
QSA-5

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

July 2014

Presidents Corner

How did it get to be August already? Everybody is talking about back-to-school and the fall. Ok its 53 days until the autumnal equinox so maybe the not everyone is talking about it, just advertisers, but since I worked in an advertising driven business I guess my ears might be tuned that way. Some of your ears are tuned to pick that one signal out of a pileup. That seems a more useful skill.

In July I got to go on our annual camping trip to McCloud near Mt Shasta. We camp amid the trees on the bank of the McCloud River. It is a supremely beautiful spot where there is no cell service. For the die-hard hams, there are a couple of repeaters you can get into. When I parked the car, I powered down the phone and felt the tension of work melt away. In the day time we sat around and chewed the rag. In the evening we sat around the campfire, sipped old scotch and looked up at the stars. Mercy... There are a lot of stars up there. You forget that, living in the bay area with the lights and overcast skies. We also saw some plucky satellites cruising across this most excellent canopy, the air—look you, this brave overhanging firmament, this majestically roof fretted with golden fire, in the form of a shooting star or two.

The most present sound was the babbling of the river, a sound that cannot but bring you peace. Ok there was some kind of bird in the next camp over. We could not see it but from time to time it seemed like its owner, or since this is a Marin County club, its human guardian, would place a cat in its cage with it. The amount and variety of the sound produced was impressive.

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Field Day Newspaper Report

Member Report-Portable Ops

ARRL Looks Back

On the Air

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USS Pampanito Report

Board and Meeting Minutes

From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

It seems like the summer minimum is in full force. Many of us are taking our annual vacations. Band conditions are not great on HF and the solar conditions are on the decline. The local repeaters are mostly quiet. We can hope for better conditions in the fall both on HF and the repeaters when everyone is back from vacation.

Vacation time means many different things to all of us. This month Steve Fischer took to the mountains and setup a battery portable HF station. He and his dad Michael made a number of domestic and DX contacts.

Mike Ransom went camping with his daughter who was visiting from England. She rode her bike from Half Moon bay to Morrow Bay while Mike accompanied her with his camp trailer and jeep. We set up a schedule and worked on 40M SSB. His vertical and battery powered station were a good 57 to my QTH in San Rafael.

Recently I was talking with a ham on a repeater and he mentioned a new QRP transceiver from China that he is using. Looking at the photo it would seem to make a great portable rig to take to the field. It is a QRP rig with 5W output from 80-10M.

What are you doing this summer with ham radio?



Fortunately these performances were not frequent or long lasting. I suspect that the bird eventually cowed the cat.

The group I was with also made it an exceptional weekend. These are guys I have known since high school. We were all nerds then and we are nerds still. We became hams then and are hams still. I am always amazed by the easy comradely that exists with old friends. You can carry on a conversation that paused a year ago as though no time had elapsed. One of these fellows I see only once a year on this camping trip and another I have missed for the last several years due to my idiotic belief that work is more important than camping.

Is there a moral to all this rambling? Of course there is, maybe more than one: Remember what is important, really important and make sure you take time to addend to it. And the other, out of four guys I was the only one who doesn't own a Baofeng, maybe I am the only one in the club. I guess I should order one.

73 de WA6UDS

A Century of Amateur Radio and the ARRL

During the decade of the 1960s and subsequently, Gus Browning, W4BPD, traveled the world and operated from over 100 countries, many of them extremely rare ones and sometimes the first ham operation for that country. Gus was an ordinary guy, always a gentleman, and an unflappable pileup operator. He was the first DXer elected to the DX Hall of Fame.



ARRL prototype of OSCAR 1.

On December 12, 1961, OSCAR 1, the first Amateur Radio satellite, was launched into orbit. OSCAR 2 followed on June 2, 1962. Both paved the way for the amateur satellites that followed.

By 1963, the US ham population had reached a quarter of a million, although at that time there were more CB operators than hams.

During the 1960s, repeater operation began on 2 meters. At first, there was a fair amount of confusion -- questions of legality had to be sorted out by the FCC, a lot of hams thought channelized operation wasn't a good thing, equipment had to be developed, etc. But eventually things settled down, and repeater operation on 2 meters took off, with repeater operation on other VHF/UHF ham bands and 6 meters soon to follow.

