

Sierra Signals

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

<http://sf-arc.org>

May 2006

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

Coastal Marine Radio Telegraph Lives!

Part 2-Nostalgia

(Reported by Fred, K6DGW)

I was motivated to offer these two articles to Debbie because, many years ago as a high school senior, I had a job as a relief operator at KOK, a coastal marine station in the Los Angeles area where I grew up, and the news that the MRHS had been granted the KSM license seemed to call for a little nostalgia. Stories like what follows would not have been unique in the 20's and 30's, but by the latter part of the 50's, they're probably a bit rare.

KOK was well known to hams in So. California since, running 5KW, it pretty much dominated your receiver as you got close to one



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Digital/VE: Rob, WW6G

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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

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Joe Sylvia, KF6OQY

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EDITOR

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of it's transmit frequencies. I, and my teen friends used it for code practice as it often transmitted Press Wireless text on tape for a couple of hours in the evening, and when it wasn't doing that, they were working ships. I had received my Novice license near the end of 1953 when I was 13, and my General the next summer.

(continued on page 2)

2006 Calendar of Events

(Operating Events in Italics)

[Dates are local unless otherwise indicated]

May 6-7	<i>7QP</i>
May 6-7	<i>Northeast QSO Party</i>
May 12	Regular Meeting
May 27	Club Breakfast
May 28-29	<i>CQ WPX CW</i>
June 9	Regular Meeting
June 24	Club Breakfast

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

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Forty Years Ago At The SFARC

(Reported by Gary, KQ6RT)

Forty Years Ago at SFARC

May 18, 1966

The meeting was called to order by Pres. Joe Merryman at 2025 with 8 members and two guests present. The minutes were read and approved.

Jim and Jack were not present so Joe brought up Field Day. Gene offered his hill for the day. On more meeting will be held before field day, so it should be finalized then.

Joe wants to do something with the junk at his house that belongs to the club. Frank moved that Joe dispose of it as he sees fit. Carl seconded the motion and it passed.

Trail Ride Locations:

Tahoe City - Glen

Robinson Flat - Frank

Michigan Bluff - Les

Fair Grounds - Bob, Gene, Sage, and any others.

Frank made motion to pay out post office box rent by the year. Gene seconded the motion and it passed. (Since then I have paid the rest of the quarter that we were delinquent so the new year will start July 1).

Fred McReaken, W6US0 and California Highway Patrolman, gave an interesting talk on disaster communications.

The meeting adjourned at 2125 to 2 delicious cakes baked by Gene's XYL and good coffee made by Frank, who was designated official coffee maker.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dick Lund, WA6HY0

73,

Gary, KQ6RT

KSM

(Continued from front page)

When the required service period was up, I figured I was ready for the Extra, and conned my Mom into a ride to the Federal Building in downtown Los Angeles for the test. I got the schedule screwed up - hey, I was just a kid -- and we arrived 3

hours early. The examiner was getting ready for the 2nd Telegraph exam, and told me to just fill out the application and take the code test (25 WPM). If I passed, I got credit for it when the Extra came up that afternoon, and if I didn't pass, I could take the 20WPM Extra then.

So I did, and passed, which wasn't surprising ... my friends and I had been competing for top code speed, and all of us were at something close to 30 WPM at that point. You're probably catching on that we tended to be the nerds in school. The examiner then suggested that I sit for the written, "What's to lose?", he said" so I did. I passed that one exactly. Having used the coastal marine service for practice, I'd apparently learned enough operating procedures to make up for other areas of the test I did not know. (That also convinced my Mom to let me stick around for the Extra exam ... it was a profitable day at the FCC!)

On finding out that I now had a 2^d Telegraph, my Elmer slipped me into a relief operator job at KOK by prevailing on the Chief Operator who was his good friend. My 16th birthday was in a few days when my Dad drove me over to the station on a Saturday for my first shift.

