

QSA-5

Founded 1933

April 2008

Pres.' Msg.

Greetings from the desk of the President. Hopefully, you all enjoyed an early Easter and won't find any old hard boiled eggs in the planter boxes in May. I hope to see you all at the April membership meeting. We are having a special presentation by Bill Ragsdale, who will be a guest speaker at the Hamvention in Dayton, OH. I would encourage any members who have young people involved in Scouting to attend, and to invite any Scouting leaders that you may know to attend. Both boyz and girlz. I have contacted the Marin Boy Scout leadership by email but no one has responded. One local Girl Scout leader will be joining us. It is hoped that this presentation would be an inspiration to get young people interested or involved in ham radio and to attend our upcoming Field Day event.

The REDXA Field Day chair met with our FD chairs this past Wednesday and most of the details of the event have been established. The stations will use our club call, W6SG, this year. We will be operating 3A and this year two Step-IR antennas will be erected on 40 foot military surplus masts. (these are waaaay cool) The comtruck will be available for a third mast due to the fact that there is no public service event on the FD weekend this year. I encourage everyone to come out to the Marin Rod & Gun Club to at least see what Field Day is all about, even if you have no desire to operate. We will be hosting a GOTA (get on the air) station, so if your license has expired, you will be able to participate. I have to tell you that I was absolutely amazed at the organization and the teamwork that went into setting up the stations last year. The sight of those towers from the freeway was awe inspiring. If you plan to attend, be sure to let a participating member know, so we can include you in the head count for meals.

I will be out of town for the June meeting, and the July meeting falls on the 4th, so at the April meeting we'll be discussing

Page three, column one.

**Next meeting Friday 4 April.
PIZZA served.**

**Website at W6SG.NET
Phone 415.389.6630**

**For ARRL SF Section news, go to
www.arrl.org/sections/?sect=SF**

**Here's the MARS Calendar of
Public Service Events for 2008**

(so far):

Saturday, April 19 - The Relay
3PM - 5 AM 8-10 Volunteers

Saturday, May 03 - Miwok 100
5 AM - 10 PM 10-12 Volunteers

Saturday, May 10 - Human Race
8AM - Noon 6-8 Volunteers

Sunday, June 8 - The Dipsea Race
8AM- 2 PM 12 - 14 Volunteers

Saturday, June 21 - Double-Dipsea
8AM - 3 PM 8-10 Volunteers

Saturday, August 02 - Marin Century / Mt. Tam Double Century
4AM - Midnight 20+ Volunteers

Saturday, August 16 - Holstein Hundred 6AM-7PM 15+ Volunteers

Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF,
ka6bqf@arrl.net
Public Service Coordinator
510-526-4089

**Saturday, October 4 - Dolphin Club
Escape from Alcatraz with a Double
Dipsea run.**

Beginning with the April issue of QSA-5, you can read the series of articles by Bill Continelli, W2XOY, which he calls "The Wayback Machine", a history of ham radio. These columns were originally written for the Schenectady Museum Amateur Radio Association. See page two of this issue for Wayback Machine #1. Number 26 was printed in the March issue.

(We plagiarized it from another publication.)

**Alan Weisman (W5ALW)
1938-2008**

Alan Weisman died this week at 70. He was a creative, accomplished inventor and community servant. Among his inventions, Weisman was known for patenting the 'T'-top found on American sports cars such as the Corvette. After college, Weisman was employed by the automobile manufacturer Saab before experiencing a work related accident. Following years of physical therapy, Weisman and his wife made their home in Richmond, California, where he undertook entrepreneurial ventures before moving to Tularosa, New Mexico near the White Sands Missile Range. At various times, he worked on projects for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), designed and built one of the earliest flight simulators for Bushnell Corporation, constructed working robots for use in Hollywood films, developed self-assembly methods for 'growing' tools, designed devices for preventing carpal tunnel syndrome and, most recently, worked on building a new type of hybrid engine. Weisman was an avid automotive hobbyist, spending time during the 1970's and 80's modifying Volkswagen Beetles with Porsche engines for members of the Oakland Raiders and building an electric motorcycle that eventually broke the world land speed record. He also enjoyed restoring classic cars. Weisman was involved in various community activities including serving on the Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS) board and serving as a City of Richmond Commissioner as part of a sister-city program with Shimada, Japan. Battling cancer, Weisman retired to Tularosa, where he passed peacefully in his sleep on **March 1, 2008**. There will be a brief memorial service at the home on March 5th. Alan is survived by his wife, Sherry Hines, his brothers Howard (Terry) Weisman of Fountain Valley, CA and Bruce Weisman of Houston, TX, three nephews and a niece, and four grand-nieces and grand-nephews. Weisman's dream was to have his ashes flown into space. Contributions to the A. Weisman space fund can be sent to: Sherry Hines, 107 Encino, Tularosa, NM 88352

Al's wife, Sherry, passed away about a week later.

