

Sierra Signals

Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club
Auburn, CA
An ARRL Special Service Club

<http://www.sf-arc.org>

February 2004

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

At the Key of S.F.A.R.C.



PRESIDENT

Rob Carpenter, WW6G

ww6g@arrl.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Casey McPartland, W7IB

W7ib@arrl.net

SECRETARY

Bob Boeckman, WA6ULL

916.987.9910

wa6ull@cwnet.com

TREASURER

Donna Hodge, KD6PJN

larryhodge2000@attbi.com

DIRECTORS

Kevin Reid, KG6RIO

George Simmons, KG6LSB

grsim@mindspring.com

Larry Hodge, AE6CE

REPORTERS

Satellites: Greg, KO6TH

History: Gary, KQ6RT

Digital: Rob, WW6G

REPEATERS

145.430 (-0.6 MHz/PL 162.2)

440.575 (+5.0 MHz/PL 94.8)

223.860 (-1.6 MHz/PL 100.0)

CLUB NET

All welcome to check in
Thursdays, 7:30PM, K6ARR/R
145.430

CLUB MEETINGS

Second Friday of the month,
7:30PM at the Auburn
Library, 350 Nevada St,
Auburn

CLUB BREAKFAST

Last Sat of the month at
Susie's Café, Cirby at
Riverside, Roseville - 8:00 AM

NET CONTROL OPS

Dave Jenkins, WB6RBE

Gary Cunningham, KQ6RT

Joe Sylvia, KF6OQY

Casey McPartland, W7IB

WEBMASTER

Justin Carpenter, KG6NYD

rancourt@houserancourt.org

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Fred Jensen, K6DGW

VOX: 530.885.8251

FAX: 530.745.9622

k6dgw@arrl.net

2004 Calendar of Events

(Operating Events in Italics)

- Feb 7 *North Am. Sprint (SSB)*
- Feb 13 Regular Meeting
- Feb 20-22 *ARRL DX Contest (CW)*
- Feb 27 *North Am. Sprint (RTTY)*
- Feb 27-29 *CQ 160 DX Contest (SSB)*
- Feb 28 Club Breakfast
- Mar 5-7 *ARRL DX Contest (SSB)*
- Mar 12 Regular Meeting
- Mar 26-28 *CQ WPX (SSB)*
- Mar 27 Club Breakfast
- Apr 9 Regular Meeting

IN THIS ISSUE

Officer Reports

Digital Musings

"Its My Opinion"

Sacramento Valley Section News

President's Report



Well, the new year started with a bang. The new officers and director's met for the first time and it really looks like we shall have a great year. To the directors, George, Kevin and Larry I certainly look forward to working with them. They provide good insights and fresh energy. To the other officers

Casey, Donna and Bob, my thanks for making the transition smooth.

There is nothing new to report about the repeater site at this time but there are a host of activities with our members. The ARES group under Joe Park's leadership has a pretty aggressive set of objectives this year. Digital has begun and my thanks to Fred Jensen for his input. Casey is the point of contact for a Technician License class. It starts Sunday, February 8th from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the Veteran's Hall in Auburn. If you know anyone who might be interested, let them know and ask that they contact Casey at w7ib@arrrl.net Larry Hodge is the liaison for the VE team and it looks like another great year for that team. If anyone is interested in taking an exam or potentially becoming a Volunteer Examiner, please contact Larry. The sessions are held on the 1st Saturday of each month at Folsom Lake College [exit 27 off Route 50] starting at 9AM and a special session will be held at the conclusion of the Technician class.

Don't forget our Board meeting next Friday at 7:30 and Roundtable pizza in Loomis. All members are welcome and, of course, I look forward to seeing everyone at our regular meeting February 13th.

73

Rob, WW6G

Vice President's Report

Well here we are in February and another SFARC year is under way. I expect to bring some interesting programs to our meetings in the coming months, and I look for input from the membership for content ideas. In addition, Field Day is only 5 months away, and I request that each of you give some thought to our needs and plans for FD 2004. I'd really like to put together the "FD Committee" now so that we are ready to go when May and June arrive - please let me know your thoughts and volunteer. "Many hands make light work!"

This month's program will be presented by a representative of CalSTAR, the folks who provide air evac. for trauma victims. Many people, even some that each of us may know, wouldn't be with us if it wasn't for quick movement to medical facilities. It should be quite interesting and exciting.

