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# QSA-5

## The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

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Founded 1933

September 2016

### Presidents Corner

#### Wishes do come true!

For the last few weeks, Wednesday evenings have been quite exciting at our clubhouse. I am of course referring to the Technician License course that our club is hosting. Though this is a learning experience for all of us, I think everyone has been doing a wonderful job.

My introduction to Amateur Radio started out at this club in a class similar to this one. Unfortunately, since then we have not presented a class at our club. When I became President it was my biggest wish that we would start to have classes again, and now that wish has come true. Since our education committee started to have meetings, a small group took this dream to heart and helped to make the ideas and plans come together.

I cannot take credit for making this happen, that credit would go to Kris Backenstose KK6AYC, our Vice President and Instruction Team Leader, who really took the initiative on this project. I would also like to thank all of the members who have stepped up and volunteered to be class instructors (Discussion Leads), Elmers and those coming out to help with planning and support. I am sure I speak for all of us when I say your work is very much appreciated.

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### From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

#### On the Air

Last weekend was the 51<sup>st</sup> California QSO Party. I participate in the contest and enjoy making SSB contacts while working with my ham gear. This year I was plagued with equipment problems. Several days before the contest I lost the ability to receive on 15 and 20 meters. With my MFJ SWR meter, I checked the SWR on both bands. The SWR on 15 meters was great, below 1.3 for the entire band. However on 20 meters, it was over 3.0 for most of the SSB portion of the band. These were going to be my primary bands of operation due to the declining sunspot cycle and resulting poor band conditions.

After switching out radios, amplifiers, tuners and other station gear, I had one last thing to check, the antenna. My antenna is located on the roof of my house on a 15 ft mast. With the aid of a helper we brought the antenna down on Saturday, the day of the contest. I serviced the antenna two years ago when I installed new coax. Since that time it had worked fine. All of the mechanical connections checked OK, but the SWR curve on 20M was a bit high. I adjusted the 20 meter element length to move the curve to the center of the phone portion of the band. Up went the antenna and I was back in the shack to check out the SWR at the radio. The SWR came down to 1.3-2.8 over the 20M band, but I had moved the center point for SWR to 14.050, when I had been adjusting for 14.225. It was only about an inch in adjustment the wrong way, but up on the roof we went again and I made the adjustment the other way and got the result I wanted.

Back in the shack and I still had no reception on 15 and 20M. So I took my Icom PW1 and MFJ 998 antenna tuner out of the loop and now I could receive on 15 and 20 M. OK, so now I had two possible pieces of equipment that could be the cause of my problems. It was getting late in the day and I still had not been on the air.

I wanted to run an amplifier, so out of the closet came my Ameritron AL-800 amplifier. Making the connections, I had it on line with my Icom 7600 and was able to work the contest using the N1MM+ logging software.

So after hours of trouble shooting and roof work I finished the contest with 184 contacts, mostly on 15 and 20 meters. The weekend before I had a very different radio experience, it was my last public service event of the year. I worked the Breast Cancer Fund's Peak Hike from Cardiac Hill on Mt. Tam. Both events gave me a chance to participate in our hobby. So whatever your interest, get on the air and communicate.

I know that many of you have spent a lot of your personal time and effort to present these classes. I hope that each of you have gotten a lot out of the process including the joy of helping the “newbies” share in our great hobby. The best part is that with all this great instruction, I get to learn even more by just showing up and listening. With everyone else doing all the work, all I have to do is bring the cookies :-). Just in case I have forgotten to tell each one of you, thank you.

73  
Tom Soskin, W6MTS

## Public Service

### Breast Cancer Fund Pike Hike



Net Control using new communications truck



Tom Jordan KG6TCM and Rob Rowlands NZ6J on their way to install an APRS iGate in the historic Gardener fire lookout atop Mt Tamalpais

## What's Happening in Radio

### The sleeping princess awakes! Marin APRS update



Our APRS capability in Marin just got an update last Friday September 23 with the installation of a receive only iGate in the fire lookout on the east peak on Mt Tamalpais. Thanks to the Sherriff's Office of Emergency services and RACES for making this happen.

This iGate consists of a Raspberry Pi computer running Dire Wolf software, an SDR “dongle”, a bandpass filter to minimize cross modulation and de-sense, and a handy antenna we “found” in place! Total cost about \$120. This iGate has spectacular coverage of the whole Bay Area and beyond, as shown by this “heat map” of stations heard directly. Stations as far away as the US 50 corridor in the Sierras are being received!

