

QSA-5

Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Established 1933

April 2021

From Our President

“Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this son of York
And all the clouds that loured upon our house in the deep bosom of the ocean
buried.” Those are of course the opening lines of Richard III. Which does not end
well for poor Gloucester who speaks them. The last couple of weeks still put me in
mind of the sentiment of those first two lines. The weather feels like spring. The
two spring observances of the Judeo-Christian tradition Passover and Easter are
upon us.

Closer to home our VE team under the new leadership of Ken Brownfield AB6JR
has an exam scheduled for April 10th. Our Public Service team lead by Michael
Fischer K6MLF, Rob Rowlands NZ6J, Pam Witherspoon N6PDW and Stan
Witherspoon AI6NF and the organizations we serve are planning events for late
summer and early fall that we believe will actually take place. You are reading this
in the first edition of QSA-5 edited by Hugh Patterson KN6KNB. To all of these
folks we owe a huge debt of gratitude. We also owe an even larger debt of
gratitude to the folks they took over from.

With more of us getting vaccinated and Marin County likely to move to a less
restrictive Tier some of us might be able to meet in person. That said with things
as they are for the foreseeable future we will continue to have our meetings on
line. Although I miss seeing you all face to face and the excuse to eat pizza one
night a month, there are advantages to meeting online. Not the least of which is
more of you are showing up to our on-line meetings.

On balance it seems to me that things are improving with spring which is the way of nature. There are my personal flaws to consider as a counterpoint. Last month our web hosting company updated the software on our server which broke several parts of the website. I have fixed many of them but several of you have noticed that the roster is still broken. I will get to it. If you need specific contact information feel free to drop me a line at wa6uds@w6sg.net. Fear not, the first things I fixed were the membership application and membership renewal among others. Unsurprisingly now comes my seasonal reminder to renew your membership. Without the roster, you can't look there to see if you are current but if you go to the renewal page <http://w6sg.net/site/members/renew-2/> and follow the instructions it will tell you if you are current or not without having to go near the payment page. This weekend the past due notices will be emailed out. At the end of April I will begin purging the QSA-5 mailing list and change the website password.

I hope this finds you all well 73 de WA6UDS

rsvp@w6sg.net

From the Editor

Greetings! My name is Hugh Patterson, and it is a privilege and honor to serve as the editor of QSA-5. It is my hope that together we can produce a great monthly newsletter. There is an old adage, "it takes a village to raise a child", that I take to heart in my quest to provide a solid publication. By this, I mean that we can work together as the village and develop our club's newsletter, taking it to new and exciting heights. I am new to the Marin Amateur Radio Society, so I count on you to tell me what works for the club newsletter and what does not. My goal is to provide not only an accounting of club meetings (both general and business meetings), but topics that you, the reader, will find both interesting and useful. I expect to go through some growing pains as I streamline our newsletter so it is tailor fit to its readers, so bear with me. Together, we will create a newsletter we can be proud of and other clubs will admire. I highly encourage you to contact me regarding topics you want to see included in our monthly publication. I would like to spotlight some of your projects. You can email me at QSA-5Editor@w6sg.net.

General Membership Meeting: 5 March 2021

Call to Order 19:30 Hours (7:32 PM)

Adopt Agenda M/S/A N/A:

Approve minutes of (not yet published) Board Actions (Curtis) Changed banking setup for new board members Discussed restarting Public Service events New QSA-5 Editor Hugh Patterson KN6KNB QSA-5Editor@W6SG.net New edition coming in April New VE Coordinator Ken Brownfield AB6JR exams@w6sg.net

New Members:

Brian Bailey-Gates KF6SYY – Fairfax

David Goodman KN6NUM - Greenbrae

Fun with Ham Radio:

AI6NF Stan: got on 6 meters for the first time recently. W6JMK John: now administers 4 BBS's for Santa Clara County. KB6HOH Steve: asked about our MARS Facebook page. We don't have the login for it anymore, those are held by a past member who has left. KN6NNB Jamie: now skews our average age downward! KI6NXX Roger: Brought up a space hurricane and what impacts it might have had. KH6GJV Bill: Most ham field events and Pacificon are still on virtual basis if being held at all.

