
QSA-5

The Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Founded 1933

February 2018

Presidents Corner

Those of us of a certain age grew up with a lot of popular catch phrases. One that does not pop up that often anymore is “You are what you eat” a concept that at least dates back to the eighteen twenties. A similarly pithy statement by Carl Jung at least in part is “You are what you do”. On any kind of deep soul searching analysis both of these catch phrases are problematic. We are an amateur radio club and not a forum for epistemological debates.

I do however want you to take a moment to think about “You are what you do” one of the things we do as a club is provide communications for public service events. This is good for the organizers because they get a better run event, and it is good for us because we get to practice emergency communications in a non-emergency situation, we get to hang out in beautiful parts of Marin County, and we get to meet people we don’t usually interact with. Also as a member of the club I can be proud of our history and our on-going support for worthy causes.

A few years back we started the Public Service Lunch as a *post mortem* session on the past year’s events. The idea proved its worth in the very first session. I had the privilege of chairing that meeting and we gathered a long list of ideas that could and would improve our performance, make the activity itself more rewarding for participants, and help us grow the community of amateurs who take part. We thought the idea of a meeting to improve the process of such a value that we have continued it year after year.

This year we are having another Public Service Lunch on March 24th at 11:30 at our club house. When we organized the first lunch it had two purposes. One as I mentioned before was a *post mortem*, and the second was to say thank you to the people who came out to participate. Those goals still obtain but the scope of the meeting has expanded since then. We certainly celebrate those who

From the Editor

Ed Essick, K6ELE

Too Much of a Good Thing

The new digital mode FT8 has become wildly popular on the ham bands. This is a view of the waterfall of signals on a recent weekend. Keep in mind when looking at this that all of FT8 occupies about the frequency space of one SSB voice transmission. Since FT8 arrived most hams have stopped using digital modes like PSK31 and others.

It’s apparent from this high usage that the frequency allocation for FT8 will get pressure from hams to be increased beyond the current 3Kh in use. Of course many hams switched to FT8 because they could make lots of contacts in this period of the solar cycle. Other hams have argued that FT8 is just an automatic way of making a contact. In any event, this mode is making it possible for lots of hams to remain active on the HF bands.

A new update to FT8 is the inclusion of a DXpedition mode. Operator’s on a DXpedition are concerned with making a high rate of contacts per hour and a typical FT8 contact can take from 30 to 60 seconds to complete.

According to Joe Taylor, the WSJT developer, “the basic goal of FT8 DXpedition Mode is to enable DXpeditions to make FT8 QSOs at the highest possible rates, and the *WSJT-X* Development Team has been working with members of the Baker Island KH1/KH7Z DXpedition team, ahead of its mid-summer operation, to work out the wrinkles”.

Basically the new mode uses the Fox and Hound approach, with the Fox being the DXpedition. The mode makes it possible for the Fox to transmit five signals at a time and complete a contact with one transmission, which now takes up to four.

What’s Happening in Radio

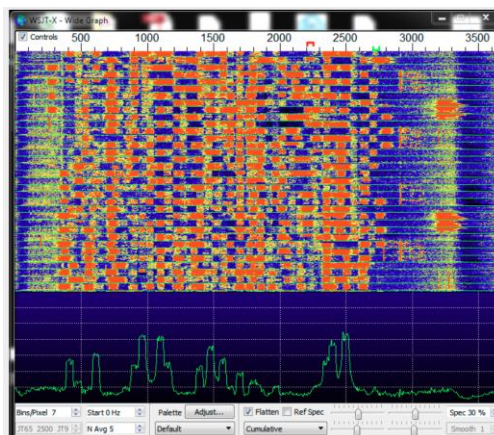
On the Air

ARRL News

Public Service

General Meeting Minutes

Board Minutes



have participated and in new ways. We also discuss what we can do better in the future. We also provide orientation and training on best practices. We encourage people who have not yet volunteered for an event to "come on down" and learn about what we do and how to do it. To understand how we get new folks started, how we mentor operators, how you won't be sent alone to the middle of nowhere to do something you have never done before.

If you are one of our stalwart volunteers or have never participated in a public service event I recommend you come to the lunch, and of course RSVP to rsvp@w6sg.net so we have a good head count for food and door prizes. I look forward to seeing you there. To finish with a catch phrase "To do is to be" Jean-Paul Sartre.

