

Petaluma California, site of the March 13, 2019 REDXA meeting at the Boulevard Café. Directions and details on the pages of “Sunspots” that follow.



This is part of what looks to be a 4-panel mural in progress on the East side of Petaluma Boulevard South, right after the exit from 101 North

# 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**

**Number XXIII**

**MARCH 2019**

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

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

**We'll be meeting at the Boulevard Café on Wednesday, March 13**

**Our program will be on the recent Ducie Island (VP6D) DXpedition, presented by Chris Tate, N6WM**

**Scroll down to Page 15 for more details of the VP6D DXpedition**



## REDXA President's Commentary

Unfortunately, I missed last month's meeting with the NCCC. I hope the folks that braved the weather enjoyed the presentation on digital and FT8 contesting. I've made a handful of contacts on FT8, but it hasn't piqued my interest yet.

You don't want to miss Chris Tate's presentation on VP6D, Ducie Island. Chris was one of 14 team members that activated VP6D October 20<sup>th</sup> through November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

I hope everyone was able to get PJ5/N6YEU in the log. He had some impressive signals for running 100W and a dipole. I listened to him on 30 meters a few times running some huge pileups. Fred did a great job working the hordes of callers. I can only imagine what it sounded like on his end. We'll look forward to an evening with Fred as he tells us all about his



trip to PJ5.

A few things happening in my shack, namely SO2R and ERC V4 USB computer rotor control. SO2R is a huge amount of work. I'm running two Elecraft K3's, SteppIR DB18 beam and BigIR vertical. I'm using two sets of Dunestar filters, YCCC SO2R box and N1MM+. I'm building the United Micro BCD-14 band decoders for automatic switching of the Dunestar bandpass filters. Living on a postage stamp sized (45'x100') lot doesn't allow for antenna separation and I'm learning I need a few stubs for the harmonics. I've built the stubs for 80,40,20 and am trying to figure out an elegant and cost-effective way to switch them. That covers a lot of the technical issues of SO2R.

The SO2R learning curve is huge. I've read if you can watch TV, send emails and text while contesting with one radio you should give SO2R a try. Once you get the technical aspects solved, it's time to start using 2 radios at once. My scores dropped the first few times using SO2R. I'm using the weekly one-hour CWT mini contests as practice and it's helping. There is a lot of work to be done, but as they say practice makes perfect. I'll put together a presentation for the club if there is enough interest.

ERC - Easy Rotor Control is a German company manufacturing PC boards that interface and allow direct USB computer control of some 90 different antenna rotators. Point and click operation with either ERC provided software or many popular transceiver control and logging programs such as Ham Radio Deluxe or N1MM. Vibroplex is the USA and Canada distributor for ERC. I anxiously awaited its delivery, as I tracked it online I was shocked to see it ship from Vibroplex in Tennessee to KP4 San Juan. Puerto Rico! Apparently, there is a USPS sorting facility there. It eventually arrived a few days late. I ordered the kit version and was able to build the board in a couple hours. I need to do a little tower work before I can test the unit.

I hope to see you all at the meeting Wednesday.



# IDXC

**70th International DX Convention**  
**April 12-14, 2019**  
**Visalia, California**

Visalia DX Convention is just around the corner. The 70th International DX Convention sponsored by the Northern California DX Club will be held again at the beautiful Visalia Conference Center in downtown Visalia, California from April 12-14, 2019. If you're a DXer or interested in any aspect of Ham radio, then IDXC is the place to be. Top DX operators (and contesters) from around the world will be there. You'll match those familiar call signs with new faces, and shake hands with the person you have had a sched with for the past 10 years but never met.

The convention is a full 2 ½ days Friday through Sunday. Friday will be a full day of Contest Academy presentations and training, including parallel presentations in the DX and technical fields. This will be a must for the novice or seasoned DXer! Friday evening dinner options include Topband, Contesting and IOTA.

Saturday also includes a full day of presentations. Top DXpeditioners from every continent tell you how they did it. Learn the secrets for big signals on the top band, how to have fun and adventures chasing IOTA, contest forum, DX forum, seminars for everyone from the seasoned pro to the beginning DXer. Bring your latest QSL card arrivals for checking.

Continued next page



## REDXA IDXC Table reservations - Early Seating Requests

To reduce the time waiting in line at the convention site Friday and Saturday, early seating assignments for the Saturday Evening Banquet will be available via E-mail request. You need to pre-register for reserved banquet seating. Since the Convention Center only uses round tables seating 8 people, for group seating, the maximum group size is 8 people. Any registered individual may request seating for only himself or himself and up to seven (7) additional persons making a maximum group of eight persons (Full Table).

