

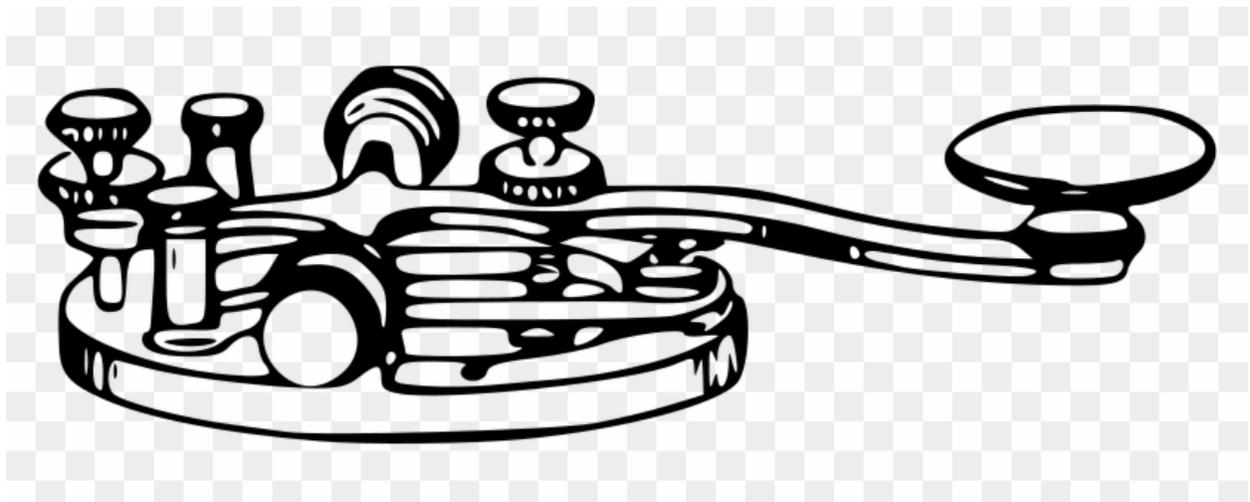


# QSA-5

## Marin Amateur Radio Society Monthly Newsletter

Established 1933

October 2025



**When all else fails, you can count on Amateur Radio**

## From Our President:

We are continuing our work repairing and cleaning the club house. I had written one of my typical dry process-oriented descriptions of our future plans. I passed it along to the committee working on those plans. Gerald McCarthy W6NOV responded with a much more rousing call to action. Rather than more of my words, I present his:

*Dear Fellow Marin Amateur Radio Society Members,*

*As proud members of the Marin Amateur Radio Society, we are fortunate to have a clubhouse that serves as the heart of our community—a place where we connect, share our passion for radio, learn and build lasting friendships. This space is more than just a building; it's a symbol of our shared commitment to something greater than ourselves. However, our beloved clubhouse is in need of repairs, and we need your help to restore it to its full potential.*

*Over the years, we've tackled significant projects like replacing the roof, painting the exterior, and installing new antennas. Now, our focus shifts to both the interior and exterior aesthetics and functionality. The clubhouse is ours—a collective reflection of who we are as a club—and it deserves to shine as a welcoming space for members and visitors alike, free from the clutter of unfinished projects (something I'm personally guilty of!).*

*We've formed a committee to identify and prioritize the necessary projects, and they'll report to the board soon. Unlike the larger tasks we've outsourced in the past, much of the work ahead can be done by us—the heart and soul of this club. We're planning work parties where we can come together, roll up our sleeves, and make a real difference. These gatherings are more than just labor; they're opportunities to strengthen our camaraderie, share stories, and take pride in shaping our shared space.*

*To make this happen, we'll need supplies, and with the board's approval, I'll reach out with specific requests for donations. Every contribution, whether it's your time, skills, or resources, will bring us closer to a clubhouse we can all be proud of. The board values your input and will seek your feedback before moving forward with any decisions.*

*This is our chance to come together as a club, to be part of something bigger, and to create a space that reflects the spirit of the Marin Amateur Radio Society and the greater Amateur Radio community. Let's rally together, lend a hand, and make our clubhouse a place we're excited to call home.*

*Feel free to use as you see fit.*

*Best,*

*Gerald*

Elections for the board of directors are coming up in November. Three seats on the board will be voted on this year. I think it is always better when you actually have a choice in an election. If you would like to serve on the board, or know someone who you think would be a good board member please let the election committee know by emailing at [elections@w6sg.net](mailto:elections@w6sg.net) If you nominate someone else please ask their permission before nominating them. You don't need to campaign, or debate or any of that unpleasant stuff. The board meets 12 times a year by zoom and everyone is elected as a director. At the January board meeting the club officers are elected by vote of the board members. Directors are elected for a two year term.

