
QSA-5

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

March 2014

Presidents Corner

Curtis Ardourel

April 15th. Now there is a date that makes the blood run cold. It will soon be here but so will more interesting dates. Saturday 12 April at 10:30 we will hold our public service orientation meeting at the Alto clubhouse. I urge you to attend, particularly if you have not worked a public service event before. Randy Jenkins KA6BQF and Michael Fisher K6MLF will talk about our events, what you will be expected to do, hold some hands-on communications practice. Please bring your HT. We will provide lunch. You won't have to eat your HT. If you would like to attend, please email either Randy at ka6bqf@arrl.net or Michael at fischer@igc.com

While I am on the topic of public service April 26 is the Ridge to Bridge the first event of our public service season. You can check out all our events at http://w6sg.net/blog?page_id=6. Public service is a big part of what our club is about. We get to give back to the community. Event volunteers and participants often get interested in the amateur radio by talking to you. You get to meet other members. We all improve our skills, give your radio a workout, and you get to do all of this in some of the most beautiful country in the world.

We are up to 59 current members. There are still 23 of you who were members in 2013 and have not renewed for 2014. You can mail a check to the club at PO Box 6423, San Rafael, CA 94903, you can drop your check off at the club house, and you can go online to w6sg.net and choose the renew your

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From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

Last month I asked you what excited you about amateur radio. Well, one of the things I found out that really excites me is contesting. I have been a casual tester for the last several years, mainly to pick up DX as I was working for my DXCC 100 award. Last weekend was the CQ WW WPX contest. This is a 48 hour contest where amateurs around the world contact as many other amateurs and prefixes as possible. I started the contest Friday afternoon soon after it started. I had planned on working maybe 4-5 hours of the contest over the weekend. Well, by Sunday afternoon I had set in front of the radio for a total of 19 hours and made 347 contacts, 338 of which were DX stations.

After the contest I thought about why I had spent so much time in the contest. I realized that contesting for me was much like taking my boat out through the Golden Gate into the Pacific Ocean salmon and tuna fishing. That was challenging and sometimes conditions made it quite exciting coming back in through what is known as the "potato patch." That is area just off of Pt. Bonito what becomes quite rough with outgoing tides, swell, and wind. In those conditions piloting my 26ft. catamaran took skill and knowledge of the water conditions in that area. That skill and knowledge was developed over 35 years of going out the gate in the boats I have owned. Alas my ocean boating days ended in 2012 when I sold my boat as it was time to find less physically challenging activities.

Contesting has let me experience some of that same excitement I got in running my boat in challenging conditions. Contesting is challenging in its own way. Picking out the contact in the QRM, getting the exchange right, and logging it correctly, that is exciting for me when I can accomplish that. I learn more about my radio, how to set filters, etc. and when the various bands give me the best propagation from my QTH. I learn more about operating techniques and my logging software with each contest. I know contesting is not for everyone and some operators even complain about the bands being taken up during contests. I doubt I will ever become a serious tester as some are, but for me it's another aspect of amateur radio that keeps my interest.

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membership link and follow the instructions to renew using a major credit card or PayPal. You can also make a donation to one of our club funds. The repeater fund comes to mind as we just upgraded our repeater system and need to fund the next repeater upgrade. We want you back.

And now for a shameless plug. Doug Slusher KF6AKU and I are doing a presentation at the Friday meeting about the ending of Windows XP support. On April 8, 2014 Microsoft will end support for Windows XP. The odds are, if you have a computer at home it is probably running XP. There are real issues raised by Microsoft's move. We will discuss what these issues are and suggest a variety of ways to for you to proceed. From moving off XP to mitigation. We did this presentation at the East Bay Amateur Radio Club last month and it provoked a lively discussion. We specifically address issues of interest to Hams. I look forward to seeing you there.

73 de WA6UDS



Is your radio ready for the public service season?

During WWII Civil Defense volunteer ham operators assisted in setting up mobile radio communications.

There are many contests on throughout the year. The ARRL lists their contests in QST and on the ARRL website. The WA8BNM contest calendar is a good source of contest information.

<http://www.bornucopia.com/contestcal/weeklycont.php>



The Catamaran



In the ocean 15 miles north of San Francisco

What's Happening in Radio

CANADIAN HAMS ATTEMPT TO CROSS THE POND ON TWO METERS

A group of hams from Atlantic Canada will operate from Pouch Cove, Newfoundland, from July 4th to the 12th. The goal is to complete a 2 meter trans-Atlantic QSO and claim the Brendan Trophy.

