

QSA-5

Founded, 1933

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

July 2006 Page 1

President's Message

As I write this on the eve of Field Day, Norm WA6CLK has done a great job of herding cats planning and organizing the troops. It should be a great event. Look for the details in next months QSA5.

Kids Day June 17th at the Bay Area Discovery Museum went well. We did not have the turnout we had hoped for, one reason being that the museum patronage was unusually low for a Saturday and the other was we were competing with a Chinese New Year Dragon dance demonstration with drums and all. For the four hours we were there we had ten or so kids stop by with about half getting on the air and making contacts. This in itself was a challenge as the bands were downright BAD. We could hear stations from Boston to Hawaii but, you guessed, it they could not hear us. Anyway we have our foot in the door for next year as the powers that be were impressed with the concept and may even expand on it with Radio seminars leading up to the event next year. I want to thank Rem K6BBQ for organizing the event plus Norm WA6CLK, Augie KØCQL and Jon KG6URI for helping out. Great job guys!

Our QSA5 editor has told me I have to keep it short this month as he is running out of column space. I think I need to talk to him about who the publisher is but I doubt it will make any difference.

So to please our editor and keep peace in the family I will close with this: Last month at the request of the Board I asked you all for some input on our annual Christmas party and so far you have been silent. Folks, this is our biggest social event of the year and should be what you want it to be. We have tentatively planned for December 3rd with the same faire we have had for the last several years. Now is the time to speak up if you want to do something new so please let Connie AE6PA or one of the Board members know your thoughts. Their phone numbers are on page four.

'Til next month, 73.

Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ

Website at W6SG.NET
Phone 415.389.6630

Public Service Events for 2006

Here are the remaining events for 2006.

August 5 Marin Century / Mt. Tam
Double Century

August 19 Holstein Hundred

October 15 Escape from Alcatraz

Randy KA6BQF

ka6bqf@arri.net 510-526-4089

Our biggest public service events are coming up in August. The Marin Century / Mt. Tam Double Century Bike Ride is on Saturday August 5. Volunteers are needed for aid station and SAG* wagon communications. We can work with your schedule. The ride is also looking for SAG* drivers. We need 20 - 25 hams to staff this event.

(The Double Century event has the most food for participants. We've not seen this many pizzas in one place at any other event, ever. Plus, there's food and drink at stops along the routes, all the way to Valley Ford and back.

The Holstein has had chicken, rice, salad, rolls and ice cream. We're sold on it! ed.)

The Holstein Hundred, which benefits the West Marin Senior Center is also coming up on Saturday, August 19. We have the same assignments available. They will also be looking for SAG* drivers. We need 15 - 20 hams to staff this event.

Contact Randy, KA6BQF to volunteer. ka6bqf@arri.net 510.526.4089

*** SAG. We always forget what this term means but it probably has little or nothing to do with the anatomy of the participants. Well, maybe a little with a few.**

P.O. Box 6423
San Rafael, CA 94903

General Meeting 2 June

The meeting was called to order at 19:30 by President Dave Hodgson, KG6TCJ. Other board members present were; Frank Strom, WA6JTP; Raine Strom, KG6GII; Tom Jordan, KG6TCM; Eric Rosenquist, KG6WOU; Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF; John Boyd, KE6ORI; and W6SG Trustee August Koehler, KØCQL.

Twenty-three members and guests signed in. The Agenda was approved as submitted.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published in QSA-5.

Secretary Randy reported on incoming and outgoing correspondence.

President Dave reported that the building would once again be used as a polling place on Election Day.

Treasurer Eric reported that an analysis of last year's spending would be discussed at the Board Meeting, with a view to coming up with a budget.

The recreation committee has set September 23 as the date for the picnic, and has a tentative date of December 3 for the Xmas / Holiday Party.

Public Service Chair Randy reported on upcoming public service events, including the Dipsea on June 11 and the Double Dipsea on June 24. We received a nice thank you for covering the Miwok. Tom, KG6TCM, reported on the Human Race.

President Dave reported that a trip was made up the mountain to reprogram the controller on the 146.700 repeater, and that the glitch was fixed. There were comments about various repeater sites.

Education Chair Ben Sawtelle, N6PJZ, reported that classes for the Technician license would be held on June 10 and 17. Secretary Randy reported that a VE session was scheduled for June 3.

Page two, column three.

RAMBLING TRIVIABITS

Try to stay awake.

Origin Of RG For Coax Cable

RG means "radio guide" and was the original military specification for coax cable, starting in the 1930s. So what do all the numbers mean ? RG-6, RG-8, RG-58, RG-59, RG-62, RG-122, RG-213, RG-405 and on and on?

The number is just a page in a book. RG-1 was the first page and apparently not a very successful cable design.

RG-6, the sixth page, was very successful. Most CATV/broadband cable these days is RG-6.

