Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS) october 2026 newsletter

QSA-5

Estate Planning



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



September is rushing to a close and we will soon begin the mad dash into the holidays. With that comes club activities as well. Of course on the 2nd will be the regular club meeting. I look forward to seeing you there. October 3rd will bring us The Marin Triathlon which is a new event added during the summer. If that is not enough on the 4th is the club picnic at Stafford Lake. You can get more info and pay in advance at https://w6sg.net/picnic_2025.php I will also be emailing you about it again.

It is also election season for MARS – four members of the board including me are up for election. Two of our numbers will not be running this term so there are two seats that are wide open. I have two asks about the election. First we are looking for people to run. The commitment is for a two year term involving 11 zoom meetings (one usually gets cancelled). You have to be a club member and have a valid amateur radio license. Our meetings are pleasant, without the Sturm and Drang of some boards. We are stronger when we have a variety of viewpoints. You also get to have a say in the direction of the club. If you are interested you can email the nominating committee at elections@w6sg.net. You don't have to campaign, engage in a debate, or seek funding like some folks do.

The second thing about elections is that in November we will have an online election for the board. At the December meeting the results of the election will be announced. As they taught me as a child in the Chicago public schools, vote early and often. The election software we use will allow you to vote early, but only once. Ballots will be sent to all current members.

I have one final request. The end of the year marks the time for awards. Giving out awards is one of the parts of my job that I enjoy most. I am asking you for suggestions on who should be recognized. Of course the first names that come to mind are the movers and shakers in the club. While they contribute much they generally already have received awards. I hope we can honor some of the folks who are relatively new to the club and are beginning to be contributors in their own right. Those people need you to recognize their effort and let me know so we can encourage them. Rather than reciting the awards. I commend you the club awards page on the website at:
https://w6sg.net/site/members/club-awards/

Enough from me

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

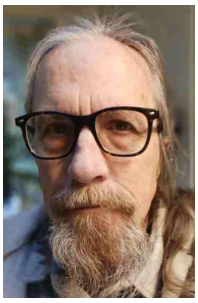
For Newcomers

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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



Greetings and salutations! The cool down is arriving along with the ghosts and goblins of Halloween! Summer is now officially in the rearview mirror, and everyone is preparing for the dreaded winter El Nino. This month, the QSA-5 covers a topic most people don't want to talk about. Estate planning. No one likes to think about their own mortality (except for my aunt who liked to remind us all that we're all going to pass on to the great cocktail party in the sky). We purchase insurance and create a will. However, a lot of amateur radio operators don't think about what happens to their equipment. That equipment is often extremely valuable!

The Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS) recently held a silent auction made up of radio equipment belonging to members and non-members who are now silent keys. To say the club had a room full of equipment was an understatement! There was so much stuff that the club had to do the auction in two shifts that day! A lot of great equipment has found a new home and will continue to help foster and drive the radio arts.

As always, the club has been participating in the usual club activities. From marathons to emergency communications in times of disaster, the Marin Amateur Radio Society is there doing what amateur radio operators do best, operating their radios.

The QSA-5 would like to thank James Renney (KI6RGP) for his contribution to our monthly publication. We encourage you to contribute or send us suggestions regarding what you want to see within the pages of the QSA-5. After all, this is your publication. With that said, have a great October and we'll see you 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

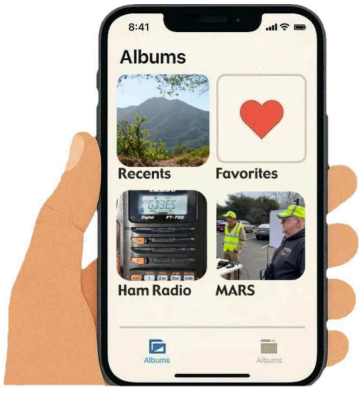


QSA-5 is published monthly by the Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS) and sent electronically to its members.

"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, October 8, 2026
Financials

Next Club Meeting: Friday, October 2, 2026

Welcoming New Members: Adele Ho KO6MXQ (Richmond)

News

- Estate Planning
- Scenes from the Silent Auction
- Escape from Alcatraz
- North Bay 2m Critical Mass
- Lessons From My First POTA
- October Calendar

Inside the Clubhouse: Estate Planning



You've spent years learning about amateur radio, collecting equipment that works for your ham shack, and enjoyed making new friends over the airwaves and/or in person. But maybe you're not feeling as excited operating your gear anymore. Maybe it's too physically demanding to fix your antenna after a bad storm. Or maybe you've realized that no one else in your family appreciates your shelves of wonderful gear – and wouldn't be able to tell what's valuable if you're not around to guide them.

This is not a topic that most amateur radio operators want to think about. But if you've ever purchased life insurance to take care of loved ones after you're no longer around, estate planning for your amateur radio gear is similar.

At a recent luncheon, one topic of discussion was estate planning. People shared various perspectives:

– We were at the clubhouse one Sunday doing some work and a guy walked up with a big box and said, "I'm not doing this stuff anymore. I got some medical problems. So I just wanted to donate it to you guys." And so we bring it in and open it up and there's a KX2 with every accessory you can imagine. Everything, probably four or five antennas, HF, two meter, microphone, headset, the software for it. I mean, everything, every option made. And then there was a Kenwood D75, the HT D7500 or D75. Even a brand new Kenwood HT (worth $700-$800). Every option, spare batteries, multiple antennas, the tuning software, cables. There was even a mountain topper, brand new, still in the plastic.

– There's a level of burden that it puts on the surviving spouse. I remember one gentleman who passed away, and he had all these step IR antennas, he had the satellite tracking system with all the motors, not only the horizontal, but also the sweeping vertically and horizontally, tremendous amounts of stuff. Another person donated ACOM amplifiers that are probably 75-90 pounds.

– We've got tables down at the clubhouse just filled with two silent keys' gear. It's a real burden.