I also need to thank a few of you. The first person who comes to mind is Steve Toquinto KB6HOH. Not only did he organize a excellent Field Day but also a great club picnic. I also want to thank Jeff Young KM6Y who was part of the driving force behind our NBAM committee. Jeff was instrumental at getting grant funding for the project as well as establishing many of the radio sites. Jeff has since moved to Oregon and even from that distance has participated in the ongoing management of the NBAM team. Jeff has decided to focus more on where he is now and has left the NBAM team. We owe him quite a debt for that work. Thank you Jeff.

While we are thanking people it is also time to think about club awards. Please take a moment to visit <https://w6sg.net/site/members/club-awards/> to see what awards the club has and if you have suggestions on candidates for this year please email me at [wa6uds@w6sg.net](mailto:wa6uds@w6sg.net)

73 de wa6uds

## **From the Editor:**

Greetings everyone! Let the holidays begin, starting with Halloween. It's October, and the weather's changing, the air cooler and the morning fog more pronounced. As usual, advertisers are reminding us that Christmas is a mere three months away. The Marin Amateur Radio Society has been busy, as always, carrying the hobby of amateur radio into the future and ensuring our community has working communication channels during times of disaster. I'm going to keep this short. Thank you to Curtiss Kim and all the usual suspects for their contributions. As always, if you want to see something within the QSA-5, email me and we'll make it happen. Please note, the club financials were not included in this issue, but will be emailed out as soon as they are ready. Have a great October!

[QSA-5Editor@w6sg.net](mailto:QSA-5Editor@w6sg.net)



### **New Members:**

Eduardo Rodriguez KK6UVD – Vallejo

Ed Shelden KO6IDJ - Richmond

Vojin Oklobdzija WF1A – Berkeley

Steve Lochner N6UP - San Francisco





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



**Marin Amateur Radio Society Board of Directors Meeting 9/11/2025**

**Call to Order 19:30 Hours (7:30 PM):** Meeting called to order @ 19:30.

**Attendance:**

**President:** Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS

**Vice President:** Ken Brownfield AB6JR

**Secretary:** James Saltzgaber KM6WWY

**Treasurer:** Bruce Bartel N6VLB

**Director:** Richard Cochran AG6QR

**Director:** Steve Toquinto KB6HOH

**Director:** Ed Essick K6ELE

**Trustee W6SG:** Marc Bruvry KF6VNT

**Trustee K6GWE:** Brian Cooley K6EZX

**Adopt agenda-** Amended Next Regular Meeting to 3 October & Next Board Meeting to 9 October. MSC without objection to adopt agenda as amended.

**Approved minutes of** 7 August board meeting as published in QSA-5

**Secretary's Report/Communications** - Jim KM6WWY – Nothing to report.

**Treasurer's Report** - Bruce N6VLB- We are fully on the TechSoup accounting system.

**Members Present:** Mark Klein KM6AOW, Milt Hyams KM6ASI, Dan Sobel N6HLZ, Scott Pasternak KN6ZDM, Kathy Spicher KM6URP, Rob Rowlands NZ6J, Gray KN6JZQ, Gerald McCarthy W6NOV

**Committee and other Reports:**

1. **Membership** Curtis WA6UDS Present membership =157 This is 95% of this time last year. (88%)
2. **Facilities** Skip KJ6ARL– Not Present, via submitted report- 1.) Furniture and items by front door moved. Now about a 3x3 ft area where a desk was removed, needs painting to match the walls (if possible). It is unknown whether we still have any of the wall paint.  
  
