

# SUNSPOTS

**REDWOOD EMPIRE DX ASSOCIATION**

P.O. Box 750834, Petaluma, CA 94975

**Volume XXIII**

**Number III**

**March 2021**

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Alan Eshleman K6SRZ

## Meeting Announcement

**This Month's Program will be :**

**Digital Modes  
Joe Eisenberg, KØNEB**

Joe will present about FT8, FT4, and another new digital mode just released for the 630 meter and 2200-meter VLF bands. He'll give an overview of what's needed to get started in these modes and explain why they are so popular. He will also share why FT8 is the most popular digital mode, practically taking off overnight, and how it's become a phenomenon.

## President's Commentary

Lots of you have been doing well in contests. I have not been too active in contests as I have had troubles with both the Steppir DB-36 which I have had for 10 years and the KPA-1500 which has been back to Elecraft 3 times {Ser. 00163}. And my back has been bothering me. I Hope to be back contesting soon. In the interim, I've been doing lots of FT-8 and hope to try new WSJT-X modes on 160m. If you are into FT-8 and collect certificates, there is a good article in CQ this month. Sign up is free and all you have do is upload your FT-8 adif file. Have also experimented with GridTracker for FT-8 in addition to the normal JTALERT. (cont. next page)

I Just received a Cannabis email ad addressed to [Cooper@aol.com](mailto:Cooper@aol.com). I am old but that email address must be older than AOL-- from the 80s. I Could not get that address to work but thought it would be cool to use an address that certifies my seniority in Internet and Web activity. When I was CIO at the Justice Department, I had trouble getting my managers to understand and use the Web so I encrypted their performance ratings at a couple of sites to force them to learn. During my long career in IT, I missed early recognition of minicomputers and PCs but did recognize networking, UNIX and the Web fairly early on. It will be interesting to see what the new big thing will be.

As a charter member of the National Security and Privacy Board many years ago, I kept up with security issues. I am long out of date **but I highly recommend that everyone use 2 step id using cell phone callback for their most important accounts.** It's a little trouble for a lot of security. I Also recommend using password managers such as LastPass for passwords. A little up-front work for lots of future utility. The top packages work with your PC and phone seamlessly and you can share accounts with your spouse.

I Got both of my Covid shots at the SF VA clinic. It was a great experience. I worked for VA many years ago and only recently got back into their health care system which has made great improvements since my time. Chuck Hagel was the Deputy Administrator when I was there.

For April—for next month's meeting—I hope to have ZOOM tour of the K3LR Super Station. I Wish I had visited that station when I lived back East.