I'm working on a program for next month and the balance of the year. Until next month,

73,

Casey, W7IB

January Board Meeting(s)

1/2/04

Present: Rob, WW6G; Casey, W7IB; Bob, WA6ULL; and George, KG6LSB.

A briefing was received from Paul Hillesheim of Foothills Wireless regarding his desire to use the K6ARR repeater location. There being no quorum, no action could be taken.

Adjourned until January 9, 2004 7PM

1/9/04

Present: Rob, WW6G; Casey, W7IB; Bob, WA6ULL; Donna, KD6PJJ; Kevin, KG6RIO; [George, KG6LSB; and Larry, AE6CC.

Upon motions made, seconded and unanimously carried the following resolutions were passed:

RESOLVED: On the repeater site, we seem to be properly engaged and we will remain engaged. MADE BY: Donna; SECONDED BY: Casey

RESOLVED that the Vice President, Casey McPartland, and Treasurer, Donna Hodge, be and they hereby are authorized as signatories upon the club bank account with the Placer Sierra Bank and said bank is directed to honor all checks drawn upon the club account executed by either officer. The Vice President and the Treasurer and hereby authorized to execute any and all documents required by the bank in furtherance of this resolution. MADE BY: Casey; SECONDED BY: George.

RESOLVED that the payment made by the club to the Placer County Library in the amount of \$200.00 [check 635] for rent of the club meeting place pursuant to the resolution of the Board at the December 2003 meeting be and the same hereby is ratified and approved as made. MADE BY: Kevin; SECONDED BY: George.

RESOLVED that the President or the Vice-President be and they hereby are authorized to change contact information regarding the club as listed with the ARRL and any other location.

Special Report: A request has been made by Paul Hillesheim of Foothills Wireless to use the K6ARR repeater location. The matter was discussed and upon motion duly made seconded and unanimously carried it was RESOLVED: That the current manner of engagement with the school district is approved by the Board as the correct direction at this time. Membership to be briefed at the general meeting.

PLANS FOR 2004: What do we want to do ?

TREASURER: Mike Hudson reported on the state of the finances Mike has a notepad which he has put the 2003 finances, month by month.

OTHER BUSINESS: Donna needs to advise Richard of member list as we get to March as this is how far we go with the newsletter. Rich will bring in the 2nd key to the PO box at the next meeting

Casey will work out programs for February and beyond.

We need need to update net control lists with Dave, WB6RBE.

Meeting adjourned: 7:25PM

General Meeting 1/16/2004



30 members and guests present.

President Rob Carpenter, WW6G opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance

1. Discussion of proposal for Internet site at the Auburn repeater site w/school district: Three things need to be tested

and/or negotiated: Occupation of facilities, Expenses, and Interference. The early stages of an agreement will address Who would provide insurance and Workers' Comp, could we have an IRLP link to the repeater, status of the license to occupy building and operate equipment (would it be transferred to the leasee?). Jim has an 11-year lease now, with 2 years left on it.

2. Vice president Casey, W7IB, talked about Field Day. He is open for suggestions to make it a more interesting event.

3. The February meeting will feature a helicopter pilot from Cal-STAR to discuss and provide information about working with them in an emergency.

4. SFARC will be sponsoring a 6-week Technician license class at the Auburn Veterans' Memorial building at 100 East St. The classes are planned for 5:30 - 7:30 PM on Sundays. It will be necessary to purchase a new manual from the ARRL ("Now You're Talking"). Contact Casey, W7IB, at <w7ib@arrl.net> for information and to enroll.

5. Greg, KO6TH, reported that the International Space Station will be expanding and will provide more quarters. There are two hams aboard right now, and some ARISS traffic.

6. President Rob, WW6G, regretfully reported that Bob Greenslade, W3PMP, passed away over the Christmas holidays. He will extend the Club's condolences to Bob's family.

7. At the Christmas dinner in December, Richard, WA6RWS, presented certificates of thanks to Greg, KO6TH, and Casey, W7IB, for their work for the Club during 2003. The food was delicious, and the raffle was bigger than ever. We had two Grand Prizes -- an ICOM IC-2720 from the club, and a flat-panel computer monitor donated by the son of our Section Manager Jettie, W6RFF. Shannon and Bill Parrish re-donated an MFJ-259 antenna analyzer from the previous year. Tickets will be sold for it at later meetings.

