

Sierra Signals

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

<http://sf-arc.org>

July 2007

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

Summer Time Eyeball QSO's

(Reported by Greg, KO6TH)

Those "lazy hazy crazy days of summer", as the song goes, can be a great time for "eyeball QSOs" - talking face to face without even needing a rig. They're also a great time for winding down at the end of the day, relaxing around the back yard or out on the beach under the stars and looking at the constellations. You'll see all the familiar ones, point out the big and little dipper to the kids, and even make up new ones.



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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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Then, out of the corner of your eye, every once in a while, you'd swear that you saw something move. Ah, just an airplane. Blinking lights, and all that. Yes, sometimes. But not always. Sometimes you're seeing a satellite in orbit. And

(continued on page 2)

2007 Calendar of Events

(Operating Events in Italics)

[Dates are local unless otherwise indicated]

July 7	VE Session
July 11	<i>WIAW Qualifying Run</i>
July 13	Regular Meeting
July 13-14	<i>IARU Championships</i>
July 21-22	<i>No. American QSO Party</i>
July 28	Club Breakfast
July 28	<i>Flight of the Bumblebees</i>
Aug 4	VE Session
Aug 10	Regular Meeting
Aug 25	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)

June of 1967 was the last official meeting of the original Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club. The Club remained dormant for the next five years until it was resurrected with the efforts of Jim Carmen and Ken Weger in August of 1972.

Forty Years Ago at SFARC will resume in August 2008 when we will start over again with the very first meeting of SFARC. Until then I will try to fill in with a Thirty Years Ago column. Unfortunately during the late seventies there were several months with no recorded meetings.

73,
Gary
KQ6RT

Summer Time Eyeball QSO's

(Continued from front page)

sometimes when you look at it, it's gone! (Queue the theme to "Twilight Zone" ...)

After dusk, just as it gets really dark down here, is a great time to watch for satellites. There's lots of them up there, and many are big enough to be seen from down here when the conditions are right. All you need is darkness here and sunlight up there, and a careful eye towards the western heavens. This happens because the satellite's altitude keeps them in sunlight – out of the Earth's shadow – past the time when we've passed into night. The higher the orbit, the longer this time window is. There's also a window of time in the very early morning, looking east, but I've never gotten up that early...

The best viewing place, of course, is out in the country, away from all the city lights. Pick a quiet spot and watch a patch of sky away from the Milky Way, getting used to the pattern of the stars in the western half of the sky. Your peripheral vision – the area off to the side of where you are directly looking at – is usually where you will see them first. That area of your eye is quite a bit more sensitive to light, and will detect the movement of a "star" first. For dim ones, looking directly at it will often make them go away, since you're now looking with the less sensitive part of your eye. (ok, turn off the Twilight Zone now...)

Satellites range in brightness from invisible to bright. The really small satellites, for example the popular 4-inch Cubesats

that hams often put up, are far too dim to see in orbit. (They're even hard to see across the room!) The bigger, visible ones will look like dim stars, moving against the fixed background about as fast as a high flying jet.

The biggest satellite, of course, is the International Space Station. Orbiting only about 200 miles up, the ISS is huge. NASA lists it's current statistics: Weight: 471,444 pounds; Length: 146 feet (191 feet if you count the trusswork); Height: 90 feet; Solar Array span: 240 feet. The habitable volume is some 15,000 cubic feet, which is about the same as an average 1,875 square foot house. But it seems larger because the walls and ceilings count as floor space in zero gravity. Something this big is going to be easy to see.

A large percentage of the satellites in space are in polar orbits. The orbits run top to bottom, and around back to top, going from pole to pole. This sort of orbit is best for Earth-observing missions, because as the Earth spins below, the satellite's orbit will cover all of the Earth's surface. There are also special kinds of polar orbits, where the plane of the orbit always faces the Sun, and ones where the satellite comes over the same part of the Earth at the same time each day. You will see them coming up from the western horizon, or setting in that direction from above. But, polar orbits take a bit more fuel to get to, and for large objects (such as the ISS) a west-to-east direction is used. This means that the ISS passes overhead at varying times each day, from varying directions, and the times shift slowly over the course of the year.

A few weeks ago, around the time of the latest Space Shuttle mission, the ISS passes came just at the right time, during that magic dark-down-here-and-light-up-there window. Many hams and non-hams recorded seeing the Station and Shuttle flying in formation. From the ground, they look to be about as bright as the planet Venus at its brightest, with another bright star tagging along close by. With strong binoculars, some report seeing the station's structure. With a telescope and very quick tracking motors, you can see a lot more. One such sky gazer has documented his results on the Internet at: <http://www.astrospider.com>. The pictures are amazing.

That wonderful alignment of ISS orbit and daylight is over for now, but should return again in about a month or so. In the mean time, you can still see many satellites each night, just by looking up.