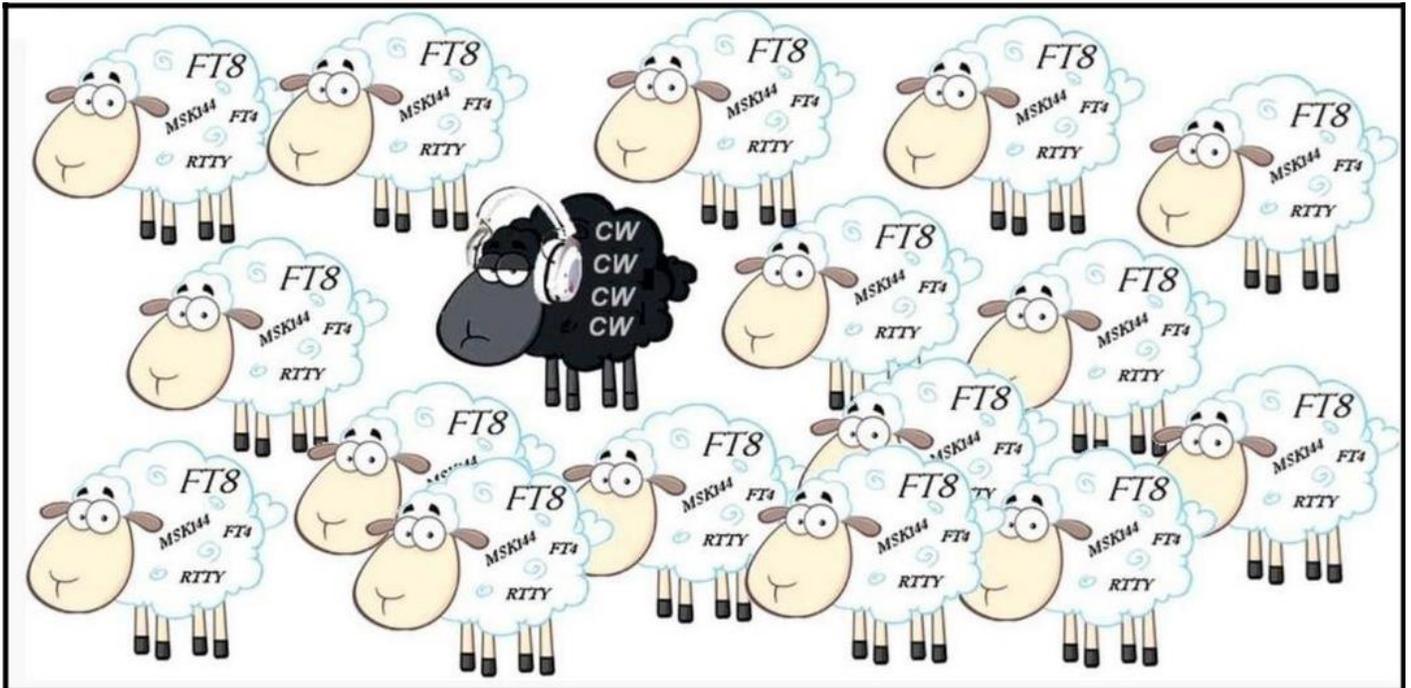
Are any REDXA folks using the new WSJT-X modes, WSJT-X 2.3 or WSJT-X 2.4 (which is said to allow "limited" 2-way conversation ?

Thanks to Len, K6ANP for getting us into the 21st century with on-line dues payments!

73 Roger N3RC

This cartoon is courtesy of my friend and DXpedition partner Mome Dimovski, Z32ZM. The message is clear to me: the digital modes, especially FT8 have dominated the HF bands lately. It's possible to tune to 40 M CW (for example) and hear nothing and then spin the dial to 7074 and hear many FT8 sig-nals.

Mome is a skilled CW operator. He has achieved 10 band DXCC (224 confirmed on 6 meters. He has 38 zones confirmed toward six meter WAZ.



**Apropos of this month's presentation**

Three new videos are posted on our YouTube channel.

**REDXA YouTube Channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvANpw-F6QPAe8T41tzK3w>

**John Miller, K6MM - Presents "K5P DXpedition: The Cursed Paradise of Palmyra Atoll"** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rD070BqJTtg>

**Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA presents a new optimistic theory regarding Solar Cycle 25** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD6G1I7JW04>

**Why Chase Islands? - An Introduction to the IOTA Program by Cezar Trifu, VE3LYC** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSF1wwOs7f8>

**Also check out N6YEU's 21 years of CQP - California QSO Party County Expeditions - N6YEU Fred Leoni**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLmgaaJggpo>

Don't forget to **subscribe** and **Like**.