Secretary – Communications:

No news for the group.

Treasurer's Report:

N6VLNB Bruce: Cleaning up the books, chasing down uncashed checks, some duplicate check numbers that date back a long time are being reconciled.

Committee and other Reports:

Marin Amateur Radio Society General Membership Meeting 5 March 2021
Membership Curtis WA6UDS 97 current members / 70% membership renewal rate March is the month when non-renewed members go into arrears as officially past due. By mid-March Curtis will start culling the list of arrears members, site password change, etc. Facilities Skip KJ6ARL Security cams have been installed indoor and out at the clubhouse, with help from Rob NZ6J. Plumber came in and fixed a longstanding leak.

NZ6J brought in a cleaning crew and the clubhouse is now tidy. Working with our tenant to get her a replacement stove, which will be brought up at next board meeting.

Education: N/A

Repeaters:

Doug KF6AKU UHF duplexer for Bahia is in, ready for install soon. (Thanks, Doug, for donating the Sinclair duplexer.)

Misc:

Skip KJ6ARL Tonight's presentation is by an operator who is also somewhat involved w/ a Marin County effort that is exploring a new ham radio operator recruitment project this year in which community-based emergency orgs can tap into a pool of hams, coordinated through the county to give community based orgs a comms layer. We are looking for local hams to get involved in the above. If interested Contact Skip at KJ6ARL@arrl.net

Public Service:

Michael K6MLF Recapped the likelihood of a fair-sized public service season that will clearly be back-loaded into the late part of the year (Sept./Oct.) Dipsea may be our first event, but the odds are 50/50 that it gets postponed until the fall. The P.S. Calendar for 2021 is still too much in flux to be opened yet for volunteers to sign up. (Pam, Stan, Rob and Michael are the current PS team.)

Old Business: Completed

New Business: N/A

Good of the Order

Adjourn M/S/A Adjourned at 8:31pm PT

Post-agenda Presentation:

Andrew LeBlanc VE3VLF discussed setting up the telecommunications systems for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. The conversation later migrated to the coming MERA system Gen 2 upgrade and Andrew acts as the operations officer for MERA. BIO: My career started in 2001 as an engineering co-op student for a cellular provider, Rogers Wireless, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, where I fell in love with wireless communications. Upon graduation, I landed a job as an RF design engineer for Bell Mobility in Vancouver, where I got to build a Nortel 2G 1.9 GHz CDMA network from the ground up. Shortly after that, Bell Canada won the Telecom rights to the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games. I was fortunate enough to get a position where I managed the Wireless Spectrum Program. Under this umbrella, the spectrum program included: building out the first NZ6J brought in a cleaning crew and the clubhouse is now tidy. Working with our tenant to get her a replacement stove, which will be brought up at next board meeting. Education N/A Repeaters Doug KF6AKU UHF duplexer for Bahia is in, ready for install soon. (Thanks, Doug, for donating the Sinclair duplexer.) Misc. Skip KJ6ARL Tonight's presentation is by an operator who is also somewhat involved w/ a Marin County effort that is exploring a new ham radio operator recruitment project this year in which community-based emergency orgs can tap into a pool of hams, coordinated through the county to give community-based orgs a comms layer. We are looking for local hams to get involved in the above. If interested Contact Skip at KJ6ARL@arrl.net Public Service Michael K6MLF Recapped the likelihood of a fair-sized public service season that will clearly be backloaded into the late part of the year (Sept./Oct.) Dipsea may be our first event, but the odds are 50/50 that it gets postponed until the fall. The P.S. Calendar for 2021 is still too much in flux to be opened yet for volunteers to sign up. (Pam, Stan, Rob and Michael are the current PS team.) 700 MHz Astro P25 Radio Network in Canada, cellular coverage enhancements, all radio frequency applications for Olympic Family members, and venue radio communications. After the Vancouver 2010 Games concluded, I moved on to help support the Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games, London 2012 Summer Olympics, Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, the Toronto

2015 Pan American Games in a similar capacity. In 2015 I returned to working with Bell Canada managing the upgrade of the Ontario Province-wide Public Safety Network (Fleetnet) in Toronto and Ottawa, Canada. The network had over 25000 users and comprised over 200 VHF RF sites that provided coverage to 95% of the population (14 million people). After the upgrade In 2019, I got the opportunity to relocate to Tokyo to support 5G connectivity for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. In March 2020, the world took a turn. As I had left my heart in San Francisco many years ago, I relocated, looking at this as an opportunity to apply for my American Citizenship. In November of 2020, I started with the County of Marin, Managing the Radio Telecom team, which is embarking on an extensive network upgrade to P25 and a modernization of all its current systems and process.

