
QSA-5

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

February 2015

Presidents Corner

Last weekend I sent out the dreaded renewal emails. By the end of 2014 we reached 82 total members. As I check right now we have 51 current 2015 members so 62 percent are up to date. This is way ahead of where we were last year at this time. In the past we only sent out renewal notices to current members. Last year was different we sent out notices to former members from 2010 and 2011 as well. We did pick up a few of those former members. This year we only sent out notices to 2014 members and participants in public service events who were not members. As of today we picked up a few public service volunteers as new members.

According to the bylaws you have until 30 June 2015 to pay your dues. Early in July I will remove email addresses from the QSA-5 mailing list of member who have not paid up. I will take this opportunity and probably a few more to remind you to get current and pay up. When you are renewing, consider a donation to one of our club funds.

As some of you may know I listen to a lot of National Public Radio and our local affiliate KQED, this means I have listened over the years to hundreds of hours of pledge breaks. We don't have any operators standing by, or matching grants, or tote bags, or cute pseudo commercials. You don't have to listen to me drone on and on until I foam at the mouth and fall over backwards. It could be worse. If you read my little monthly screed you will have to hear me remind you to renew. The quicker you all renew, the sooner I will stop nagging you, just like on public radio.

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From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

Working Digital Modes

As the sunspot cycle starts to drop to another low the use of digital modes can make the difference in making contacts. Of course we all know that CW is the original digital mode and many hams use this mode very effectively. The other digital modes that are also effective in making contacts when the cycle drops involve the use of software programs.

These digital modes include RTTY, PSK31, PSK63, and OLIVIA that are popular today for making QSO's. Under extremely weak conditions modes such as JT65 and WSJT-X can make contacts no other mode can. For hams with antenna restrictions, these modes allow contacts that otherwise would not be possible. The last two modes are not for extended QSO's and exchange only the minimal information for a contact.

All of these modes require software to operate. I have used some of these modes for both contesting and general QSO's. My experience specifically is with RTTY and PSK31/64. The digital mode software that I use includes MixW and Digital Master in HRD 6.1. MixW was the first digital mode software that I started with about 10 years ago. It is limited in what it can do compared to Digital Master in HRD, but it is relatively easy to learn. All of these modes allow you to create macros that can transmit basic contact information. This can be handy as some hams mainly use macros for contacts. Many of the DX contacts use macros as they are often not fluent in English.

So if you are looking for a new way to make contacts, you might consider a digital mode as the sunspots leave us and we reach another low in the next couple of years. (See my article later in this issue on operating PSK and RTTY)

A new column starts in this issue of QSA5. **Help and Questions.** This month Herb Drake, N6QE, who suggested the column, asks his question.

What's Happening in Radio

On the Air

Working Digital Modes

USS Pampanito Report

Help and Questions

Board Minutes

Meeting Minutes

Last week the public service committee Randy Jenkins KA6BQF, Michael Fischer K6MLF, Doug Slusher KF6AKU, and Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ met to discuss the ideas put forward at the public service thank you lunch. I can relate a few changes now.

We want to improve opportunities for mentoring particularly at net control. If you have an interest in being a net control operator please let Randy or Michael know so we can schedule you to work the control station first in secondary capacity. We want to have at least one more person at the net control position on all events and two more people at some events.

There were a lot of comments getting event information out to you. There are two parts to this. First we are reviewing the event information on the web site and we will be adding content. Second we are going to try a net in the evening on the Thursday before each event to review assignments, frequency plans, and any late changes, and of course you can ask questions. There are a few more items in the pipeline and I will tell you about them in future issues and well as more specifics like the time of the nets.

