Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS) july 2026 newsletter

QSA-5

Inside the Clubhouse

Board actions, club activities, and upcoming opportunities to share and get involved..

Ham Radio in the News

From local to national to international – stories, inspiration, and legislation.

Ham Classroom

Every month, we showcase interesting subjects..

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

From the MARS President

We have just completed another successful Field Day. We also had beautiful weather, although we have been blessed with that for a while at Stafford Lake. I still have to get the computers back here and enter the manually logged contact sheets to get the results out the door. I need to thank all of you who volunteered this year for setup and strike. Your efforts were particularly appreciated as a few of our heavy hitters were on vacation so you all had to fill in the slack. I do need to call out a few people who went above and beyond. Jim Saltzgaber KM6WWY who seemed to be everywhere at once. Scott Pasternack KN6ZDN for keeping everyone fed. Rob Rowlands NZ6J for coming up with whatever necessary item that did not appear. Finally Steve Toquinto KB6HOH for wrestling the whole weekend into existence. I speak on behalf of the club when I say Thank You, Thank You, Thank You.

A quick reminder for everyone. The July meeting has been cancelled due to its proximity to the fourth of July. You get a first Friday of the month without having to listen to me. For the August 7th meeting we should have a presentation about the California QSO party, a contest which takes place October 3rd through the 4th this year. The "gimmick" being that everyone is trying to contact California. More info on that later.

No long didactic screed from me this month. Have a safe and sane 4th of July and the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Curtis Ardourel, WA6UDS
wa6uds@w6sg.net

Resources

Membership Application

Membership Renewal

Club Calendar

Local Repeaters

Our Weekly Net

North Bay 2-Meter Critical Mass

Get Licensed

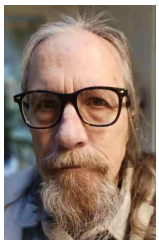
For Newcomers

P.O. Box 6423
San Rafael, CA 94903-0423
A 501(c)3 not for profit corporation

Clubhouse Address
27 Shell Road
Mill Valley, CA 94941

Membership in the Marin Amateur Radio Society is open to any person with an expressed interest in amateur radio. Annual dues are currently $30/individual or $35/family.

From the Editor



Welcome to the July 2026 edition of the QSA-5. This month, we make the jump from ham shacks to portable batteries and lightweight antennas, dedicating our pages to Parks on the Air (POTA). Whether you are hiking up Mount Tamalpais or activating one of our coastal state parks, this issue highlights the ultimate thrill of portable, off-grid operations. I know most of us like to sit in our ham shacks when working the bands but by going out into the field, you can inspire future generations of amateur radio operators, growing the hobby.

This issue explores how we can take portable operating skills to new, scenic heights. Inside, you will find articles on choosing efficient, packable antennas, perfect for remote operations, as well as articles that will inspire you to take your radio show on the road!

We are also incredibly proud to feature contributions from club members who have successfully completed park activations or hunted them on the bands. There is also a fascinating piece about the club house's history! As always, a huge thanks to Jay for doing the lion's share of work creating this look and layout of the QSA-5. A special thanks to Nancy NW6Y, Rob NZ6J, and Gerald W6NOV for their contributions to the QSA-5. It's our club members that find the most interesting items to feature in the pages of our publication!

As always, we encourage you to get involved and put these techniques into practice. Be sure to check into our weekly MARS nets to practice your operating skills and join us at our next monthly club meeting to swap stories in person. See you in the parks and on the air!

Hugh Patterson, KN6KNB
QSA-5Editor@w6sg.net

Committees

Communications Truck

Education

Facilities

Field Day

Marin Radio Communication Volunteers (RCV)

Membership

North Bay Area Mesh (NBAM)

Public Service

Recreation

Technical

Volunteer Examiner (VE) Testing

QSA-5 is published monthly by the Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS) and sent electronically to its members.

"QSA-5" is a ham radio Q-code which means "The strength of your signal is very strong."

Have an article or fun ham-related photos you want to share? Please send by the 24th of the month to QSA5@w6sg.net for publication consideration.

Inside the Clubhouse

Board actions, club activities, and upcoming opportunities to share and learn.

Board of Directors

Meeting Notes
Next Board Meeting Thursday, July 9, 2026
Financials

Next Club Meeting: Friday, August 7, 2026

Welcoming New Members: Arthur Wallace KO6MUQ (San Rafael)

News

- Parks on the Air
- Field Day 2026
- Dipsea Memories
- Dipsea Lessons
- Where is it Now?
- Restoring a 1956 RCA Strato-World
- North Bay 2m Critical Mass
- July Calendar
- Tragedy Beneath the Surface

Inside the Clubhouse: Parks on the Air

One of my favorite ham radio activities is POTA (Parks on the Air). It's fun and like a vacation for my head. I have been enjoying POTA for 11 months by the time this is published. This article is written from that perspective, a newer ham interested in POTA, learning what it's about, how it works and how to do it.

What is POTA? It's an international program for ham radio operators that has activators and hunters. Activators are operators who set up a portable station using transceivers, batteries and portable antennas, and transmit to make contacts within a designated park's boundaries. It's most common to transmit on HF, which is what I do but an activator can also transmit on UHF/VHF. Contacts can be made using any amateur radio band and mode, whether that's traditional voice (SSB), Morse code (CW), or digital modes like FT8 and FT4. Hunters are operators outside a park, typically at home, who look for, or "hunt" POTA activators. POTA is managed by a group of volunteers who run the POTA program. An operator needs a minimum of 10 verified QSO's (contacts) to activate a park. Once the park is activated the log is uploaded to the POTA app website to get credit. This also is how the hunters get credit. Both activators and hunters can earn certificates, awards, and track their stats over time. An operator doesn't need to get a permit to operate in a park, but there are rules to follow like not using a spike to hold an antenna in certain parks because of historical and archeological considerations.

I heard about POTA last year but wasn't sure how to get into it. I knew it was done outside, in a park, using a portable set up. This sounded tailor made for me as I love being outside, ham radio and learning something new. Last spring, I had just started getting on the air with VHF/UHF but also wanted to try HF while we are at the peak in the solar cycle. POTA was also high on my list, but I was nervous about it. Sheila (N6XN) encouraged me to start by activating Yellowstone, when she heard I had an upcoming trip in August. This didn't give me a lot of time but did give me a goal. I used a combination of YouTube Videos, the POTA website and trial and error to get started.

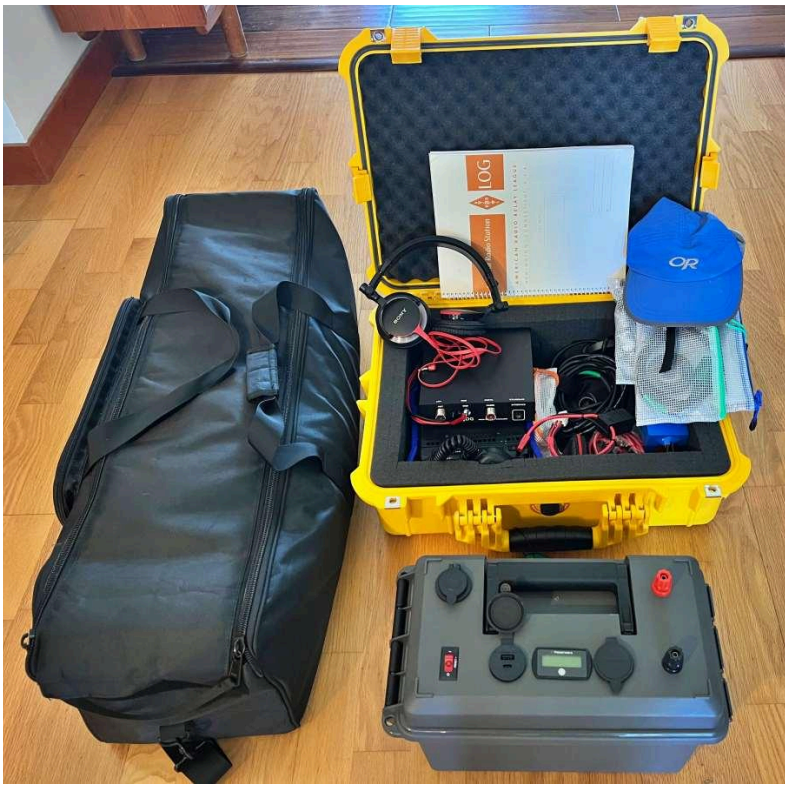
I researched many HF radios and ended up purchasing the Yaesu FT-891, a sweet little 100-watt radio. It does not have a waterfall display, and you must drill down to menus to change settings, but I found it easy to learn and use. Antennas were another matter, and it was overwhelming with how many portable HF antennas were available. I settled on the SOTAbeam 40/80 dipole (band hopper 2) and JPC-12. To get ready, I practiced during the month of July in my backyard and in early August tried to activate China Camp with Sheila to get some experience before I went on the trip. It was dreadfully slow, at first but we finally did it with the last contact being 2 operators at 2 parks, a "2fer," which brought us to the finish line of 10 plus QSOs.

My activation of Yellowstone National Park was successful and fun. I was prepared to operate at a picnic table or out of the car, but we were staying at a cabin inside the park which made it a lot easier. The weather can be challenging, and I had to stop a couple times due to thunderstorms but was able to activate Yellowstone several times over a 3-day period. I was able to make contact with Sheila and Jerry (WB6BXV) but Steve (HOH) and I tried hard but couldn't make it happen.

