

Sierra Signals

Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club

Auburn, CA

An ARRL Special Service Club

<http://sf-arc.org>

June 2005

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

The Field Day Phenomenon

Casey McPartland W7IB

(A short historical romp through last year's event)

Well, Field Day 2004 is over. For many of us it seems to be just the latest in series of these annual events. Having taken a little time to think since wrapping things up this morning, and chatting with a number of the SFARC participants as we "broke it down", and after catching up with Leslie at home, and after many years, and many FD's on both coasts, I've come to some interesting conclusions.

The FD phenomenon mostly isn't about radios and antennas, or operating, or numbers of QSO's. It isn't really about competition or set-up, or non-standard power sources; it isn't solely about the food or the "social aspects", or being with friends old and/or new. And, it's really not about whose got the fanciest, newest, oldest, plainest, most complicated, or simplest. No, Field Day for me is about people being with people, coordinating effort to achieve – just being people. What I've done is sit down this evening, (after

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

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Casey McPartland, W7IB
w7ib@arrl.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Ed Morell, N6EOD

SECRETARY

Paul Alford, KB6NYB
pla@wizwire.com

TREASURER

Donna Hodge, KD6PJJN
dhodge2644@aol.com

DIRECTORS

Kevin Reid, K7TST
kevin_r89@netzero.net
George Simmons, KG6LSB
grsim@mindspring.com

Larry Hodge, AE6CE

REPORTERS

Satellites: Greg, KO6TH
History: Gary, KQ6RT
Digital/VE: Rob, WW6G

WEBMASTER

Marc North, W6SQL
marc@marcnorth.com

RESOURCES

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

Thursdays, 7:30PM, K6ARR/R
145.430

CLUB MEETINGS

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

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

EDITOR

Fred Jensen, K6D6W
530.885.8251
k6dgw@arrl.net

my nap of course) and scribbled a list of words that are the FD phenomenon for me. I ask that you think about them and if you weren't there, consider the opportunity in the future, even for a few hours. If you couldn't be there for whatever reason. God love you. Either way, you *were* missed! For those of you who were there (wherever "there" was) or, who have been in the past, here's my list – it's dedicated to hams from Jettie Hill to Phillip & Andy to Donna & Patty, (continued on Page 1)

2005 Calendar of Events

(Operating Events in Italics)

[Dates are local unless otherwise indicated]

Jun 6	<i>Spartan Sprint (1800-2000 PDT)</i>
Jun 10	<i>Regular Meeting</i>
Jun 11	<i>ANARTS WW RTTY Contest</i>
Jun 11	<i>ARRL June VHF Contest</i>
Jun 18	<i>Kids' Day</i>
Jun 25	<i>Club Breakfast(?)</i>
Jun 25-26	<i>FIELD DAY</i>
Jul 8	<i>Regular Meeting</i>
Jul 30	<i>Club Breakfast</i>

We encourage members to receive Sierra Signals via email to save the Club the cost of reproduction and mailing

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Meeting Minutes

8 April 2005

Minutes of the Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club meeting, Friday 8 April 2005 at the Auburn, California Main Library.

The SFARC Board of Directors meeting convened at 1855 hrs. Attending were: President Casey, W7IB, and Directors Kevin, K7TST, George, kg6lsb, and Larry, AE6CE. In response to an incident of "jamming" of the repeaters used by the MS Walk on 2 April 05, the Board discussed protocol and priority use of repeater at future events that should require prior approval by directors.

President Casey, W7IB, called the General Meeting to order at 1940 hrs. and led 30 members and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. He then introduced the club officers and invited all members and visitors to introduce themselves.

Treasurer Donna, KD6PJN presented the treasurer's report, Larry, AE6CE, gave the VE report, and Joe, WB6AGR, gave the ARES report.

At 2010, there was a break for refreshments

At 2025 the meeting resumed with a round table discussion on the question, "What to do and not do when happening upon the scene of an accident."

Gary, KQ6RT, held the raffle at 2104, and the meeting was adjourned at 2114 hours.

Respectfully Submitted

Paul Alford, KB6NYB, Secretary

Forty Years Ago at SFARC

June 16, 1965

The meeting was called to order by our president, Sage Otow, K6ZWZ, about 2015 with 9 members present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Les Miller gave a report for the treasurer that there was a balance of \$36.28 in the checking account.

