

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

Volume XXII Number XII October 2019

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Alan Eshleman K6SRZ

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

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Wednesday, November 2019 at Boulevard Café & Grill, Petaluma. If you need directions please call one of the club Officers

6pm—- Social Hour in the Lounge

7pm — Dinner and Meeting

8pm -- Program

Program: N6TV Everything You Need to Know About USB and Serial Interfaces, as presented at 2019 Dayton Contest University



REDXA President's Commentary

I hope you all had a great time in CQP. It looks like REDXA put up some big scores once again. We had a great time in Lake Tahoe celebrating Sue's birthday.

Contest season is upon us and I hope we all completed our antenna projects before the winter weather arrives. I enjoyed a full-time single op unlimited low power November sweepstakes last weekend. I worked hard erecting the BigIR vertical for the 2nd radio. It was a temporary installation, between the houses. It really wasn't worth all the time it took as it didn't play well at all. It worked really good when it was roof mounted, but the city asked me to take that down. I'll have to re-think a multi-band antenna option for the 2nd radio. (cont. next page)



We are certainly living in some interesting times with the PSPS power outages, red flag warnings and devasting fires. We were without power for 2 ½ days during the first PSPS and many thanks to W6XU for letting me borrow his generator as my neighbor and I didn't lose the food packed in our freezers. This past PSPS we had power, but everything around us was without. This also includes Comcast switches and distribution networks. We had no cable TV, Internet or landline. The cell service also dropped to 1 bar of reception. Luckily, I had WX6B mount a TV antenna on the tower when he put up the SteppIR. I re-wired the house distribution box during both PSPS events and we received 67 crystal clear channels while everyone else in the neighborhood was without. We enjoyed watching the world series (what a great series!) and the 8-0 Niners on Thursday night football.

We had a cancellation for our meeting next week and I'm working to get someone on short notice. If any of you have a presentation you'd like to share let me ASAP. I hope to see you all at the meeting next week.

My summary of REDXA members' contest results follows on the next few pages. Most of these results are gleaned from 3830 (https://www.3830scores.com/) or from the NCCC reflector. Special bonus question: why is 3830 called "3830")



CQP

Call	Ops	Class	CW	SSB	Mults	Score	QTH
KU6W	K6SRZ K9YC W6GJB	M/MCntyExp HP 530	0	54	85,860	SJV	
W6DR	N9YS W6DR WB6RJH	M/SFixed HP	606	401	57	149,340 SCL	A
W6BX	K6EU K6SRZ K9YC N3ZZ	M/MCntyExp HP 1024	701	58	259,492	SCV	
	N6RNO W6GJB						
K6RIM	K6RIM	SO(A)Fixed HP	348	29	53	58,406	MARN
N6IE	N6IE	SO(A)Fixed HP930	930	969	58	283,380 SON	10
N6ZFO	N6ZFO	SOFixed HP	952	232	58	192,767 LAK	Œ
KG6N	KG6N	SOFixed HP	638	62	57	116,166 SON	10
N5UJ	NM6E	SOFixed HP	17	17	16	1,360	TEXAS
N3RC/	6 N3RC	SOFixed HP	552	148	56	109,312 SON	10
KU6F	KU6F, W6TTF	M/SCntyExp LP	0	17	100	374	SMAT
N6YEU	N6YEU	SOCntyExp LP	374	151	54	76,896	MADE
W6XU	W6XU	SO(A)Fixed HP	341	149	55	72,655	SONO

COP SOAPBOX

KU6W

Our entire team spent Saturday in San Benito County. Sunday morning, we broke down the CW antennas, packed up, and K6SRZ, K9YC, and W6GJB moved up to a lovely site overlooking the San Luis reservoir in Merced County. The rest of the team (K6EU, K6YL, N3ZZ, and N6RNO) remained at the San Benito site and finished the contest there. We swept in San Benito, missed VY1, MR, VE4, and ND from Merced county.

W6BX

Our seven member team again split up on Sunday, with K6SRZ, K9YC, and W6GJB moving W6GJB's contesting trailer to activate Merced county as KU6W. Saturday we were all at a horse ranch in a very isolated part of San Benito county. A good time was had by all, but we were disappointed to see activity die very early (we had no one to work after 9 PM local time).