I prefer to have company when I try to activate a park but most of my activations have been on my own. It was scary the first time, but I had a feeling of accomplishment when I finished and always learn something new every time I set up. I have activated several parks and recently finished my first Kilo (1,000 contacts) at Olompoli State Historic Park. Sometimes the contacts are easy to make, and there is a constant pile up but more recently, the bands have been up and down and it can take an hour to just make 15 QSOs. I like pile ups as that means the QSOs are easy to make, and the park can be easily activated.

In the future, I want to expand the range of POTA parks I activate and explore more of Marin and Sonoma Counties. I don't have a schedule for POTA and only do it when I have time and it will be fun. That is the number one reason I do it – to have fun. There is something amazing when you are in a park, it's a beautiful day and you are outside trying to make contacts on your radio and talk to people all around the country and Canada, including Alaska and Hawaii. I don't make many DX contacts with POTA but sometimes get lucky. My favorite settings have been North Beach in Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Yellowstone and China Camp on the water.

So, what does my POTA set up look like in the field? It looks pretty much like one at a public service event, but with HF equipment. I use these items for POTA:



- **Go Box**: Yaesu FT-891 Transceiver, LDG Z-100A tuner (if needed) with connector cables, coax cables, paper logbook, 12-ah Bioenno battery, headphone, pencils, manuals
- **Antenna Bag:** I have several portable HF antennas, but my favorites are the JPC-12 with CHA fabric strip radials, the SOTAbeam 20/240 dipole and Spooltenna. The JPC-12 is a vertical whip antenna with loading coil and can be set up in about 10 minutes. It is typically used with wire radials, but I use it with CHA fabric radials for ease of set up. The SOTAbeam 20/40 dipole is a neat lightweight antenna and I use it with a mast. I have made some amazing DX contacts with it from my backyard. The Spooltenna is very small, lightweight and easy to deploy.

Masts: Sotabeam Tactical Mini - Compact ultra-portable 6m (19.6 ft) mast and a Packetenna Fiberglass mast 10m (32 feet).

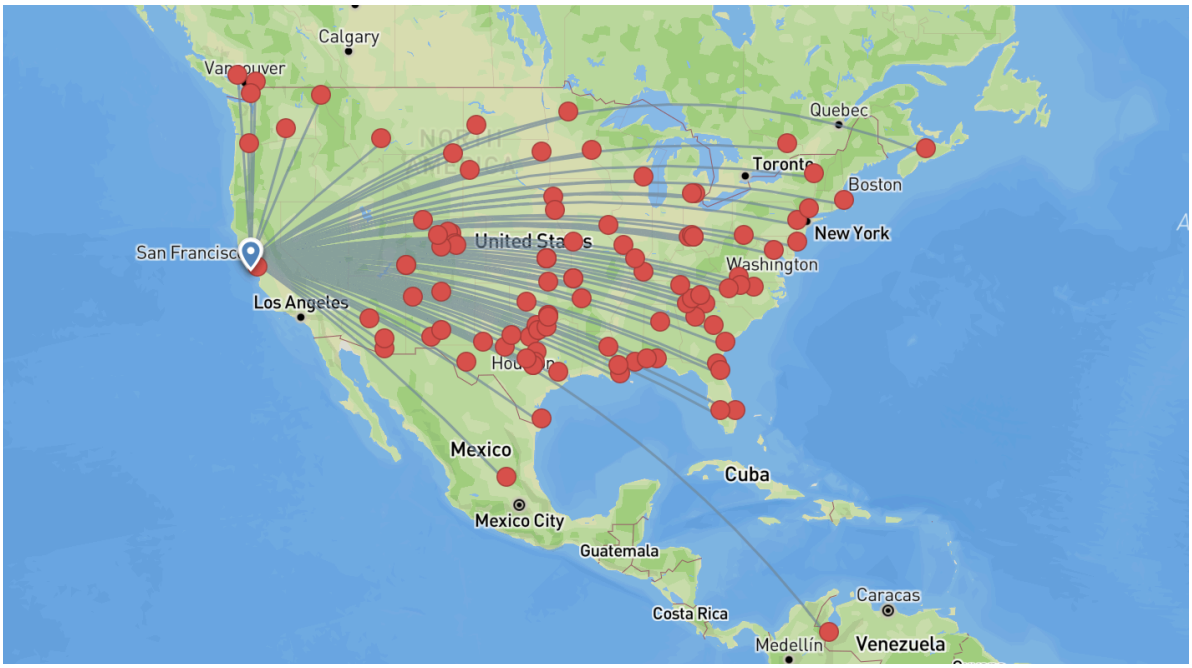
CHA Carbon Fiber Tripod – very small

Extra coax cables, connectors, bungee cords, zip ties, arborist rope and weight, picnic table connector and misc.

- **Battery Box**: 2 Bioenno 20Ah batteries. (I also carry a smaller 12Ah battery in a Go Box if I don't want to take the battery box).

After you set up your equipment, you "spot" yourself on the POTA app by inputting your park number, frequency of operation and any comments. The POTA app automatically assigns your spot a band and mode. Hunters will use the POTA app to look for POTA activators and can sort by frequency, band or other options. Then you just start by calling "CQ POTA" and your call sign. You can also contact any other operator or hunt other activators at parks and not call out CQ to get your total of 10 contacts needed for park activation.

I use a paper log in the field to keep track of contacts and then manually log them in to World Radio League (WRL) which is integrated into QRZ. I also maintain logs on LoTW but just upload manually from time to time. I chose WRL for my main logging as it's very intuitive, easy to use and constantly being updated and debugged. It also has a nice mapping ability. The choice of logging software is a personal thing, and everyone has their own favorite ones to use like N1MM. The map below is from an activation at Olompoli Park (US-3527) on May 15 with the JPC-12. I started as KO6GII and am now NW6Y, so I also had to learn how to update a call sign change in several places.



I have "met" many interesting people doing POTA. I often hear the same call signs from earlier park activations or from hunting parks myself at home, and we exchange a hello, how are you doing, or what's the weather like. POTA is a very friendly community of people, activators and hunters. You can chat as little or as much as you want. If there is a pile up, I keep chatting to a minimum but if it is slow, it is fun to talk to people. If you want to just make contacts, POTA is one easy way. Operators come to you if you call "CQ POTA and (your call sign)". There are many awards given by QRZ and LoTW and any POTA QSOs can be counted towards those awards. People in the park often wander by and ask questions about what I am doing. It's an opportunity to introduce them to ham radio and most find it cool. During a recent activation in Olompoli, two ranger trucks drove up and stopped in front of my table. One had a bullet proof vest on, but I knew I was ok when they smiled and said hello. One of the rangers explained he was training the other ranger and told him

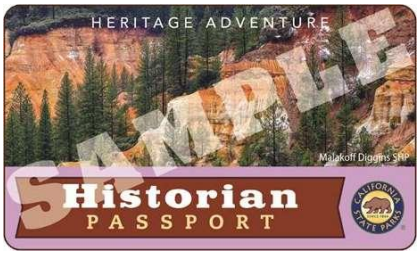
what I was doing and explained "you will see these people sometimes in the park". I was relieved when they drove off as I hadn't paid the park fee (I forgot).

There are many MARS club members who have many years of POTA experience and would be happy to share their knowledge and help you get started. I would also be glad to answer any questions.

POTA has been great for me for so many reasons. It has helped me to become a more confident radio operator, and develop skills which will help with emergency operations, public service events and contesting. I am now more comfortable handling piles ups and radio traffic. It also got me started on HF, which I also now also do from home with an inside set up. But the main reason I do it is for fun. Give it a try!

Nancy Wein, NW6Y

CA State Parks Historian Passport



Looking to explore new parks *and* participate in a Parks on the Air (POTA)? To commemorate America's 250th anniversary, until **July 6th**, anyone can download a free "Historian Passport" (normally $50). To download the pass, set up an account at reservecalifornia.com — the state parks department's website for reserving campgrounds — and go to reservecalifornia.com/passes/advancepasses

Parks accepting the Historian Passport

Anderson Marsh SHP
Antelope Valley Indian Museum
Bale Grist Mill SHP
Benicia Capitol SHP
Bidwell Mansion SHP
Bodie SHP
California Citrus SHP
California Mining & Mineral Museum
Colonel Allensworth SHP
El Presidio de Santa Barbara SHP
Empire Mine SHP
Folsom Powerhouse SHP
Fort Ross SHP
Fort Tejon SHP
Indian Grinding Rock SHP
Jack London SHP
La Purísima Mission SHP
Los Encinos SHP
Malakoff Diggins SHP
Marshall Gold Discovery SHP
Monterey SHP
Olompali SHP
Petaluma Adobe SHP
Railtown 1897 SHP
Robert Louis Stevenson SP
San Juan Bautista SHP
Shasta SHP
Sonoma SHP
State Indian Museum SHP
Sutter's Fort SHP
Weaverville Joss House SHP
Will Rogers SHP
William B. Ide Adobe SHP

Colorado QSO Party: Saturday, Sept 12th

All amateur radio operators are encouraged to get on the air and make QSOs, chase counties or even visit Colorado to activate a county. This year is particularly special because it's the 250th anniversary of the United States as well as the 150th anniversary of Colorado. We welcome out-of-state stations to help activate counties in Colorado. More information for participants is available at: https://coloradoqsoparty.org/getting-started/

Looking for upcoming QSO parties? https://contestcalendar.com/

Inside the Clubhouse: Field Day 2026

The first **ARRL Field Day** took place in **June 1933**, organized by the American Radio Relay League (the same year the QSA-5 was first published). It was conceived by former ARRL Communications Manager F.E. Handy to test the rapid deployment and emergency availability of portable amateur radio stations in the field. Every year since then, amateur radio operators in the United States and around the world participate in this activity which takes place during the last weekend in June. The Marin Amateur Radio Society – MARS – has been part of this event for decades!