Examples:

- W6XYZ requests seating for himself, one person
- KA6XYZ requesting seat for himself and his wife would be a group of two.
- N6ABC requesting seating for himself and KA6XXX and KA6XXX/YL would be a group of 3.

### REDXA Scores

#### ARRL DX SSB

Call	Class	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score
K6CTA	SO UQRP			1	1		3
K6ELE	SOAB HP			114	52		17,784
K6RIM	SO UHP			167	83		41,583
K6SRZ	SO UHP			313	131	13	123,009
N3RC	SOU HP			439	112		139,104
N6ZFO	SOAB HP			300	126	18	113,400

#### ARRL DX CW

Call	Class	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op Time	Score
K6CTA	SO U LP			63	49		9,261
K6JS	SO ULP	x		602	216	28:00	388,152
K6MM	SO UHP			604	200	18	362,400
K6RIM	SO UHP			373	163		182,397
K6SRZ	SOAB HP			615	220	20	405,900
N3RC	SO UHP			422	149		188,634
N6IE	SO UHP		x	477	221	10	316,251
N6ZFO	SOAB HP			798	209	20:00	500,346
W6DR	SO UHP			41	29	3	3,219
N6T(N6TQ)	SO UHP						100,118

Continued next page



## CQ WW WPX RTTY

Call	Class	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Prefixes	Op TimeScore	
K6CTA	SOSB/20 LP			100	80		12,800
K6ELE	SOAB HP			269	155		74,556
K6RIM	SOAB HP			335	178		108,580
N3RC	SOAB HP			765	305		408,395
N6ZFO	SOAB HP			1088	432	25.5	930,528
WQ6K(N6IE)	SOAB HP						2,227,083
WU6TT(W6DR)	M/S HP						163,761

## NAQP RTTY

Call	Class	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op TimeScore	Team
K6CTA	SOLP			32	21		672 NCCC
K6MM	SOLP			177	48	4	8,496 NCCC Team #3
K6RIM	SOLP			254	61	6	15,494 NCCC Team #1
K6SRZ	SOLP			301	104	7:09	31,304 NCCC
N6ZFO	SOLP			271	105	4:45	28,455 NCCC Team #4

## NAQP SSB

Call	Class	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	Mults	Op TimeScore	Team
K6ELE	SOLP			38	32	3	1,216 NCCC
K6MM	SOLP			421	88	6.5	37,048 NCCC Team #3
N3RC	SOQRP			4	4		16 NCCC Team #2

Continued next page



## CQ 160 Meter CW

Call	Class	SO2R	Remote	QSOs	State/Prov	DXCC	Op Time	Score
K6JS	SOAHP			111	40	8	5	14,448
K6SRZ	SOAHP			271	45	7	7	34,112
N3RC	SOLP			22	11	1		1,428
N6IE	SOAHP		x	251	46	13	4.5	39,058
N6TQ	SOHP			161	44	6	6	21,400
N6ZFO	SOLP			26	12	8	1:45	2,060
W6DR	SOHP			452	56	17	13:32	84,607



Where will *you* be for Field Day?





N6YEU with official DXpedition shirt

## N6YEU/PJ5 DXpedition to St. Eustasius by Fred Leoni, N6YEU

As many of my REDXA brothers and sisters know, I recently made a solo DXpedition to the Caribbean island of Sint Eustatius. Sint Eustasias was formerly a Dutch territory. The island is known affectionately to the locals as "Statia". Sint Eustasius is a variant of Saint Eustace [see sidebar]

The trip was a long time dream of mine: to one day be on the other end of a pileup and I was not disappointed. Turning 70 on February 15; having been a ham for 30 years; and realizing that the years are passing by faster each year, I thought I should take the plunge. These seemed like good milestones to celebrate. My research finally narrowed my goal down to Sint Eustatius. It is not too far away but still off the normal tourist track. To

get there I flew to Charlotte, NC then on to Sint Maarten (this is really a big tourist destination) and then by a 19 seat prop plane to Sint Eustasius. On Statia, I stayed at an AirBNB property called "A Quiet Getaway" that had been rented a few times before by hams. It was perfect. The cost was within my cheapo budget and it overlooked the Atlantic, which was about 200 meters away. Europe and the USA were right over the salt water. It was also about a mile and a half from "town" (Oranjestad).



"A Quiet Getaway", Hq. of the N6YEU/PJ5 DXpedition

I arrived Monday night February. The next morning set up the antenna. I used a homemade "linked dipole" inspired by the commercially made PACKTENNA. I used Packtenna's 1:1 balun put together the rest before leaving home. Band changes with this antenna are made by connecting or disconnecting 2mm banana clip connectors. I cut the antenna for 15-17-20-30 and 40 meters. I brought extra wire for 80 but had no luck with that band: two tries revealed an SWR that was off the charts. I have no idea what was wrong but 80 meters was not to be. I supported the antenna inverted vee style with a fiberglass "Spiderpole" and used a small pulley to raise and lower the antenna to change bands. The apex was about 9 meters up. I used RG8X coax which was light but it still put some strain on the pole [see the picture]. Winds blew CONSTANTLY while I was there but the antenna set up survived.

