
QSA-5

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

October 2013

Presidents Corner

Curtis Ardourel

Another public service season has come and gone. First I want to thank all of you who participated this year. The thank you messages we have received are a little humbling. Not only do you provide communications, you bring humanity to the job and credit to our club. Last year we invited everyone who participated to lunch. We had two reasons for this. The first was to say thank you in a tangible way. The second was to discuss how we could make the experience better. We sent out a survey and at the lunch we discussed the survey and asked more detailed questions.

As a result of this we updated the public service section of the website to provide detailed information about each of our events. Each event has a page with specific information about the event, links to the event site, and when I have received pictures, a gallery of images from the event. Whether you worked an event or not I urge you to take a look at the site and the images of your friends. Follow the Public Service link on the home page. For those of you who served this year we will invite you to lunch and have another discussion. If you have not received your invitation yet it will arrive soon.

At this point I have to thank Michael Fischer K6MLF and Randy Jenkins KA6BQF. First for organizing our presence at these events. Second on a more personal note for creating and updating the web pages on the public service site. They both put

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On the Air

From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

The Pacificon 2013 convention held in Santa Clara on October 11-13 had something for every ham. I attended the all-day antenna seminar on Friday, along with 400 or so other hams. In addition, there were breakout sessions on topics ranging from emergency communications to the Elecraft presentation on the evolution of hardware. It was amazing to see the changes in technology from the K2 to the present KX3. The surface-mount technology used in the KX3 uses components the size of a flea, according to RF engineer Wayne Burdick, co-founder of Elecraft. These components are glued to the circuit board, which is then run through an oven to flow the solder to the components.

In the hall was an exhibit of rigs from the 1940s to 1960s, including the Gonset six-meter Communicator, which was painted yellow because it was used as a Civil Defense unit. The vendor show gave everyone a chance to purchase the coolest new products. I ended up with a Piglet, a small component that turns my Ipad into a wireless controller for my Elecraft K3. As usual, the flea market had some deals and duds.

The conference was well attended by hams from all over the U.S. I met hams from Texas, New York, and Nevada, and had some interesting conversations with all of them. Our club members attending included Doug Slusher, Dave Hodgson, and Mike Ransom. If you have not attended before or not recently, I urge you to go next year to enjoy the fun.

The dinner banquet speaker was Rick Roderick, K5UR, ARRL First Vice President. He gave an entertaining talk about being a ham from a small town in Arkansas, but it was his real passion for the hobby that impressed me. It is the ARRL Centennial in 2014 and Rick urged all of us to do something to support the hobby in some way next year. As I looked around the banquet room, I saw a lot of gray-haired hams and not many young ones. Clearly, to ensure the future of ham radio as a great hobby for people of all put down their iPhones and pick up ham handsets! Most of us had an Elmer –mine was Hugh Cassidy (SK) (WA6AUD), publisher of the DX Bulletin in the 1970s. He encouraged me to get active again and try something new in ham radio. So if you can Elmer someone in the coming year or help the ham radio hobby in some way please do.

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in a lot of work to make the events a success and to make it a good experience for all of you who work the events.

One more thought for those of you who volunteer for our public service events. Remember the Sunday nets. If you check in regularly you will have noticed that the net control operator changes from week to week. This is something we want to encourage. In the next month or two we will be implementing an on-line net control system. This is a tool for the operator to track who checks in. I will give you more details when we are ready and I will demo the system at a regular meeting. While I am on the topic I want to compliment Sean Leite KK6FBI for the fine job he did on 20 October as net control. I hope we hear him again at the mic soon.

Now on to one of my favorite hobby horses. At the next regular meeting I will be announcing the candidates submitted by the nominating committee for election to the board of directors. At that meeting I will also take nominations from the floor. I encourage any of you who are interested in serving to step up. You don't need a speech or a second or a super PAC. You can nominate yourself, many of us on the board got in that way. What you can't do is nominate someone who is not present.

73 de WA6UDS

Club Events

Public Service Lunch: All members are invited: at noon on Saturday, November 16th: the second-annual post-season debriefing session and celebration luncheon. Yes, Virginia, there is such a thing as a free lunch-if you participated in one of the MARS-supported public service events, or if you think you might do so next year.