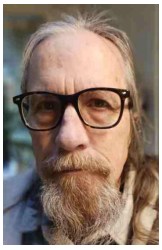
This year, and for many years past, MARS set up the club's radio systems at Stafford Lake Park in Novato CA. MARS has been participating in Field Day almost since the inception of both, which is a testament to the club's commitment to emergency preparedness and radio arts. Walking into the area MARS set up for Field Day, you could easily see how the club could run a large radio communications center in the field during a disaster. There were multiple stations set up for working multiple bands simultaneously. There was a GOTA (Get on the Air) station that allowed people interested in amateur radio, but who have not yet gotten a license, a chance to go on the air, experiencing the excitement of the hobby.

James KI6RGP and Jay KO6FIR created a mobile recording space to acquire oral histories and recollections of the club, its history, and its members. This project allows the club to preserve a rich history that would be otherwise lost. The event, which ran 24-27 hours consecutively, from Saturday June 27th (18:00 UTC) until Sunday June 28th (20:59 UTC) saw continuous operation from MARS operators during the entire event. MARS outdid itself this year with multiple transceivers and antennas, as well as 24-hour operations!

Stafford Lake Park is a beautiful location with plenty of parking and space for doing such an event. It's easy to get to from Highway 101 and the drive takes you through a lesser known scenic part of Marin County. The weather couldn't be better, not too hot and not too cold, just right for a day outdoors!

One of the most important exercises practiced during Field Day is the physical setting up of the equipment. Get it right and you can communicate with the appropriate resources during a disaster. Get it wrong and you can't reach those much needed resources. It's one thing to operate within your ham shack. It's another thing to operate in the field. Walking into the MARS Field Day camp, visitors saw a completely organized and efficiently laid-out complex of individual operating stations. Teamwork is what allowed our club, and clubs around California and beyond, to pull off such a successful event. Visitors to this emergency preparedness event have little idea of the amount of planning that goes into it. Club members formed committees early this year and worked tirelessly to ensure success! The MARS Field Day team is a well-oiled machine, and the well-laid-out infrastructure of the radio stations was proof of that!

This event was a great chance for club members to get out of their shacks and try something different, operating outdoors. It gave the MARS Field Day crew a chance to further hone their skills. There's a reason amateur radio's motto is "when all else fails." Field Day is about more than just preparing for an emergency or disaster. It's a chance to have people not involved in our hobby see what we do and even try it out (GOTA). Field Day promotes amateur radio and sparks interest in future members of the amateur radio community. Lastly, it's a chance for members to share stories with one another and just talk face to face. It was a chance to catch up, compare notes, and share our love of this fantastic hobby. It's all 'bout community!



Hugh Patterson, KN6KNB


THE CABINET OF
Dr. CALIGARI
Amateur Radio
Public Service
Communications
marin
MARIN
AMATEUR
RADIO
SOCIETY
(MARS)
MARIN
Amateur
Radio Soc.
Radio Communications
marin
Service
Training
Community
EST 1933
AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY


CAUTION
RADIO
COMMUNICATIONS
Steve Kramme
It's the Law


11:31 am


9:06 pm


Radio Communications
marin
10:12 pm

Inside the Clubhouse: Dipsea Memories

Inside the Clubhouse: Dipsea Lessons

Here's what worked well:

1. Doug Kaye (K6DRK)"s superb management of the APRS infrastructure worked well.
2. Our iGate MARS-10 at Commonweal on the Bolinas Mesa forwarded over 150 position packets to the APRS-IS Server, including many from Steep Ravine.
3. The new marsaprs.org replacement for CalTopo gave everyone interested real time access to the overall progress of the race.
4. The official Dipsea timing information at my.result.com meant we could see individual runners in real time.
5. The complete timing system allowed us to stay off the flat bed truck at finish.
6. The crossband repeater allowed Net Control and Finish to access Tam West without fear of breaking into the Surf Shack marine radios.
7. Mailboxes managed their assistance to the road diversion crew well.

Here's what didn't work well:

1. The generator in the County van at Net Control kept shutting down, meaning we lost Starlink internet connection.
2. Simplex comms on 147.555MHz inside the beach park weren't reliable.
3. We had to change the UHF uplink frequency to the cross band repeater on the night before the race due to unknown QRM.
4. The crossband operation continues to be poorly explained! The fact that the transmit and receive UHF frequencies are identical is mind boggling.
5. The ambulances that went to Muir Woods had 800MHz radios that did not work there.
6. The position of the last sweep was difficult to determine.
7. The crossband antenna at Moors was a 19 inch whip. We have used a mast mounted collinear previously.

Rob Rowlands, NZ6J

Inside the Clubhouse: Where is it Now?

On April 8, 2026 Martin Rothfield (W6MRR), successfully launched a small balloon with a WSPR tracker on 20 meters. It's currently on its 5th trip around the world.

If the balloon is still aloft (and the tracker is working), find it online on WSPRnet with callsign NJ6Z.

Rob Rowlands, NZ6J

Inside the Clubhouse: Restoring a 1956 RCA Strato-World

After the Randy Jenkins Memorial Public Service Kickoff Lunch (in February), Scott Pasternak (KN6ZDM) was chatting with our host, Louis Canotas (Presidio Yacht Club manager) and asked if there's anything our club can do as a thank you. Louis mentioned that growing up he listened to a RCA radio that he inherited, and sadly wasn't working. Scott offered to see what he could do.

Scott then passed the radio to Jerry Foster (WA6BXV). Jerry thought getting it working would be a fun challenge – and identified it as a 1956 RCA Victor 7-BX-10 "Strato-World II". He carefully replaced all the electrolytic and paper capacitors. He upgraded the silicone rectifiers with solid state rectifiers. And after a bit of trial-and-error, he was able to hear transmissions from the long-silenced radio!

One mystery remains: embossed on the cover is a stamp. Looking closely, it says, "Feld nummer 56509" that appears to be a German WW II Field Post stamp. Since the radio was manufactured after WW II, it's unclear why the emblem is there.

Inside the Clubhouse: North Bay 2m Critical Mass (NB2mCM)

Our February 2026 2m Critical Mass meeting was devoted to an orientation of the MARS Radio Room located at our Mill Valley clubhouse. This was Part 1 of introducing HF radio to our UHF/VHF 2m Critical Mass attendees.

Northbay 2m Critical Mass Team

Field Day's 2m Critical Mass was Part 2 – giving everyone the chance to make on-the-air contacts with a HF radio under proper supervision.

Inside the Clubhouse: July 2026 Calendar

Curious what's coming up? You'll find details on all of our weekly nets, upcoming meetings, public service events, and other local activities on our online calendar. You can even subscribe to the calendar. Please submit corrections or suggestions to: QSA5@w6sg.net.

JULY	Saturday, 11	Amateur Radio Exams 🪪
	Saturday, 19	North Bay 2 Meter Critical Mass
AUG	Saturday, 1	Marin Century 🚲
	Friday, 7	MARS Club Meeting
	Saturday, 8	MCBC Dirt Fondo 🚵
	Sunday, 16	North Bay 2 Meter Critical Mass
	Saturday, 22	Double Dipsea 🚶‍♂️🏃‍♂️

Inside the Clubhouse: Tragedy Beneath the Surface, the MARS Clubhouse and History that Deserves to be Remembered

On July 20, 1961, San Rafael became the site of one of the most devastating structural disasters in Marin County history. What began as a fire inside the historic Puerto Suello Hill Tunnel rapidly escalated into a catastrophic collapse that claimed the life of 23-year-old Fireman Franklin "Frank" Kinsler of the Alto Fire Department. His death left a lasting imprint on the region's firefighting community, its infrastructure, and its collective memory.

The Puerto Suello Hill Tunnel, a roughly quarter-mile-long railroad passage constructed in 1879 by the San Francisco and North Pacific Railroad, ran beneath a hill topped by Lincoln Avenue and Los Ranchitos Road in north San Rafael. By 1961, it was owned and operated by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. Like many tunnels of its era, its structural integrity depended on heavy timber framing and wooden supports.

The blaze was deliberately set by two boys, ages 12 and 13, following an altercation at a local pool. They ignited at least three fires inside the tunnel. Railroad maintenance workers successfully extinguished two of them, but the third grew beyond their control. They exited the tunnel and called the San Rafael Fire Department. Fueled by decades-old dry timber, the fire quickly intensified. The confined space acted like a blast furnace, generating extreme heat, thick toxic smoke, and rapidly weakening the wooden supports that held up the hill above.