2.) Report on security lights outside on the front wall not being directed to our parking area. I adjusted the lights to shine on our driveway & parking area rather than across the street. Our tenant reports the adjustment works as expected. 3.) The East side yard is no more cluttered than usual. There are signs of vegetation encroaching from the neighbor's yard that will need to be cut back soon. 4.) Along the West wall the leaves are starting to pile up, but the drain is usable for now. A major issue may be the neighbor's tree limbs. Some of them are up to our second-floor walls and may be hanging over the roof. I'll ask our tenant if she has noticed any issues from that source.
3. **VOAD/RCV** Skip KJ6ARL– Not Present, via submitted report- 1.) RCV and VOAD are planning a field exercise on 10/4 to test signals from CBO remote locations in case the CBO's is damaged beyond use and needs to move to another facility. 2.) RCV is

collaborating with ACS-RACES to participate in the Great Shakeout on October 16th. What roles each team will have has not yet been defined.

4. **Technical** Milt KM6ASI – Gerald has materials to complete grounding the clubhouse antennas. Simulcast repeaters have been working well for public service events.
5. **Public Service** Scott KN6ZDM– Escape from Alcatraz, Kelley Mitchell, Trail Ride Will be meeting with Public Service Group to fine tune the Net Control procedures.
6. **VE Testing** Jim KM6WWY– Next VE session is October 11, 2025, at the clubhouse, 1:00 pm, we have one applicant. ARRL VEC is transferring their service to ExamTools online system. All VE Teams will obtain tests and forms from ExamTools and submit exam results and reports electronically, at a minimum. ExamTools offers online system for applicant registering, via HamExam.org, and various electronic/online exam methods up to and including full online remote exams. We are already set up to do in person exams and submissions on paper and will explore expanding to electronic tests/signatures, both in person and remote. We will also explore collaborations with VE teams from adjacent counties to streamline VE testing and new ham recruiting.
7. **Comm Truck** Charlie AI6TT– Not Present – via submitted report, all is well with the truck. Scott KN6ZDM – A brand new X-50 antenna has been installed to replace the X-30 that had been damaged.
8. **NBAM** Kathy KM6URP– Mark will set up AREDN station demo at MARS Picnic. The Bodega Bay demo site requested an Omni directional antenna, Rob provided one for them, they will test it at Doran Beach Park. Hoping to have the park and Bodega Bay fire house set up for the Great Shakeout drill in October. Awaiting Dir. Of Public Infrastructure in Sonoma to continue with the Sonoma Mtn. site as well as Schellinger Mtn. site to finish before wet weather starts.
9. **Picnic** Steve KB6HOH- Stafford Lake Park September 13th. 11 am to 5 pm. Last Picnic committee meeting was last night 9/10/2025. Current reservations at 60. Set up and teardown people to help Mary Hyams. Caterer is on board for Forrest Fire BBQ. Raffle prizes were discussed and will include a 1-year MARS family membership. Each attendee will get a raffle ticket without charge. Scott KN6ZDM will pick up ice, soft drinks, water, and cups.

#### **Old Business:**

1. **Donations Committee Charter** – Curtis WA6UDS still in progress.
2. **New Google environment** – Online storage of club records – Bruce N6VLB – We have had a glitch with file permissions and are doing a security mod that disables access by external link.

- 3. Elections/Nominating committee-** Ed Essick K6ELE, Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS, and Ken Brownfield AB6JR board terms are expiring at the end of 2025. We will return to alternating 3 board members terms expiring one year and 4 board members the next year with this election. A Board of Directors election slate must be submitted to the general membership at the November meeting. Ken AB6JR will manage the election software for this election. We need a minimum of three candidates for 2026-2028 board terms. Ken and Scott KN6ZDM will be on the nominating committee. Curtis will recruit a third member. Anyone wishing to run for a 2-year Board of Directors position should contact Ken or Scott.

### **New Business:**

**Good of the Order** – Bruce – we received a request from Maritime Radio Historical Society for volunteers at KPH in Pt. Reyes. It was agreed to distribute their brochure at the Club picnic.

**Executive Session** Board Adjourned to Executive Session for discussion of the clubhouse at 20:20 by Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS. Returned from Executive Session at 20:54. 20:20 exited to executive session to discuss details of the safety inspection of the clubhouse. Adjourned special session and returned to regular session at 20:54

**Adjourn** MSC to adjourn at 20:55.

**Next Regular Meeting 3 October 2025**

**Next Board Meeting 9 October 2025**

## **Marin Amateur Radio Club**

### **Balance Sheet Comparison**

The financials were unavailable at the time of publication. The financials will be sent to members by email under separate cover at a later date. Thank you for your patience.

