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# QSA-5

## The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

August 2017

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### Presidents Corner

#### Club History

We have two events coming up that need interested club members who are willing to be Elmers. First there is our Technician license class and second is a new event (at least new to us) with the Boy Scouts called Jamboree On The Air.

During September and October we are holding another Technician license class. Now most of you have already heard about the class and many have already signed up to either teach a class or to be available as an Elmer, so for you this is old news. For those members who have not signed up, consider coming to act as Elmers to the students. Classes will be every Wednesday evening from 7pm till 9pm starting September 6th through Oct 25 with the VE session on Wednesday November 1st. Some of the students attending our class this year will be my own family members, my wife, Karen, my younger daughter, Erin and her boyfriend, Damian. I was pretty surprised that they agreed to attend (ok, I may have guilted them into it, begging and pleading seemed to help too!), so please make them feel welcome.

We also have another great piece of news. The Boy Scouts of America have an event every year called Jamboree On The Air or JOTA. This is a pretty large event for scouting and can include over a million scouts participating. We have been invited to assist BSA Venture Crew 333 during this event for radio support. This year marks their 60th event and will be held on the 3rd weekend in October, specifically the 20th through the 22 (the weekend of PacifiCon).

*Continued on Page 2*

### From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

#### New Digital Mode

A lot of excitement has been generated by a new type of digital mode for HF bands this year. This mode is part of the WSTJ-X software created by Joe Taylor, K1JT. Dr. Taylor developed his software in 2001 to allow hams to communicate by moon bounce. Later versions of his software added variations of weak signal digital communication. One issue in using this software is how long it takes to complete a contact. This deterred many hams from using the software. Last month Joe and Steven Franke, K9AN, released a new digital mode called FT8 (FrankTaylor8).

Before FT8 became available hams were using the slower mode call JT65, which took up to 3 minutes to make a basic contact that exchanged call signs and a signal report. For some hams this mode was compared to “watching paint dry”, so when FT8 was released and it was found that the same contact could be made in about a minute, hams jumped onto the mode. FT8 is in beta release, so the WSTJ-X user guide does not include information about it. Several YouTube videos are available to demonstrate the mode and its setup.

Many hams would rather make voice or CW contacts than use a digital mode. However in this declining sunspot cycle long distance communication (DX) on the high frequency bands is becoming harder to accomplish. One ham I know has been trying complete his Worked All States (WAS) ARRL award. He lacked several states to complete his award, but he just started using FT8 and was able to complete his WAS. Here is what Joe Taylor says about this mode: “FT8 is an excellent mode for HF DXing and for situations like multi-hop Es on 6 meters, where deep QSB may make fast and reliable completion of QSOs desirable.”

The great thing about the WSTJ-X and FT8 modes is that you can make contacts with a minimal station. A simple wire antenna and 10 watts can make contacts. These weak signal modes can detect signals that can't be heard by us, yet they are coming into our receiver. Next month I will have a FT8 review with screen shots. Hope to see you on FT8, I will be there this year trying to complete my ARRL digital WAS award and Five-Band WAC (Worked All Continents) award.

What's Happening in Radio

Guest Speaker List 2017

On The Air

Public Service

Membership Meeting Minutes

Board Minutes

## What's Happening in Radio

We are only being asked to set up a station on Saturday Oct 21 for a few hours, from about 9am to 12pm. If anyone would like to help out with this event, or learn more about it, please contact either Doug Slusher or myself, your ideas and assistance would be greatly appreciated. I personally find this event exciting for our club because everyone always asks, "How do we get younger people into Amateur radio?". Well, this is a great way to start, and I hope that we will be able to get some scouts interested in learning more about HAM radio and possible even to get their license and joining our club.

Here are two perfect examples of events to possibly generate new HAMS and maybe new club members as well. So time to step up ladies and gentleman, this is our time to help our sport grow.

73 and thank you for your support.

Tom Soskin, W6MTS

### Guest Speakers 2017

9/1/17 Richard Dillman, W6AWO, president and co-founder of the Maritime Radio Historical Society, will make a presentation on emergency communications and the West Marin Disaster Council. Richard designed and built the repeater system for the Council and has been active in emergency communication in West Marin for many years.