73 DE WA6UDS

On The Air

Contest Calendar

ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB: 0000Z, Mar 7 to 2400Z, Mar 8
DARC 10-Meter Digital Contest 1100Z-1700Z, Mar 8
Idaho QSO Party 1900Z, Mar 14 to 1900Z, Mar 15
North American Sprint, RTTY 0000Z-0400Z, Mar 15
BARTG HF RTTY Contest 0200Z, Mar 21 to 0200Z, Mar 23
Russian DX Contest 1200Z, Mar 21 to 1200Z, Mar 22
CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB 0000Z, Mar 28 to 2400Z, Mar 29

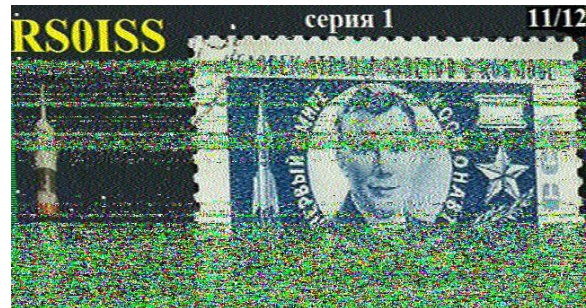
VE Session

The club held a VE session on Sunday 2/15 monitored by Randy Jenkins, Jerry Foster, Dave Hodgson, Michael Fischer, and Mike Ransom. Six candidates attended, three passed the Technician test and three passed the Extra test.

What's Happening in Radio?

International Space Station

The ISS started transmitting SSTV pictures this month on 145.800. Rob Ireson, K6RGI, captured these SSTV images from the ISS using X50 and a Signallink converter into MMSSTV software.



"Gray Radio Gang" Reactivates Vintage Battleship *Iowa* HF Transmitter

It's a massive project on a number of levels, but the so-called "Gray Radio Gang" that's been working to restore some of the vintage US Navy radio gear on board the [Battleship *Iowa*](#) (BB-61), docked in Los Angeles, recently fired up one of the vessel's transmitters for the first time in about 25 years. Restoration team member Jim Jerzycke, KQ6EA, recounted on his "Every Blade of Grass" [blog](#) how the group was finally able to get 950 W into a dummy antenna from one transmitter on 20 meters. "We still have quite a way to go before we attempt to put one [transmitter] on the air, as it was last on in 1990.



He told ARRL that, once transmitters are deemed operational, they probably would not be used very often on the ham bands. The *Iowa* already has a ham radio station, NI6BB, under the auspices of the Battleship Iowa Amateur Radio Association ([BIARA](#)), an ARRL-affiliated club. BIARA's president is Doug Dowds, W6HB. NI6BB has more modern gear but makes use of the ship's own antennas.

The BIARA is active from the *Iowa* most Wednesdays and for many national holidays, such as Veterans Day, Pearl Harbor Day, and Memorial Day, and for operating events such as the Museum Ships Weekend and International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend. The station also has hosted Boy Scouts' Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) groups each fall.



Arnold Shatz, N6HC, at the helm of the *Iowa*'s NI6BB club station.

Jerzycke said the Gray Radio Gang is composed of about 10 individuals with experience on various types of US Navy radio gear dating from the 1950s to the 1980s, when most of them served in the Navy. "At 63 years old, I'm one of the 'youngsters' in that group," he added. The team has been trying to get the original receivers, transmitters, RTTY gear, and antennas working again, Jerzycke said. "We are very fortunate in having the guys from the aircraft carrier *Midway* in San Diego and the Battleship *New Jersey* in Camden, New Jersey, who have provided us with technical help, documents, and spare parts."

The AN/URT-23(C) transmitters, he joked, are "built like a battleship," with a pair of 4CX1500Bs in the final and nominally capable of putting out a couple of kilowatts. He noted that once the Gray Radio Gang has confirmed the signal paths for the various shipboard transmitters and receivers, it will be able to put a transmitter/receiver pair in operation for certain special events. "At this time it's unlikely that we will use the original radio equipment for 'routine' Amateur Radio operations, as it's very manpower intensive, requiring at least six people to operate," Jerzycke explained.

"It's an honor and a privilege to be able to work on the *Iowa*, and I enjoy every minute of it!"