What's Happening in Radio

Solar Cycle Fizzles

Predictions that 2013 would see an upsurge in solar activity have not occurred so far. Instead, the current peak in the solar cycle is the weakest for a century. This lack of solar activity is being compared with the Maunder Minimum that occurred between 1645 and 1715. During this period the absence of sunspots and other solar activity also saw the coldest temperatures in a century.

The unusually low number of sunspots in recent years "is not an indication that we are going into a Maunder Minimum" according to Giuliana DeToma, a solar scientist at the High Altitude Observatory in Colorado. Instead is more likely to be a shorter downturn that occurs about every 100 years.

Many solar experts think the downturn is linked a different phenomenon, the Gleissberg cycle, which predicts a period of weaker solar activity every century or so. If that turns out to be true, the sun could remain unusually quiet through the middle of the 2020s.

FCC Actions

The FCC has dismissed a Petition for Rule Making that sought to expand Technician privileges in the 10 meter band. The Toledo Mobile Radio Association (TMRA) had asked the Commission last June to expand the spectrum available to Technician licensees on 10 meters to include operating privileges in the FM portion of the band, from 29.520 to 29.700 MHz. Novice and Technician licensees now may operate on 10 meters from 28.000 to 28.500 MHz.

"We conclude that TMRA has not presented grounds for the Commission to revisit the question of operating privileges for Technician class licensees," the FCC said October 17 in denying the petition. The FCC said that Technicians may transmit through repeaters licensed to a General class or higher licensee that have an output channel in the 29.5 to 29.7 MHz segment, as long as the repeater has a 2 meter or 70 centimeter input. (ARRL General Bulletin ARLB024)

New FCC Chairman Named

Following his swearing in, the former cable and wireless telephone lobbyist will assume the top job at the agency, succeeding fellow Democrat Mignon Clyburn, who has been running things as acting chairwoman since Julius Genachowski stepped down earlier this year. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz cleared the way for the confirmation vote Tuesday evening by lifting his hold on a vote.

USS Pampanito Report

Our Saturday, October 12th, Dedicated Day of Operation (DDO) got underway aboard the USS Pampanito, SS-383 around 1045 hours. The RO's were your CO, Den, K6ZJU and Guest RO, Sergey Nikiforov, NS6W. We met Sergey during the September DDO and he expressed interest in coming aboard the Pampanito and operating our station NJ6VT. Sergey is from Moscow, Russia and still holds the call sign RX3DUX and is a skilled RO.

We started on the 40 meter band using SSB around 7260 kc. Radio conditions were poor with no short skip. I had a sked with Ed, W6WRL, in Pine Grove at 1100 hours but with no short skip at hand I could not establish contact with him. There were a few stations heard down south. Sergey made several QSO's - one in Ridgecrest, CA with Jeff, N6EVF and another in Oregon with Berry, K6BAJ. With radio conditions on 40 meters being what they were (bad) we went to the 17 meter band and Sergey worked a few stations in Colorado and Oregon. Much later in the day, I worked JJ1FXX, Kon, in Tokyo, Japan on 18.145 mc SSB. Our 80 watts and our 115 foot long wire antenna did quite well over the long haul and we received a 5 by 4 signal report.

Visitor traffic aboard the boat was sporadic. Normally, we would have had lots of visitor traffic, but with Fleet week canceled this year visitor traffic was light. About 50 officers from the Bangladesh Navy came aboard in several groups to tour the Pampanito. I never realized Bangladesh had a Navy! As I learned, they do, but nearly all their boats/ships are shore patrol craft. Nearly all the officers did not speak English, but a few did and I was able to learn a few things about their operations, limited as they are. Quite a few visitors from Australia aboard the boat during the day and we enjoyed talking with them as well.

Our next DDO is scheduled for the 4th Saturday of the month, October 26th if any PARC member and Guest RO wants to take it. Michael Fischer, K6MLF will be out of town and will not be able to help out. Our 2nd Saturday of the month DDO is set for November 9th aboard the boat. I want to thank Sergey Nikiforov, NS6W, for making our DDO a successful one! Thanks Sergey!!