73 de WA6UDS

General Meeting Speakers

February Speaker - Joe Thibodeau

Joe will share with us his 30+ years of embedded hardware and software design. A historical perspective on the evolution of technology featuring unique projects from the 80s and 90's



will be presented. This includes a short discussion on how amazing it was to design Rail sounds II for Neil Young and Lionel Trains. A long juicy journey filled with amazing technology.

Member News

Welcome to Stephen McCurdy, WB6CWW, San Rafael our newest member.

Condolences to David Chaney whose father passed away on February 14th.

New Hams from VE Session at UC Berkley

The Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences students, 65 in all, took the technician and general tests with 59 passing one or both tests.



On The Air

Contest Calendar

ARRL Inter. DX Contest, SSB, 0000Z, Mar 3 to 2400Z, Mar 4

SARL VHF/UHF Analogue/Digital Contest 1000Z, Mar 10 to 1000Z, Mar 11

BARTG HF RTTY Contest, 0200Z, Mar 17 to 0200Z, Mar 19

Virginia QSO Party, 1400Z, Mar 17 to 0400Z, Mar 18 and 1200Z-2400Z, Mar 18

CQ WW WPX Contest, SSB, 0000Z, Mar 24 to 2359Z, Mar 25

See complete list at:

<http://www.contestcalendar.com/index.html>

ARRL News

3Y0I Bouvet Island DXpedition Revived

Polish DXpeditioner Dom Grzyb, 3Z9DX, and four other operators announced that their postponed plans to mount the [3Y0I DXpedition](#) to Bouvet Island are back on. This comes as the [3Y0Z DXpedition](#) team members, are returning home after an unsuccessful landing on the remote South Atlantic island. According to the latest ClubLog [DXCC Most-Wanted](#) List, Bouvet is the second most-wanted DXCC entity, behind North Korea.

"Our trip, planned originally at the end of 2017, was canceled at the request of the organizers of the 3Y0Z expedition," an announcement said. "Due to the cancellation by the [3Y0Z] organizers, we are now returning to the implementation of our project and preparations for our trip as a matter of urgency."



DX-World has reported that the 3Y0I license has been renewed and a landing permit -- good for 1 year -- issued by the Norwegian Polar Institute. While no specific dates for the DXpedition have been announced, the 3Y0I team said its plans call for operating during the subantarctic summer, which suggests they could be on the air late this year.

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What's Happening in Radio

Every Sunday a group of club members meet at the clubhouse to talk about radios, work on them, and share in some good conversations. Come join us if you can.



Photos by Michael Fischer

Board Election Results

President: Curtis Ardourel
Vice President: Kris Backenstose
Secretary: David Chaney
Treasurer: Ed Essick

3Y0I Bouvet Island DXpedition

The 3Y0I team said it has chartered a seagoing yacht adapted for extreme weather conditions to make the 12-day, 2,800-nautical mile trip from South Africa to Bouvet Island. The team anticipates operating for about 2 weeks. The participants have financed the trip out of their own pockets.

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Radio Amateur Named as Next President of Harvard University

Lawrence S. Bacow, KA1FZQ, of Brookline, Massachusetts, has been selected to become the 29th president of Harvard University, the home of W1AF.

In a recent interview Bacow confessed to being an "uber nerd" while he was growing up in Pontiac, Michigan. "I was a ham radio operator. I used to get my kicks building radios out of Heathkits -- some of you are old enough to remember them." Bacow said his reading outside of school was "confined to *Popular Science*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Scientific American* and some obscure magazines known only to fellow ham radio operators, called *QST* and *73*."

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Amateur Radio Emergency Service Transitioning to New Online Reporting System

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) will phase out the traditional ARES report forms later this year in favor of an online system called *ARES Connect*, a volunteer management, communications, and reporting system. The new system will allow information to be logged by ARES members and managed through the Field Organization. The advent of *ARES Connect* is one of the key elements highlighted in "The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) 2017 Annual Report," released this month.