### On the Air

#### Contest Calendar

All Asian DX Contest, Phone, 0000Z, Sep 2 to 2400Z, Sep 3

Colorado QSO Party, 1300Z, Sep 2 to 0400Z, Sep 3

Tennessee QSO Party, 1800Z, Sep 3 to 0300Z, Sep 4

ARRL September VHF Contest, 1800Z, Sep 9 to 0300Z, Sep 11

Washington State Salmon Run, 1600Z, Sep 16 to 0700Z, Sep 17 and 1600Z-2400Z, Sep 17

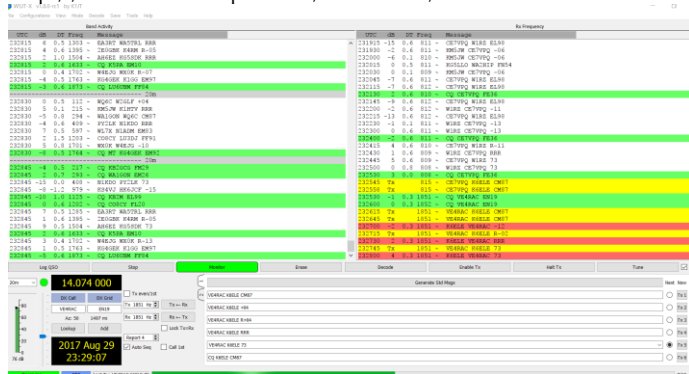
CQ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY 0000Z, Sep 23 to 2400Z, Sep 24

Maine QSO Party 1200Z, Sep 23 to 1200Z, Sep 24

Texas QSO Party 1400Z, Sep 23 to 0200Z, Sep 24 and 1400Z-2000Z, Sep 24

See WA7BNM Contest Calendar for all contests

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



FT8 making a contact

## ARRL Board Explores Entry-Level License Options, Ways to Face Future Challenges

Meeting July 21-22 in Farmington, Connecticut, the ARRL Board of Directors took steps to chart a firmer future for Amateur Radio by enhancing the value of the entry-level license and by providing ongoing support for new licensees. ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, chaired the second regular meeting of 2017.

ARRL New England Division Director Tom Frenaye, K1KI, presented the report of the Ad Hoc Entry-Level License Committee. He said the committee's initial, informal survey attracted nearly 7,900 responses. A second random survey drew another 375 responses. "A clear majority favored a revision to the Technician rather than a new entry-level license," the committee's report said, noting that this would require no change to the Technician examination, which already covers more material than necessary for an entry-level examination. "This choice requires the simplest revision to FCC rules," the committee report said. The committee suggested expanded digital access on 80, 40, and 15 meters, where Technicians already have CW access, as well as the addition of Technician phone privileges on those bands. Frenaye pointed out that while the Amateur Radio population is growing, the annual rate of growth has stagnated at about 1%. "There is a general consensus...that 'something needs to happen,'" the committee's report said, noting a generally favorable attitude toward attracting newcomers.

"The general goal here is to have an entry-level license that offers a way for a newcomer to experience multiple facets of Amateur Radio," the committee's report said, "encouraging them to get on the air, meet other licensees, and engage in a lifetime of learning while using Amateur Radio."

Later in the meeting, the Board charged the ARRL Executive Committee with developing a plan to implement the ad hoc committee's recommendation to make the current Technician class license more attractive and useful by expanding its operating privileges on HF to include phone and digital modes. The Board asked the Ad Hoc Entry-Level License Committee to further research and develop the details of a second recommendation to improve successful outreach to prospective radio amateurs and help them through the licensing process.

*Reprinted with Permission from ARRL letter 8/3/17*

# Public Service

## Marin Century



Net Control



Nicasio School



APRS tracker

## Dirt Frodo



## Net Control

## Smart Train and Ham Radio

Steve Smith  
WA1TOV

After 60 years, passenger train service finally resumed through the towns north of San Francisco. The Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) trains began demonstration rides for the public on June 29, running 7 'preview' round trips between two stations.

