

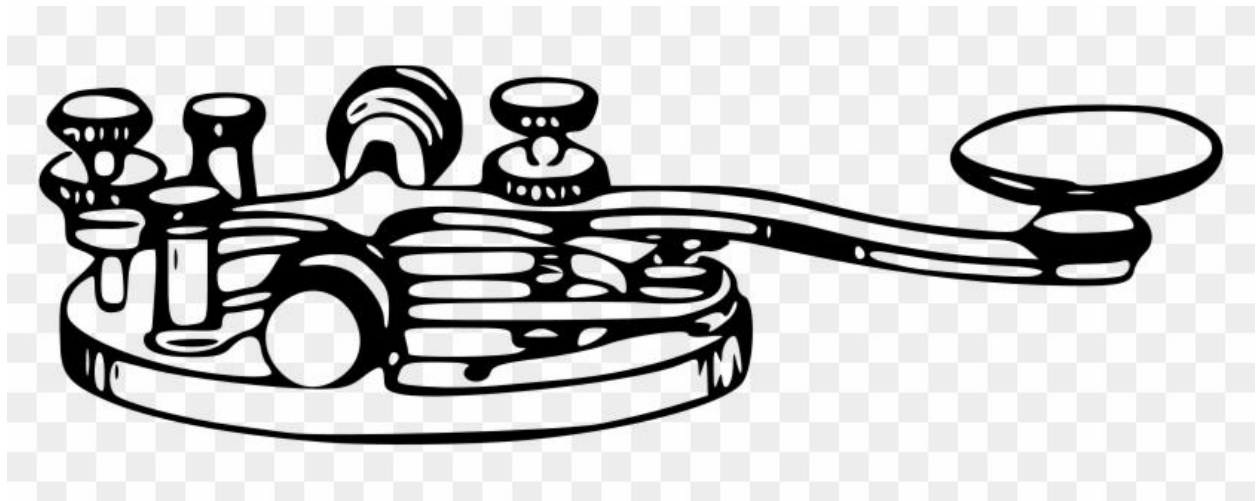


QSA-5

Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Established 1933

March 2024



When all else fails, you can count on Amateur Radio

From Our President:

This whole weather thing is confusing me. It is late February, which I grew up thinking of as winter, and yet it is tee shirt weather although the internet tells me that it is only 61° outside. They are forecasting rain in the next day or so. Punxsutawney Phil indicated an early spring and of course Thursday is leap day. Spring Training has already started. I am convinced that spring is nigh.

In a little over a month, April 6th at 11:00 am at the Clubhouse to be precise, will be the Kickoff of our Public Service season. The club will provide lunch, informative presentations, the opportunity to ask questions, awards, and of course swag. If you participated in public service in 2023 you should attend. If you did not but are interested in learning more, I urge you to show up as well. If you plan to attend, please email rsvp@w6sg.net so we can get a head count.

As part of the whole spring thing the days are getting longer, today the sun sets at 6:01 pm and will be a minute or two later each day. During the years of covid we stopped meeting in person, but we have been back at the clubhouse for a while as we do our monthly meetings in person and on zoom. I understand the convenience of meeting on zoom but face to face meetings offer a social experience that far exceeds the little rectangles of zoom. There is plenty of room at the clubhouse to spread out and if you are still cautious, please wear a mask. We are getting around six to eight people right now, but I would love to see more of you.

While we are on the topic of meeting in person, we are looking for ways to revitalize the Sunday morning get togethers at the clubhouse. What was often called Babble Class. These take place every Sunday morning starting at 10 am and usually break up around 1 pm. They are unstructured and the club provides coffee and donuts or other treats. There has been some talk about setting up a code practice session, which we did in the past. We are looking for someone to lead this. If you are interested in leading or improving your CW please let me know. It is also being bruited about to move some of the North Bay 2 Meter Critical Mass sessions to the clubhouse. We have a place to meet face to face, we should use it.

Of course, this would not be a spring issue of QSA-5 with me reminding you to renew your membership. You are still in the grace period but at the end of March

if you have not renewed you will get another reminder and then you will be dropped from the email list.

Have a happy leap day and see you at the meeting on Friday. 73 de wa6uds

From the Editor:

Greetings Everyone! The Ides of March are almost upon us! I hope everyone made it through that series of storms we had, although the first month of 2023 was far worse. Going into the third month of the new year, things are moving along with the Marin Amateur Radio Club. The pandemic that once seemed to hang over our collective heads like Damocles' sword, is now a footnote in our collective history. It's nice to get back to normal living!

In the sometimes-crazy world we live in, I'm thankful that amateur radio hasn't changed in terms of its goals. While technology has advanced incredibly, the basic, underlying science and ethics have remained unchanged. Thankfully, you cannot change the physics behind radio communications. Of course, a hundred years from now, scientists will probably laugh at us in the here and now, wondering how we could think that radio works the way it does.

As always, things are moving along here at the QSA-5. I simply do the typing, cut and pasting, and occasionally turn the rudder to ensure the boat is going in the right direction. It is you, the readers, who make this publication what it is. Therefore, I'd like to thank the usual suspects (you know who you are) for your contributions. A special thanks to Curtiss Kim for his piece on the RCV. I couldn't do this without you. Keep those comments and suggestions coming, and I'll get them onto the page of the QSA-5. Happy March everyone!

QSA-5Editor@w6sg.net



New Members:

Jeff Curry KK6JJZ - San Francisco





“Your parents hath given you a name. And the FCC hath given you another...”



Marin Amateur Radio Society - Board of Directors Meeting
8 February 2024

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

Attendance:

President: Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS

Director Richard Cochran AG6QR

Director: Ed Essick K6ELE

Director Steve Toquinto KB6HOH

Secretary James Saltzgaber KM6WWY – Arranged Absence

Director Jeffrey Young KM6Y – Arranged Absence

Treasurer Bruce Bartel N6VLB

Trustee W6SG Marc Bruvry KF6VNT

Member Oliver Lu KM6BON

Member Rob Rolands NZ6J

Member Don Magdanz KI6MZX

Adopt agenda Items added to agenda: Steve Toquinto - Club picnic. Marc Bruvry - Follow ARRL lead in granting membership to students. MSC that agenda be

adopted as amended.

Approve minutes of 11 January board meeting. MSC minutes approved as published in QSA-5

Secretary's Report/Communications no secretary report

Treasurer's Report Paid property tax, 2nd installment, plus painting charge, tenant rental is slightly late. Bruce says we have about \$57,000 in current cash, more than \$30,000 of that is the NBAM grant. One more \$7,000 painting payment will be due. So it's roughly \$20,000 available.

Committee and other Reports:

1. **Membership:** Curtis 64% of last year have renewed
2. **Facilities:** Skip No report
3. **Public Service:** Rob
 - a. 2024 Calendar Approved
 - b. Don Magdanz introduced himself as a new member of the Public Service team and mentioned that he has a goal of getting a radio in every SAG.
 - c. Oliver Lu introduced himself as a new member of the Public Service Team.
 - d. Curtis talked about separating COMM truck maintenance from the Public Service committee and making it a separate MARS committee that reports directly to the board. Rob commented that it makes the Public Service budget easier. The current Comm Truck committee is: Rob Rowlands NZ6J, Stan Whitherspoon AI6NF, Milt Hyams KM6ASI, Jim Saltzgaber KM6WWY. To add Oliver Lu KM6BON, Don Magdanz KI6MZX. MSC to separate the Comm truck maintenance from public service committee.
 - e. Rob talked about the budget, said it would be similar to last year's except that Rod & Gun club would not be rented, and there would be

some APRS equipment purchased. Estimates budget to be around \$3650.