FRANK KINSLER
Loses life at fire

The county dispatch center, situated on 4th Street in San Rafael, transmitted the alarm on 46.5 MHz from the Mt. Tam transmitter, designated with the FCC callsign KML958 and tactical callsign "Control-6." The Klaxon Fire Alarm located at 27 Shell Road in unincorporated Alto activated, and it would have been Frank's responsibility, as the most junior member or "duty man," to promptly proceed to the base station radio and acknowledge the dispatch. Upon receipt, Frank would have meticulously recorded the date, time, FCC callsign of the dispatch center, and the address of the emergency in the mandated FCC Communications Log. Frank's dispatch acknowledgment constituted a crucial step in the emergency response process. At the time, the 15-25 Watt GE MC-1W mobile radios utilized in fire apparatus necessitated several minutes for the tubes to attain optimal temperature. During the warm-up phase, the radio would be rendered incapable of transmitting or receiving radio updates.

For Frank Kinsler, the Alto Fire Station was more than a workplace; it was his home during his 72 hour work-week. Only six months into his firefighting career, the U.S. Air Force veteran (who had served at Hamilton Air Force Base) was a dedicated responder, husband, and new member of the Alto Fire Department.

When the mutual-aid request to San Rafael came in, Kinsler responded immediately. Fire departments from across Marin County converged on the scene. Because fighting a fire inside a wooden tunnel is extraordinarily hazardous, crews operated at both portals and along the ridge above to monitor ground stability. Kinsler was assigned to drive a fire pickup truck along Lincoln Avenue, directly over the burning tunnel.

As the inferno raged approximately 50 feet below, the critical timber supports succumbed to the flames. Without warning, the earth beneath 1867 Lincoln Avenue collapsed into a colossal 50-foot chasm. A young San Rafael resident between his Freshman and Sophomore year at USF, recalls the tragic events of that day. *"A friend arrived at the house and informed us that the tunnel was on fire. We proceeded in my friend's car north on Grand Avenue to Linden Lane, under the freeway to Lincoln Avenue, and we parked near the nursery. We walked north to the south entrance of the tunnel. Smoke was billowing out of the tunnel, and a fire truck was stationed on the tracks. The firemen really had their hands full with the situation. An Alto Fire Department pickup truck drove past, and the driver partially opened the door, suggesting he intended to exit the truck. Suddenly, a hole opened and swallowed the truck. The truck disappeared. Large flames erupted from the hole, it occurred so quickly".*

CAVE-IN — Alto Fire Chief Carl Heynen and San Rafael Police Chief Charles J. Chiesa run toward huge crater immediately after cave-in of part of Lincoln Avenue. An Alto truck with fireman Frank Kinsler aboard plunged through the cave-in. Other sections of the land above the tunnel collapsed during the night.

Fireman Kinsler and his truck plummeted into the void. He was instantly killed.

Two boys, one of whom had a prior record for arson, fled the scene but were apprehended by San Rafael police that evening. Concurrently, firefighters endured 36 hours of arduous efforts, aided by a crane, to recover Kinsler's remains. Throughout the ordeal, Susan Kinsler, Frank's wife, maintained a vigil at the scene.

The loss of Frank Kinsler sent shockwaves through Marin's fire service and the close-knit Alto community. Over time, fire districts consolidated and the original Alto station eventually ceased operating as an active fire station. The building itself, however, was preserved.

In 1997, the remaining members of the Alto Volunteer Firemen transferred the historic station to the Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS). Today, the very same building at 27 Shell Road serves as the MARS clubhouse. The former engine bays now contain our communications room, meeting space and hosts events like critical mass and "babble class", while former living quarters have been

FIRE IN SOUTH ENTRANCE—Fire crawls around south end of railroad tunnel as fire-fighters above shoot water through opening in attempt to put out the blaze. The fire smouldered throughout the night and may still be burning under the caved-in ground, firemen said today.

repurposed into an apartment. The building continues to represent a place of service to the community, much like it did on that July day in 1961 when a young, 23-year-old Fireman bid farewell to his wife and reported to the Alto station for duty.

For members of the MARS club who visit the facility each week, history is readily accessible for those who take the time to observe. A small, inconspicuous plaque affixed to the wall bears the name Franklin Kinsler.

Despite its diminutive size, it holds significant historical importance. It commemorates the location where a young firefighter worked and responded to his final alarm.

The next time you step into the clubhouse—whether to repair equipment, attend a meeting, or join a VE session—take a moment to stop by the plaque. Pause and reflect on the veteran, husband, and firefighter who once walked these same floors. Honor Frank Kinsler not simply as a name on the wall, but as a hero of Marin County.

The human cost of that day extended far beyond Kinsler. Two civilians sustained severe injuries, and 26 families were displaced from their apartments following a secondary collapse and fire that destroyed the entirety of Schwartzer Apartment Building and one large wing of the Chula Vista Apartments.

The collapse also severed freight rail service on the southern section of the Northwestern Pacific line, triggering years of legal battles over the railroad's future and forcing Marin and Sonoma counties to rely even more heavily on U.S. Highway 101 as their main north-south corridor.

The Puerto Suello Tunnel lay collapsed and boarded up for six years. It was rebuilt in 1967, closed again in 1985, and later rehabilitated for the Sonoma–Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) system, which restored passenger service to the historic route in 2017.

The Lincoln Ave incident location as it appears today. The red line is the approximate location of the tunnel, and the gold star depicts the approximate location of the collapse. Note: None of the apartment building damaged by the collapse are present today

More than six decades later, the Puerto Suello Tunnel fire remains a sobering reminder of the dangers of underground tunnel fires and the fragility of aging timber-lined tunnels, the bravery of the firefighters who responded, and the importance of preserving local history. Marin wouldn't see another railroad tunnel fire until the early 1990's when the Cal Park Hill tunnel fire erupted and the lessons learned 30 years prior were successfully employed.

Tragically, Frank Kinsler was not the only Marin firefighter to die in the line of duty during the 1960s. Four more would perish before the decade ended.

Today, Kinsler's sacrifice is remembered through a modest plaque mounted on a white wall inside a trophy case. The building—once a fire station and now home to the Marin Amateur Radio Society clubhouse—stands as a living tribute to his memory.

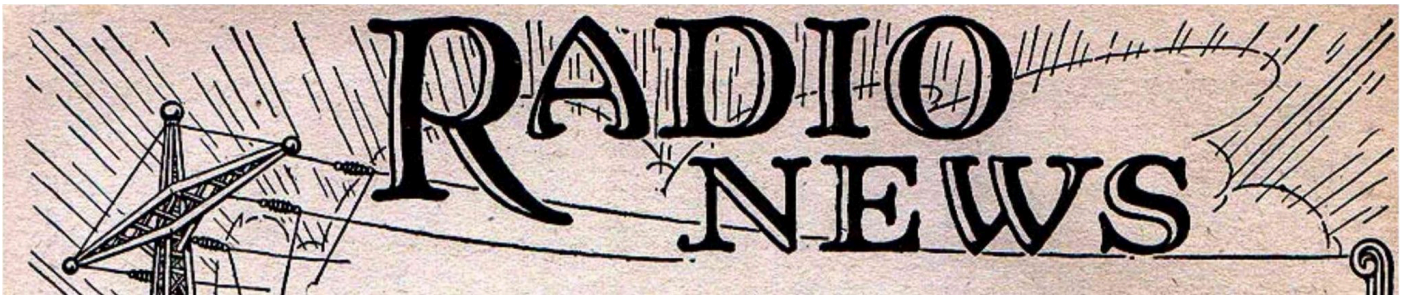
Franklin D. Kisler was returned to his hometown of Sneedville, Tennessee, a population of approximately 1,000, where he was interred on Saturday, July 29, 1961, at the Fox Branch Cemetery.

The young college student who witnessed the tragedy that day is our very own Milt Hyams, KM6ASI.

The death of Alto Fireman Franklin Kinsler 65 years ago and our historic clubhouse is history that deserves to be remembered.

The July 1961 edition of the Marin IJ, newspapers.com, ancestry.com, and The Associated Press, with contributions from its reporters, articles and photographers, played a role in the creation of this writing.

Gerald McCarthy, W6NOV
Deputy Chief of Operations, Novato Fire District (Ret)



Ham Radio in the News

From local to national to international – stories, inspiration, and legislation.

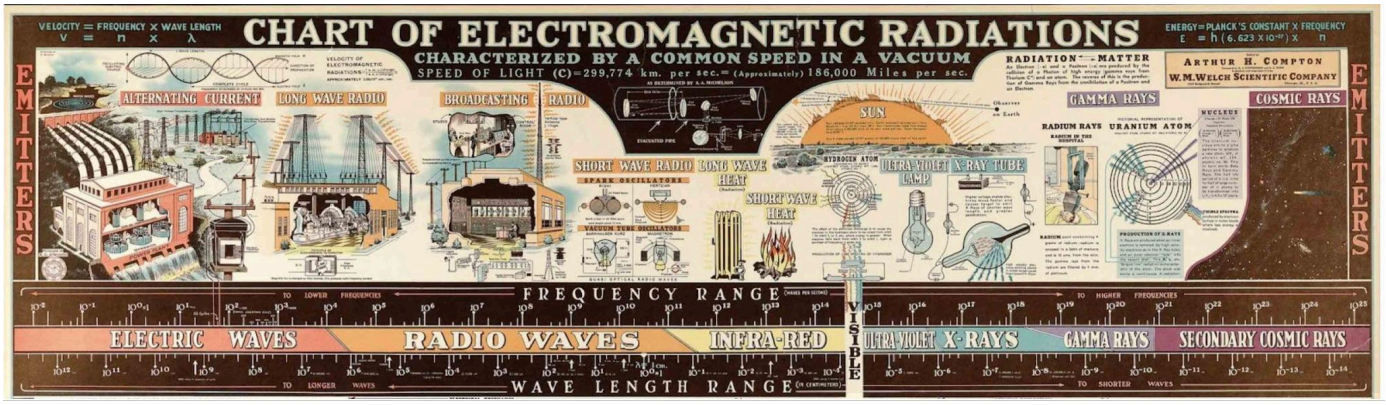
- New! DMR Radio ID Annual ID Verification
- RivCo 'Ham' Radio Enthusiasts Plan 24-Hour `Field Day' Saturday
- Amateur radio operators prepare for nationwide test and storm spotting
- FCC Approves Limited Emergency Use of 70 cm Band by AST SpaceMobile Satellites Outside the US
- FCC Warns Licensee on Out-of-Band Transmissions

Trusted Radio News Souces

ARRL News Page for national news regarding ham radio.