K6ARR gave a report on the trailer and Sig's physical condition. The trailer is in Jim's yard and needs painting. Anyone having spare time should contact Jim and help get the trailer painted.

Jim also gave a report on Field Day and a check was made to see how many could help with the event. Ken was to get notices out to members before Field Day to help recruit members so a good Field Day could be held this year. Joe offered his pickup truck to transport needed gear, and Frank offered to drive it. Sage offered to

bring his flat-bed truck if it were felt it would be needed. Jim was to contact Zackit for a power supply for the HW-12.

The 100 mile Tevis Cup Ride is to be held on July 10th. Preparations are nearly completed, with a new location at the fairgrounds, namely the infield, to be used for publicity purposes. The different stations and operators will be:

Tahoe—K6QKO
Robinson Flat—K6TFD
Michigan Bluff—WA6MEC
Echo Hills—WB6KUT
Base—K6CBP

Clay was unable to attend, but asked if anyone had ideas about the letter to be sent to the FCC.

The meeting was adjourned, and a cake was served. The cake was furnished by WA6UHV

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard H Lund, WA6HYO
Secretary

The Field Day Phenomenon

and everyone in between (and those who've gone before us, and are no longer with us):

Camaraderie	Fellowship	Learning
Teaching	Working	Playing
Good food!	Nature	Kidding
Experimentation	Laughing	Dirt
Dark chocolate	Sunburn	Sharing
Acceptance	Rocky Road	Old/Young
Old/New	Bugs	Stories
Advice (good/bad)	Common Ground	Sunflower
Seeds		

Whether we're pushing a mic-button, tapping a key, slapping the paddles, or tickling the keyboard, we share a strong affection for a common passion – we're all hams.

So when FD is complete and the cleanup is done, and you're standing around shaking hands and sharing a good hug, and trying to figure out why you "don't really want to leave", think of *your* list of words – then I think you'll get it! It's the Phenomenon of Field Day.

Reflections on Dayton 2005

Geeks, Tweaks, and the Future of Amateur Radio

Casey McPartland, W7IB

I'll start with factual reporting to give you the flavor of the event, and then some editorial comments, just to keep you interested!

Anyone who hasn't had the opportunity to make it to the annual Hamvention in Dayton should really do it at least once.

Just imagine the implications of 20 to 30 thousand hams converging on a small mid-western city for three days. It is a cat herders delight, and couple with it the ARRL Annual convention – HOG HEAVEN! The “Old Man” must be proud.

Dayton presents the biggest single swap meet this op has ever seen (although the regulars thought it was smaller this year). The really exciting part about the swap was that it was about 95% radio stuff and only 5% computers, unlike many of the ones in California that seem to go 70/30 with computing on top. This was just a couple of large parking lots!

Then, there's the manufacturer and dealer exhibits which took up the main arena floor (think Arco) and three or four other attached venues, most larger than your high school cafeteria! There was somewhere in the neighborhood of 150 to 200 individual exhibits, displacing about 300 booths inside the buildings – not for the undisciplined shopper.

In addition, the ARRL had about 10-12 booths ranging from general membership stuff like books and trinkets to individual tables for ARES, DXCC, the Big Project, and on and on. All of the names we hear or read about so often were there, Dave Sumner K1ZZ, Jim Haynie W5JBP, Rosalie White K1STO, Stan Horzepa WA1LOU, Mark Spencer WA8SME, Dan Miller K3UFG to name a few.

I flew into Dayton by way of Dallas on Thursday afternoon, and I must say that at least half of the passengers on the MD80 were either hams, or worked for Yaesu, Icom, AES, HRO, etc. I recognized a couple of big time Dxers (K5RQ and a Japanese op whose call I don't know. The first thing that struck me was the variety and array of mobile antennas in the parking lot of the Red Roof Inn – I had to look at some of this stuff and wonder if it would really work! I met my cw buddy Rick Clifford KF6UEB at the motel office on Friday morning for breakfast, and then off we went (btw, Rick is the founder and net control of the Orange County Wireless Net (OCWN) that meets each Sunday morning on 7086.0.)