There are now 3 iGates in Marin: Rob K6RGI-4 in Greenbrae, Tony W6XZZ-1 in Novato and NZ6J-13 on Mt Tam. Additionally our friends in Sonoma have installed an even more spectacular iGate K6QXY-1 on Castle Rock, west of Santa Rosa. Together with other iGates scattered through the North Bay, and the network of WB6TMS digipeaters, coverage is almost complete. There are still “holes” in Pt Reyes station, and Tennessee/Rodeo Valleys to fill.

If you'd like to get started using APRS there are several of us in MARS that can help you – come along to a club meeting or Sunday morning “bible class”, or contact me directly at [rowlands47@gmail.com](mailto:rowlands47@gmail.com)

Rob Rowlands NZ6J

## ARRL NEWS

### Amateur Radio Parity Act Passes in the US House of Representatives!

On September 12 the US House of Representatives approved the Amateur Radio Parity Act, H.R. 1301. The focus of the campaign to enact the legislation into law now shifts to the US Senate.

The House victory culminated many years of effort on ARRL's part to gain legislation that would enable radio amateurs living in deed-restricted communities to erect antennas that support Amateur Radio communication. The measure calls on the FCC to amend its Part 97 rules "to prohibit the application to amateur stations of certain private land-use restrictions, and for other purposes." While similar bills in past years gained some traction on Capitol Hill, it was not until the overwhelming grassroots support from the Amateur Radio community for H.R. 1301 shepherded by ARRL that a bill made it this far. The legislation faces significant obstacles to passage in the US Senate, however. *Reprinted with permission ARRL Letter 9/15/16*

### Club Members Participating in Marin County RACES Session



## Member Reports

### I Think I was Destined...

Pinky Picard, W6FQS

I think I was destined to be a ham operator. I was born in 1927, the year that The Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting System made its on-the-air debut with a basic network of 16 radio stations. This system name was later changed to CBS. My mother's maiden name was Marconi. My first ocean trip on a U.S. Navy tanker was to St. John's, Newfoundland, where I had the opportunity to visit The Marconi Tower. The location from which the first transatlantic radio was sent by Marconi. Visited there many times since when I was aboard ship. There remained a piece of Marconi's original antenna, the last time I saw it in about February 1949. I have sometimes wondered if the God's of propagation or something had me earmarked. On second thought, if this were true, I would be having better success at working DX.

### Sputnik 1

Pinky Picard, W6FQS

On today's date, 10/4/1957, The Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite named Sputnik into orbit. I tuned around, and found it a tad above the WWV frequency of 20.00 MHz. It was just beeping continuously, with a burst of data now and then, which we couldn't encode. The signal was fairly strong.

At the time, I was living in a rented home in San Rafael. My ham shack was outside in the garage where there was no telephone. I always left the garage door opened, so my wife could tell me if there was a phone call for me, or she needed me for anything else. I had Sputnik on the loudspeaker. The neighbors knew that I was a ham, were curious, and wandered into the garage to see if I was listening to Sputnik. For several days, I had neighbors coming up behind me that wanted to hear the satellite. It was boring to listen to, but so many people came into my garage to hear it, that I just left my old National NC-173 receiver on the frequency when I wasn't operating on the ham bands.

### Corrections

WA6DNR is Alan Bowker, who arranged for the communications van donation.

San Francisco Radio Club Repeater

The frequency of our new W6PW repeater. It should read 145.150 rather than 45.150.

## Tips for good communications practices for public service events

1. Listen, listen, listen and learn from the tempo, protocol, and style of other operators. If possible, monitor another event prior to the event for which you are volunteering.
2. Think of what you are going to say before pressing PTT. Then keep it short; no rambling.
3. If it doesn't need saying, don't.
4. Keep your voice calm--even if you are not.
5. Press PTT, wait a second before saying anything.
6. Say the station you are calling first, then give your tactical call.
7. Use tactical calls, not your FCC callsign, until the closing.
8. No need to repeat the calls each time during a multi-exchange conversation.
9. Wait two counts before pressing PTT on each exchange (avoid tailgating in order to allow breakers.)
10. If you have urgent traffic, take advantage of those spaces to call "priority;" then wait for net control to say, "Go ahead, priority traffic"
11. When finished with traffic in a conversation, then use your callsign in place of, or in addition to, "clear" or "out."
12. When you hear that final signoff, and you have been waiting to contact net control--that's your time to make a call. Do not interrupt a conversation in progress unless you have more urgent traffic.
13. Keep a paper log of your contacts with net control; s/he may later ask something like, "What time did the first sweep transit your rest stop?"
14. When reporting an injury, never use the name of an injured party in order to protect their privacy; use bib numbers or other descriptors.
15. In a controlled net, all traffic should go to (or through) net control; you may "go direct" to another rest stop only after receiving permission from net control to do so.
16. Use common English; avoid the use of "Q" codes.
17. Common "pro-words" are fine: "I say again," "I spell," "all after," "figures," "number-letter group," "roger," "correction," "go ahead," etc.
18. If using an HT: face the repeater input, hold the antenna vertical, and don't move your head while transmitting. During initial checkin at the beginning of the event, check your copy with net control to find your best "hot spot."
19. Never turn your radio off, or volume down, to deal with a situation w/o telling net control that you will be away from the net and receiving permission to do so; check back in when you return to the net.