QRZ Now for ham radio news from around the globe.

Amateur Radio Newsline weekly amateur radio story highlights.



Ham Classroom

Every month, we showcase interesting subjects.

[QRP Radio Power Consumption: Choosing the Right Rig and Power Source for Portable Operations]

[POTA and SOTA Antennas]

Ham Classroom: QRP Radio Power Consumption: Choosing the Right Rig and Power Source for Portable Operations

QRP operation—transmitting at 5 or 10 watts or less—depends on efficient power use, especially during portable, field, or emergency activations where battery life is critical. For General Class operators and above working HF (and sometimes VHF/UHF), understanding a radio's receive (RX) and transmit (TX) current draws is essential for selecting the right rig and properly sizing batteries.

This guide compares popular QRP and portable transceivers: the Icom IC-705, Elecraft KX2, Elecraft KX3, Lab599 Discovery TX-500, Yaesu FT-818, and Xiegu X6100.

All data reflects typical values measured at ~13.8V external supply (the voltage needed for full ~10W output capability). RX figures assume no-signal or moderate audio levels; TX figures are for ~5–10W output. Actual consumption varies with settings such as backlight brightness, volume, preamp use, band, and mode. Always verify with your own measurements.

Power Consumption Comparison

Receive Mode Current Draw (Typical @ 13.8V)

Radio	RX Current (mA)	Notes
Lab599 TX-500	100–110	Backlight on, preamp off – class-leading efficiency
Elecraft KX2	135–180	As low as 135 mA optimized
Elecraft KX3	150–200	As low as 150 mA optimized
Icom IC-705	300–500	Standby ~300 mA; higher with screen on and loud audio level
Xiegu X6100	~330	Average; screen, radio volume & adv. features increase draw
Yaesu FT-818	380–450	Backlights on; lower when squelched

Transmit Mode Current Draw (Typical @ ~5–10W, 13.8V)

Radio	TX Current (A)	Notes
Lab599 TX-500	1–3	Highly efficient
Elecraft KX2	1–2	Excellent at QRP levels
Elecraft KX3	1–2.5	Very efficient at ≤5W
Icom IC-705	~3 (10W) ~2.5 (5W)	—
Xiegu X6100	~3	At max rating
Yaesu FT-818	2–3	At 5–6W output

Overall Efficiency Ranking (Most to Least Efficient for Typical QRP Use)

1. Lab599 TX-500
2. Elecraft KX2
3. Elecraft KX3
4. Icom IC-705
5. Xiegu X6100
6. Yaesu FT-818

The TX-500 and Elecraft KX-series rigs stand out for minimalism and maximum battery longevity. The IC-705 and X6100 trade some efficiency for modern "shack-like" features (color screens, panadapters, pre-amp, D-STAR, GPS, WiFi, Bluetooth). The FT-818 remains a rugged, reliable classic but draws more power at idle.

Ways to Reduce Power Drain

Receive (RX) optimizations deliver the biggest gains since you spend most of your time listening:

1. Use headphones instead of the internal speaker
2. Dim or turn off the backlight
3. Disable preamps and spectrum scopes when not needed
4. Enable squelch, the constant "hiss" of HF draws power to run internal speaker

Transmit (TX) optimizations:

1. Use the lowest power necessary
2. Prefer CW or digital modes for better efficiency
3. On Elecraft rigs, stay at or below 5W for peak efficiency

General tips:

1. Turn off unused features (Bluetooth, WiFi, etc.)
2. Monitor consumption with an inline wattmeter
3. Use efficient antenna

Battery Amp-Hour Recommendations

Assume a typical QRP day: 70–80% RX/listening and 20–30% TX with a light duty cycle. Add a 20–50% safety margin for cold weather, inefficiencies, and unexpected use.

For a full day of operations (8–12 hours active):

- Most efficient rigs (TX-500, KX2, KX3): 4–7 Ah LiFePO4
- Mid-range (IC-705, X6100): 7–10+ Ah
- FT-818: 8–12+ Ah

For extended emergency operations (24–48+ hours):

- Plan for 10–20+ Ah total capacity (or multiple packs) and pair them with a small solar panel (10–30W) plus an MPPT charge controller.
- LiFePO4 batteries are preferred for safety, weight, and flat discharge curves.
- Always use properly fused cables rated for your radio's voltage.

Many rigs display voltage or current draw. A simple inline wattmeter is one of the best investments for serious QRP field work.

Summary

The Lab599 TX-500 and Elecraft KX2/KX3 set the benchmark for efficiency in portable operation. The Icom IC-705, Xiegu X6100, and Yaesu FT-818 offer more features and familiarity at the cost of higher power consumption. Choose based on your operating style, test your actual battery runtime, and enjoy more time on the air.

73 and happy portable operating!

Gerald McCarthy, W6NOV

Ham Classroom: POTA AND SOTA Antennas

POTA (Parks On The Air) and SOTA (Summits On The Air) provide a great way to master the craft of antenna building. Before getting into the main point of this article, antennas for portable operation, let's look at why you should consider getting involved in POTA or SOTA:

Summits on the Air (SOTA) and Parks on the Air perfectly blend amateur radio with outdoor exploration. These activities provide a multitude of benefits, including enhanced physical fitness, invaluable emergency preparedness, superior signal performance, continuous technical skill building, and a vibrant, supportive community. It also helps promote amateur radio because people passing by become interested in what you're doing!

1. Embracing the Great Outdoors and Physical Fitness
Both programs compel operators to venture away from their home base and get out into nature. While POTA Portable Operating often features car-accessible camping areas and parks, SOTA Summits on the Air require hiking or climbing to reach designated mountain peaks. This integration naturally promotes regular physical exercise, fresh air, and an appreciation for the environment, turning a sedentary hobby into an active pursuit.

2. Practical Emergency Preparedness
Setting up and operating an off-grid station in the wilderness or neighborhood park serves as excellent training for emergency communications (EmComm). By repeatedly building portable antenna systems, optimizing battery life, and troubleshooting equipment failures in the field, operators learn how to establish vital communication links when standard infrastructure fails.

3. Superior Signal Propagation and Lower Noise
Operating away from the dense electrical and urban interference found in residential areas provides an exceptionally low noise floor. You would be amazed at how my better distant signals sound! For SOTA in particular, operating from an elevated position (Height Above Average Terrain) significantly improves VHF and UHF line-of-sight propagation, allowing operators to reach impressive distances using very little power. There's an entire sub-genre of our hobby dedicated to long distance VHF and UHF communication.

4. Honing Technical and Equipment Skills
Portable operating forces hams to master the fundamentals of their gear. If you want to master the use of your gear and up your skill level, operate from a remote location. This is especially true when it comes to mastering antenna theory. Because operators must physically carry all their equipment (especially for SOTA summits), they are motivated to design ultralight stations, create highly efficient and portable antennas, and manage low-power (QRP) setups. This continuous cycle of refinement makes operators much more knowledgeable and adaptable.

5. Vibrant Community and Networking
Both award programs foster a large, enthusiastic, and supportive community of activators and chasers portable operating. Whenever an activator sets up in the field, a network of "hunters" eagerly awaits to make contact. The thrill of initiating a "pileup" and the camaraderie built through special "Park-to-Park" (P2P) and "Summit-to-Summit" (S2S) contacts offer an ongoing, highly rewarding challenge.

6. Public Visibility and Outreach
Operating in public spaces like national or state parks brings amateur radio out of the hidden confines of a home shack and into the real-world. POTA is great public relations for ham radio: Inquisitive bystanders and hikers frequently stop by to watch and ask questions, offering the perfect opportunity to spark public interest in the hobby and potentially recruit new licensed operators.

POTA and SOTA Antennas

Homemade vertical antennas are a good choice for portable amateur radio operations due to their distinct space advantages and highly effective radiation patterns. Unlike horizontal antennas, which require high tree branches, great lengths, or bulky center-support structures to stay airborne, a vertical design relies on a single, upright element, often a 16 to 18-foot telescopic whip which you can purchase on Amazon for as little as $30. This makes them highly versatile for varied terrain, as they can be mounted using simple ground stakes, small tripods, or strapped directly to park picnic tables. For the POTA or SOTA operator, this structural simplicity translates directly into less gear to haul and fewer environmental dependencies when selecting an activation spot.

