
QSA-5

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

February 2014

Presidents Corner

Curtis Ardourel

Rain. It actually feels like winter. I can't remember a winter like this. Sunny days in the 70s in February makes no sense to me. No doubt we will be rationing water for a while. When I got home last night I found the hallway in my building being aired out with giant industrial fans. A water pipe burst and flooded part of the hallway. As I write this they just activated the Emergency Broadcast System to warn of flash floods in the south bay.

These occurrences are all out of the ordinary. They serve to remind me that unexpected things happen. We need to be prepared. As individuals we need to be ready for the unexpected. As a club that focuses on public service many of us hold ourselves to a higher standard. We want to help when the unexpected interferes with the lives of others.

It is the time of year to think about the next public service season. The dates for most of the events for 2014 are posted on the website please take a moment or two to check it out. Time to start thinking about which events you want to volunteer for. This year we are again scheduling an orientation session to talk about procedures. Everyone who went last year found it fun and valuable.

It is also time to make sure that your mobiles and handhelds are programmed for our current repeater locations and PL codes.

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From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

The Excitement of Amateur Radio

After I accepted the job of newsletter editor, I began to think about what I could include in QSA5 to make it more interesting to our members. To that end I am going to solicit your input for QSA5. I will be sending out a survey to members in the near future for your response. I would like to know what excites you about amateur radio and why you continue to pursue our hobby.

Recently Mike Ransom, AI6II, and I were invited over to a new member's house, John Self, K6VFR, to help in determining where he should site his new antenna. You could tell he was excited about getting a new Steppir vertical antenna setup to operate on HF.

So here is a new member of our club who comes to our monthly meetings and asks members for suggestions for his new antenna. Several club members offered suggestions to John and Mike volunteered to look at John's QTH for antenna locations.

To me this is one of the reasons we come together as a club, to help one another with our pursuit of our hobby. Some of our members attend the Sunday bible class and share their knowledge of ham radio with other members. I would encourage each of you to share what excites you about amateur radio with other members of our club, especially new members.

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Time to think about your go kit, not just radios, batteries, cables and ham gear but also food, water, a first aid kit and the like. We live in a place that everyone should have some preparation for emergent situations.

Of course I have my pet projects too and in this vein I want to encourage you to sign up to run the Sunday morning nets. This is not a matter of not having people to run the net. We have several people who step up each week and they are doing a great job. That said the experience of running the net in a relaxed no pressure situation will build confidence and skill that pays off when the stakes are higher.

Please take some time to check out the Club Nets section of our website. It is mostly complete but I am still adding features. Not only can you find scripts for running the net but you can also see who has checked in for the last several weeks and in many cases where they were when they checked in. In particular I want to thank Ton Soskin W6MTS and Marc Bruvry KF6VNT for their improvements to the scripts for our nets.

Keep in mind that the vernal equinox falls on 20 March this year. After that more of our day will be light rather than dark. So let's get ready to climb out of the cave and shake the snow off. Spring is on the way even if the plants are getting started early.

73 de WA6UDS

What's Happening in Radio

VE Exams at UC Berkley Club

Randy, KA6BQF, and Michael, K6MLF from our club were two of 20+ VE's that administered tests to 89 applicants at UC Berkley Radio Club this month. Of that total 82 passed the exam consisting of 77 Technicians and 7 Generals.