The crew were all middle-aged and they all knew how this 16 year-old had gotten the job, and as I had expected, they gave me a fairly hard time. That shift was to be "over-the-shoulder" training, which I had assumed meant I, with headphones, would look over his shoulder and observe. It sort of worked like that, except he was looking over my shoulder as I was operating - well, trying to operate might be closer. Every time I made a mistake, which would have been most every time I touched the key or the mill, he'd box me on the side of my head and then "explain" what I was doing wrong. You could do that to kids in those days, never any blood but I did spend many shifts with a pronounced headache and sore shoulders.

After awhile, the guys backed off a bit as I got better and they got used to me. About half-way through the school year, two of my teen friends and I built what may have been a predecessor of the TO-keyer. It had 9 or 10 dual-triodes in it, a relay to key the transmitter, and we modified our bugs to key them. It weighed about as much as 1 1/2 bricks. I took mine to work and was roundly abused for resorting to such a crutch. My crew must have gotten word to some of the ships because I began to get a lot of QSD's ("Your keying is defective"). But, by now, I really wanted to become a regular member of the crew and not just a kid, and I didn't care.

As graduation and college loomed, my last shift arrived. When we were finishing the logs and handing off to the next watch, the CO pulled out a small cake with one candle. With the crew around me, he made a little ceremony out of taking my ticket off the wall and completing the service record, and I cut the cake. I decided I had achieved my goal and been accepted by those old guys. I would be gone to college in a week, and 17 in two, and my 2nd Telegraph eventually lapsed for lack of service.

I had gotten to work one semi-emergency - a ship had lost power. No one sank or even got wet, but it was exciting, I got to taste a little adrenaline, and the CO was behind me all the time, but this time no one boxed me on my head. Walt, the guy I usually ate my swing shift lunch with, had asked me if I'd

leave the keyer with him one time. I did and had to plead to get it back on my next shift. He and two others commissioned my two friends to build them each one. So much for QSD.

Obviously, radio played a huge role for me in that senior High School year, I enjoyed that job immensely and I learned a great deal about coastal marine operations. But thinking back on it, I think two other things stand out more for me. I learned what being an employee, with responsibilities to your employer return for the paycheck meant; and I learned what it really meant to be a member of a team. That last one would turn out to be a major contributor to my survival a few years later on the other side of the planet.

73s,

Fred K6DGW

Contesting News

(Reported by Fred, K6DGW)

Selected Contests for May 2006

7QP (6 May 1300Z - 7 May 0700Z) <www.7qp.org>:

Northeast QSO Party (6 May 2000Z – 7 May 0500Z and 7 May 1300Z – 2400Z) www.neqp.org

CQ WPX CW (28 May 0000Z -29 May 2400Z) <www.cq-amateur-radio.com/wpxrules.html >:

NS Sprint (Every Thu, 1930-2000 PDT) <www.nccsprint.com>

Contest Comments

7QP: This will be the first running of the 7th Call Area QSO Party, and it is part of a growing (and welcome) trend for regional contests. Unlike our own CQP which has become a major world-wide contest in October, many of the State QSO Parties don't have much in-state activity, and they can get fairly boring fairly fast. 7QP encompasses all of the call area (WA, OR, ID, NV, AZ, UT, and MT). The goal is to work as many 7's as you can. The exchange for them is RST and their county abbreviation+state. For all others, it's RST and your state/province. More distant states on 20 in the afternoon, close in states on 40 and 80 in the evening. Rich, NU6T, and I are going to activate Elko County NV, alternating Rich on SSB and me on CW.

NEQP: That same weekend, another regional contest will be on. The NEQP encompasses ME, VT, NH, CT, MA, and RI, CW and SSB, and activity is quite high. I've taken "2nd in CA," (which may mean that "1st in CA" was also "Next to Last in CA!") the last two years running. Since Rich and I will be in 7QP this year, the "2nd in CA" field is wide open for you.

