



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

It is summer and everyone seems to be traveling. So much so that I had to cancel the August Board meeting due to lack of a quorum. I don't recollect that happening before but I do have a flakey memory. Just to stay in the spirit of summer next week I am going camping with friends up by Mt. Shasta. A tradition I have been following for more than 50 years. They even let me have a few days off. No cell service so they can't make me work. Enough about me.



MARS has a busy September planned. On the 12th we have the Dolphin Club Escape from Alcatraz event. On the 20th we have the NorCal Adventure Revival. We also will have the club Silent Auction on the 5th starting at 10 am at the club house. In the last couple of years we received donations of some really cool gear and it does no one any good to store it at the club house when you all should be using it. Since many of you have not visited since our clean up the Silent Auction can serve as a chance to inspect the gear and see some of your on-the-air pals. To further entice you we will be serving up burgers and hot dogs at noon. This is a free event and there will be door prizes from what has been donated. I will be sending out more detailed info about the specifics which you are likely to have received before you get this missive.

September 19th will be the club picnic at Stafford Lake in Novato where we have held it for the last several years. I will be providing more detailed information about that in the very near future. That is enough news for this month so I will give you two hundred fifty words back.

Curtis Ardourel, WA6UDS
wa6uds@w6sg.net

Resources

[Membership Application](#)

[Membership Renewal](#)

[Club Calendar](#) July 17

[Local Repeaters](#)

[Our Weekly Net](#)

[North Bay 2-Meter Critical Mass](#)

[Get Licensed](#)

[For Newcomers](#)



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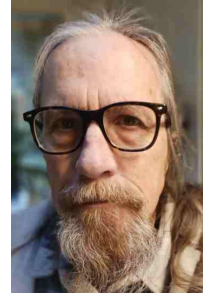
[Membership in the Marin Amateur Radio Society](#) is open to any person with an expressed interest in amateur radio. Annual dues are currently \$30/individual or \$35/family.

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."

From the Editor

Greetings and salutations! Autumn is on its way, although you wouldn't know it based on the warm weather. However, there's a chill in the air early in the morning and the sun is setting earlier with each passing day. Winter band conditions are changing the operational landscape. While the 10-meter band has been hit or miss, the 20-meter band is extremely active. Fortunately, there are many ways to get on the air, so amateur radio operators can always make contacts.



The theme for this month's QSA-5 is oral histories. Our club has been in existence for nearly 100 years. Many changes within amateur radio have taken place during the Marin Amateur Radio Society's rich history. While the QSA-5 has been around since the club's early days, it hasn't preserved most of its members' histories. The devil is in the details! A plethora of technical knowledge and radio history resides within the minds of our older members. Once a member becomes a silent key, a piece of radio history is lost. Jay Hamilton-Roth (KO6FIR) has been assembling an oral history of our club's members. Why is this oral history so important to the Marin Amateur Radio Club (MARS)?

Oral histories are vital for MARS because they preserve the unwritten legacy of our members and technological milestones the club and its members have experienced. While official club minutes track events, meeting dates and budgets, they often miss the human element, the thrill of a first long-distance contact, the community scramble during a disaster, or the personal struggles to overcome a technical problem. Recording these first-hand accounts ensures that the passion, camaraderie, and foundational stories of the club members are not lost as older generations of operators move on to that great ham shack in the sky. These narratives transform a dry list of events into a living, breathing history of community and technical achievement.

These recorded memories also serve as an invaluable educational resource and a bridge between different generations of amateur radio operators. Hearing a veteran operator describe the evolution of radio technology, from building vacuum-tube transmitters to mastering modern digital modes, provides newer members with crucial context and deeper technical knowledge. These stories offer practical insights into troubleshooting, antenna design, and operating etiquette that cannot be found in standard manuals. By listening to the challenges and triumphs of the past, newer hams gain a deeper appreciation for the hobby and a stronger foundation for their own technical journeys.

Finally, an oral history archive strengthens the club's current community and serves as a powerful tool for recruitment and public outreach. Sharing these compelling personal stories on the club's website or during community events showcases the real-world impact of amateur radio, such as providing critical emergency communications during disasters. There is no substitute for personal stories when it comes to creating a complete history of our club and its members. These narratives humanize the technical hobby, making it highly attractive and accessible to potential new members, younger generations, and local historians. Ultimately, documenting these voices celebrates the dedication of the club's members, reinforcing a shared identity and inspiring future operators to carry the torch forward.

This project has required a Herculean amount of effort from Jay (KO6FIR) and the club owes him a huge debt of gratitude. Under his guidance, MARS will have a complete picture of the club's history, providing the next generation of operators with a stronger foundation upon which to advance the radio arts. A special thanks goes out to Victor Denisov (N6DVS), Steve Toquinto (KB6HOH), Curtiss Kim (KM6GUY), Milt Hyams (KM6ASI), Mark Klein (KM6AOW), and Frank Catena (KD8JJK) for their wonderful contributions to this month's issue. Your contributions are what make this publication great.



Inside the Clubhouse

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

Board of Directors

August 13, 2026 Board meeting was cancelled

Next Board Meeting Thursday, September 10, 2026

[Financials](#)

Next Club Meeting: **Saturday, September 5, 2026 @ 10am**

Welcoming New Members: Bruce Quan WA6PXL (San Rafael)

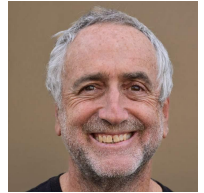
News

- [Oral Histories](#)
- [California QSO Party](#)
- [September 5th Silent Auction](#)
- [From the Marin Century](#)
- [Restoring a Collins Transceiver](#)
- [DMR Made Easy](#)
- [North Bay 2m Critical Mass](#)
- [Antenna Raising](#)
- [From the Double Dipsea](#)
- [September Calendar](#)