On March 27, 1964, a magnitude 9.2 [earthquake and the resulting tsunami](#) struck Alaska and caused extensive damages in many parts of the state. As in most natural and man-made disasters, hams were quick to put together emergency communication links to help with disaster relief.

Late in 1967, incentive licensing returned to ham radio. This had been an on-again/off-again issue with FCC for about 15 years. -- *Al Brogdon, W1AB*

(Reprinted with permission from The ARRL Letter for July 24, 2014)

Calling All Hams

Rem O'Donnelley

Amateur radio operators convened at the Marin Rod and Gun Club last month to partake in Field Day, the largest on-the-air event of its type in North America. Thousands of participants – known as “hams” – in the U.S. and Canada used their trusty radios and antennas to communicate with other enthusiasts around the globe. These dedicated hobbyists may sound like a peculiar group, but the hams hold the key to off-the-grid communication and could be an essential piece to disaster preparedness.

One-sided conversations and the taps of Morse code could be heard from a trio of wooden shacks through all hours of the day. Sitting in close quarters, radio operators repeatedly called out, “CQ Field Day,” informing others on the frequency that they’re searching for a contact.

CQ – understood as “seek you” – is common jargon among amateur, or “ham,” radio operators. It’s an efficient and effective way for hams to seek out a connection. It’s also entirely emblematic of the purpose of this type of radio communication: to succinctly transmit information from one place to another without the burdens of present-day technology.

Ham radio is free of infrastructure. It doesn’t use telephone wires to link to other stations; it doesn’t use cellular towers and can be used in the field without power lines.

Operators transmit from their radios using an antenna, which bounces signals off of the Ionosphere in the atmosphere before the signals bounce back. The signals are then received by other ham radio stations on Earth.

More than 30 people from Marin and Sonoma gathered at the Marin Rod and Gun Club in San Rafael June 28-29 to put their hamming skills to the test. They erected towers and large antennas and set up a generator to power their computers and radios.

Thousands of these gatherings were simultaneously happening around the world in honor of Field Day, the largest ham radio event in North America. Operators took their stations – radios and antennas – outdoors for the event, which focuses on being able to operate off the grid and being prepared for when disaster strikes.

The utility of ham radio, however, did not entirely overshadow the weekend. The activity has also proven to be a fun hobby and a bonding experience.

For 11-year-old Nicole Fiden of Occidental, ham radio is something she and her father, Josh, enjoy doing together. “It’s really fun,” Nicole said. “It’s fun to be able to reach out to other people and other places and know that they can hear you even though you are in totally different places.”



Nicole Fiden, 11, makes Field Day contacts while her father, Josh, offers guidance.

The hams from the Marin and Sonoma clubs were using the call sign “W6SG” to contact other field day stations. The clubs’ computer log, which keeps record of each and every communication, indicated they made contact with other hams in Maine, Florida, Washington, Illinois and Texas.

Ham radio is a diverse hobby, as operators can talk both locally, using handheld radios, and all around the world. Some hams talk to the astronauts on the International Space Station. The astronauts also use their ham radio to talk with school children back on Earth.

Anthony Andrianos of Kentfield has had a number of fascinating conversations with hams in unique places.

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"It's an interesting hobby," Andrianos said. "It kind of broadens your horizons to meeting people. I've had interesting conversations with numerous vehicles including the space shuttle, aircraft carriers, airplanes and even talked with a guy on a submarine once which was pretty awesome."

The Marin Amateur Radio Society provides communications support for cycling and running events in the county including the Dipsea, the Holstein 100 and Marin Century bicycle races because there are no cellular phone signals available in certain parts of these areas.

Andrianos said he has used ham radio in emergencies where there was no cell signal. "I lived in West Marin for a number of years, and there was no cell phone coverage," he said. "I came across two car accidents and one head-on motorcycle to motorcycle accident which were really bad. [There was] no cellphone coverage and [they] needed medical response. It was really great to have ham radio for that safety aspect." People become hams for different reasons. For some it is to be prepared for emergencies; for others it is because of TV shows and the movies.

"When I was young we used to go to the movies that had all the German spies, espionage and they were sending code from these secret places," Bill Stewart of San Rafael said. "I wanted to be able to understand what they were saying. I always wanted to learn [Morse] code and I was always fascinated with that. I learned it and found out what they were saying."