The primary technical benefit of a vertical antenna is its low angle of radiation, which is exceptionally well-suited for long-distance propagation. Horizontal antennas deployed at typical portable heights—often lower than a quarter-wavelength above the ground - tend to radiate most of their energy straight up into the atmosphere, a phenomenon known as Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS). This leads to more localized communication. Verticals, by contrast, focus their signal outward toward the horizon, making them fantastic antennas for racking up long-distance contacts. This low-angle characteristic is highly prized by both POTA and SOTA operators who want to maximize their reach into distant states or neighboring continents using modest portable power levels.

For the budget-conscious radio amateur, building a homemade vertical is an incredibly economical project that can offer the same performance as expensive, commercially sold antennas. A highly effective 20-meter vertical can be constructed using nothing more than a cheap telescoping fiberglass fishing pole or kite pole, a length of standard insulated wire, a Banana plug binding post for the coaxial cable, nylon cord, and a handful of stakes. The wire is simply taped or spiraled along the length of the pole as it is extended upward. Because the materials are so inexpensive, operators can easily build multiple resonant wires for different bands, swapping them out in the field to match changing atmospheric conditions without breaking the bank.

If you want to use a telescopic whip antenna, you can purchase an antenna/coaxial cable mount/base for around $35.

There is one small catch! That catch is the radials. A crucial component of any successful homemade vertical antenna system is the radial network, which serves as the "other half" of the antenna. Because the earth itself is generally a poor electrical conductor, a vertical antenna requires a system of wires laid out on or just above the ground to act as an artificial RF ground plane. For portable setups, hams frequently create a multi-wire radial radial-hub using a basic metal plate with holes drilled in it or ring terminals that connect between the mount and the whip. Cutting four to eight quarter-wavelength radial wires creates a low-loss mirror image of the antenna element, drastically increasing system efficiency and lowering the overall Standing Wave Ratio (SWR) without requiring an antenna tuner (although having an antenna tuner can further reduce the SWR).

When it comes to portable operations, vertical antennas excel in different ways across the two distinct formats of POTA and SOTA. In a POTA environment, where operators often set up near a vehicle, a vertical can be built using a heavier-duty telescoping fiberglass mast and a vehicle wheel-stand mount, allowing for stable operation on the lower, physically longer bands like 40 meters. For SOTA operators scaling rugged mountain peaks, weight is the overriding factor. Hikers frequently opt for ultralight, collapsible carbon-fiber or fiberglass poles that pack down to a few feet, allowing them to deploy a highly efficient 20-meter or 10-meter vertical right on a rocky summit where throwing ropes into non-existent trees is impossible.

Ultimately, the process of designing, building, and deploying a homemade vertical antenna offers the satisfaction of doing it yourself and gaining a deeper understanding of RF fundamentals. Watching a pileup of eager hunters respond to a signal radiating from a piece of wire and a cheap fishing pole provides a thrill that commercial, store-bought antennas simply cannot replicate. By experimenting with different radial configurations, wire gauges, and matching networks in the field, operators turn every outdoor activation into a practical laboratory, continually honing the technical skills that define the heart of amateur radio.
You can also consider a random wire, end-fed antenna if you're going to a location that has lots of trees. This type of antenna is better suited, if the physical area you're setting up in, is a POTA activation rather than a SOTA activation where tall trees may not exist.

Building a homemade random wire antenna is one of the easiest and most effective ways to get on the air quickly during a Parks on the Air (POTA) activation. The system consists of three basic components: a specific length of insulated radiator wire, a matching transformer, and at least one counterpoise wire. Unlike a resonant antenna, a random wire intentionally uses a length that is ***not*** a half-wavelength or multiple of a half-wavelength on any amateur band. This clever design prevents the antenna from presenting an extremely high, unmanageable impedance to your radio, allowing a wide-range antenna tuner to easily match it across multiple bands. You do need an antenna tuner for this type of antenna.

The heart of the antenna is the impedance-matching transformer, typically a 9:1 Unun (unbalanced-to-unbalanced). You can find them online for around $30. There is also the option of making one yourself. It does take a bit of work and it's often easier to purchase one. Here's a breakdown of what's involved in building one so you can decide if you're up to the task: To build one, you wrap enameled copper wire through and around a ferrite toroid core - a Type 43 material core like the FT140-43 or FT240-43 works perfectly for portable HF power levels. You will wrap a specific number of turns (tapped or wound in a trifilar style) around the toroid to achieve a 9:1 impedance transformation. This steps down the high, unpredictable impedance of the random wire to a lower range that is well within the correction capabilities of modern automatic or manual antenna tuners (50 Ohms). You'll have to solder specific wires together and then connect the unit to a SO-239 connector. There are plenty of online sites with detailed instructions. I just wanted you to get a feel for the process.

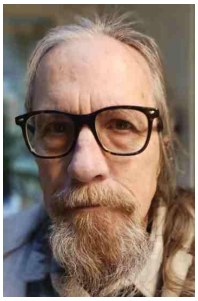
Choosing the right wire length is critical to avoid tuning dead spots where the wire might accidentally become resonant. Popular, field-tested lengths for a 40-meter through 10-meter POTA antenna include 29 feet, 35.5 feet, 41 feet, or 53 feet [The Best Random Wire Antenna Lengths - Palomar Engineers]. For the counterpoise, a single wire cut to roughly 17 to 21 feet and hung perpendicular to the antenna's length is usually sufficient to stabilize the system and minimize RF feedback in the shack. You can use cheap, lightweight 16 to 22 AWG stranded hookup wire for both the radiator and counterpoise, making the entire kit highly compact and budget friendly.

Deploying this antenna in a park is exceptionally forgiving, which is why it is a favorite for rapid POTA setups. Because it is non-resonant, it does not care if it is perfectly straight or perfectly high. You can throw a weighted rope over a tree limb to pull the far end up as a sloper, hang it horizontally between two trees, or pull it up into an Inverted-L configuration using a lightweight telescoping fiberglass pole. The 9:1 Unun box can sit right on a picnic table or hang a few feet off the ground, connected directly to your transceiver's tuner via a short length of coaxial cable.

Once deployed, this antenna turns your POTA station into a highly flexible, multi-band powerhouse. By using the built-in automatic antenna tuner found in popular portable radios like the Xiegu G90 or Icom 7300, you can instantly hop from 40 meters for local regional contacts down to 20 or 15 meters for long-distance DX. The sheer simplicity of throwing a random piece of wire into a tree and successfully working a massive pileup of hungry park hunters provides a rewarding boost to your technical confidence as a portable operator.

I always try to have two to three antenna types in my antenna kit when operating remotely. Having choices is crucial to the success of your activation. Always make sure to have a full complement of adaptors for your antenna's connection points. I carry two of each. When it comes to POTA, it's better to over pack than under pack when it comes to antennas. While this article didn't go into detail regarding antenna building, it was written to give you a starting point for deciding what type of antenna you want to take out into the field with you. Happy Activating!

Amazon.com sources for parts mentioned: Kite Pole, Speaker Wire, Binding Post, Telescopic Whip, and Antenna Mount/Threaded Base.



Hugh Patterson, KN6KNB

Marin Amateur Radio Society Board of Directors Meeting 6/11/26

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

Attendance:

_X__ **President:** Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS
_X__ **Secretary** James Saltzgaber KM6WWY
_X__ **Director** Richard Cochran AG6QR
_X__ **Director:** Ed Essick K6ELE
____ **Trustee W6SG** Marc Bruvry KF6VNT

_X__ **Vice President** Kathy Funke-Spicher KM6URP
_X__ **Treasurer** Bruce Bartel N6VLB
_X__ **Director** Steve Toquinto KB6HOH
____ **Trustee K6GWE** Brian Cooley K6EZX

_X__ **Adopt agenda**
_X__ **Approve minutes of** 7 May board meeting.
_X__ **Secretary's Report/Communications** – NBAM MOU received from Curtis WA6UDS.
_X__ **Treasurer's Report** - Nothing to report.
_X__ **Approve financials for** May 2026 -APPROVE MAY FINANCIALS

Members Present: Jay Hamilton-Roth KO6FIR, Skip Fedanzo KJ6ARL, Gerald McCarthy W6NOV, Larry Bradley KK6QPE

Committee and other Reports:

1. **Membership** Curtis WA6UDS - 135 81% (88%)
2. **Facilities** Skip KJ6ARL – Talked with gardener to remove weeds and other growth. Approx. $500 including dump run estimate. He verified that our tenant, Sharon, has an escape ladder installed and knows how to use it. He thanked those who had been active in the recent clubhouse cleanup effort.
3. **VOAD/RCV** Skip KJ6ARL – RCV is planning training for actual net control conditions that may be encountered in a real disaster/emergency conditions, long running schedules, personnel shortages, and other unique situations. Schedule TBD. He would like to have the input of anyone who has actual experience with these real-life emergency situations.
4. **Technical** – Milt KM6AIS not present. Gerald W6NOV reported an update on the running of coax from the back of Clubhouse to the work bench area. This task has been started and is still open. It is estimated to be completed in September. One additional HF antenna has been requested by Marc Bruvry KF6VNT, for the radio room. It will likely be an off-center fed dipole or possibly a vertical. Mast materials were discovered during the yard cleanup.
5. **Public Service** Scott KN6ZDM – Not Present. He is at the Dipsea event briefing. The Dipsea Race will be held on Sunday June 14th.
6. **VE Testing** Jim KM6WWY– Next exam date is July 11th. We presently have no applicants for this test session. Jim noted getting applicants has become problematic and suggested that we study the possibility of adding some of the new electronic testing/grading systems that are now available for VE exams as well as gaining information from other VE teams in the bay area. Skip KJ6ARL – The club in the past gave basic Technician Class classes, have we considered resurrecting those? Jim- We have and also tried a couple of "ham cram" style classes for the RCV CBO personnel that were interested in licenses. Interest in both has been very light. have Kathy KM6URP – reported that Sonoma County Radio club has a technician class starting soon, and she also noted that their interest has been very light. They show initial interest but fail to show up. They are using the Gordon West syllabus. Larry KK6QPE – Mt. Diablo (MDARC) has classes for Technician, General and Extra class licenses. They do hybrid, Zoom and in-person class format. That resulted in an improved turnout. A student handout, including available Elmers is made available to all students. MDARC Class is based on ARRL manual.
7. **Comm Truck** Charlie AI6TT– Via Curtis WA6UDS passed Charlie's report that the van Insurance and registration are current.