Inside the Clubhouse: Oral Histories

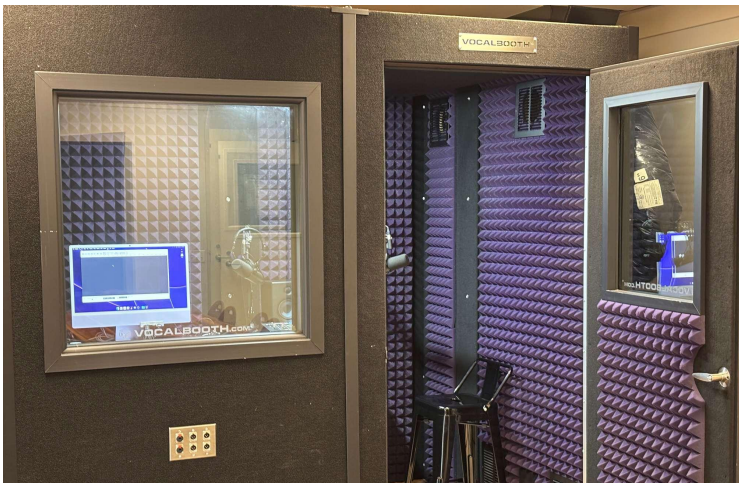
Earlier in the year, I heard about Chris Bigall's (KC6ZKO) passing. While I didn't meet him, there were lots of stories about him being passed around. And that got me thinking about others in the club – and their stories. Since I had experience interviewing people (for a television series I produced), I launched an oral history initiative – with the blessings of Curtis Ardourel (WA6UDS). It's my hope that newer members can learn some club lore and everyone would learn a bit more about their fellow hams. Oral histories can now be found online: <https://w6sg.net/site/history/oral-histories>

PS – Contact me to recommend someone (yourself?) for an oral history!



Jay Hamilton-Roth, KO6FIR

Most of the interviews have been conducted in Mill Valley Public Library's sound booth. It has all the gear, is quiet, and private. At Field Day, James Renney (KI6RGP) kindly set up (and cleaned up!) his van and turned it into a small recording studio as well.



The following are excerpts from the interviewees that generously sat down with me:



[Michael Fischer, K6MLF](#)

Then at age 10, five years later, we moved to San Antonio, Texas, out of the South into the Southwest. Once again, there was a crusty, elderly, to me anyway, ham with a similar but somewhat less flimsy ham shack, QSL cards hanging all over the walls, oscilloscope flickering, the smell of the ozone from the heated vacuum tubes in the hum of the amplifier, and listen to his stories about the stations contacted far, far away. Magic, mesmerizing, 1950, think of that. Air travel for poor people, not even imaginable. To be able to talk to people in other continents, a magic carpet couldn't have been more magic.



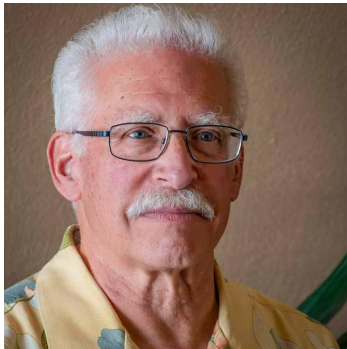
[Rob Rowlands, NZ6J](#)

And in these days, which was during the Vietnam War, the people that were sent to Antarctica were people who were sent there rather than being sent to Vietnam. So we're talking about Seabees, Navy Seabees and people like that. So running phone patches back to the United States for them to talk to their wives and girlfriends and whatever was an activity that required licensed hams and there was an absence of licensed hams despite the excellent equipment we had. And so I stepped in and used to run phone patches and stuff simply because there was nothing else to do. So fun stuff. Dealing with the vagaries of HF and all that, it's pretty interesting.



[Steve Wilson, W6SDY](#)

During Katrina, they had evacuated everybody to the big stadium in New Orleans, and they had somebody there from the Saturn Network. That's the Salvation Army's emergency radio network. There were people there, and they were trying to make contact with people in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And they were calling back and forth, and I could hear them both just fine out here because the skip was such that the radio signals ended up in California instead of where they needed to go. And so I volunteered to just relay messages from the stadium where they were asking for water and blankets and beds and things to the Red Cross that was in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And I guess they got them together.



[Doug Kaye, K6DRK](#)

I was doing public service events, and I realized that at net control, they were struggling trying to keep track of where people were. And it was all done with voice. And so decided to ramp up the APRS coverage. We had a bit of it in the County, but very, very little. And of course, APRS requires that you have receivers and repeaters in specific good locations to cover a course like the Dipsea, which is seven miles over rough terrain. And so I was intrigued with the technology. I was already building my own gear and things like that. So I decided to dive into APRS hardware and discovered a whole world of what APRS was all about.



[Germaine Krase, N6WTQ](#)

And in 1995, we finished fixing up the boat we had moved on to, sailed out the Golden Gate Bridge and took a left. We were going to go for several years, but it was a little harder with a two-year, two- and three-year-old for different reasons. You didn't care where we were as long as we could stay there. And so there's a big cruiser's net and nets, plural. And then stateside hams would patch through phone calls if you wanted to speak to your family.



[Dirck Brinckerhoff, KM6VKQ](#)

I started with ham radio when I was acting as SAG for the Marin Century. I stopped by Nicasio School to ask where they wanted me next and someone behind the desk said, Dirck, haven't seen you in a long time. That was Ann Shores. Our son used to work with her husband and climb with her husband and I let her know that I had always wanted to be a ham, but I couldn't get code when I was a teenager. She said, you don't need it anymore. So three weeks later, I had my license.



[Ann Shores, K6SHO](#)

I got started with ham radio sometime in 2016, I believe. So I had been involved in CERT, the Community Emergency Response Team, and we had a little training just using simple walkie-talkies. Skip Fedanzo gave the training, and I had known Skip through CERT. And we did this radio training, and we played around and spread out, and we climbed up the tower that's in the middle of the Village Shopping Center, among other places, and we, you know, transmitted messages. And I thought, gosh, this is kind of fun.



[Milt Hyams, KM6ASI](#)

So it's 10 years ago. During that time, I joined the club (MARS) and also had a friend from my youth who we had headed our separate ways but happened to rejoin at a meeting – Dan Dufficy. Dan Dufficy was essentially the architect of the Simulcast system in Marin. And so we renewed our friendship very quickly. And so he tried to teach me everything that he knew about the repeater system because what he wanted to do, I think, is have a successor. And he knew me well enough that he thought I could do it. Well, technically he was wrong, but that is from a technical or engineering perspective. But unfortunately, he had the poor judgment of dying before he had accomplished his mission. But nevertheless, I wound up inheriting the repeater in the technical committee. And so having me as the head of the technical committee was a poor choice, but I was the only one that was willing to do it. So that's how I got into it.

[Rich] I met Marilyn at, I guess it was up at San Rafael someplace.

[Marilyn] It was up on top of San Pedro Ridge. We were operating on Field Day.

