

We'll be ZOOMing our
next Meeting

Time 7:00 PM

December 9 (Wednesday)

ZOOM:

meeting number *****

password *****

See page 4 of this issue for
fur-ther instructions if you're
not familiar with ZOOM (it's
not difficult)

SUNSPOTS

REDWOOD EMPIRE DX ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 750834, Petaluma, CA 94975

Volume XXIII

Number XII

December 2020

Club Officers:

PRESIDENT:

Jim Selmi, K6JS
jselmi@hotmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT:

(+CC) Roger Cooper, N3RC
rogern3rc@gmail.com

SECRETARY:

(+Web) Doug Bender,
WW6D
ww6d@arrl.net

TREASURER:

Fred Leoni
N6YEU@aol.com

DIRECTORS:

Josh Fiden, W6XU
w6xu@arrl.net

Bill, WX6B (PP)
billys95404@yahoo.com

EDITOR:

Meeting Announcement

COVID has changed our usual December meeting plans All REDXA members are invited to come participate in the election of officers for 2021. Topics for the meeting include;

- The election—presentation of the slate
- The Spirit award
- The future of REDXA, including meeting times, our ZOOM account, and future meeting programs
- Field Day 2021
- Status of club equipment

REDXA President's Commentary

This is an important meeting, dealing as it does with the future direction of our club. Be there! Most of you are by now ZOOM experts. For the uninitiated, page 5 has all the details.

(continued next page)

During a year like no other and heading into the holiday season with a possibility of another shelter in place. We must continue to stay safe, wear a mask, wash your hands and social

distance. We will all get through this together. Vaccines are just around the corner and hopefully we can celebrate our Holiday party with our friends at the Boulevard Grill in 2021. The only positive from all of this has been increased contesting activity and the awakening of Ole Sol?! The sun seems to be emerging from a long hibernation in epic fashion. We'll have to wait and see how cycle 25 progresses.

The contest season is in full swing with better propagation on the higher bands. We celebrate our 40th REDXA holiday party on a Zoom meeting. Please join us for the presentation of the REDXA Spirit award, election of new officers and discuss ideas for the future of REDXA. Some topics of conversation that showed up on the email reflector; changing meeting times (I assume this is for in-person meetings), Field Day and club equipment. Please join us and enjoy some online fellowship. REDXA meetings will be via Zoom for the foreseeable future. I imagine we will be doing Zoom meetings well into 2021.

As my REDXA presidency winds down, I reflect back on my introduction to this fine club. It wasn't long after I moved to Petaluma in the early 90's that I set the rig up and ran into Chuck, N6OJ several times on the bands. I was invited over to his house and we shared tales about our radio backgrounds and realized we had a mutual friend; I believe he was one of the first REDXA members and also my high school ham radio club advisor some 20 years earlier, Bill, K6WAP (Ex-WB6QBJ). I was invited to attend a meeting and I've been hooked ever since.

The meetings were held at the old Carrows in Petaluma back then and I always look forward to the next REDXA meeting, anticipating the great presentations and the camaraderie of this special group of folks. I always wanted to give back to the club that provided me enjoyment over the years; and it is my hope I've provided you with the same anticipation for each meeting. Looking back on the past couple of years, I've done my best to get quality presentations that are new and informative.

A changing of the guard will occur at our December meeting. Please attend our meeting tomorrow and vote (Yes, another plea to VOTE)

President Roger, N3RC

Vice President Bill, WX6B

Treasurer Fred, N6YEU

Secretary Doug, WW6D

Director Jim, K6JS

Director Josh, W6XU

In closing, it's been a honor and privilege to serve this extraordinary club. We have a strong slate of officers to carry on the REDXA traditions.

Alan – I wrote the original article on 12/2 but since then the SOTA 2020 Challenge ended on 12/7 with a change in the results.

I managed to activate one additional summit but my nearest competitor activated 4 SOTA summits on a single day and passed me by 70 points.

I remain with the high score in California, but I was 70 points behind the top score for the entire US!

I revised the article to reflect the change!!

