
QSA-5

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

August 2013

Presidents Corner

Curtis Ardourel

Change is always a little scary and as we have learned in recent years not always for the better. That said, change is always inevitable so we learn to embrace it, to work to make the results an improvement. With an opening sentence like that you might conclude that I am going to bring you bad news. I am happy to say that I think the changes I am speaking of are for the better.

First I would like thank Phil Dunlap K6PHD, for his years of service to the club in editing and publishing our newsletter QSA-5. I see the newsletters of a number of other clubs and Phil has done an outstanding job producing a high quality newsletter month in and month out for years. QSA-5 has consistently provided not only the required content, but also interesting features and comments. Phil brings a unique perspective on the world and I know many of you will miss it. Sisyphus notwithstanding you can only roll the rock up the hill again and again for so long.

With this edition Phil has handed the vast journalistic resources of QSA-5 over to Ed Essick K6ELE. Ed is our newest board member, serving the remaining term of a board member who resigned. Ed brings a new direction to our newsletter and I look forward to the changes he will make. Ed is a published author,

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From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

With this issue of the newsletter you will see some changes in its content as well as my becoming the new editor. I want to thank Phil for his help in getting started with this new job for the club. As Curtis stated, Phil has done a great job for the past 12 years in producing the newsletter for the club.

I would like to encourage all of you to consider submitting an article or other input for future issues of QSA-5. It's your newsletter and I would like to get any suggestions you have for changes and/or improvements. Some changes were made in the content for this issue, so please give me your feedback on what you like and don't. You can email me your thoughts at e.essick@comcast.net.

For those of you who I have not met yet, I would like to introduce myself. It's hard to believe, but I have been a ham for over 50 years. I started out as WA6LDF, licensed as a Tech+, when the great sunspot cycle of 1958 occurred. My first experience as a ham radio operator was on six meters when it did not take much of station or antenna to work lots of DX.

Like many other hams, I became inactive after college with the demands of career and family. I kept my license current and in the early 1990s I began to use the ACS repeaters running a dual band mobile rig. I upgraded to General class in 2000 and set up a HF station. My radio interests now include HF digital modes, SSB, contesting, construction projects, and of course VHF operation.

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and taught at College of Marin for many years. It was there that he took a chance and hired a twenty year old geek as a student computer operator on the college IBM mainframe. That decision sent me down the path I took working in computers. Please join me in welcoming Ed as our new editor and publisher.

By now you must have noticed that our repeaters have changed. Doug Slusher KF6AKU, the chairman of our technical committee, and a few others have replaced repeaters on Big Rock, Mt. Barnabe, and Mt. Tam. Not only were radios replaced but a signal received at any of the sites is retransmitted from all three sites. Early reports from folks working on public service events indicate that this has resulted in much better coverage for our system. This is the first major upgrade in our system in some time. Note that frequency assignments and PL tones have changed. You can find an excellent explanation and settings on our web site.

We are in the process of reviewing and updating our By-laws. I had intended to talk about the process and what we are thinking about changing at our August regular meeting, however circumstances forced me to miss the meeting. I will start that discussion at our September meeting instead. I invite you to bring your suggestions to the membership meeting.

We are changing the mechanics of running the Sunday nets. We will provide tools for you to be net control. Using a web browser, you will be able to sign up to run the net a few weeks in advance. We will provide scripts, and on line check in list, advice and assistance. I will provide specifics in a future column.

73 de WA6UDS.

Club Events

Annual Picnic. Our annual picnic will again be at Piper Park II on Sunday, September 15th from 11:30 am to 3 pm. The park is located at 252 Doherty Dr., Larkspur, CA 94939.

Parking at Piper Park fills up quickly; additional parking can be found at nearby Henry C. Hall School. Talk-in will be on the new K6GWE simulcast system; 146.70 MHz PL 203.5 (See w6sg.net for all the access tones) Our crystal ball is in the shop, so it would be helpful if you would let us know if you are coming, but don't let that be your reason for not showing up. If you would like to bring a salad or dessert to share that would be great too.