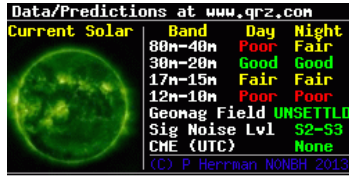
Reprinted with permission of ARRL Newsletter, 2/12/15

Making Digital Contacts

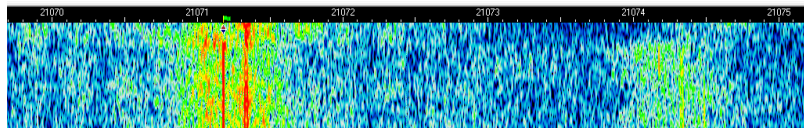
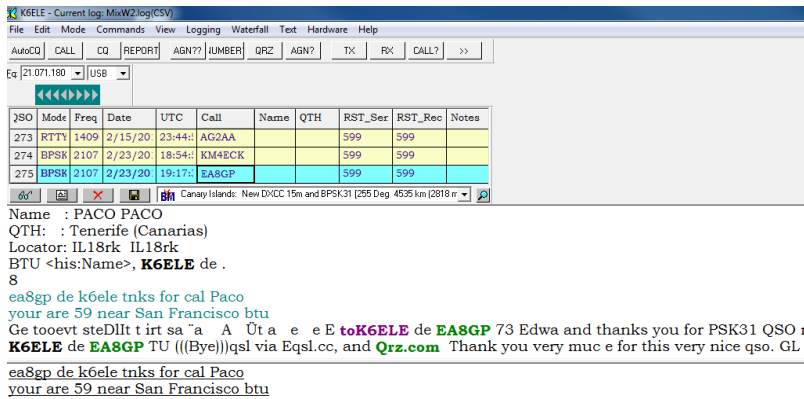
Ed Essick, K6ELE

PSK31 and MixW

The following two contacts were made on 2/23-24 when predicted conditions were only fair for 15M and good for 20M. The software in use was MixW using the PSK31 mode and my Icom 7600 running 50 watts into a 3 element Yagi at 25 feet. The 7600 has a USB port which is used to connect the computer to the radio. Other radios might need a USB interface such as the Signal Link USB for a connection.



This is a screen shot of the PSK31 MixW contact on 15M. The top part of the screen shows the command line such as File, Edit, etc. The next line shows the macros that I have setup- AutoCQ, CALL, CQ, REPORT, AGN??, etc. Next is the frequency and mode. Here it shows USB, which is actually USB-D1 on my Icom 7600 while running PSK. The log is shown next and my contact with EA8GP in the Canary Islands was inserted in the log when I clicked on his call in the receive window. The receive window is next with our conversation followed by the transmit window and then the waterfall. The waterfall shows a trace when a signal is present and clicking on it sets the frequency. The waterfall width is limited to the filter set on the radio. Here I have the 2.8KHz filter on. Two traces are shown one for EA8GP who is using a macro for the contact, which is often the case with hams who speak limited English.



RTTY and MixW

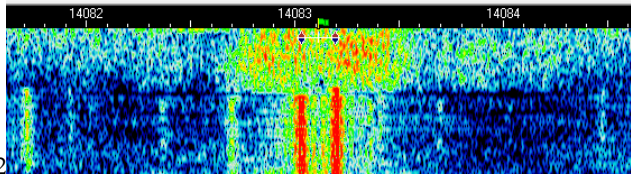
The contact shown here was on 20M RTTY with KH6/NA2U on the island of Hawaii. I was running 100W at the time and I worked him off the back of my beam or you could say long path. He was working DX, so the contact was a brief exchange. For this contact I used my “Call” macro and “RPT” macro. These macros look like this. <ALIGN:1500><TX> <MYCALL> <MYCALL> <MYCALL> <MYCALL><RXANDCLEAR> In the “CALL” macro I used the align command to center his call on my waterfall. The second macro for “RPT” <TX><CALL> 599 <MYCALL> TU <RXANDCLEAR> sent my report.

SO	Mode	Freq	Date	UTC	Call	Name	QTH	RST_Ser	RST_Rec
275	RTTY	1810	2/23/20	19:17:	EA8GP			599	599
276	RTTY	1810	2/23/20	21:23:!	KG4HF			599	599
277	RTTY	1408	2/25/20	01:06:	KH6/NA2			599	599

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EBXDX
FTLMBYBYSQBYS
XCQ DE KH6/NA2U KH6/NA2U K URRPFZXX
KH6/NA2U K6ELE K6ELE K6ELE
D
WREX7
K6ELE 599 599 RDGJ YYI
KH6/NA2U 599 K6ELE TU