Joe

AAOBV

ARRL 10 Meter Contest

By K6JS

The ARRL 10-Meter Contest is this weekend from 0000Z, Dec 12 to 2359Z, Dec 13. Please try to clear some time on your calendar and give REDXA some points. This contest is pretty much a daytime affair, so it leaves some time for the family. We entered this contest as a club last year and had a nice turnout of members. It is a good contest for REDXA to enter in the club competition and we just missed winning the "local" club category, once again being edged out by the MLDXCC.

There are three club competition categories; Local 1 to 10 logs, Medium 11 to 50 logs and Unlimited at 50+ logs. We'll compete against other similar sized clubs. We'll find out what category we're in when all the logs are submitted.

Ten meters is opening up as cycle 25 comes alive which should make this a fun contest. It has world-wide participation with numerous classes of entry CW only, SSB only, Mixed and Multi categories. If you have time, get on the air for some REDXA fun during the ARRL 10M contest. Rules are here: [http:// www.arrl.org/10-meter](http://www.arrl.org/10-meter).

CQWW

I hope everyone found time to get on the air for the CQ WW CW contest. There was plenty of DX activity from around the world, with some pretty amazing scores being claimed.

I heard several REDXA stations on the air. It sure was nice to see an SFI at 106 and some sunspots for this contest. 15 meters was in great shape during the contest.

The CQ WW web site states they've received over 9000 logs, just 48 hours after the end of the contest. In 2013 they had 5000 logs, who says ham radio is fading away. I was able to work a lot of DX and had a lot fun from a little pistol station.

ARRL Sweepstakes 2020 Local club competition

By K6JS

A small group of contesters got together and discussed going for the gavel in the Local club category. The Local club category is defined by a 35 mile radius around the club center.

A maximum of 10 logs combined in the CW and SSB contest weekends is allowed in the local club division. N6ZFO requested a move of the club circle 6 miles North to accommodate his station. This move drops our

Marin members. The Board of Directors voted on and approved the one-time move of the center of the club for the combined CW and SSB contests. We missed points from our active contesters to the South, K6RIM (82,170), K6ELE and K6CTA were not active for SS.

The CW weekend took place on November 7th and 8th. We had 6 logs (K6SRZ, N6ZFO, K6JS, W6ZU, N6IE, N6YEU) totaling 685526 points. This leaves us 4 logs for the SSB weekend

On the 21st and 22nd. K6SRZ, N6ZFO, W6XU, K6JS and N6YEU submitted logs for 518,586. We finished with a combined score of 1,203,308 which is VERY competitive in the Local

category. We unfortunately submitted 11 logs and were automatically placed in the medium club category. I thought we had all communicated on log submissions, but I failed to notice we were over the 10 log limit before the deadline had past. Lesson learned and I'll be better prepared for next year.

Our little club accomplished a great score and everyone should be proud of their efforts. We can try again next year.



REDXA is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Election of Officers

Presentation of Spirit award

Discuss ideas for Zoom meetings, Sunspots, Field Day, equipment

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://marincounty-org-dpw.zoom.us/j/91781892793?pwd=MjJwUmhXaUFZMTQ0Qlg2MUdRTjBCZz09>

Meeting ID: *****

Password: *****

One tap mobile

+12133388477,,91781892793#,,1#,432213# US (Los Angeles)

+12532158782,,91781892793#,,1#,432213# US (Tacoma)

Dial by your location

+1 213 338 8477 US (Los Angeles)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 206 337 9723 US (Seattle)

Meeting ID: *****

Password: *****

Find your local number: <https://marincounty-org-dpw.zoom.us/u/ab48R4xzKT>

NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

by Doug WW6D, Secretary

The monthly meeting was held via Zoom on November 11, 2020 beginning at 7:00pm. It was hosted by President Jim Selmi, K6JS. A maximum of 21 participants were signed in to the meeting while it was in progress. 5 guests attended the meeting: Steve, KK6VZE, our speaker's daughter and son-in-law, Thomas, KM6DLW, Mark, KF6MZQ and Steve, KJ6AFJ (our speaker's grandson).

A motion was made to approve the minutes and treasurer's report from the October meeting as published in the September Sunspots. Motion was seconded and approved.

Old Business. None.

New Business. Fred, N6YEU, is now accepting nominations for the annual REDXA Spirit Award. President Jim K6JS is struggling to get volunteers for the Nominating Committee. He will use the club's new Groups.IO reflector to provide updates.