N6YEU

Not sure what happened but conditions seemed to be very poor. I was /portable in Madera county with low power and tribander with wires but I really had to work hard for every qso. I took several breaks as one can all CQ only so long with no to few callers. I have operated CQP /portable for over 20 years and this had to be the worst year ever. It still is fun to give out one of the rarer counties but the cost/benefit ratio could have been better this year! Every year I say this is my last county expedition but you never know.... 73, Fred

N6ZFO

Surprised to work OK1CF on 40m cw at 2353Z well before sunset. Nothing from Eu at Eu sunrise, however. Other stong Eu stations on 40m and on 20, but little activity. W6JTI worked on 10m CW - no others heard there.

Easy sweep this year ~ last one was UT. Multiple Q's in every section, including NT ~ VE8GER worked on 20 SSB Sunday monrning at 1800Z. 73 Bill n6zfo

Conditions seemed poorer this year. Missed MB.



KG6N

Conditions seemed poorer this year. Missed MB.

KU6F

Limited space for deploying antennas: buddipoles on 20 and 40, dipole on 10-40, with a solar array next door (was it bad band conditions? or noise from there?), we had to check out of our AirBNB at 11, so we missed the opening on 20. Still, we had a grand time and I worked WY and gave him San Mateo County. 40 on the buddipole was our sweet spot.

Makrothen RTTY Contest

<u>Call</u>	Class	QSO	Score	<u>Club</u>
N6ZFO	SO/Single Xcvr HP	259	1,247,230	NCCC
K6MM	SO/Single Xcvr HP	126	483,762	Pizza Lovers 259
W6DR N9YS W6DR	MO/Single Xcvr HP	335	1,372,799	Pizza Lovers 259
N6IE	SO/Single Xcvr HP	281	1,146,434	NCCC

Makrothen RTTY SOAPBOX

W6DR

We should probably get with Writelog and fix the MAK Module.

K6MM

Part-time effort during all 3 sessions. Total of 5 hours of FUN over a busy weekend. Love the format, the scoring and the great 20M EU opening on Sunday morning. But where were the JA's? Probably my favorite RTTY contest now. The 3 separate time periods are nice, but I wonder if one 24 hour session might be better = less tiring? Thanks for the Qs. 73, John, K6MM. N1MM+K3+KPA500+SteppIR+Wires

N6ZFO



The new normal: a back-up refrigerator and a generator. The generator, of course, goes outside when it's running.



November Sweepstakes CW

Call	Class	QSO		Mults		Score	Club
K6RIM	SO Unlimited HP 364		83		60,424		REDXA
W6XU	Single Op HP	428		78		66,768	REDXA
N6ZFO	Single Op HP	817		82		133,988	MLDXCC
K6SRZ	SO Unlimited HP 904		83		150,064	REDXA	
K6JS	SO Unlimited LP	600		82		98,400	REDXA
K6MM	SO Unlimited HP 267		79		42,186		
K6CTA	SO Unlimited LP	22		18		792	REDXA
N3RC	SO Unlimited HP 324		81		52,488		REDXA
N6YEU	Single Op LP	282		78		43,992	REDXA
W6DR	Multi-Op HP	814		83		135,124	PL259

Ops:K6TD N5KO W6DR W9KKN

November Sweepstakes CW Soapbox

N6YEU

Conditions not great but it is what it is. Missed:RI,PR,SJV??,EWA and NL. I had 27 multipliers with only ONE qso! (not intentionally!)

K6MM

Limited time over a busy weekend. Thanks for the Qs. 73, John

N6ZFO

Was going to quit, symbolically, at QSO # 807... but there were stations calling on 40m, so kept plugging along for a while longer.

Almost missed WTX and had a little panic over SJV. Never worked or heard Labrador for first time in many years. KP2X and NP4Z both easy on 40m Sat night.