### Make yourself known and available:

20. Always introduce yourself to the rest stop captain (and medical crew if present) at the beginning of your shift; make a note of his/her/their name(s) for your after-action report.
21. Set up your position at the rest stop so that you can stay informed while staying out of the way. In many cases, this will be close to the rest stop captain or the medical crew. If that is not possible, or if the captain is a roamer, take a set of GMRS radios so that you and s/he are able to contact each other quickly.
22. At the same time, your operating position should be in a relatively quiet location, away from cheering crowds, rock bands, and announcement speakers.
23. Make sure the captain knows to require the organization's sweepers to check in with you when they enter the rest stop, and to again check in with you when they depart the rest stop. You would report both times to net control.
24. If you are stationed at net control, there is to be total silence while the net control operator is passing traffic. Any chatting that might happen during a lull is to immediately cease.
25. Arrive at your duty assignment prepared to be self-supporting: food, water, sunscreen, a chair, warm clothing, extra batteries, etc.
26. An after-action report, together with photos, is part of your assignment; make notes to yourself during the event in preparation for your report.

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### Examples of different priority messages

27. **EMERGENCY** - Accident with injuries, injury to participant, injury to volunteer, immediate threat (drunk or threatening driver)

28. **PRIORITY** - Accident without injuries, lost participant, mechanical breakdown on course, safety hazard, potential threat, ill participant

29. **HIGH** - Running out of water, supplies did not arrive before check point opened, minor injury, participant requesting transportation from course, first participants arrival

30. **MEDIUM** - Supplies running low, participant requesting transportation from check point, course marking mistake (that cannot be field corrected), request for more volunteers, weather changes that affect participants, last participant location

31. **LOW** - Requests late in the event that are logistically impractical, participant progress requests.

### **Pampanito Report**

Our Dedicated Day of Operation (DDO) at NJ6VT got underway at 1045 hours this last Saturday aboard the USS Pampanito. Radio propagation was poor on the 40 meter band in the morning insofar as short skip was concerned. A S8 to S9 noise level did not help things out either! The noise sounded like "white noise" associated with high solar winds impacting the magnetosphere. Nonetheless, I did manage a QSO with the USS Midway (NI6IW) aircraft carrier in San Diego with a good signal report. Moving to the 17 meter CW band found a much lower noise level and I worked RW9JZ in Russia with a good signal report. In the afternoon, the noise level on the 40m meter band had dropped significantly and I made another QSO with NI6IW with strong signals being heard at both ends. There was no radio traffic for the boat this time around.

The visitor traffic aboard the boat was light in spite of relatively good weather. The "Chocolate Festival" nearby may have had something to do with the low visitor turn-out on the boat.

The Pampanito will be leaving for the yard this week. The latest information I have is that the departure date was moved from the 15th to the 17th of this month. Repairs on the boat are expected to take up to six weeks to complete. Thus, it is unlikely that will have a DDO for the month of October. I'll keep you informed on the progress on the Pampanito as I learn it.

73,

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



## General Membership Meeting

Friday, September 02, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 19:33 hrs by President Tom Soskin.

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

The agenda was adopted as presented.

The minutes of the August 05 General Membership Meeting were approved as published.

President Soskin reported on the actions at the August 08 Board of Director's Meeting.

There were five reports under "Fun with Ham Radio".

There was no one reported as a new member.

Secretary – Randy reported there was nothing important.

Treasurer – Dave submitted a report that showed \$2,655.24 income and \$1,218.84 expenses. Total assets are reported as \$81,309.54.

Standing Committee Reports:

Club Station and Facilities: Doug will get a new cleaning bid.

Membership: No Report.

Education: Instruction Team Leader Kris Backenstose reported on the Technician class starting on September 07. We have 20 students signed-up.

Technical / Repeaters: Doug reported that he was arranging a trip to Mt. Tam. There will be an APRS I-Gate installed at East Peak. Doug was looking for Motorola Micor equipment.