As we approached Hara Arena one of the things that struck me was the amount of police officers and vehicles at the entrance of the facility – I mentioned to Rick that there might be plans to film a first edition of “Hams Gone Wild!” while we were there. Just think of the possibilities: live news footage of a pizza slice and hot dog eating contest, or a violent credit card battle at the MFJ booth, or hams being arrested in the parking lot for reselling burnt out tubes to unsuspecting newbies. My favorite thoughts are those of local cops chasing down fleeing hams in an effort to catch them before a coronary strikes!

Rick has become a legend in my mind for the impromptu surveys he runs everywhere he goes. He asked restaurant servers, people on the street, and whomever else would humor him, “What's up with all these people with the badges on?” “Where are all the cars with the things on their roofs in town for?” Two of the best answers were: “They're here for the Hamvention, but I'm not really sure what they do” and, “I think they have something to do with driving trucks.” And people say we don't really need public relations!

One of the most interesting and entertaining presentations that we went to was the FCC Forum starring Bill Cross, W3TN and Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH. Everyone probably knows that

Riley is in charge of Amateur Enforcement, and Bill is the in charge of the Wireless division whose responsibilities include us, GMRS, MURS, et al. Three things really surprised me about their presentations, 1) Riley's jokes (“After seven years, it can't surprise any of you that I won't be around much longer. I've eaten so many hamfest hot dogs that they're bound to kill me soon! Why I was at an event in North Carolina last weekend, and I found a wiener that I carved my initials in over a year ago in Florida!” 2) how little a bureaucrat can really say in two hours, and 3) how frightened the FCC-types are of a call from a member of Congre\$\$.

I was also impressed with Jim Haynie's presentation on his annual trips top DC to lobby Congress and the Senate. The trips are 3 days 2-3 times a year and every minute of 12 to 20 hours a day are filled with schmoozing politicians, some fun, huh? There is a new Walter Cronkite video about these trips...I'm impressed with the effort that the video shows, but I wish they'd get someone else to narrate...I mean he must be the world's oldest novice! (It looked like they had to show him which knob was the vfo on the radio that was “on his desk” – and, after all, he says he uses ham radio on his sailing yacht – what's a novice really gonna do with an hf rig on a yacht?) Whatever you think about the ARRL, and I often have my doubts, just remember they're the *only ones* lobbying for anything ham radio that you and I are interested in! If you not a member, you ought to be.

I could go on and on, but space is an issue (*Well, not really these days, Casey! Ed.*). So I'll say it was great fun and leave you with a few written impressions of my first, but for sure not last trip to Dayton. Here they are:

Well-dressed and well-known men wearing Farah Fawcett wigs

The ICOM sales guy trying to sell Rick and me that a great feature of the new 7000 is its ability to receive tv channels 2 through 13 in color (FABULOUS!)

ICOM models running around handing out toothbrushes and tooth paste dressed in jammies and pink fluffy bathrobes – Marketing gone wild!

Guys with screwdriver antennas on their back packs actually knocking down “Q's” on 20

Guys wearing hard hats with towers and yagi's on them

People eating hotdogs, pizza and doughnuts that clearly didn't need any of them!

If you need a cab, don't call Diamond Taxi – ask me.

The *striking* image of 20,000 to 30,000 humans having a lot of fun and laughs, sharing some new ideas, and exercising the camaraderie that comes of common interests! What a blast!

Next year in Dayton!?

(Thanks so much Casey! While employed by a Defense Contractor specializing in the US Air Force, I found myself in Dayton often, three times during Hamvention. In case you don't know, the majority of contracting for the USAF happens at Wright-Patterson AFB. Each morning, as I was heading down the elevator at the hotel, lugging my 18 lb computer bag and briefcase filled with incredibly cool and interesting reading material, and just aching to flog our products and services in front of a room full of Generals and Colonels who couldn't really give a rip, I was joined by a gaggle of obvious hams with HT's

on their belt, clearly anticipating a good time. I came very close to calling the boss and telling him "Take this job and shove it" on more than one occasion. Ed.)

GPS Class for WSER/TEVIS

(I received the following from Ralph, W6RWL, who is the 2005 coordinator for WSER/TEVIS communications. If you are currently scheduled as a volunteer, this is a great class. If you aren't and would like to learn to really use a GPS receiver, contact Ralph and see if there's room)

From: w6rwl@foothill.net

Subject: GPS Training

To All,

GPS Class is confirmed for Sunday, June, 19, 2005 at 0900 (9:00 AM) till about 1400.