ONN was scarce. worked a VE3 in ONN on 40m about 1700Z sunday morning, way into daylight for him. Very discouragning to hear the 20m pileup on VE4VT on Sunday . . lots of very bad actors there, but he was a good op and didnt let minself be intimidated. Generally a rough one glad to be out of town for the SSB weekend! 73 Bill n6zfo

K6SRZ

I was well on my way to a good score on Saturday night-having established a run frequency on 40~ when I started experiencing an ocular migraine. In my case, it's a painless visual disturbance with wavy lines, sparkles, and checkerboards. It has no important prognostic significance but if one has never experienced one it can be scary. I've had several patients come to me worried that they were having a "stroke" and giving good descriptions of ocular migraines.

Stress and staring at monitor screens are well-known triggers.

So, I closed down K6SRZ and had a long, refreshing night of sleep with the result that I gave up almost five hours of operating time. That's why my score isn't as high as in most previous years.

And, yes, there were the usual problems with fills for "pre" or "prec". A few times I had to revert to sending "letter?". Is "precedent" a quaint anachronism from traffic handling? The word is usually defined as: "an earlier event or action that is regarded as an example or guide to be considered in subsequent similar circumstances." Seems like "class" would be a better descriptor, but that train left the station years before I was born. Thanks for

for the Qs. 73 & KB, Alan/K6SRZ

K6IS

Missed PR - Never heard them or saw them spotted, that could have been an error with my skimmer filter setup which I corrected early Sunday

I erected the BigIR Vertical as the 2nd antenna, less than ideal location, between my house and the neighbor 15' away. My lot is $45' \times 100'$.

It played well when roof mounted, but the city made me take it down. It was pretty much useless located at the side of the house.

Tried CQing on 15 with the vertical and didn't even get a skimmer spot. 80M Q's and 2nd radio Q's took a hit without a good antenna, although

K9YC was booming in on 80 and I was surprised to get his Q precedent.

I tried to get a coveted K6XX 100 Q, but couldn't break the pileup. Thanks for the Q's Jim, K6JS

Elecraft K3 x 2. DB18 @ 55', BigIR Vertical



Art Car destined for Burning Man an being repaired at Penngrove's Twin Oaks Garage. The rocket car sits on a 1974 Cadillac chassis.

CO World Wide DX SSB

Call	Class	QSO	Zones	DXCC	Score
N6ZFO	SOAB HP	105	39	57	28,032
K6SRZ	SOAB HP	47	23	33	7,616
N3RC	SOAB HP	213	44	106	87,600
K6MM	SOSB20 HP	1	1	1	6

CQ World Wide DX SSB SOAPBOX

K6SRZ

Fires, evacuations, power outages and dismal propagation made this not the year for CQ WW SSB.

N6ZFO

Quit after power shutoff due to fire threat. Good 20m run of JA's Sat afternoon on 20m at JA sunrise.



Above: Where Roblar Road meets the road to Valley Ford. The proposed quarry on Roblar Road is not making the local bicycling community happy.

Below: your editor's WWII ration book. The fine print says it's property of the United States Government, but they've never asked me to return it.

United States of America Office of Price Administration WAR RATIO	489903 DH N BOOK No. 3 Food if altered NOT
Identification of person to whom	dissued: PRINT IN FULL 3813 WITHOUT Middle name) (Last name) Clast name)
SIGNATURE OF SEX SERVICE (Person to whom book is is seed. If such p	HT HEIGHT OCCUPATION Lbs. Ft. In. Mlendon berson is unable to sign because of age or incapacity, another may sign in his behalf.)
WARNING This book is the property of the United States Government. It is unlawful to sell it to any other person, or to use it or permit anyone clise to use it, except to obtain rationed goods in accordance with regulations of the Office of Price Administration. Any person who finds a lost War Ration Book must return it to the War Price and Rationing Board which issued it. Persons who violate rationing regulations are subject to \$10,000 fine or imprisonment, or both. OPA FORM NO. R-130	LOCAL BOARD ACTION Issued by //-5 (Local board number) Street address 38 Selection (Date) City State address (Signature of issuing officer)