THE WAYBACK MACHINE**ISSUE #1**

by Bill Continelli, W2XOY
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I start this column in an attempt to research three major questions that have been asked: "When did ham radio start?"; "Who was the first ham?"; and "Where did the word 'ham' come from?". To answer these questions, let's set "The Wayback Machine" to Warp Factor 9, and head back 100 years.

Practical "wireless" had its start in 1896, when Marconi first sent a signal over a distance of two miles. By 1899, he succeeded in sending a wireless message across the English Channel, a distance of 32 miles. The year 1899 also marks the first construction project, which appeared in "American Electrician" magazine. In December, 1901, Marconi was able to bridge the Atlantic, a feat which caught the world's attention and fueled the imagination of thousands of potential amateurs, who took their first steps into wireless.

In the early days, everything was "spark". What exactly was spark? Well, sit down some summer night, listen to your AM or SW radio, and count the static crashes. Now turn on the vacuum cleaner, or an electric shaver, and listen to your radio again. Hear that noise? In short, spark wireless was merely a form of "controlled static". A high voltage inside a spark coil would jump across a gap, which was coupled to an antenna. The spark was keyed on and off to transmit the code. The signal generated was extremely broad. A "state of the art" 1906 park transmitter operating on 400 meters (750 kHz) would actually generate a signal from about 250 meters (1200 kHz) to 550 meters (545 kHz). Receivers were no better. Before 1912, all systems were basically unamplified detectors. Tuners were primitive or nonexistent. As might be expected, by today's standards, the early wireless stations were terribly inefficient. Transmitting ranges varied from as little as 600 feet with a 1/2 inch coil to perhaps 100 miles from a kilowatt station and a 15 inch spark coil. Ships at sea with 5 KW transmitters might get as much as 500 miles maximum range.

It was into this world that the early amateurs ventured. Actually, if we were to concentrate on the years prior to 1908, it would be more appropriate to say "experimenters" rather than "amateurs". For in the first decade

Column two.

of wireless, there was little or no interest in personal communications with other stations; rather, the concentration was on technical development, either in the interest of pure science, or (more often than not) with an eye towards cashing in on this new medium. Experimenters were unorganized and, with the exception of those immediate stations with whom they ran tests, had no knowledge or interest in other pioneer stations. Any true "amateurs" prior to 1908 have been lost in pre-historic obscurity.

By 1908, however, the face of wireless began to change. Technical developments had reached their first plateau, and a number of major competitors had formed the first "wireless rust"--United Wireless. With a temporary truce in effect, equipment was now more readily available to the public. Along with this, new magazines, such as "Modern Electrics," were formed with wireless communication as the primary thrust. The circulation of "Modern Electrics" jumped from 2,000 to over 30,000 in just two years. The year 1908 also saw the first "handbook", "Wireless Telegraph Construction for Amateurs." It is difficult to know exactly how many amateur stations were on the air in this completely unregulated, laissez-faire era, but reliable estimates put the number of "major" stations (i.e. those capable of communicating over 10 miles) at 600, while "minor" stations with a one or two mile range probably numbered 3000 or more. Thus, if a year had to be arbitrarily chosen as the start of amateur radio, it would probably be 1908.

As for the "first" amateur, that's a harder one. Without licensing, regulations, or a written record, there will never be a definitive answer to this question. However, "The Wayback Machine" has come up with the name W.E.D. Stokes, Jr. He was a founding member and the first President of the first amateur radio club--the Junior Wireless Club, Limited, of New York City. This organization was formed on January 2, 1909. Other founding members who might lay claim to the title "first amateur" were George Eltz, Frank King, and Fred Seymour. Later the same year, the Wireless Association of America, and the Radio Club of Salt Lake City were created.