8. Joe, KF6OQY, presented a proposal to purchase more magnetic signs for car doors. The best price is \$40 for 2, with a \$40 setup charge. The club will probably pay the setup charge. There were 12 people who expressed interest.

9. After a break, Casey, W7IB, introduced Joe, WB6AGR, Placer County Emergency Coordinator. He announced a meeting of the ARES group to be held Sunday, January 18 at 6:30 PM at the Veteran's Memorial building in Auburn. Rob, WW6G, will provide a demonstration of packet radio and discuss its usage in emergency situations. Joe stated that later plans included a simulated aircraft crash, a large inter-county drill, and a hospital drill.

10. A 30 minute movie about ARRL Headquarters in the 1947 - 1953 time period showing how the League functioned then. It was very interesting, and showed the old office machines and typewriters.

11. Bob, KD6WTY, won the atomic clock in the raffle. President Rob, WW6G, thanked Debbie, KF6LXN, for the refreshments, and adjourned the meeting at 9:06 PM.

Bob, WA6ULL
Secretary



40 Years Ago at the SFARC

Reported by Gary, KQ6RT

Minutes of SFARC February 12, 1964

Meeting was called to order and the minutes were approved as read.

2. Frank Carman was appointed to purchase a chalk board for approximately \$10.00.

3. New members were inducted into the club as Marie and Glenn Moore, Bob Colling, WB6AEU, Joe Merryman, and Lee Bowman.

4. Guests for the evening were Vida (XYL) and Jack Cunningham W6OXG, Margaret Lee Meister, Larry Duncon, and Siegfried Goepner.

5. Twenty-three members and guests were present.

6. Sig gave a short talk on CD activities as far as the communications aspect of it and his part in trying to get a 2 meter or 6 meter net in action with whatever help the club could give him and the county.

7. Ken Weger, read an article from a representative of the FCC in regard to the

incentive licensing plan and just what is the role of amateur radio as set forth in the original charter of ARRL. This was an eye opener for some who only regarded it as a hobby with no particular function as to a national service.

8. Otto Ruud, and Jim Carman were appointed as a committee to look into the matter of a local RACES net for the sheriffs communication set-up.

9. A film on "Ariel--Communications Satellite" was enjoyed by all.

10. Gus Gerke gave a talk on the pros and cons of the Nickel Cadmium battery as against other cell types.

11. The expenditure of \$10.38 was approved for the purchase of a secretarial attaché case for the club secretary.

12. \$3.00 worth of stamped envelopes were approved for use by the secretary in his correspondence duties with other clubs and in the interest of the clubs advancement.

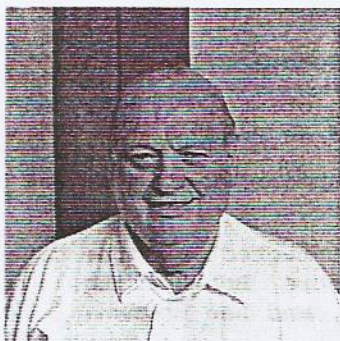
13. Meeting was adjourned and refreshments served.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Weger, Secretary

Sacramento Section Report

Jettie Hill, W6RFF - Section Manager



JANUARY was an interesting start for the New Year 2004! The ARRL Board of Directors met for their annual meeting and passed several motions and approved a proposal for changes to the amateur license classes. A brief outline of the proposal is as follows: A new Novice

license class – no code but HF, CW and SSB on select HF frequencies; Current Tech and Tech plus licenses would be upgraded to General; Current Advanced would upgrade to Extra. Only code requirement would be for Extra class, at 5 wpm. There would be "re-farming" of present Novice frequencies and changes in frequencies for most classes of licenses. Much more information can be found at www.arrl.org. This proposal has been sent to the FCC. Comments can be made to myself, Pacific Division Director, and ARRL HQ. Formal comments to the FCC can be made after it is made a official proposal.

The Board also approved a four-tier set of Amateur Radio mentoring programs. Read more on the ARRL web. Also the full minutes of the Board meeting are available.

SILENT KEYS: The following SK were reported to me: Joe Bryant, KB6SNU, a North Hills RC member and long time Sierra Foothills ARC member, Bob Greenslade, W3PMP (*also a long-term SFARC member*). Both were very active in local clubs and events. They will be missed.