Former broadcast radio personality and engineer Ron Castro of Santa Rosa has a simple explanation of how hams operate. "We're not commercial and use our own equipment," Castro said. "[We] generally operate from our homes or our cars, sometimes from remote locations and it's communicating one ham to another. It is also for emergency preparedness and that's what we're doing with Field Day."

For San Rafael ham, Rich Carbine, it boils down to one thing. "It's basically communication without wires or anything," Carbine said. "It brings the world much closer. Now with the internet, cellphones and everything else it's still pretty interesting to people."

San Anselmo's Doug Short said ham radio is his favorite hobby. "It's the world's greatest hobby," Short said. "It's fun, it's very complex, you can get into it at many different levels but there are very simple things you can get just to get started or just get a radio and tune in and listen until you get more and more involved and pulled into it."

Rem O'Donnelley has been a ham since 2002. Using his K6BBQ call sign, he can be heard making voice and Morse code contacts with hams around the world. Contact Rem at remsreportsmarin@gmail.com. (Used with permission of the author)

Steve Fischer, K6ETA Portable Operation from the Sierra Mountains

Ever worked HF with zero noise on all bands? That's exactly what it was like operating a 100W portable HF station at 6,500 feet in the Sierras north of Tahoe.

While camping at Jackson Meadows Reservoir, about 20 miles NW of Truckee, California as the crow flies, my father K6MLF and my sister KI6TDG and I set up a station consisting of an 80M dipole, an Icom IC-7200 (with LDG IT-100 auto tuner) and two large 12V batteries. With this humble station, we were able to work stations in Israel, New Zealand, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and all over North America. In many cases, the stations we worked had an S-0 reading on the signal strength meter.

Working stations with zero noise can be both exhilarating and exasperating. On the one hand, you can hear many more DX stations than usual – but on the other hand, it can be frustrating when they can't hear you! So we spent four days listening to Q5 signals from Eastern Russia, Iceland, Australia, South America and the Pacific Islands who we were unable to reach. This was probably because they did not have such a low noise floor and our signals were consequently "in the weeds" for them. In some cases we just couldn't make it through their pile-ups – but in many situations our ears were just better than theirs.

But working stations without a noise floor can also be very exciting as well! We were able to work a 20W QRP station in New York State without even tickling each other's S-Meters and had a long, perfectly Q5 QSO on reduced power. We were also able to work a mobile station on 17M that was operating from a semi near Springfield, Illinois.

Using a telescoping 18' painter's pole for the dipole's feedpoint and ends secured with kite string tied to a crescent wrench thrown up into the Ponderosa Pines surrounding our station, the IDG auto tuner was able to tune us up on 6M, 10M, 15M, 17M, 20M, 40M, 60M and 80M with no problem. Unfortunately the 6M, 10M and 15M bands were not open during the four days we were there, but 17M

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and 20M were doing fine for us, partially due to our non-existent noise floor. Dad K6MLF was able to check in to his favorite 75M nets with good signal reports. We were thrilled to check in on 75M, 40M and 60M for the Marin RACES Tuesday HF net where signals on all three bands were also very workable.

We also brought a VHF/UHF 50W rig and an Elk antenna and were able to work the Mt Vaca W6VVR repeater as well as the Donner Peak and Sierra City repeaters. Unfortunately peaks to our SW completely nulled out most of the other Bay Area repeaters including the Big Rock system – I guess you can't have it all!

Our station was powered for four days of moderate duty by a 100ah AGM battery for HF and an automotive battery for VHF/UHF. Both batteries were still reading 12.7v when we finally secured the station, so they could have lasted several days longer at least. All in all, the effort of hauling the gear out into the woods was well worth it!

Aside from being a lot of fun, the experience proved to be quite valuable. Learning low-noise QTH operations; testing a signal pattern from 6,500ft elevation with a low-strung 80M dipole; and battery duty cycle experiences were all very informative. Hopefully we will put these experiences to good use the next time we operate portable!