Until it was discontinued around 1960 +/-, there was a transmitter in a blockhouse in the pasture in the northern part of Hamilton Field. It sent the MCW characters **S R F 24/7** as a homing beacon. The blockhouse, and the antenna, a 100 foot tower, are both still there and can be seen from highway 37. The feedline used, RG-17 which has a diameter of 7/8 inch, was widely available after WW2 and was used by many hams at the time. Way too expensive, now, especially when a 250 ft. roll of #12/2 w/ground copper 'house wire', commonly called ROMEX, will set you back around \$125.00, fifty cents/foot.

K6GWE Repeaters

2 meters

Big Rock Ridge 147.330 +

INPUTS

- pl 203.5 Big Rock
- pl 179.9 Mt. Tam west
- pl 167.9 Mt. Barnabe
- pl 192.8 Tiburon

Mt. Tamalpais 146.700 -

- pl 179.9 Mt. Tam input

San Pedro Ridge 147.330 +

- pl 173.8 off-line - reserve status.

440

San Pedro Ridge

- 443.525 + pl 82.5

Mt. Tamalpais

- 443.250 + pl 179.9

W6RV San Rafael

- 440.550 + Private/Open

- pl 100.0

Board of Directors Meeting, 12 June.

The meeting was called to order by President Hodgson at 19:31. Others present were Vice-president / Treasurer Rosenquist, KG6WOU; Secretary Jenkins, KA6BQF; Board Members Boyd, KE6ORI; Weisman, W5ALW; Jordan, KG6TCM; Foley, KF6YUF; Raine Strom KG6GGI; and Frank Strom, WA6JTP; Trustees Slusher, KF6AKU and Koehler, KØCQL; and QSA-5 Editor Dunlap, K6PHD.

The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the May Board of Director's Meeting were approved as published in QSA-5.

Treasurer's report was deferred to Old Business.

Public Service Chair Randy reported that the Dipsea was completed successfully and that the Double Dipsea was almost fully staffed. Recruitment for the Marin Century / Mt. Tam Double Century has begun.

Under Technical Committee, Trustee Doug reported on a trip to the Mt. Tam site. The controller problem was solved. The receiver checked out OK.

We have a new tower climber available, pending paperwork. There was a discussion about several sites and options.

President Dave reported that the radio battery in the truck needed to be charged up.

License classes should be underway. VE Session on June 3 was successful.

Field Day is coming up June 24 & 25. Kid's Day is June 17.

A communication from the Building Manager was discussed by the Board.

Old Business: Treasurer Rosenquist submitted a report detailing the 2005 expenses. The report was discussed, and several suggestions were made.

New Business: Discussion of a leave of absence for Director Rosenquist will be revisited in July.

The status of the Comm Truck generator was discussed. When a trip was made to pick it up in Martinez, it was discovered that the shop has been quoting us, and working on, the wrong generator. Our generator has a serious problem, and repairs are estimated at \$2200.00. We can pick it up, no charge. Al Weisman W5ALW has a small engine shop, and

Column three, lower.

General Meeting, cont.

Field Day Chair Norm Baetz, WA6CLK, stated that Field Day was three weeks away. Norm reported that radios, antennas, the site, and other arrangements for Field Day were coming together.

Membership: Three new members.

Kid's Day will be at the Bay Area Discovery Museum in Sausalito on Saturday, June 17th, 10 to 3 pm.

The Comm Truck Committee Chair John Boyd reported that the generator was removed and had been taken in for service. The shop reports that the unit is ready for pick up with a new carburetor and repaired wiring. (However, they worked on the wrong unit and ours wasn't ready. ed.)

President Dave reported for Building Manager John Butler. John needs some sheet rock and ceiling tiles to make some repairs.

Secretary Randy reported on Museum Ships Weekend on Saturday and Sunday, June 3 & 4. Additional comments were made by John Reed.

Tom KG6TCM reported on a work party to deal with some poison oak out behind the clubhouse.

Denice Stoops reported on the Titanic Exhibit in SF.

There being no further business, the business meeting was adjourned at 20:02.

Respectfully submitted, Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF, Secretary.

Board Meeting, cont.

will evaluate the generator. Doug Slusher has located a new Honda generator that may fit our truck, for \$2700.00. Additional information will be forthcoming. (Additional info was presented at babble class on Sunday 5/18. The Honda engine would fit but the necessary attachments to it would prevent its use in the comm truck. It was noted that some commercial broadcast stations are still using the same gen as ours on their trucks. ed.) A decision was deferred until the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:57

Respectfully submitted, Randy Jenkins KA6BQF, Secretary.

Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humor. Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilot (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers.

- P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.
- S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

- P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.
- S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

- P: Something loose in cockpit.
- S: Something tightened in cockpit.

- P: Dead bugs on windshield.
- S: Live bugs on back-order.

- P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.
- S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

- P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.
- S: Evidence removed.

- P: DME volume unbelievably loud.
- S: DME volume set to more believable level.

