

Sierra Signals

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

<http://sf-arc.org>

April 2007

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

The Night All Hail Broke Loose

(Reported by Greg, KO6TH)

It was a car dealer's worst nightmare. The vehicles are out on the lot, getting ready for the big show. Then the sky opens up and hail comes crashing down, causing little dings and dents everywhere. The event is ruined.

The only difference here is that we're not talking about a car lot, and the vehicle isn't even a car. It's Cape Canaveral, and this is the Space Shuttle Atlantis.

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

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Contesting: Fred, K6DGW

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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

Gary Cunningham, KQ6RT

Joe Sylvania, KF6OQY

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At around 5pm on Monday, February 26, 2007, an "extremely localized" storm opened up right over Pad 39 at the Kennedy Space Center. The shuttle itself, protected by the Rotating Service Structure, had little damage. A few hits to the heat protective tiles were caused by hail ricocheting off other parts of the vehicle. The external fuel tank, however, was not so lucky.

NASA officials originally estimated that the golf-ball sized hail caused some 7,000 dents to the nose cone of the external tank, and the three ice-frost ramps that insulate brackets along the Shuttle's exterior. After closer inspection that estimate was

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2007 Calendar of Events

(Operating Events in Italics)

[Dates are local unless otherwise indicated]

Apr 7-8 **MO QSO Party**

Apr 7 **V.E. Session (see pg. 3 for details)**

Apr 13 **Regular Meeting**

Apr 14-15 **JA Int'l DX**

Apr 21-22 **Ontario QSO Party**

Apr 21-22 **Michigan QSO Party**

Apr 28 **Club Breakfast**

May 11 **Regular Meeting**

May 26 **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)

April 19, 1967

Building locked so Bob and I stood outside and talked. Carl and his XYL came later and we talked for a while and went home. The janitor said he would see that we got a key so we could get in if he wasn't there.

73, Dick

Thirty Years Ago At The SFARC

April 19 1977

SFARC bought some 13 each 220 rigs on a special deal and distributed them among the members who paid.

73,
Gary, KQ6RT

The Night All Hail Broke Loose

(Continued from front page)

lowered to around 2,500, with about 1,600 of the dents needing repair. Still, they believe this is the worst storm damage to hit a shuttle. The shuttle Atlantis was also hit with a hail storm in 1990 and shuttle Discovery in May of 1999. Discovery's storm caused 650 divots and a week's delay in its launch. Discovery was also the target for a flock of Northern Flickers, who pecked some 200 holes in the tank's foam insulation. The damage from each of these earlier incidents was repaired, and the missions they interrupted flown successfully.

But NASA officials are concerned about the damage none the less. In 2003 a briefcase-size chunk of foam shook loose during the launch of the shuttle Columbia and damaged the shuttle's wing. That led to the shuttle's destruction during reentry, and the loss of the entire crew. The integrity of the foam insulation has had a heightened focus ever since. With the much more extensive damage this time, officials are evaluating replacing the tank altogether. Though that option is considered unlikely, they won't know until early April whether it will be required or not. A decision is expected April 10.

The inspection and repair have, of course, delayed Atlantis' flight. The original plan was to launch Atlantis on March 15th on a mission to deliver two new truss segments and a new starboard solar array panel to the International Space Station. That would have been completed in time for the April 4th launch of Discovery with a new Station crew. Instead, Atlantis is now scheduled to lift off no earlier than mid-May. The flight would be delayed to no earlier than June 8th if the external tank needs to be replaced. The crew exchange will apparently take place some time after that, so the current crew get to spend a longer time on board the Station.

In the mean time, the Station crew continue their work, and periodically answer questions from students on the ground. These school contacts take place via Amateur Radio, with the downlink from the Station to Earth on 145.800 mhz in the 2 meter band. On April 12th, they are planning to hold a contact with the Salt Creek Primary School in Salt Creek, Australia. Because the Station will not be anywhere near Australia at the time, the contact will be via a "Telebridge" (sort of like a conference call) to a Amateur Radio station in Santa Rosa, California. We should be in the footprint of the Station as it goes by, which means that we should be able to listen in! The contact is scheduled for 03:10 UTC, which works out to 8:10pm our time on WEDNESDAY April 11th. Mark your calendars!