The trains were packed with folks bussed over from senior centers for an excursion, parents looking for an activity for their out of school children, the simply curious and an ample complement of 'foamers' (railway geeks). Nevertheless, Steve Smith WA1TOV managed to squeeze himself and his HT aboard the 2 pm departure. Smith proceeded to work two local repeaters for the first known QSOs from the SMART train. First he contacted Dale Westertep WB6TMS via the Sonoma Mountain Repeater Society's repeater on 146.910.

Heading south Smith enjoyed the bucolic views of the Petaluma river wetlands out of the left side of the train. The large picture windows on the other side offered occasional glimpses of the stopped traffic fighting its way north through the Novato Narrows. Once he passed the landfill and was moving out of range of the Sonoma Mountain repeater, Smith switched over to the Marin Amateur Radio Society's Big Rock Mountain repeater on 146.700.

He quickly reached Michael Fischer K6MLF who was also mobile, but in a car not a train. Fischer was headed in the same direction as the train, so he stopped at one of the stations to take a photo. Said Fischer, "I was waiting to take a photo of the historic radio-ride, but the dark windows made that impossible, since Steve was not about to relinquish his space on the train to the hordes waiting at the Civic Center station to join the already-crowded train."

So instead Fischer watched in awe of the sophisticated high-tech system which permitted the train to leave the station and cross the busy road with the crossing gates still in their upright position. The good news is that the gates came down when the train was halfway across the street--and the crossing guards' screams were successful in preventing several clueless pedestrians from dashing across in front of the train.

The train retraced its journey back to Rohnert Park where Smith deboarded and headed back to his car for the drive south. The northbound traffic was still backed up.



Steve Smith on the Smart Train

## Jamboree on the Air Marks 60 Years this Fall

"60 Years Connecting Scouts" is the theme for the Boy Scouts' 2017 Jamboree on the Air ([JOTA](#)), set for October 20-22. JOTA Coordinator Jim Wilson, K5ND, said the theme "recognizes the start of the event in 1957 and commemorates its growth in participation and in the expanding communication channels that are activated on the third weekend in October." The official JOTA patch will be available by July 19. The JOTA-JOTI (Jamboree on the Internet) patch is available now.

Wilson said JOTA's "communication channels" now include Amateur Radio on the air and via internet-based channels, as well as many other internet-based options, including social media, ScoutLink and IRC chat services, Skype, and more. "It also recognizes the goal of the event -- connecting Scouts so that they can engage in conversations with other Scouts across town and around the world," Wilson said. "This allows them to discover geographic and cultural differences and similarities. Plus, they are exposed to the technology that makes all this happen." The World JOTA-JOTI Team said it would announce "a number of weekend activities supporting the 2017 theme."

JOTA participation last October was up from 2015's numbers. According to the final report, 10,761 Scouts took part -- an increase of more than 50% from a year earlier -- and number of stations filing reports, at 267, jumped by 28% from 2015 (the record was 271 in 2013). The number of Amateur Radio operators was up by 14% to 1,120, although the number of reported in use dropped by 25% to 631. Total JOTA 2016 contacts remained flat at 8,254. *to JOTA Coordinator Jim Wilson, K5ND*



JOTA  
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2013).  
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-- Thanks