The expedition will operate take to the air from Maidenhead Grid GN37 transmitting on 144.270 MHz with about 750 watts into a 30 meter long rope Yagi with a gain of more than 23 dB over a dipole.

The group will concentrate its efforts using the digital mode JT65B that offers greatly enhanced performance over more conventional analog operation. It will also have the capability to operate CW and SSB if conditions warrant.

A special call sign has been requested and will be announced if and when approved. In the event that approval for a special call sign is not received, the group will use VO1NO.

Member Reports

CW Practice Mike Ransom, AI6II

I swatted my hand side to side against the tail pieces of the Bencher BY-1 paddle. The speaker in the Trac CMOS Electronic Keyer blurted out “dit-dah-dit”. Michael, K6MLF, muttered “R” and scribbled down the letter on the small pad he had in front of him. A moment later the speaker again blurted the sweet cadence of Morse Code, “dah-dit-dah”. Michael repeated his part in the scene only this time it was the letter “K”.

And so the first Sunday morning Morse Code session at the MARS clubhouse went. There I was, Mike, AI6II, slapping at the paddle and there was Michael writing down what he heard. Following the Farnsworth method, sending the dit/dah tone stream at around 18 words per minute (what might be pretty normal speed for sending CW on the ham bands), but allowing the pause letters to linger long enough for Michael to find the sent letter in his mind and send the right hand to jot the identified letter down. The second or so between the letters means speed closer to 5 words a minute and allows the person learning the code to correctly letter, write it and prepare for the next letter.



I was considered a signal to his an actual identify the

Now mind you, ‘R’ and ‘K’ are not the only two letters Michael is being drilled on, but they are the two he just learned. That doubled his range of letters to four. He already knew ‘S’ and ‘O’ from the proverbial S.O.S of Titanic fame, so the challenge was to recognize the two new letters along with the ‘S’ and ‘O’ in the stream I was sending.

So how did he do? Very, very well. I was impressed. I did not detect any sweat on his brow and though at times his face looked a bit intense, he seems overall very cool throughout the practice session. We started off with me sending just S’s and O’s and Michael copied them easily. When the newly introduced ‘K’ was mixed in, he made zero mistakes in his copy. Then came the new letter ‘R’. You will notice that ‘K’ and ‘R’ are both the same length (three alternating sounds) but the inverse of each other. The ‘K’ starts with a dah, whereas the ‘R’ begins with a dit. While Michael had already come to hear the difference between the three dit’s of the letter S and the three dah’s of the letter O, the combination of dit’s and dah’s presented in the new letters were not as easy to distinguish. And that is when the real learning began. If I saw him hesitate after sending an ‘R’, I selectively let a bit more time slip by before sending the next letter. Sometimes it was all that was needed to ‘play’ the sound of the letter over in his mind or even repeat it out loud “dit-dah-dit”, before scribbling it down on his pad. If he got it right, I would continue with another letter, but if not, I would stop and review the differences between the sounds of the two letters. He never missed a ‘S’ or ‘O’ but the ‘K’ and ‘R’ were a challenge.

Interestingly this is not the order of letters I have traditionally used when training newcomers in Morse Code. I always started with the shortest (easiest?) sounds like “dit” for ‘E’ and “dah” for ‘I’ and then moved to “dit-dit” and “dah-dah” for ‘T’ and ‘M’. But this method of introducing longer sound strings right at the start is the (Koch) method that Rich, AG6QR suggested when he and I began working together on this project to mentor Marin Amateur Radio Society members who wanted to learn Morse Code or build up their current speed. Rich is has been learning the code over just the past year and although he can copy comfortably at 13 WPM or so, he has not been making many CW QSO’s on the air. His goal is to build his speed (and confidence up) so on the air CW becomes a common mode for him. More importantly, Rich has become an invaluable partner. He has created a collection of Webpages on the subject (<http://www.ag6qr.net/radio.html>). In it you will find references to learning tools, like the excellent explanation of the Koch method at <http://www.qsl.net/n1lrz/finley.morse.html>. Check it out.

Getting back to the code session with Michael, after about a half hour of copying code, it was time for him to try sending. Michael had a MFJ-1312D Deluxe Code Practice Oscillator with him, but because straight key sending tends to become personalized (spacing between and length of individual dit’s and dah’s) and automatic keyers more the norm for sending CW on the air, I turned the paddle over to him. Still adjusted for 18 WPM, it was a bit tricky to get the side to side movement to correctly send the letters he had learned. Eventually the ‘K’ and ‘R’ were coming out smoothly along with the ‘S’ and ‘O’. And you could see from the smile on Michael’s face, that this part was really fun.