- f. Curtis talked about the document that described the public service working arrangements, and asked if it could be approved. MSC to endorse the public service document.
 - g.
4. **Technical** Milt No report
 5. **VE Testing** Jim No report
 6. **VOAD/RCV** Skip No report
 7. **NBAM** - Bruce reported some activities are ongoing but due to scheduling issues the steering committee will not be able to meet until mid-March.
 8. **Comm truck** Jim No report

Old Business

1. Separate Comm Truck Committee from Public Service Committee – See item d under Public Service.
2. New members for Public Service Committee – See items b and c under Public Service.
3. Including board member's contact info on the Board Member page of the website. – Some members have supplied emails. Discussed generic email forwarders.
4. Paint the Clubhouse Fund – It was agreed that we will set a target of asking members to match 50% of the cost of the paint work. Curtis will put a status thermometer on the website. An email and on-air campaign will be started.

New Business

1. Bylaws update committee – Bruce, Ed, and Curtis volunteered to be committee to revise bylaws. Revisions will probably be prepared and then published so that they can be voted on by the membership during the November board election. Topics may include are not limited to: Change meeting date of board to Thursday after the Friday general meeting, granting 1-year honorary memberships, confirming trustees.
2. MARS Credit Card (Zoom, Election Buddy, Mailchimp, Hostgator, &c. – Bruce asked that existing resolution to create NBAM bank account be amended to include the credit card so that the bank visit can include all account changes. Curtis to prepare a revised resolution and bring it up at the March meeting.
3. Remembering Randy Jenkins KA6BQF – The public service team has suggested that a remembrance will be part of the Public Service Kickoff on April 6, 2024.
4. Regular cleaning of the clubhouse meeting room. - The Facilities committee has been directed to obtain estimates for this service. Mark suggested weekly cleaning as an option.
5. Public Service event calendar – See Public Service item A.
6. Club Picnic – Steve suggested that we should start planning the club picnic. He graciously volunteered to head the committee. Curtis said he would assist. The sense of the board was that the same location as last year at Stafford Lake would be a good location.
7. Follow ARRL suggestion about providing incentives to students. The sense of the board was to instruct Curtis to grant honorary memberships to any active student who is seeking or has an active license. Ultimately this will need to be part of the bylaws revision but can be accommodated for the time being by the discretion afforded the membership chair for special cases. There was additional discussion about outreach to schools.

Adjourn Adjourned at approximately 9:15pm

Respectfully Submitted 2/10/24 by Curtis Ardourel with the invaluable assistance of Richard Cochran AG6QR for taking detailed notes.

2024 MARS Public Service dates

1. Kaiser 5k and half marathon: SFRC Sunday, February 4, 2024 DMR Radio required. - **Cancelled due to weather!**
2. Public service briefing and lunch: Saturday April 6, 2024, 1100 to 1400 hrs, Location: Clubhouse.
3. Ridge to Bridge: Saturday, April 13 Requesting 16 MARS volunteers: Pam and Oliver organizing.
4. MCBC Jane Fondo Saturday April 27 2024 Women's mountain bike event 18 at aid stations, 3 accompany SAGs, 1 moto, 1 biker Don Magdanz, Event Organizer at Net Control.
5. Miwok 100K, Saturday, May 4, 2024 18 at aid stations, 3 hikers Rob organizing.
6. Dipsea: 113th Annual Dipsea will be run on Sunday, June 9th, 2024 7am-2pm 20 needed (Stinson/County Comm Truck) Rob to organize. Don Magdanz, Finish Truck and Information Tent.
7. Field Day: June 22/23, 2024 Stafford Lake Park 1800z (11am) to 2100z (2pm Sunday) <http://www.arrl.org/field-day-rules>.

8. MCBC Dirt Fondo: Saturday, July 20, 2024, 6am - 3pm 18 needed (/Fort Cronkite/Comm Truck) Michael Fischer, Event Organizer at Net Control.
9. San Francisco Marathon SFRC Saturday/Sunday July 27-28, 2024.
10. Marin Century: Saturday August 3, 2024, 5:00am-8pm 34 needed (Stafford Lake/Comm Truck) Don Magdanz, Event Organizer at Net Control.
11. Double Dipsea: Saturday August 24, 2024, 6:30am-1:30pm 18 needed (Stinson/Comm Truck) Pam and Stan to organize.
12. MCBC Adventure Revival. Saturday, September 21, 2024 7:30am-3pm. 15 needed. (San Geronimo former golf course/Comm Truck?) Don Magdanz, Event Organizer at Net Control.
13. ZBC Dipsea Hike: Saturday, September 21, 2014 (Comms Organizer TBD) 7am-2pm, 8 needed (Old Mill).
14. Breast Cancer Prevention Partners Peak Hike: **Moved to Pacifica in 2023, no MARS radio support required.**
15. MDARC Pacificon ham convention San Ramon Marriott October 8-20, 2024.
16. Dolphin Club Escape from Alcatraz Saturday, October 5, 2024 10am-6pm. 8 needed, organizer TBD.

**The MARS Public Service team:
Roles, Responsibilities and Duties**

December 2023

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The MARS Board achieves that duty by appointing skilled volunteers to manage the program, by assuring them of the support required and by providing only that limited oversight to assure themselves that the program is being managed well.

The purpose of this paper is to set out the duties of the Public Service team so that the Board—and the team—understand the scope and nature of the volunteer activities necessary to continue to maintain the standards established over the past several decades. The Board should expect a confidence-inspiring report on the program at every monthly meeting.

II. The Schedule

- Begin working on the schedule in November of the preceding year.
- Meet with legacy event organizers early in their own schedule-making to minimize calendar-conflicts with Marin as well as Sonoma and San Francisco events.
- Be open to—and reach out to—other organizations that might benefit by our support.
- Take the schedule to the Board for approval in February or March
- At this meeting, the Board should review, modify if necessary and approve The Documents (see below)

- Keep Marin County Fire Dept informed of the overall schedule early and as the season progresses; Battalion Chief Brett McTigue is the contact, though he is due for retirement in the near future.

III. The Budget

- Brought to the Board in February or March as a separate item from the schedule of proposed events. There are three separate components to the public service budget:
 - The kickoff event: awards, food, door prizes, giveaways related to operating in an event.
 - Expenses for equipment to be purchased by the committee: caps, vests, gold stars, banners, radios, antennas, portable repeaters, etc.
 - Comm truck: This separate budget item should be presented in coordination with the separate Comm Truck committee. While the principal use of the comm truck is for supporting public service events, the Board may well have other projects and programs for the truck with equipment and maintenance expenses beyond those needed for the public service program.

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- This annual event, held at least several weeks prior to the first event, serves four purposes: 1) to recognize, motivate and reward those who volunteered the previous season; 2) to make explicit MARS' expectations (the position description and code of conduct); 3) to recruit volunteers for all of the events in the season and 4) to provide training for the upcoming season.
- Where will it be held? Clubhouse? Stafford Lake? Marin Rod & Gun Club? Responsible for making arrangements wherever; date and location are items that might require approval by the Board
- Speakers from two or three of the organizations to be supported (this helps to strengthen the recognition that we are part of their event team)
- Awards (gold stars)
- Door prizes
- Handouts to all of items that will be useful in the field, eg clipboards as well as the caps and vests.

- Training—especially the position description and code of conduct but also prowords, emergency protocol; this part should not be pro-forma. Add in the kind of role-playing that Cooley has given the past two years.