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## General Meeting Minutes

August 4, 2017

- 7:31 President Tom Soskin calls the meeting to order.
- 7:32 Introductions of those present.
- 7:34 President Tom Soskin asks for the club to adopt the agenda.
- 7:34 Adoption of the agenda. There is a motion, second, and vote to pass.
- 7:34 Adopt the minutes. Let them stand as published.
- 7:35 President's Minute. There were some problems with the locked door last Sunday morning. President Soskin bought a new lock box and will put a second key in the back. President Soskin introduces new members. Lew Byington is a Tech and he describes his 2-meter base station and explains his plans for radio work in the wilderness. He is working with QRP projects. His kitchen is his workshop and he goes to Electronics Plus a lot. Lew discusses small radio PC board projects with Vice-President Kris Backestose. He discusses his RFI problems. He is working with Ham Steve Wilson on his RFI problems.
- 7:41 Secretary's Report. The club has paid for Field Day 2018 with the Marin Rod and Gun Club. It is \$300 in addition to the \$250 deposit.
- 7:43 Treasurer's report. Treasurer Dave Hodgson is not here.
- 7:43 Education. Kris Backenstose pitches the Fall Tech class. Posters have been made and look very nice. Please help the class and put the posters up and around town.
- 7:46 Club Station. Trustee Doug Slusher is not here. He has to be at the Marin Century bicycle race public service event tomorrow at 4 AM.
- 7:46 Public Service. Randy Jenkins. The Marin Century is tomorrow on **MARS General Membership meeting minutes page 2,**  
August 5, 2017. It is a 200 mile race lasting all day long.
- 7:47 Volunteer Examiner. Tests for Technician, General, and Amateur Extra will be administered at the Alto Clubhouse on August 12, 2017.
- 7:48 The MARS club picnic is on September 16 at Piper Park in Larkspur, CA.
- 7:49 New Business. Discussion of a change of the next meeting date so as not to interfere with Labor Day? Members are encouraged to discuss the best date. Are there any suggestions? None. OK, the next General Membership meeting is on September 1, 2017
- 7:51 New Business. San Francisco radio club is having an FM QSO party. It is on August 26, 2017. Simplex FM. Randy Jenkins will forward the email to everybody. It is a contest with points, fun, and competition.
- 7:54 The Good of the Order. Nothing else. The meeting is adjourned with a motion, second, and vote.

## Board of Directors Meeting

August 10, 2017

- 7:30 PM President Tom Soskin calls the meeting to order.
- 7:31 PM The meeting agenda is adopted by a motion, second, and vote.
- 7:31 PM The minutes are adopted as published in QSA-5.
- 7:31 PM Harmony among members. This is a discussion about peaceful discussions between club members.
- 7:33 PM Secretary's minute. David Chaney reports about working at the Marin Century public service event as a scribe for Doug Slusher and Rob Rowland on August 5, 2017.
- 7:34 PM Treasurer's Report. Dave Hodgson. The Board reviews a printed email statement. Discussion of the water bill at the Alto clubhouse. The water bill has decreased. Dave discusses his board

term that concludes at the end of 2017, and President Soskin discusses finding his replacement. The club still has not paid for the sewer project. Trustee Doug Slusher has called the plumbing company twice about the final bill but has yet to receive a telephone call. A discussion ensues about which account the final payments will come from: the General fund or the building fund?

7:40 PM Membership. Curtis Ardourel reports that we have 114 members in the MARS club. 8 of the total 114 are "special" members. MARS Board meeting of August 10, 2017 page 2, Member Ardourel has yet to change the password for the W6SG.net website. He will attempt to make the change on the coming weekend.

7:43 PM Education. Kris Backenstose Vice-President talks about the marketing of the Fall Tech class, and this includes the distribution of the posters. President Soskin will make a presentation at a local school marketing the class. Kris has completed the construction of the Arduino morse code key to give to the class members. There is a discussion of Baofeng VHF/UHF radios for class members. David Chaney discusses equipment for a possible CW morse adjunct to the Tech class. There is also discussion about a minimum number of students. At what point is the class cancelled? Members suggest that there will be enough students attending, being optimistic, and saying that there is enough time yet to market the class. Ed Essick asks if there are .pdfs for projections in the class presentations. Doug Slusher suggests that MDARC has new projection slides that may be added to the class. Kris Backenstose distribute the information via Google Drive as he did last year. President Tom Soskin asks about young kids. Will we buy them books (since kids don't have a lot of

MARS Board meeting of August 10, 2017 page 3, money). Ed Essick suggest that the MARS club could sponsor younger kids: a "scholarship." There are a number of pros and cons of giving books to the kids. Ed Essick makes a motion that any child under 15 years of age gets a free book. There is one abstention. The motion passes.

8:05 PM Club Station and facilities. Doug Slusher is waiting for repair equipment to be repaired-the device is being calibrated. The Fusion Repeater is ready to be put up at the repeater site.