Next Meeting: 2 April 2021

Upcoming Presentation (April Meeting)

Nano VNAs are an indispensable tool for anyone involved in radio or electronics. Prior to the advent of the NanoVNA, Vector Network Analyzers were costly. Now, this versatile tool has become extremely affordable. Our own Rob Rowlands NZ6J is giving a presentation about the NanoVNA in a hands-on format, so you might want to get one prior to the presentation. What follows is a write up from Rob.

A Vector network analyzer (VNA) is the ultimate RF test tool for characterizing components. While commercial VNAs can cost up to \$200K, a \$50-100 NanoVNA can put the same functionality in the hands of radio hams. No mere toy, it can be used not only as an antenna analyzer but also to measure filters and cables etc. This presentation is supposed to be hands-on, so if you're interested go to your favorite online retailer and order one.

Rob Rowlands, NZ6J, graduated 50 years ago with a degree in Electrical Engineering and has worked since in the telecommunications industry and test and measurement. He still sells part time and teaches a 1 semester RF lab class at Sonoma state university. This year Covid restrictions necessitated a low-cost alternative to professional lab equipment, and the NanoVNA allowed students to participate from home in a remote zoom lab.

First licensed in 1963, ham radio has been a big part of Rob's life, except for the several decades after he discovered girls.

References:

1. NanoVNA-users@groups.io
2. QST May 2020
3. Countless eham and other reviews
4. The one I have: AURSINC NanoVNA Vector Network Analyzer 10KHz -1.5GHz V3.4 HF VHF UHF Antenna Analyzer Measuring S Parameters, Voltage Standing Wave Ratio, Phase, Delay, Smith Chart
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07T6LXNTV/ref=cm_sw_r_cp_api_glt_fabc_GWB_CR2DSZ517YET1P6AW?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1

Ham Radio News

Each month, we are going to include an article link or two from newspapers and digital magazines regarding ham radio. This month's first article addresses the many roles that ham radio played and continues to play during the Covid-19

Pandemic. It comes to us from The Seattle Times (Washington). While the article is short, it really does a good job describing the radio community in terms of being a place in which members are there for one another and their communities. Here's a link to the full article:

<https://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/separated-by-distance-and-a-pandemic-amateur-radio-enthusiasts-are-connecting-and-checking-in-with-even-greater-frequency/>

This next article comes from the IEEE's Spectrum online magazine. It addresses the future of ham radio. While lengthy, it brings up some interesting points regarding the advancement of technology and ham radio's place in this ever-changing technological world.

<https://spectrum.ieee.org/telecom/wireless/the-uncertain-future-of-ham-radio>

Propagation News

Solar Cycle 25 is here! Well, it really started in December of 2019. However, it may be time to dust off those long wires and get your HF gear in good working order. You can find a good article in the April 2021 issue of the ARRL's QST magazine on page 31. Here's a link to K0LWC's website featuring information about this solar cycle (link on the next page):

<http://k0lwc.com/solar-cycle-25-has-officially-begun/>

DIY Radio References

Here is a list of links to DIY (do it yourself) websites that are useful for ham radio operators. We'll be building up this list in future editions of our club newsletter.

Building Simple Antennas:

<http://www.arrl.org/building-simple-antennas>

Antenna Calculator (online)

http://www.westmountainradio.com/antenna_calculator.php

600 General Links for Ham Radio

<https://ksarrrl.org/deeplink/>

Coming Soon

Over the next few issues, I'll add some additional sections. Some of these will spotlight our club member's projects and the members themselves. One area I'd like to build up is a section on homemade, low-cost antennas. Again, send me suggestions regarding what you want to see in our club newsletter and I'll be happy to include them.