EMCOMM: Several changes in Emergency Coordinators in the section. Al Pena, KQ6YW, of Redding is now EC of the combined Tahama County and Shasta County ARES groups. Much credit must be given to the SEC, DEC's, EC's and AEC's for the many hours they spend in training, drills and nets as well as keeping a ready kit for emergencies. The ARRL is requiring more information on the actions being taken by ARES groups in the sections and setting up more guide lines. See Dave, K6SOJ, k6soj@arrl.net, for more info.

CLUB AFFILIATION: Each club should update the club's information and renew their affiliation. This can be done on the ARRL web pages. There will be new programs for the affiliated clubs, in the near future, including a Club Mentoring program. Hopefully this will help clubs get new members and the clubs need to promote ARRL membership.

Club Newsletters should list club officers and give a phone number or email address for at least one officer and the club's web address, so contact can be made if needed. I am receiving more newsletters and emails telling me their newsletter is on their web page. Please send me an email when your monthly newsletter appears on the club's web page.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE: Speakers from the NWS in Sacramento, have been visiting clubs and presenting a basic weather spotting information program and signing up volunteers as spotters. This program is just beginning at the Sacramento NWS office. It is very active in Northern CA and Southern OR and Reno area.

YUBA SUTTER ARC: The club is planning communications for a MS Walk. Contact Paul, N6XVL for info. The annual Bike Around the Buttes needs 20 operators – contact Herb, W6HBU. Their Technician class has 7 students and they are doing well. There is a Potluck and Board meeting on Feb 10 at Lindhurst High School.

NEVADA COUNTY ARC: Plans are being made to provide communications during a 3 day Horse Run. The coordinator is Mike, WD6EVG, mikie@onemain.com, for info. Many hams needed for this event. VE exams on Feb. 21 – contact George, KQ6SQ at ve@ncarc.org.

RIVER CITY ARCS: Armand Nobel, WR6WR, of World Radio magazine, spoke to the club in January. Their March meeting will be on Monday, March 8, due to the Primary election on Tuesday March 2.

MISC: Be sure to check the SV section web page for any latest section information and the ARRL home page for the latest Ham and FCC news. More next month.

Digital Musings

Rob Carpenter, WW6G

This month, we shall explore VHF Packet.

Packet is one of the older digital modes and, it falls into the ARQ [Automatic Repeat reQuest] family of digital modes. This means that the sender and receiver engage in a dialog, or protocol, in which the sender and receiver exchange acknowledgements that a packet sent was received. If the sender does not get an acknowledgement of the sent packet within a short period of time, the sender resends the packet of data.

A packet is simply a chunk of data with some header information to say, among other things, who the packet is addressed to. Packet in amateur radio is built on the AX.25 protocol. Fortunately, you really do not need to know much about the AX.25, packet lengths, and re-transmission protocols. Modern packet TNC's and software take care of all of that.

So, to get started in packet, what do you need to do? First, since we are exploring VHF packet, you need a VHF FM transmitter – like the rig you use for our Thursday night nets, the Sunday night ARES net, or your favorite handheld. Each of these should work just fine!

Next, you need is a way to modulate the transmitter to send your packets out, and a way to listen to and interpret the packets sent your way. This can be accomplished in two basic ways: (1) by use of a TNC [Terminal Node Controller] and computer; or (2) a sound card equipped computer.

Packet Setup with a TNC

This is the traditional approach. You attach your radio to the TNC via a cable and your TNC to your computer with a standard RS-232 serial cable. The first cable is a little more complicated because it depends on your rig. Probably you best sources for these is www.buxcomco.com or www.associatedradio.com. They have pages of cables for specific TNC/radio combinations.

So what exactly is a TNC? A TNC is just a special type of modem. That little box which you use to dial up your internet provider does what your TNC does. The modulation is a little different, but essentially, they are the same from a functional perspective. With your old modem you had an RS-232 cable to your computer, and if it has the right DB9/DB25 connectors for your computer and TNC today, you may use it! If not, you need to get the right cable. The modem had a little piece of phone line [RJ11's] to connect to your phone line. Now you must get a cable to connect your TNC to your radio.