V. The people

- Actively recruit and train new operators; use the Critical Mass mailing list and other tactics in this element of the program.
- Actively recruit experienced volunteers for each event, starting (but not ending) at the kickoff.
- Learn which operators are best with which roles.
- Learn which operators can be counted on—and not.
- Be cognizant of potential (or actual) personality conflicts as teams are assembled.
- Constant attention to recognition, praise, thanks, motivation in a variety of ways before, during and after every event.
- Be especially careful in assembling the net control teams—their comportment and competence will be the principal way that the event organizers weigh our performance. Weave less-experienced operators into NC teams as possible, but always carefully and mindfully. Assure that every member of the team knows “The Documents” (see below) by heart.
- A member of the Public Service team should be on every Marin net before and during the season—the Sunday morning net and the several Tuesday evening nets.

VI. The client organizations

- Meet with them in their offices if appropriate at the beginning of the season and again in the weeks before the event. Know the names of staff or volunteers on their side and ensure that they know you.
- Know their organization’s mission in detail. Be familiar with their website; in conversation with them, make them aware of your firm grasp of what they are all about—build a close rapport with them.
- Invite several of their spokespersons to the kickoff.
- Be at the start-finish several hours before the start time to help them set up. Help provide parking assistance, pop-up tent erection, unload the trucks...whatever’s helpful and appropriate. Again, this is about instilling

confidence, and team building with the organizers—separate from the team-building with our own operators.

VII. The events

- Get course maps to post on our website.
- Prepare in advance for the Thursday-before Zoom pre-briefing so that it is succinct, well-organized, gives the volunteers all the information they need and leaves them with confidence that all is well in hand.
- Fashion your draft frequency plan and duty roster well in advance and be prepared to modify it several times up to the night before the event.
- Check with the volunteer list—in the weeks and months since they signed up, their lives may well have changed.
- Request that MARS be named on their event insurance; get a copy of the insurance coverage form and give it to the MARS secretary for filing. If we will be using another club's repeaters, get the same named coverage for them.
- Provide the MARS logo to the event organizer with a request that we be recognized on their website, banners, tee-shirts, etc.
- If they give recognition for in-kind contributions, ask that our name be on that list.
- Make sure the first shift at net control is there a full hour or more before start time to set up and be on the air.
- In addition to whatever reporting the event organizers wish, all operators should keep a record of the time they arrived on station; the time they were set up and ready to transmit; the time the rest stop volunteers arrived and were set up, the time the first participant arrived, the time the last participant arrived (and left) the time the rest stop volunteers departed and the time the operators closed down their station. They should also be encouraged to take photographs of their setup. Any unusual incidents should also be reported.

VIII. The Radios

- Test, test, test the coverage of various repeaters as you drive or hike the course prior to making your frequency plan.
- Use as few repeaters as possible.

- If Sonoma County repeaters are required, get permission well in advance, get their named-insurance certificates.
- Assume that the comm truck's radios will fail or that it will get a flat tire on the way to the event. Make sure the first shift at net control has tables and chairs and a full radio and antenna setup to get on the air without delay.
- Do you plan to use APRS tracking for sweeps and/or SAGs? If so, make sure the equipment is available and the repeaters' coverage is sufficient.
- Similarly, if you propose to use DMR radio for any part of the comms plan, check equipment and repeater coverage.

IX. The website

- Be facile with Google docs to use for the volunteer list, the duty roster and maps to the rest stops.
- Working with the Board-designated webmaster, make sure the public service section is easy to use and inviting (it needs a major overhaul.)
- Be a regular (weekly) visitor to the website to make sure information is up to date and accurate.
- Post photos and maps to assist operators to get to their locations.
- Make sure The Documents (see below) are prominently posted on the website and request that every operator check them prior to each event.

X. The Documents

- The Board should review the following documents at the beginning of each season and make any appropriate changes. The Board should request the public service team to create a special program to assure that all operators are familiar with their provisions and agree to follow them.
 - Position description.
 - Code of conduct.
 - Accident and emergency protocols (Public service team should ask the Marin County Fire Dept to review this each year)
 - List of prowords.

XI. After-event duties

- Send an email to all operators with repeated thanks and atta-boys/gals. Describe what went well and what we will work on to make better in future. It's impossible to be too corny in expressing thanks and appreciation—

that's an essential ingredient in motivating volunteers. Call out several operators who did an especially good job.

- Repeat that thanks and appreciation on all Sunday and Tuesday nets following an event.
- Collate/assemble the reports from the operators (see "The Event" above)
- Post photos on MARS website.
- Meet with the organizers for an after-action conversation. Give them the results of the operators' reports on the timing of each rest stop. Discuss any changes they might have in mind for next year. Give them attaboys for a job well done.
- Fill out the ARRL report for each event and send it in to Antonis Papatsaras.

XII. Staffing

Clearly, these duties (yes, 65 bullet-points) are beyond the abilities or time one volunteer leader can devote to MARS principal activity. A team of two and at the most three can do so—and has done so for the past 15+ years. The team needs to have a demonstrated combination of **technical** skills, **management**/organizational skills and **people**/motivational skills. It's the Board's duty to recruit, appoint and support (but not second-guess) a team with a combination of all three.

XII. The role of the Board

1. Set goals for the Public Service Committee.
2. Set specific expectations for the Public Service Committee to:
 - a. Prepare and seek board approval for annual public service calendar.
 - b. Prepare and seek board approval for a Public Service budget.
 - c. Keep the board informed on activities.
 - d. Bring any new events to the board for approval.
3. Appoint the members of the Public Service Committee.
4. Understand that the Public Service Committee must have a degree of autonomy and that issues that arise around Public Service Events will be resolved through discussion with the Public Service Committee with the explicit understanding that the board must act in the best interests of the club.

Marin Amateur Radio Club

Balance Sheet Comparison

As of February 28, 2024

	TOTAL	
	AS OF FEB 28, 2024	AS OF FEB 28, 2023 (PY)
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
B of A Facilities Account - 8795	5,385.61	5,917.13
B of A General account - 4328	59,376.95	41,848.74
Cash on hand		
MESH Grant (deleted)	0.00	500.00
Total Cash on hand	0.00	500.00
CD	0.00	0.00
Money Market	0.00	0.00
VE Session Cash	0.00	-87.00
VE Session Cash Received	0.00	
Total Bank Accounts	\$64,762.56	\$48,178.87
Other Current Assets		
Uncategorized Asset	385.00	-95.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$385.00	\$ -95.00
Total Current Assets	\$65,147.56	\$48,083.87
Fixed Assets		
club house- 27 Shell Rd. MV	58,983.00	58,983.00
Total Fixed Assets	\$58,983.00	\$58,983.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$124,130.56	\$107,066.87
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Total Liabilities		
Equity		

Opening Balance Net Assets	124,400.00	124,900.00
Retained Earnings	13,748.91	-20,412.57
Net Income	-14,018.35	2,579.44
Total Equity	\$124,130.56	\$107,066.87
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$124,130.56	\$107,066.87

Marin Amateur Radio Club

Profit and Loss

January 1 - February 28, 2024

TOTAL

	JAN 1 - FEB 28, 2024	JAN - FEB, 2023 (PY YTD)
Income		
Christmas Party Income	640.00	
Donations	200.00	1,517.69
Dues	110.00	225.00
Interest Income		792.77
Rent	5,200.00	5,200.00
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	385.00	
Total Income	\$6,535.00	\$7,735.46
GROSS PROFIT	\$6,535.00	\$7,735.46
Expenses		
Accounting	60.00	110.00
Awards		299.99
Car & Truck		695.94
Christmas Party	2,970.23	

Contractors	11,000.00	
Field day		122.97
Garbage	99.00	95.68
Insurance		
Comm Van Insurance	138.50	
Total Insurance	138.50	
Other Business Expenses		104.93
Public Service Expense		1,328.83
Reimbursable Expenses	20.00	87.33
Repeater	1,246.67	1,465.08
Taxes & Licenses	4,049.67	
Utilities	739.74	653.16
VE Session		87.00
Water	79.54	105.11
Total Expenses	\$20,403.35	\$5,156.02
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$ -13,868.35	\$2,579.44
Other Expenses		
MESH Grant Disbursement	150.00	
Total Other Expenses	\$150.00	\$0.00
NET OTHER INCOME	\$ -150.00	\$0.00
NET INCOME	\$ -14,018.35	\$2,579.44

LIFE IS SIMPLE



MARS Club News

MARS Public Service sub-committee is seeking new blood for 2024!