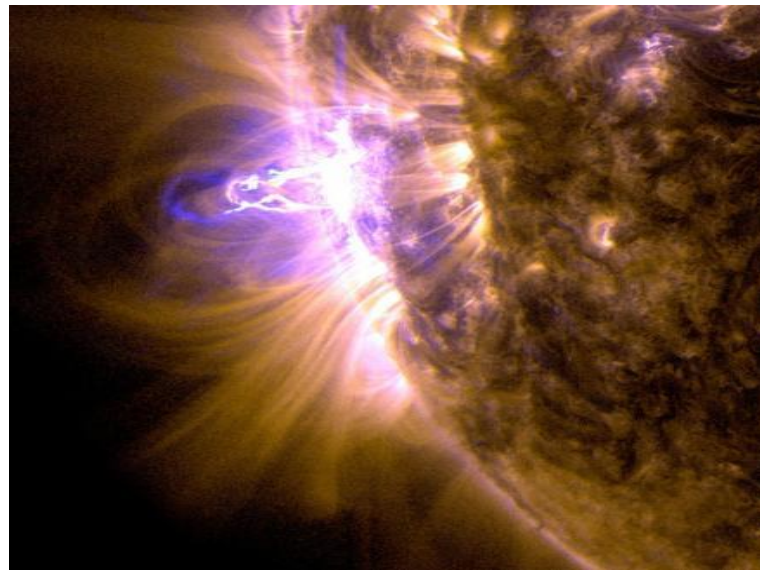
Car Rams House in Campbell and Topples Tower



In an apparent attempt to harm his girlfriend and child, a 27 year old man rams a house in Campbell. The man was arrested on charges of attempted homicide.

Sun Erupts in Largest X-Class Flare of 2014

In this year of a declining solar maximum a sunspot created an X5-class flare.



Quartzfest Mike Ransom, AI6II

Now that I am fully retired, I have more time for Ham Radio and my other favorite pastimes, 4-wheeling and camping. When the opportunity comes to combine them all, I am really drawn to it. The announcement of Quartzfest in the December QST caught my eye and I looked it up on the Web (www.quartzfest.org). Ham Radio, 4-wheeling, camping and the desert in January...now that was too much to let pass.

I got in touch with the lead organizer, Kris, KR1SS and made plans for the trip to festival's site in Quartzsite, Arizona, about 20 mile east of the California/Arizona border on US Route 10. It would be a two day drive down for me, so I made reservations to stay at Castaic Lake RV overnight, both coming and going. The festival was scheduled to run from Sunday, January 19th through the following Sunday, but a scheduled medical appointment would require I leave Wednesday. Still it was Ham Radio, wheeling and camping in the desert in January ... and I was on board for that. And I could get there a couple of days early to compensate for the shortened stay.

So on early morning, Thursday the 16th, I headed south down I5, the Jeep, Aliner trailer and Elvis, my electric bike, excited about taking on this new adventure. Six hours later I was set up for the night at Castaic Lake RV, just past the Grapevine and my 'better than halfway point.'



The next morning I was on the road by 8 with plans to stop in Indigo for an eyeball qso with Daryl, W8UN, a ham who I had met on Remote Ham Radio (there is another story in that.) The run to Quartzsite went very smoothly and I pulled into the BLM camping area that hosted Quartzfest around 2:30 in the afternoon (that's California time. I never did change over to AZ time.) After checking in with the camp host, I headed down the road towards dozens of RV's sporting all sorts of antennas.



One ham clearly spent a lot of time creating his idea mobile station. I didn't snap a picture of him and can't remember his call, but if you see this turquoise bus camped along the roadside, you can bet it is him.

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I found a spot near, but not packed in with other RV's, set up my trailer and antenna and felt ready to partake in the festivities. You can see my homebrew 28 foot vertical in back of my trailer. The base is a heavy duty tripod that originally served as a microphone stand in my Rock 'n' Roll daze (another story there too.) The 17 foot whip on top is supported by an 11foot telescoping fiberglass pole and a wire from the base of the whip led down to a 4 to 1 balun mounted at the bottom of the pole. Add a couple of 30 foot radials and I am good to go.



My traveling rig is an Elecraft KX3 with a KXPA100 amp giving me the choice of qrp through 100 watts operation. This was the week of the NAQP SSB contest and I had wanted to work it a bit. Unfortunately my tablet didn't want to load properly (something about exceeding the trial period for the beta and I needed purchase and download the new release.) I didn't see any Starbucks in Quartzsite for internet access and I later found out both my debit and credit cards had been hacked on this trip so it is good I didn't expose myself further on the net. Anyway I had no way to log contacts. (No I don't log contests the old fashion way.) I did make a couple of SSB qso's anyway and a few CW contacts with folks not in the contest.