Connection to your radio is usually through either a microphone jack [if it has PTT, audio in, audio out, and ground] or an accessory/data jack on the back. Once you have the cabling all done, the next issue is software. You may purchase any one of several software packages, but if you just want to try it cheaply, the Hyperterminal utility in Windows will work just fine. The commands you will enter are specific to the TNC and slightly different from TNC to TNC. hence, the Kantronics commands and the AEA Timewave commands are

different but similar enough you could quickly catch on once you get the hang of it.

Which TNC is best

This is a matter of personal preference and how many features you want. A classic is the Kantronics KPC3, now the KPC3+128. One thing I like about it is that it is small, not too expensive, and could run off a 9 volt battery if you install a battery clip. I also have a AEA Timewave PK232/PSK which, all things considered, is probably overkill. Both work. It is up to you. You will probably see more KPC3's as they are smaller and less expensive. When you come right down to it, most packet modems are based on the design from the Tuscon Amateur Packet Radio group and, ultimately, are pretty similar.

The Sound Card Approach

If you do digital already and have a multimode software package such as MixW, you already have all you need. You are simply using your sound card as a modem. MixW takes care of everything for you, including CAT control of your rig, logging, etc. This is a really simple way to do it, but there are some issues, so let's explore them.

First, because Packet is an ARQ protocol, the software needs to switch between transmit and receive quickly. This means that you are best off using the serial port on your computer for the switching of the PTT line. Some hams use VOX to do this, but it may be too slow for packet. You can experiment.

If you do not want to use a serial port, there are some sound card interfaces which will sense the presence of audio and trigger the PTT line directly. An example of this is SL-1 or SL-1+ from Tigertronics <http://www.tigertronics.com/> I used one at Field Day and it worked fine. Another alternative is Associated Radio www.associatedradio.com which will build a custom cable with interface.

There is a second issue, however. One of the really neat features of packet radio is the ability to set up a maildrop or PBBS which allows individuals to connect and send and retrieve messages from a maildrop. This functionality is not generally supported with sound card packet software but there are add ons. Just as with the TNC solution, the cabling is probably the biggest issue.

Emergency Service Packet

One key reason for getting into packet is that it is popular in emergency services. The reason may relate to the potential use cases and to the fact that packet has been around for quite some time. Let's look at those cases.

Hub and spoke – asynchronous message processing

In this model a maildrop or full PBBS is available at the hub. Individual stations in the field send their messages to the hub and they are processed there or picked up by other users.

This model is appropriate for non-real time issues such as long lists [an example might be all runners who has passed a particular point] or other messages not requiring immediate

action. These need to be processed, are probably awkward with voice, and well handled by packet. In this model, a TNC is needed at the hub [or the appropriate mail/BBS software], but TNC or sound card packet is appropriate at the spoke ends.

Hub and spoke – synchronous message processing

These are messages which are sent and need to be responded to now. They are typically routed through a hub [net control location] but require a response either from the hub or another station. Examples are well known in ARES literature and the most common use is the transmission of a name.

In this case digital transmission is appropriate and packet is certainly a method but it is not the only method. The complexity of packet may make it not the best method. PSK31 or one of the other digital modes might be a better and simpler choice. Whether with packet or another digital mode, the fact that different frequencies are used for asynchronous and for synchronous messaging makes sense.

Peer-to-Peer

Peer to peer is simply one keyboard to another between two stations not involving the NCS or hub. This model is appropriate under any of the use cases for digital, but again, packet is not the simplest mode, although it is certainly an adequate mode. Personally, I think there are easier connectionless modes for digital communication in a peer to peer mode.

Give it a try

If you like, we can schedule a contact. You might also want to consider using one of the packet “nodes” in the area. My favorite lately is ECHO whose maildrop is ECHO-1. You simply connect as usual CONNECT ECHO-1 and use the mail system. It is that simple except as you can see, you use the node’s name instead of the callsign. Remember packet will put the callsigns into the header anyway so do not worry about identification.

The nice thing about nodes is that generally that act as digipeaters and the will store and forward mail. So if Gary, KB7QWC, wanted to send me a packet mail, he could send it to a node in Idaho addressed to WW6G@ECHO-1 and it would get routed to me. We will leave the details of routing nodes to another discussion, but it takes little detailed knowledge to use it. The key to packet is simply to try it. Ed, N6EOD, and I have communicated, but the path from his QTH to mine is not optimal. Fred, K6DGW, and I have communicated as well. Give it a whirl and over time we will figure out the best nodes to work together.