QGB
K6ELE TU ALOHA DE KH6/NA2I QRZ? YRBP
    
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RTTY and HRD-DM780

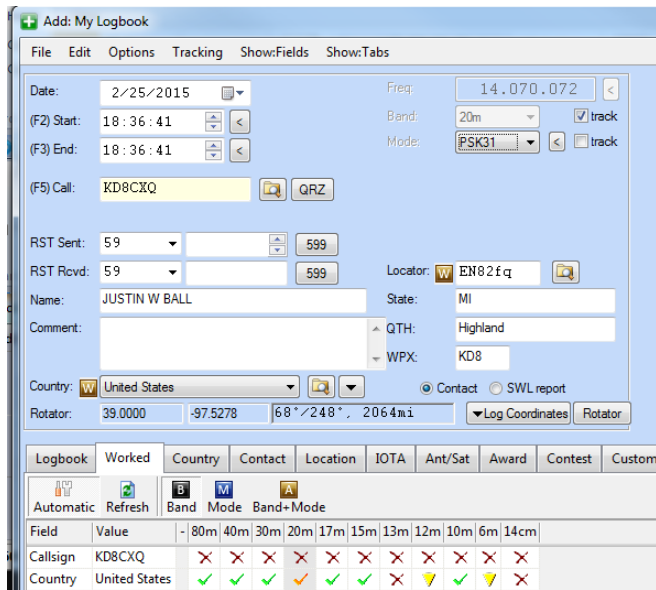
Ham Radio Deluxe is a suite of programs that provides digital modes, a logbook, and rig/rotor control. The following is a partial screen shot of a PSK31 contact on 20M using Digital Master 780. HRD provides a wide range of features and takes some time to learn all of its capabilities. The top part of the screen shows the exchange, then the message transmit window, followed by the waterfall. The waterfall does not show the actual frequency, but you only need to click on the trace to select the station.



Frequency is shown in the HRD program itself, which allows mouse control of your rig. Here the screen shot shows that my transmit frequency is 14.070.



The last step in this contact was logging my contact with KD8CXQ. HRD logbook will fill in all of the information on the contact using QRZ if you have set it up.



So if you have not tried some of these digital modes, maybe it is time to think about them as the sunspot cycle starts to decline, especially if you are not a CW operator. Send me an email if you would like some help getting started with any of these.

USS Pampanito Report

Our Dedicated Day of Operation (DDO) got underway on Saturday, February 14, 2015 aboard the USS Pampanito around 1030 hours. Our station, NJ6VT, was on the air by 1045 hours and several QSO's were made by 1100 hours. Our XO, Jerry Foster, WA6BXV, was present and Doug McCasland, KJ6OYJ, joined us in the afternoon. Visitor traffic was very light before noon, but picked up quite a bit after lunch. I think the beautiful weather had something to do with the light morning visitor traffic aboard the boat.

Jerry brought his WW-II, BC-611, portable transceiver which has been restored and made operational on 3885 kc AM. We tried it out for the shortest distance QSO of the day - pier to boat and it worked well. On the other hand, our FT-890 rig did not work so well on AM - we seem to have a "motor boating" problem that may be caused by some RF feedback.

While the pier to boat was the shortest QSO made that day, Jerry did work several DX stations: XL3T, a special event station in Canada; PI4CC in the Netherlands and HC2AO in Ecuador all on 20 CW. All in all, at least a dozen QSO's were made including working the USS Midway aircraft carrier, NI6IW, in San Diego on 7250 kc. The USS Midway was commemorating "The Battle of Iwo Jima" and the flag raising on Mt. Suribachi that took place on February 23, 1945. The island soon after became an emergency landing field for our B-29 bomber aircraft thanks to the Navy "Sea Bees" who constructed suitable runways for the aircraft.

I want to thank XO, Jerry Foster, WA6BXV, and Doug McCasland, KJ6OYJ, for helping out with this DDO. Our next scheduled DDO is set for Saturday, March 7, 2015 aboard the USS Pampanito. Please join us if you can. Thanks!

73,

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



Help and Questions

Herb Drake, N6QE, starts off this first column with his question about computer speaker systems.