– Somebody dies, and the family says, "Well, can you help us dispose of it?" If you're a member of the club, they will put a value for the surviving spouse or take it as a donation. But I didn't really put myself in the position of being the surviving spouse until you actually see them, and what do I do with all this stuff?

– A gentleman just showed up with three different M square antennas, about a half a dozen hamsticks, and some other gear. He said, "I don't use it anymore, and I want to see somebody get some use out of it, so I'll give it to the club."

– "It sounds like a good idea for us older guys to donate it before we have to have our wives and loved ones get rid of it."

Plan



The ARRL Estate Planning Workbook is a good place to start, with a set of worksheets to catalog your equipment and wishes (give away, donate, sell). If you've made any structural or electrical changes to your home for your equipment, you may need to involve some contractors to aid in the removal/repair of your gear. Another good ARRL resource – Estate Planning for Amateur Radio Operators. The September 2019 issue of ARRL's QST has a useful article, "Silent Key Estate Planning – A Guide" (tips include: tell your family how to report your passing to ARRL for inclusion in QST's Silent Key listing and direct your family to the FCC website to cancel your license – or reassign your callsign). If you'd prefer to watch a video presentation, consider ARRL's *Your Station is an Asset – Estate Planning for the Radio Amateur*.

If you want someone else to handle all the planning, you may wish to reach out to HamEstate.com. They charge a yearly flat rate of $235 ($230/military). They will dispose of your equipment and remove all towers & antennas. They subtract all the incurred expenses from the income of equipment sales to derive at the net income of your radio estate (and charge a 30% commission of net income).

HamEstate
Serving Hams and their Families

Sell

If you or your family wish to sell the equipment yourselves, you might wish to reach out to these companies that specialize in buying and selling used ham gear:



You may have received a postcard from HamAndHiFi.com. Contact them with a list of the equipment you wish to sell. Once you've agreed on a price, they'll schedule a time to come pick up the equipment. You'll be paid on the spot.

Schulman Auction ESTD 2006

Based in the Kansas City area, Schulman Auction specializes in ham radio auctions. Depending on the estate size and value, they'll either ask you to self-ship or arrange for shipping for you. They test, perform minor repairs, photograph, and document pre-auction. They are looking for modern HF, VHF/UHF, and microwave equipment, amplifiers, quality new in box antennas, test equipment, accessories, vintage Collins, Drake, Heathkit, and other collectible equipment are generally good candidates. They typically decline large collections of heavy "boat anchor" receivers and transmitters (expensive to ship) unless they're part of a larger estate. Towers and antennas (unless the antennas are new in the box) are also on the list of things they would decline. They market directly to a worldwide audience of amateur radio operators and collectors, who are generally looking specifically for this type of equipment rather than stumbling across it in a general estate auction.

Donate

Finally, you may wish to contact Marin Amateur Radio Society's donation committee. Here is the current donation agreement form:

First let me express our condolences on the loss of your loved one. Then I want to thank you for considering the Marin Amateur Radio Society to receive your donation. We understand that this is a difficult time for you and that radio equipment is arcane and difficult to assess. We wish to help you in any way we can and to get the equipment into the hands of someone who will put it to use. At the same time we are not in a position to simply haul everything away so we want you to understand what we can and cannot do. The following are rules formulated by our board to govern donations.

1. MARS will only accept non-cash donations that have been approved by our donations committee. As soon as possible after being contacted by a donor the donations committee will schedule a site visit.
2. The donations committee will only deal with non-cash donations. Cash or equivalent donations will be handled by the MARS board.
3. MARS will provide a detailed inventory and thank you letter for the donation. The IRS prohibits us from assigning a monetary value to non-cash donations.
4. We will provide guidance on determining the value of donated equipment for tax purposes.
5. Donations to MARS will be disposed of at the sole discretion of MARS.
6. Some potentially donated items, while they may have a perceived value to the original owner or donor, are in fact e-waste and need to be disposed of as such. We will assist the donor in arranging for the disposal of those items.
7. MARS is not an electrical or building contractor and although we will assist with disconnecting and removing equipment, we are not qualified to repair structural or electrical modifications to premises made by the owner of the equipment.
8. MARS does not charge for the removal of equipment.
9. Certain amateur radio stations include antenna towers. The removal of towers etc. can incur liability for property damage or injury. MARS cannot remove towers etc. We can provide contact information to professionals who do this work.

During the site visit we will inspect, photograph, and document the equipment. We will answer your questions. Once the visit is completed we will supply an inventory of the equipment that the club will accept as donations and make suggestions about disposal of items the club cannot accept. Once we have come to an agreement on any donations we will set up a visit to remove the equipment.

Nick Gloyd KV6KLG (SK): Celebration of Life



October 25, 2026, 1-4pm
10880 Franz Valley Rd, Calistoga 94515

Join us to honor a life well lived. If you have a favorite photo, memory, or story you'd like to share, please bring it with you to add to our memory book.

RSVP appreciated. Email Erin k6eri@sonic.net to RSVP.

Inside the Clubhouse: Scenes from the Silent Auction

Over $9,300 (and counting) in sales!









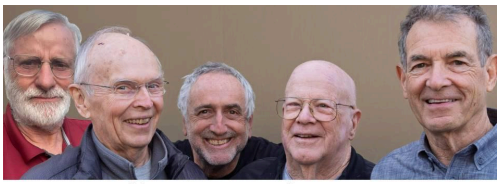
Inside the Clubhouse: Escape from Alcatraz



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

Do's & Don'ts presentation from Sept. 20, 2026

📻 DO — Listen First


Northbay 2m Critical Mass Team

- Listen before transmitting.
- Make sure the frequency is clear before you key up.
- On a repeater, listen long enough to understand what is happening before joining in.
- Remember that a frequency may be in use even when you don't immediately hear a conversation.

🎙️ DO — Identify Yourself

- Identify your station as required by the FCC.
- Use your call sign clearly and correctly.
- Don't assume that because you are using a repeater, you don't need to identify.

