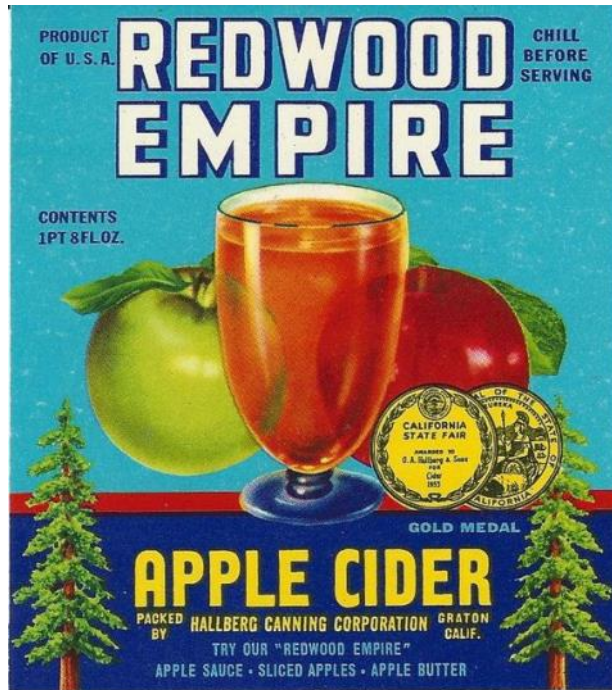
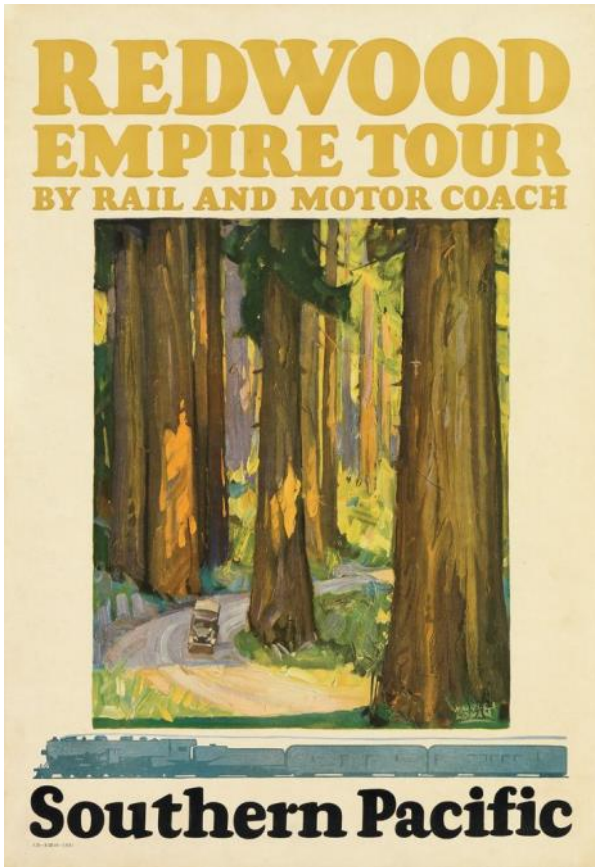


To the left is some detail of the underside of the quilt. If you look carefully you'll see that the stitching pattern is a series of interlocking dog paw prints. The stitching is computer controlled. Modern quilt technology is amazing!





The February 12 meeting of REDXA will be a joint meeting with the Northern California Contest Club. Some of us are already members of the NCCC. If you're not in the NCCC, and if you are interested in amateur radio contesting, consider joining them. Many of the NCCC meetings are in the South Bay—a long trek for most of us REDXA folk—but all of them are Web cast in real time. Check out the NCCC Web page at <https://www.nccc.cc/>







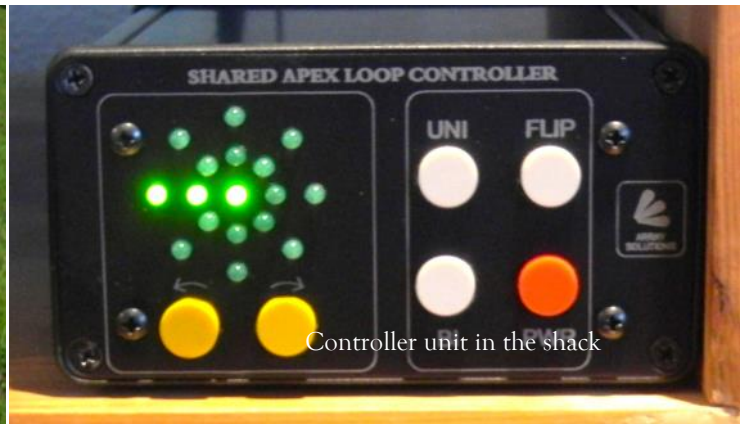
Top Band at K6SRZ

The K9AY receiving loops at K6SRZ finally failed. Parts were unavailable so the antenna was taken down and scrapped. In its place is the Shared Apex Loop (SAL-20) from Array Solutions. The SAL works differently than most low band receiving antennas in that it doesn't require grounding or terminating resistors. Instead it combines the phases of a received signal from pairs of loops to give dramatic F/B and directionality. Like all receiving antennas, it use a pre-amp.