For additional information or to let us know you are coming please contact Doug Slusher (415) 927-8120 or email picnic@rfhell.com

Christmas Party: Save the date: December 14th. More in Sept. QSA-5

Meet our Members

(Your editor is soliciting members to submit your radio biography and picture, if possible, for inclusion in a future QSA-5 newsletter. Please consider this as a way for all members to get to know you and your interests in the hobby. Email me at e.sick@comcast.net)

What's Happening in Radio

PACIFICON 2013- October 11-13, 2013

Marriott Santa Clara Hotel
2700 Mission College Blvd.
Santa Clara, California

For Events, Latest Updates and Registration go to:

www.PACIFICON.org

Events, Forum Topics, and Exhibits Include:

- Friday All-Day Antenna Seminar • Friday Evening New Media Elmers and Podcasters • Saturday Morning Kickoff with Speaker Gordon West • More Than 75 Outstanding Technical Forums • Largest West Coast Vendor Show of Amateur Radio Gear • Saturday Amateur Radio and the Law Seminar
- Great Saturday Swap Meet • Ham License Exams • Daily Radio Prize Drawings • Direction Finding/Fox-Hunting, Beginner and Advanced • Great QRP Programs • Amateur Television (ATV/DATV) • HFpack Activities • Saturday All-Day Technician License Class • Working Satellites • DXpeditions • Contesting
- A Full Slate of Youth Projects and Activities • Kit Building • Emergency Communications • Saturday Evening Banquet with Guest Speaker • Annual ARRL Pacific Division Director's Forum • Understanding the Physics of Radio • Moon Bounce - EME • Antenna Theory & construction

W6A America's Cup Special Event Station. Operators are needed for the W6A America's Cup Special Event Station hosted by the San Francisco Radio Club. The Special Event Station will be staffed on Sunday 9/8/2013, Saturday 9/14/2013, Sunday 9/15/2013, Saturday 9/21/2013, and Sunday 9/22/2013. The hours will be from 12Noon to 9PM each day at the SF Veterans Admin Hospital in Fort Miley, overlooking the Golden Gate. Interested? Contact Robert Klahn KJ6OGE at kj6oge@kint.org.

Member Reports

USS Pampanito

On a gorgeous morning this past weekend, with ten colorful and sleek 45' America's Cup catamarans sailing close-by the submarine, Guest Op Art KJ6ANT and the undersigned began operations aboard at 1015 hours. Without a break for lunch (we brought our sandwiches with us,) we secured at 1500.

We began with a tour of the bridge, examining the auto tuner (without opening the cabinet) and conning tower. There were two docents aboard the entire time we were there: Dwight and Merrill.

It was not a fantastic day on the radio: 15 and 17 meters were entirely quiet. There was some activity on 20, but not much. Most of our 20+/- contacts were on 40 meters. There were QSO parties going in Kansas, Ohio and Hawai'i, and we scored several contacts in each, giving a bit of a startle to the contestants when we IDed as a submarine. Art, with dedicated patience, did a LOT of fruitless CQ-calling--but every now and then, a QSO would pop up. Our almost-DX 5/9 contacts indicated we were getting out OK, but QSOs were few and far between.

While Art was working the radio, I was working the visitors, and completing the logbook. The good news is that the logbook is now completely up to date and up to snuff. Now the task is to get out the QSL cards for the past three months!

The companionway was filled with tourists almost without pause from late morning until we quit after we went for a half-hour with no contacts on the radio. A higher-than-normal percentage of Bay Area and California families were represented. But almost half the visitors, as usual, were from all over Europe, from Poland and Finland to Norway, Scotland, the UK, Spain, the south of France, and Italy. Probably brought by the America's Cup, we had at least a dozen groups from Down Under.

We also had three licensed hams and two teenagers who are studying for their technician licenses, and handed out QSL eye-ball cards to them. As we logged out on the pier shed, we were able to chat with Marvin Wong for a bit--his good humor is as infectious as ever.

As you see by the photos, the boat was dressed--probably for the US Navy inspection earlier in the month and the America's Cup. Pretty fancy!

Michael Fischer, RO NJ6VT
USS Pampanito, SS-383
San Francisco



USS Pampanito

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80-meter Traffic Nets: Great Message-Handling Practice

Michael Fischer K6MLF

Every evening between 1800 and 2000, on 80 meters, there are several Traffic Nets that provide a purposeful opportunity to keep your HF chops lubricated. For the past several years, I have been an active, regular member of:

- California Traffic Net, 3.906 at 1830 daylight time, 1800 standard time;
- Oregon Emergency Net, 3.980 at 1900 (they get to California about 1945 in the first session, about 2030 in the second session;)
- Golden Bear Net, 3.975 at 1930;
- Western Public Service System, 3.952 at 1930;
- Mission Trail Net, 3.856 at 2000 daylight time, 1900 standard time.