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ARRL Requests Expanded HF Privileges for Technician Licensees

ARRL has asked the FCC to expand HF privileges for Technician licensees to include limited phone privileges on 75, 40, and 15 meters, plus RTTY and digital mode privileges on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. The FCC has not yet invited public comment on the proposals, which stem from recommendations put forth by the ARRL Board of Directors' Entry-Level License Committee, which explored various initiatives and gauged member opinions in 2016 and 2017.

"This action will enhance the available license operating privileges in what has become the principal entry-level license class in the Amateur Service," ARRL said in its Petition. "It will attract more newcomers to Amateur Radio, it will result in increased retention of licensees who hold Technician Class licenses, and it will provide an improved incentive for entry-level licensees to increase technical self-training and pursue higher license class achievement and development of communications skills."

Specifically, ARRL proposes to provide Technician licensees, present and future, with phone privileges at 3.900 to 4.000 MHz, 7.225 to 7.300 MHz, and 21.350 to 21.450 MHz, plus RTTY and digital privileges in current Technician allocations on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters. The ARRL petition points out the explosion in popularity of various digital modes over the past 2 decades. Under the ARRL plan, the maximum HF power level for Technician operators would remain at 200 W PEP. The few remaining Novice licensees would gain no new privileges under the League's proposal.

ARRL's petition points to the need for compelling incentives not only to become a radio amateur in the first place, but then to upgrade and further develop skills. Demographic and technological changes call for a "periodic rebalancing" between those two objectives, the League maintains.

"There has not been such a rebalancing in many years," ARRL said in its petition. "It is time to do that now." The FCC has not assessed entry-level operating privileges since 2005.

The Entry-Level License Committee offered very specific data and survey-supported findings about growth in Amateur Radio and its place in the advanced technological demographic that includes individuals younger than 30. It received significant input from ARRL members via more than 8,000 survey responses.

"The Committee's analysis noted that today, Amateur Radio exists among many more modes of communication than it did half a century ago, or even 20 years ago," ARRL said in its petition.

Now numbering some 378,000, Technician licensees comprise more than half of the US Amateur Radio population. ARRL said that after 17 years of experience with the current Technician license as the gateway to Amateur Radio, it's urgent to make it more attractive to newcomers, in part to improve upon science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education "that inescapably accompanies a healthy, growing Amateur Radio Service," ARRL asserted.

ARRL said its proposal is critical to developing improved operating skills, increasing emergency communication participation, improving technical self-training, and boosting overall growth in the Amateur Service, which has remained nearly inert at about 1% per year.

The Entry-Level License Committee determined that the current Technician class question pool already covers far more material than necessary for an entry-level exam to validate expanded privileges.

ARRL told the FCC that it would continue to refine examination preparation and training materials aimed at STEM topics, increase outreach and recruitment, work with Amateur Radio clubs, and encourage educational institutions to utilize Amateur Radio in STEM and other experiential learning programs.

"ARRL requests that the Commission become a partner in this effort to promote Amateur Radio as a public benefit by making the very nominal changes proposed herein in the Technician class license operating privileges," the petition concluded.

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2018 MARS PUBLIC SERVICE SCHEDULE

Post-season Debrief & Awards / Pre-season Briefing luncheon Saturday, March 24, 11:30 – 3pm at the MARS clubhouse. Join us for;

- A free lunch! (Who ever said there's no free lunch?!)
- Gold-star awards to those who volunteered for at least 3 events last year. That's half of the 60 people who volunteered, wow.
- Several of the event organizers will tell us how we are integral to their management: Tom from MCBC, Tina from the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, and Denise from MALT.
- Yellow-green-reflective ball caps for those who do not yet have one.
- A useful door prize for everyone who attends.
- As usual, a terrific raffle—top prizes: two “official” MARS jackets with logo, your name, and reflective strips. And, of course, more than a dozen other prizes.
- Special post-meeting orientation session for recently-licensed operators.
- Materials and a soldering station for you to make your own “tiger tail” counterpoise for handheld radios after the meeting (support provided by Jan WB6SPX)