🤝 DO — Be Courteous

- Give other operators a chance to speak.
- Keep transmissions reasonably brief.
- Leave pauses between transmissions so someone with an emergency or priority traffic can break in.
- Treat new and inexperienced operators with patience and respect.
- Remember: someone listening may be learning from your example.

📡 DO — Use the Correct Frequency and Settings

- Know whether you are operating simplex or through a repeater.
- Use the correct repeater offset and CTCSS/PL tone when required.
- Check the local band plan and repeater information before transmitting.
- Be especially careful around weak-signal and other specialty portions of the band.

The ARRL 2-meter band plan, for example, separates commonly used repeater, simplex, weak-signal, EME, satellite, and other activities into different portions of the band. (ARRL)

🔊 DO — Use Only the Power You Need

- Use the minimum power necessary for reliable communication.
- Avoid unnecessarily high power that could create interference.
- Remember that a good antenna and location can often accomplish more than additional transmitter power.

🚨 DO — Give Way to Emergency Traffic

- If someone announces emergency or priority traffic, stop normal conversation and allow them access.
- Keep the frequency clear when an emergency communication is underway.
- Provide useful assistance if you can do so accurately.

🧭 DO — Learn Your Radio

- Know how to change frequency, offset, tone, power, and operating mode.
- Know how to lock or disable accidental controls.
- Understand what your radio is transmitting before you press PTT.
- Practice programming repeaters before you actually need them.

❌ DON'T Transmit Without Listening

- "Keying up to see if anyone is there" can interrupt an ongoing QSO.
- Instead, listen first and, if appropriate, make a brief call such as: "K6XXX listening."

❌ **DON'T Hog a Repeater**

- Don't monopolize a repeater.
- Avoid excessively long transmissions.
- Don't prevent others from joining a conversation.
- Don't treat a repeater like a private telephone line.

A repeater is operated under the control of its licensee, and repeater owners can establish reasonable operating practices for their systems. (ARRL)

❌ **DON'T Tune or Test on an Active Frequency.** Avoid repeatedly transmitting:

- "Radio check?"
- "Is this thing working?"
- Long test transmissions.

If you need to test your equipment, use an appropriate frequency or method and keep the test brief.

❌ **DON'T Interrupt a QSO**

- Don't jump into an established conversation simply because you want to talk.
- Wait for a natural pause.
- If you have something relevant to add, give your call sign and wait.

❌ **DON'T Cause Deliberate Interference**

- Never intentionally jam, annoy, or disrupt another station.
- Don't transmit over someone simply because you disagree with them.
- Don't use tones, recordings, music, or other transmissions to deliberately interfere with a QSO.

FCC rules prohibit willful or malicious interference and require amateurs to cooperate in making effective use of amateur frequencies. (ARRL)

❌ **DON'T Assume a Frequency Is Yours**

- Amateur frequencies generally aren't assigned to individual operators for exclusive use.
- Don't claim that you "own" a frequency.
- If another legitimate activity is present, cooperate and find another suitable frequency when necessary.

❌ **DON'T Forget the Microphone**

- Don't hold the microphone too close to your mouth.
- Don't shout.
- Don't speak too quietly.
- Avoid excessive background noise.
- Speak clearly and naturally.

A good habit is to give your call sign, speak normally, and let the radio's deviation circuitry do its job.

❌ **DON'T Give Out Private or Sensitive Information:** Remember that amateur radio transmissions are public radio communications. Avoid transmitting:

- Passwords
- Account numbers
- Sensitive personal information
- Information that should remain confidential

❌ **DON'T Use Amateur Radio as a Substitute for Commercial Communications**

- Amateur radio is not intended for conducting ordinary business communications or making transmissions prohibited by FCC Part 97.
- When in doubt, check the rules rather than assuming something is permitted.

⭐ The "Golden Rules" of 2-Meter Operation

1. **LISTEN**: Listen before you transmit.
2. **IDENTIFY**: Know when and how to identify your station.
3. **BE BRIEF**: Make your point, then give others a chance.
4. **BE COURTEOUS**: Operate as though everyone is listening — because they are.
5. **KNOW YOUR FREQUENCY**: Use the appropriate frequency, offset, tone, and mode.
6. **DON'T INTERFERE**: Never intentionally disrupt another station.
7. **HELP NEW HAMS**: Good operators teach; they don't embarrass.
8. **WHEN IN DOUBT — LISTEN**: If you're unsure whether it's appropriate to transmit, pause and listen.

2-Meter Quick Reference: U.S. amateur allocation: 144–148 MHz

Common FM uses include: Repeater operation, FM simplex, Emergency/service communications, Public-service events, and Local nets.

Common national calling frequencies: 146.520 MHz (FM simplex calling) and 144.200 MHz (SSB/weak-signal calling).

The specific frequencies and practices used in your area may differ, so consult the applicable local band plan and repeater listings. (ARRL)

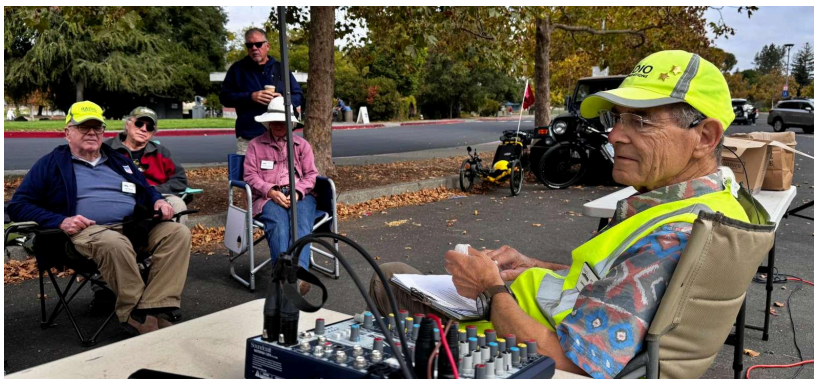
Remember: Listen first. Think before you key up. Be courteous. Identify properly. Leave room for others.