In the past several years, I have taken (and delivered by telephone) more than 300 written messages, and have composed and sent more than a hundred messages of my own. Almost all of my messages have been “service-back” traffic to stations originating radiograms that I have delivered, or been unable to deliver. Most (not all) of the messages are standard-text traffic (some call it “ham-spam”) sent via the NTS, National Traffic System. Messages like “a friendly reminder, your license is about to expire,” or “congratulations on achieving your new amateur radio license...”

Why do it? Well, there are several major benefits:

- You learn how your signal works in different propagation situations;
- Regular, frequent HF operation lets you know that your equipment and antenna are in good working order, ready to deploy in an emergency;
- You become VERY familiar with the standard message form, how to establish a confident, professional traffic-handling tempo and a clearly articulated radio voice (this would be especially valuable for RACES members;)
- You learn how to take traffic in poor-propagation situations, developing the ears necessary to tease out weak signals;
- You learn how to act as a relay station, and how best to use a relay station;
- When delivering the messages, you get to engage in some VERY interesting conversations, especially to those brand-new to ham radio;
- Most important, in my view, is the fact that your name, your voice, your call, and your location become well-known to scores of fellow traffic-handlers in Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Washington, Oregon and throughout California. When a disaster hits, those traffic nets, hearing my call, will immediately recognize a friend and will be eager to help.

Don't want to check in to five nets every night? Well, three to five times a week is plenty. And the top message-handling nets are the California Traffic Net and the Golden Bear Net. There are very few Bay Area hams on the nets, so there will be plenty of opportunity to volunteer to take traffic. Jump in, help out, become a member of a larger ham community, and learn a lot!

Denice Stoops Returns Home!

Randy Jenkins- from the Maritime Radio Historical Society Newsletter

As we reported in Newsletter No. 40 our beloved Denice Stoops, who suffered a stroke while joining her third Military Sealift Command ship in Singapore, has returned home.

It will be remembered by most that Denice was the first female radiotelegrapher hired at KPH, this in 1979. She came to KPH after four years at neighbor station NMC of the United States Coast Guard. Thus it was particularly appropriate that her first visit back to the station last Saturday was also the day that many NMC personnel visited the station to participate in our Services of the Church of the Continuous Wave.

Naturally a group photo of this wonderful event was required. So here it is...



Denice with her fans

Denice specifically asked that we make her email address available for those who might want to send her a message. She can be reached at da.stoops@sbcglobal.net. We're sure she'd love to hear from you.

Spark Transmitter Donated to the MRHS

One of the best parts about letting fellow True Believers know about our project is that they understand that donations made to the MRHS will not end up on eBay or in some private collection. Witness the donation of Radiomarine CRM-R6A receivers by the family of the engineer who designed them (see Newsletter No. 27). Now comes Dr. David A. Hunt of Reno, NV. He did us the honor of making contact to inquire if we might possibly be interested in the donation of a spark transmitter. Of course the answer was "yes". It took a while to pull together the mission to Reno but before two long Greg Farrell and Tom Harris of the H Set Team set forth over the Sierra Mountains. Soon Mackay Radio and Telegraph Company Radio Transmitter 30-A, SN 31257 was on its way to its new home.



Spark Transmitter

Minutes for Board of Directors Meeting

Board of Director's Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 08, 2013

Board Members present: Curtis Ardourel, Dave Hodgson, Rita Brenden, August Koehler, Doug Slusher, John Boyd, Cal Anber, Ed Essick, and Randy Jenkins. Craig Mirkin was also present.

The meeting was called to order by Curtis Ardourel at 19:30 hours.

The agenda was approved as amended. Ed Essick, K6ELE was welcomed to the Board.

The minutes of the June 13, 2013 meeting were approved as published. There was no Board meeting held in July.

Randy reported no important correspondence.

Treasurer: Dave submitted reports for June and July. The June report showed \$2,470.00 income and \$4,236.94 expenses; and total cash assets of \$37,565.40. The July report showed \$2,315.00 income and \$739.93 expenses; and total cash assets of \$39,141.07.

Committee reports:

Membership- We have about 50 renewed members.

Recreation – The picnic date will be Sunday, September 15; September 14 was not available. Doug put down a \$240.00 deposit for Piper Park. The Christmas party date was changed to December 14. How we handle food needs to be decided.

Public Service – The Marin Century was successfully completed. The Holstein 100 is on August 17.