8:09 PM Public Service. Doug Slusher recaps the Marin Century bicycle race. It was a great race, there were few injuries, and the communications worked extremely well. There were about 2500 riders. The APRS trackers had much better coverage. Rob Rowland hid digipeters at race sites of high elevation-this worked well. Trustee Slusher was extremely pleased with the APRS coverage!

8:13 PM Volunteer Examiner. There is a VE session this Saturday at the Alto clubhouse. Randy reports that 5 volunteers are available.

8:14 PM MARS picnic. Doug Slusher is working to reserve the picnic site. Other park sites than Piper Park are discussed. MARS Board meeting of August 10, 2017 page 4, Doug Slusher leads a discussion to pick a date for the Christmas party. December 6, 2017 is selected.



- 8:22 PM Old Business. President Tom Soskin discusses roof repair with trustee Doug Slusher.
- 8:23 PM New Business. Decoration of the communications van is discussed
- 8:24 PM New Business. Boys Scouts have made a request to the MARS club to assist at the JOTA (Jamboree On The Air) event. The Board members review an email proposal which is a formal request. The site is a church in San Rafael. A response to the Boy Scouts is formulated. President Tom Soskin will telephone the Boy Scout Representative tomorrow on August 11, 2017.
- 8:30 PM New Business. President Soskin discusses a new clubhouse door lock. Member Randy Jenkins is consulted about making changes to the door knob and lock. The club needs to get a second key and a lock box in another location. Doug Slusher will have a key copy made and also procure another lock box.
- 8:36 PM Good of the Order. There is a discussion about Field Day 2018. Secretary David Chaney is reimbursed \$300.00 for the Marin Rod and Gun Club rental shared with the Sonoma Redxa radio club. There is a discussion about the insurance deposit and discussions with Rich Carbine and Dave Dufficy about securing the insurance rider 30 to 60 days before the event. David Chaney will complete the rental agreement and take it to the Marin Rod and Gun Club.
- 8:45 PM President Tom Soskin gavels the meeting closed.

**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 sign-up instructions. The W6SG emergency HF net check-in is at 9 am on 3.915 Mh.

<p><b>Marin Amateur Radio Society Officers and Board Members:</b></p> <p><b>President</b> Tom Soskin, W6MTS tomsoskin@gmail.com</p> <p><b>Vice President</b> Kris Backenstose, KK6AYC</p> <p><b>Secretary</b> David Chaney, AA6AE</p> <p><b>Treasure:</b> Dave Hodgson KG6TCJ 707 978-2560</p> <p><b>Board Members</b> Curtis Ardourel, W6UDS, 510-595-3494 Cal Anber N6TIA 209-275-5252 Marc Bruvry KF6VNT 492-9292 Ed Essick K6ELE 456-1715 Mitch Martin, WU1Q</p> <p><b>Other Positions:</b></p> <p><b>Education Chair</b> Randy Jenkins Kris Backenstose Instruction Team Leader.</p> <p><b>VE Liaison</b> Randy Jenkins</p> <p><b>Building Co-Managers</b> Doug Slusher Dave Hodgson</p> <p><b>Trustee for W6SG</b> Augie Koehler K0CQL</p> <p><b>Trustee for K6GWE</b> Doug Slusher KF6AKU</p> <p><b>Sunday Emergency Nets</b> Mark Bruvry</p> <p><b>DX Representative of ARRL</b> Jerry Foster WA6BXV 892-3829</p>	<p><b>Public Service Event Coordinators</b> Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089 Rob Rowlands, NZ6J, Michael Fischer, K6MLF</p> <p><b>Membership</b> Curtis Ardourel, WA6UDS</p> <p><b>Editor of QSA-5</b> Ed Essick K6ELE e.essick@comcast.net</p> <p><b>ARRL San Francisco Section Manager</b> Bill Hillendahl KH6GJV@ARRL.ORG</p> <p><b>WEBMASTER</b> Glenn Meader N1ZKW 987-3948 N1ZKW@ARRL.NET</p> <p><b>HF Sunday Net Control</b> Mike Ransom, AI6II</p> <p><b>VHF Sunday Net Control</b> Steve Toquinto, KB6HOH</p>
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