Enjoy and 73,

Jim

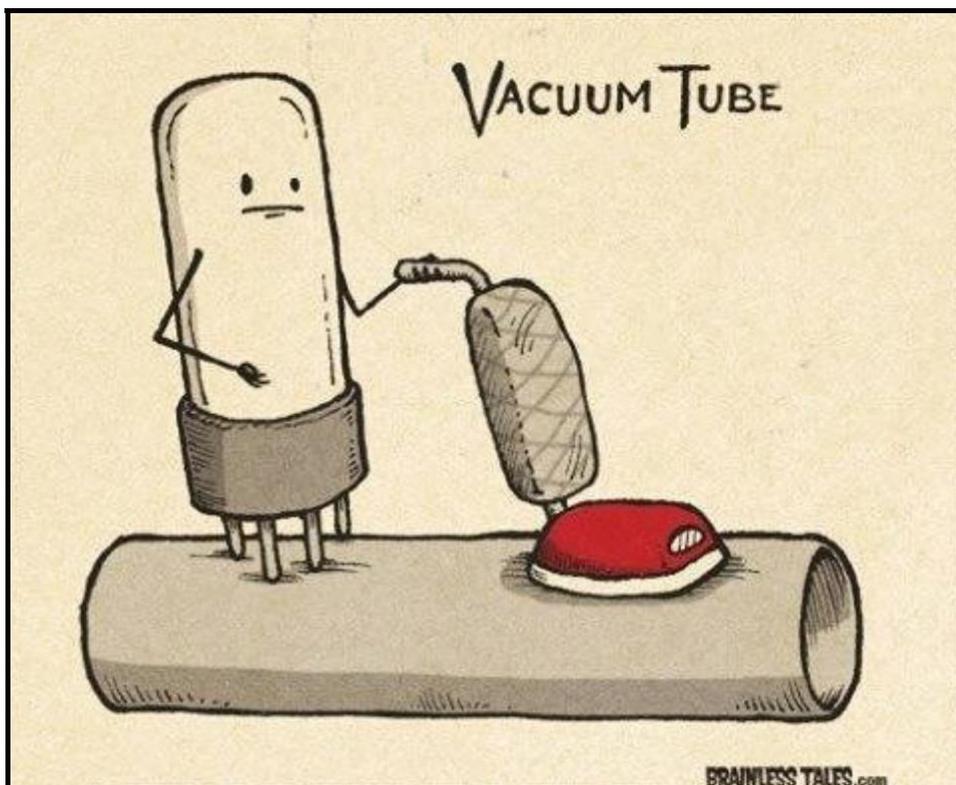
K6JS





Above: a stereopticon slide titled “copying code)

Below: a kind of grammar school level sight gag. Of course many children of grammar school age probably don't know what a tube is.



## Clublog standings for 2021 as of March

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

<b>Overall</b>	
KC6AWX	171
K6ANP	78
N6IE	64
N3RC	52
N6AD	50
<b>CW</b>	
K6ANP	76
KC6AWX	60
W6WF	18
K6CTA	12
N6IE	11
<b>SSB</b>	
K6VXI	22
KC6AWX	6
N6IE	5
N3RC	3
K6CTA	2
<b>Digital</b>	
KC6AWX	118
N6IE	62
N3RC	51
N6AD	50
W6DR	45

## Recent Contest Scores

### NAQP RTTY

Call	Class	Qso	Mults	Score	Team
N6IE	SOLP	675	152	102,600	NCCC 1
K6SRZ	SOLP	566	134	75,844	NCCC 1
N6ZFO	SOLP	506	137	69,322	NCCC 2
W6DR+N9YS	M/2LP	411	133	54,663	
K6MM	SOLP	74	39	2,886	NCCC 4
K6CTA	SOLP	15	8	120	

### ARRL DX SSB

Call	Class	QSO	Mults	Score
N6ZFO	SOUHP	400	105	125,685
N6TQ	SOUHP	146	67	29,346
N6YEU	SOABLP	65	41	7,995
W6PZ/K6SRZ	SOABHP	31	20	1,860
K6CTA	SOU QRP	2	2	12

These scores are obtained from results or submissions posted at 3830

If you're not already doing so, take a few minutes to submit your contest scores to <https://www.3830scores.com/>

Bonus question: why is it called 3830?

## FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

by Doug WW6D, Secretary

The monthly meeting was held on Zoom February 10, 2021. Social hour began at 6:30 pm, hosted by President Roger Cooper, N3RC. Formal meeting began at 7:07 pm. 18 participants had already joined the meeting.