2018 PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

1. Ridge to Bridge: Saturday, April 21, 5am-3pm 15 needed
(Michael/Presidio/CommT)

2. Miwok 100: Saturday, May 5, 5am-10pm 20 needed (Rob/Stinson/CommT + RACES portable repeater)

3. Dipsea: Sunday, June 10, 7am-2pm 15 needed (Michael/Stinson/CommT)

4. Double Dipsea: Saturday, June 16, 6:30am-1:30pm 10 needed (Rob/Stinson/CommT)

Field Day: June 22-24

5. Tour de MALT: Saturday, July 21, 7am-3:30pm, 15 needed (Michael/Nicasio/CommT)

6. Marin Century/Mount Tam Double Century: Saturday, August 4, 4:30 am-11pm 30 needed (Rob/Civic Center/CommT)

7. MCBC Dirt Fondo: Saturday, August 18, 6am - 3pm 15 needed (Michael/Fort Cronkhite/CommT)

8. ZBC Dipsea Hike: Saturday, September 22, 7am-2pm, 6 needed (Rob/Old Mill/CommT)

9. MCBC Jense Gran Fondo: Saturday, September 29, 6:30am-6pm, 20 needed (Michael/Stafford Lake/CommT)

10. Dolphin Club Escape from Alcatraz: Sunday, September 30, 10am-6pm, 6 needed (Rob/Old Mill)

11. Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (formerly Breast Cancer Fund) Peak Hike: Sunday, October 14 6 needed
(Rob/SantosM/CommT)

You can sign up to volunteer for any of these events on the MARS website <http://w6sg.net/site/public-service/>

In Memoriam—Maurice (“Pink”) H. Picard, W6FQS

The Silent Keys section of QST’s January 2018 issue included Maurice (“Pink”) H. Picard, W6FQS, who passed away on September 6, 2017 in his 90th year. The amateur radio community thereby lost one of its most engaging, intelligent, and vibrant members. Pink was a San Rafael native and 1945 graduate of San Rafael High School. A member of the “Greatest Generation,” Pink enlisted in the Navy as a 17-y.o. in 1945 under an arrangement that allowed him to graduate from high school while on active duty. He spent his first months in the Navy recuperating in sick bay after a fellow basic-training recruit delivered a jaw-breaker round-house blow in an unfortunate case of mistaken identity. (The identity of the intended victim, the reason for the attack, and the consequences for the assailant are lost to history.) The war ended while he was still recuperating, and he finished his service in peace time as an electrician’s mate on a tanker, the USS Noxubee, in the North Atlantic Ocean.

While in the Navy, Pink became acquainted with amateur radio through the ship’s radio operator and spent many off hours learning Morse code and radio theory. (Another draw was the fact that the radio room had the best coffee on the ship.) He received his first amateur license—a class B amateur license permitting mostly CW operation—while in the Navy in February 1949. Discharged in September of that year, Pink gave the FCC a California address and received his lifelong call sign, W6FQS. He ultimately earned his Extra license—back in the day when this required mastery of Morse Code at 20 wpm.

In the ensuing years Pink made his career with Pacific Bell and established a family with wife Nancy and soon had sons Jim (KA6PMG) and Doug (WB6HFH). A man of wide interests, he enjoyed many activities in addition to amateur radio, including barbershop quartet singing and anything having to do with the outdoors. He especially loved scuba diving, motorcycling, travel to Mexico and Central America (he was fluent in Spanish), hiking, and camping. It was in this context that I first met Pink in San Rafael’s Boy Scout Troop 18, in which his sons Jim and Doug also participated, with Pink often providing adult supervision for camping trips and hikes.

It is difficult to express how much I enjoyed and looked forward to those camping trips, which provided one-on-one access to his apparently bottomless fount of knowledge and experience. Pink administered my 5 wpm Novice code test and mail-in written examination during my sophomore year at San Rafael High School. I was overjoyed to pass and soon was on the air as WN6CWW.

Pink moved from San Rafael to Chico in 1977 on retirement from Pacific Bell. In retirement he continued as an avid DXer, and conversations about ham radio often led to discussions about recent world-wide contacts, achieved at all hours of the day and night. He regaled with talk of his experiments with antenna configurations and propagation, which were often over my head (pun intended). He had two 50-foot Hygain 18-HT tower antennas in his yard, supplemented with approximately 4000 feet of ground radials covering the property. (“That’s why I don’t have a veggie garden.”) He was also an active member of various 80- and 40-m nets. As a member of the Marin Amateur Radio Society, he also contributed to this newsletter.