(Ed. Note: Rob's own mailbox can be reached on 144.910 using the call sign WW6G-1. You may also want to try connecting to K6NP on 144.950 -- it is part of the worldwide DX Spotting Network, and is located in Rio Linda. If your TNC is set up for multi-connects, you can also connect to a node [try STH on 145.030] and then tell the node to connect back to yourself. This gives you a looparound and helps you get your gear set up properly.)

It's Just My Opinion

Casey McPartland, W7IB

Surprise! The “Old Man” channeled me a message that he’s taking the month off to pay attention to all the “hoo-haw” (?) in Amateur Radio. My guess is that he’s looking at interesting and challenging new developments... So I figure it’s my turn to stimulate the collective thought process – I only hope I can do it well.

Boy, I tell ya, if you want to find out what people who have too much time on their hands do, check out some of the rants (I’m sorry, postings) on www.QRZ.com. There are some folks who think things through, then read what they wrote, spell check, and revise, all before they push the “send” button. Sadly, many, if not most, don’t engage the brain before the button gets pushed, so what they write often comes out semiliterate and incredibly hard to understand. There are many who just look for any string of postings where they can simply “flame” the author, or other contributors. Some of the people who comment on QRZ.com are no longer active, or even licensed – go figure! Finally, there are those whose role in life is to appear like they know what they’re talking about – kind of fun it, it sorta adds to the “heat” of the situation. Funny, it sounds like many other facets of life, don’t it?

I guess my point is that if you or I have an opinion, we need a place to “speak” it. Speaking one’s opinion does however leave them open to the “authorities”, know-it-alls, attackers, “flame throwers” and non-thinkers. An opinion, after all, is open for judgment from anyone who hears or sees it, and a lot of those folks aren’t kind.

When reading opinion pieces, even (or maybe especially) mine or the “Old Man’s”, we must always have our malarkey filter on (anyone needing a definition of malarkey, should ask me off-line.) Opinions are heavily tinged with prejudices and misunderstandings, and sometimes rage, so *always* have the “filter” on because there often is value hidden in there, somewhere.

So on to my topic. The ARRL just released its proposal for re-farming of the old Novice bands in conjunction with its “position” on CW and restructuring of the license classes (again!) If you want to know more about these proposals, check out www.arrl.org a summary starts at the very top of the homepage. I’m just going to make a couple of opinionated comments about a few of specific items and then be on my way.

The ARRL has proposed a few revisions to the licensing system that would offer three classes of operating privileges, “Novice”, General, and Extra, as follows:

A new Novice license requiring a basic 25-question test, and offering some limited HF privileges, as well as VHF and UHF. This approach would make entry to the hobby even easier than it currently is, and provide more privileges

Elimination of the Technician class of license - this sounds good, I guess. It would have all of those with Technician, Technician Plus, and General licensees all lumped into the one class called, oddly enough, General. I have seen a case made on the web, that this would be the same as back a few years

when all of the then Technicians were grand-fathered to General. However, all of those Tech's had passed 5wpm code, as was then required for the Novice license, and the General theory – think about that. This new General license class would no longer require CW. This would mean that the Tech's, and Tech's with HF privilege would be Generals without ever passing, or taking, Element 3, thus not meeting the minimum requirements, less Morse code, for the General class license. *So, it's not even nearly the same...*

the Extra license would consist of the current Extra's and the Advanced class licensees, who would be grand fathered. Under the proposal the 5 WPM CW requirement would remain. In my opinion, this could be done today, it's no big deal and it would reduce the number of license classes for those overworked folks at the FCC. According to this proposal, the Extra CW bandwidth would remain unaltered.

I'd guess many of you have already figured out what my opinion is, but maybe not. First, most everybody knows that I think the Morse requirement should not be dropped, *at all*. I don't share the opinion of some of the "old timers" that give us all of the rest of us a bad name, I'm just a traditionalist and I think the code is appropriate (so call me Tevia!) I am also, however, a realist and I know that the movement has been under way for many, many, many years (more than some of you know) to drop CW as a requirement for HF privileges. I think it might have been the "Old Man" himself that mentioned, perhaps in last month's column (it's often hard for me to remember the things that he channels - I am in a trance ya know), that it would be a good thing to offer the "no code" Technicians more possibilities for SSB and digital on HF, and I agree! However, it is my personal preference that the General class requirements be left alone, CW and all, and that the Extra class license require 10wpm CW as well as the current Element 4 - but that's only my opinion. I suspect that what I think of the blanket upgrade of all current Technicians to General is pretty clearly stated above, so I won't go into it.