Thanks to Capt. Jeff Stolson, he again is donating the Cool Fire Station for this class. Please bring your GPS, Owners Manual, connection cable, and standard compass if you have one. 2-3 hour class and then hit field.

Ralph Lucas, W6RWL
530-367-3026
408-640-0963

EMCOMM Monthly

(I'm sure most everyone gets this really cool newsletter from the SV Section EC, but here are a couple of good excerpts in case you missed it or read over them. Ed.)

Just within the last two months, two Morse operators just within the past two months that have become Silent Keys in one section alone. All of us need to work hard to maintain our pool of operators skilled in the "essential language". Not only do we need to replace the CW SKs, we need additional operators who are willing to become proficient traffic handlers in all modes! And,

Chip Margelli, K7JA, and Ken Miller, K6CTW, who appeared on the *NBC Tonight Show* on May 13, complete with their old time telegrapher costumes should inspire us all to become more active on CW and improve our Morse skills! Story at:

<http://www.arrrl.org/news/stories/2005/05/16/3/?nc=1>

Related story at:

<http://www.160characters.org/news.php?action=view&nid=1541>

(If you don't have time to visit the link, the hams blew the teenage text-messengers away! Now, all we have to do is find a way to entice those teenagers into our hobby. It's unlikely that the "Magic of Wireless" or "Talking to Far Away Places" is going to do it ... they carry wireless to school in their pockets, and play Internet games with people all over the world. One of my grandsons did have a very positive response to the competition aspect when he watched me in the ARRL CW DX Contest. He plays football and soccer for his school, is (over?) competitive, and can learn virtually anything if it interests him. Ed)

National Ham News

Thanks, ARRL Bulletins and Letter

Customized E-News from the FCC

The FCC Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) is launching the Consumer Information Registry, an expanded and improved e-mail service that will deliver customized information about the FCC's actions and related developments in telecommunications and other communications services.

"The Registry is an Internet database that can be customized to deliver information on whatever topics the subscriber chooses," the FCC said in a news release this week. Among the many choices are "Amateur Radio and Related Interests" and "Ham Radio." The topic checklist also includes Broadcast TV and Cable TV, but subscribers can also specify topics not on the list.

Acting CGB Chief Monica Desai says the FCC is "delighted to be able to offer this valuable tool to everyone interested in communications issues." She says FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin has expressed an interest in ensuring that consumers continue to enjoy the benefits of the best communications system in the world. "I believe the Consumer Information Registry has the potential to play an important role in achieving that goal," she added.

The sign-up information is on the FCC CGB Web site:

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/>

Subscribers will be asked to indicate the subjects on which they wish to receive information. The service is free, and subscribers may unsubscribe at any time.

K6DGW/MM

Some of you may know that Andrea and I took a trip from Ft. Lauderdale across the Caribbean (Jamaica and Aruba), through the Panama Canal (truly awesome, particularly if you're an engineer), and up the western coast of the Americas (Costa Rica and Hualtuco, Acapulco, and Cabo San Lucas Mexico, to Los Angeles.

I took my Elecraft KX1 and the results were a mixed bag. I have posted a summary of operating QRP from a cruise boat at www.foothill.net/~andrea/Ham43.htm should you be interested and contemplating such an operation.



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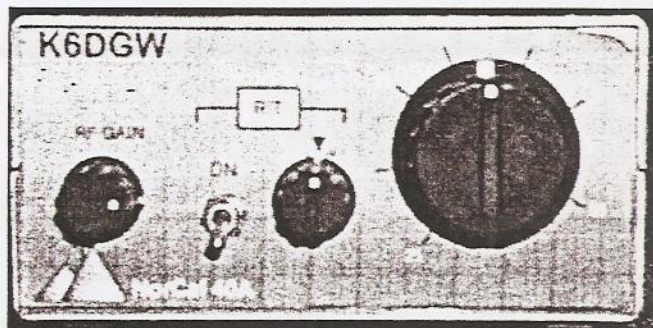
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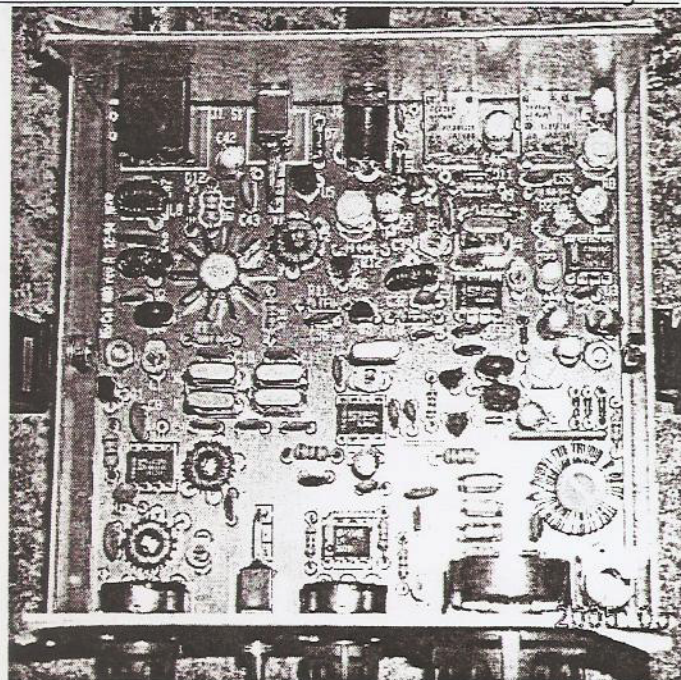
The NorCal 40A