[Rich] I thought this is somebody I'd like to know. And so we got together. And that was it.

[Marilyn] And he was fixing an antenna on top of a wooden pole up at Hamilton at the red and white tower. And he just walked with his spikes on and continued walking and didn't even miss a beat and walked right up the wooden pole. And I thought, hmm. Then I found out what kind of antennas he had at home and I thought, he's got better antennas than I do.



[Marilyn Bagshaw, N6VAW &
Rich Carbine, W6UDS](#)



[Rich Cochran, AG6QR](#)

I like the technology and there is still something magical about being able to send a signal up in the air and, and let it land many states away or even an ocean away. It's kind of geeky that way because nowadays with the internet, it's very easy to contact people far away, but it's not the same as calling CQ and having some random individual that you've never heard of before answer your CQ. So that's the fun thing about it.



[Andrew Musselman, KI6UOC](#)

I love that it's such a diverse hobby, that you have people who are just in it for the social element. That's me to some extent. There's people who are in it because they want to push the bounds of technology and build crazy things, the W6JTs of the world – the guy who built the FT8 and all that kind of stuff, there's some really groundbreaking signals processing work in that. The people who just like building stuff. Yeah, it's been done before, but I'm going to build mine. All the hand-built Go boxes and stuff floating around and everything about that. Event comms. I don't do enough of it these days.



[Mark Klein, KM6AOW](#)

I must have been nine/ten years old, I was riding around on a bicycle. And I was always interested in electronics and things like that. And I just happened to see this house that had this big antenna on top of the house. And it was moving. And kids, they'll go up and they'll knock on the door and that's what I did. I stopped my bike. I was riding on a bicycle. I stopped and knocked on the door. Hello, I see your antenna moving. Can you tell me what's going on? The guy says, yeah, I'm into ham radio and I'm working a station and anyway, so he became my Elmer effectively. He helped me build this little radio to listen to you know, what was going on the ham bands. And his name was Mr. Sadler. I'll never forget that. And that kind of got me started.



[Peter Otis, KI6SZF](#)

When I initially got my ticket, I was a lot more active on HF than I am now, but I absolutely loved talking to people that, I mean, that were like in France, in Japan, and we can hit Japan pretty easily here. I remember talking to hams in Japan. I was blown away. I had 100 watts and a wire, and I'm talking to this guy in Japan. Western Siberia, Peninsula, Norway, England. I mean, it was incredible, I'd run downstairs and say Barbara - Barbara, I just talked to a guy in Wales. Where the hell's Wales? So I get my book and I figure out, oh, Wales is part of England. No, it's not part of England. Don't say that. But I learned a lot of geography about ham radio, and I still think that's very valuable.



[Jim Emrich, N6NRV](#)

I was back up here in the Bay Area working for Fireman's Fund. I was in San Rafael. And at lunchtime I went across the street to the shopping center, and they had a Radio Shack in there. And they had an HTX-100 – the 20 meters only. And I go, oh, a ham radio. And it had the mag mount and the power supply and stuff. So I got it, put it in my minivan. And a friend helped me install that. He worked for PG&E, and that was his job, installing radios in the cars and trucks. So he helped me. Got it in there. And then that was the way I went. You know, I had the mag mount up on the roof, and on the way commuting from Novato to Terra Linda, I'd get on there in the morning and in the afternoon, and sometimes at night after work I'd go out. And then I hooked up a key to it, and started working CW from my van.



[Jim Saltzgaber, KM6WWY](#)

In 2019, I needed to get a hobby that would keep me going and learning and using my brain and meeting new people once I retired. I went and took my Technician's license. And I met, right off the bat on the air, a couple of people from the Marin Amateur Radio club immediately – and it was one of the first contacts I made after I put the radio in my truck. They invited me to the Marin Amateur Radio Society's monthly meeting in Mill Valley, which actually happened to be the next night. And so I showed up and I was already meeting people.



[JoAnne Saltzgaber, KN6FXH](#)

One time, all of the electricity in Marin went out. We live in a condominium, so we went door to door because if there was an emergency anywhere in the complex, no one was going to be able to call the fire department, the police department. So we went door to door and told each one of our neighbors that no matter what, no matter what time it was, if there was an emergency, to come over and Jim would be able to get them in contact to rectify whatever the emergency was. And that was the first time that I realized it was just a real situation and that we could be a part of getting help to people that might need help. That we could be of service.



[Jerry Foster, WA6BXV](#)

When I was in the Navy, we had the Collins radio equipment aboard our submarine. It's a stack-mounted radio, beautiful radio, 500-watt amplifier, nice receiver. Matter of fact, when I was on watch every day, I would go in there and tune around and listen to the hams talk. But I couldn't say anything, obviously, on a submarine. So the captain walks in and he says, Jerry, as you know, my wife's pregnant back in New Haven, Connecticut. And he says, could you run me a phone patch? And I go, oh, we hams can do that. He said, I know we're out in the middle of the Atlantic. Now this is the captain of our submarine. Jerry, I will send in a message to COMSUBFLOT- Atlantic to get permission to run ham radio on our submarine. And I said, oh, that would be lots of fun.

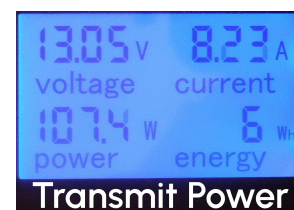
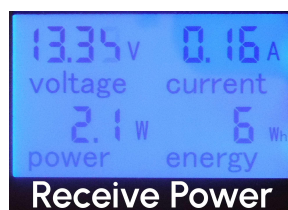
Battery Box Idea

Ed Sheldon Jr. (KO6IDJ) wanted to share his battery box design using off-the-shelf components, some spare parts he had laying around, and no exposed electrical connections:

- Box from [Electronics Plus](#) (San Rafael)
- 100AH 12v battery (did not want to use a lithium batteries that aren't protected from shorting out)
- [DC 8-100V 0-100A Meter Voltmeter Battery Monitor with 100A Shunt](#)



His next experiment is to track watt-hours, to determine how long he can operate a radio powered by the battery.



Inside the Clubhouse: California QSO Party

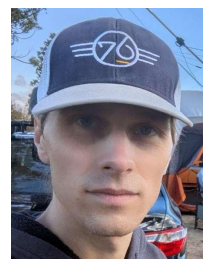
Since 1974, the [Northern California Contest Club](#) has sponsored an annual radio contest on the first full weekend of October. Using HF frequencies, stations *outside* of California attempt to contact all 58 California counties; stations *inside* of California attempt to contact all 50 states and 13 Canadian provinces.