## **Marin Amateur Radio Club**

### **Profit and Loss**

Not available this month. See Above comment

# LIFE IS SIMPLE



# MARS Club News

**LOOSE PARTS:** By Dave Blazek



## MARS Club Picnic

2025 MARS Picnic by Curtiss Kim, KM6GUY

It was a picture-perfect day to share food, friendship and frivolity. The 2025 MARS picnic at Stafford Lake Park in Novato exceeded expectations. Over fifty picnickers turned out to dine on bbq ribs, chicken, mac and cheese and scrumptious desserts. Adding to the conversation, Jerry Foster's (WA6BXV) collection of vintage military radios, most in working order. There was the SCR-536, often considered the first of modern hand-held, self-contained, "handie talkie" transceiver. It was a constant fixture on the old "Combat" television series where the actor Vic Marrow was often heard saying, "check mate king two...this is white rook over". Foster's collection also featured several Vietnam era transceivers including the PRC 77 manpack and the battery powered PPP-9 helmet mounted receiver. The receive only unit was used primarily at the squad and platoon level where the officer in charge used the PRT-4 handheld transmitter, to give orders. The ARDEN (Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network) Mesh system was also on prominent display including a wireless phone system. But the comradery, companionship and conversation took center stage

during the gathering. The day was not without reward. Thanks to Jerry Foster, WA6VXB's generosity five Baofeng UV-R5 handheld radios were raffled off. The dual band handie talkie is considered the most popular model in the series. For his efforts, Foster won the drawing for a free year's membership in MARS. Many in attendance quipped the membership was worth more than the radios combined. Picnic organizer Steve Toquinto, KB6HOH, was more than pleased with how the event turned out saying it was the best picnic ever hosted by the club. The social event is one of several get-togethers put on by MARS throughout the year. Unfortunately, according to MARS President, Curtis Ardourel, attendees had to pay for the luncheon this year but that did not seem to curtail turnout. Most agreed the payment was well worth it.



## Double the Fun: A Two-Fer POTA Adventure

### Sheila Adams-Sapper, N6XN

I discovered Parks on the Air (POTA) earlier this year while attending my very first ham convention, the Big Bear Ham Escape. As a lifelong outdoor enthusiast, I was instantly drawn to a packed session about POTA and its mix of nature, radio, and friendly on-air chasing. I learned that you can start as a Hunter—tuning in from your shack or a picnic table—or level up to an Activator, choosing a park, setting up your gear, and calling CQ until you log those ten magic contacts for a successful activation. The blend of strategy, band conditions, and a little luck hooked me from the start.

My most memorable outing so far was a “two-fer” activation with my ham sister, Nancy Wein, KO6GII, at China Camp State Park. We set up one radio with two antenna options, first reaching Colorado and Washington but struggling to be heard. A quick antenna swap helped, yet after more than two hours we still hadn’t made enough contacts—Nancy had nine, and I only eight after forgetting to pass the mic during one QSO. Just as I was ready to pack up, we heard two operators calling CQ POTA. Nancy pounced, logged both, and passed the mic to me for my final two contacts. To our delight, those contacts also gave *them* their official activations—a perfect Park-to-Park ending to a day of persistence and teamwork.

POTA continues to be pure fun and a great teacher. Each outing sharpens my skills—figuring out which portable gear travels light but still reaches far, testing antenna designs, and learning how band conditions and time of day can turn a quiet QSO desert into a sudden pileup. I can’t wait to see what the next activation brings—and which new friends I’ll meet on the air.



POTA activation, China Camp State Park, July 2025. Sheila Adams-Sapper, N6XN (left), Nancy Wein, KO6GII (right).

## Clubhouse News

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## **Upcoming Elections**

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73 de wa6uds

## Volunteer Examiner News

**Final date on our remaining on our 2025 schedule is Oct 11<sup>th</sup>.** At the time of going to print, there is one applicant. This will likely change, and if it doesn't, we'll be there to do our best! As always, testing starts at 1:00pm, however, applicants should plan on getting there 30 minutes early. Testing takes place at the clubhouse at 27 Shell Road, Mill Valley. Applicants should make sure they have the FRN number with them.