Last issue (April) we covered the Elecraft KX1, a moderately pricey (~\$500) trail radio that is second to none. I took it with me on our trip through the Canal and you can check out the link above for the results (not outstanding by any means!) My apologies to all of the US Navy folks out there for referring to the Sun Princess as a "boat," but for those of us USAF folk, "If It Floats, It's A Boat." That did get me and a few of my troops tossed overboard from an LST many years ago, but I refuse to call an LST a "ship." After all, we only have one word for "airplane," and you Navy guys might want to conserve on the language a bit too.

When I was a kid, with my friends, we fooled around with very low power radios using acorn tubes powered by dry cells in So. Central Los Angeles, usually in the LA River bed which is dry most of the time. We even fooled around in the storm drain tunnels (made famous by the ancient SciFi flick, "Them.") and found that there really was a sort of a waveguide effect. After that, I paid no attention to QRP for nearly 45 years, until I purchased a NorCal 40A marketed, at that time, by the Northern California QRP Club. It was in the ~\$100 range, and covered the lower 40 KHz or so of the 40m CW band. I believe it is still be available from Wilderness Radio, and I've seen both NorCal 40's and 20's at ham swaps.



After getting the KX1, this radio sat on the shelf, and I finally found a Girl Scout leader who wanted to use it as a teaching tool, but I have made several hundred QSO's on it. You can put the 40 KHz segment wherever you want, within limits. I had mine set for 7020 - 7060 to cover all of the "QRP Watering Holes" around 7040. It has a single conversion receiver and has extremely good specs for internal noise, dynamic blocking range, and stability (It was designed by Wayne, N6KR, of Elecraft fame, so what would we expect?). The transmitter produces about 3W with a 12V supply, weighs around 0.4 lbs, and will run on about any power source you can come up with.



With the exception of the chassis mounted controls and connectors, the entire radio is built on one circuit board. I built mine in about 20 hours of off and on work. The 4 crystals in the center left form the IF filter which is about 300 Hz wide and has very sharp skirts.

The receiver on the 40A is really quite surprising. The first thing you notice when you put on the headphones is that it appears to be broken ... almost no noise. But, tune around a little and the first signal you find will leap into the headphones, seemingly out of nowhere.

I had an older MFJ keyer that would run on a 9V battery, and together with the 40A, a Bencher paddle, and a 40m dipole I made from some RG-59 75Ω coax, everything fit nicely into a small plastic tackle box which would stash neatly into our tent trailer.

Operating QRP is definitely a challenge. However, around the QRP frequencies (~7040, 14040 - 14060), you will find that QRP'ers really do listen for the weaker signals, and I managed to snag some South American DX occasionally as well.

The NorCal series began as a kit project for the Northern California QRP Club, and was wildly successful. They are a great, inexpensive way to give trail radio a try, and like most of us, you are likely to find a fascination with running radios from batteries outside.

SIERRA Foothills AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

P.O. Box 1005

Newcastle, CA 95658



SIERRA Foothills AMATEUR RADIO CLUB 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

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

Associate Name: _____ Call: _____ Class: _____

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

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Applications received in the middle of the year will be pro rated. Contact the President or Treasurer for exact rate.

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