James Renney, KI6RGP







Inside the Clubhouse: Lessons From My First POTA







Despite getting my General license at the beginning of 2026, I still hadn't found a way to learn to get on the air with a HF radio. So when Victor Denisov (N6DVS) offered to share a POTA (Parks on the Air HF radio) experience to newbies at China Camp State Park, I jumped at the chance. He brought 3 bags of gear (that he could carry himself): a MFJ antenna carry bag (holding his mast, V-dipole, SWR meter, coax cable, guy wires, rope, and POTA flag), a Pelican case (containing a Icom IC-7300, 20Ah Bienno LiFePO4 battery, power cables, and 3D printed power extender fuse box), and backpack (with headset and mic).

We picked out a suitable picnic table (a common workspace for POTAs), connected and tested the gear, and got started. He had previously registered using the POTA app which published his frequency, location, and planned time of being on the air. And then he activated the frequency with "Is this frequency in use?" a few

times, and began repeating over-and-over "CQ POTA CQ POTA this is N6DVS" to let the "airwaves" know his station was listening and "open for business".

And then the waiting began. "CQ CQ" over and over, hoping for another radio operator to respond ("a contact"). I was imagining that we were "fishing" for someone to contact us, throwing a line repeatedly for a "bite." After 15 or so minutes at our POTA fishing hole, he decided it'd be more instructional to try to contact another POTA or QSO (a contest – with no prizes – for operators to try to make contact with others) station. Using the POTA app and scrolling through other 20m frequencies (the antenna he brought operates on 20m and was specifically chosen for daytime operation), he found an Alabama station operating QSO (but we couldn't get noticed) and then found (and successfully contacted) a Colorado station operating POTA.

Trying to make contact with a POTA/QSO station was eye-opening. I've been trained on various 2m (UHF/VHF) weekly check-in nets to be polite for non-urgent communication: wait until someone's done talking and you hear a squelch break (a squawk by the repeater that indicates it's done re-transmitting). Wait a second or two to listen in case anyone starts transmitting. And when I push my transmit button on my radio, wait a second so the repeater has a chance to sync up before I actually start talking. The airwaves are a party line, and it's important not to talk over ("double") someone else. On the air courtesy.

Victor kept encouraging me to break my "good habits," because HF radio is very different from UHF/VHF radio communications. Without a repeater, there's no squelch break to cue you that the airwaves are free. To make a contest contact you need an over-the-air "handshake" – you want the other person to repeat your callsign, transmission quality, and location. As with 2m, just because you can hear someone transmitting doesn't mean that others can also hear them (e.g., you could be close to the other person and their transmission may not be able to be heard by the repeater). With HF, there's no repeater and someone's signal may be strong enough to be heard by you, but not by the contest station. So, until you hear a "handshake," I was encouraged to "talk over" the other transmission with the hope that my signal was stronger and I'd be rewarded with a contact. Unlike fishing for a contact, this was more like speed dating. I was trying to catch the eye of someone else for a momentary conversation ("look at me, look at me!"). So, I was listening for the end of another's contact (either "QST" or "73") and immediately trying to reach out by calling out my callsign or "Park to Park" (letting the other station know I was also operating in a park which may either be for sympathy points or actual contest points). He encouraged me to actively sit on the edge of my seat, ready to jump in at a moment's notice instead of waiting patiently for my turn. What I realized was my 2m net practices were more about checking if my equipment was working than learning to command the frequency to pass a message.

As we wrapped up, Victor shared a bit about his 5 year journey doing POTA (and also SOTA - Summits on the Air). As a one-man band, he continues to evolve a system that works for him, balancing power needs against size, weight, ruggedness, and budget. Besides learning about radio gear, he had to learn a myriad of other skills: lashing his mast securely (using a trucker's hitch), setting up guy wires into the ground for high winds (using tent stakes, strong line, and a lightweight hammer), bringing a notepad, pens, and wristwatch (to quickly note the time for each contact – checking your phone takes too long), neatly coiling cables and rope, and getting familiar with logging software (paper/pen is the default, but logging software can save time). He also has different gear bags for different uses. A SOTA contest requires you to hike to the summit, so your gear has to be much lighter and likely using low-power (QRP), perhaps using Morse code instead of voice.

Operating in the field also had its own challenges. There's the wind – both the noise and the difficulty of keeping your paper and pens on the picnic table. And with gear that's been transported, it's hard to know if

things are working. Victor's SWR meter confirmed that his antenna was working. When using a repeater, you can announce that you're "listening" so you can hear the repeater's squelch break letting you know that you're transmitting and something can hear you. With HF, *if* you have internet access, you *could* visit a website that offers a SDR (software defined radio) such as Maritime Historical Society and see if that site hears you. But for the most part, you need to trust your gear. And the nearby wildlife - both human and not – offer its own interactive challenges.

My current goal for learning ham radio is for emergency communications, and Victor has confirmed that POTA-like exercises are excellent practice opportunities. In an emergency, if I was to request help from others, I'd need to effectively connect with other operators – competing against others also trying to get help. The better my over-the-air skillset, the more likely I'll effectively get my needs met. And if I'm trying to be net control (where others contact me for help), I'll need to navigate through the radio communications chaos of everyone trying to talk to me at once, keep my cool, and record the message traffic.

Before I consider getting my own HF gear, I'd want to practice on other's gear. I'd like to learn the pros/cons of various setups, see what I personally prefer, and join others on various POTA-like opportunities. I wonder if there's an informal notice board where club members can invite others to join them for a few hours to share their expertise. I also wonder about the opportunity to use our club's radio room to develop my skills for HF practice (to build my ability to handle emergency communications) using an ideal setup.