Steve and Michael Fischer Portable operation From Jackson Meadows

On The Air**Contest Calendar**

10-10 Int. Summer Contest, SSB 0001Z, Aug 2 to 2359Z, Aug 3

ARRL August UHF Contest 1800Z, Aug 2 to 1800Z, Aug 3

North American QSO Party, SSB 1800Z, Aug 16 to 0559Z, Aug 17

Hawaii QSO Party 0400Z, Aug 23 to 0400Z, Aug 25

See complete list at:

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/index.html>

Grassroots Campaign Underway to Promote Co-Sponsorship of "Amateur Radio Parity Act"

A grassroots effort is underway to encourage radio amateurs to promote co-sponsorship of HR.4969, the Amateur Radio Parity Act. The measure, introduced in the US House with bipartisan support on June 25, calls on the FCC to apply the "reasonable accommodation" three-part test of the PRB-1 federal pre-emption policy to private land-use restrictions regarding antennas. The bill's primary sponsor is Rep Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), and it has initial co-sponsorship from Rep Joe Courtney (D-CT). With Congress going on its August recess in a few weeks, the campaign is focusing on contacting Members of Congress or their staffers at or through their district offices during the break. Getting additional lawmakers to sign on as HR.4969 co-sponsors is considered essential to the bill's success.

"This is the ideal time for you to develop small teams of constituents to approach members of Congress in their district offices," said ARRL Hudson Division Director Mike Lisenco, N2YBB, a principal proponent of HR.4969. "Ideally, you'd want no more than three members to go to a meeting with a Member of Congress or top staff members. These need to be active, articulate individuals who present themselves well." Individual radio amateurs or clubs also may wish to e-mail or write their representatives to urge them to cosponsor the bill.

The primary point to convey is that the greatest threat to Amateur Radio volunteer emergency and public service communication is restrictions that prohibit the installation of outdoor antenna systems. Nearly 30 years ago the FCC, in adopting its PRB-1 policy, acknowledged a "strong federal interest" in supporting effective Amateur Radio communication. In the intervening years, PRB-1 has helped many amateurs to overcome zoning ordinances that unreasonably restricted Amateur Radio antennas in residential areas. The 11-page PRB-1 FCC Memorandum Opinion and Order is codified at § 97.15(b) in the FCC Amateur Service rules, giving the regulation the same effect as a federal statute.

After the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ordered the FCC to enact regulations preempting municipal and private land-use regulation over small satellite dishes and broadcast TV antennas, the FCC further acknowledged that it has jurisdiction to preempt private land-use regulations that conflict with federal policy. At this point, PRB-1 only applies to state and local zoning laws and ordinances.

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Last Voice of America Station Transmitter Saved

The largest Collins AM shortwave transmitter will be saved as a result of an agreement between the Government Services Administration and Collins Radio Heritage Group. The group was formed when the Collins Collectors Association and the Antique Wireless Association came together to save the station.

The transmitter and associated equipment were removed and shipped to the Antique Wireless Association Museum in New York.

The Collins station, model 821A-1, is HF autotune transmitter with a power output of 250KW.

The station at Delano was built and operated by the Columbia Broadcasting Company, then the US government. It operated from 1944 to 2007. In 1965 two 50KW SSB transmitters were installed to communicate with the Philippines. In 1988, a multi-band, curtain-array antenna was installed that could be electronically aimed to improve the station's broadcasting needs. When the Delano site closed, it was operating five 250KW transmitters, one of which was the Collins.

The site consists of 800 acres with a variety of HF and satellite antennas. The GSA has offered the site to public agencies including one that would use the site for a homeless shelter.



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If HR.4969 passes the 113th Congress, it would compel the FCC, within 120 days of the Bill's passage, to amend the Part 97 Amateur Service rules to apply PRB-1 coverage to include homeowners' association regulations and deed restrictions, often referred to as "covenants, conditions, and restrictions" (CC&Rs). HR.4969 has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Rep Greg Walden, W7EQI (R-OR), chairs that panel's Communications and Technology Subcommittee, which will consider the measure.

Among other tips, Lisenco advises groups setting up in-person visits with representatives to pick a leader, listen carefully, and leave behind information [see below] that supports your primary points, plus a business card. "Business cards are a big thing in DC," he pointed out. "Make certain to take them when going to DC or a district office."