73s,
Greg KO6TH

Contesting

The Sport of Amateur Radio

(Reported by Fred, K6DGW)

Selected Contests for July:

Here's a short list for July. -- as always, the complete list can be found on Bruce's page at

www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/

I write this on Fri, 29 Jun, and when you read it, you will already have missed the RAC Canada Day contest. CD is their 4th of July, it's always well attended, and our good neighbors to the north are easy to work, and it's really fun to wish them "Happy Birthday."

W1AW Qualifying Run: 11 Jul www.arrl.org

IARU Championships: 13 Jul 2200Z – 14 Jul 2200Z
www.arrl.org

No. American QSO Party – RTTY: 21 Jul 1800Z – 22 Jul 0600Z www.ncjweb.com

Flight of the Bumblebees: 28 Jul 1700Z – 2100Z
www.arsqrp.com/ars/pages/bumblebees/bb_rules.html

Contest Chatter: I mention the W1AW Qualifying Run because it will be transmitted from K6KPH, at the site of the [somewhat famous] coastal marine station, KPH at Point Reyes, and the current coastal marine station KSM, operated by the Radio Marine Historical Society. The IARU Championships are a great time to work a few new ones. This is the "in-between" year, and we don't have a WRTC championship going on at the same time. Look for HQ stations in countries you don't have, they will generally QSL 100%, and most are on LoTW as well.

We've done the NAQP's several times. I'll make the last half of this one, I'm going to help out at the Auburn Blood Drive at the theaters during the day. Be advised, I will be using one of the nicknames my troops gave me in SE Asia [one suitable for the radio!], so don't log "Fred." The FOBB is a really neat, QRP field contest. I'm going to try my new Buddipole with my K2 at Overlook Park in Auburn. It's all CW, most everyone will match speed to whomever calls them [that would be me too].

Other Stuff: The PAVE PAWS saga grinds on, and the really really good news is that the USAF is very cooperative in this. They just want to find the cause of their increasing noise floor, and it's beginning to look more and more like digital TV. The WSER went well, even with Bald at 5W to the antenna, I don't think that will change by Tevis time – this is the government after all – but it is all going to work out.

I did some Class 1D on FD after getting home from Duncan Canyon on the WSER. Phone was bedlam – way beyond the

capabilities of the meager hearing I have left, and I managed 20 Qs on 20m. Another few hundred on 40, 20, and 15 CW. I heard Jettie, but he was in S&P and I never got to work him, and I don't know what call SFARC was using this year so I don't know if I worked you.

Off-Topic: I think many of you know I'm a combat veteran from Vietnam. My combat team and I got a lot of support from stranger Americans and it meant the world to us. Actually, way more than I can ever tell you. If anyone is interested in sending some support to our current combat troops, drop me an email at k6dgw@arrl.net and I'll give you some resources.

And, in an "End Of An Era:" Jan Huttula [nee Metke] conducted a sale of the Metke radio gear on the last weekend of June [that's tomorrow as I write this] which will include the house, eventually. Many of us remember the Metke's, W6SUP was a staple on the repeater and also on 20m although not so many remember that [I do]. K6GKR was sort of a stabilizer, and I'd often retire to the kitchen to talk to Gerri for a bit of relief from birds flying backwards over Roseville. Bob was annoying, and managed to annoy just about everyone at one time or another. I also found Bob was one of those very few people I'd trust my life to. He and Gerri ran a VE operation that quite a few local folks can trace their license to.

I remember heading down to the Metke Garage for a Roseville Christmas Parade, and Andrea said, "We should stop and get some donuts." I said "No, not a problem." She said, "How do you know? We should." I said, "Bob was a cop." She said, "But he's not any more." I said, "He's a cop, always will be, I would trust him with my life, and believe me, there will be donuts." And, there were. He could have been a little less annoying in life, but then, that wouldn't have been him.

Rest In Peace, Bob. 511 Oak Street Roseville won't be the same.

73,

Fred K6DGW

June Meeting Minutes

(Reported by Leslie, K7NYE)

Minutes of the SFARC Board and General Meeting, June 8th, 2007 at the Auburn, CA main library:

Board of Directors meeting began at 6:45 PM with a quorum officers and directors in attendance. Old business discussed included final preparations for Field Day 2007. The board discussed the prizes for Field Day and the budget for them.

Discussion also centered on how to update the SFARC website and the best way to do so. Picnic preparations were confirmed for August 18th at Pinebrook Village in Folsom starting at 11:00. Current expenses and balance for the club were presented by George, KG6LSB. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

SFARC General Meeting Minutes:

7:35 PM Meeting started by SFARC Club President, Don Hay, WB6LPJ. Meeting started with Pledge of Allegiance, no introductions of general members or officers, in order to save time for a special presentation. A special award, the Joe Knight Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Jettie Hill, W6RFF by Bob Vallio, W6RGG, Pacific Division Director. Jettie's life work in the service of ARRL and amateur radio was confirmed by a nomination written by Casey McPartland, W7IB. A plaque was presented to Jettie to commemorate his2/2007] contribution and Jettie accepted the award to the applause of the club members and guests.