Jay Hamilton-Roth, KO6FIR

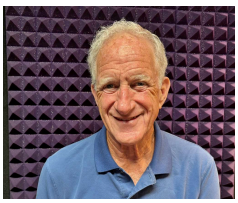
Newly Released Oral Histories



Derek Van Loan WB6VXS

My daughter, Katrina Van Loon, was the youngest member of the club back in the early 90s, and she got her Technician ticket when she was 13. Woody, one of the old club members, gave us enough antique parts, which he had bushels of, to build a one-tube regenerative set, which I hooked up to my 40-meter dipole over my house here in Mill Valley. And it actually worked.

"I remember those classes well at Hamilton AFB. A lot of very supportive elderly men. I will be very honest with you and say that while I appreciated the education, I ALSO very much looked forward to the HOT CHOCOLATE treat at break time..." – Katrina Murray (née Van Loon)



Erick Steinberg K6ER

When KDFC was sold, going back to wherever it was, 1994ish, thereabouts, I told the family, look, no, no, no, do not sell the land. I'll manage that transmitter. We had 10 or 12 tenants up there. It's a steady source of income for you and your heirs. Do not sell it. I'll manage it. And they go, well, that's a good idea. You're in charge. So I went and got a California Real Estate broker's license. And I've been managing that property since then on behalf of the family.

Inside the Clubhouse: October 2026 Calendar

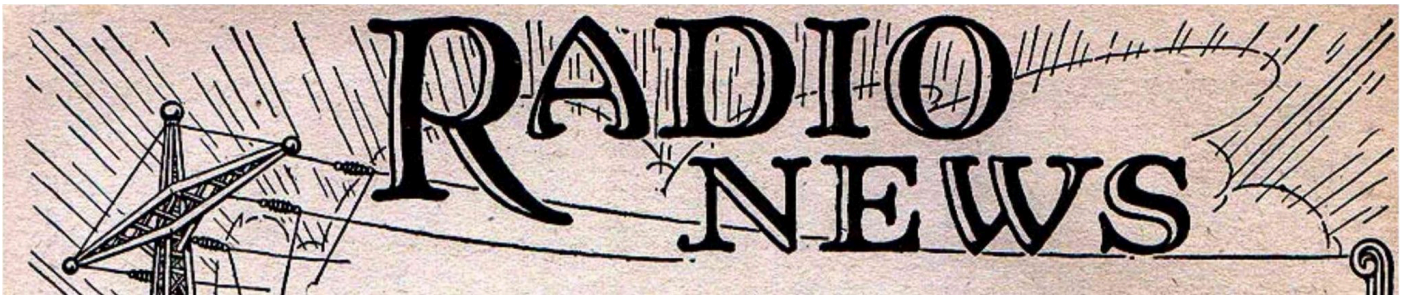
Curious what's coming up? You'll find details on all of our weekly nets, upcoming meetings, public service events, and other local activities on our online calendar. You can even subscribe to the calendar. Please submit corrections or suggestions to: QSA5@w6sg.net.



OCT	Friday, 2	MARS Club Meeting
	Saturday, 3	Sonoma County Radio Amateurs Hamfest 📻
	Saturday, 3	Marin County Triathalon 🚤🏃🚲
	Sunday, 4	MARS Club Picnic 🍔
	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
NOV	Friday, 6	MARS Club Meeting
	Saturday, 7	Mt. Tam Trail Run 🏃
	Sunday, 15	North Bay 2 Meter Critical Mass

Sonoma County Radio Amateurs

Hamfest is on Saturday, October 3rd
Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, Santa Rosa
Pancake Breakfast: 7:00am-11:00am ($5 12 and under / others $10)
Radio Clinic: 8:00am-9:30am (free)
Amateur Radio Exam Session: 9:30am-11:00am
Swap Meet: 8:00am-12:00pm ($10/seller)



Ham Radio in the News

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

📻 The Dwingeloo Radio Telescope and the Spirit of Amateur Science

📻 Will RADE Be the Next SSB?

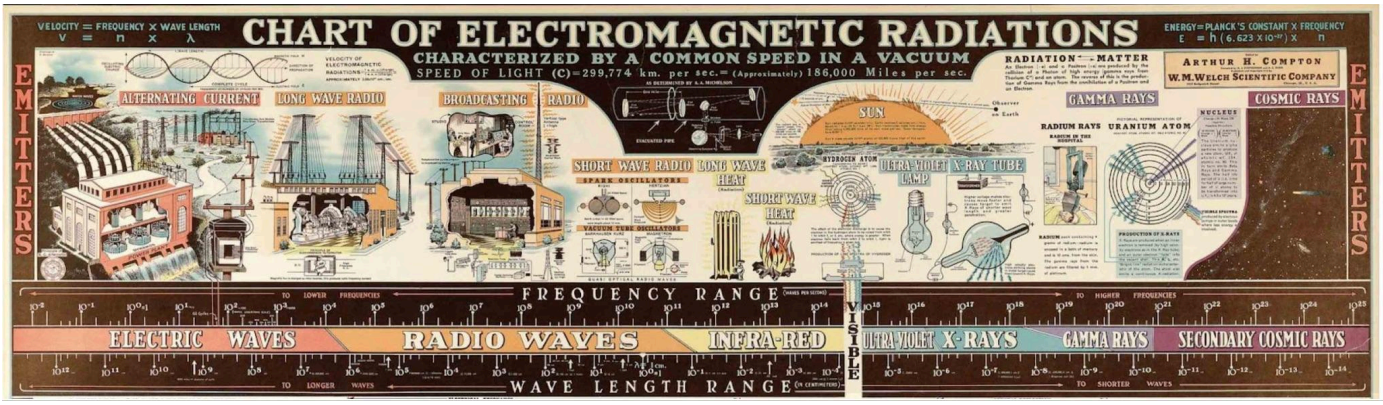
📻 Answering the Call: A 9/11 Remembrance from ARRL

📻 FCC and HHS Initiate New Proceedings on RF Exposure

📻 The ARRL Solar Update

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.