By this time the first couple of hams in the clubhouse had been replaced/augmented with a few more including Doug, KF6AKU, and Marvin (Tom), W6MTS. Both of them were interested in learning the code. Although neither chose to try a couple of letters then and there, they both said they would be joining in.

So that brings us to you. Are you a CW guy/gal? Do you want to be? I can tell you if you like working DX there is a huge advantage to making Q’s via CW over relying just on SSB. And heck it is really fun!

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Rich and I plan on showing up at the clubhouse Sunday mornings from 9 to 11 to help anyone interested in learning CW (Morse Code). Of course you cannot learn it from this weekly session; rather you will need to spend about fifteen minutes or so each day on your own learning and drilling. Check Rich's Webpages for finding computer based learning tools. Or better yet come by next Sunday and have him help you choose. There is no better time for you to increase your ham radio fun quotient that right now.

USS Pampanito Report

Our Dedicated Day of Operation (DDO) got underway this last Saturday, March 8, 2014 aboard the USS Pampanito. The operators at NJ6VT were Bill Stewart, KF6RMK, and I. Bill already had NJ6VT up and running when I arrived at 1030 hours, working several QRP stations on the 40 meter CW band. Several other stations were worked in 40 SSB as well as a few QSO's using the Big Rock repeater on 146.700 to the Pine Grove / Pioneer area of the Sierras where I spend a lot of my time. The Big Rock repeater is quite a machine! Later, I worked Pine Grove again using a one watt hand-held radio - a distance of well over 100 miles.

We tried several other HF bands aboard the boat as well. Ten meters are very active, but we were not able to work anyone with our long wire antenna and 80 watts. Rather puzzling. We did manage to work Japan in the 17 meter CW band, but QSB made it a difficult contact. All in all we worked a dozen stations during the day. Visitor traffic was light to moderate. There were a number of events going on in the city that probably kept the visitor turnout aboard the boat on the low side. At least the weather was good and that help with what visitor traffic we did have.

The highlight of our day at the USS Pampanito was seeing our dear friend, Denice Stoops, KI6BBR, aka DA, dockside again !! After our reunion with Denice, we had a very nice lunch at the wharf. For those of you who have never met Denice, she was the RO on the SS Jeremiah O'Brien's station KXCH. She operated the 500 kc circuit with KPH on the O'Brien. Denice was also the first woman telegrapher hired at KPH in Bolinas! Later, she joined the Military Supply Command, making several worldwide voyages. It has been several years since we have seen Denice and hope she can return to the JOB again soon!

Our next regularly scheduled DDO is set for April 12, 2014. We need volunteers, so please let me know if you can help the PARC out! Also, please keep in mind the Museum Ships on the Air Special Event in early June. We will need RO's for that event as well! By the way, our Year 2013 Museum Ship's certificate is now in the display case window in the Watch Shack. Let's get another one for 2014 !!

73,

Den Regan, K6ZJU
CO Pampanito A.R.C. NJ6VT
USS Pampanito, SS-383

San Francisco



On the Air

VK9M, Mellish Reef

The expedition to Mellish Reef in the Coral Sea is underway, but will be cut short due to severe weather conditions. The team is expected to leave on April 4th as sea conditions are not favorable to continue.

The K7RA Solar Update

Solar activity increased over the past week, with average daily sunspot numbers rising from 129 to 135.6, while average solar flux increased by nearly 13 points to 154.3. This compares the recent March 20-26 period with the previous 7 days, March 13-19.

The latest predicted solar flux from the current 45 day forecast has 10.7 cm flux values at 160 on March 27-29, 155 on March 30-31, 150 on April 1, 145 on April 2-4, 150, 155 on April 5-6, 160 on April 7-8, 155, 150, 145, and 140 on April 9-12, 145 on April 13-14, and 150 on April 15-17.

Minutes for Board Meeting

Thursday, February 13, 2014

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

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

The agenda was approved as amended.

The minutes of the January 09, 2014 meeting were approved as published.

Dave reported on bills received. Randy reported, except for items reported at the February General Meeting, that the remaining items were junk mail.

Treasurer: Dave submitted reports for January. The report showed \$2,718.00 income and \$459.68 expenses; and total cash assets of \$45,944.54.

Committee reports:

Membership- We have 53 renewals. The mailing list has been updated.