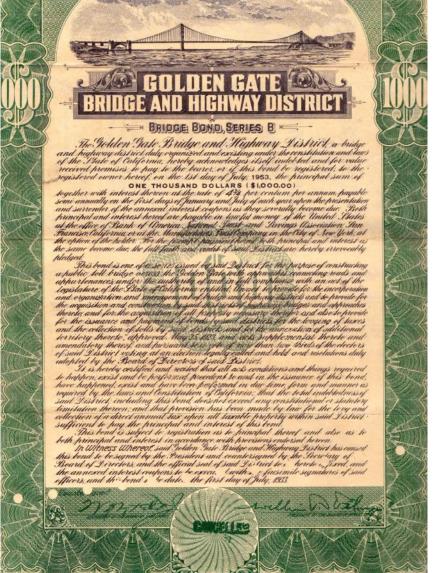


A treasure from a radio rummage sale at the Petaluma Salvation Army



K6SRZ and KU6F division winners for M/S HP Sweepstakes SSB 2014. Saraj's plaque was a casualty of the Tubbs Fire, but the ARRL provided a replacement.

Some of the photos in the issue of "Sunspots" are not relevant to ham radio. Your editor includes them ijn his continuing efforts (1) to keep things interesting and (2) to fill blank spaces. REDXA members can have their own work featured here. All that's needed is for you to send your contributions to K6SRZ.





One of the coyotes of Penngrove stalking gophers

A \$1000 Golden Gate Bridge bond, long since cancelled. When your editor was young his parents would occasionally allow him to lean out the car window and hand the toll payment to the collector. At the time, the toll was twenty-five cents. "Why," I asked my father, "do they collect our money!" It's to pay for building the bridge was his reply. "So," I asked, "when they have enough money to pay for it, will they stop collecting the toll?" "Yes," he lied.

Current toll is \$6.00-24 times what it was when I first asked.





My apologies if I've run these photos before. It's just part of my effort to keep "Sunspots" interesting.

One nice thing about ham radio is getting to know people all over the world. In the recent CQWW SSB contest I was surprised to hear "hello my friend Alan" over the air from ZW5B, a big club station in Brazil. Turns out it was my friend Miguel, PY3MM, who had been with me on an expedition to Conway Reef in the South Pacific. I was the expedition doctor. Miguel dislocated his shoulder while snorkeling. I was able to pop it back in place. Paul, N6PSE, took the before and after pictures. These photos also appeared in a DX medicine presentation at Visalia two years ago.

REDXA Calendar of Upcoming Events

by Doug WW6D

Oct 18-20 PACIFICON

Oct 26-27 CQ WW SSB

Nov 2-3 ARRL Sweepstakes CW

Nov 13 * REDXA Monthly Meeting

Nov 16-18 ARRL Sweepstakes SSB

Nov 23-24 CQ WW CW

Dec 6-8 ARRL 160m Contest

Dec 11 * REDXA Holiday Party & Raffle

Dec 14-15 ARRL 10m Contest

Dec 28 RAC Winter Contest

Dec 28-29 Stew Perry Topband Challenge

Jan 1 ARRL Straight Key Night

Refer to https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html for more contest information.

N6YEU, Madera County for CQP

This year I had the opportunity to do something a little different from my normal out-in-the-sticks CQP portable operation. Having noticed that Madera county was underrepresented last year and having friends who recently moved there and who normally board our dogs when we travel ,I decided to do CQP from their place. 3 days after the contest I was off to WV and left the dogs there until our return home.

While this was not an ideal QTH it was adequate. I would certainly be in demand as a multiplier .I drove

down to Oakhurst on CQP weekend Thursputting up one of the (like the ones REDXA raised it to 35') and old Force 12 C3 tribvee for 40 and 80.

I set up my station in the tower in the middle ran extension cords not need my usual gen-Spartan but adequate good--not too hot and

I began the contest with only 27 QSOs in was going to be a strugreally improved all ple of hours on 20 SSB think this was probably use of an amplifier. I Beacon site and I had reports.