I needed to travel as light as possible and to avoid overcharges so I kept things simple. The Spiderpole collapsed to 48 in. and fit in a pvc tube with end caps.

I had a duffle bag which carried my IC7300 in an Apache case (Harbor Freight). I had a smaller case for my Palm Paddle key and Winkeyer USB. The wire antenna, coax, and various tools and guying lines etc were also in the duffle along with minimal clothing. The weather was t-shirts and shorts all week, peaking to the mid 80s during day then plummeting to low 70s at night!





I got on the air at 1450 UTC, starting on 20 phone. I had no idea what to expect. Things went pretty well all week. There were some very slow times but when the bands opened it was DX Nirvana. I operated simplex quite a bit but did operate split on CW listening up 1-2 which was a trip. The pileups were relentless but fairly disciplined except for the occasional (you guessed it) Italian!!

For the entire expedition, I logged 3,939 QSOs including 1,637 in the ARRL DX-CW contest. On the Saturday of the contest I had what has to be the greatest contest run of my life logging 680 QSOs on 15 M in 5 ½ hours—averaging 123 per hour. Before I started, I wasn't even sure 15 would even be open! During the 7 days of operating I managed to work all states and 76 DXCC entities. Big fun! I operated mostly CW as the few times I would call CQ on phone the response was underwhelming. CW, however, generated large numbers of callers.

I spent as much time as I could on the air but also took advantage of visiting the other parts of the island. Wikipedia and Google have a lot of information on the history and current status of the island. Sint Eustatius is fairly poor economically but the local people are friendly once approached. I enjoyed the stay immensely.

Flying home--which took more time than I would have liked--really gives you a sense of the truly magical discovery of radio. Being



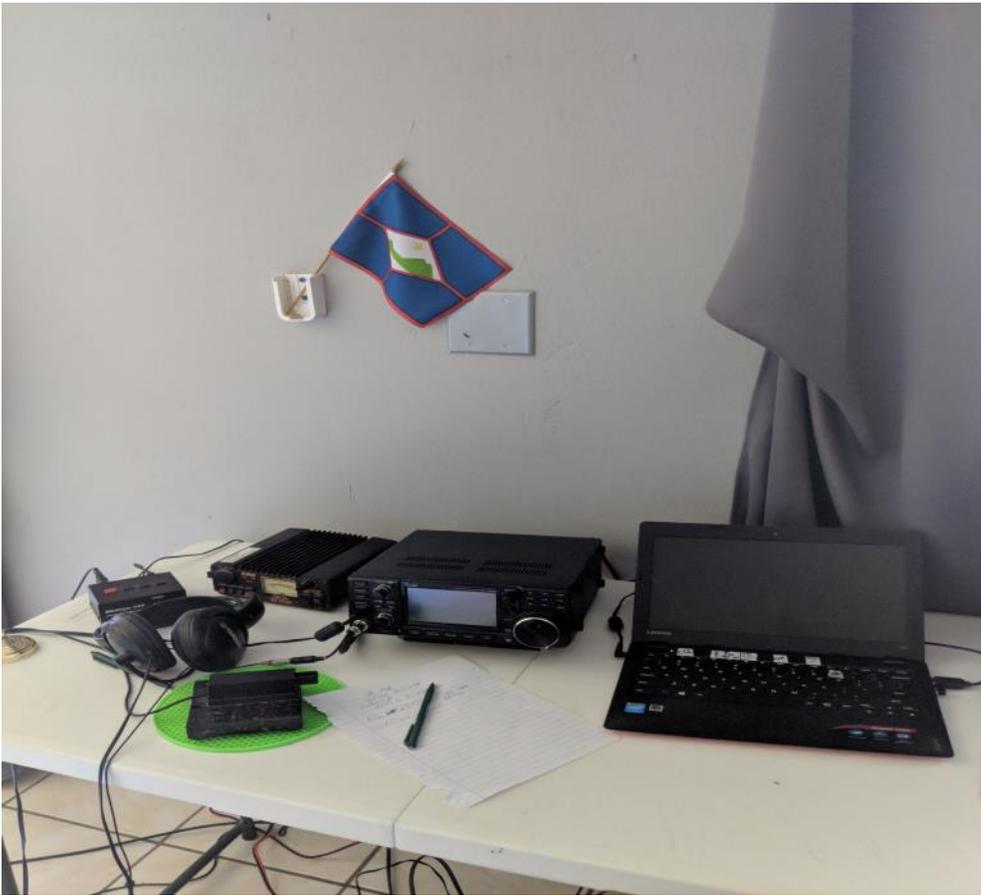
able to send signals around the world at the speed of light is almost beyond comprehension. I take lots of things for granted working stations from home, but this trip really increased my appreciation for this wonderful hobby of ours.