Public Service – The web page is being updated with 2014 dates. The Orientation is scheduled for April 12.

Technical- Doug reported on an issue at Big Rock, apparently with the downlink. Access to the site is dependent on weather, as the road needs to dry out. There was some discussion about the receiver on Tam Middle Peak.

Comm Truck- No Change. It will be tarped. Doug will try to contact ENG about the tower on Tuesday.

VE Liaison – 2014 dates are set and posted; March 15, June 14, September 28, November 23.

Education - Nothing scheduled.

Speakers – Discussed

Field Day – Curtis reported had a question about an insurance certificate request by the Rod & Gun Club. Doug will ask Dan Dufficy.

Old Business:

Updated Club Logo – No new report.

Website Redesign – There is a sample, It will be discussed in March.

Ham Shack Procedures – No report.

The Sunday Nets - Curtis that changes had been made, based on suggestions.

New Business:

The East Bay Club will be losing their station site. Storage of the EBARC towers will be permitted at the back of our clubhouse property, for up to two years. AKU/TCJ/Pass.

The July General Membership meeting would occur on July 04. The meeting is canceled. TCJ/AKU/Pass.

Next meeting: March 13, 2014.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:17 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF

Secretary, Marin Amateur Radio Society

The official copy of these minutes shall reside in the Secretary's files as maintained at the Corporate Office.

Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF

Minutes for General Meeting

Friday, March 07, 2014

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

A round of introductions was the first order of business. Seventeen members or guests were present.

President Ardourel will make a presentation on the new Sunday morning Net sign-up page.

The agenda was adopted as amended.

The minutes of the February 2014 general membership meeting were approved.

President Ardourel reported on the actions at the February Board of Director's Meeting. 2014 officers were elected, and the Board voted to cancel the July 4 general membership meeting. The Board also voted to assist EBARC with storage space outside, as they are losing their club station.

There were six reports under "Fun with Amateur Radio."

The following new members were announced: None.

Secretary Jenkins reported on communications were junk mail.

Treasurer Dave Hodgson was not present and submitted no written report.

Membership: About 56.

Recreation: Hibernating

Public Service: Most dates are posted. We are planning this year's orientation for April 12. We had communication from the Double Dipsea. Michael Fischer passed around a sign-up sheet.

The Technical Committee: Doug reported an issue with the downlink from the Big Rock site was fixed by replacing a cable. Still working on Tam West duplexer.

Comm Truck: No change.

Doug reported that there was a station for sale, with Kenwood equipment. Contact Doug if interested.

Education: Randy reported that nothing was scheduled.

VE Liaison: Randy reported that 2014 dates were chosen and posted; March 15, June 14, September 28, November 23. We need more VE's.

RACES: No report.

Old business: None

New Business: Michael Ransom, AI6II is working on an on-air practice net for learning CW. Information at AG6QR.net.

There being no further business, the business meeting was adjourned at 19:56 hrs.

Respectfully submitted, Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF, Secretary.

Mike Ransome, AI6II, made a presentation on Remote Ham Radio.

Board of Directors Minutes

Thursday, March 13, 2014

Board Members present: Curtis Ardourel, August Koehler, Doug Slusher, John Boyd, Cal Anber, Rita Brenden and Randy Jenkins.

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

The agenda was approved as printed.

The minutes of the February 09, 2014 meeting were approved as published.

Randy reported that mail items were junk mail.

Treasurer: Dave submitted reports for February. The report showed \$2,592.00 income and \$891.31 expenses; and total cash assets of \$47,635.13.

Committee reports:

Membership- We have 54 renewals.

Public Service – The web page is being updated with 2014 dates. Talked with the Double Dipsea folks.

Technical- Doug reported that the issue had been solved and the repeaters were working.

Comm Truck- No Change. We have a tarp

VE Liaison – 2014 dates are set and posted; March 15, June 14, September 28, November 23.

Education - Nothing scheduled.

Speakers – Doug and Curtis will speak in April.

Field Day – We need a chairman. Doug and Cal will be co-chairs.

Old Business:

Updated Club Logo – No new report.

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Ham Shack Procedures – No report.

The Sunday Nets – Tom S has been running VHF net and logging. Discuss webpage and suggestions.

Website Redesign – There is a sample, we need to discuss it as a group.

New Business:

Parking; Cal parking the limo will be discussed again in November.

CW Net: There was no specific proposal presented. The Board offered some support.

There was a discussion about hospitality.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:22 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF

Secretary, Marin Amateur Radio Society

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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. See the club website for signup instructions. 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

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