In 2021, I was living in San Jose (California) and was taking ARES/RACES training. My tutor recommended that if I wanted to become a good emergency radio operator, I should practice real-world "pile-ups" (while operating as net control, having many people try to contact me at the same time). One such opportunity would be at the annual [California QSO Party](#) – if I was the net control for a "[rare county](#)" (a California county that has very few ham operators). I found that Trinity County had the fewest number of ham operators – so I decided to challenge myself. I found a campsite located high in the county, brought my camping and radio equipment, and operated W6T (the designated callsign for the county during the contest) solo. The first year was hard, but over the past 5 years it's gotten much easier. I'm now quite comfortable camping, setting up my portable station, and practicing my public service/emergency communications skills anywhere needed – great for boosting my "prepper" confidence. Along the way, I've learned to program logging software and deepen my understanding of antenna construction and propagation.



Last year it was great to be joined by 4 others, and for the next California QSO Party (October 3-4, 2026) – so far I'm back to a team of one – but I'm inviting my fellow hams to join me. All you need is: a warm sleeping bag (overnight temperatures near freezing) and a valid radio license (General or higher for HF operating privileges but Technicians are welcome to assist with logging, antennas, and camping). I'll provide radios, antennas, food, and camping gear! My goal isn't to "win" the contest. It's to share my passion for improving radio skills with others with a drop-dead gorgeous backdrop.

Interested? [Contact me](#). I'll even have a practice POTA (Parks on the Air) session to show people how things work without the need to travel far or set up camp! No prior experience needed.



Victor Denisov, N6DVS

Inside the Clubhouse: September 5th Silent Auction



Our last silent auction was over 10 years ago. And since then, people have continued bringing equipment to the clubhouse that they no longer want – in some cases just leaving the gear by the locked front door. Ham spouses contact the club after their partner dies and wants the equipment out of their home. I'm sometimes surprised just how much stuff they have collected – it can completely fill my van! It's also sad when a ham friend dies and I "inherit" their prized gadgets. As a result, both the garage of the clubhouse and my living room have slowly filled up. When we recently did a major clubhouse cleanout, it became clear just how much we've accumulated. Rather than simply selling the radio equipment to a for-profit business, we really wanted to give our community a first chance to get a good deal. We've advertised the auction not only to our MARS club membership, but also to other local ham clubs, too.

Our auction team consists of Curtis (WA6UDS), Milt (KM6ASI), Rich (AG6QR), and myself. While we didn't have the time to do a thorough test of all the hardware, we cleaned everything, ensured everything we're selling powers up, took photos, tagged it, and agreed upon a reasonable minimum acceptable bid. The exact inventory will be published soon – and sold "as is." We decided not to make the auction online because we didn't want to deal with shipping and we wanted the gear gone at the end of the day. We also wanted to make it an opportunity for people to hang out – so we'll be grilling up some burgers and hot dogs, too (at Noon).

If you're looking to upgrade your equipment, collect some spare gear, or even just hardware-curious, "come on down!" We'd love to see you on **Saturday, September 5th**. Hopefully you'll buy something that'll make your ham shack even better.



Steve Toquinto Sr., KB6HOH

Details: Doors open at 10:00 am. There will be door prizes including handhelds and assorted accessories. Bidding will close after noon on specific groups of items at the discretion of the auctioneer. This is done to avoid long waits to see who has won an item. If you are interested in a specific item, it is in your interest to show up early. If by 2:30 there are no bids on an item exceeding the reserve price the Donations Committee may decide to offer the item to the highest bidder.

Fine Print: Payments may be made in cash or credit/debit cards. We cannot accept checks. We make no warranties on any equipment. Please note that all equipment for sale is from donations to MARS. Some items came from working stations, others not. We do not have the capability to test every piece of equipment that we receive. You may inspect all items here and you are encouraged to do so. However, every piece of equipment is sold as is and the reserve prices reflect that. All sales are final, no returns or refunds.



Curtis Ardourel, WA6UDS

Inside the Clubhouse: From the Marin Century



Inside the Clubhouse: Restoring a Colins Transceiver



The other day, Jerry Foster (WA6BXV) was tasked by Milt Hyams (KM6ASI) to excavate the [Colins KWM-2 radio](#) from our club museum, and see if he couldn't get the radio working before donating it to the [Marconi Conference Center](#) (the receiving station of the [Pt. Reyes KPH transmitting site](#)). With help from Rich Cochran (AG6QR) and Marc Bruvry (KF6VNG) they dusted off the radio, its power supply, and other associated equipment.

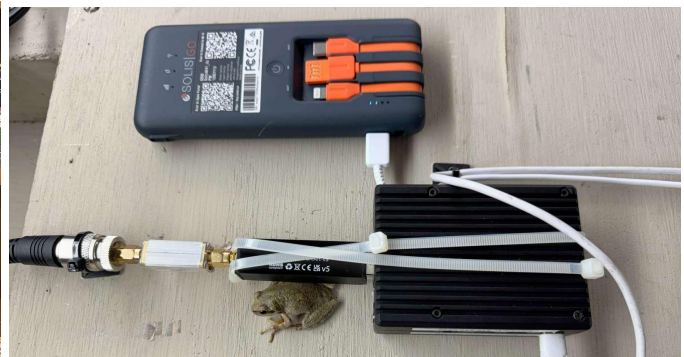
Because the radio uses vacuum tubes, it was imperative that they didn't simply plug the radio into the 120v outlet and turn it on. As older hams know, you need to warm the tubes up gently, so they wisely connected the radio to a variable transformer – starting at 50v and gradually increasing the voltage.

Once they proved that the radio could be powered up, their next step was to see if it could receive any signals. Using the [Point Reyes SDRs](#) as reference, they confirmed that the Colins could indeed receive a signal.



The last step was to see if the KWM-2 could transmit. Jerry connected up a Morse code key, and after a bit of trial and error – reached a contact in Utah. [Rich recorded this contact for posterity!](#)

Finally, Doug Kaye (K6DRK) and Annie Ivan (KM6QIW) delivered the gear to the Marconi Center. Shown on right (below) is the iGate setup Doug installed in their pump house along with the new APRS mascot.