By 1910, wireless clubs were springing up all over the country, and the first call book - "The Wireless Blue Book" --was published. Since there were no regulations in this period, the call sign listed in the "Blue Book" were self assigned--which brings us to our third question--

Column three.

where did the word "ham" come from? Legend has it there was a phenomenal station on the air with a 5 KW transmitter, which could be heard at all hours of the day and night at distances of over 500 miles. The station operator used his initials for his call-sign - H.A.M. I don't know if this is the real story, but I've always liked this explanation best.

Amateur radio continued to grow. By 1911, "Modern Electrics" had a circulation of 52,000, and there were 10,000 amateurs in the country. With thousands of stations on the air, both amateur and commercial, interference was becoming a serious problem, especially in marine communication. Ships, because of their restricted antenna length, were limited to frequencies between 450 and 600 meters (666 to 500 kHz). As we have seen, one spark station could take up this entire spectrum. Thus, it was imperative that all stations cooperate and stand by when the others were transmitting. Sadly, this often was not the case. In addition to interference between amateurs and commercial stations, there was more interference and sometimes deliberate jamming between commercial stations of different companies. Prodded by the Navy (which was using inefficient and outdated equipment and thus suffering from excessive interference), Congress was starting to take a serious look at wireless regulation. However, before they could take up proposed legislation, an incident happened that would quickly and dramatically alter the structure of the wireless spectrum.

On April 15, 1912, the R.M.S. Titanic struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank. Thanks to wireless, and the first* SOS in history, 713 lives were saved. However, it has been argued that the number of survivors could have been doubled or even tripled, if there were stronger wireless regulations in effect. We are going to leave "The Wayback Machine" hovering over the year 1912, keeping a sharp eye on the Titanic, and on a 22 year old experimenter in Yonkers, NY, who would soon make some major contributions to radio.

So, until then, keep that spark gap adjusted and those raspy CQs coming. We'll catch you next time on board "The Wayback Machine."

These columns were originally written for the Schenectady Museum Amateur Radio Association. Copyright 1999, 2001 by William Continelli, W2XOY. All rights reserved.

*Titanic was not actually the first. ed.

K6GWE Repeaters**Big Rock Ridge 147.330 +****2 meters****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 offline - reserve status.

440**San Pedro Ridge**

443.525 + pl 82.5

Mt. Tamalpais

443.250 + pl 179.9

Pres. Msg. cont.

an alternate date for the July meeting. The Jeremiah O'Brien is going on a short cruise the weekend of April 26. I don't know if tickets are still available, but you can check the ship's website at www.ssjeremiahobrien.org. (If you remember the movie *Titanic* you can see the ship's engine used in the movie in operation. It powers the O'Brien. Impressive. ed.)

KPH recently held a Morse demonstration for a class from Acalanes High School in Moraga at the transmitter site in Bolinas. There is a rumor that details will be published in the March 27 issue of the Pt. Reyes Light.

As always, the Board of Directors is your servant and, unless you come to meetings and make your wishes known, we cannot be responsive. 73/88 Denice Stoops, President

A service station owner in Arkansas was trying to increase his sales. So he put up a sign that read, 'Free Sex with Fill-Up'. Soon a local redneck pulled in, filled his tank and asked for his free sex. The owner told him to pick a number from 1 to 10 and that if he guessed correctly he would get his free sex. The redneck guessed 8, and the Proprietor said, 'Sorry, you were close. The number was 7. No sex this time.' A week later, the same redneck, along with a buddy, Bubba, pulled in for another fill-up. Again he asked for his free sex. The proprietor again gave him the same story, and asked him to guess the correct number. The redneck guessed 2 this time. The proprietor said, 'Sorry, it was 3. You were close, but no free sex this time.' As they were driving away, the redneck said to his buddy, 'I think that game is rigged and he doesn't really give away free sex.' Bubba replied, 'No it ain't, Billy Ray. It ain't rigged. My wife won twice last week.'

Board of Directors Meeting 13 March

In attendance: Elisabeth Thomas-Matej, Norm Baetz, Denice Stoops, Doug Slusher, August Koehler, Randy Jenkins, Dave Hodgson, John Boyd.

Called to order: 19:36.

Agenda addendum from John Boyd—capital expenditures, establishing a budget? Budget was approved last December. Agenda approved without objection.

Minutes from February 1, 2008 as printed in *QSA-5* passed without objection.