Technical- The final tally for the repeater upgrade was \$17,285.30. There was a motion to authorize payment of the additional \$3,285.30. ORI/ELE/Pass. There was a question of about selling any of the old equipment.

Comm Truck- No change.

Field Day – Over.

VE Liaison – Randy reported that there would be a session on Saturday, November 23. The July session went well.

RACES – No report.

Building Management – No report.

Education: Class to be scheduled, maybe October.

Minutes for General Meeting

No minutes were recorded for the August meeting as the Secretary and President were not in attendance.

On the Air

Why are Amateur Radio Operators also called "Hams"?

Ham: a poor operator; a 'plug' (G. M. Dodge; The Telegraph Instructor)

When telegraphers who operated land based systems transitioned to wireless operators, they were ingrained in the earlier ways of communication by wire. Spark transmitters of the day occupied a wide spectrum of a band, which caused interference between amateur radio operators and commercial and Government wireless stations. It was possible for two amateur operators conducting a QSO to block other services operating in the same area. When the amateur transmissions interfered with commercial wireless operators, they referred to the amateur operators as “hams.” This title was picked up by amateur operators for some reason and thus we became “hams.”

Contest Calendar

These are some of the contests this September. See link for full list. <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/index.html>

Tennessee QSO Party 1800Z, Sep 1 to 0300Z, Sep 2

Ohio State Parks on the Air 1600Z-2400Z, Sep 7

All Asian DX Contest, Phone 0000Z, Sep 7 to 2400Z, Sep 8

RSGB SSB Field Day 1300Z, Sep 7 to 1300Z, Sep 8

WAE DX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Sep 14 to 2359Z, Sep 15

ARRL September VHF Contest 1800Z, Sep 14 to 0300Z, Sep 16

Washington State Salmon Run 1600Z, Sep 21 to 0700Z, Sep 22 and

ARRL September VHF Contest 1800Z, Sep 14 to 0300Z, Sep 16

CQ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY 0000Z, Sep 28 to 2400Z, Sep 29

Texas QSO Party 1400Z, Sep 28 to 0200Z, Sep 29

Android app for Scanner Software

Gordon Edwards' Scanner Radio lets you listen to 4,000 public safety, weather and amateur radio frequencies from around the world, including police and fire dispatch and incident-based tactical communications. Advantages of scanner-over-Internet, as opposed to scanner-over-radio waves, include being able to listen to a hometown frequency when away. Other tricks include listener threshold

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notifications when a local agency's communications are being monitored by a significant numbers of people, indicating a major incident may be taking place. This is the link for Google app <https://play.google.com/store/apps/developer?id=Gordon+Edwards&hl=en>

Cycle 24 lowest in Over 50 Years

Sunspot cycle 24 is turning out to be the weakest in over 100 years. David Hathaway of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center recently stated that this is the weakest cycle since the Space Age began and the next sunspot cycle could be worse. The polar fields have been slowly reversing at this maximum, according to Hathaway, which suggests that they are not likely to get much stronger during Cycle 24. NASA scientists believe this will lead to a smaller maximum during Cycle 25.

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/science/2013/07/15/sun-2013-solar-activity-peak-is-weakest-in-100-years/#ixzz2dJAnqf4M>

Read more at: <http://www.foxnews.com/science/2013/07/15/sun-2013-solar-activity-peak-is-weakest-in-100-years/#ixzz2dJ8Yb12H>

FCC Proposals to modify Amateur Service Part 97 rules

Bill Cross with the FCC's Mobility Division, within the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, told attendees at the annual National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators in July that FCC was still considering these rule changes:

1. Granting exam credit for expired and licenses out of the grace period
2. Decrease the grace period to renew an expired ham license
3. Changing the time a call sign is unavailable to vanity applicants
4. Changing the rules to allow remote testing
5. Lower the number of volunteer examiners required to administer examinations
6. Changes to allow additional types of emissions, primarily digital, for amateur stations

Also at the conference an FCC official stated that a trustee for a radio club may not serve in the same function for another club. This has been the rule since 2/11.

W7RN, Comstock Memorial Station

This contest station is the result of the work of K5RC and W5FU. It includes multiple towers set in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Virginia City, NV. The towers include a 4-stack of 6 element beams on 10M topped by a 40M beam at 125ft. Stacked 3 over 3 80M beams can be seen at the right of the photo.



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

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Vice President

John Boyd KE6ORI 924-04419

Secretary

Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089

Treasure:

Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ 332-1864

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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

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