73s,
Greg KO6TH

Contesting

(Reported by Fred, K6DGW)

Selected Contests for April:

MO QSO Party: [try Google for "Missouri QSO Party"]

7 Apr 1800Z – 8 Apr 0500Z
8 Apr 1800Z-2400Z

JA Int'l DX [JIDX]: 14 Apr 0700Z – 15 Apr 1300Z
jidx.org/jidxrule-e.html

Ontario QSO Party: 21 Apr 1800Z – 22 Apr 1800Z
cco.ve3xd.com/oqp/

Michigan QSO Party: 21 Apr 1600Z – 22 Apr 0400Z
www.miqp.org

Contest Chatter: The ham radio contest year runs from Fall through Spring, and Spring sprang on the 21th of March, so it is fairly certain we're heading into the Summer Contest Season [translation: Not a whole bunch to choose from]. Thus encouraged, let's forge into April.

The MOQP is a favorite of mine because I always find lots of MO stations on, including mobiles traveling from county to county. Here's a tip: Log all stations as <call>/<county abbrev>. Logging programs will take this, and it allows you to work the same mobile from a different county without your

software complaining that he's a dupe. As one progresses east from the Frontier out here, the number of counties per state increases, making for more mults. OH has 90+ and Texas over 230. Of course we all know, Texas is big in everything.

JIDX is fun because we westerners have a pipeline into the Pacific rim, and for once, our eastern brothers/sisters don't have the advantage. It's also fun because, unlike a number of JA contests, the JA's can't work each other so they're ready for you! Be ready for a tail-ender JA to call you on-frequency even though you called the first guy. And, make sure you're registered with the 6th area QSL Bureau at webhome.idirect.com/~va3rj/qsL_buro2.html You will likely get a "few" cards that way.

The VE3's put on a real attempt every year in our Cal QSO Party in Oct, and we like to return the favor. Besides, except for 2 in VY1, a handful in VE7, VE6, and VE5, one or two in VE4, and a smattering in the Maritimes and PEI, all Canadian hams seem to reside in Ontario! There will be huge participation, and they tend to check 10m on the hour, so here's an opportunity for Tech's with new privileges to get their HF feet wet. "If the sun is up, 10 might be open." OK ... "really up and not really down."

MIQP overlaps ONQP, and you can actually work both contests at the same time ... more stations. It is quite well represented with MI stations, including mobiles. If you do CW, listen for Joe, N8EA. I'll find him for sure, haven't missed in many years. Joe was one of my combat troops, and has always had a 50WPM code speed. He slows down for me J.

RM-11306: This is the "Regulation By Bandwidth" petition that was filed with the FCC by the ARRL in Nov 2005. Honestly folks, I thought it had died [and for me, a well deserved death], but as has happened a few times in my life, I was wrong. Andrea would add, "Yet again, Fred." Alas [for me], it still lives, amended by the League now to cover only bands from 28MHz and up. Unfortunately, it is a very complex subject and most hams just don't have the time to study it in detail. We all have families, jobs, and other pressing matters to take up our time [OK ... some of us don't have jobs any more ... but we all do know that ham radio is our hobby and it comes after lots of other things J]. Also unfortunately, the devil is in the details. Excluding the HF bands [except 10m] will significantly reduce the number of adverse comments filed, which may have been the objective of the amendment ... or not. At any rate, it still will affect all of us when it becomes a regulation if it does – and long after it does as well.

In 53 years as a ham, I can count the number of times I have disagreed with the ARRL's actions with the FCC on the fingers of one hand [even if I was missing a thumb and a finger two], but this is one of them. Many SFARC members use VHF, and more than a few use UHF, and some work satellites. I know of two who like weak-signal work at the very bottom of the band. We all have an interest in this, and we all need to be informed, and I urge everyone to become as informed on RM-11306 as is possible for you.

73, Fred K6DGW

March Meeting Minutes

(Reported by Leslie, K7NYE)

Minutes of the SFARC Board and General Meeting, March 9th at the Auburn, CA main library:

Board of Directors meeting began at 6:55 PM with quorum of officers in attendance. Officers attending included Club President, Don Hay, WB6LPJ,;VP, Kevin Reid, K7TST; Directors, Treasurer George Simmons; KG6LSB, Secretary Leslie Nye, K7NYE; and Directors Birton Gilbert, N6UG and Wayne Stilwel, W6DT.