Communications: Pres. Denice reported receiving an official letter from Bill Ragsdale, K6KM, about a speaking engagement at the clubhouse on 4 April—Randy reports having received a copy already. Denice sent out e-mails to Boy Scout leadership in Marin, as well as to Debbie Utter, local Girl Scout troop leader, to assess their interest. Debbie plans to come to the presentation on April 4.

Treasurer's report: February's income \$3,045.00, expenses \$1,867.50. Rent check has been received. Report approved without objection.

Committee and other reports:

- 1) Membership: No report.
- 2) Recreation: No report.
- 3) Public service: As reported at general membership meeting, Peak Hike (breast cancer) and Escape from Alcatraz need volunteers. Relay and Miwok are also coming up. John KE6ORI asked about a portable repeater. Randy doesn't know what the process has been but notes that West Marin is pretty well supplied with repeaters these days.
- 4) Technical committee: No report.
- 5) Comm truck: Randy repaired the metal frame of the awning over the comm truck.
- 6) Education: No report.
- 7) VE coordinator: Saturday March 15 is the next test date. Since Al Weisman died, Randy needs to look for a new coordinator and will ask on Saturday.
- 8) RACES: No report.
- 9) Building managers: Denice will discuss under new business.

Old Business

- 1) Fund raising for building maintenance is progressing. Horst asked Dave to mention that his son is a member of Lyons Club and might be able to do something.
- 2) Doug has ordered a sign to forestall a possible prescriptive easement for the back of the property.

Column three.

3) 75th anniversary: Randy says July and September would be better than the months with tons of public service events. Dave says we have a standard ad in *World Radio*—we could write a new one announcing our anniversary. In lieu of a picnic on rental grounds somewhere, we'll have a BBQ here with open house for the neighborhood. Doug will find out who at the *Marin Independent Journal* might cover the event. We can invite the ARRL league officials. Sundays in September are the 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th. The 14th looks best, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. John will look into artwork for a commemorative T-shirt.

4) Memorial fund for Al Weisman: Doug has an addendum—Sherry Hines, Al's wife, has now passed away as well, unexpectedly. Doug says her sister and Al's brother are in charge of the estate, so we need to find to whom to send our memorial donation.

New Business

1) Dave and Denice are chairing Field Day together. Dave says ARRL sells T-shirts for \$14.00 each, with only \$12.00 shipping, so we can put a notice in *QSA-5* and see if members are interested in a bulk order.

2) Repeater access codes: Doug had a conversation with Mike K6RVL Lerner, who wanted to shut down the 147.330 repeater because of jammers and would therefore need access codes. Mike's no longer involved in RACES leadership and isn't a member here. Randy points out that Doug is the trustee, so it's his decision about who should have the codes. Elisabeth will send Doug the list of RACES leadership who would be the logical ones to have access.

3) Advising tenant about how to handle repairs—she spent \$208 for Roto Rooter and deducted it from the rent, without apparently making an attempt to notify anyone on the board. Denice will make sure she has board member phone numbers and will ask her to notify us first in future, if she has a nuisance problem such as a blocked drain.

4) Augie has spoken with a member who would like to operate here under W6SG and wants to know the procedures—Randy will send a copy of the procedures.

Adjourned: 8:51.

Elisabeth Thomas-Matej, Secretary.

**Marin Amateur Radio Society
Membership Meeting
March 7, 2008**

Call to order 7:31 p.m.

Agenda approved.

Minutes from Feb. 1, 2008 meeting, passed without objection.

Al Weisman W5ALW passed away—moment of silence.

Communications: Received letter from Bill Ragsdale regarding meeting with Boy Scouts, will be speaking here April 4th. We may invite local or regional Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts leaders or adults.

Actions of Feb. 1st 2008 board of directors meeting mostly involved discussion of a party to commemorate club's 75th birthday. Rich Carbine will liaison with REDXA for this year's field day.

Treasury: Recovered financially nicely, property tax paid, insurance bill coming up, donations have been generous (from some members). Income \$3,045.00, expenses \$1867.50. No questions from membership. Treasurer's report approved, passed w/o objection

Recreation committee: Randy says we decided to forego picnic, have BBQ here to commemorate anniversary and maybe invite local community—inside the clubhouse and out back. August sometime—no one knows exact date of our anniversary.

Public service: Two more requests: Peak Hike Sept 21, Dolphin club Oct 4. Relay is April 19.