Old Business: The club members were apprised of final preparations for 2007 Field Day.

New Business: No new business was discussed.

Presentation: Bob Vallio, W6RGG discussed his recent DXpedition to the Scarborough Reef (BS7H) in the South China Sea. Bob talked about his experience operating CW from a solitary reef in the middle of the ocean and the adventure getting to and from the reef. The expedition was operating from the reef for seven days.

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

Respectfully submitted:

Leslie, K7NYE

Secretary

The Never-Ending Saga of the CA Call Letter Plates...continues

(A true story by Casey, W7IB)

Just today, June 26th, I was once again standing in line at the Local DMV office. You see, I *still* haven't got my call letter plates and the temporary sticker for my pick-up expired at the end of May! Why it's almost (?) a disgrace that the much

esteemed California Motor Vehicle Department has so badly screwed this little transaction up that I am now on my 4th reorder of the call plates.

As has been my practice, I stopped by at lunch time, when the lines are non-existent (at least at this office), without an appointment and "took a chance." I got called up to a window within 15 minutes and explained my situation to the agent, who was clearly new, since that's typically who gets to work through the normal lunch hour! The young woman behind the counter couldn't have been nicer, or more friendly (I must say at this point that the folks at the local office are about the nicest I've ever run into in 45 years of driving, mostly in the Golden State!) However, she had to do a lot of research on-the-fly to find out exactly what had to be done, once I explained to her what Ham Radio Call Letter plates are, and that they are not applied for using the standard vanity plate form, 'cuz they're not! [btw, the correct form number to apply is REG 17A (Rev his2/2007)]

She then talked to one of the more seasoned members of the staff who showed her where to find the phone number of the Special Plates office in Sacramento, that's *the department in Sacramento that actually handles these orders*, where she could talk to a person who works in *the department in Sacramento that actually handles these orders*. Right about then I kinda got that *déjà vu all over again feeling* that Yogi Berra was so fond of. The person on the other end of the line told her that it had in fact been "too long," and that we should once again submit another reorder (this would be #4!)

So, we then started to fill out the order when one of the other members of the staff returned from lunch. This woman, who had the wily look of one who has done all of this before, asked the young woman who was helping me how things were going. They had a brief conversation, and the "wily one" walked over to the counter and asked me where my application was. I cheerfully answered, "I would have thought that you folks had it."

"No," she said, "you filled it out and should have a copy of it." (Jeez!)

So I said, "I don't have it with me, and by the way which one is it that you want to see, the one from February 28th, or the one from April 17, 2006, *fourteen months ago!*"

So, "wily one" says, "Wait right here," and heads for the phone, sending the nice young woman back with some forms to fill out, just in case. She then asked me to take the forms over to the side and when I'm finished to bring them directly to "wily one's" attention. Apparently, "wily" is the manager of the local office! Not only that, but she actually used to work in *the department in Sacramento that actually handles these orders* and she "knows people!"

I didn't hear the whole conversation with the person *in the department in Sacramento that actually handles these orders*, but It got this tidbit, "Well, I understand that you're new, but think how much you'll learn if you go back into the files and look at the application that Mr. McPartland submitted back in April of '06...". She was very nice about it, but very managerial! The "wily one" came over to me and said, "Let me get your phone number – they're going to have to call me back, and I'll call you directly with an update." [At this point, I'm not sure whether to let out a cheer, or say, "We'll see!"]

So, while I was chit-chatting with "wily" and filling out the new set of "just-in-case" forms, the phone rang and lo and behold it was the supervisor of the "new person" in Sacto who, it appears, is on really good terms with the "wily one." We found out that the order is in fact right where it's supposed to be, however the shop at Corrections that makes the plates has been on lockdown due to some missing tools. "Wily one" says, "how long can it take to do an inventory and shake them all down?" Good question!

Anyway, I now have an extension sticker good through August. I had "wily" tell me that if I didn't get my plates by August(!) to come directly to her (Wow folks, personal accountability! This is new!) and she'll go to her ol' buddy's boss.

I left the DMV after an hour and a half feeling that least I got someone's attention this time. The people have always been great from the face-to-face customer service perspective, but I never sensed, *true or false*, any level of accountability beyond my own. I guess we'll just have to wait and see, and hope that I don't have to write another sequel in two months.

For now the saga of Casey and *the department in Sacramento that actually handles these orders* goes on!

Postscript:

Well it's June 27th and as hard as it may be to believe *the department in Sacramento that actually handles these orders* magically came through and the plates arrived in today's mail. Coincidence, or just stranger than fiction?

Go figger!



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P.O. Box 1005
Newcastle, CA 95658

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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:	\$ _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:		DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE	
Date: _____	Treasurer: _____	Secretary: _____	Roster: _____
Payment: _____	Check Number: _____	Cash: _____	