Program: "K5P DXpedition: The Cursed Paradise of Palmyra Atoll" was presented by club member John, K6MM. This was an updated version of his original presentation given a few years ago and included additional material.

In 2015, Palmyra ranked in the top ten of the Most Wanted List and #2 in Europe! As with major DXpeditions, there were changes due to unforeseen events. Based on the original award (permission to land and operate) received in January 2015, a Team of 12 operators was assembled. The air charter was provided by our host, The Nature Conservancy, as part of the award. Later in 2015, the air strip was decertified and as a result the aircraft type had to be changed to allow access to the Palmyra. The aircraft selected would only seat 9 persons, which was a major change of plans for the DXpedition. Several alternate options were examined but were unsuccessful. It was with great pain that three of the operators stepped back from the Team to allow the DXpedition to proceed.

All equipment was received, pretested and packaged for shipment to Hawaii in the fall of 2015. The Team left Hawaii for Palmyra on 11 January 2016 and was active from 12 January through 18 January.

Future Palmyra Atoll activations may not happen for many years, as access is severely restricted. Permissions to operate on these rare and extremely controlled locations are exceedingly difficult to obtain. We wish to thank The Nature Conservancy and the US Fish and Wildlife Service for their cooperation and support. Without this, K5P Palmyra 2016 would not have occurred.

Meeting adjourned around 8:15pm.

REDXA Calendar of Upcoming Events

by Doug WW6D

Dec 4-6 ARRL 160m Contest

Dec 9 * REDXA Monthly Meeting

Dec 12-13 ARRL 10m Contest

Dec 26-27 Stew Perry Topband Challenge

Jan 1 ARRL Straight Key Night

Jan 2 ARRL Kids Day

Jan 2-3 ARRL RTTY Roundup

Jan 9-10 North American QSO Party CW

Jan 13 * REDXA Monthly Meeting

Jan 16-17 North American QSO Party

SSB Jan 29-31 CQ 160m Contest CW

Feb 10 * REDXA Monthly Meeting

Feb 12-14 CQ WW WPX, RTTY

Feb 20-21 ARRL Inter. DX Contest, CW

Feb 26-28 CQ 160m Contest, SSB

Treasurer's Report

Balance end of October: \$3,459.89

Outgo for November: \$59.00 (6 months
P.O. Box rent)

Balance end of November: \$3,400.89

Received one dues for 2021 deposited Dec 2 (\$20.00)

Current balance: \$3,420.89

Fred Leoni-N6YEU Treasurer



Our Not So Rare DXpedition to the Somewhat Remote Island of Kadavu, Fiji

Rich Carbine, 3D2UD & Marilyn Bagshaw, 3D2VW

October 1999

We flew to Suva Fiji, took a small plane to Kadavu Island. Then boarded a small boat to our destination, a small hut hidden in trees.

Electrical power to our hut was supplied by 2 batteries under the floor. They were charged by a generator, which supplied 2 huts. It was turned off each evening.

Our station was a Kenwood TS 50. A ladder line inverted V, up about 25' – 30', the apex shot up into a tree with a slingshot, served as our antenna.



Our limited operation resulted in 306 total contacts; 181 SSB & 125 CW during the 5 days we were on the air for just a few hours a day. Steve Bertsch, K6SAB SK, former Sunspots Editor, was our QSL Manager. (cont. next page)

W6UDS/N6VAW Fiji expedition

(CONT.)

We were interrupted by kayaking, photography, snorkeling & hiking to a native village. We were invited to visit by the Chief. We danced with the natives. Men and women both wore pareos, as we did. We drank Kava out of coconuts. Children went to school by boat to another island on weekdays, and returned on weekends.

A memorable trip.



A Tapa (vegetable fiber) print, an indigenous Fijian art form

Editor's note

A few years after Rich and Marilyn's expedition to Kadavu, your editor and XYL also travelled to Kadavu on a SCUBA diving expedition. It was a tense time in Fiji as a coup was in progress. The entrance to the Nadi airport was guarded by Fijian soldiers carrying enormous assault weapons. They just smiled at us and waved us through.