Technical committee: Doug Slusher says there is nothing to report, repeater upgrades are coming along. Please ignore jammers on air, so that they don't get their jollies. Doug doesn't want to shut off repeaters, because that will give them more power. Ignoring is the key.

Comm truck has new canopy.

Education: Dave says Marin Medical Reserve Corps has asked about training people to get FCC licensing. The problem is that they will likely have trouble making the time commitment to take a full course of instruction. Randy announces a class starting April 8th in Richmond, evenings.

VE coordinator: Saturday March 15th is next VE session.

Field Day needs a chairman. Rich Carbine says there's a chairman already at REDXA. Denice and Dave volunteer to do it together. Problem solved.

Membership: Current paid-up roster is on the wall. Pay up if you haven't yet!

Bldg. Manager: Rich says second coat of paint is done. Refrigerator fits in cubby! Denice is looking for better cabinets than we got donated last time. Dave suggests we can buy new by June—will be able to afford it. Randy says there are still maple cabinets in Davis for the taking, but we would like photos first.

Old business:

Do we still need a painting party? No. Randy mentions we need to get handrails to make the bathroom ADA compliant.

Fundraising? Do we want to do a T-shirt sale along with the anniversary celebration? Bake sale?

Sign for prescriptive easement? It's coming soon. Does it have to be mounted on its own post, or can we put it on the fence? Fence seems sensible.

New Business:

Rich reminds us we need to reserve a restaurant for Christmas party. Doug (Dougie) says his only complaint about Deerpark Villa was the loud party adjacent and no way to close off the noise. Dave will check into price at Spinnaker Club and Hilltop in Novato. Rich will check Deerpark again.

Denice suggests donation to an organization in Al's memory. Doug Slusher will give obit to Phil Dunlap for QSA-5. Al wants his remains shot into space! We can donate to that. Denice proposes we donate \$50.00 toward that. Passed w/o objection.

Presentation will be given April 4th by Bill Ragsdale—ham radio and Boy Scouts (noted above).

Madelaine KI6IMW Matej asks people to lend old dial telephones for Mill Valley Middle School musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*.

TZ5C Clipperton Island, 6 days sail SW of Mexico, is doing a DXpedition for the next week on CW, which members might want to listen for.

Dave brings up our trivia question for Southern Marin RACES net from this week, which was about hearing loss in 40 million Americans, of which 25% of cases are noise induced.

Adjourned 8:13 p.m. Elisabeth Thomas-Matej, Secretary.

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 Thursday at 7:30 PM. Members are encouraged to attend to try to keep the clowns honest.

Sunday morning informal meeting, grinningly called the bible/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. Sometimes we even talk about radio. 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, dismemberment or the Third Sunday Breakfast, only. So far, he still remembers the way to the clubhouse.

Dues structure is: \$25. per year. \$30. for family memberships. No dues are charged for Life or Honorary members.

<p>Marin Amateur Radio Society President: Denice Stoops KI6BBR 672-0303 Vice President: Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089 Secretary: Elisabeth T-M* KI6IMV 381-0585 Treasurer: Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ 332-1864 Additional Board Members: Norm Baetz WA6CLK 898-4887 John Boyd KE6ORI 924-4419 Rich Carbine W6UDS 479-3136 Horst Dannecker KA6BHZ 459-6163 Phil Dunlap K6PHD 491-0318</p>	<p>Education Chair: Ben Sawtelle N6PJZ 382-1170 kermode7@hotmail.com Membership: Dave and Phil VE Liaison: Randy's looking for a re placement for Al Bldg. Manager Rich Carbine W6UDS 479-3136 Trustee for W6SG: Augie Koehler KØCQL Trustee for K6GWE: Doug Slusher KF6AKU Sunday Emergency Nets: HF and VHF Ben Sawtelle N6PJZ</p>	<p>DX Representative of ARRL: Jerry Foster WA6BXV 892-3829 WEBMASTER Glenn Meader N1ZKW 987-3948 N1ZKW@ARRL.NET Public Service Event Coordinators Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089 Asst.? Tom Jordan KG6TCM 497-4406 ARRL San Francisco Section Mgr. Bill Hillendahl KH6GJV@ARRL.ORG Editor of QSA-5: Phil Dunlap K6PHD 491-0318 K6PHD@ARRL.NET</p>
<p>* Thomas-Matej</p>		

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San Rafael, CA 94903

Stamp

The Mailing
 Address
 Goes Here