Program: Why Chase Islands? - An Introduction to the IOTA Program by Cesar Trifu, VE3LYC.

After a brief introduction, Cesar kicked off the program at the onset. Quoting from his QRZ.com page:

*"The difficulties associated with putting on the air some of the most remote islands on Earth, usually for only a very short period of time, and sometimes under precarious propagation conditions make the island chasing a remarkable challenge."*

And he has certainly accepted the challenge. His DXpeditions have made the cover page for several issues of QST Magazine. Check out his QRZ.com page to see his activations.

The program concluded at 8:38pm. It was then followed by a brief New Business meeting where motions for the minutes and treasurer's reports published in the January Sunspots were made, seconded and approved.

## REDXA Calendar of Upcoming Events

by Doug WW6D

Mar 10 \* REDXA Monthly Meeting

Mar 13-14 Stew Perry Topband Challenge

Mar 27-28 CQ WW WPX, SSB

Apr 10-11 Japan International DX Contest CW

Apr 14 \* REDXA Monthly Meeting

Apr 16-18 Virtual International DX & Contesting Conv: Part 1

Apr 23-25 Virtual International DX & Contesting Conv: Part 2

(For more info, go to: <http://www.dxconvention.com/> )

May 1-2 7th Call Area QSO Party

May 12 \* REDXA Monthly Meeting

May 29-30 CQ WW WPX Contest, CW

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

## Treasurer's Report for February 2021

Balance February 1: \$3559.35

Outgo: \$57.61 ( Spirit Awards costs)

Income: club dues paid by check( 2 single and 3 family) \$115.00

dues from online payments via Square app: 8

K6ANP original set up \$21.12 ( no fees taken out it seems) 7 others at \$20.00 each (\$140.00) less fee charged by Square @ \$.88 per transaction =\$6.16

Club gets \$133.84

Dues income for both methods=\$369.96

Balance as of February 28:

\$3771.70

Respectfully submitted: Fred Leoni-N6YEU

Members don't forget to use the new online payment option for dues via the "Square" app. There is a link on the club web site <http://www.redxa.com/>

Fill out as much info as you can . I need your name and call. Checks via mail are still accepted also.

Don't forget to sign up for the club email reflector on groups.io .This info is also on our website also.

Thanks and 73,  
Fred - N6YEU Treasurer



For sale Yaesu FTdx 5000 \$2500.00

Yaesu FT 1000 D \$595.00

Yaesu sp 5 external speaker \$25.00

Yaesu sp 5 with fonepatch and meter \$30.00

Yaesu FT 757GX hf xcvr \$395.00

Alpha 87A \$2500.00

Spare set of finals for Alpha 3cx800A7 2 ea Eimac \$950.00 ea

Top ten ant relays 6ea \$50.00

Top ten band decoder 2ea \$95.00 ea

Signal link 4ea \$50.00 ea need cables 1 has cables \$75.00

MFJ 259 B \$100.00

Daiwa CN720B SWR power meter 2ea 1 has cracked glass in meter face \$65.00 and \$40.00 for the one with the cracked glass

Dentron MT 3000A antenna tuner \$250.00

Icom IC4kl KW solid state amp needs some work make offer

Mirage B2516 G 160 watt 2 meter amp \$300.00

Mirage D 1010 100 watt 440 amp \$300.00

Icom IC 820 144/440 dual band full duplex good for satellite work

\$395.00 Alinco Battery EBP 73

B&W KW Dummy load Wattmeter dry with meter \$50.00

Sinometer Frequency counter new \$7.00

Tectronics oscilloscope make offer

Bird wattmeter 50 ohm model 43 \$100.00

Bird slugs 500 watt 2-30 khz \$ 35.00 ea

" " 50 watt 2-30 khz

"" "" 10 watt 100-250 khz

"" "" 25 watt 100-250 khz

"" "" 25 watt 200-50 khz 2 ea

"" "" 100 watt 200-500 khz

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"" ""50 watt 100-250 khz

"" "" 50 watt 400-1000 khz

Grid dip meter unused \$50.00

Alinco DJ G7 triband Ht 144 450 1.2 with charger \$250.00

prices as marked but will take any reasonable offer.