Inside the Clubhouse: DMR Made Easy



Over ten years ago as a newly minted amateur radio enthusiast I won a raffle at a ham fest and took home a brand new Connect System 750 DMR handheld radio complete with code plug. Only problem, I had no idea what DMR (Digital Mobile Radio) was and to complicate the situation I had no clue on what a talk group was let alone a color code or time slot. All were needed to program the damn thing. So began my odyssey into the world of digital radio. When I did make contacts it was amazing. Talking to hams around the world with audio so clear it was like they

were in the same room. It took a while but I learned how to program the radio that relied on the internet. Soon I was building a modem hotspot to work with an internet connection. I took my DMR gear on trips and talked to operators while visiting Australia, New Zealand, NYC, and Philadelphia.

To my amazement I discovered the next iteration, BlueDV – a software program that utilized a USB dongle. I checked in on various nets from Italy and up the Rhine River while on a Viking river cruise using onboard internet and the laptop. I was a happy camper realizing I could go almost anywhere and make contact with just a simple keystroke.



Imagine my incredible amazement when I heard about QSO-One. A [free download](#) that required nothing more than a laptop and headset. Developed by Frank Catena (KD8JKK) the program connects to multiple digital voice networks including AllStarLink, EchoLink, DMR (BrandMeister and TGIF), M17, System Fusion and IAX Direct. QSO-One is a simple program that lets you make contacts on any talk group with just a mouse click using Windows or Android. The release of the program is still in its initial stage. Catena says acceptance has been overwhelming. "We are getting ready for a proper general release on the Google Play Store. That means the app leaves beta and goes out to people who have never heard of it, which is equal parts exciting and terrifying." The developer is looking at the Microsoft Store and at getting the installer properly coded to ease the download process.

While Catena has been burning the midnight oil to get his project online, the ham has also added some additional features making QSO-One even more attractive. "On top of the connections, it has QSO logging, callsign lookup, and audio recording. The one I'm most excited about is Net Runner, which transcribes a net as it happens and automatically catches callsigns as they come in, so you end up with a running check-in roster without typing a thing." Of course there are amateurs who wonder whether this is even ham radio. Some wonder whether licensed radio operators should be spending time on a program that doesn't require power output wattage, an antenna and transceiver. While others consider it just another avenue of the hobby. One ham feels getting operators "on the air" in whatever form is a good thing. He feels this may be the app to help bridge the age gap with kids and their handheld electronics. There is the thought that the app on a smartphone could be a game changer when it comes to expanding amateur radio. While Catena is working through some early bugs he's up and running with a [Facebook page](#) to capture user reaction. Response has posted both questions and praise. Catena calls himself a one man show but says he is answering all inquiries about QSO-One. His invention is being championed as the best regarding ham radio in decades. Catena says that it remains to be seen but there is no doubt that talking worldwide is as simple as opening up the laptop and tapping the keys. I guess my old CS 750 has joined the ranks of being a "collectable."



Curtiss Kim, KM6GUY

[Editor's Note: Our interview with QSO One's Frank Catena can be found [here](#)]

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



This month we had a special presentation and exercise by Ann Shores (K6SHO) and Brian Cooley (K6EZ) on "How to Be a Net Control Ace" (how to effectively be on an amateur radio team in charge of coordinating transmissions for public service events). Their presentation covered: what is net control, net control resources, who's at net control, typical net control layouts, procedure words, responsibilities, best practices, and message formation ([video here](#)).



And then the 20+ attendees were divided into two groups. Each group selected their net control operator and scribe (the person recording the messages traffic at net control). The other members of the group were given special scripts with messages to convey to net control. The simulation gave a great sense of a typical public service event's message traffic – and required a lot of patience and concentration to juggle all the various needs and problems that arose. Each group got two more opportunities to rotate new people into net control (with new scripts).

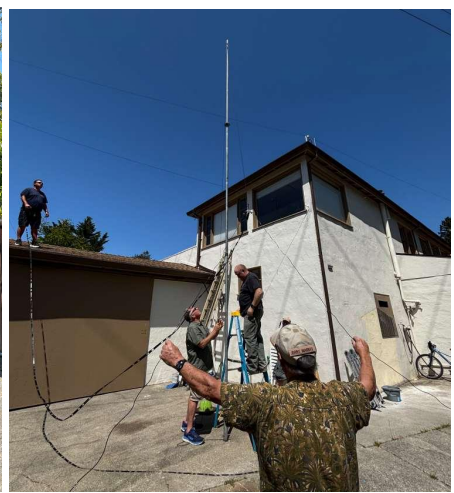
If you're interested in [volunteering as a net control operator for a future public service event](#), let the event organizer know of your desire and they'll try to accommodate your request and team you up with a mentor.



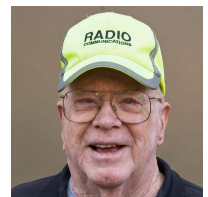
Northbay 2m Critical Mass Team

Inside the Clubhouse: Antenna Raising

During our clubhouse cleanout, I found in the electronic recycle trailer a new antenna which I misidentified as an unused [G5RV antenna](#). While it had the telltale ladder line, it also had traps which G5RV antennas do not. The G5RV antenna is one of the most popular HF multiband (middle-fed) dipole antennas (covering 3.5 - 28 MHz). Since our club's radio room has 3 HF radios and only 2 HF antennas, I thought it'd be a good idea to put it to use. The hardest part of installing the antenna is attaching it to a mast, securing the mast from the elements, and getting it high enough to be effective and low enough to be maintainable. On a recent Sunday at the clubhouse, there was interest in working together to make it happen. After a few hours of careful wrangling and camaraderie by Jerry WA6BXV, Marc KF6VNT, Gerald W6NOV, Dan KN6PNA, Peter KG6OUE, and Jay KO6FIR, we were able to make our first HF contact – to a POTA (Parks on the Air activation) on Mt. Tamalpais.



However, Marc KF6VNT noticed that the antenna didn't have good reception on other bands, particularly 40m, which was strange. The next day Gerald W6NOV did some G5RV research (using [ARRL Antenna Handbook](#)) and found that our new antenna was not a G5RV, but rather a highly modified, specific-use antenna that would not fully meet the club's requirements, but merits further study. We will ask Rob NZ6J to bring his spectrum analyzer to determine the antenna's performance across all bands before considering replacement. If we decide to replace the antenna, not all is lost. The mast we installed has a pulley to raise/lower the antenna, so it won't be a major effort to install another antenna.