73,
Den Regan, K6ZJU
CO Pampanito A.R.C. NJ6VT
USS Pampanito, SS-383
Pier 45, Shed "A"
San Francisco



Meet our Members

Doug Slusher KF6AKU Technician class for the moment



Greetings, When did it all start? From day one I have always been interested in all thing mechanical, trains, cars, plains and the rest; it's all interesting to me. But my fascination with electricity began at the age of four. That's when I discovered a bobby pin while playing in the hallway. It seemed like the perfect tool to use to clean out a wall socket. Well that event must have jump started a few of my brain cells because from that moment, or shortly after I recovered, I was hooked on all things electrical too.

My father had been in the signal corps in WW II and he taught me enough to keep me from electrocuting myself a second time. My grandfather back in the late 40's had taken a National Electronics correspondence school course. He saved all his lesson books and gave them to me when I was old enough to understand them. What I know about fixing a 1938 Buick radio or how to navigate an aircraft via an A-N range I owe to him. Actually the Buick radio knowledge did come in handy.

I should mention I am a Marin native. Growing up in Corte Madera I attended grades K-6 at LCM school in Larkspur where, coincidentally, my father was principal. I don't recommend that last part. Grades 7-8 at Hall Middle School. But my exposure to ham radio didn't begin until I started attending Redwood High School. At that time the high school offered an excellent four year electronics program taught by Truman Whorton. He was a great teacher and I credit him for getting me started on a great career path. The icing on the cake was the school had a ham radio station too, WB6NVY.

At Redwood I quickly discovered was I liked building things. I enjoy dragging something out of the trash and making it work or better yet transforming it into something else. Ham radio fits nicely into that subject. During my four years I participated in building a crank up tower for the TH6-DXX antenna that the teacher donated, rebuilding the radio clubs Heathkit SB101 transceiver and participating in field day activities. During the 70's the property at the top of Sugar Loaf drive in Tiburon was vacant, so we commandeered it for field day. What a great location! We were section leaders that year.

While in high school I started working at a local TV repair shop. It was fun applying what I had learned in school to what was happening in the real world. Oh, and getting paid for it was good too. That turned into a long career in the consumer electronics industry with a focus on high end audio systems. Unfortunately all good things come to an end and the consumer electronics industry is no exception. Nobody fixes anything anymore, so I made the leap from audio to the computers. I then spent 20 years at the Marin Independent Journal working in the information technology field. Unfortunately all good things come to an end and the newspaper industry is no exception. Nobody reads newspapers anymore, so I made the leap to computer consulting.

I got back into amateur radio while working at the Marin IJ. I want to thank Jerry Foster, WA6BXV, for giving me a tap on the shoulder and sending me out to get my technician class license. Before you say it, I am now brushing up for my extra class ticket as you read this. Jerry worked at the IJ more years than I care to remember.

I am a member of Marin Amateur Radio Society, Contra Costa Communications Club and the Northern California Association of Emergency Radio Operators.

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I like all areas of amateur radio, but for years I have concentrated on the world above 50 MHz. I like the design challenges of working in the VHF/UHF spectrum. Lately I have been spending most of my time working with Dan Dufficy, KH8AF, installing the clubs simulcast repeater system. Dan is a good mentor. I especially enjoy working at the mountain top repeater locations. They have the best views of the bay area.

Public service within amateur is my second passion. I enjoy sharing our hobby with others. The number of people who have come up to me and said they were surprised amateur radio was still alive is enough to keep me volunteering and keeping the word out there.

Recently I started exploring the world of software defined radio. I spent much of my time at Pacificon this year attending seminars on SDR and talking to others who share the same interest. Radio stuff with computers added sounds good to me. That's what's driving me to upgrade, I'll need "HF" privileges. Let's see... that will be project 9000 for the winter. Yea I can do that.

Member Reports

The 2013 Public Service Season-A Report by the Numbers

Michael Fisher

By all accounts, the successful Public Service of the radio operators excellent service to our There were more than them needed our active, help we were able to give.