💎 A New Life for a Silent Key's Transceiver

💎 Getting Started with DMR: Breaking down the complexities of programming your digital mobile radio for repeater use (Conrad Trautmann, N2YCH)

Ham Classroom: **A New Life for a Silent Key's Transceiver**

The Marin Amateur Radio Society receives a lot of equipment from the families of Silent Keys (radio operators who pass away). The club takes this responsibility seriously and makes every effort to ensure that this gear will be used by other amateur radio operators. This is the story of what happened to one piece of equipment, a Kenwood TS-430S transceiver. This transceiver was part of a silent auction held by the club.

I have a love of 1980s HF transceivers. I love this period of transceiver engineering because the rigs were transistor based rather than tube based, built to last and easy to use. Everything you need is on the front panel with no buried menus which are often difficult to find. Buying them can be tricky and I'd be doing you a disservice if I didn't offer some words of caution regarding the purchase of used equipment:

Buying a used **high-frequency (HF) ham radio transceiver** online or at an auction carries significant risk due to hidden, hard-to-detect electronic degradation. Unlike modern consumer electronics, HF transceivers operate under high voltages, intense heat, and complex analog circuitry that naturally deteriorates over time. A unit that "powers on" can still suffer from dried-out electrolytic capacitors, misaligned intermediate frequency (IF) stages, or degraded final power amplifier (PA) transistors caused by previous owners operating into poorly matched antennas. Because online listings and auction blocks rarely allow for rigorous bench testing with an oscilloscope or dummy load, buyers frequently inherit costly internal defects that require specialized knowledge and expensive test equipment to diagnose.

The physical and operational history of a used radio is often completely obscured when purchasing from an unverified seller or a general estate auction. Many radios sold at estate sales or via online liquidators belonged to silent keys (deceased operators) and may have sat unused for years in damp basements or dusty garages, leading to corroded switch contacts, brittle wiring, and moisture damage. Furthermore, modifications are incredibly common in the ham community; a transceiver may have undergone undocumented, poorly executed "shack mods" or wideband modifications that compromise the radio's spectral purity. Without a trusted service history, you risk purchasing a device that transmits illegal spurious emissions or has a compromised receiver front-end.

Finally, the lack of buyer protection and the high cost of return logistics present a major financial gamble. High-frequency transceivers are heavy, fragile instruments that require meticulous packaging to survive transit; inadequate packing by an inexperienced seller often results in shattered displays, bent chassis, or broken VFO dials upon arrival. If the radio arrives dead on arrival (DOA) or fails shortly after purchase, auction houses generally sell items strictly "as-is," leaving the buyer with zero recourse. Even on major online marketplaces with buyer protection, returning a heavy transceiver can result in exorbitant shipping fees, turning a perceived secondhand bargain into a stressful and expensive mistake. Thankfully, the gear sold at the club's silent auction had been checked out and any problems were listed with each piece of equipment.



Standing at one of the tables stacked with HF transceivers, I came down with a bad case of sensory overload due to so many choices to bid on. Then I saw the Kenwood TS-430S, complete with power supply and the much-coveted MC-60A desktop mic. The mic alone was worth the minimum bid of $100!

As I was examining the transceiver. I noticed that it was in great condition. All the knobs and buttons worked as if new. This rig was obviously lovingly cared for and used in someone's ham shack. I pondered the rig's history along with its previous owners' history. There were probably some fantastic stories and amazing contacts made with this classic transceiver. The Kenwood TS-430S is a classic that many operators prefer because of its impressive audio qualities and simple to access functions.

There are no modern bells and whistles on the 430S – no waterfall display or DSP (Digital Signal Processing). Using the TS 430S takes you back to the days when radio operators relied on their ears to pull in those faint signals. However, the sound quality Kenwood transceivers produces is stunning. All in all, the TS-430S was built to last and last it did! Was I able to take it home and start making contacts? Yes and No!

Modern DSP SDR (Software Defined Radio) transceivers have built in antenna tuners and sophisticated filtering systems to ensure great audio and easy to find signals (waterfall displays are a big selling point). When you purchase a new transceiver, new is what you get. When you purchase used vintage gear, you need to do some work to either get the rig working properly or optimize its performance.

I did a test run on the 20-meter band and was able to make a contact in Colorado. However, after doing some research into what is problematic with older Kenwood transceivers, I decided to give it a total cleaning. This information can apply to most older pre-SDR transceivers (with the exception of cleaning the relays and bandpass filters). I started with the antenna connection point, the SO-239 socket. I used canned air to remove any loose debris from the knobs, buttons, and switches. I opened the rig up and did a capacitor inspection and made sure all the wiring harnesses were seated properly. Running the rig with an antenna, the results were better but not as good as they could be. The very fact that the transceiver was fully functional was amazing, but the volume was extremely low and some of the signals I received were garbled, even though I was putting out up to 120 watts on SSB.

It pays to use AI to research any used rig you purchase because there will probably be plenty of other operators who have had the same issues and found a solution. One thing I noticed about the rig was that it was loudest on the 80-meter band. This combined with low volume and garbled signals pointed to oxidation on the low pass filter (LPF) relays. Kenwood came up with an official, clever maintenance shortcut released by the manufacturer under Kenwood Service Bulletin ASB-0902. Here is the biggest problem I had and how I fixed it with this brilliant hack:

The Kenwood TS-430S can develop an intermittent or weak receive (RX) signal across different bands. This happens because the radio uses a bank of mechanical Low-Pass Filter (LPF) relays. Over time, these relays suffer from oxidation, dust, and microscopic tarnish buildup on their silver-plated contacts. Because the incoming receive signal carries almost zero current, it isn't strong enough to break through the tarnish, causing a heavily attenuated or "deaf" receiver.

Instead of tearing down the radio to desolder and manually wipe down 15 individual relays, Kenwood's official fix uses DC current to electronically "zap" and burn away the oxidation. This really is a brilliant fix!