One of the real pleasures was working many REDXA and NCCC members while there. The "East Coast Curtain" did have an advantage but call sign recognition helped me pick out a few of you "locals".

All I can say that this was the pinnacle of my ham radio career. I may never get the opportunity to be DX again but I definitely won't forget it!

73, Fred PJ5/N6YEU





**The operating position at PJ5/N6YEU. The flag of Sint Eustasius is on the wall**

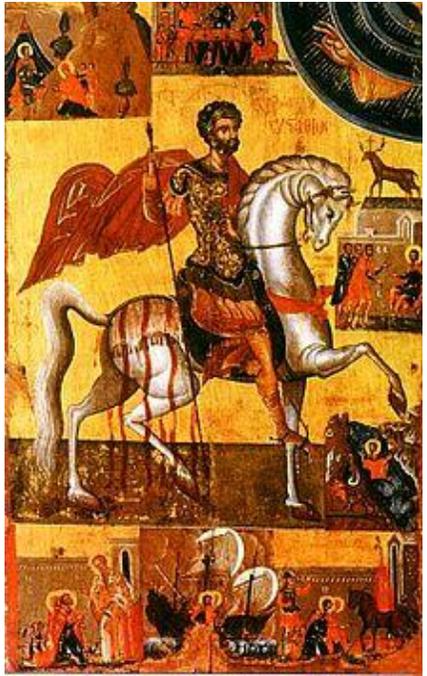
...so, who was Sint Eustasius and did he do that was saintly? Well, according to Wikipedia, he was a Christian martyr and “soldier saint” from the Second Century AD. He converted to Christianity after seeing a vision of a crucifix between the antlers of a stag he was hunting. Emperor Hadrian is said to have condemned Eustace his wife, and sons to be roasted to death inside a bronze statue of a bull. In 1970, the Catholic Church removed St Eustace from the universal calendar of the saints.

**REDXA members in the PJ5/N6YEU Log**

K6SRZ, K6JS, KG6N, N6OJ, K6ANP, K6RIM, N3RC, WW6D, K6MM

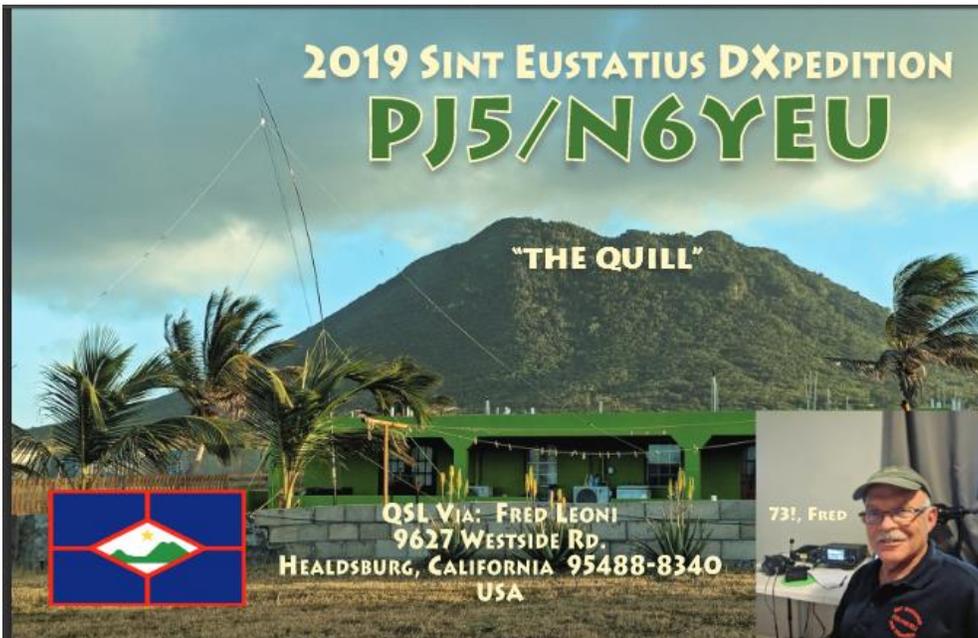
Former members: W9KNI, K6UM, WN6W

NCCC members: K9YC, K6XX, K6TD, W6NV, W1SRD, K2RD, WB6JJJ, K9JM, W6WF



Above, a Greek Orthodox icon of St. Eustathios. He is a patron saint of fire fighters, hunters, and torture victims.