New business discussed included requesting additional borrowed generators for the club for Field Day, as well as topics for upcoming meetings. Generators were offered by George, KG6LSB and Don, WB6LPJ. Potential topics for future meetings included Emergency Preparedness, Search and Rescue, as well as a guest speaker from the California Highway Patrol. George, KG6LSB, presented current expenses for the Club year and reported that the club has 50 paid members to date. He also suggested that a physical prize be given in lieu of money for the Xmas party gift. This was agreed to by the board. Leslie, K7NYE was given responsibility to check on the availability of a commercial BBQ for Field Day and also to request a free DVD regarding DX from the DX League. Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

SFARC General Meeting Minutes:

7:31 PM Meeting brought to order by Club President, Don Hay, WB6LPJ. Meeting started with Pledge of Allegiance, Introduction of SFARC Board Members and introductions made of all club members and guests, total of 40 in attendance, including several visitors; Officer reports were given by Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer; Committee reports made for ARES, ARRL and VE, as well as Satellite. There was special thanks offered to Bob, KG6BQG for all of his dedicated efforts on behalf of training for ARES. With the Code requirement now absent from the General ticket, it was reported that 19 people passed their General license requirement at the last VE session, as well as a couple of new technicians and Extra class licenses.

New Business: It was suggested that SFARC hold an antenna clinic similar to the one the El Dorado Club does.

Presentation:

Kevin Reid, K7TST presented information to the club on several topics but primarily focused on the use of antenna analyzers, as well as his experiences with long-wire counterpoise antennas during the 2006 Field Day. He brought in his antenna analyzer to demonstrate and other club members also brought in their antenna analyzers as well.

Gene, KG6NYH held the monthly Drawing. Meeting was adjourned approximately 9:40PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Leslie, K7NYE

Secretary

Lifetime Ham Hobbyist On Airwaves 84 Years!

(Submitted by Richard Kuepper, WA6RWS, Reprinted in part by permission from the "Senior Spectrum")

Chances are that most people will not understand when they try to figure out John Ahlstrom's license plate numbers. "It's my call sign," Ahlstrom, age 96, explains. "I'm a ham radio operator."

For many Hams, the interest in amateur radio lasts a lifetime. "I was a 12-year-old Boy Scout in 1922 when I built my first radio," said Ahlstrom. "QST printed plans to build your own transmitter and receiver."

"Every month the magazine published a part of the plan for the radio. Every month for six months," he continues, "I spent every cent I earned on radio parts and got a local machinist to help me bend the copper tubing for the coil."

His enjoyment of the fruit of his labors was short lived. "I used it for about a week," Ahlstrom recalls. "I was unlicensed, and the government was very serious about that. When a man showed up at my parents' house a week after I started broadcasting, I became frightened and quit."

Ironically, the man whose appearance frightened him was a ham operator. "Basically, he was trying to help me," says Ahlstrom. "I'd been broadcasting without knowing what I was doing and was messing up the airwaves. He just told me that it shouldn't be done that way."

While Ahlstrom did get rid of his self-built radio, his interest never left him. In high school he built radio sets and sold them to fellow students for \$2 apiece. Later while serving as a US Marine stationed in Shanghai, he took a correspondence course in electronics and always kept his interest alive until he became a licensed operator in 1991.

"My brother was always a Ham, and he kept bugging me to do it," said Ahlstrom. That, combined with his life-long interest, led him to "finally do it."

Ahlstrom, KQ6CK is a life member of SFARC and keeps in contact with other members.

Onslaught of General Upgrades!

(Reported by Richard Hill, NU6T)

The VE crew braced for it. Three irregulars backed the six stalwart regulars handling the rush of 32 examinations. As the confusion organized into coherent results, we had one new

Technician, 19 new Generals and five new Extras for a total of 28 new licensees or upgrades.

It was a paper storm. Fourteen Generals and one Extra upgraded through test-free no-code CSCE exams. About 23 written exams were administered.