Measures of success? We annual post-season radio above—it will happen at attend!



Marin Amateur Radio Society has just concluded another Event season, thanks to many people—most especially, to all who gave their time, their skill, and their dedication to principal customers: the participants in each of the events. five thousand participants in those events. A very few of engaged, direct support—but those few REALLY needed the

hope to learn about some of them from you at our second-operator's gathering that Curtis mentioned in his column noon on Saturday, November 16th, and we hope you all can

But before we get to measures of success, here are some indicators of how much work you all put into making this season a success:

- We supported 11 events, from the Dipsea to the Marin Century to the Breast Cancer Fund's Peak Hike;
- We provided significant support to another 5 non-MARS events, from the San Francisco Marathon to the Grizzly Peak Century to The Relay.
- We filled a total of 165 radio operator's positions in the MARS-supported events;
- 64! different licensed radio operators participated in our events;
- Twenty operators participated in 3 or more events;
- Eight operators participated in 5 or more events; and
- One of our most active radio operators, Doug Slusher KF6AKU, participated in 10 events, not counting the non-MARS activities that he devoted time to.

WE hope that you will think about the events in which you participated and let us know what went right in each of them, and what went wrong. Or where we could do better.

Last year, we sent out a relatively long questionnaire, and many of you took the time to give us thoughtful feedback—which, I hope you agree, we took to heart. But almost everyone asked us not to do that again, so the highlighted sentence above is this year's questionnaire. Please tell us what worked and what didn't. Shoot an email to fischer@igc.org and Michael will compile your thoughts. If you don't have time to write something down in advance, bring your suggestions with you on the 16th.

Curtis was kind enough to thank Randy and Michael for organizing the events, but you should know that Curtis himself devoted many hours of his time to design and keep our new website up to date. This is where we incorporated most of your suggestions from last year: clear assignments, previous year's frequency plans, photos and maps, current year maps and links to the organizing sponsors' websites—all stuff that would prepare you in advance to do a better job in the field.

OK, measures of success:

- Ability to recruit, brief and organize scores of radio operators to staff more than 150 positions, often starting before dawn and lasting until well after sunset;
- The professional approach, attitude, and expertise of virtually every one of our operators;
- Well-established protocols for operations and for dealing with problems, whether safety-related or event management;
- Skill at developing work-arounds (like cross-band repeater systems or new antenna setups) when communications gaps were discovered;
- Some of the best, smoothest, most calm and decisive net controls around, and a growing bench of net control operators; new net controls were included in almost every event we fielded;
- Well-developed and relatively seamless operating relationships with the event organizers, both before the event and during;
- While professional, no-nonsense radio discipline is clearly an important element of our approach, we always look for opportunities to inject light humor, to welcome operators just learning the ropes, and to relieve tension.
- The most heart-warming indicator of our success is to have our colleagues from other clubs comment about how much more smooth, effective, and enjoyable our events are. Ditto from the event organizers, some of whom are quite effusive about their appreciation.

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But, again, we would like to learn from YOU about the indicators of success that we should both be proud of and where we should strive to improve. Let us know! Public service is one of the key hallmarks of our organization, and we want to continue to improve. We look forward to see you all on November 16th-- including those of you who have not yet participated, but might do so next season. Sincerely, thanks to you all.

MARS Member Rich Carbine Falls from Roof

Marilyn Bagshaw

On Oct. 2, Rich fell off a ladder, which was on our roof, to concrete, about 25 feet. He was repairing our inverted V antenna. He was at Marin General Hospital for a week, then Rafael Convalescent Hospital until last Friday (10/27). He has 7 broken ribs; 2 broken vertebrae, collapsed lung, fractured left Sacral and right pelvis. He is fine, healing, walks with a walker with home rehab started next week. He is lucky. The outcome could have been quite different.