From **Rob Rowlands** NZ6J: Our public service program in Marin is one of the Club's major outreach activities. Our client organizations need us more here than in other geographies, thanks to our challenging terrain and excellent repeater infrastructure. The clients include the Dipsea foot race, the Marin Century bike event, the Miwok 100 Ultramarathon, and others. Our program

for next year can be seen

at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nXczB2l8pUczjGduGx54Ob-m5wLAdFu0Lmnje8K3UAQ/edit?usp=sharing>. This Google doc is still preliminary, pending approval by our Board, and once done operators can use it sign up for specific events.

The duties of event organizers are outlined in this excellent document by emeritus Convenor, Michael K6MLF! <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-VeFBtMrrP2Z3xrOHYQg372t7c0hrROhxruM0qn8JN0/edit?usp=sharing>. Over the 20 years I have been involved, Michael and others including Randy KA6BQF, Larry KK6QPE, and more recently Pam N6PDW and Stan AI6NF, have refined our playbook to ensure the best service to our clients and the best experiences for the operators. It's a very rewarding way to deal with our community and also to get out on the trail! There's a lifetime supply of T-shirts in your future!

If you would like to join our subcommittee, please either contact Curtis WA6UDS or myself.

73,

Rob Rowlands NZ6J soon to be emeritus hopefully!

Here is the relative documentation that will give interested parties an idea of what they are committing to, should they volunteer:

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VII. The events

- Get course maps to post on our website.
- Prepare in advance for the Thursday-before Zoom pre-briefing so that it is succinct, well-organized, gives the volunteers all the information they need and leaves them with confidence that all is well in hand.
- Fashion your draft frequency plan and duty roster well in advance and be prepared to modify it several times up to the night before the event.
- Check with the volunteer list—in the weeks and months since they signed up, their lives may well have changed.
- Request that MARS be named on their event insurance; get a copy of the insurance coverage form and give it to the MARS secretary for filing. If we will be using another club's repeaters, get the same named coverage for them.
- Provide the MARS logo to the event organizer with a request that we be recognized on their website, banners, tee-shirts, etc.
- If they give recognition for in-kind contributions, ask that our name be on that list.
- Make sure the first shift at net control is there a full hour or more before start time to set up and be on the air.
- In addition to whatever reporting the event organizers wish, all operators should keep a record of the time they arrived on station; the time they were set up and ready to transmit; the time the rest stop volunteers arrived and were set up, the time the first participant arrived, the time the last participant arrived (and left) the time the rest stop volunteers departed and the time the operators closed down their station. They should also be encouraged to take photographs of their setup. Any unusual incidents should also be reported.

VIII. The Comm Truck

- The Comm truck committee will be responsible for routine maintenance, tires, tower lube, etc. But the public service team must do a final check for each event.
- In the week before an event, wash the truck.
- Fill up the fuel tank.
- Check that the radios are programmed and working.
- Make sure that the items you will need at net control are aboard: white board, popup tent, large-screen monitor, tables, chairs, paper, pencils, forms, water...
- Who will be driving the comm truck to the event? Who will return it? Who will put it away with the trash emptied, gear stowed? (Drivers must be listed on the Club's insurance!)

IX. The Radios

- Test, test, test the coverage of various repeaters as you drive or hike the course prior to making your frequency plan.
- Use as few repeaters as possible.
- If Sonoma County repeaters are required, get permission well in advance, get their named insurance certificates.
- Assume that the comm truck's radios will fail or that it will get a flat tire on the way to the event. Make sure the first shift at net control has tables and chairs and a full radio and antenna setup to get on the air without delay.
- Do you plan to use APRS tracking for sweeps and/or SAGs? If so, make sure the equipment is available and the repeaters' coverage is sufficient.
- Similarly, if you propose to use DMR radio for any part of the comms plan, check equipment and repeater coverage.

X. The website

- Be facile with Google docs to use for the volunteer list, the duty roster and maps to the rest stops.
- Working with the Board-designated webmaster, make sure the public service section is easy to use and inviting (it needs a major overhaul.)

- Be a regular (weekly) visitor to the website to make sure information is up to date and accurate.
- Post photos and maps to assist operators to get to their locations.
- Make sure The Documents (see below) are prominently posted on the website and request that every operator check them prior to each event.

XI. The Documents

- The Board should review the following documents at the beginning of each season and make any appropriate changes. The Board should request the public service team to create a special program to assure that all operators are familiar with their provisions and agree to follow them.
- Position description.
- Code of conduct.
- Accident and emergency protocols (Public service team should ask the Marin County Fire Dept to review this each year).
- List of prowords.

XII. After-event duties

- Send an email to all operators with repeated thanks and attaboys/gals. Describe what went well and what we will work on to make better in future. It's impossible to be too corny in expressing thanks and appreciation—that's an essential ingredient in motivating volunteers. Call out several operators who did an especially good job.
- Repeat that thanks and appreciation on all Sunday and Tuesday nets following an event.
- Collate/assemble the reports from the operators (see "The Event" above).
- Post photos on MARS website.
- Meet with the organizers for an after-action conversation. Give them the results of the operators' reports on the timing of each rest stop. Discuss any changes they might have in mind for next year. Give them attaboys for a job well done.
- Fill out the ARRL report for each event and send it in to Bill Hillendahl.

XIII. Staffing

Clearly, these duties (yes, 65 bullet-points) are beyond the abilities or time one volunteer leader can devote to MARS principal activity. A team of two and at the most three can do so—and has done so for the past 15+ years. The team needs to have a demonstrated combination of **technical** skills, **management**/organizational skills and **people**/motivational skills. It's the Board's duty to recruit, appoint and support (but not second-guess) a team with a combination of all three.

XIV. The role of the Board

Once the committee is appointed, the Board should avoid the error of second-guessing decisions of the Committee. Members of the Board are not on the committee and should not act as though they are. When the Board approves the schedule and budget, it should specifically identify items on which they wish to be consulted—for example, whether to add a new event, say, or the location of the kickoff meeting. The board should expect a progress report at each meeting but should not take that as an opportunity to counter or modify decisions made by the Committee. (Even if the Board does not agree with those decisions!) The Board, of course, may make suggestions along the way; but its role is strictly limited to selecting the members of the committee, approving their roles and responsibilities, approving the schedule and budget. Period.