The K6SRZ SAL-20 is mounted on a pressure-treated 4x4 set in concrete. The antenna is small enough and light enough to be installed by one person. It was not difficult. The wood blocks are to secure the mast temporarily while the loops are guyed.

The SAL uses RG/6 (72 ohm) coax for the feed line (top) and delay line (bottom two). The RG/6 conducts the received signal back to the controller unit in the shack and also conducts a 15 volt signal to the combiner unit shown in the left lower picture.



Controller unit in the shack



## REDXA Calendar of Upcoming Events

by Doug WW6D

Jan 9 \* *REDXA Monthly Meeting*

**Jan 12-13 North American QSO Party CW**

**Jan 19-20 North American QSO Party SSB**

**Jan 25-27 CQ 160m Contest CW**

Feb 13 \* *REDXA Monthly Meeting*

**Feb 16-17 ARRL Intl DX Contest CW**

**Feb 23-24 North American QSO Party RTTY**

**Mar 2-3 ARRL Intl DX Contest SSB**

Mar 13 \* *REDXA Monthly Meeting*

**Mar 30-31 CQ WW WPX SSB**

Apr 10 \* *REDXA Monthly Meeting*

**Apr 12-14 Visalia Int'l DX Convention**

**Apr 27 Int'l Marconi Day (observed)**

**May 4-5 7<sup>th</sup> Call Area QSO Party**

May 8 \* *REDXA Monthly Meeting*

**May 25-26 CQ WW WPX CW**



The ship for the next attempt at a Bouvet Island DXpedition from the expedition Web site <https://dxnews.com/3y0i/>

While we all wait for Bouvet to be on the air, here's a link (courtesy of W6SFK) to the BBC Science story on Bouvet, it's climate, and just how remote it is. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-46547254>



## DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES

by Doug WW6D, Secretary

President Gabe KJ6AZU, called the meeting to order at 6:58 pm, December 12, 2018 at the Boulevard Cafe, Petaluma, CA. In attendance were 33 members and guests.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Bill W6IYS and approved by the membership.

Correction to last meeting's minutes. Your secretary did not properly record or take note that the slate of officers that was presented was, in fact, voted in by acclamation at the November meeting, with the exception of the Treasurer position and the two Directors.

Consequently, a follow up process was done by the Nominating Committee (N6YEU and K6TER) and a candidate for Treasurer was found: Terry K6TER was nominated. The membership then declared him the new Treasurer. The outgoing Treasurer, Bill W6IYS will work with Terry during the transition and was thanked for his service to the club.

Since there were 3 candidates for Directors, an election was necessary to select 2. The results for that were Bill WX6B and Josh W6XU.

To recap, here's your current Officers, Directors and Appointed Positions:

President: Jim K6JS

VP: Roger N3RC

Secretary: Doug WW6D





Treasurer: Terry K6TER

Directors: Josh W6XU, Bill WX6B

(Past President Gabe KJ6AZU will serve as a director, per the ByLaws)

Sunspots Editor: Alan K6SRZ

Webmaster: Doug WW6D

Next, Fred N6YEU presented the REDXA Spirit Award for 2018. Terry K6TER was selected in that he has contributed a lot to the club over the past few years, volunteering to help out when needed and has been an enthusiastic, energetic force that has kept the club going. Congratulations Terry!

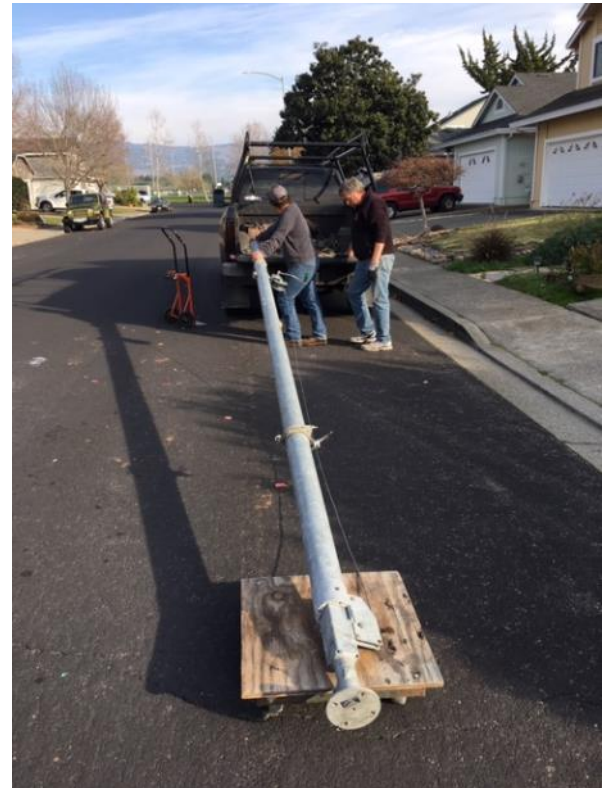
After a wonderful dinner served by Daniel and his family, the traditional Holiday Raffle was held. The YL prize was won by Cathy, YL of Rick N6GY. The raffle prizes for the club members included Ham Radio Outlet Gift Certificates of: 2 ea \$100, 1 ea \$75, 2 ea \$50 and 2 ea \$25. Other items included bottles of wine, books and other ham radio related items.