The ARRL Volunteer Examiner's (VE) program has played a pivotal role in the licensing of amateur radio operators in the United States since its inception in 1984. Prior to the establishment of the VE program, amateur radio licensing exams were administered exclusively by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This process was often cumbersome, requiring candidates to travel to FCC offices, which

were not always conveniently located. The introduction of the VE program decentralized the examination process, making it more accessible to aspiring operators. Under this program, qualified volunteers, themselves licensed amateur radio operators, were authorized to administer exams, significantly streamlining the licensing process and encouraging greater participation in the hobby.

The VE program is a cornerstone of the amateur radio community, reflecting its ethos of self-regulation and mutual support. By empowering experienced operators to oversee the licensing process, the program fosters a sense of responsibility and mentorship within the community. Volunteer Examiners are required to meet stringent qualifications, ensuring that they possess the knowledge and integrity necessary to uphold the standards of the amateur radio service. This peer-driven approach not only maintains the credibility of the licensing process but also strengthens the bonds within the amateur radio community, as new operators are welcomed and guided by those who share their passion for the hobby.

The importance of the VE program extends beyond its practical function of administering exams. It has been instrumental in promoting the growth and diversity of amateur radio. By making the licensing process more accessible, the program has lowered barriers to entry, enabling individuals from all walks of life to become licensed operators. This inclusivity has helped amateur radio remain relevant in an era of rapid technological change, attracting new generations of operators who bring fresh perspectives and innovations to the field. The VE program has thus played a crucial role in ensuring the continued vitality of amateur radio as a dynamic and evolving pursuit.

Moreover, the VE program has had a profound impact on emergency communications and public service. Amateur radio operators are often called upon to provide critical communication support during disasters and emergencies, when traditional communication infrastructure may be compromised. By facilitating the licensing of new operators, the VE program helps to expand the pool of skilled individuals who can contribute to these efforts. The program's emphasis on rigorous testing ensures that licensed operators are well-prepared to handle the technical and operational challenges of emergency communication, thereby enhancing the overall resilience of the amateur radio service.

In summary, the ARRL Volunteer Examiner's program has been a transformative force in the world of amateur radio. By decentralizing the licensing process, fostering community engagement, and promoting inclusivity, the program has made amateur radio more accessible and vibrant. Its role in supporting emergency communications further underscores its significance, as it equips new operators with the skills needed to serve their communities in times of crisis. The VE program stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of amateur radio, embodying its values of innovation, collaboration, and public service.





## 2025 North Bay 2-Meter Critical Mass Calendar

### 2025

October 26<sup>th</sup> (fourth Sunday; third is Pacificon) Milt

November 16<sup>th</sup> (third Sunday) Rob

December 14<sup>th</sup> (second Sunday; third is too close to Christmas) Michael

## North Bay Critical Mass Report

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The North Bay Critical Mass Radio Group, affiliated with the Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS), focuses on practicing and maintaining amateur radio communication skills for potential use during emergencies and public service events.

Here's a breakdown of what they do:

- **Monthly Practice Sessions:** They meet each month to practice various communication skills using 2-meter band radios, including getting on the air, setting up equipment, and contacting other stations. These practice sessions help participants familiarize themselves with radio procedures and troubleshoot potential issues.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** The group contributes to local emergency preparedness by ensuring their members are ready to provide communication support in the event of a disaster. This includes

collaborating with organizations like RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team).

- Public Service Events: They also participate in public service events, using their radio communication skills to assist with logistics and communication needs.
- Skill Development: The group provides an environment for members to learn and refine their amateur radio skills, including using the phonetic alphabet, operating on different frequencies, and maintaining their radios.
- Community Engagement: While the core focus is on radio skills, the group fosters a sense of community among amateur radio enthusiasts in the North Bay.