Pickup only

Chuck N6OJ

2 meters 146.490

707 774 - 6797

707 763 - 2528

More for sale

**K3 #3077**

including P3 and Digi Key II, cables, etc.

all boxes factory built

200 hz 5 pole

400 hz 8 pole

1.8 khz 8 pole

2.7khz 5 pole

2nd rcvr

KXV3B-F upgrade

KSYN3A syn upgrade both receivers

KDVR3 voice recorder

deluxe weighted tuning knob

factory calibrated 10/2015

**P3 Panadapter** with SVGA board

**K3/0**, still in box from W7RN Comstock Station

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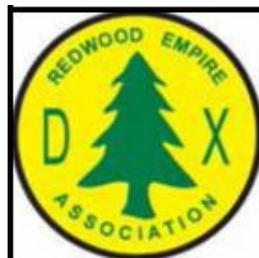
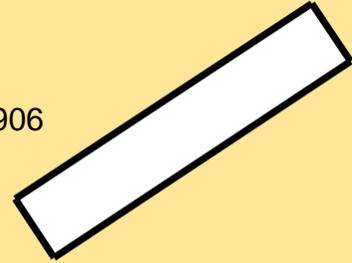
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Elecraft bundle for sale, asking \$4,350.00  
All original boxes.

Contact me if interested, [saraj@sonic.net](mailto:saraj@sonic.net) or cell# 707-888-3906  
Located in Santa Rosa, CA

I will not be resuming "contesting" from my new QTH.  
I will still be on the air eventually with different transceivers.

In the mean time, your chance To acquire some nice gear, easily adaptable for remote operations.





The national codes for aircraft and for amateur and broadcast radio are mostly the same. In the USA, commercial and private aircraft have N or NC designations.

The craft here belongs to my friend and DXpedition partner Hrane Milosovic from Serbia. Serbia retains the "YU" prefix (a reminder of when Serbia was part of Yugoslavia.) Hrane's personal amateur call YT1AD is also featured on the vertical stabilizer. Serbia has the block from YTA through YUZ





## RIMshot QSYing to New QTH

After our move in 2014 from the ridgetop QTH in Corte Madera to the flats in Kentfield, XYL Pat and I thought that we were done moving, and that Kentfield was our forever QTH until we could no longer deal with a house.

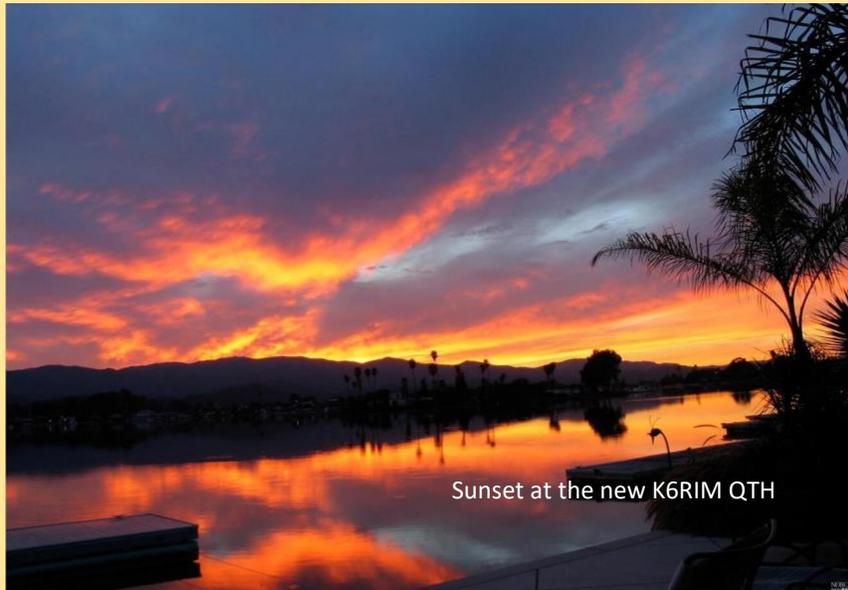
Wrong!