The festivities started Sunday afternoon with a gathering of attendees and an introduction to the planned schedule of events. Kris, KR1SS was a great master of ceremonies and it started to look like it was going to be fun. Gordon West was there and so were another 274 hams that had checked in. Last year they had over 400 attendees and expected more to arrive. This was the 14th staging of this

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event and the first time it was designated an official ARRL Convention.



Then came the raffle. Kris announced that she had not received the usual support from vendors, mentioning that due to the economic downturn they were not able to send the goodies as they had in the past. She then began drawing tickets and awarding the lucky winners with a Yaesu World Map and sticker. While funny at first it became a bit much by the twenty-fifth time and she was still not done. Other donated prizes like a package of eighteen pairs of individually wrapped tea cookies were sprinkled in. In fact that is what I won! But I traded it to the ham sitting next to me for a World map which I thought I could use more than another 1K calories.

The schedule of events for the two days that I would be attending included Tai Chi, Antique Hat Pins and Hair Holders, Portable HF Antennas, Mounts & Options, 2nd Annual Quartzfest Pet Parade, Dutch Oven Cast Iron Cooking, Tower Safety, Western Country Cousin Net information and Skywave Propagation, and M.A.R.S. Recruiting. Hmmm, not much there in the way of what interests me. Maybe the Tai Chi exercise class. And that was the problem for me at least.

This was a convention that was started by a member of the Escapees RV Club, folks who live in their land cruisers and travel from one end of the country to the other year round. Seventeen years ago he got his ham license and formed a 'Birds of a Feather' interest group within the Escapees club. Quartzfest started off as an informal yearly gathering and grew into what it is today, a gathering of RVers who also are hams. Unlike what I have come to expect from a ham convention where ham radio is the main interest of those attending, this group was first and foremost a collection of Escapee members who have formed bonds with each other and happen to share an interest in ham radio. There were other RVers who were not members of the Escapees and mind you a few of them are really knowledgeable and active hams, but to me it was kind of like attending a gathering of sailboat cruisers to talk a little about ham radio. Nothing like Pacifcon put on by MDARC.

Maybe it is me. My interests lie more in chasing DX, working contests and local community service events. Still I did get a few days in the desert and a chance to drive through Death Valley (which if you haven't been that way in 30 years as was my case, is much like driving down a long stretch of a freeway with only desert around you, but with hundreds of passenger cars and RV's bustling alongside you like they are headed for the outskirts of LA.) In the end it was an adventure and adventures are fun. And I found out my eBike, Elvis, ran great on the hard pack desert floor. Would I do it again? No, but I would consider attending the Yuma Ham Convention which happens in the middle of February and draws about 1,400 attendees. Maybe next year.

USS Pampanito Report

The DDO for Saturday, January 11, 2014 took place aboard the USS Pampanito starting around 1045 hours. It was a single operator effort this time. I was able to make a number of QSO's on the 40 and 17 meter bands. The best DX of the day was on 17 meter CW with K3Y/KH6 in Hawaii and JH2X/2in Japan. Radio conditions on the 40 meter band were poor with an S7 noise level and a troublesome "squeegee" parked right on 7260 kc. I think a good part of the interference that we pick up on the boat is associated with the nearby SF trolley system. In spite of the S7 noise level, several QSO's were made on 40 meter SSB. No other museum ships were heard on or around 7260 kc this time around.

All in all it was a fairly quite day aboard the boat. The only real excitement was provided by a gal who dropped her iPad through a space between one of the engines and a floor plate. The iPad landed below on the second deck and had to be fetched by one of the Docents from the Watch Shack. In general, the visitor traffic was light with relatively few groups of visitors. I secured NJ6VT a little after 1500 hours. Your CO was getting cold!