There was no report submitted for the monthly North Bay Critical Mass group. However, there is a special event that was posted in the NBCM group:

### **Special Event W6P - SFRC OTA Trifecta+**



#### **San Francisco Radio Club**

Just a quick note to let you all know that we are planning our 6th, annual, **W6P special event "OTA Trifecta+"** at Angel Island on November 1st, 2025. Details below:

## ***Special Event W6P - SFRC OTA Trifecta+***



**On** Saturday, Nov 1st, the San Francisco Radio Club will run a Special event at Angel Island. We called it the **SFRC OTA-Trifecta+** as we will attempt to combine a Parks on the Air (POTA), a Lighthouse on the Air (LOTA), Summits of the Air (SOTA) and Boats on the Air (BOTA) activation, all at the same time! Our special expedition callsign will be **W6P** for the duration of this event.

We would love you to join us! **We need operators** SSB and CW, HF, VHF and UHF to help us staff this event. We need you to bring your radios, antennas and batteries and spend half a day out there and have fun! Whether you are an experienced operator or new to the hobby we need you to volunteer!

*---For SOTA activators: you will need to be able to hike a moderate elevation trail around 2 miles to participate. For POTA and LOTA activators: the distance to cover is up to 1.5 miles but without elevation---*



The Angel Island team will assemble at the Tiburon Ferry terminal just before 10am that morning. Once at Angel Island, we will split into three teams hiking three different directions. Team Summits OTA will head to the top of Mt Livermore (elev. 788f), they will setup a VHF/UHF, 20/40 ssb and cw station. Team Lighthouses OTA will head south west at the Ridge Sites and operate a VHF/UHF and 20/40 ssb station. Team Parks OTA will head to Camping Site 10, west of the island, and setup a VHF/UHF and 20/40 ssb station. Team BOTA will meet in the Berkeley Marina and start from there.

Event Slack channel: [#2025-ota-trifecta-event](#)

If you have any questions, comments, or requests please do not hesitate to contact me at [antonis@aa6pp.org](mailto:antonis@aa6pp.org).

Kind Regards

Antonis, AA6PP

Here's a list of Marin County and other Important Repeaters held over from last month for any new club members:

<b>Marin County and other repeaters</b>				
Install <b>Repeaterbook</b> on your phone: <a href="https://www.repeaterbook.com/index.php/en/">https://www.repeaterbook.com/index.php/en/</a> . Not the ARRL book!				
<b>Repeater</b>	<b>Your receive Frequency (MHz)</b>	<b>PL tone (Hz)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Offset</b>
Simulcast Bahia	146.700	203.5	Novato	-600kHz
Simulcast Mt Tam	146.700	179.9	Middle peak	-600kHz
Simulcast Barnabe	146.700	167.9	Mt Barnabe	-600kHz
Simulcast West Peak	146.700	192.8	West peak	-600kHz
Tam West	147.330	192.8	West peak	+600kHz
Mt Tam UHF (damaged feed lin	443.250	179.9	Middle peak	+5MHz
Big Rock UHF	447.175	156.7	Big Rock Ridge	-5MHz non standard
Dollar Hill UHF	440.925	162.2	San Rafael	+5MHz
Barnabe UHF	444.125	151.4	Mt Barnabe	+5MHz
Muir beach	442.225	141.3	Muir Beach	+5MHz
Tiburon fire station 9	442.125	146.2	Overlook	+5MHz
North Marin Simplex	147.585	n/a	Strawberry	+5MHz
Central Marin Simplex	147.510	n/a		
South Marin Simplex "Nickels"	147.555	n/a		
West Marin Simplex	147.465	n/a		
Wolfback Ridge DMR	442.525	CC2, TS1 Norca	Wolfback Ridge, Sausalito	+5MHz
Bolinas DMR	440.138	CC3, TS1	Commonweal	+5MHz
Novato KG6MZV	440.500	CC1, TZ1	Novato	+5MHz
<b>San Francisco repeaters</b>				
Sutro tower W6PW	145.150	DCS664	Sutro Tower, SF	
SFACS WA6GG	442.050	127.3		+5MHz
Sutro DMR	444.225	CC1, TS1	Sutro Tower	+5MHz
<b>East Bay Repeaters</b>				
Mt Diablo	147.060	100	Mt Diablo	+600kHz
San Leandro	147.240	107.2	San Leandro	+600kHz
W6CX DMR	145.000	CC1, TS1	Mt Diablo	+2.5MHz
Carla Orinda DMR	443.500	CC1, TS1	Orinda	+5MHz
Grizzly	145.290	131.8		