Recently we purchased a property in Bel Marin Keys (Novato) and expect to move as soon as the Kentfield property is sold, hopefully around mid-March.

The backyard of the new QTH is on the lagoon and has a dock, so we can fish, kayak and otherwise enjoy the beauty of the water.

Plan is to put up the same antennas used in Kentfield: a K4KIO hexbeam on a 34-foot crankup tower and a SteppIR BigIR/80 vertical.

(continued next page)



I Haven't yet made a final decision of the location for the vertical, but I favor placing it close to the water (saltwater) and dropping radials into the water. Is that a good idea? Would appreciate hearing from anyone with knowledge and experience with the ideal setup of verticals near the water.

I will delay putting up the antennas until after I have received a Building Permit from Marin County. Reason? Just in case some neighbor objects.

I have been through the permit "process" in Marin before.

In Tiburon, the requirement was for a "*conditional use permit*," which involved notifying neighbors of your application so that they could attend the required hearings and complain that your antennas would lower property values, kill the deer and otherwise forever ruin the neighborhood.

But Kentfield and Bel Marin Keys are unincorporated, and the rules are governed by Marin County. No HOA, no CC&Rs. Marin County process for ham antennas involves only obtaining a *building permit*. The County's concern is collecting its fee of around \$500 and that setback requirements are followed. That's it!

Looking forward to the move, getting back on the air and, hopefully, returning to REDXA meetings like we enjoyed pre-Covid.

73,

Al, K6RIM

## Bonus content

Our program is about digital modes. Here's an essay in praise of the original digital mode Continuous Wave telegraphy suggested by Doug, WW6D

### *Give Morse Code a Try! – by James K. Boomer W9UJ*

**Amateur Radio:** Many Facets, Much Enjoyment—Amateur Radio is blessed with a multitude of exciting facets and operating modes, not to mention building stuff and messing around with antennas. That's what makes it such a neat hobby! Regarding operating modes, some hams like SSB, others like the satellite modes, while still others prefer television or the new exciting digital modes. Then, there are those of us who also like Morse code, or CW, as it is called, in addition to the many other modes of operation.

**Remember When Your Parents Said** Try it, You'll Like It?—One thing I've learned in life is that you never know if you're going to like many things until you try them remember when you were a tiny child and your mom or dad made you eat food you thought you didn't like. And remember that many times you were surprised to find out that you liked that food item!

**I Hated Morse Code!**—My association with CW is analogous to the food example. That is, when I found out that I had to learn Morse code to become a ham, I was really disappointed! My thought process was, After all, I'm going to get on radiotelephone right away and will never use CW! But, I decided that learn-ing Morse code was a reasonable entry fee to the exciting Radio Amateur community!

**Lack of Money Talks!**—Well, I got my license at age 15 in 1947, back in the build-it-yourself days and didn't have enough money to build a radiotelephone transmitter. It was in the AM days and modulation transformers and the like were beyond my pocketbook. So, I reasoned that getting on CW at first and then quickly getting on AM radio telephone as soon as possible, after I had saved enough money for the modu-lator parts, was the best strategy. This was the beginning of a sweet addiction! Read on!

Continued on the following pages



**What is This CW Thrill** and This CW Music??—I'll never forget the thrill of hearing the first station that I contacted sending my call in Morse code! Then, I started hearing stations sending much faster than I could receive. And, surprisingly, a good keying transmitter sending Morse code began to sound like music to me. The sound of the keying was crisp and the Morse code had a truly musical quality to it. Also, everyone sent differently! Some sent very fast and erratic; others sent very slow and others sent just the right speed for me to copy.