CQ WPX CW: What's to say about a contest that offers nearly infinite number of multipliers? There is no such thing as a "clean sweep" in WPX. The multipliers in WPX are everything in a call sign up to and including the first numeral (or second if the country prefix includes a number). Activity will be deafening, and it's a great time to pick up some new countries as well. The advent of vanity call signs really changed this contest, and many folks have chosen their call to

be a rare multiplier. For example, Jim WX6V, here in Auburn chose his because there are no WX6xxx calls, so there are only 702 stations who can give you the WX6 multiplier.

NS Sprint: This little half-hour CW romp is run by the No. California Contest Club. It follows the rules of the NCJ Sprint, and was originally started as a club practice session for that contest, however it has gained national activity. The NCJ Sprint has a QSY rule that prevents a big gun from camping on a frequency and just calling CQ. After you have "solicited" a QSO by any means (CQ, QRZ, etc.), you are required to QSY at least 5 KHz before soliciting another QSO. This falls into a pattern where you find a CQ, work him, he moves and you solicit a QSO on that frequency, and then you move, giving the frequency to your second QSO. NS generally starts on 20 for about 10 min, moves to 40 for 10 min, and ends up on 80 for the last 10 min. Some folks spend the last 2 or 3 minutes on 160 as well.

"Is the Band Open?" In case you haven't heard about the NCDXF Beacons, visit www.ncdxf.org/beacons.html. The No. Calif. DX Foundation coordinates a total of 18 beacon stations around the world. The frequencies are 14.100, 18.110, 21.150, 24.930, and 28.200 MHz. Each station transmits its call followed by 4 1-second dashes. The call and first dash are sent at 100W. The remaining dashes are sent at 10W, 1W, and 100mW. The stations are all synchronized, beginning with 4U1UN at the UN in NYC. It sends on each band in succession, starting with 20. After it vacates 20 (10 sec), the next station (VE3AT) transmits on 20 and then works up the band. When the last station (YV5B) has transmitted on 20 and moved, 4U1UN begins the next cycle. Camp on 14.100 MHz some Saturday, and you'll hear a few of them. With a spotless sun, you don't hear many, but with a reasonable solar flux (in a couple or three years), it's sort of cool to hear the "march around the world." Incidentally, it's considered somewhat bad form to transmit on the beacon frequencies, so it's a good idea to post the beacon frequencies near your rig so you can avoid them.

73,

Fred K6DGW

April Meeting Minutes

(Reported by Leslie, K7NYE)

Minutes of the SFARC Board and General Meeting, April 14, 2006.

Meeting was held at alternate meeting place - the Veteran's Hall, Auburn, CA due to no access to the Auburn Library.

For this reason, no Board of Directors meeting was held.

SFARC General Meeting Minutes:

7:30 PM Meeting started by W7IB, Casey, President; Started off with Pledge of Allegiance, Introduction of SFARC Board Members; Introductions made of all club members and guests; first was our Vice President, Ed, N6EOD, then the Treasurer's report (George, KG6LSB) and Secretary's (Leslie, K7NYE) report from last meeting was given. Ed, N6EOD mentioned upcoming Field Day and that the final preparations were still

ongoing; we are awaiting the formal approval of the use again of previous field day location in Nyack. George, KG6LSB, reminded members about the upcoming MS Walks on April 29th and May 6th. Committee reports were made. These included ARES (Chuck, KG6FFK), VE (RobWW6G) and Repeater (Jim, K6ARR). No Satellite or ARRL reports were given, as designated representatives were not present. In the VE Report, Rob, WW6G reported that six individuals took a variety of tests (Tech, Code, General and Extra) at the last VE Session and all passed. Gary, KQ6RT previewed drawing prizes to the club.

New Business:

No new business was introduced.

Presentation:

Jerry Fry, W7PT, provided a very entertaining and complete presentation to the club on the topic of QRP, antennas and contesting. Jerry has been involved in QRP and contesting for a number of years. Originally licensed in 1993, he quickly found that living in an established suburban neighborhood created problems with his neighbors using high power. Also, his neighbors were not too excited about his antennas. For this reason, Jerry became proficient at using low-level power (QRP_ and antennas that were not easily detected. Jerry entered a number of QRP contests (and even some CW contests) and won first place in some local contests in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. In July 2006, Jerry and his wife are relocating to Port Townsend, WA for a new life together. Jerry plans to stay very active in the hobby and we wish him the very best!