Prepared by Rob Rowlands NZ6J and Michael Fischer K6MLF

December 4, 2023

Reformatted to Google Docs by Rob Rowlands

December 7, 2023

2024 MARS Public Service dates

1. **Kaiser 5k and half marathon: SFARC Sunday, February 4, 2024**
DMR Radio required DMR Repeater (W6PW) Digital channel
RX:444.225,TX:449.225 Color Code (CC): 1 Timeslot (TS): 2 Talkgroup(TG) 9

2. **Public service briefing and lunch: Saturday April 6, 2024,1100 to 1400 hrs, Location: to be decided**

3. **Ridge to Bridge: Saturday, April 14** Requesting 16 MARS volunteers:

4. **MCBC Jane Fondo Saturday April 27 2024** Womens mountain bike event
18 at aid stations, 3 accompany SAGs, 1 moto, 1 biker
Don Magdanz, Event Organizer at Net Control

5. **Miwok 100K, Saturday, May 4, 2024**
18 at aid stations, 3 hikers

6. **Dipsea: 113th Annual Dipsea will be run on Sunday, June 9th, 2024** 7am-2pm 20 needed
(Stinson/County CommTruck)
Don Magdanz, Finish Truck and Information Tent

7. **Field Day: June 22/23, 2024** Stafford Lake Park 1800z (11am) to 2100z (2pm Sunday) <http://www.arrl.org/field-day-rules>

8. **MCBC Dirt Fondo: Saturday, July 20, 2024**, 6am - 3pm 18 needed (/Fort Cronkhite/CommTruck)
Don Magdanz, Event Organizer at Net Control

9. San Francisco Marathon **Saturday/Sunday July 27-28, 2024**

10. [Marin Century](#): **Saturday August 3, 2024**, 5:00am-8pm 34 needed (Stafford Lake/CommTruck) Don Magdanz, Event Organizer at Net Control

11. **Double Dipsea: Saturday August 24, 2024**, (Comms Organizer TBD) 6:30am-1:30pm 18 needed (Stinson/CommTruck)

12. [MCBC Adventure Revival](#). **Saturday, September 21, 2024** 7:30am-3pm. 15 needed. (San Geronimo former golf course/CommTruck?) Don Magdanz, Event Organizer at Net Control

13. [ZBC Dipsea Hike](#): **Saturday, September 21, 2014** (Comms Organizer TBD) 7am-2pm, 8 needed (Old Mill)

14. **Breast Cancer Prevention Partners Peak Hike**: Moved to Pacifica in 2023, no MARS radio support required.

15. **MDARC Pacificon** ham convention San Ramon Marriott **October ? 2024**

16. **Dolphin Club Escape from Alcatraz Sunday, October 5, 2024** 10am-6pm. 8 needed (Old Mill) Could certainly use 20, if more folks are interested, please!

From the editor of the QSA-5: For those interested in this volunteer position, here are a sample of the type of event the club and volunteer position covers from May of 2023. This was also put together and provided by Rob Rolands:

Proposed RACES/ACS Field Event Saturday May 6, 2023

Further to discussion at the RACES leadership meeting 1/14/2023, we could combine the MARS Public Service Event for the Miwok 100 with a parallel RACES exercise to ascertain baseline Marin repeater's performance.

As there is little Miwok 100 activity in the morning, I suggest from 10am to noon we run an overlapping repeater check. Operators additional to those assigned to the rest stops would need to deploy to non-Miwok 100 sites, as shown in table 2. Operators at Miwok 100 sites would of course defer to any Miwok 100 traffic!

Here are the 2022 Assignments:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B3EbbmBZ3L0HZGHGqco_7vG1yMngiyST0G8OWITQj2w/edit?usp=sharing

Table 1: These are the Miwok 100 sites:

Site	Primary repeater	Other repeaters
Stinson Beach Net control at Fire Station	147.330 MHz PL 192.8 Tam West VHF	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Barnabe UHF, Big Rock UHF
BOFAX aka Bolinas Ridge (Trail & Bolinas Fairfax Road)	147.330 MHz PL 192.8 Tam West VHF	English Hill, Sonoma Mtn, Diablo, Simulcast, all UHF
Randall Trail (Hwy 1 and Randall Trailhead)	147.330 MHz PL 192.8 Tam West VHF	Simulcast, Barnabe UHF, English Hill
Muir Beach (Muir Beach Parking Lot)	147.330 MHz PL 192.8 Tam West VHF	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Barnabe UHF, Big Rock UHF

Tennessee Valley (End of Tennessee Valley Road)	147.330 MHz PL 192.8 Tam West VHF	Simulcast, Station 9 UHF, Tam UHF, K6ER UHF,
Gerbode Stables (Bunker Road)	147.330 MHz PL 192.8 Tam West VHF	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, K6ER UHF
Cardiac Hill	147.330 MHz PL 192.8 Tam West VHF	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Barnabe UHF, Big Rock UHF. K6ER UHF, Station 9 UHF

Table 2: Other sites to check. Require deployment of mast antenna and 50W mobile radio if none already exist. RCV has already tested many of these paths

EOC at Los Gamos, preferably from radio room	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Barnabe UHF, Big Rock UHF, English Hill, Sonoma Mtn
Coast guard station at Fort Baker	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Big Rock UHF, Station 9 UHF, K6ER UHF, W6PW Sutro
Nicasio School	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Barnabe UHF, Big Rock UHF, English Hill, Sonoma Mtn
Stinson Beach School	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Barnabe UHF, Big Rock UHF, W6ER, W6PW Sutro
San Geronimo Old Golf Course	Simulcast (all 4 inputs), Tam UHF, Barnabe UHF, Big Rock UHF
Walker Creek	
Valley Forde	
Tomales	
Fallon-Two Rock	

Please add comments or populate table 2!

Plan of Action

During the RACES activity each of the Table 2 stations should endeavor to get signal reports from each of the Table 1 Miwok stations as Event traffic allows. As well as testing Tam West, where possible as many of the external repeaters should also be tested. A spreadsheet

Rob Rowlands NZ6J
415 849 5667

RCV News

In time of disaster, amateur radio operators are often the only form of real communication when cellphones and the internet are down. Across the Country and the globe, small groups of dedicated ham operators prepare for the moment disaster strikes. Here in Marin County, we have the RCV, led by Skip Fedanzo KJ6ARL. The QSA-5 will continue to cover this crucial part of amateur radio. We highly suggest that our newer members become involved with the RCV. It's a great way to gain radio skills. Here's an article written by Curtiss Kim about the RCV:

Radio Communication Volunteers (RCV) has moved to guarantee radio coverage for one community-based organization moving to new headquarters. Canal Alliance is moving into two adjacent buildings at 711 Grand Avenue in San Rafael after renting offices for years. The organization has been set up in two separate

buildings in the center of the Canal area of San Rafael at 91 Larkspur Street and 86 Belvedere Avenue. The agency is expected to keep 91 Larkspur as a satellite



operation with a food bank and clinic. It was important to see if the two locations could be tied together point to point with a simplex channel. In addition, each location was tested for connectivity to the repeaters on San Rafael Hill, Big Rock and Mt. Tam. RCV volunteers also tested communications between the two Canal location and the nearby San Francisco Marin Food Bank using both VHF and UHF simplex frequencies.

Taking part in the site testing, Ann Shores, K6SHO, Dirck Brinckerhoff, KM6VKQ, Curtiss

Kim, KM6GUY and Lead Operator of RCV, Skip Fedanzo, KJ6ARL. Mobile equipment was used in the testing with a power output of 20 watts. The move to a new location for its headquarters will allow the nonprofit to continue strengthening its programs and services for the Latino community. Over the years the Canal Alliance has helped thousands of Latinofamilies with legal services, education, and career programs with a goal of overcoming barriers to success. The organization has been working closely with RCV to ensure vital services will continue in the event an emergency or disaster should occur in Marin County. RCV has already scheduled a meeting in March where the various service organizations will meet with volunteer members to discuss concerns, future plans and additional services.