I hired a friend, a professional rigger, who has put our antenna back in business. As the trauma doctor said in ER, most of his patients are men who have fallen from ladders. I think Rich knows that now! (*Let's all keep Rich in mind and especially when thinking of working on antennas. Get well soon Rich! Ed.*)

Minutes for Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, October 10, 2013 Board Members present: Curtis Ardourel, Dave Hodgson, Marc Bruvry, August Koehler, Doug Slusher, John Boyd, Cal Anber, and Ed Essick

The meeting was called to order by Curtis Ardourel at 19:30 hours. The agenda was approved as amended. The minutes of the August 08, 2013 meeting were approved as published. Randy reported on a notice from Marin Public Works, under correspondence.

Treasurer: Dave submitted reports for September. The report showed \$2,236.00 income and \$355.23 expenses; and total cash assets of \$41,640.28. A motion was made by Doug Slusher to approve the payment of property taxes of \$3534.9. The motion was seconded by John Boyd. Passed by unanimous vote. A motion was made to authorize up to \$600 for repair of rental unit plumbing. Motion by John Boyd, second by Cal Anber. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

Committee reports:

Membership- No report Public Service – All public service events are completed for the year. Michal Fischer requested the board consider purchasing public service hats. Discussion followed. It was felt that a token of appreciation for those participating in events as well as providing visual representation of each ham by the hat was a good idea. The hats will have reflective strip and club name. A motion was made by Cal Anber to purchase 60 hats at an estimated \$11.95 each. John seconded and it passed by unanimous vote. A public appreciation lunch on November 16th was approved for up to \$200. Motion by Ed Essick, Second by Cal Anber. Passed by unanimous vote.

Comm Truck- No Report.

VE Liaison – No report

RACES – No report.

Education: Tech class starts 10/20

Website Redesign – The redesign is in progress using WordPress.

Ham Shack Procedures – Curtis is completing the website process to allow members to sign up as the net control operator for Sunday nets.

Bylaws- Discussion deferred to November meeting. Doug asked if we could implement electronic vote for coming election. Tabled to next meeting.

Board Elections- The nominating committee has set the slate for the upcoming election. Curtis Adroul, Phil Dunlap, Dave Hodgson, and John Boyd.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm

Minutes for General Meeting

No minutes reported

General Membership Meeting is held on the first Friday of each month at Alto District Clubhouse at 27 Shell Road in Mill Valley, starting at 7:30 PM. Come a little early for pizza or whatever. From highway 101, head west toward Mill Valley on E. Blithedale. Turn right at the first stop light. Stay right at next stop sign, then turn left at next corner, Shell Road. We are in a two story building, second from the corner 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. **Sunday morning informal meeting** (aka bible class) meets every Sunday morning at the Alto District Clubhouse in Mill Valley starting around 8am and runs to about 11am.

Sometimes we even talk about radio. **The Sunday Emergency nets.** The K6GWE emergency VHF net check-in is at 10:15 am on 147.700 (-pl 203.5). This is a directed net and the net control station may operate at the club house or at a member location. Members on the net check-in list that do not check in for three consecutive weeks are removed from the list until they reestablish check-in. Any member can sign up to act as the net control station. The process to become the VHF net control station will be posted on the website in the near future. The W6SG emergency HF net check-in is at 9 am on 3.915 Mh.

Marin Amateur Radio Society Officers and Board

Members: President Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS 510-595-3494 **Vice President** John Boyd KE6ORI 924-04419 **Secretary** Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089 **Treasure:** Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ 332-1864
Board Members Cal Anber N6TIA 209-275-5252 Rita Brenden KG6WPN 707-557-5521 Marc Bruvry KF6VNT 492-9292 Phil Dunlap K6PHD 491-0318 Ed Essick K6ELE 456-1715 **Other Positions: Education Chair** Randy Jenkins **VE Liaison** Randy Jenkins **Building Co-Managers** Curtis Ardourel Dave Hodgson **Trustee for W6SG** Augie Koehler K0CQL **Trustee for K6GWE** Doug Slusher KF6AKU **Sunday Emergency Nets** Mark Bruvry and other volunteers **DX Representative of ARRL** Jerry Foster WA6BXV 892-3829

Public Service Event Coordinator Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089 **Membership** Phil Dunlap K6PHD 491-0318 **Editor of QSA-5** Ed Essick K6ELE 456-1715 e.essick@comcast.net
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