**QSL VIA: FRED LEONI**  
**9627 WESTSIDE RD.**  
**HEALDSBURG, CALIFORNIA 95488-8340**  
**USA**

73! FRED

Confirming contact with:			Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	
Band	Mode	RST	UTC	QSL PSE TNX

Verified: \_\_\_\_\_

QTH: "A Quiet Getaway" AirBnB  
 Sint Eustatius, West Indies

Lat: 17° 29' 58.5" North Long: 62° 58' 11" West

IOTA NA-145

CQ Zone 8

FK87ml

ITU Zone 11

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## PJ5/N6YEU

**QSL via:**  
 Fred Leoni - N6YEU  
 9627 Westside Road  
 Healdsburg, CA 95448-8340  
 USA

### 2019 DXpedition to Sint Eustatius Island

In celebration of my 70th birthday (15 Feb.) and my 30 years as a ham, I decided to do a solo DXpedition. I chose Sint Eustatius as it is off the normal tourist path. Between 12 - 18 February, I made 3,939 QSOs - mostly on CW - including 1,637 QSOs in the ARRL DX-CW Contest. I logged 76 DXCC countries (entities) and all 50 US States. I enjoyed the experience of being DX and also the island with its people.

**Rig:** ICOM IC-7300 100Watts

**Antenna:** Home made linked dipole with PACKETENNA 1:1 Balun - Inverted Vee

**Support:** Spiderpole at 9 meters

**Logging:** Lenovo laptop with N3FJP software

**Keying:** Palm Paddle and Winkeyer USB

**Headset:** Yamaha

Thanks to everyone for the QSOs! It was a very enjoyable experience!

73, Fred PJ5/N6YEU

Here's the PJ5/N6YEU QSL



...Looks like we can now use the KPH SDR as a kind of Reverse Beacon Network. I've tried it. It works!

—Ed.

### REDXA Calendar of Upcoming Events

by Doug WW6D

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**

**Jun 8-10 ARRL VHF Contest**

**Jun 15-16 All Asian DX Contest CW**

Jun 12 \* *REDXA Monthly Meeting*

**Jun 22-23 ARRL Field Day**

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

### KPH Software Defined Receivers

Now you can listen to the LF, MF and HF bands using the same antennas the operators at KPH use - from the comfort of your computer no matter where you are in the world.

We have installed several Kiwi Software Defined Receivers (SDRs) covering all frequencies from 0 to 30Mc - and made them publicly available via the Internet.

The LF/MF receiver uses a Marconi T antenna while the HF receiver used a TCI-530. Both are located at the KPH receive site where electrical noise is extremely low.

We are still fine tuning the installation but the project has reached the point that it's ready for you to use. Here are the links.

For LF/MF: <http://198.40.45.23:8072/>

For HF: <http://198.40.45.23:8073/>

For more information, go to: <http://radiomarine.org/>. We'd appreciate your comments. Please write to [info@radiomarine.org](mailto:info@radiomarine.org).



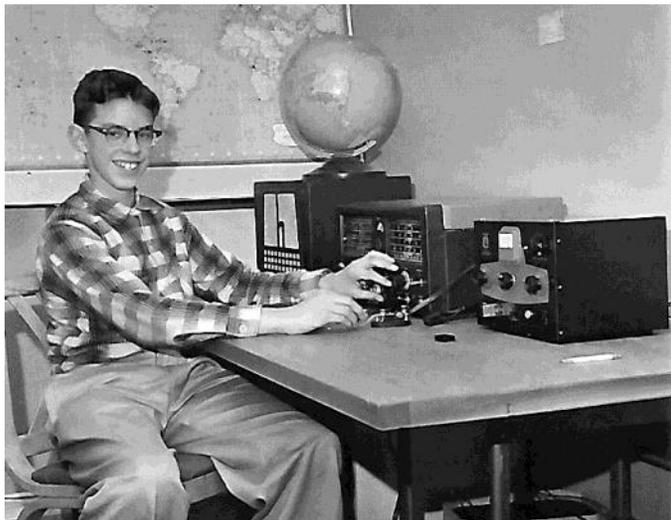
Your editor—and I suspect many of you readers—has places to go and people to see that he really *means* to follow up on and yet somehow never gets around to it. One of the items on my list was to venture up to Kelseyville, Lake County, to visit REDXA member Bill, N6ZFO, and XYL Barbara. I hadn't been to Bill's place since he lived in Corte Madera and that was eleven years ago!

## A visit to N6ZFO

Bill may be REDXA's farthest flung member. He's an active contester and DXer and, since his move to Lake County, a vintner and oenologist operating his own Talleyrand Winery. His QRZ.com page lists some of his accomplishments.