Gary, KQ6RT, held monthly Drawing.

Meeting was adjourned approximately 9:30 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Leslie, K7NYE

Secretary

perspective, it takes light (moving at the speed of light) a little over 8 minutes to get here from the Sun 93 million miles away. It took Voyager's signal about 13.6 *hours* to get here from the tiny spacecraft. January 5, 2005, marked its 10,000th day in operation. (When was the last time you had to reboot your PC?)

The AMSAT-DL team included Freddy de Guchteneire, ON6UG, James Miller, G3RUH, Hartmut Paesler, DL1YDD, and Achim Vollhardt, DH2VA/HB9DUN. They used a 20 meter dish antenna at Bochum. The signal was identified as Voyager's by its 8.4 ghz frequency (after correction for doppler shift), and the location in the sky. No data was decoded from the signal. To get such a weak signal to appear, the team used a combination of techniques. Besides the obviously large antenna, and sensitive receiver, the receiver bandwidth was made very narrow to exclude noise. Further, they integrated the signal over several minutes to further reduce the noise. The resulting signal was clearly visible on a spectrum analyzer.

Another ham, Luis Cupido, CT1DMK, recently duplicated the feat using his 5.6 meter dish. Luis has been hunting deep space signals for some time, and has documented his impressive results on the web at: <http://w3ref.cfn.ist.utl.pt/cupido/dsn.html> . His smaller antenna and linearly polarized receiver made his task that much more challenging. Integration of the signal took several 15 minute sessions, and he had to combine the results after accounting for the change in doppler shift over the measurement period.

So, next time you are having difficulty receiving a faint, distant signal, remember that faintness and distance are both relative terms. My own personal distance achievement was with the now silent AO-40, some 30,000 miles distant at apogee. The signals were faint, but copyable, and I persevered. But these achievements are absolutely humbling.

73s,

Greg KO6TH

Hams Set Receive Distance Record

(Reported by Greg, KO6TH)

So, you think you have problems receiving signals from our Amateur Satellites? What, with tracking azimuth and elevation, doppler shift, pass times and pass bands, it's a wonder that we ever complete a QSO. But recently a team from AMSAT-DL overcame all that, and quite a bit more. They detected the faint signal from the Voyager 1 spacecraft, over 8.8 billion miles away.

Voyager 1 was launched back in September of 1977. Designed to last 5 years, its purpose was to get the first close-up views of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter was visited in 1979, and Saturn in 1980. During the encounters it discovered active volcanoes on Jupiter's moon Io, and the fine structure of Saturn's rings. Moving at some 38,000 miles/hour, in 1998 it passed Pioneer 10 to be the farthest man-made object. It is currently three times the distance from the Sun as the outermost planet Pluto and in inter-stellar space. Putting this in

Updates from Louisiana

*(Reported by Chris Robinson, KF6NFW)
(edited by W7IB)*

April 23, 2006

Well I may be going home sooner than planned. While working here I have sprained my ankle, chipped my chin bone, and now the latest, I have been quarantined for exposure to toxic molds, and other respiratory affectants. Coughing tastes like a moldy sock, and hurts. My crew and I have been placed on antibiotics, and aren't allowed to do much of anything. The prognosis is that we will be fine, and this is all precautionary.

The contaminant level is about 1000 times what is considered safe, and that is why the quarantine. We were exposed while down on Grand Isle, the only inhabited island of LA.

We have been rebuilding a relay facility down there, when we discovered this new problem. I wish I had better news to update with, but there you have it, life is great and we are doing fine!

We are still preparing at breakneck speed to be ready for this coming hurricane season, but are having some major difficulties. One is getting the volunteers motivated, and two is finding those who have a clue as to what is going on so they can help teach us a few things.