ACS/RCV Mission Statement

Mission: During national, regional, or local emergencies provide effective backup radiocommunications in support of the EOC/VOAD and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) or other non-public safety agencies within the Marin County OA when requested by competent authority.

Capabilities: Proven ability to establish and maintain radio communications between OA EOC/VOAD and CBOs during exercises including the three annual Golden Eagle and two Great Shakeout exercises. Ability to deploy and operate portable stations as needed to establish reliable communications in areas that are otherwise out of touch with the EOC/VOAD.

Resources: Develop and maintain the resources that may be needed to support the overall mission:

1. Operators – A corps of trusted radio operators with: (1) basic skills and a commitment to establishing radio communications when needed; (2) ongoing participation, training, and practice in accurately passing message traffic using a variety of basic analog and specialized digital means.
2. Mobile stations – Individual operators routinely test and maintain their own radio transceivers and related equipment including power supplies, which can be deployed to locations otherwise lacking reliable communications with the EOC/VOAD or between two or more CBOs.
3. Relationships – Establish on-going relationships of familiarity and trust between RCV operators and with key staff of served agencies, including EOC and VOAD.

RVC Phone Number Request

In case any of you RCV members missed this email: We're building a web site for RCV. A question has arisen about whether all RCV Operators are willing to have their cell phone number shared by RCV with other RCV members – but not with CBOs or other potential RCV clients.

Please think about this and let me know ONLY IF YOU OBJECT TO THIS SHARING. If we hear no response from you by next Thursday 02/15/2024, that will be interpreted as your assent to share your cell number among all RCV Operators.

Thank you & 73,
Skip Fedanzo KJ6ARL

RCV Workshop with CBO Clients

Date: Friday, March 8

Time: 9:00am - 12:00pm

Location: 3240 Kerner Blvd, San Rafael, Rooms 109/110

More information will be forthcoming soon as we learn more about what the CBOs want to cover in this workshop/tabletop event. Meanwhile, if you think of any topics you believe could be worthwhile to include, please let me know.

We expect there will be some new CBO representatives attending for you to meet. Getting to know who's who among our CBO clients is essential for all RCV Operators. You are strongly encouraged to attend!

Thank you & stay safe,

Skip Fedanzo KJ6ARL

RCV Lead Operator

Agenda RCV Operators Meeting

RCV Operators VIRTUAL Meeting

The monthly RCV Operators meeting is Monday February 26 th at 1730.

1. Summary of communications test on 2/10 between Canal Alliance's new facility and its operational building(s) in San Rafael
2. Update on discussions with OEM/EOC management:
 - a. On-boarding processes
 - b. Activation procedures and authority
 - c. Operator qualifications
3. Field tests and exercises:
 - a. March 8 th Workshop with CBOs. Details to follow.
 - b. A new UHF repeater at Muir Beach will be tested this spring as part of larger coastal simplex & repeater exercise. Date is TBD.
 - c. Deployment shuffle exercise – use your copy of the CBO Profiles document. This will test us under No-Notice conditions as well as for multi-day operations. Date is TBD.
4. Other topics?

Next meeting is March 25th on Zoom. Agenda, relevant documents and Zoom login to follow.

North Bay Critical Mass Report

North Bay Critical Mass was moved to the fourth Sunday this month because of Presidents' Day Weekend posing several scheduling conflicts.

On the 24th at 10 AM they met at the far end of the Juror's Parking lot at the Civic Center, near the trees and the National Guard Armory. As the change of location would suggest participants experimented with VHF/UHF antennas for use in Public Service events as that season approaches. Participants worked to see which was easiest to set up and still worked well in difficult environments.

Those who attended also did their usual MARS Sunday Morning Net check-in and found some creative exercises to test their phonetic alphabet skills.

From Michael Fischer K6MLF, a report on February's North Bay Critical Mass:

Hello, radio colleagues--

A round dozen of us mustered out at the far end of the Juror's Parking Lot to attend Milt's session on antennas for our 5W handhelds. If you weren't able to join us, you missed a good one. Thanks, Milt!

Thanks also to Mrs. Hyams who baked several dozen luscious muffins--the ones stuffed with blueberries? omg. Yum!

Among the things we discussed were tiger tails: a counterpoise for the HTs. Without a "real" counterpoise, when you are holding the HT to push the PTT, YOU are the counterpoise. Nothing personal, but you (and I) make pretty poor counterpoises. Yes, you can purchase a tiger tail (some call 'em rat tails):

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/152651896663> \$15 for a piece of wire? If that offends your sense of adventure, it's awfully inexpensive to make your own.

Dan KN6PNA asked for the length to which the wire should be cut:

<https://www.bridgecomsystems.com/blogs/bridgecom-official-blog/98609031-what>

[s-a-tiger-tail-how-to-make-one](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X16I3oHDNM) And here's a quirky Brit making one as you watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X16I3oHDNM>

Here's a YouTube clip that argues for a larger strand of wire than the simple bell wire or two-strand electrical wire: it's 16 minutes long, and he focuses only on a two-meter version.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMGXGxnb5GU>

And here's how to use the tiger tail as a directional antenna:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMGXGxnb5GU> Well, another quirky Brit who

doesn't actually know what he's doing--but it's fun to watch him learn.

The major lesson Milt was preaching: it ain't the wattage of the radio that leads to success--it's the antenna! As he said, WWII, the Korean War and the beginning of Vietnam: the radios used to communicate on the battlefield were 1W or 2W! But the antennas were sophisticated, which made all the difference. Now, sophisticated doesn't necessarily mean complicated. An inexpensive Ed Fong up in the tree. A simple magmount on a cookie sheet. An X50 on a painters pole. A high-gain SMA 24 whip to replace the rubber duck.

See you next month.

Oh, by the way: We would like to hear from you: we are ruminating about moving some or all of the North Bay Critical Mass sessions to the MARS

clubhouse on Shell Road in Mill Valley. Would that make it more or less likely that you would want to attend our gatherings, which have been at the Marin Civic Center lagoon for almost 8 years, now? Should we:

1. Stay at the Civic Center
2. Move to the MARS clubhouse
3. It's all the same to you

Please let us know!

Here are some photographs from the February event:







Amateur Radio Volunteer Support Wanted!

From Michael Fischer K6MLF:

BSIM=Big Sur International Marathon—Great radio experience ! Fabulous views!
Starts before dawn! Rob and I worked it year before last—now it's your turn.

Think about it,

Michael K6MLF

BSIM 2024 is Fastly approaching, 80 days and counting. BSIM is looking for amateur radio volunteers to support this year's marathon. If you're new to the BSIM and or are interested in volunteering to operate this year's marathon please respond back.

If you guys have any questions, comments or concerns, please email me in a new email, your questions, comments or concerns. If you know of anybody else that would be interested in volunteering, please forward this onto them and have them email me.

Amateur Radio Volunteer Support Wanted:



Do you want to volunteer for Amateur Radio Support for the Big Sur International Marathon? If you do, please email: Jeff Ackerman—KG6UYZ at kg6uyz@gmail.com for a volunteer form.

Event: Big Sur International Marathon
Area of operation: Big Sur, Ca to Carmel, Ca
Event Date: 4-28-2024
Race Start Time: 0645hrs (Approximate)

Race End Time: 1230hrs (Approximate)
Volunteer Start Time at Position: 0500hrs (Approximate)

Positions Volunteers Staff: Mile/Aid Stations, SAG & Other positions as requested by BSIM. (Positions Assigned by Event Coordinator)

What do the positions' duties encompass:

SAG: Five Sag operators will ride co-pilot with a driver and vehicle provided by the Marathon that travel the course picking up runners that cannot finish the race for various reasons. Runners picked up by a SAG are dropped off at various drop points along the course. SAG operators and SAG drivers will work together to navigate the course to pick up runners, pickup assignments are dispatched out by Net Control. Sag operators do not drive the vehicle, the SAG will come with a driver.