There were plenty of smiles all around. Of course, the applicants carried serious looks as they entered the examination room, really the Raley's community meeting room at 6845 Douglas Boulevard in Granite Bay. Once the paperwork was complete, the smiles grew. Next meeting, look for those sporting big grins and ask whether they have worked any good DX, and whether they are still appending /AG to their call sign. How many put in for sequential call signs or went the vanity route? We may have a bunch of new calls out there shortly.

Technicians did not have to attend a VE session to begin using their new privileges. Technician licensees who never passed a Morse code test gained new CW privileges on 80, 40 and 15 meters and new CW, RTTY, data and SSB privileges on 10 meters. Perhaps there is cause for interest in a code buddy system to help the Technicians relax from their General upgrade studies?

Technicians can upgrade to General by passing the Element 3 written exam. Amateur Extra upgrade requires passing the Element 4 written exam. Morse code (Element 1) is no longer required. Upgraders will need to bring a \$14 session fee, an original and copy of their license, and an original and copy of their Certificate for Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) if they previously passed an exam. Note that you can take several different exams or upgrade for one session fee. You can retake an exam on the same day, but that does require an additional session fee.

Thanks go to Bill Costa, WV6J; Jettie Hill, WR6FF; and Steve Porten, KN6OX for their help. Your VE regulars are Rob Carpenter, WW6G; Gary Cunningham; KQ6RT; Gordy Fuller, WB6OVH; Richard Hill, NU6T; Larry Hodge, AE6CC; Casey McPartland; W7IB; Ken Vogeles, W6KWV; and Peggy Vogeles, KE6NMC. Larry, AE6CC, and Donna, KD6PJM, deserve special recognition for organizing the VE sessions. ARRL VEC notes that under Larry's call sign we have had at least 56 VE sessions.

ARRL VEC is a bit behind. Processing is taking about two weeks. They processed 280 VE sessions between March 5 and March 9. Four hundred and fifty sessions a month is typical. More than 800 VE sessions are scheduled for March and more than 600 scheduled for April.

The ARRL VEC program, the largest of the 14 VECs, began in July 1984. ARRL/VEC has 26 years of Service to Radio Amateurs. For information about the VEC program or to become a VE, see <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/facts.html>.



Looking for a V.E. Session?

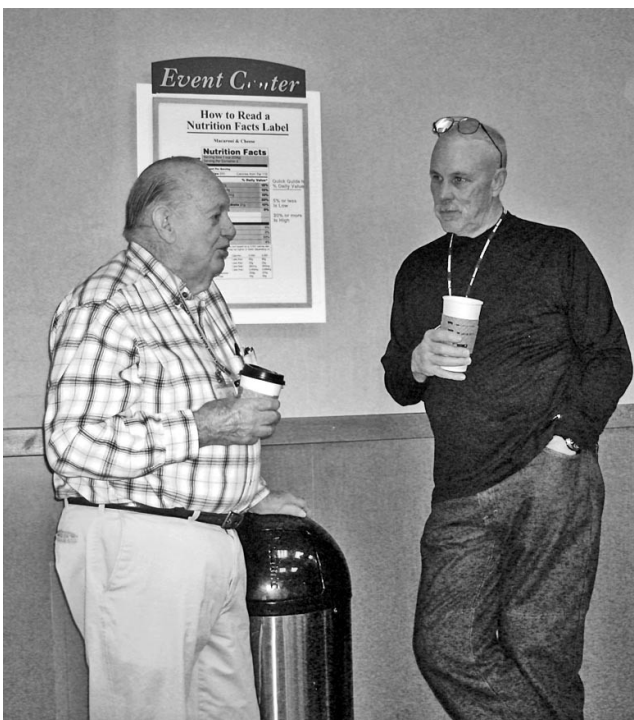
SFARC sponsors a V.E. session on the first Saturday of every month at the Event Center in the back of the Raley's store located on Douglas Blvd. at Auburn Folsom Rd.

Our next session, March 3, will be our first session following the FCC's decision to drop the Morse code requirement. If you have a current CSCEE for the General written, but haven't passed the code test, you will need to bring your CSCEE along with a current copy of your license to a test session to complete your upgrade.



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**SIERRA FOOTHILLS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
 2007 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 (for new members only) 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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Date: _____	Treasurer: _____	Secretary: _____	Roster: _____
Payment: _____	Check Number: _____	Cash: _____	