**The Receiving Speed Plateaus**— The faster sending stations fascinated me and encouraged me to increase my code speed. So I started listening to W1AW code practice and found it invaluable. Also, I had a code practice oscillator, would have the practice text in front of me and attempt to send along with W1AW's perfect code to increase my sending proficiency. I found that increasing my code speed went in plateaus. That is, I would reach a certain speed and not be able to copy above that speed for a few nights. Then, all of a sudden, I found myself copying 5 words per minute faster than my previous peak speed! The trick, I found, was to copy behind the sending station. The higher the speed, the farther you copy be-hind, I found! Also, I found that as I increased my receiving speed, I could just listen to the code and recognize whole words! The higher the code speed, the more recognizable the words were (up to the highest speed I could copy, of course!) Wow! Now, I could sit and listen to sending stations without having to write down everything!

**The Critical Decision:** Radiotelephone or Higher Speed CW Sending?—Soon, I found that I could receive faster than I could send on a straight key. Hooray! I could now talk to many other stations without having to ask them to slow down! But, I couldn't send as fast on my straight key as they could with their speed keys. By this time, I had saved enough money for an AM modulator for my transmitter. But with slightly fewer dollars, I could buy a Bug speed key!

What a dilemma! What to Do? Well, I agonized and agonized and finally bought a Bug, because I had now tried CW and had begun to really like it! What a challenge and fun that was, learning to send on a Bug! It made automatic dots and all you had to do is make the dashes! But, now it was time to go back to W1AW! I had to learn how to send decent Morse code before I put that thing on the air! And so it was! I soon learned to send faster and faster and strived to send perfect Morse Code just like W1AW did but, of course, I never achieved this degree of perfection.

**The Challenge** and Fun of Learning New Skills, Increasing Your Proficiency—and The New Music!— Learning to send and receive Morse Code is a lot like learning any other skill, such as athletics or playing

Continued next page



a musical instrument. You start out pretty shaky but if you stick with it, you begin to gain some proficiency, which encourages you to practice harder to further increase your proficiency. In engineering we call this a positive feedback loop. Once you have learned to recognize the letters and numbers by ear, you basically know Morse code at 5 words per minute! Then, it's just practice, practice, practice. Recognize, too, that, like any other skill, some people are more adept at Morse code and attain higher speeds than others. It's like golf, baseball or any other skill some are better at it than others, but it's fun to play the game the best you can anyway!

The longer you operate CW, the more a good keying transmitter sending CW at any speed sounds like good music. CW operators develop a critical ear for perfect transmitter keying and strive to have perfect keying transmitters themselves, so they can generate that good music. !

Interestingly, I have also found that many of the best CW operators are also music fans and/or musicians. So, if you like music or are a musician, and haven't tried CW, you might be surprised to find out that you really like it.

**Now, You Can Really Crank Up the Speed!**—Talk about speed, fun and challenge! Electronic keyers that make automatic dots and dashes are now readily available at modest cost. And many modern Amateur Radios have built-in keyers. With one of the many varieties of paddles you can send very fast CW.

**CW keyboards** open up a whole new frontier of fun with Morse code! Software that generates Morse code characters at the touch of your computer keyboard, is available to load into your computer. You can buy affordable CW keyboard systems that consist of a keyboard assembly and a little electronic unit that generates the code. Now, with these gadgets, you can send perfect code and at speeds beyond your imagination! And, look out! Believe it or not, there are people out there who can send and receive 80 words per minute! Sending fast code on a keyboard is also a great challenge, in addition to receiving very fast code. Don't worry if you are not a typist. There are many hunt and peck and two-finger keyboard operators punching out fast CW. Also, a CW keyboard is a wonderful way to learn to type, in case you don't already know how. Finally, a CW keyboard doesn't ruin your Bug sending (fist); on the contrary it helps you be a better Bug sender because, unlike electronic keyers, it is a different concept than using the bug and it generates perfect code which you have fresh in your mind when you are sending on a Bug.