Just a note for anyone who decides they would like to help out on a future disaster, it is mentally taxing, and we are all having our own demons. We have lost a few good people to suicide, which is that much harder on us mentally, so do find someone you trust to talk to, it could save your life and theirs.

April 30, 2006

Well Headquarters has shut down for good in Metairie, LA. All volunteers are being sent home, and the new phase is in effect for all paid members.

In the last couple months I have had my hands involved in many projects, some simply helping rebuild houses, establishing new procedures, and some include establishing a communications system that can, and will work in worst case situations.

The latter isn't as easy as it sounds, think about it, we can all secure antennas, and hide them in a building if needed, but what if the building collapses, or it is somehow rendered unsafe to be in, then what? Like we saw already, the streets could be flooded, and there could be no way around the city, and in a state that is basically FLAT, finding a high point means making your own. So we have been looking at other means of setting up a reliable link to the outside world.

Now the advantage that many of us have, is that we are Ham operators, but other than that the disadvantage is, we aren't using Ham equipment for this task, so getting it set up, or secure is a big obstacle at this point. The one thing we can count on is high winds, floods and damage, so that means we have to go high with anything we do--well at least the antennas do.

So I got to looking at the structures of the building and noticed that many tall buildings have something in common. Height first off, but they also have rails of some sort at the top, now these rails aren't always big or small or even what one would want as an antenna, but it is horizontal, it does run the length of the building, and most are not grounded. If anyone else has some suggestions I would love to hear of them, 'cause while I have tons of ideas, getting them to work isn't always easy.

Many agencies are looking at getting away from the 800MHz system because of system failures, don't know if they will, but they are thinking of it, which means back down in frequency, and taller, more susceptible antennas again.

Well as for me, I am doing better, I spent a week under close supervision, because of Toxic molds that we had been exposed to for over three weeks while working on a radio relay site. The floor had to be ripped out of building which stirred up more items to breath in, and over all was performed like a circus act, which is why we all got sick. So pay attention to mold it hurts and all that other nasty stuff that goes with it.

Until next time

Chris Robinson

Kf6nfw3@excite.com

Rocklin MS Walk

(Reported by George, KG6LSB)

The MS Walk in Rocklin was supported today by the SFARC for the second year. In attendance were:

Chuck KG6FFK

Doc KG6ZIN

Norm KG6UHZ

Bill K6WWH

Cathy KG6EOV

Eldred KF6ZSL

George KG6LSB

All operators were on station and ready to go at the appointed time of 0930. We manned a NCS, 1 rest stop and a SAG vehicle that traveled the 5K route.

We were prepared for the unexpected in that we had prearranged frequencies programmed in. The Roseville repeater failed us by being unusable due to a loud continuous noise so we went to TAC 1 and completed the mission. There was some difficulty in getting some transmissions across due to terrain. Chuck acted as NCS using his mobile radio and was able to talk to all the HTs present -5 Kenwood TH-F6A and 2 ICOMs. Chuck referred to us as the F6A club.

The weather was ideal and it was a pleasant day outing for those who attended. We learned some new things and how to deal with frequency problems. It was a very worthwhile experience for all of us and especially for the newer members of the Club.

It gave us some practice for the next event-- The Auburn MS walk on Saturday May 6th.

George

KG6LSB

Items for Sale

Kenwood TS 570S 80 thru 6 meter.

Bought new Jan. 98 \$ 375.00

Contact Joe KF6OQY Tel. 916-797-3149

Editor's note: Anyone wishing to submit items for sale may do so by emailing me with the details (in a plain text or Word document) and I will publish as space permits.

SIERRA FOOTHILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
P.O. Box 1005
Newcastle, CA 95658

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**SIERRA FOOTHILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
2006 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:	\$7.00
Associate:	\$ 7.00	Repeater Donation:	\$ _____
Auto Patch Donation:	\$ _____	Newsletter Booster:	\$ _____
Miscellaneous Donation:	\$ _____	Christmas Donation:	\$ _____
Worldradio Renewal:	\$ _____	TOTAL:	\$ _____

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Payment: _____ Check Number: _____ Cash: _____