"This isn't rocket science, but it does take planning and the ability to state your case succinctly in no more than 15 minutes," Lisenco advised. He said delegations should follow up with a thank you note within a day and a telephone call a week later.

(Reprinted with permission from The ARRL Letter for July 10, 2014)

USS Pampanito Report

Our regularly scheduled Dedicated Day of Operation (DDO) took place aboard the USS Pampanito Saturday, July 12, 2014. Aboard the boat was myself and our XO, Jerry Foster, WA6BXV. Our station, NJ6VT was up and running before 1100 hours.

Radio conditions in the lower HF bands were poor on Saturday, but the 10 meter band was open for a change! We worked several Brazilian stations, a station in Haiti and one station in Hawaii on 10 meter CW and SSB - all with decent signal reports. Visitor traffic was busy in general and Jerry and I had many visitors in the radio shack asking questions and listening in.

Several other interesting things took place aboard the boat as well. Jerry brought his newly acquired 1944, WW-II, BC-611 handy talky, the WW-II version of the modern cell phone, aboard and we tried it out! Jerry's BC-611 is a single channel, battery powered, vacuum tube, HF hand-held radio that operates at 3875 kc using a whip antenna. The BC-611 puts out a few hundred milliwatts using AM modulation. The range would probably be several miles, maybe five miles at most. With Jerry topside and me below using the Yaesu FT-890 on 3875 kc with AM modulation, we made a QSO using the BC-611 - maybe the first since 1944? The BC-611 sounded pretty good and the more it was used, the better it performed!

The other development that Jerry and I found interesting was the request by Rich Pikelney to restore a few of the radio control boxes that were once mounted and used in the radio shack. This would be a good project for the radio club. Another project would be VLF/LF RAK or the MF/HF RAL receiver power supply - one of the two power supplies needs repair.

A note arrived from Margaret Burgess at NJ2BB, Battleship New Jersey, letting me know that our Museum Ships event log arrived at HQ. We should have our Museum Ship's participation certificates before too long.

Our next scheduled DDO is set for August 9, 2014 aboard the USS Pampanito. Please let me know if you can come to the boat and help out. We do need more participation from our members!

73,

Den Regan, K6ZJU
CO Pampanito A.R.C. NJ6VT
USS Pampanito, SS-383
Pier 45, Shed "A"
San Francisco, CA 94133



Minutes for Board Meeting

Thursday, July 10, 2014

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

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

The agenda was approved as submitted.

The minutes of the June 12, 2014 meeting were approved as submitted.

Randy reported no important mail.

Treasurer: Dave submitted reports for June. The report showed \$2,300.00 income and \$595.56 expenses; and total cash assets stated as \$46,517.72

Committee reports:

Membership- We have 68 members for 2014.

Public Service – The Double Dipsea is done. Marin Century is August 2. We will be using new forms.

Technical- Doug reported that he is waiting on getting the duplexers for Tam West from the tech. There was a question about another repeater on 146.70.

Comm Truck- No Change.

VE Liaison – 2014 dates are September 28, and November 23.

Education - Nothing scheduled. Talked about a General Class.

Speakers – Doug reported that there would be no speaker in August. He is working on Bill Hillendahl for September.

Field Day – Doug reported Field Day went well. Dave has sent a check to Marilyn for the MR&G rent. Cal reports that we will have picnic food.

Building - Doug reported that Alan Best submitted a bill for the gate (\$47.00). Thanks to Alan! Doug will contact our electrician to find out about patching holes. There is an offer to patch.

Picnic - Doug asked about a date. We will try for September 20.

Old Business:

Updated Club Logo – Several designs were presented. Discussion. A straw vote favored design 6 or 7.

Ham Shack Procedures – No progress.

The Sunday Nets – Curtis to work on them.

Website Redesign – Discussed posts and aging content.

Budget – There was a motion to adopt the presented budget with corrections, as a working document. BQF/AKU/Pass.

Building Inspection – No report.

Parking Signs – No progress.

New Business:

There was a discussion about termites observed near the electric meter box.

Phil asked about a better way to move the generator. He has a trailer that he would be willing to donate.

Good of the Order – We need to consider candidates for the “Ham of the Year” and “Hi Roberts” awards.

Next meeting: August 14, 2014.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:44 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

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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