8. **NBAM** Kathy KM6URP- Installation at Bodega Bay is progressing well since Mark KM6AOW and James Renney went out and gave them assistance with setting their plan and budget. She has leads for a couple of additional sites in Sonoma and Napa counties. The Sugarloaf State Park area is being explored, but this has been a problematic area. The modeling is being done in conjunction with BMRS Repeater.
9. **Clubhouse Cleanup** – Milt KM6AIS- Not present. Gerald W6NOV Recycling runs, both E-waste and waste paint have been made, or will soon be completed. Radio Tech. Manuals have been gathered up and will have their own file cabinet. Outstanding inside clubhouse is office organization. Kitchen has been cleaned and organized. Hot water heater room door is still outstanding. Rodent feces and storage in the water heater room are still a project. The new door will be required to comply with the present fire codes and is a non-standard size opening in the concrete block wall. The storage in the garage is greatly improved and will be several iterations of organization to finish it up. Jim KM6WWY – Thanks to Rich AG6QR for organizing the network wiring, access point, modem and switches in the office area. We need to do some signage and then a fire inspection to complete the project. Winter emergency action plans need to be made up and posted. Research on the various electrical panels and identification of the various circuits need to be done.
10. **Field Day** Steve KB6HOH– Meeting tomorrow 6/12 7:30. We are going to be shorthanded for this year's field day. Jim KM6WWY– I will be able to drive the trailer from the clubhouse to/from Stafford Lake, but not able to load or unload it. Dan KN6PNA will drop his trailer at the clubhouse in advance. Volunteers have been requested to help Friday at the clubhouse and at the site to string antenna guy ropes. We still need to get the nesting birds survey for permission to string antennas in the trees, most likely Wednesday prior to the event. Scott KN6ZDM will be heading the food

Old Business:

1. Club budget for 2026 – Curtis WA6UDS Budget is still being formulated to include the costs of the Clubhouse Cleanup and repairs to make it as accurate as possible. He will have it by next Board meeting.
2. Clubhouse Inspection and EAP – Skip KJ6ARL and Jim KM6WWY will be working on these documents. (See attached)
3. Sale of donated equipment – Donation committee is working on written documentation of "for sale" equipment. A sale date needs to be set. We have 3 public service event in August. Weekend of 8/15 or 8/29 is proposed. 8/29 was determined to be the best option. Sale will be "Silent Auction" format.
4. Club reopening celebration and thank you. Curtis WA6UDS – Will discuss this at a later date.

New Business:

1. Publish Board Minutes and Financials separately from QSA-5 – Curtis WA6UDS – received a request to publish Board Minutes and Financial reports separately from QSA-5. Jay KO6FIR Goal of QSA-5 is to be interesting reading to the "average person". The board minutes are likely not of interest to them. Currently, due to our reporting system, the reported financials are one month late. Curtis WA6UDS – we need to see what reporting requirements are in the By-laws, they may require amending. Skip KJ6ARL– Would publishing a link to the financial on the website in QSA-5 be an improvement? Or possibly a snapshot in QSA-5 with a link to the website. Ed K6ELE – noted that every member receives the QSA-5 and that ensures that the reporting of financials to the membership is available to all members. No immediate Action taken.
2. Request committee chairs to provide reports for QSA-5 – Jay KO6FIR – Gathering information for QSA-5 is very time consuming and requires his being a reporter to gather the information. As an alternative, could each committee chair be responsible for providing a monthly QSA-5 submission. Curtis WA6UDS– this would impose an extra requirement on committee chairs. Kathy KM6URP– This is possibly a good idea, but agrees with Curtis that it is extra work, and most of the information is

contained in meeting minutes. Jay KO6FIR– Would like to have QSA-5 be of interest to community outside of the radio club. No immediate action taken.

3. Cancellation of 7/3 meeting and move to cancel the July 3rd general meeting due to Independence Day weekend. MSC to cancel the July 3rd general meeting.

__X_ **Good of the Order**- Jay KO6IFR- New Mill Valley city employee “Neighborhood Response Group and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator”, Kevin Ritchy, has been reached out to and invited to an introduction to the Marin Amateur Radio Society.

__X_ **Executive Session** – Not required.

__X_ **Adjourn** – MSC to adjourn without objection @20:53.

Next Regular Meeting 7 August 2026 (July Meeting Cancelled – Independence Day)

Next Board Meeting 9 July 2026

Suggested EAP and Inspection Checklist (Attachment 1)

1. Monthly Safety Inspection Checklist

Frequency: First meeting or first Sunday of each month
Inspector(s): _____
Date: _____

General Building & Emergency Egress

- ☐ All exits, doors, and hallways clear of obstructions
- ☐ Emergency lighting and exit signs functional
- ☐ Interior lighting (all rooms, hallways, bathrooms, office, garage, comm room no burned-out bulbs)
- ☐ Exterior lighting (entryways, parking area, perimeter) functional and timed/motion-sensor working
- ☐ US Flag (exterior or meeting room display) in acceptable condition: clean, no tears/fraying, properly displayed
- ☐ First aid kit(s) stocked and unexpired
- ☐ No extension cord or "zip" cord use
- ☐ No tripping hazards, loose carpeting
- ☐ No accumulating boxes or electronics (mark with blue tape with date for disposal after 30 days unless directed otherwise)

Fire Safety

- ☐ All fire extinguishers present, pressure in green, pins/seals intact, tags current
- ☐ Smoke/CO detectors tested and batteries fresh (if so equipped)
- ☐ Replace batteries annually in CO/Smoke detectors. Date:_____

Electrical & Electronics Safety

- ☐ No overloaded outlets, daisy-chained cords, or damaged wiring
- ☐ GFCI outlets in kitchen/bathrooms test properly
- ☐ Surge protectors if used on radio/electronics/ computers working
- ☐ No extension cords under rugs or through doorways

Kitchen

- ☐ Appliances clean and operating.
- ☐ Refrigerator ≤38°F; no spoiled food, clean and organized
- ☐ Sink/drains clear, no water leaks under or around

Bathrooms (2)

- ☐ Fixtures functional, no leaks
- ☐ Exhaust fans operating
- ☐ Floors dry and slip-resistant
- ☐ Windows secured

Meeting/Classroom

- ☐ Tables/chairs clean and free of damage
- ☐ Tables/chairs in place with isle access
- ☐ AV equipment secure, cords managed
- ☐ No debris / orphaned equipment (blue tape, date, discard in 30 days)
- ☐ Drop ceiling tiles in place, undamaged (no sagging or stains)

Office

- ☐ Furniture anchored (earthquake zone)
- ☐ No overloaded shelves
- ☐ No extensions cords or "zip" cords
- ☐ Windows secured

Electronics Workbench

- ☐ Tools organized
- ☐ ESD mats/grounding good
- ☐ No exposed wires or chemicals
- ☐ Racks/antennas secure
- ☐ No extensions cords or "zip" cords
- ☐ All coax connectors tight on radios
- ☐ Grounding present and properly secured to radios

Communications Room

- ☐ Antennas coax secure to Polyphaser(s) and ground bus
- ☐ Grounding bus secure to grounding station ground
- ☐ Ground pipe beneath radios secure and undamaged
- ☐ All coax connectors tight on radios
- ☐ Grounding present and properly secured to radios
- ☐ Radio vents clear; no overheating, no storage on radios
- ☐ Grounding present and properly secured to power supplies
- ☐ Power leads from power supply to radios properly secured
- ☐ All coax in good condition

Garage/Storage Area

- ☐ Flammables in approved containers
- ☐ Heavy items secured
- ☐ Floors clear; no spills
- ☐ No signs of water leaks
- ☐ No signs of rodent activity
- ☐ Garage door in working order
- ☐ Garage door locks in working order
- ☐ Garage lighting working

Exterior (Quick Visual)

- ☐ Doors (front and old app bad doors secure/weather-tight
- ☐ No new damage or pests
- ☐ Windows secured and without damage
- ☐ Clear exit path for tenant
- ☐ No items on stairs
- ☐ Hot water heater room clean, free of storage