- P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.
- S: That's what friction locks are for.

- P: IFF inoperative in OFF mode.
- S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

- P: Suspected crack in windshield.
- S: Suspect you're right.

- P: Number 3 engine missing.
- S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

- P: Aircraft handles funny.
- S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

- P: Target radar hums.
- S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

- P: Mouse in cockpit.
- S: Cat installed.

- P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.
- S: Took hammer away from midget.

FCC DIRECTS MANASSAS BPL SYSTEM TO RESOLVE AMATEURS' INTERFERENCE COMPLAINTS.

(Finally!)

In two strongly worded letters, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau has directed the Manassas, Virginia, BPL system to take appropriate steps to eliminate harmful interference to Amateur Radio operators. Several hams in the Manassas area have complained, some repeatedly, about severe interference from the BPL system, operated by COMTek on the city-owned power grid. The FCC minced no words in detailing what it wants the city and BPL operator COMTek to do to ensure its system complies with Part 15 rules governing BPL systems and even hinted that it may shut down all or part of the system. One of the FCC letters followed up on a complaint from Dwight Agnew, AI4II, of BPL interference to his mobile operations.

FCC Spectrum Enforcement Division Chief Joseph Casey told the city and COMTek June 16 that within 20 days he wants a "detailed report on the actions you have taken and the progress you have made in resolving the interference complaint or reducing the emissions in the area referenced in Mr. Agnew's complaint to 20 dB below the Part 15 limit," a level the FCC maintains generally is sufficient to eliminate BPL interference to mobile operations. Additionally, Casey said the Commission wants to know "the specific steps you will take to inform customers of a cessation of service in the event you are directed to cease operations, either in part or system-wide."

COMTek has indicated it expects emissions can be reduced to 20 dB below the Part 15 limit once second-generation BPL equipment is in place along the Virginia Business Route 234 corridor by the end of July. Casey said that's not good enough. "We note that a failure to respond until the end of July to any complaint alleging harmful interference in an effort to determine if the new equipment resolves the matter is not sufficient," he pointed out in a footnote.

From the ARRL Letter

(We long suspected that the FCC was allowing COMTek to stall until the second generation BPL equipment was available. Maybe the FCC just moves slowly? ed.)

Stuff

We had a count of five for babble class on Mother's Day but made up for that the following Sunday when the count was twenty-one. Looks like we have more 'pros' than 'amateurs' when it comes to long weekends. Long holiday weekends and events like New Year's Eve are more for the amateurs while the pros tend to stay closer to home to avoid going where the odds of a safe return are not quite as good. In a four day w/e situation the smart money schedules ahead, takes a couple of extra days, leaves Thursday and returns Tuesday. Fewer amateur drivers on the road but more trucks. A reasonable tradeoff. ed.

Two guys from Michigan are sittin' in a boat on Elk Lake fishin' and drinkin' down beer when all of a sudden Mike says, "I think I'm going to divorce my wife - she hasn't spoken to me in over six months." Harry sips his beer and says, "You better think it over - women like that are hard to find."

Boss asks employee: "Do you believe that there is life after death?"

Employee: "Certainly not, there's no proof of it," he replied.

Boss: "Well, there is now. After you left early yesterday to go to your brother's funeral, he came here looking for you."

Why Hams End A QSO With Dit Dit

In the old days, every time a train left the station, it would sound two short blasts from its whistle, warning everyone it was moving out. The old telegraph operators having been exposed to this practice, picked it up and would send two dits at the end of each telegraph message. This meant "GOODBYE". So ham radio CW operators adopted the practice. It is still used worldwide today.

Ole and Lena got married. On their honeymoon trip they were nearing Minneapolis when Ole put his hand on Lena's knee. Giggling, Lena said, "Ole, you can go a little further now if ya vant to."

So Ole drove to Duluth.

General Membership Meeting is held on the first Friday of each month at Alto District Clubhouse on Shell Road in Mill Valley, starting at 7:30 PM. Turn right at the first stop light west off hwy 101 at the Mill Valley/Tiburon exit. Angle right at next stop sign, then turn left at next street, Shell Road. We are in the two story building on the left directly under the power lines.

Business/Board Meeting meets at the Alto District Clubhouse in Mill Valley on the second Tuesday at 7:30 PM. Members are encouraged to attend to try to keep the clowns honest. However, they probably would not be successful at that.

Sunday morning informal meeting, smilingly called The bible (or babble) Class, meets every Sunday morning at the Alto District Clubhouse in Mill Valley starting at roughly 0800 hours and runs to around 1100 hours. This weekly event is hosted by **Ben Sawtelle N6PJZ**, our Ham of The Year in 1996, whose absence would be the result of serious disease or dismemberment, only. **Dues structure is:** \$20.00 per year for regular or family memberships. No dues are charged for Life or Honorary members.

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Stamp

The Mailing
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 Goes Here