Milt Hyams, KM6ASI



(From July 2026 QSA-5 article) Testing showed the bicycle antenna setup is vulnerable to getting knocked off when mounting and dismounting the bike. I forget it's there and wack it accidentally with my leg (breaking it a couple of times). Replaced 3D-printed low-quality plastic modeled support and replaced with a [flexible antenna](#).



Inside the Clubhouse: From the Double Dipsea



Inside the Clubhouse: September 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.

upcoming SPECIAL EVENTS

SEP

Saturday, 5	MARS Club Meeting (10am)
Saturday, 5	MARS Club Silent Auction 🏆
Saturday, 12	Colorado QSO Party 📻
Saturday, 12	Dolphin Club Escape from Alcatraz 🦋
Saturday, 19	MARS Club Picnic 🍔
Saturday, 19	NorCal Adventure Revival 🚲
Sunday, 20	North Bay 2 Meter Critical Mass

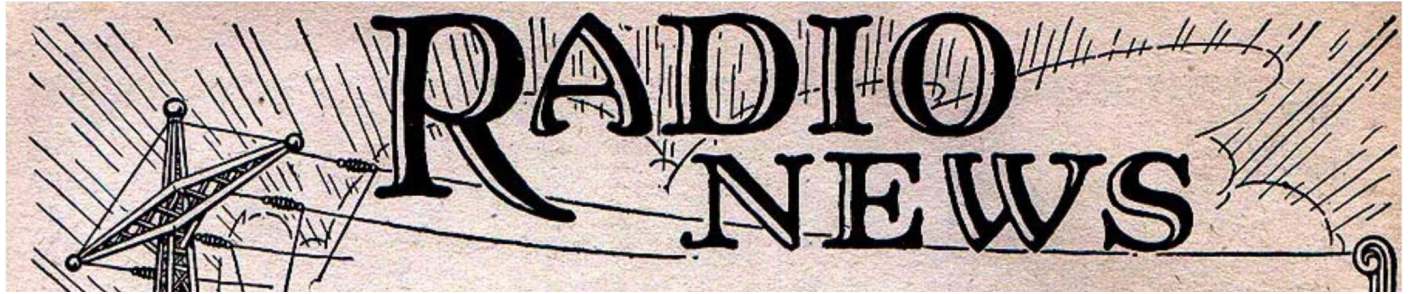
OCT

Friday, 2	MARS Club Meeting
Saturday, 3	Sonoma County Radio Amateurs Hamfest 📻
Saturday, 3	Marin County Triathlon 🏊🏃🚲
Saturday, 10	Amateur Radio Exams 📄
Fri-Sun, 16-18	Pacificon 
Sat-Sun, 17-18	Jamboree on the Air 📻📡💻🌐
Saturday, 17	Foxy Fall Century (Yolo) 🚲
Saturday, 24	Kelly Brush Ride 🚲
Sunday, 25	North Bay 2 Meter Critical Mass



**Sonoma County
Radio Amateurs**

Want to sell some extra gear? SCRA is renting outdoor spaces (\$10) for the Flea Market at the [Oct 3rd HamFest](#) (at Luther Burbank Art and Garden Center). There will also be a pancake breakfast for a fee, a radio clinic and a license testing session. [Email Carolita Carr](#) for more information.



Ham Radio in the News

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

 [Kopernik Observatory Seeks Amateur Radio Operators to Track August 19 Balloon Flight](#)

 [Colombian Amateurs Help in Earthquake Response; Clear Frequencies Requested](#)

 [Amateur Radio Supports Wisconsin Tornado Recovery](#)

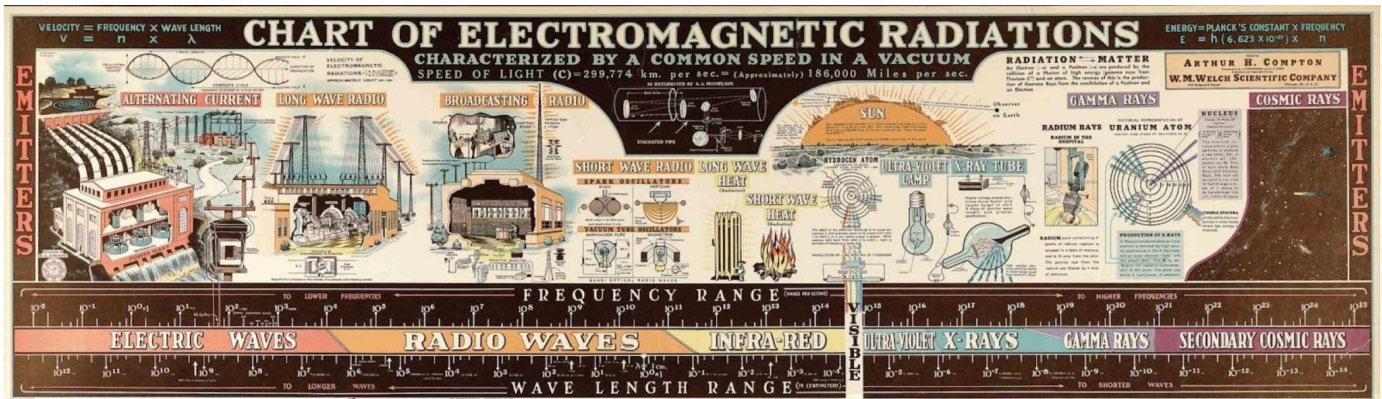
 [FCC Cites GMRS Licensee for Illegal Linked Repeater Network](#)

Trusted Radio News Sources

[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.

- 💎 [Project N.O.M.A.D. for Amateur Radio Operators](#)
- 💎 [Unlocking Your Handheld HT](#)
- 💎 [Interview with QSO One Developer](#)



Doug Kaye's (K6DRK) newly released [APRS Map application](#) has been getting lots of testing at the Marin Century and Dirt Fondo events with great results. The latest version now includes the ability to dictate messages using the user's microphone (computer/mobile phone) and have messages read aloud. Coming soon: the ability to dictate/hear messages on smart watches (Apple Watch and Android)!

Ham Classroom: Project N.O.M.A.D. for Amateur Radio Operators

As a licensed amateur radio operator and member of both the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) team and Radio Communication Volunteers (RCV) in Marin, I am excited to share my findings on Project N.O.M.A.D., a powerful tool for offline emergency response and communication. Are you a Prepper? Then this is definitely for you!