Update Station Manual (Routine Operations, Emergency Operations, Appliance Information, Emergency Contact Information, Pending Maintenance Issues)

- ☐ Insurance company information updated
- ☐ Emergency contact list updated
- ☐ Emergency vendor list updated
- ☐ Plumber
- ☐ Electrician
- ☐ Roofing Co
- ☐ Safety policies
- ☐ Duplicate Comm Van information updated
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ Registration
- ☐ Emergency Procedures

Notes / Actions Needed (include pro reports):

Inspector Initials: _____ Signature: _____

2. Seasonal Safety Inspection Checklist

Frequency: October to April, prior to and immediately following major storm
Inspector(s): _____
Date: _____

- ☐ Roof, gutters, downspouts cleared
- ☐ Side drainage ditch clear, functioning, no blockages/erosion
- ☐ Drains in front parking lot working, no blockages
- ☐ No leaks around windows/doors
- ☐ Heating **system clean; air filter replacement date: _____ (replace 1–3 months)**
- ☐ Mold inspection in wet areas
- ☐ Wood framing checked for rot
- ☐ Windows/doors seal; weather stripping good
- ☐ Dipole Antenna mounts secure
- ☐ Flag Pole in place
- ☐ Garage mounted antenna(s) guy wire and antenna condition
- ☐ Roof Antenna mounts secure

Notes / Actions Needed:
Inspector Initials: _____ Signature: _____

Summer (Hot/Dry Season) – May to October or before and after predicted East Wind Event and/or Red Flag Warning for Marin (Below 1000' elevation)
Inspector(s): _____
Date: _____

- ☐ A/C, fans, ventilation clean/operational; air filter replacement date: _____
- ☐ Equipment (radios, HVAC) not overheating
- ☐ Wood surfaces checked for drying/cracking
- ☐ Perimeter cleared of all combustibles (defensible space)
- ☐ Generator serviced
- ☐ Pest nests removed
- ☐ Roof vents clear
- ☐ Roof clear of combustible materials (tree litter)

Notes / Actions Needed:
Inspector Initials: _____ Signature: _____

MARIN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 3220

1. Fire Safety and Evacuation

- If you smell smoke, see fire, or hear the smoke / CO alarm immediately evacuate —do not investigate or delay.
- Alert others including the tenant(s) calmly Call 911 from outside (provide address: 27 Shell Road, Mill Valley; describe the emergency).
- Evacuate using the nearest safe exit — close doors behind you but do not lock them.
- Follow posted exit signs/routes
- Proceed to a pre-designated assembly point (e.g., across the street or in the parking
- area away from the building and overhead power lines).
- Do a head count/account for people; report missing individuals to firefighters or 911.
- Never re-enter the building until cleared by emergency responders.
- Fire extinguishers — know locations (often near kitchen, radio room, exits); use PASS method (Pull pin, Aim low, Squeeze, Sweep) only if trained and the fire is small/contained — otherwise, evacuate.

2. Utility Shut-Off Procedures

- All members with key fob access should be able to identify, locate and shut down natural gas, water and electric services.
- **Natural Gas Shut-Off**:
  - Main valve: Need to locate — turn quarter-turn so handle is perpendicular to pipe (off position).
  - If you smell gas: Do not turn lights/switches on/off, use phone inside, or create sparks; evacuate, open doors/windows from outside if safe, call 911 first, address is 27 Shell Road, Mill Valley;. Call PG&E (800-743-5000) when told to do so by 911 operators.
- **Water Shut-Off**:
  - Main valve: Often at the street meter (curb box) or inside near water heater/entry point — wheel/lever valve; turn clockwise to close.
  - Internal valves: Near sinks, water heater, or bathrooms for isolating sections (useful for leaks/clogs).
- **Electricity Shut-Off**:
  - Main breaker: In electrical panel (need to identify location); flip main switch to off.
  - Sub-panels: May exist for radio room? — label important circuits (e.g., don't shut off security cameras - I can explain later).

3. **Earthquake Procedures**

- During shaking: Drop, cover, hold on — get under sturdy furniture; protect head/neck; stay away from windows, heavy objects, antennas outside, overhead power lines or utility poles.
- After shaking stops: Check for injuries, fires, gas smells, or damage. If gas smell: Evacuate and shut off main gas (need to locate) if accessible/safe. Inspect for hazards (downed wires, structural issues).
- Evacuate if building damage suspected; assemble at safe point.
- Use club radios/nets for status checks if power/cell service out.

4. **Medical Emergency**
   - Once the club can pass a fire inspection, I would like the club to consider adding a AED and CPR masks.
   - Call 911 immediately — provide address, nature of emergency, number of victims.
   - If trained, provide first aid/CPR; use any onsite first aid kit.
   - Designate someone to meet responders at entrance.
   - Clear space; keep calm crowd control.

5. Power Outage / General Safety
- Use flashlights (avoid candles/open flames).
- Unplug sensitive equipment (radios, computers) to prevent surges on restoration.
- For extended outages: Club may activate emergency nets or generator (if van/on-site).
- Secure building before leaving (lock doors, check stove off).

6. General Daily/Closing Procedures
- Kitchen/Stove: Double-check stove is fully off (knobs to OFF, pilot if any); never leave unattended.
- Exits/Doors: Ensure clear access
- Security: Arm/disable alarms if present; lock up; report suspicious activity.
- Last out: Walk through — check appliances, lights off, thermostat set, doors/windows secure empty garbages (bathroom, kitchen, comm room, meeting room.

7. Contact Information
- Plan must contain the name and contact information for Club President, whomever has delegated responsibility for implementing plan / facility manager and/or club emergency preparedness manager

We will need to document site-specific details (e.g., exact shutoff maps, extinguisher locations, and assembly points) and create a simple laminated map.

All members with key fob access should have a working knowledge of the above information, the "club binder" location along with procedures to contact Insurance Co etc., and fire extinguisher.

Marin Amateur Radio Society

Balance Sheet Comparison - Custom

As of May 31, 2026

Distribution account	TOTAL	
	As of May 31, 2026	As of May 31, 2025 (PY)
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
CD	0.00	0.00
MARS BUILDING FUND (8795) - 3 - 2	1,960.40	1,516.40
MARS GENERAL FUND (4328) - 9 - 1	75,006.44	72,078.87
Money Market	0.00	0.00
VE Session Cash	0.00	0.00
VE Session Cash Received	0.00	0.00
Total for Bank Accounts	**$76,966.841**	**$73,595.27**
Accounts Receivable		
Other Current Assets		
Uncategorized Asset	0.00	0.00
Total for Other Current Assets	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
Total for Current Assets	**$76,966.841**	**$73,595.27**
Fixed Assets		
club house- 27 Shell Rd. MV	58,983.00	58,983.00
Total for Fixed Assets	**$58,983.00**	**$58,983.00**
Other Assets		
Total for Assets	**$135,949.84**	**$132,578.27**
Liabilities and Equity		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
Credit Cards		
Other Current Liabilities		
Total for Current Liabilities		
Long-term Liabilities		
Equity		
Retained Earnings	22,664.10	15,577.46
Net Income	-11,114.269	-7,399.19
Opening Balance Net Assets	124,400.00	124,400.00
Total for Equity	**$135,949.84**	**$132,578.27**
Total for Liabilities and Equity	**$135,949.84**	**$132,578.27**

Marin Amateur Radio Society

Profit and Loss Comparison (January-May, 2026)

Distribution account	TOTAL	
	Jan 1 - May 31 2026	Jan 1 - May 31 2025 (PY)
Income		
Donations	3,695.00	1,299.00
Dues	60.00	180.00
Rent	14,250.00	13,500.00
Total for Income	**$18,005.00**	**$14,979.00**
Cost of Goods Sold		
Gross Profit	**$18,005.00**	**$14,979.00**
Expenses		
Awards	200.00	400.00
Bank Charges & Fees	-8.99	
Car & Truck	$323.00	$354.94
Car & Truck Gas		34.89
Total for Car & Truck	**$323.00**	**$389.83**
Equipment < $2,500	2,184.51	431.48
Field Day	35.00	35.00
Food	1,843.37	661.44
Garbage	271.1	263.7
Insurance	$3,555.47	$1,427.83
Comm Van Insurance	375.41	2,085.07
Total for Insurance	**$3,930.88**	**$3,512.90**
Office Supplies & Software	185.98	65.00
Public Service Expense	3,731.83	3,295.57
Repairs & Maintenance	8,332.51	1,521.63
Taxes & Licenses	4,442.48	4,164.36
Telephone	557.18	
Utilities	1,742.18	1,917.45
Accounting		1,705.00
Meals		70.77
Other Business Expenses		575.32
Station Upgrades & Maintenance		1,894.69
Water		341.05
Web Services Expenses		0.00
Total for Expenses	**$27,771.03**	**$21,245.19**
Net Operating Income	**-$9,766.03**	**-$6,266.19**
Other Income		
MESH Grant Income	-100.00	
Total for Other Income	-$100.00	
Other Expenses		
MESH Grant Disbursement	1,248.23	1,133.00
Total for Other Expenses	**$1,248.23**	**$1,133.00**
Net Other Income	**$1,248.23**	**-$1,133.00**
Net Income	**-$11,114.26**	**-$7,399.19**

This Month's Quick Online Survey

Do you have a mobile ham shack?

Last Month's Survey Responses

What size font should we use for our article content?