<b>Sonoma County Repeaters</b>				
Sonoma Mountain	146.910	88.5	Petaluma	-600kHz
English Hill	147.315	88.5	Sebastapol	+600kHz
English Hill DMR	443.100	CC1, TS1	Sebastapol	+5MHz

# 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.

# HF Radio 101

## A few words on Etiquette

I apologize for interrupting the scheduled article on DIY HF antennas. However, given the crazy times we currently live in, I thought I'd address a few on-air etiquette guidelines for new amateur radio operators. While this is simply a guide for the new operator, there are a few things to consider before reading further: We live in a time in which recording conversations is as simple as tapping the screen of your cellphone. Many outrageous or off-color rag chews have been recorded and put up on sites such as YouTube where potentially millions of people listen to the conversation between operators. The enforcement arm of the FCC are sometimes sent digital copies of these conversations if they are particularly offensive. This can lead to possible investigation and fines. I'm not going to address the debate over free speech. I'll just say use common sense. With that said, here are some guidelines for new operators:

Amateur radio is built upon a foundation of courtesy, respect, and established operating procedures, collectively known as operating etiquette. These unwritten rules are vital for ensuring that the shared radio spectrum remains a valuable and enjoyable resource for all licensees around the world. The fundamental principle is always to be mindful of others sharing the band, prioritizing clear communication and minimizing interference. This starts with listening, which is arguably the most important skill in ham radio; before transmitting, an operator must always listen on the desired frequency to ensure it is not already in use, thereby preventing a "double" or interference.

A key component of good etiquette involves proper station identification. According to international regulations, operators must identify their station with their assigned call sign at the end of a communication and at least once every ten minutes during a QSO (contact). This is not merely a rule, but a professional courtesy that allows others to know who is transmitting and facilitates logging contacts. Furthermore, using standardized phonetics, such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) standard (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.), is essential for ensuring that a call sign is understood correctly, especially under poor signal conditions.

When joining an ongoing conversation, or "breaking in," proper protocol should be observed to avoid disruption. Instead of immediately transmitting your call sign, wait for a pause in the conversation. When you do transmit, a simple "break" is generally sufficient to alert the current operators that you wish to join. For a brief, urgent message, one might use "break-break," but this should be reserved for emergency or truly important traffic only. Once recognized, keep your initial entry concise and state your intention to join or pass a message, never monopolizing the frequency or changing the subject abruptly.

Choosing the correct power level is a significant part of considerate operation. While a ham license allows for high power output (up to 1500 watts in the US), good etiquette dictates using the minimum power necessary to establish and maintain a reliable contact. This practice, often referred to as "running the minimum power necessary," reduces the signal's footprint, minimizes the potential for interference with other users on adjacent frequencies, and conserves the shared spectrum. High power should only be used as a last resort when propagation conditions genuinely necessitate it.

In the case of DX (long-distance) operating, specific procedures are in place to manage the excitement and complexity of making rare contacts. If a DX station is operating "split," meaning they are transmitting on one frequency but listening on another, operators must *only* transmit on the listening frequency specified by the DX station. Ignoring the split frequency and transmitting on the DX station's transmit frequency is known as "tail-ending" or being a "lid" (an old term for a poor operator) and is a serious breach of etiquette that can quickly disrupt the entire operation.

Etiquette also extends to the use of repeaters, which are automatically operating stations that re-transmit signals to extend range. When using a repeater, keep transmissions brief and focused. Avoid lengthy monologues, as a repeater is a shared resource and constant use can prevent others from accessing it. Always pause a moment after keying your microphone before speaking to ensure the repeater has time to fully activate. Similarly, on digital modes and nets, follow the established protocols set by the net control station or the digital mode's community, respecting the timing and flow of digital traffic.

In times of emergency or disaster, the established rules of etiquette become even more critical. During declared emergencies, all non-emergency traffic must immediately cease on the designated frequency to allow emergency communications to flow unimpeded. This is an official requirement and a fundamental ethical obligation of every amateur radio operator. Respecting the authority and direction of the Net Control Station (NCS) during these times ensures that vital, life-saving messages are passed accurately and efficiently. Ultimately, amateur radio etiquette is about maintaining a spirit of goodwill and technical integrity across the bands. It requires patience, technical proficiency, and a commitment to being a "good neighbor" on the air. By adhering to these practices—listening first, identifying clearly, using appropriate power, and respecting established procedures—operators contribute to an organized, friendly, and vibrant global community that continues the long tradition of amateur radio as a service and a hobby.