What is Project N.O.M.A.D.?



Project N.O.M.A.D. (Node for Offline Media, Archives, and Data) is an open-source, offline information platform designed to provide critical information and services in the event of a communication blackout or disaster. Think of it as a personal "survival computer" that can be self-contained, even without internet access.

I use an inexpensive fanless mini PC as my host. I did swap out the hard disc for a 2TB drive so I can download more content. But, it does not contain a GPU worth talking about, so the AI features are slow. I am thinking about building a separate portable case for a reasonable GPU that can connect over Thunderbolt, but that just sucks up battery power and in an emergency, I think that power is more important than speed.



Key Features

Offline Content

Project N.O.M.A.D. comes with a vast library of offline content, including:

- Wikipedia articles. The full (200+ gigabytes) Wikipedia is available, as are cut down versions.
- Medical and first aid guides. These include some Military Medicine field documentation.
- Survival guides and emergency procedures. Urban Prepper as well as the Canadian Urban Prepper docs are here.
- Maps (regional and global)
- Educational resources (Khan Academy-style courses)
- Meshtastic and Meshcore documentation

AI-powered Assistance

The platform includes an AI-powered chat assistant that can provide answers to questions, assist with writing, and even help with document analysis.

Document Management

Users can upload documents to a Knowledge Base, which allows for document-aware responses from the AI assistant.

Map Navigation

Offline maps enable navigation and exploration without reliance on internet connectivity.

System Monitoring

The platform includes a System Benchmark feature that can track hardware performance.

Use Cases

Emergency Preparedness

Project N.O.M.A.D. can serve as a critical tool in emergency response situations, providing essential information for medical care, safety protocols, and situational awareness. When a disaster strikes, among the first things to fail are cellular service and the Internet. With a standalone computer, you can:

- Access field medicine documentation to provide first aid and other medical procedures.
- Access the survival details from the Urban Prepper manuals.
- Find information about water purification, food storage and shelter building.
- Use offline maps to navigate when your phone fails.
- Access details on gardening and food gathering.
- Find radio frequencies.

Offline Content Capabilities

While the internet is crucial for many online services, Project N.O.M.A.D.'s content library is designed to be self-sustaining in offline mode. The platform's AI-powered system can:

- Provide answers to questions based on uploaded documents and offline resources.
- Offer general knowledge and information outside of documentation.
- Assist with tasks like writing and document analysis, using language models and machine learning algorithms.
- It is Docker based and you can add additional applications very easily.
- All documentation that is uploaded can be indexed by the AI agent for cross referencing.

Recommendation

As amateur radio operators, we are accustomed to relying on manual communication and situational awareness. However, in emergency situations, having a reliable tool that can provide critical information without internet access is essential. Project N.O.M.A.D.'s offline content capabilities make it an invaluable addition to our go-bag emergency kits.

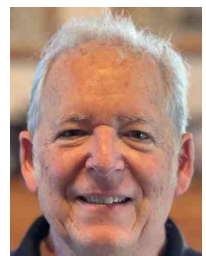
Incorporating Project N.O.M.A.D. into Your Emergency Kit:

- ☐ Download the platform and explore its features.
- ☐ Create a local copy of the offline content library (Wikipedia articles, etc.) for offline access.
- ☐ Upload relevant documents and knowledge to the Knowledge Base for AI-assisted responses.

By including Project N.O.M.A.D. in our emergency response strategies, we can enhance our situational awareness and ability to respond effectively in crisis situations.

References

[Project N.O.M.A.D. Official Website](#)
[Crosstalk Solutions, LLC \(Developers of Project N.O.M.A.D.\)](#)



Mark Klein, KM6AOW

Ham Classroom: Unlocking your Handheld HT

The other day I received this email (brand name removed since other radio brands have similar functionality):

UNLOCK the full potential of your radio

We are excited to announce that the Military Auxiliary Radio Service (MARS) modification for your radio is now available. You can unlock extended frequency capabilities right from your home—no need to ship your radio to us.

For convenience and safety, your radio is locked to transmit only on frequencies allocated to US hams. Remove the guardrails and unlock your radio's full potential for only \$9.95!



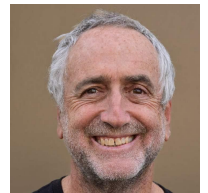
This modification is useful for:

- *Participation in Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) exercises.*
- *[FCC Part 97.403](#) life or death situations to reach help on unlicensed bands (FRS, GMRS, MURS, etc.) or emergency service frequencies.*
- *Travel to ITU regions with different VHF/UHF ham bands (other restrictions may apply).*

The MARS mod for your radio simply removes the upper and lower band edge limits for transmitting on both VHF and UHF. By default, your radio won't allow the user to accidentally transmit outside of the ham bands (144.000 to 147.995MHz and 420.000 to 449.995MHz). The MARS mod allows the radio to transmit from 136 to 174MHz and 400 to 480MHz (which includes FRS and GMRS frequencies).

UNLOCKING

I was directed to a website to get my unlock code. The site required: my email address, my HT's factory ID (8-character code from the radio using an obscure set of button presses), and the one-time token from the manufacturer (which is what I received from the unlocking purchase). Entering the unlock code was yet another obscure set of button presses. But I can now see that frequencies that I couldn't transmit are now indeed unlocked, which might prove useful in an emergency situation.



Jay Hamilton-Roth, KO6FIR

Ham Classroom: Interview with QSO One Developer

QSO One

Ham radio without the hardware. One free app.

I built QSO One so you can get on AllStarLink, EchoLink, IAX Direct, DMR, System Fusion, and M17 from a single app, without a Raspberry Pi, a radio interface, or a weekend of Linux. It's free. Sign up with your callsign, download it for Windows or Android, and you're on the air in about five minutes. More platforms are coming.

[QSO One](#) is a newly released free app to use digital radio networks worldwide without a digital transceiver.

What is your ham background? I got my ham license in 2008. To be entirely honest, I never really did much with the license. I wanted it because I wanted to have backup emergency communications "just in case". But I did hop on my little Yaesu VX6 every so often to listen to the local traffic and participate in the local nets.