I'm looking for a recommendation for a computer speaker system that isn't wiped out by RFI. I have an Altec Lansing VS2121 with a woofer that buzzes like crazy when there is any RF present--even from an antenna 20 feet away! I'd like to replace it, but have no idea which computer speaker to buy since none of them have a spec for RFI sensitivity. If anyone has a computer speaker system that is immune to RFI I'd sure like a recommendation. His email is Herb Drake hd@lucasvalley.net

Club Jackets Available

Like the new MARS logo? Need a toasty, spiffy jacket? Look at the photo of Steve, Jerry and Michael wearing theirs, and get one for yourself! You order them directly from Debbie Diaz of Catto's Graphics in Santa Cruz. Her telephone number is 888-722-7135 (0700-1530L) Base price is \$52 w/logo.

Add your name and call sign, tax and shipping, it's around \$80. Up to 6XL available. (Base price for XXL and up is \$58) Her email is debbie@cattosgraphics.com



Minutes for Board Meeting

Thursday, February 12, 2015

Board Members present: Curtis Ardourel, Dave Hodgson, Marc Bruvry, August Koehler, Doug Slusher, John Boyd, Ed Essick, Rita Brenden and Randy Jenkins.

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

The agenda was approved as amended (additions).

The minutes of the January 08, 2015 meeting were approved as published.

Randy reported no significant mail, under correspondence.

Treasurer: Dave submitted reports for January. The report showed \$2,670.00 income and \$1,432.17 expenses; and total cash assets of \$57,784.91.

Committee reports:

Membership- We have 41 renewals for 2015.

Public Service – We had a thank-you lunch scheduled on January 17. The schedule for 2015 is filling in. There was a new event request for a mountain bike event in September. There was a question on the webpage for R2B.

Technical- There is a problem on Big Rock. The site needs a new GPS unit for the sync signal. Doug is ordering it. John B initiated a discussion on putting up a digital repeater from Yaesu. More

Comm Truck- Still rusting.

VE Liaison – Randy reported that the next date is Sunday February 15. We need more people to sign up as VE's.

Speakers – Doug is looking for speakers. He has a couple of leads.

Building Committee – Doug is scheduling a roofing contractor for an estimate. Doug will investigate the high water bill.

Old Business:

Ham Shack Procedures – Tabled.

The Sunday Nets - Curtis reported that he still has a couple of items to fix on the webpage.

Parking Signs – No report.

Inventory of Equipment – Doug is half way through. There should be a report by March. There was a request to add a “Swap page” to the webpage. Curtis will work on that.

DBA Corporate name: John Boyd has researched the issue, and made a report, and has the forms to fill out. We will proceed with registering “Marin Amateur Radio Society”.

New Business:

July 3 Meeting – The general membership meeting scheduled on July 3 is cancelled due to proximity to the July 4 holiday.

ORI/VNT/Pass

March 12 Board Meeting – Moved to March 5. ORI/PHD/Pass

QSA-5 Ad – There was a question about listing equipment for sale, or help wanted for projects.

Repeaters – Webpage needs to be updated. Randy will add a link to the frequency list for public service. Doug will review.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:43 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF

Secretary, Marin Amateur Radio Society

Membership Meeting

Friday, February 06, 2015

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

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

The agenda was adopted as presented.

President Ardourel reported on the actions at the January Board of Director's Meeting. The Board re-elected the 2014 officers for another year.

There were seven reports under “Fun with Amateur Radio”.

The following new members were announced: Herb Drake, N6QE

Secretary Jenkins reported no significant communications.

Treasurer Dave Hodgson was not present and submitted a written report showing \$57,748.91 assets.

Membership: 35 plus 2 tonight for 2015. Curtis reported that renewals would go out for 2015. Members can renew and pay on the website.

Public Service: The 2015 events are filling in on the chalkboard, and on the website.

The Technical Committee: Doug reporting that there was a GPS issue that is causing some flutter on the simulcast system. New parts have been ordered. 147.330 is the next project.

Comm Truck: Still rusting.

Education: Nothing scheduled.

VE: First exam scheduled for Sunday, 2/15.

Old business: None

New Business: None.

There being no further business, the business meeting was adjourned at 20:25 hrs.

Respectfully submitted, Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF, Secretary.

Marin Amateur Radio Society W6SG.NET, membership@w6sg.net 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

Treasurer:

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