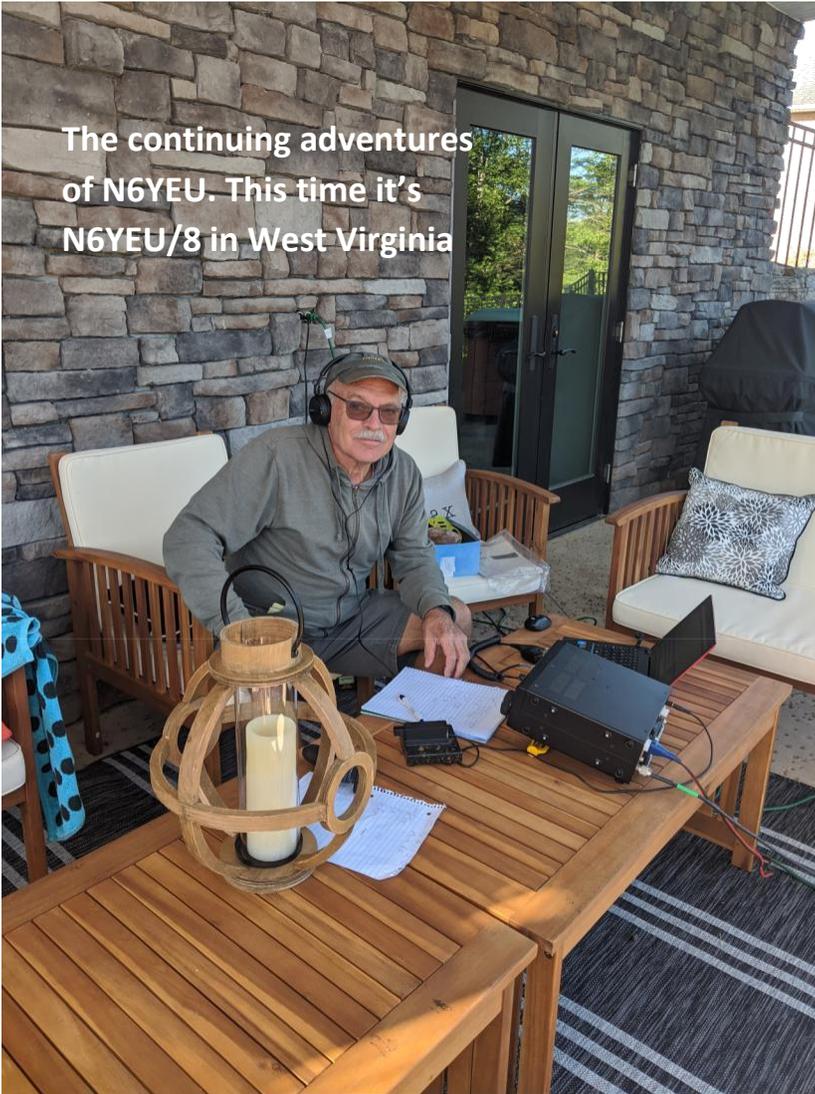
While we stayed at Dive Kadavu, the son of a local village chief learned that I was a guitar picker. Every night he came down to the Dive Kadavu bar carrying two beat-up guitars and we jammed. His favorite tune was "You Are My Sunshine".

The Australian government had recently built a hospital near the Kadavu airport. It was a solid building, but completely empty and unstaffed saved for an office that counseled (against) teenaged pregnancy. We were told that there was no money to finish the hospital job.

Kadavu is pronounced "Kan-davu". There is a convention in written Fijian that an "N" sound is inserted before a hard "D". The international airport on the main island—Viti Levu—is Nadi, pronounced "Nan-di."



The continuing adventures
of N6YEU. This time it's
N6YEU/8 in West Virginia



Back in September my wife and I decided to go visit our daughter and family in West Virginia. Throwing caution to the wind but also taking all precautions during the Covid crisis we took the plunge. I stayed for 4 weeks and my wife stayed 3 more. I needed to return for CQP!