Mile / Aid Station: Operators are placed at one of 13 or 14 different Mile / Aid Stations where they will be responsible for reporting any kind of race traffic that needs to make it way back to Net Control. Such information could be major medicals, minor injuries, runner pickups, rogue vehicles on the course or any other vital info that may need to get passed back to Net Control or another Mile / Aid position or SAG vehicle.

Equipment Requirements:

- SAG:** Operators should bring a mobile radio (dual band) with an accompanying magnetic-mount antenna and cigarette lighter plug. Operators should also bring a portable radio with good batteries to use as a backup radio or when you're out of the SAG vehicle. In the event you should have to operate off of a portable radio in vehicle please bring an adapter cable to connect the mobile radio magnetic-mount antenna to your portable.
- Mile / Aid Stations:** Operators can operate mostly off portable radios (there are a few spots that portable do not work or have bad coverage, but a mobile/base radio is also encouraged if available. Mile/Aid station operators will be able to drive to their location on course and park their vehicle at the location. Portable radios should have good batteries that can last long enough for the duration of the event, bringing a spare charged battery is always encouraged.

Food: A buffet style breakfast will be provided early Sunday Morning, To-Go lunches will be provided for volunteers venturing out onto the course. A Marathon Volunteer base wide BBQ is provided to all volunteers of the Marathon after the race finishes, the volunteer BBQ is available until food runs out.

Volunteers will also receive a Big Sur International Marathon Volunteer T-Shirt at check in.

More information is available and can be requested from
Jeff—KG6UYZ at the email address listed above.

VE Examination News

The Marin Amateur Radio Society's VE Program is an extremely important component of amateur radio. The national program MARS is a part of allows member radio clubs to administer licensing tests on behalf of the FCC. What this means to people getting into ham radio is that there are more test locations and a more flexible schedule for taking the license exam. Ken Brown will be stepping down as Lead VE. Thank you, Ken, for your service and especially for teaching me how to be a Volunteer Examiner. Jim Saltzgaber, KM6WWY, has replaced Ken as Lead VE, effective at the end of the Board meeting.

The first scheduled testing session was on January 13th, 2024. The test started at 1:00pm. Our first testing session has passed, and we have three more, which will be announced in the next issue of the QSA-5. Stay tuned!

Are Chinese Manufactured Radios Any Good?

When you say the words "Chinese radio" to amateur radio operators who have been around for a while, they'll often reply with "they're junk," or "I'd never buy one of those." Over the next few issues, we're going to look at Chinese manufactured radios, discussing the pros and cons. I should start this out by saying that there was a time in Japanese electronics history when they were considered cheap and unreliable. The Japanese learned a lesson from this consumer opinion and stepped up their design and manufacturing process. Now, Japan produces some extremely high-end electronics. China has learned this lesson as well and is now starting to produce some decent radios! So, what is the problem (or reluctance when it comes to them) with Chinese radios?

It is not accurate or fair to generalize that all Chinese radios are cheap and unreliable. China is a major manufacturer of electronic products, including radios, and produces a wide range of products with varying quality levels. There are both

inexpensive and high-quality radios manufactured in China, and the reputation of a particular product depends on the brand, manufacturing standards, and quality control processes implemented by the company.

It's essential to evaluate products individually based on their specifications, features, reviews, and the reputation of the manufacturer rather than making broad generalizations about products from a specific country. China produces a diverse range of electronic goods, and some companies prioritize quality and reliability in their manufacturing processes. Still, why are Chinese radios considered problematic?

Chinese radios, particularly budget-friendly models, may face challenges in terms of build quality, reliability, and adherence to regulatory standards. Some common issues include:

1. **Build Quality:** Cheaper Chinese radios may have inferior build materials, leading to durability concerns.
2. **Consistency in Quality Control:** Variability in quality control practices can result in units with different levels of performance even within the same model.
3. **Frequency Accuracy:** Some radios might not adhere strictly to frequency regulations, causing interference and legal issues.
4. **User Interface:** Cheaper models may have less intuitive or user-friendly interfaces compared to more established brands.
5. **Accessories:** Limited availability and quality of accessories like antennas and batteries may be a drawback.

It's crucial to research specific models, read reviews, and consider your needs to ensure you choose a Chinese radio that meets your expectations. Some Chinese manufacturers seem to have the handheld transceiver market under their control. People keep buying these radios, so they can't be that bad? I have several Chinese radios that are great. They're well made, work well, and didn't cost a small fortune. Many new amateur radio operators start off the Baofeng VHF/UHF handheld. However, Baofeng isn't the only manufacturer of Chinese radios. There are a few that own chunks of the sale market for radios. Who is the biggest manufacturer of Chinese handheld ham radios at this moment?

One of the prominent manufacturers of Chinese handheld ham radios is Baofeng. They are known for offering a variety of affordable handheld transceivers and have gained popularity in the amateur radio community. However, other manufacturers like Wouxun, TYT, Quansheng, and Radioddity also produce Chinese handheld ham radios, each with its own product lineup and features. It's advisable to research specific models and reviews to find the one that best suits your needs. Next month, we'll do a deep dive into the biggest issues with these radios, as well as look at the tiny SDR HF transceivers that are flooding the market.

Ham Radio News

Each month, QSA-5 searches the internet for stories about amateur radio in the news. As editor of our publication, I merely present these articles and do not take a position regarding their message or content. Our first article comes from the ARRL regarding the need for help regarding a Solar Eclipse project:

Amateur Radio Operators Needed for Help with Solar Eclipse Project

<https://www.arrl.org/news/amateur-radio-operators-needed-for-help-with-solar-eclipse-project>

FCC Wants to Bolster Amateur Radio: The FCC will vote in November on a plan to remove outdated technical restrictions.

<https://www.radioworld.com/news-and-business/business-and-law/fcc-wants-to-bolster-amateur-radio>

Ham Radio May Speed Up Soon: An interesting piece from a online journal dedicated to advances in technology.

<https://hackaday.com/2023/10/29/ham-radio-may-speed-up-soon/>

No cellphone? No problem! The vintage radio enthusiasts prepping for disaster: Another reason amateur radio is so important!

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/27/ham-radio-emergency-natural-disaster-climate-crisis>

Ham radio operators practice for emergencies, build community: A nice article regarding the importance of amateur radio.

https://www.southernminn.com/faribault_daily_news/news/ham-radio-operators-practice-for-emergency-build-community/article_c305405c-1446-11ee-9e1c-17bef3ed0921.html

How Far Will a Radio Transmit? This is very useful information to have, and it's well explained.

<https://www.radioddity.com/blogs/all/how-far-will-a-radio-transmit>

FCC Regulatory News

Here are the current regulatory changes and FCC news as it applies to Amateur Radio. This section of the QSA-5 newsletter was introduced last year. We will add new regulations and rules monthly, removing the older regulations and rules as new regulations/rules are introduced. As of the August 2021 issue of the QSA-5 newsletter, this list of FCC regulations and changes will be reduced, only covering this year's new regulations and rules. The newest regulations and changes will appear at the top of the list. Note that we are not able to cover every change the FCC has made this year within our publication. Sorry folks, it's been a slow year at the FCC.