I wish we had more participation aboard the boat for these DDO's. Single handed operations aboard the boat are not the best way to go and a second RO is really needed. The radio club needs your help, so please consider volunteering some time to help out. Our next scheduled DDO is set for Saturday, February 8, 2014. Let me know if you can help out!

73,

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



On the Air

ARRL W1AW/n operations

The W1AW call sign is being put on the air by volunteer stations in each state during 2014 for the ARRL Centennial QSO Party. Each state will have two one week periods throughout 2014. The slot for Northern California is the week starting October 1 ending October 8 -- which includes CQP!

The goals for our week are to:

- Cover all band modes 24/7 for the entire week.
- Involve as many host stations as practically possible

-Ensure we give appropriate focus to band openings to the "hard" parts of the world from CA. Many DX hams are looking for the QSO Party awards and we want to cover the west coast openings.

-Have a slow speed CW operation-VHF/UHF coverage -Provide an opportunity to learn how to run a pileup -Involve as many local clubs as possible

Before signing up, please consider:

- The station owner must be an ARRL member.
- The station owner will be responsible for securing the log and forwarding it to the coordinator daily.

If you are interested please reply via email to w1srd@arrl.net and indicate the date, hour(s), band and mode you would like to cover as well as a brief about your stations capabilities. From a practical perspective QRO is recommended.

Best 73,
Steve Dyer
W1SRD

Solar Update

Tad Cook, K7RA, Seattle, Washington, reports an increase in solar activity over the past week, so it appears that the recovery of solar cycle 24 is not over. Average daily sunspot numbers February 20-26 increased nearly 24 percent from the previous 7 days -- from 140.4 to 173.6. Predicted solar flux over the near term is 180 on February 27-28, 175 on March 1-6, 180 on March 7-9, then 175 and 160 on March 10-11, 145 on March 12-13, 150 on March 14-17, and 155 on March 18-20, peaking at 180 on March 26 and again on April 2-4.

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.

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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

ka6bqf@arrl.net

510 526.4089

Minutes for General Meeting

Friday, February 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. Fourteen 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 (Next meeting March 07).

The minutes of the December 2013 and January 2014 general membership meeting were approved.

President Ardourel reported on the actions at the January Board of Director's Meeting. A committee was appointed to tabulate the ballots, and announce the results. All candidates were re-elected and the by-laws changes were approved. President Ardourel presented Stanton Gleason, KD6SWU his "Ham-of-the Year" Award.

There were two reports under "Fun with Amateur Radio.

The following new members were announced: KD6QZH – Peter, KJ6MDI – Alan, W6MCP – Matthew, NZ6J – Rob, KC6YYP-Marty.

Secretary Jenkins reported on communications from Marin Elections and an insurance certificate. The rest were junk mail.

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

Membership: About 44.

Recreation: Hibernating

Public Service: Most dates are posted. We are planning this year's orientation for April 12. There was a discussion about leaving last year's assignments on the pages.

The Technical Committee: Doug reported an issue with the downlink from the Big Rock site, and was hoping to get up there when roads dry out a little..

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.

QSA-5: Editor Ed Essick was soliciting profiles of members for publication in QSA-5.

Old business: None

New Business: Michael Ransom, AI6II proposed a class and on-air practice net for learning CW.

There being no further business, the business meeting was adjourned at 20:10 hrs.

Curtis explained how to navigate the net control sign-up page.

The official copy of these minutes shall reside in the secretary's records on file at the corporate office.

Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF

Secretary

Board of Directors Minutes

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Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF

Secretary, Marin Amateur Radio Society

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Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF

ka6bqf@arrl.net

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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

Editor of QSA-5

Ed Essick K6ELE 456-1715
e.essick@comcast.net

ARRL San Francisco Section Manager

Bill Hillendahl KH6GJV@ARRL.ORG

WEBMASTER

Glenn Meader N1ZKW 987-3948
N1ZKW@ARRL.NET