I ended up with 525 (missed WY,MR,AB 76,896. I could have



the Thursday before day and spent Friday AB 577 portable towers uses for Field Day) I used it to support my ander and an inverted

an old mule barn with of the former corral. I from the garage so did erator. The shack was and the weather was not too cold.

with high hopes but the first hour I knew it gle. Conditions never weekend. The last couwere pretty good. I a good weekend to have checked the Reverse mostly single digits dB

qsos and 54 mults and NT) for a score of spent more BIC (butt in

chair) time but having few callers and an offer to go QRT and visit the local brew pub for dinner Saturday evening took me away from the rig for a while. While not one of my better CQP results, I did enjoy being the "Rare DX" even if I wasn't very loud. I hope all who needed MADERA were able to find me. I enjoy operating /portable but it does get a little harder physically each year but I am looking forward to next year already!



Operating position at N6YEU, Madera County and a view of the barn where Fred operated







David, K6DAJ, ventured up to Sierra County to operate M/S with W6MY at his nicely equipped station in North San Juan.

David did CW and Henry, W6MY, did SSB. The station is set up inside a Desert Storm surplus radio trailer.

W6MY got to name his own street—Ham Radio Operator Drive.



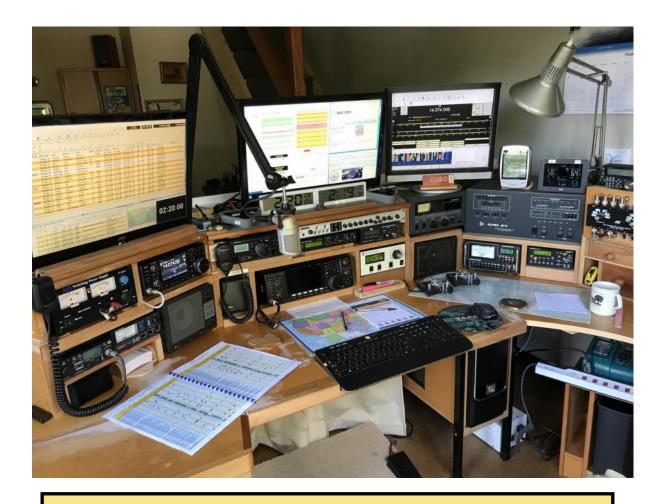
K6SRZ joined K9YC, W6GJB, K6YL, K3ZZ, and N6RNO for a split operation that activated San Benito Co. (W6BX) and Merced Co. (KU6W). Above: W6GJB's radio trailer parked above San Juan Reservoir (Merced) Below: The view from W6BX at the Douglas Ranch, Paicines CA (San Benito County)



ARRL now permits field card checkers to verity 160 M QSOs. Chuck, N6OJ, is a field card checker and REDXA member in Petaluma. KC6AWX, in Novato, is another REDXA field check-



#180 on Top Band for K6SRZ. In general, conditions are poor so far this season.



Go with BIG 4K TV for your PC!!!!

Included is a pic of current K3RC shack with the addition of 2 new Samsung 50" 4k monitors which run about \$400 each. I got one and was so impressed

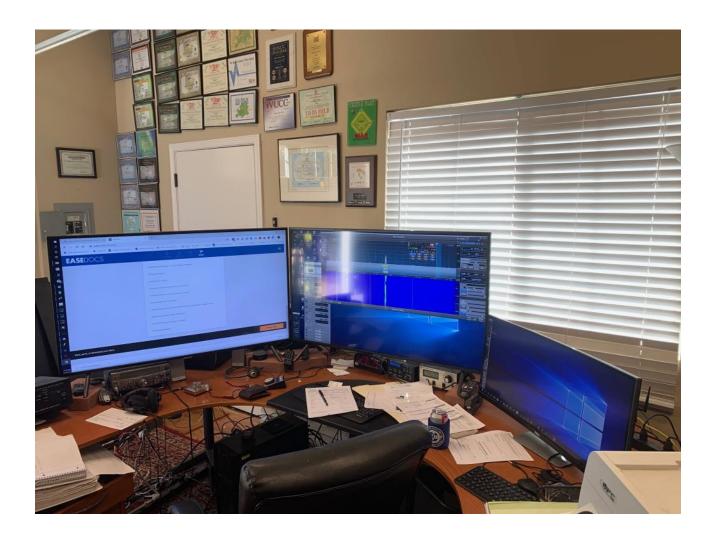
I bought another one. I highly recommend you try this over buying a regular PC monitors. On the right side of desk is a 31" Dell ultrawide which

I bought about a year ago for \$800. It has lower resolution and doesnt hold a candle to the Samsungs even though it was the highest rated PC monitor at the time for less than a \$1000. Make sure any 4K TV you buy supports

Chroma 4:4:4

There are lots of good articles on the subject and https://www.rtings.com/tv/reviews/best/by-usage/pc-monitor is a good place to start. Check out your video card to make sure it supports full 4k. You will not be disappointed.