*In April, 2008, Bill, N6ZFO relocated from the San Francisco Bay Area to a 27 acre farm on the summit of Mt. Dali Dona at the south end of Clear Lake, CA. Mt. Dali Dona was the site of the Konocti TV tower and transmitter in the 1950's. With XYL, operates the Talleyrand Winery, a small commercial winery and vineyard. Serves as President, Friends of Taylor Observatory-Norton Planetarium, Inc. a CA 501 (c) (3) STEM resource for Lake County K-12 students.*

*Bill is the developer of the Northern California Contest Club's popular Sprint Ladder competition and is the Director of the NCCC's Thursday Night Contesting Series.*

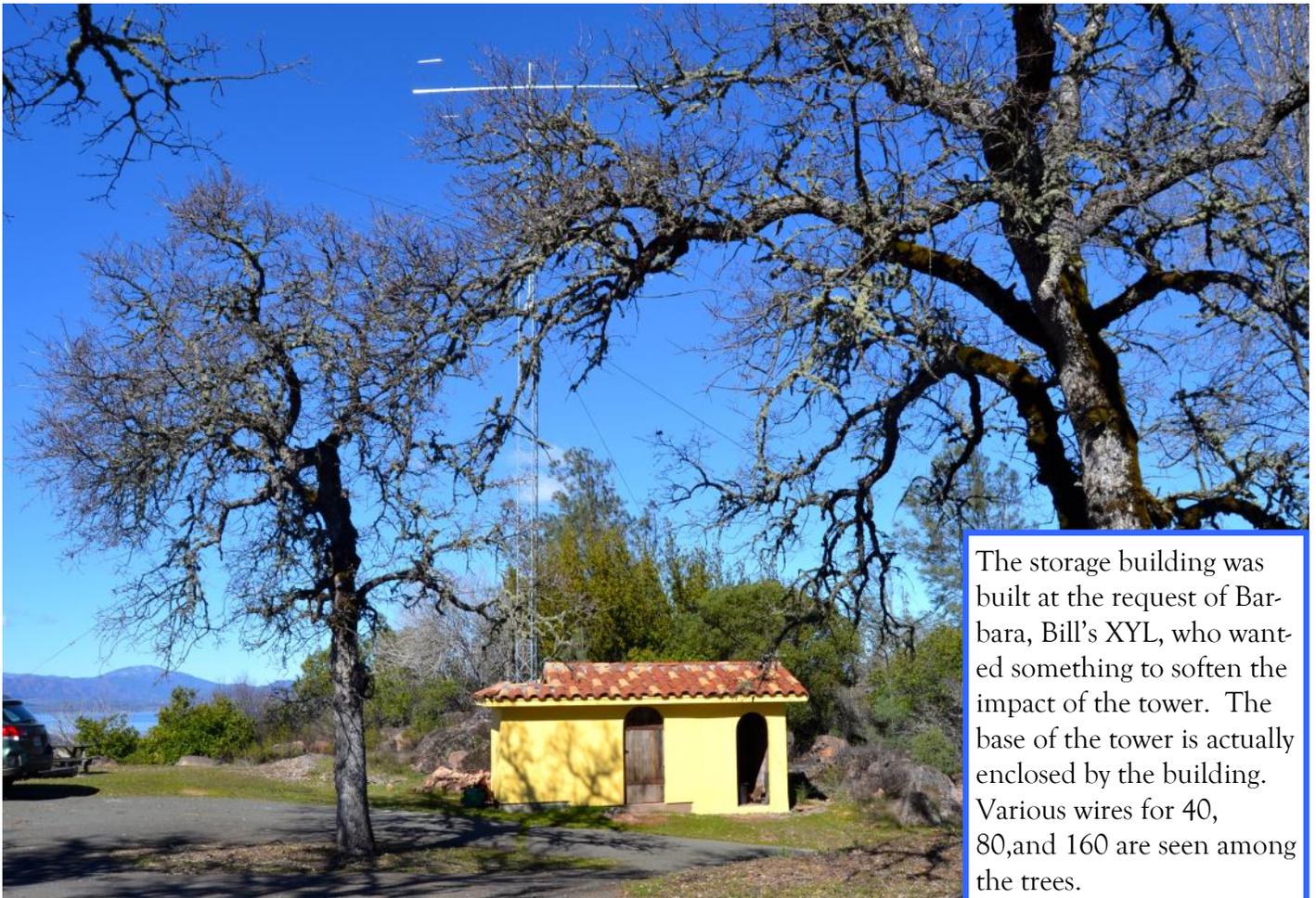


K(N)6OPI then and N6ZFO now operating from home in San Francisco ca. 1956. The receiver is a Hallicrafters SX-71 [I had one of those too—ed.] and he transmitter a Viking Ranger. K6OPI and K6SRZ worked each other during CW Sweepstakes that year.