How the Trick Works

The procedure forces a relatively high direct current (~**500 mA**) backward through the SO-239 antenna jack. As you cycle through the bands, the radio engages different relays. The current rushing across the tiny, tarnished contact points acts like a microscopic arc welder, instantly vaporizing the contamination and restoring clean metal-to-metal continuity.

The Step-by-Step Procedure

To perform this safely, it is essential to use a high-wattage power resistor to limit the current and protect the radio's sensitive input circuitry.

1. **Prepare the Resistor**: You need a **28-ohm, 10-watt power resistor** (commonly made by wiring two 56-ohm, 5W ceramic resistors in parallel).
2. **Hook up the Power**: Connect the positive (+) lead of a **13.8V DC power supply** through the resistor directly to the **center pin** of the radio's SO-239 antenna port. Connect the negative/ground (-) of the power supply to the radio's chassis ground. *(You can use the radio's main power supply for this)*.
3. **Turn on the Radio**: Power up the TS-430S normally (making sure **RF ATT** is pushed **IN**, mode is **CW/AM**, and **1 MHz** is **IN**).
4. **Cycle the Bands**: Press and **hold down the "UP" or "DOWN" band switch** on the front panel. This makes the radio automatically loop through all the bands continuously.
5. **Run the Process**: Let the radio cycle through the bands for about **1 to 2 minutes**.

If you do this note, the power resistor will get **extremely hot** during this minute because it's dissipating the current. Hold it with pliers or rest it on a heat-safe surface. **Do not transmit** while doing this, or you will immediately destroy your test setup and potentially the radio.

Does it Work?

It is a mixed bag, depending on how bad the radio is:

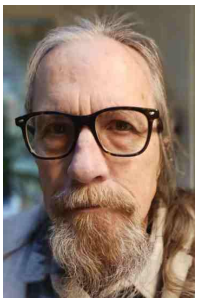
- **The Pros**: If the radio has just been sitting in a closet and has light oxidation, this trick works like absolute magic. The receive sensitivity will instantly jump back to factory specs.
- **The Cons**: This is a temporary fix. Because the physical tarnish is burned but not physically wiped away, it can reform over a few months or years. If the relays are severely pitted or sealed with heavy grime, the process won't work, and you will ultimately have to pull the filter board to clean the contacts manually with gloss paper

Once I performed this technique, the transceiver roared back to life. When switching between bands, the background static was louder but even, not fluctuating in volume from band to band. I was able to hear other operators, weak or strong signaled, clearly. My longest contact on the Kenwood TS-430S was to Slovenia, 6067 miles away. I received a 57 signal report (using a 40-meter dipole antenna).

The matching power supply works wonderfully, as does the MC-60 microphone. I should note that older transceivers tend to get hot. While the TS-430S has a large cooling fan built into the back, it is factory set to go in when the temperature reaches 150 F. This can cause components to get hot which in turn can create some mild distortion. In modern transceivers, the fan comes on around 100 F. There is a fix for this but I don't run the TS 430S long enough to overheat it, so I am avoiding having to do some soldering on one of the boards.

Is buying an older transceiver worth it? If you can get it from a reliable source, such as your amateur radio club or one with a good reputation, and you're willing to put some work into it, the answer is yes. If you have limited experience with electronics but have someone who has experience and can help you, it's a good choice. However, if you are new to HF and radio in general, consider buying a new transceiver.

In closing, I know that there is a good chance that something will wear out within the complex array of components that make up the TS-430S. Therefore, I'm already shopping for potential parts. The true joy of owning a vintage transceiver that belonged to a now silent key is knowing that you are keeping a once loved transceiver alive, adding to its history. If you ever want to experience what amateur radio was like back in its early days, try operating a transceiver built before everything became digitally processed. For those of us who do this, it's a joyful journey back in time. The 43 year old Kenwood I purchased at the auction is back in service in my ham shack, helping me to make contacts across the globe.



Hugh Patterson, KN6KNB

Marin Amateur Radio Society Board of Directors Meeting 9/10/26

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

Attendance:

_X__ **President:** Curtis Ardourel WA6UDS
_X__ **Secretary** James Saltzgaber KM6WWY
____ **Director** Richard Cochran AG6QR
_X__ **Director:** Ed Essick K6ELE
_X__ **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** MSC to adopt agenda as presented.
_X__ **Approve minutes of** 9 July board meeting (No August meeting was held) MSC to approve minutes as published in QSA-5.
_X__ **Secretary's Report/Communications** – Jim KM6WWY –
_X__ **Treasurer's Report** Bruce N6VLB - Auction proceeds not shown in financials
_X__ **Approve financials for** July and August 2026

Members Present: Mark Klein KM6AOW, Skip Fedanzo KJ6ARL, Dan Sobel N6HLZ, Annie Ivan KM6QIW, Milt Hyams KM6ASI, Jay Hamilton Roth KO6FIR, Scott Pasternak KN6ZDN

Committee and other Reports:

1. **Membership** Curtis -WA6UDS – 137 84% (93% last year at this time)
2. **Facilities** – Skip KJ6ARL -Concrete requires fixing near Comm Van parking location. Several contractors have looked at the broken concrete. 2 did not wish to bid. One suggested pavers, but those will tend to heave up with any future earth shifting. Another gave a rough estimate of $20K + to remove and replace the currently failed area. It may be prudent to replace a larger section at this time, possibly $30+k. Curtis suggested that we bore scope the sunken area to determine the cause and scope of the void. Milt KM6ASI- He had been told by Rich Carbine who was there when the concrete was installed that there is a drain from the street through the broken area. More inspection of the affected area will be needed to determine the actual scope of the repair needed. Time is of the essence as a heavy El Nino winter pattern is forecast. We have a dripping faucet on the side of the building. Skip will call Dan the plumber to fix it.
3. **VOAD/RCV** Skip KJ6ARL – A CBO/RCV joint exercise will be held Oct. 9th. We have a number of new CBO people, and this will be a great time to meet them. This will be a prep to the upcoming Great Shakeout Drill.
4. **Technical** Milt KM6ASI– Antonis AA6PP – Transition of technical lead to Antonis from Milt has begun. Survey of repeater sites and documentation of communication paths will be his first tasks. Jay KO6FIR – Made a video tour of Barnabe Mt. site and would like to do same with other sites. Antonis and Milt are not in favor of publishing video of sites due to sensitive equipment that may be installed by other agencies and cause problems. Video will not be currently taken. We may organize and take video of our repeaters later so there will be no conflicts of interest.
5. **Public Service** Scott KN6ZDN– Not present. Marin Triathlon sponsor has requested MARS public service assistance with the event October 3rd. Oliver Lu – this event is operated by Inside Track and gave a brief history of MARS' previous events with them. They felt MARS experience would be helpful from a safety standpoint, and we have worked with them in the recent past. MSC to add Marin Triathlon to Public Service Calendar without objection.

6. **VE Testing** Jim KM6WWY– Next test will be October 10th. We have 1 applicant currently. Future format changes to the VE program were discussed since recent turnout has been quite low. Some of our VE's have received invitations to work with various of the remote testing VE teams. Will be polling VE's regarding expanding our testing formats Skip KJ6ARL inquired if our club had given any thoughts to resurrecting the basic technician knowledge classes like we had previously done. Kathy KM6URP reported on Sonoma County efforts to conduct Technician classes and exams. She said that turnout had been spotty, and the next class would be done in Petaluma to see if more people would attend.
7. **Comm Truck** Charlie AI6TT – Nothing new to report.
8. **NBAM** Kathy KM6URP – Sites at Bodega Bay are 90% up and running. We have one node on the mast at Doran Beach Park that remains to be completed. Mark will be installing Schellenger mast tunnel and node in October.
9. **Clubhouse Cleanup** Milt KM6ASI – Door for water heater room door is being manufactured and will be at Golden State Lumber Oct. 4th.
10. **Silent Auction** Steve KB6HOH – The silent auction turnout and money taken in was a big success. Many club members put a lot of time and effort into getting the equipment checked out, documented, set up with bid sheets, and processing sales. There are a few things left that may be sold soon, particularly a large linear amplifier and some high-power antenna tuners.
11. **Picnic** Steve KB6HOH– It has been rescheduled to Sunday, October 4 at Stafford Lake. mCatering will be handled by Forest Barbecue, costing $30 per person. Steve will forward the invoice to Curtis when it is received. Because previous meat-heavy options left many leftovers, Kathy is coordinating vegetarian options for those who do not eat pork or beef. Deserts are yet to be determined.

Old Business:

1. Club budget for 2026 – Curtis - No Action.

New Business:

1. Nominations Committee -Curtis WA6UDS
    a. Up for election for 2027-28 board of directors:
        i. Jim Saltzgaber -announced he will not be running for re-election.
        ii. Steve Toquinto – is running
        iii. Richard Cochran - TBD
        iv. Bruce Bartel – Termed out.
    b. Nominating committee: Must be a member in good standing & not seeking a position on the board. The 2027 Board of directors nominating committee will be Scott KN6ZDM, Annie KM6QIW, and Mark KM6AOW. They will enlist a slate of at least 4 eligible candidates to the president for presentation at the November general membership meeting.

_X__ **Good of the Order** – Mark KM6AOW – Curtis WA6UDS, Bruce N6VLB and Mark KM6AOW will work out DNS settings for switching the NBAM website to a new provider.

_X__ **Executive Session** – Nothing required.

_X__ **Adjourn** – 8:49

Next Regular Meeting 2 October 2026

Next Board Meeting 8 October 2026

Marin Amateur Radio Society

Balance Sheet Comparison - Custom

As of August 31, 2026

Distribution account	TOTAL	
	As of Aug 31, 2026	As of Aug 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	79,684.78	83,196.64
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	**$80,743.18**	**$84,713.04**
Accounts Receivable		
Other Current Assets		
Uncategorized Asset	0.00	0.00
Total for Other Current Assets	**$0.00**	**$0.00**
Total for Current Assets	**$80,743.18**	**$84,713.04**
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	**$139,726.18**	**$143,696.04**
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	-7,337.92	3,718.58
Opening Balance Net Assets	124,400.00	124,400.00
Total for Equity	**$139,726.18**	**$143,696.04**
Total for Liabilities and Equity	**$139,726.18**	**$143,696.04**

Marin Amateur Radio Society

Profit and Loss Comparison (January-August, 2026)

Distribution account	TOTAL	
	Jan 1 - Aug 31 2026	Jan 1 - Aug 31 2025 (PY)
Income		
Donations	7,504.65	7,017.65
Dues	3025.00	2,880.00
Rent	19,950.00	21,870.00
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	155.77	
Total for Income	**$30,635.42**	**$31,767.65**
Cost of Goods Sold		
Gross Profit	**$30,635.42**	**$31,767.65**
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	2,444.40	1,100.12
Garbage	436.14	424.88
Insurance	$6,248.11	$4,010.29
Comm Van Insurance	607.67	2,308.84
Total for Insurance	**$6,855.78**	**$6,319.3**
Office Supplies & Software	185.98	104.00
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	892.26	
Uncategorized Expense	155.77	
Utilities	2,906.48	3,292.32
Accounting		1,996.61
Meals		70.77
Other Business Expenses		575.32
Station Upgrades & Maintenance		1,894.69
Water		593.45
Total for Expenses	**$34,750.82**	**$26,916.07**
Net Operating Income	**-$4,115.40**	**$4,851.58**
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	**-$7,337.92**	**$3,718.58**

This Month's Quick Online Survey



If Our Club Had a Lending Library...

Last Month's Survey Responses

How's your Morse Code?

9 responses