Adjourned at 8:21 pm.

In celebration of 30 years as a ham and of my 70th birthday I will be going on a solo DXpedition from 11 February to 19 February. This will be to a location in the Caribbean. I will announce the exact location at Wednesday's meeting. This will be my first real DXpedition but my experiences with CQP portable operating over the years should help some. I am both nervous and excited about the upcoming adventure.

Fred, N6YEU





Well I've helped put up several antennas but there's not too many that I have to take down. Rick, N6GY is officially off HF because of his health and has generously offered his 3-element SteppIR and tower to those who helped take them down.

Joe Reid, KC6RKY, and crew spent a couple of days taking down the SteppIR and tower. We also learned that the EHU's [(E)ment (H)ousing (U)nits for those of you who haven't experience SteppIR technology] need to be on top of the boom and not underneath it. The trombone elements accumulated water because the seep holes were painted over and moisture travelled down into the housing. I suspect someone will be sending them back to SteppIR for repairs again.

Lesson learned!

More pics to follow.

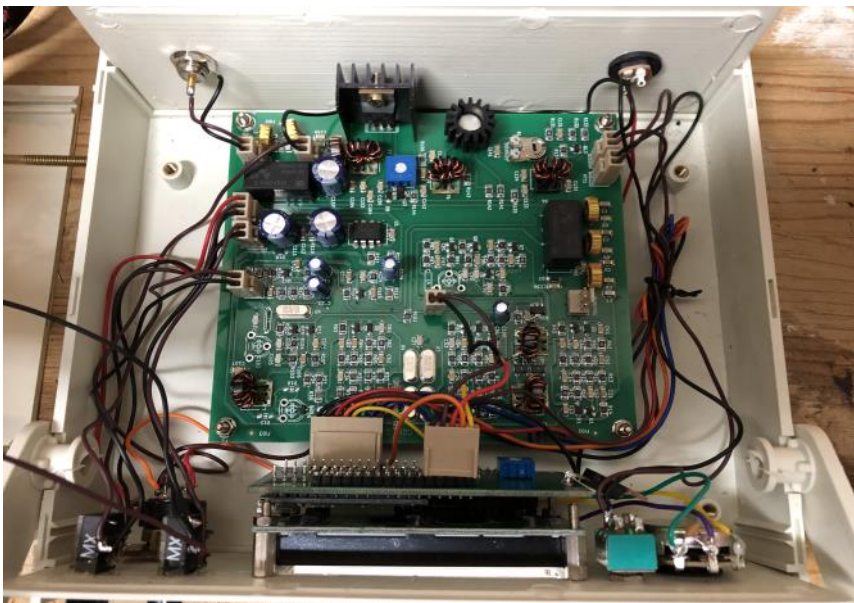
Best wishes to Rick and Kathy!

-Bill, WX6B





Here's the link to BITX  
[www.hfsignals.com](http://www.hfsignals.com)



Ed, K6CTA shares the following:

I recently read a review of the BITX 40, which is a 40 meter QRP SSB transceiver. It puts out around 7 watts and is controlled by a Raduino that uses an Arduino Nano for control. I'm not sure what possessed me to think a 40M SSB radio would be a smart idea, but I felt like building something!

The kit comes in 2 boards - main board and the Raduino with the display - plus a bag of parts. All you need to supply is a case and solder.

I found an instrument case with a bail that I thought would work. The entire thing took about two afternoons to build. I added an internal speaker so I wouldn't have to use headphones when just listening to the radio. It takes an electret mic, and I used a headphone/boom mic that I had laying around.

The receiver is pretty sensitive, but has a bit of digital artifacts. There are lots of mods and hacks (for the arduino) on the web to reduce the artifacts and add lots of features to the basic rig.

I fired it up late one afternoon and was surprised to work a station in SoCal...I was using an end-fed long wire in the attic!

All in all a fun project - that actually works!!







I think the statute of limitations on this picture has run so, presented for your amusement, a photo that will likely never be on a QSL card.

This was taken long ago on an island far away (and very high on the DXCC most-wanted list). The occasion was that DXpeditioners (who were hungry, sleep-deprived, and bitten by various insects) wanted to compose a fitting reply to the many requests they were getting . Requests for skeds, for QSYs to specific bands, for complaints about “why weren’t you on such-and-such band at such-and-such- time”, for the ever popular “why am I not in the log” and for grumbling about how they should be running their expedition (for the benefit of the complainant of course.)

So, to paraphrase, “If you don’t like our expedition, go on one of your own!”





!@#\$% and no thanks for shutting down the FCC, stopping updates on QRZ.com, putting license upgrades on hold, and generally NOT making anything great again.





## Boulevard Café & Grill

1096 Petaluma Blvd. North,  
Petaluma, CA