Knowing I would be there for a month I just had to bring along my trusty Icom IC-7300 and home brew linked dipole (both veterans of my PJ5- Sint Eustatius DXpedition). I went to the local Home Depot and purchased a 24 foot painter's pole to support the inverted vee. I set up under an over-hand outside in the back yard strapping the pole to the trampoline frame nearby. During my time there I enjoyed making 114 qsos. 45 Parks on the Air (very popular back east), 18 Route 66 On the Air, 15 Worked All Europe, 13 Texas QSO Party, 15 CWT mini contest and even worked K6JS on 40 CW after trying 20 with no success. Good fun!

After having made several Parks on the Air QSOs I thought it would be fun to "activate" a couple local parks nearby. My first try was Beech Fork State Park K-1800. I only could get on for less than an hour but made 64 qsos in 45 minutes. I returned the next day to make another 115 qsos in under 3 hours. There is a POTA web site where you can self spot or be spotted which really helps attract attention. A couple days later I went to nearby Beech Fork Wildlife Management Area POTA K-7046. Due to a late start and all picnic sites taken (access to electric power I did not get on until later. I was able to work 46 qsos in 45 minutes but had to take down early as family was waiting for me to join them for a BBQ.

I really enjoy the fun and challenge of portable operating. It doesn't take much effort and the rewards are many. I don't have to go "cold turkey" and miss out on ham radio fun! I highly recommend it!

73, Fred N6YEU/8



CQWW CW

Call	Class	QSO	DX	Zones	Score
W6DR	SO(A)AB HP	707	216	130	657746
N6ZFO	SOAB HP	903	169	92	640755
K6ANP	SO(A)AB HP	528	170	89	391349
K6JS	SO(A)AB LP	471	149	101	317750
N6IE	SO(A)AB HP	356	196	111	286124
K6RIM	SO(A)AB HP	366	135	73	210080
K6SRZ	SO(A)AB HP	280	135	69	154632
K6MM	SOAB LP Classic	40	27	23	4800
N6TQ	SO(A)AB HP	418	120	86	233,000

November Sweepstakes SSB

Call	Class	QSO	Mults	Score	CLUB
W6PZ@K6SRZ	SOUHP	1129	84	189672	REDXA
N6ZFO	SOHP	1050	78	163800	REDXA
W6DR (N9YS,W6DR)	M /SHP	843	81	136566	PL259
W6XU	SOUHP	72	79	114234	REDXA
K6JS	SOULP	321	78	50076	REDXA
N6YEY	SOLP	103	39	8034	REDXA
K6MM	SOUHP	12	11	264	NCCC

November Sweepstakes CW

Call	Class	QSO	Mults	Score	CLUB
K6SRZ	SOUHP	1119	84	185754	REDXA
N6ZFO	SOHP	866	82	142024	REDXA
K6JS	SOUHP	650	84	109200	REDXA
W6XU	SOUHP	637	82	104468	REDXA
W6DR	SOUHP	511	84	85848	PL259
N6IE	SOUHP	504	84	84672	REDXA
K6RIM	SOUHP	495	83	82170	NCCC
N6YEY	SOLP	376	79	59408	REDXA
K6MM	SOUHP	355	82	5822	MLDXCC

Contest Scores (cont.)

ARRL 160 Meters

<u>Call</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>QSO</u>	<u>Sections DXCC</u>		<u>Score</u>
W6DR	SOUHP	537	84	7	101283
N6ZFO	SOHP	530	77	6	90221
K6SRZ	SOUHP	297	60	6	42768
N6IE	SOUHP	258	73	4	39732
N6TQ	SOHP	226	50	3	23350



Clublog standings as of December 2020

Club Log Standings are based on worked entities during the calendar year.
Top 5 in each category.

Overall

KC6AWX	233
N3RC	165
N6IE	99
N6YEU	91

CW

KC6AWX	163
N6IE	131
K6JS	128
N3RC	99
N6YEU	91

SSB

K6RIM	75
KC6AWX	74
N3RC	63
N6VXI	61
N6YEU	57

Digital

N3RC	147
N6AD	143
KC6AWX	140
N6IE	110
K6MM	98

ARRL 160 Meters

Call	Class	QSO	Sections/DXCC	Score
W6DR	SOUHP 537	84	7	101283
N6ZFO	SOHP	530	77 6	90221
K6SRZ	SOUHP	297	60 6	42768
N6IE	SOUHP	258	73 4	39732
N6TQ	SOHP	226	50 3	23350



AA0BV, Joe Olsen (S)ummits (O)n (T)he (A)ir expedition to San Bruno Mountain. That's San Francisco off in the distance

The SOTA "Flavours" Challenge 2020

Summits on the air has had a year long challenge. Sota activators were asked to operate using specific modes and/or bands during the 1st 7 days of each month throughout the year.