Pink leaves our community better than he found it, and we will sorely miss him.

Stephen McCurdy
WB6CWW

Editor’s note: *Stephen was a friend and wanted us to remember “Pinky”, as we called him, who logged in on the Sunday MARS 80M HF net on a regular basis.*

Amazonsmile

Club members remember to use the Amazonsmile program when you purchase at Amazon for the donation to the club on your purchases. All you need is an account with Amazon and then use this login link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0010718>

You should see the following login:



You shop. Amazon gives.

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to **Marin Amateur Radio Club** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.
You can select a different charitable organization after signing in.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.
- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at **smile.amazon.com**.

Sign In

Your email address or mobile phone number:

Your Amazon password:

[Forgot your password?](#)

Sign in using our secure server 

New to Amazon? [Create an account](#)

General Membership Meeting

Friday, February 02, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 19:23 hrs by President Curtis Ardourel.

A round of introductions was the first order of business. Thirty-four members or guests were present. Three more arrived when the meeting was in progress. Total attendees were thirty-seven members and guests.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

The approval of the minutes of the January 05 General Membership Meeting were approved as published in *QSA-5*.

President Ardourel reported that the Board of Director's Meeting taken in January. Officers were elected: President – Curtis Ardourel; Vice-President –Kris Backentose; Secretary – David Chaney; Treasuer – Ed Essick. A Finance Committee was appointed to get the accounts in shape, so the incoming Treasuer will have a clean slate. Richard Slusher, a retired CPA, is taking a look at the records.

There were two reports under “Fun with Ham Radio”.

No one was reported as new member.

Secretary – No report.

Treasurer – No report.

Standing Committee Reports:

Club Station and Facilities, Technical / Repeaters: The temporary roof patch is in place, waiting until more rain shows up. Doug will be moving to American Canyon. When Doug gets things out of storage, he will make to the repeater sites.

Membership: 81 members have renewed for 2018, we had 130 members in 2017. Curtis will send out reminders to those members have not renewed.

Education: Instruction Team Leader Kris Backenstose reported that is working to schedule a class for the Army reservists.

Public Service: The thank-you lunch / orientation meeting is scheduled for March 24 at 11:00 at the clubhouse. The 2018 schedule has been updated on the Public Service Webpage.

VE - We have exam session scheduled on Sunday, March 18, at 1PM.

Old Business: None

Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

No minutes submitted due to death in family

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>Marin Amateur Radio Society Officers and Board Members:</p> <p>President Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS 510-595-3494</p> <p>Vice President Kris Backenstose, KK6AYC</p> <p>Secretary David Chaney, AA6AE</p> <p>Treasurer: Ed Essick, K6ELE 456-1715</p> <p>Board Members Curtis Ardourel, W6UDS, 510-290-6069 Cal Anber N6TIA 209-275-5252 Kris Backenstose, KK6AYC Marc Bruvry KF6VNT 492-9292 David Chaney, AA6AE Ed Essick, K6ELE Mitch Martin, WU1Q, 415-456-0200, m4bandit@icloud.com Tom Soskin, W6MTS</p> <p>Education Chair Randy Jenkins Kris Backenstose Instruction Team Leader.</p> <p>VE Liaison Randy Jenkins</p> <p>Building Manager Doug Slusher</p> <p>Trustee for W6SG Mitch Martin WU1Q</p> <p>Trustee for K6GWE Doug Slusher KF6AKU</p> <p>Sunday Emergency Nets Mark Bruvry</p> <p>DX Representative of ARRL Jerry Foster WA6BXV 892-3829</p>	<p>Public Service Co-Coordiators Randy Jenkins KA6BQF 510-526-4089 Rob Rowlands, NZ6J Michael Fischer, K6MLF</p> <p>Membership Curtis Ardourel, WA6UDS</p> <p>Editor of QSA-5 Ed Essick K6ELE 456-1715 e.essick@comcast.net</p> <p>ARRL San Francisco Section Manager Bill Hillendahl KH6GJV@ARRL.ORG</p> <p>WEBMASTER Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS 510-595-3494</p> <p>HF Sunday Net Control Mike Ransom, AI6II</p> <p>VHF Sunday Net Control Steve Toquinto, KB6HOH</p>
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