73, Roger N3RC



Another view of the large monitors at K3RC

Is Remote Operation in your future?

by Doug WW6D

A couple of years ago, my YL and had been discussing the possibility of downsizing. We were now empty nesters and thinking of the future, it might be prudent to unload some of our stuff. So when we were provided the 'opportunity' to move into a nice townhouse (2 story), we decided that was the best course of action. It did come with a few "side effects", notably a strict Home Owners Association (HOA) which frowned on outside antennas.

Ham Radio under such restrictions was not new for me. On moving to Santa Rosa 30+ years ago into an apartment, I had found that a Slicky antenna worked fairly well strung in the upstairs loft. However, after moving into our previous house, nothing matches the benefit of having a tower and its corresponding 'signal grabbers'.

So, my first attempt in the new townhouse was to string a dipole in the attic. However, due to modern construction using metal-backed insulation, the dipole did not work all that well. I soon discovered that a dipole hung in front of the windows in a spare bedroom provided much better performance. Currently, I am focused on only the 20m band and looking forward to the upcoming California QSO Party. CW and FT8 are the two modes that work effectively for this.

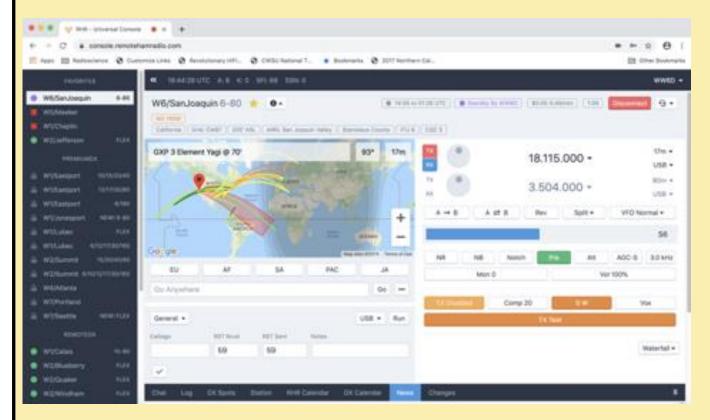
So what the about the other bands? In this age of the internet, I quickly found several freely accessible web-based SDR's (Software Defined Radios), although receive only. There are many now and are easy to use. One of the first I used and continue to operate is the KFS station run by Craig W6DRZ. It is located 6 miles south of Half Moon Bay on the site of the old commercial KFS station owned by Globe Wireless. It provides excellent reception on the ham bands 160m through 20m (minus 30m). It is free to use by anyone but donations are gladly accepted. At peak times, 70+ listeners have been noted using the receivers.

Another vast system to checkout is the network of KiwiSDR's, of which the KPH remote receivers are part. These SDR's cover 0-30 MHz with no gaps, so are very popular with SWL's and hams. You can access those through the interface page: sdr.hu. At this writing, there are 452 receivers currently available!

But what about "getting on the air", i.e., transmitting? That's where the remote ham radio aspect comes in. You can set up your own as Ron N6IE has done admirably. (See his website: n6ie.com.) Or you could get up on the learning curve using the website remotehams.com, and homebrew your own solution or use other stations.

Or do as I did: "rent a station." Essentially, that is what the "remotehamradio.com" or RHR service provides. Emerging from the "Hudson Valley Towers" company, this small group of entrepreneurs who loved putting up antennas wondered if they could turn remote operation into a business. Is it legal? Yes! They hired the appropriate attorneys and researched the process. They setup a unique on-line system for tracking your time on the various stations and developed a business plan. They've now been up and running for 4+ years now and it is going well.