This was to encourage hams who were not regularly participating in activating or chasing summits to try modes and bands that are not generally used for SOTA.

Most SOTA activations take place using SSB and CW on 40M, 30M, and 20M and FM on 2M.

January 1st-7th 2020: LF - 160m & 80m – San Bruno Mountain

February 1st-7th 2020: Datamodes – Mount Vaca

March 1st-7th 2020: Digital voice - C4FM / DSTAR / DMR / FreeDV – Mount Umunhum, Mount Diablo

April 1st-7th 2020: LF - 160m & 80m – COVID lockdown – did not participate

May 1st-7th 2020: Datamodes – COVID Lockdown – did not participate

June 1st-7th 2020: 12m, 10m & 6m – Big Hill, Bay Hill

July 1st-7th 2020: 70cm – Vollmer Peak, Chabot 2 Benchmark, Mount Tamalpias, Tiburon

Aug 1st-7th 2020: 17m – Anthony Peak, Point Reyes Hill

Sept 1st-7th 2020: Datamodes – Mount Tamalpais

Oct 1st-7th 2020: Digital voice - C4FM / DSTAR / DMR / FreeDV – Fires – did not participate

Nov 1st-7th 2020: LF - 160m & 80m – Gualala Mountain, Loma Alta, Bay Hill

Dec 1st-7th 2020: 12m, 10m & 6m – Colfax Hill, Quick Benchmark

Scoring for activators—hams who go to the summits—is the number of unique QSO partners worked multiplied by the number of unique summits activated. During the course of the year I operated from 16 unique summits and contacted 68 unique QSO partners for a score of 1088. At present I have the top score in California (nearest competitor has 88 points) and I have the top score in the entire United States, my nearest competitor has 882 points. I am the only ham in the United States who has activated using all of the flavours, and there are only 6 total hams in the SOTA world who have activated using all the flavours.

I am writing this in Dec 2nd so I have 5 more days to work toward improving my 2020 Challenge Score.

To participate in this challenge I had to learn how to use D-Star Simplex, and how to take my digital modes portable. During SOTA activations all contacts must be simplex, portable and not connected to a car, or generator. This was a great learning program. I can do things with my equipment that I did not know about before the challenge.

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by Doug WW6D

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Butter and Eggs Day ca.
1920



The K6ANP antenna farm just past dawn—N6YEU photo

With the solar flux greater than 100, our DX fortunes should be improving. Many of us have been making QSOs on 10 Meters and 15 Meters has been opening to Europe. It was good to see so many REDXA members participating in the recent CQWWDX CW. Contest. At one point I (your editor) was part of the same pileup as K6ANP, K6RIM, and K6JS. Ultimately, we all got through

Winning a DX contest from the West Coast is geographically impossible, but *everybody-works-everybody* contests like CQWW really ramp up the participation. One aspect of CQWWDX CW is the chance to engage in pileup practice. Since nobody works split (well, almost nobody), getting through to new multiplier is a matter of propagation, signal strength, and timing. Timing—and maybe calling just a little off zero beat—is good to practice.

With a good antenna and an appreciation for the times of openings to various parts of the world, it is possible to achieve DXCC in a single weekend. Unfortunately, COVID and the various travel bans have put a dent on DXpedition plans. And for those of us who no longer tolerate protracted sleep deprivation, multi-ops are mostly not happening except for remote operations such as from the N6RO station.

Next up for us CW DXers will be the ARRL contest in February.



Boulevard Café & Grill

1096 Petaluma Blvd. North,
Petaluma, CA

The Café is open again for socially distanced inside and patio service. They're not able to host gatherings like our REDXA meetings, but I encourage you to stop in for breakfast or lunch. It's one way to thank Daniel and his staff for their support over the past years.