FCC To Vote on Removing Symbol Rate Restrictions: From the ARRL regarding the digital modes.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-to-vote-on-removing-symbol-rate-restrictions>

Job Posting: FCC Recruiting Field Agents: In case any of you have wanted to become a field agent. Does it come with a badge?

<https://www.arrl.org/news/job-posting-fcc-recruiting-field-agents>

FCC Grants an ARRL Emergency Request to Permit Higher Data Rate Transmissions for Hurricane Relief Communications: The FCC has granted an [ARRL](#) emergency request for a 60-day temporary waiver intended to facilitate amateur radio emergency communications for hurricane relief.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-grants-an-arrl-emergency-request-to-permit-higher-data-rate-transmissions-for-hurricane-relief-c>

Propagation News

Here are some links dedicated to propagation conditions, space weather, sunspot cycle information and all things related to solar conditions:

The K7RA Solar Update: This is the K7RA solar update, which is updated regularly:

<https://www.arrl.org/news/the-k7ra-solar-update-818>

DX.QSI Propagation: A simple, straightforward website for propagation conditions that is regularly updated:

<https://dx.qsl.net/propagation/>

Radio Society of Great Britain: What's New and Propagation Now:

A great resource from the UK version of the ARRL regarding solar activity and propagation:

<https://rsgb.org/main/technical/propagation/whats-new-propagation-now/>

SunSpotWatch.com:

A good general interest site for amateur radio operators who follow solar activity:

<http://sunspotwatch.com/>



DIY Radio References

We have added a few additional links to our list and will continue to do so as we discover more websites related to the Do-It-Yourself movement! QSA-5 is going to keep adding to the original list of online resources, bringing you more resources as we find them. If there is anything you think would be useful to other club members, contact me and I will be happy to include it in this reference section.

Microcontrollers and Single Board Computers: With the advent of the Arduino micro-controller board, the Raspberry Pi (a single board minicomputer) and Texas Instrument's Launchpad (also a single board microcontroller), Amateur Radio enthusiasts can build both accessories, such as antenna tuners, and fully functioning transceivers. I have spent the last year at the University of California studying these devices, learning how to use them and incorporate them into electronic projects. I was able to build two HF receivers based on the Arduino and Raspberry Pi devices. The best news of all is that these devices are inexpensive! I encourage you to check these websites out!

Arduino: The Arduino microcontroller board was the first to popularize these devices. They are inexpensive and can be used for a variety of radio related projects. I will include some links to radio related Arduino projects in the next issue of the QSA-5. Here's a link to the Arduino homepage:

<https://www.arduino.cc/>

Raspberry Pi: Did you every wish you could have a PC small enough to fit into your shirt pocket? Your dream has come true. The Raspberry Pi 4 is a fully functional Quadcore 1.6 GHz computer, about the size of a package of playing cards. It has an Ethernet jack, two USB 2 ports, two USB 3 ports and two HDMI ports. Next month, I'll post some links to radio related Raspberry Pi projects. Here's a link to their homepage.

<https://www.raspberrypi.org/>

Texas Instruments TI Launchpad: The Launchpad is Texas Instruments answer to the Arduino. The Launchpad is geared more towards advanced projects and is slightly more expensive. However, the Arduino still holds it own against this device. The Arduino also has more in the way of opensource software. Here is a link to the TI Launchpad homepage.

<https://www.ti.com/design-resources/embedded-development/hardware-kits-boards.html>

Tools for electronics: It is a lot easier to build or repair your electronics if you have the right tool. Paperclips and duct tape are not the solution to everything (unless you are McGyver – hopefully, you got the reference). Therefore, we added some links to suppliers of electronics tools.

All Electronics: A one stop electronics shop that has a variety of tools for your repair and building needs:

<https://www.allelectronics.com/category/780/tools-and-supplies/1.html>

Jameco Electronics: A supplier of decent tools at a reasonable price:

<https://www.jameco.com/Jameco/content/tools.html>

Electronic Printed Circuit Boards (PCB): If you design and build projects that require specific circuit boards, you know how difficult it is to find a board that will work for your purposes. Designing a board and then having it made can be expensive. Here is a company that has a large number of radio PCBs you can purchase and then add components to. They also can take your design and fabricate a PCB at a very reasonable cost. The company's name is **PCBway**:

<https://www.pcbway.com/project/>

Electronic Components and Parts: Many of us involved in amateur radio are constantly tinkering with electronics. It seems to be part of our genetic makeup!

Here are some links to companies that sell electronic components and parts, starting with San Rafael's own Electronics Plus (Support local business).

Electronics Plus: It's great to have an electronics store close by for those times when you need a part immediately:

<https://www.electronicplus.com/>

Digikey: A good source for DIY and Maker projects as well as parts. They claim to have the world's largest selection of electronic components.

<https://www.digikey.com/>

Jameco: This company is a good source for almost everything, especially mainstay items such as resistors, capacitors, etc.

<https://www.jameco.com/>

Homemade Antennas: Many new amateur radio enthusiasts put a great deal of time and effort into researching their first radio. However, they often neglect the most important component to a successful radio experience, the antenna. Even if you have some ham radio experience, antennas can be a daunting subject. Commercially manufactured antennas can be expensive and beyond your budget during these hard financial times. Even if you have the funds available to purchase an antenna, reading through the antenna's specs can be akin to reading some long lost ancient language. A good solution for increasing your knowledge of antennas and radio wave propagation, not to mention cutting the costs down, is to build them yourself. Here are some links to DIY (do it yourself) sites to give you a start:

Antenna building basics:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Build-Several-Easy-Antennas-for-Amateur-Radio>

Good Reference for several antenna types:

<https://www.hamradiosecrets.com/homemade-ham-radio-antennas.html>

A step-by-step guide for building a simple antenna:

<https://geardiary.com/2012/07/21/building-a-simple-ham-radio-antenna-without-soldering/>

Instructions for a VHF/UHF dual band antenna:

<https://www.instructables.com/Quarter-Wave-Dual-Band-VHFUHF-Ham-Radio-Antenna/>

Build an HF dipole antenna:

<https://www.electronics-notes.com/articles/antennas-propagation/dipole-antenna/hf-ham-band-dipole-construction-80-40-20-15-10-meters.php>

Introduction to antennas:

<https://www.onallbands.com/ham-radio-antenna-options-for-home-and-portable-operations/>

Ham Radio QRP Transceiver Kits: With the advent of SDR (Software Defined Radio), building fully functioning ham radios has become a lot easier and extremely inexpensive. While, having fewer bells and whistles, as well as being low power units, many have fully functional touchscreens and cover many of the HF bands:

An easy to build QRP transceiver. No soldering needed to build:

<https://www.hfsignals.com/>

An easy to build, single band CW kit:

<https://qrp-labs.com/>

Offering several kits and finished transceivers:

<https://youkits.com/>

Propagation Websites: Propagation is a key factor in successful radio communications. Here are some links to websites that will help you with all your basic propagation needs:

Real time band conditions:

<https://qrznow.com/real-time-band-conditions/>

VOACAP band conditions:

<https://www.voacap.com/hf/>

ARRL Propagation Page:

<http://www.arrl.org/propagation>

Real Time HF Propagation Prediction:

<https://hamwaves.com/propagation/en/index.html>

Ham Radio Websites of general interest:

Ham Radio News: Here are some sites and articles you may find of interest regarding ham radio.

ARRL News Page, which is a good place to find national news regarding ham radio:

<http://www.arrl.org/news>

QRZ Now. Another good site for ham radio news from around the globe:

<https://qrznow.com/>

The Amateur Radio Newslite. An AP styled news feel page for amateur radio:

<https://www.arnewslite.org/>