**Morse Code Might Save Your Life Someday!**—Besides being a fun operating mode, CW gives you some very useful skills that may save your life someday! There have been cases where people were buried in the rubble of a collapsed building and one trapped person who knew the Morse code, found a pipe on which to tap out emergency code messages that enabled emergency crews to rescue them.

Another interesting fact that may not be well known is that military aircrews carry small survival radio sets. With these little hand held radios the downed aircrew members can set a switch to make the radio emit a very distinctive siren-sounding rescue signal. Also, the downed aircrew members can talk over these radios (AM). However, importantly, downed aircrew members can also send Morse code by pressing a little tone button. And the Morse code is printed on a little decal on the radio! As noted earlier, the siren-sounding signal is very distinctive. So, if downed aircrew members sense that they are in a dangerous situation where the enemy can monitor the radio, home in and attack them, they can send brief Morse code messages that limit on-the-air time and thus decrease the probability of an enemy homing in and finding them. Also, if the downed aircrew members suffer injuries that prevent them from talking and they are in a dangerous situation,

again, they can send Morse code messages that enable air rescue crews to rescue them.

**Thank You!** Thank You! Thank You–If Morse code had not been a requirement for an Amateur license, I would not have had the many hours of enjoyment that I have had and continue to have with CW. I often think of that it makes me say Thank you, ARRL and thank you, FCC!

**Please Try it,** you Might Like it as Much as I do (I hope)!–So, why not give Morse Code a try? It's really fun and increasing your proficiency gives you a great deal of satisfaction. It sounds like good





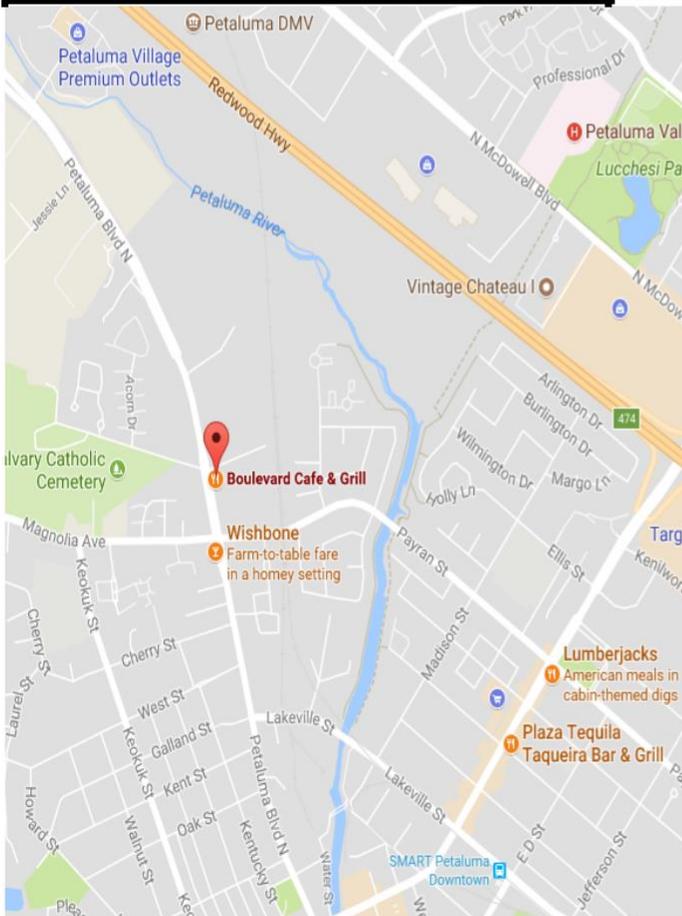
## Boulevard Café & Grill

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. Limited indoor dining is coming soon.

Please thank Daniel and his staff for their support over the past years.

REDXA's first place small club plaque is prominently displayed here on the wall with plaques from other service clubs



K6SRZ XYL Carol enjoying a chilly breakfast at the Café. Indoor REDXA meetings possible by Summer