Now, to wrap this baby up! Whatever the ARRL has proposed, I figure that by the time that all of the process has happened, it be a year or two to get it all into law. Given that, it might be good if those of you who do not have Morse credit hold off on buying that HF rig. Whenever the law passes, there'll certainly be better ones, with more features. Whatever your position, take some time, think about it, mull it over so it's a cohesive argument, position, or opinion, and make it known. Make your opinion known to your friends, the FCC, the ARRL, and, if you want to, post it on QRZ.com, or what-have you, but spare the malarkey and let that opinion stand on its own merits!

Well, that was different! I'm thinking I'll let the "Old Man" have his say more often than not. Pulling this column together is a tedious and time-consuming task. I'll sign for now...From the Old Man, W7IB and Oscar the 7 wpm Dachshund, very best 73!

AO-40 Goes Silent

AO-40 satellite remains silent in the wake of a precipitous voltage drop from around 26 volts down to 18 volts early on January 27 (UTC). AO-40 controllers are fairly certain that one

or more shorted battery cells are at the root of the problem. Efforts to restart the satellite's 2.4-GHz downlink transmitter have been unsuccessful.

"Our current best understanding is that we suffered a catastrophic failure of the main battery, which is clamping the bus voltage at a low level," Stacey Mills, W4SM, of the AO-40 command team said in a posting on the AMSAT-DL Web site.

The AO-40 ground team has been sending blind commands to the spacecraft to activate its onboard computerized control system in order to switch in the auxiliary battery bank, which was tied to the main battery bank after a bus voltage drop January 26, and disconnect the main battery.

Attention E-mail Edition Readers

When e-mail addresses and URL's appear in MS Word text, they are converted to real hyperlinks. You should be able to click on them just as on a web page. Occasionally, however, the period or comma at the end of a phrase or sentence, or the space after the hyperlink sneaks in to become part of the link. In such cases, it may not work.

I've tested those on the front page, but I don't always get to those embedded in the body text. So, if you find a link that fails, check the end of it to make sure there isn't a period, comma, or extra space. Ed.



Randy & Pamela Ubry
RPU, Incorporated
Owner - Operators

Indian Hill & I - 80
P.O. Box 788
Newcastle, CA 95658

Featuring Metropolitan Fine Coffees® & Royal Konaccino® Iced Beverages Phone 916-663-9220 Fax 916-663-9205



Batteries Plus

Don Tollefson
Owner

8025A Greenback Lane
Citrus Heights, California 95610-6509
Telephone 916.722-3300
Facsimile 916.722-2489
www.batteriesplus.com

Copyright © 2003, All Rights Reserved

The SFARC Newsletter is published monthly by the Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club for the information of its members and friends. The newsletter is distributed via the US Mail and E-mail, and is posted to the SFARC Web Site. Permission is granted to non-profit amateur radio organizations to reproduce text verbatim with attribution. Use of images is prohibited without prior written approval of the SFARC, and of all individuals pictured in the images. All logos are the property of the represented organizations and may not be used without their permission.

SIERRA FOOTHILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

P.O. Box 1005

Newcastle, CA 95658



SIERRA FOOTHILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB 2004 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Call: _____ Class: _____ e-mail: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Associate Name: _____ Call: _____ Class: _____

Phone Number: _____ Application: (Circle One) New Renewal

Member Dues: Circle Amounts That Apply. Applications received in the middle of the year will be pro rated. Contact the President or Treasurer for exact rate.

Membership:	\$22.00	Name Badge:	\$6.50
Associate:	\$ 7.00	Repeater Donation:	\$ _____
Auto Patch Donation:	\$ _____	Newsletter Booster:	\$ _____
Miscellaneous Donation:	\$ _____	Christmas Donation:	\$ _____
Worldradio Renewal:	\$ _____	TOTAL:	\$ _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Date: _____ Treasurer: _____ Secretary: _____ Roster: _____

Payment: _____ Check Number: _____ Cash: _____