The operating position at N6ZFO. The go-to radio here is a venerable FT-1000MP





The storage building was built at the request of Barbara, Bill's XYL, who wanted something to soften the impact of the tower. The base of the tower is actually enclosed by the building. Various wires for 40, 80, and 160 are seen among the trees.



The N6ZFO vineyard in late February





Besides his ham radio activities, Bill also serves as President of the Friends of Taylor Observatory. FOTO works in collaboration with the Lake County Department of Education's STEM education programs. Here he is inspecting a nicely restored telescope.



N6ZFO by Marilyn,  
N6VAW

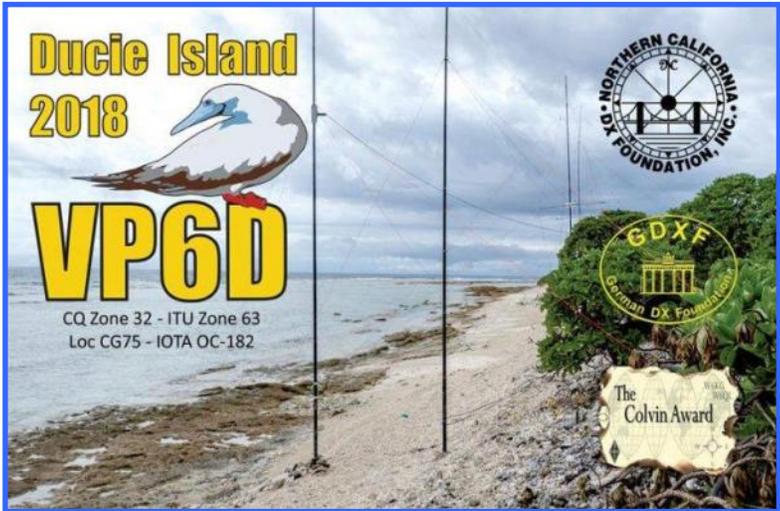




The Ducie Island DXpedition of October 20-31 2018 made more than 112,000 QSOs, including 24,441 using the FT-8 digital mode. The FT-8 share—almost 22% of the total—is something of a watershed in DXpedition emphasis. By comparison, only 2154 QSOs were by classical RTTY. FT-8 and SSB totals were very close with SSB slightly less. VP6D operator Chris Tate, N6WM will be our speaker for the March 13 meeting.

BAND/MODE	CW	FT8	JT65	RTTY	SSB	TOTAL QSO	TOTAL %
160 m	2672	354	0	0	1	3027	2.7 %
80 m	4931	1143	0	0	266	6340	5.66 %
40 m	11771	5867	0	329	3720	21687	19.36 %
30 m	7466	3643	0	1650	0	12759	11.39 %
20 m	7313	5474	0	1668	6526	20981	18.73 %
17 m	8643	3658	0	1225	4930	18456	16.47 %
15 m	8429	2224	0	811	5561	17025	15.2 %
12 m	4344	1805	0	2	1693	7844	7 %
10 m	3033	273	0	0	589	3895	3.48 %
6 m	0	0	28	0	0	28	0.02 %
<b>TOTAL QSO</b>	<b>58602</b>	<b>24441</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5685</b>	<b>23286</b>	<b>112042</b>	<b>100 %</b>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>52.3 %</b>	<b>21.81 %</b>	<b>0.02 %</b>	<b>5.07 %</b>	<b>20.78 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

Ducie Island is part of the Pitcairn Island group and counts as a unique entity for DXCC purposes. Ducie was added to the DXCC list in November 16, 2001. On the right is the QSL card from the October-November 2018 Ducie Island DXpedition by the Perseverance DX Group





The snowy Redwood Empire. Above is the view looking east to the snow capped mountains beyond Clear lake. This was taken from the on the way to visit N6ZFO. Below the view from Sonoma Mountain looking west toward Rohnert Park



## FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

by Doug WW6D, Secretary

Board Director Bill WX6B, as Acting President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, February 13, 2019 at the Boulevard Cafe, Petaluma, CA. In attendance were 18 members and guests. This was the annual Joint Meeting between REDXA and the Northern California Contest Club (NCCC).

Guests included our speaker Jack W6FB (NCCC President), Bill W9KKN, Tom NW6P, and Joanna K6YL.

The Secretary's minutes were approved as published in January Sunspots. Treasurer's report was presented by Terry, K6TERO and approved by the membership.

**Old Business.** None.

**New Business.** Due to inclement weather, no new business was handled.

Bill, WX6B, with help from NCCC member Bill W9KKN, coordinated a video conference with PJ5/N6YEU Fred. Fred provided an update of his St. Eustatius DXpedition. At that point in time, he had already accumulated over 1100 QSOs! He was looking forward to the ARRL DX Contest the upcoming weekend.