The original stations were all Elecraft K3's along with rig control, rotor control, amplifiers and appropriate remote interfacing to the user using the Chrome browser. Here's an example of the browser interface using the San Joaquin station:



The stations' locations are carefully chosen. The sign-up process involves proving you are licensed and at what class. After verifying your credentials, you get 30 minutes of free operation to see if you really want to use their system.

RHR continues to innovate. Several new stations have been added over the past few months and some stations now make use of Flex radios with their corresponding waterfall displays.

So, at this point in my life, these remote systems fill a niche in my ham radio activities. Check out their web sites for further information.

SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

by Doug WW6D, Secretary

President Jim Selmi, K6JS, called the meeting to order at 7:48 pm, September 11, 2019 at the Boulevard Cafe, Petaluma, CA. In attendance were 18 members and guests.

Minutes from the August meeting were moved, seconded and approved as published in Sunspots. Treasurer's report was presented by Acting Treasurer Bill Zaner, W6IYS. It was moved and seconded to approve his report and subsequently accepted by the membership. Bill noted that 19 people have yet to pay their dues for the 2019 year and we're about to enter the $4^{\rm th}$ quarter of the year. Please pay or you will be dropped from the roster.

Old Business. Jim updated the list of upcoming programs:

Oct 9: Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ "Latest News from Elecraft" (including K4 Xcvr)

Nov 13: Steve Jones, N6SJ "CW Skills for DXing"

Dec 11: Holiday Party and Raffle

New Business. None.

Program was presented by Ted Algren, KA6W entitled "Designing HF Loops for best DX". His presentation focused on the various loop configurations he has designed over the years and the use of antenna modeling to predict performance. A highlight of his presentation was an audio clip of a QSO he made with 3B9 Rodiguez Island proving that the low angle design really works!

The raffle sales resulted in \$26 to the club and \$26 to Len K6ANP.

Adjourned at 8:32 pm.

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Dec 28-29 Stew Perry Topband Challenge

Jan 1 ARRL Straight Key Night

Treasurer's Report

Bal. Brt. Fwd. 8/31/2019 \$3,679.76

Receipts

Raffle \$26.00

Total Receipts \$26.00

Disbursments

Contribuition to NCDXF \$250.00 Dinner for Speaker \$25.00

Total Disbursments \$275.00

Cash Flow <u>(\$249.00)</u>

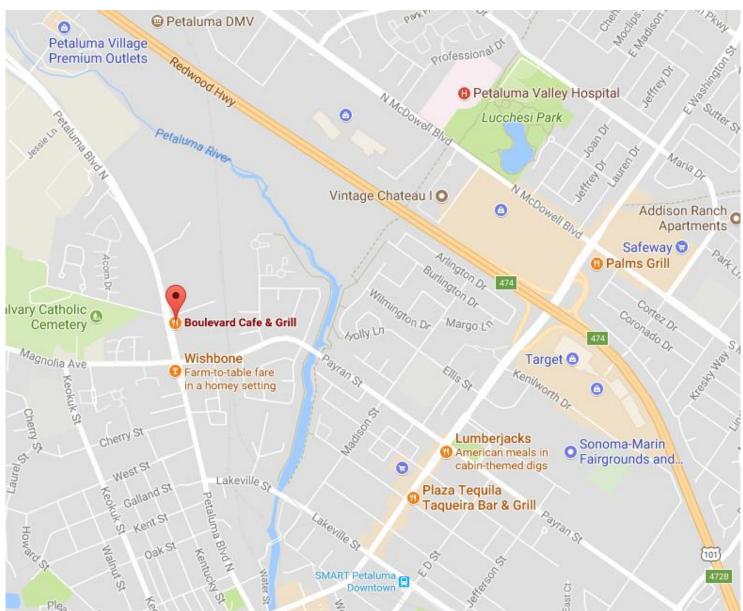
Balance 9/30/2019 <u>\$3,430.76</u>





Boulevard Café & Grill

1096 Petaluma Blvd. North, Petaluma, CA



Redwood Empire DX Association meets the second Wednesday of each months at the Boulevard Café and Grill at 1096 Petaluma Blvd. North. Petaluma, CA.