## 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 an extremely important bipartisan bill:

**ARRL Wants Every Ham to Help Us Pass The Bill:** A good piece regarding a game changing bill regarding ham radio and HOA restrictions.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-wants-every-ham-to-help-us-pass-the-bill>

**Resilience Through Amateur Radio for National Preparedness Month 2025:** A nice piece on the role amateur radio plays on being ready for anything.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/resilience-through-amateur-radio-for-national-preparedness-month-2025>

**Ham radio and the world of amateur radio operators:** A nice piece regarding amateur radio.

<https://canadiangeographic.ca/articles/ham-radio-and-the-world-of-amateur-radio-operators/>

**Local, County, and State Governments Proclaim Value of Amateur Radio:** A great article on the importance of amateur radio.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/local-county-and-state-governments-proclaim-value-of-amateur-radio>

**Ham radio operators provided critical communications help:** A nice article reminding us of the important role amateur radio plays when all else fails.

<https://www.tribtoday.com/news/local-news/2025/05/ham-radio-operators-provided-critical-communications-help/>

**Ham Radio Operators Assemble Ahead of Hurricane Milton:** A nice piece regarding disaster preparedness.

<https://www.radioworld.com/news-and-business/headlines/ham-radio-operators-assemble-ahead-of-hurricane-milton>

**Ham Radio Call Signs Discovered During Clayton UC Renovation Revive Memories of Lehigh's Amateur Radio Society:** This is an interesting read regarding amateur radio's rich history.

<https://news.lehigh.edu/ham-radio-call-signs-discovered-during-clayton-uc-renovation-revive-memories-of-lehighs-amateur>

**WKHS Makes International Contact with Amateur Radio:** A nice look at introducing amateur radio to youth.

<https://www.radioworld.com/tech-and-gear/wkhs-makes-international-contact-with-amateur-radio>

**Local Club Connecting Amateur Radio Enthusiasts:** From the Weirton Daily Times.

<https://www.weirtondailytimes.com/news/local-news/2024/12/local-club-connecting-amateur-radio-enthusiasts/>

**The Rich History of Ham Radio Culture:** A really nice piece looking at the history of our beloved hobby (really a passion).

<https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/the-rich-history-of-ham-radio-culture/>

## 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. Something new from the FCC this month:

**FCC Issues Notice of Violation for Unauthorized One-Way Transmissions and Denial of Inspection:** Apparently, they do go after offenders!

<https://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-issues-notice-of-violation-for-unauthorized-one-way-transmissions-and-denial-of-inspection>

**FCC Batch Filing System Unavailable:** Any VEC or VE should read this.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-batch-filing-system-unavailable>

**FCC Initiates Broad Inquiry on Rules to Delete or Amend:** This is of importance to everyone who has an FCC license.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-initiates-broad-inquiry-on-rules-to-delete-or-amend>

**FCC Upholds Record \$34,000 Forfeiture Against Amateur Licensee:** The story started a few years back but finally came to a sticky financial end for the offender.

<https://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-upholds-record-34-000-forfeiture-against-amateur-licensee>

**FCC Seeks Comments on Tribal FM Allotment in Wyoming:** This is an interesting read about an area of radio outside the norm.

<https://www.radioworld.com/news-and-business/business-and-law/fcc-seeks-comments-on-tribal-fm-allotment-in-wyoming>

**Solar Activity Significantly Affecting Ionosphere, FCC Opens Docket for Comments on Impact:** The impact of solar activity has been driven the FCC to solicit comments regarding it's impact:

<https://www.arrl.org/news/solar-activity-significantly-affecting-ionosphere-fcc-opens-docket-for-comments-on-impact>

## Propagation News

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

**The ARRL Solar Report:** This is the ARRL solar update, which is updated regularly:

<https://www.arrl.org/news/the-arrl-solar-update-2>

**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.

**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 Newsline. An AP styled news feel page for amateur radio:

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