What was the impetus to launch this effort? Throughout the years I would pick it up again on and off. Never got a base station at home, never put an antenna on the roof (I was always renting). But every time I got on, I noticed a few more local repeaters were no longer around. Cut to this year, we had a terrible storm come through the area and for the first time ever I had to take the family in the basement, I grabbed my little HT and went downstairs and tried to hit the only local repeater I could now reach (from 15 or so down to !!), and I could barely make it in. They were running weather updates and wanted damage reports and when I tried to hit it they could barely hear me. The next day, I remembered that I had used the [Echolink](#) desktop app years and years ago, so I redownloaded that to talk to some people. The app still looked like a file folder from Windows 95. The people there told me about [AllStarLink](#) and how that's the thing people are using these days, so I said "Sounds neat. Where's the app for that?" And they told me about various apps, some not very intuitive, some deprecated, and that there was no official AllStarLink app. They also told me that most people build a Linux node to get on the network. So I thought to myself, maybe this is my time to do a thing I have been wanting to do for a while...

How are you developing your software? How are you testing it? Over the last years, I have become very proficient in the use of AI. However, I saw that a lot of these "vibe coded" apps weren't really what the AI companies were hyping up and not what people expected them to be. There was a lot of junk popping up everywhere overnight. So I thought to myself "I am going to challenge myself and push AI to its limits and make something that actually works the way you would expect." This is, obviously, the controversial part and many people have a lot of different feelings about AI right now, but I have never shied away from the subject. A lot of people think working in this way with AI is just that you give it a prompt (build me an app that connects to AllStarLink) and it spits out something approximating what you asked for, but it doesn't really do that. It will spit *something* out, but it certainly won't be usable. I decided to really dive in head first and see what could be done. I spent 12-hour days for a month coming up with a prototype, and it worked. It was a decent client that

connected to AllStarLink and Echolink, but it only worked on Windows and didn't look all that pretty. I wanted it to be cross platform, so I rebuilt it in flutter and, months later, after many many iterations we now have a true cross platform app that is constantly being hammered on by a very dedicated community. That is how we get beta testing done, in our [Discord](#) community and through our email list.

How much support/hassle have you had to work with various digital services? I wouldn't call it a hassle, but most of this I have had no idea about until I started to try and build it. So it's definitely been interesting to do the research necessary for each network. Now that we are months into the project and some of the audio pillars are older and "settled", I find myself forgetting some of the things I had to learn from those arcs so I occasionally have to dive back in to fix an issue for someone.

Will you be including D-Star support? Yes, some time soon. It is probably the most requested feature outside of DMR!

What's your timeline for iOS and OSX support? Once the Android and Windows versions are stable and "feature complete" enough, I will start working towards getting Apple hardware to test on. Since I am partially disabled, money is tight so it will take some time to save for those devices.

How are you funding your efforts? Purely out of pocket. Members in my community keep telling me to open up some sort of donation feature, but I would feel bad charging for the app while it's not finished (well, finished to me). Perhaps once I feel it is ready for prime time, I may consider that because the backend services do cost money and I am spending 8-12 hours a day on it.

One of the challenges of using DMR Hotspots is there's not a way to say, "don't transmit if someone else is already talking on the same channel". Do you have a solution for QSO One? I have not tackled this issue yet. I wish it was full duplex! But, being software, it seems like there would be an intuitive way to do this and I will add this to my to do list.



Frank Catena, KD8JJK

Marin Amateur Radio Society

Balance Sheet Comparison - Custom

As of July 31, 2026

Distribution account	TOTAL	
	As of July 31, 2026	As of July 31, 2025 (PY)
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
CD	0.00	0.00
MARS BUILDING FUND (8795) - 3 - 2	1,058.40	1,516.40
MARS GENERAL FUND (4328) - 9 - 1	72,007.04	82,251.23
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	\$73,065.44	\$83,767.63
Accounts Receivable		
Other Current Assets		
Uncategorized Asset	0.00	0.00
Total for Other Current Assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total for Current Assets	\$73,065.44	\$83,767.63
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	\$132,048.44	\$142,750.63
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	-15,015.661	2,773.17
Opening Balance Net Assets	124,400.00	124,400.00
Total for Equity	\$132,048.44	\$142,750.63
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$132,048.44	\$142,750.63

Marin Amateur Radio Society

Profit and Loss Comparison (January-July, 2026)

Distribution account	TOTAL	
	Jan 1 - Jul 31 2026	Jan 1 - Jul 31 2025 (PY)
Income		
Donations	3,797.00	6,991.65
Dues	60.00	2,880.00
Rent	17,100.00	19,035.00
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	155.77	
Total for Income	\$21,112.77	\$29,906.65
Cost of Goods Sold		
Gross Profit	\$21,112.77	\$29,906.65
Expenses		
Awards	200.00	400.00
Bank Charges & Fees	-8.99	
Car & Truck	\$390.67	\$354.94
Car & Truck Gas		34.89
Total for Car & Truck	\$390.67	\$389.83
Equipment < \$2,500	2,184.51	431.48
Field Day	35.00	341.91
Food	2,174.39	934.76
Garbage	380.73	370.66
Insurance	\$5,350.72	\$3,149.48
Comm Van Insurance	530.25	2,234.25
Total for Insurance	\$5,880.82	\$5,383.73
Office Supplies & Software	185.98	91.00
Public Service Expense	3,731.83	3,295.57
Repairs & Maintenance	9,898.51	1,521.63
Taxes & Licenses	4,442.48	4,164.36
Telephone	779.82	
Uncategorized Expense	155.77	
Utilities	2,474.39	2,833.192
Accounting		1,845.00
Meals		70.77
Other Business Expenses		575.32
Station Upgrades & Maintenance		1,894.69
Water		456.58
Total for Expenses	\$32,905.91	\$25,000.48
Net Operating Income	-\$11,793.14	\$3,906.17
Other Income		
MESH Grant Income	-100.00	
Total for Other Income	-\$100.00	
Other Expenses		
MESH Grant Disbursement	3,122.52	1,133.00
Total for Other Expenses	\$3,122.52	\$1,133.00
Net Other Income	-\$3,222.52	-\$1,133.00
Net Income	-\$15,015.66	\$2,773.17

This Month's Quick Online Survey



[How's your Morse Code?](#)

Last Month's Survey Responses

Do you have an estate plan for your ham gear?

(Note: An estate plan is a formal document that describes what happens to all of our amateur radio gear when we become a Silent Key.)

Do you have an estate plan for your ham gear? *

- ☐ Yes, I have a written plan (in my will or trust)
- ☐ Not yet – but I've been thinking about it
- ☐ No, but I've told my family what I want done with my gear.
- ☐ No.

No Responses