The main program of the evening was on the history of the development of FT8 and how to use it by Jack W6FB. A nice presentation was made and stirred lots of the discussion from club members including Wally N6AD and Roger N3RC, both enthusiastic users of the mode.

The raffle sales were \$70 of which \$35 went to the club and \$35 to Roger N3RC.

Adjourned at 9:07 pm.



Treasurer's Report for February 2019

Beginning balance.	4138.07
Deposits	
Raffle.	35.00
Dues.	105.00
February balance.	4278.07

Terry Tinagero,  
K6TER  
REDXA Treasurer  
Semper Fi



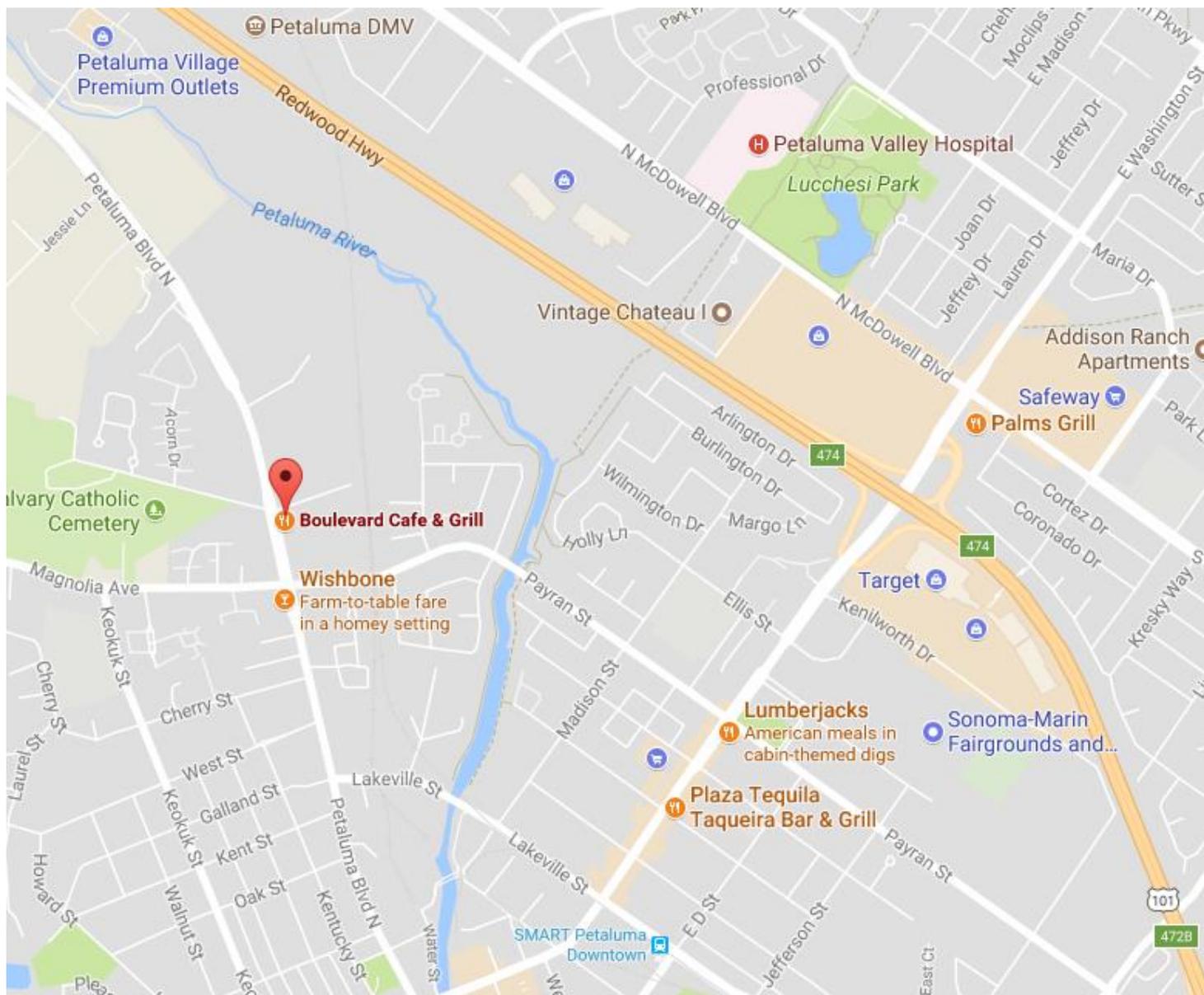
Where have they gone? This is a clip from the files of the Los Altos Historical Society showing a group of hams getting ready for Field Day 1964. Three of them are still listed by those calls on QRZ.com. The only one still listed as residing in California is Steve, WA6UAT of Santa Rosa. Can you i.d. any of the others?





## 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.