Public Service – Randy reported on upcoming events. We have two events in September, and one event in October.

VE - We have exam session scheduled on Wednesday, November 02 at 7PM.

Picnic – Is scheduled for Saturday, September 10 at Piper Park in Larkspur.

Good of the Order: No Report

There being no further business, the business meeting was adjourned at 20:15.

Joe Fischer, K5EJL presented a program on Ham Broadband/ Mesh Networking.

Respectfully submitted, Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF, Secretary.

# Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 08, 2016

Board Members present: Tom Soskin, Dave Hodgson, Rita Brenden, David Chaney, Kris Backenstose, August Koehler, Cal Anber, Doug Slusher, Marc Bruvry, Ed Essick, and Randy Jenkins. Member John Boyd was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by President Tom Soskin at 19:30 hours.

The agenda was approved as amended.

The minutes of the August 11 Board of Director's Meeting were approved as submitted.

President Soskin was impressed with the Technician class. Welcomed David Chaney to the Board.

Communications: Randy reported no interesting mail.

Treasurer: Dave was present, and submitted his report. The report showed \$2,655.24 income, \$1,218.84, expenses, and total assets of \$81, 309.54.

Club Station & Facilities: Doug reported that he is still seeking a new cleaning quote.

Membership: Curtis was not in attendance.

Education: Kris reported we had our first class, with 15 students. Kris wanted to discuss parking for the class. Cal agreed to move his bus out from front of the building. Parking policy was discussed. There is General class starting in Richmond; Randy will post the information on the website.

Technical / Repeaters: Doug reported on a trip to Tam 402 and Middle Peak by Doug & Michael Fischer. They measured antenna supports and rack space. Doug plans to install the new Fusion repeater at Middle Peak. Doug will order the repeater equipment for 402. The CTCSS tone on the link will be 192.8. Doug will update our listing with NARCC.

Public Service: Upcoming events this year are two events in September, and one event in October. Randy reported that we have received a request for a new event in April 2017, that the Public Service Committee was not able to endorse. The event was not adopted by the Board of Director's. Randy will send a response to the e-mailed request.

VE Liasion: The next exam date is Wednesday, November 02 at 7PM. We have three people signed for the November 02 evening session, plus the class members.

Grant Writing: Randy's list of wants for the new Comm Van will be forwarded.

Special Events: The Picnic date is scheduled for September 10. Reserving the park cost us \$205.00. Doug, Randy, and Rita will discuss arrangements after the meeting.

Old Business:

Awards: Tom has purchased gift certificates from HRO for the awards. Doug will arrange for placks.

Implied Resignation of Director: The letter was sent by Tom.

Rent Increase Letter: Sent by Tom, a copy was delivered to Dave Hodgson.

Condition of the Clubhouse After Use: Was discussed.

New Business:

Girl Scout Leaders group use of the Clubhouse: Doug has received a request to use the clubhouse by the Girl Scouts Leader's Group on dates September 13, October 18, November 15, January 17, February 07, March 14, and April 18. Their normal meeting place is unavailable due to renovation. The Board agreed to the dates.

Comm Van Report: Randy's comm van report was discussed.

Christmas Party Date: The Christmas Party date was set for Thursday, December 08.

Dues for 2017: Was tabled until the October Board Meeting.

Good of the Order: No report.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 13, 2016.

Agenda Items: Dues for 2017, Ham-of-the-Year nominations, Award nominations, Board of Director's nominations

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 20:56 hours.

Respectfully submitted,  
Randy Jenkins, KA6BQF  
Secretary, Marin Amateur Radio Society

**Marin Amateur Radio Society W6SG.NET, [membership@w6sg.net](mailto: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**

Tom Soskin, W6MTS  
tomsoskin@gmail.com

**Vice President**

Kris Bakenstose, KK6AYC

**Secretary**

Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089

**Treasurer:**

Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ 707 978-2560

**Board Members**

Cal Anber N6TIA 209-275-5252  
Rita Brenden KG6WPN 707-557-5521  
Marc Bruvry KF6VNT 492-9292  
Howard Leistner, W2BBF  
Ed Essick K6ELE 456-1715

**Other Positions:**

**Education Chair**

Randy Jenkins  
Kris Backenstose Instruction Team Leader.

**VE Liaison**

Randy Jenkins

**Building Co-Managers**

Doug Slusher  
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 Coordinators**

Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089  
Rob Rowlands, NZ6J, Michael Fischer, K6MLF

**Membership**

Curtis Ardourel, WA6UDS

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