

Sierra Signals

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

June 2008

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

Thank God for Walt and Me

(Submitted by Greg, KO6TH)

Everyone remembers their first contact. Shaky hand on the mike button or key. Excitement. Sweat. Mind spinning. Loss of words. Acknowledgment. Reassuring words from the speaker. Relief. Log book entry, hardly legible.

My first satellite contact was some 15 years ago this month. I had been a Ham for about a year and had mostly been on the air with an Alinco DJ580 HT, mobile in my car on the way to and from work. At home I already had a Radio Shack DX-440 Short Wave receiver, on a long wire antenna strung out to a tree in the back yard, and was now realizing that there was a lot more on the air than the commercial shortwave stations. Between the two, I was listening in, and participating in, my new hobby of Amateur Radio. Swap meets and swap nets gave me the opportunity to part ways with some hard-earned money, and a chance to own a Yaesu FT-767 all

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

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REPORTERS

Satellites: Greg, KO6TH

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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

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mode HF/VHF/UHF transceiver which I couldn't pass up. My Tech+ license gave me access to 10 meters SSB, and some good contacts as the sunspots died.

On the HT I found a popular Sacramento repeater, N6ICW on 145.195. The morning drive was filled with interesting chats, with Walt KA6VNU keeping everyone in line. One morning Walt was chatting with others about this new thing he found,

(continued on page 2)

2008 Calendar of Events

June 7	VE Session – 8:00 – 10:00am
	Raley's - Douglas/Auburn Folsom
June 14	Regular Meeting (Meeting to be held at the
	Newcastle United Methodist Church)
June 28	Club Breakfast – Suzie's – Cirby/Riverside
June 28-29	Field Day - Nyack
July 5	VE Session
July 11	Regular Meeting
July 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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???? Years Ago At The SFARC

(Reported by Gary, KQ6RT)

Nothing for this month, but next month we will celebrate the 50 year anniversary of SFARC by publishing the minutes of the very first meeting.

73,

Gary - KQ6RT

Thank God for Walt and Me...

(Continued from front page)

Communicating through RS-10. A satellite. In orbit. Around the Earth. In Space. Wow. He was clearly having a lot of fun, and talking to others about how to do it. After listening in for a few days, and taking a swallow, I keyed up and asked what to do. Back came some helpful hints, and terminology – Keplerian Elements, uplinks, downlinks, pass predictions. There were pointers to software to be downloaded from the primordial Internet, parameters to be entered. Discussion on antennas, and how to tune. But, as anyone who has talked to Walt will attest, all was discussed in a very helpful, patient, and reassuring way.

To get on the satellites, one needs a way to transmit and receive on the bands the satellite uses. No surprise here. RS-10 used 2 meters for the uplink from ground to the satellite, and 10 meters for the downlink from the satellite back down to Earth. My Yaesu rig covered both, but only one at a time. For satellite communication you need to do both at the same time, known as running “full duplex”. This is because, as Walt explained, you need to hear your own signal coming back from the satellite in order to tune for Doppler shift. You know, that shift in pitch when a train whistle screams past you. Never heard a train whistle do that, personally, but I got the idea. Majored in Physics for a short time in college, after all.

So, here was the plan. Transmit from my Yaesu rig on 2 meters upper side band. The rig puts out 10 watts, and I had built a copper-pipe J-pole antenna, which I had lashed to a vent pipe on the roof. Should be enough, he says. Receive would be with the Radio Shack shortwave receiver, BFO turned on so I could hear the side band downlink, using the long wire antenna in the back yard. Satellite software running on my desktop PC. One hand on the transmit VFO, one on the receiver tuning, one on the BFO, thumb on the Mike button, eyes on the PC. Yeah, no problem!

Well, the first attempt was significantly less than successful. Didn't hear anything, in fact. More attempts, same result. Back to Walt on the HT. Maybe the Keps were old. Pencil ready? Lots of numbers, scrawled on a scrap of paper. Try again. Nothing. Check the settings. PC Clock set right? UTC Offset? Check.

I don't recall what we finally did, but one one evening I heard it. RS-10! My morse code ability was very rusty (barely passed the 5 wpm test a year earlier), but the RS-10 beacon was clear R-S-1-0—R-S-1-0, followed by a bunch of numbers. Telemetry, from outer space! Keying up the transmitter, I tried to hear my own signal.

Now, recall above how many knobs there were to twiddle. With so many variables, there are so many ways for things to not work. I don't think it was on that first pass, but soon after I managed to get something into the bird, and a voice came back. “KD6KGW this is KW7E, Mel in Arizona”. Shock. We had a short conversation, and all the while the Doppler shift was pushing my signal off frequency. My trying (badly) to correct for this sent my signal scurrying all over the passband, with Mel patiently correcting for it on his end. The BFO on my shortwave receiver was not right, either, but “Donald Duck” notwithstanding, I had made my first satellite contact!

The next night I tried again. This time, RS-10's pass was low to the East. KA2WMP Tom came back to my call. A quick reality check. 2-Land is New York! 10 watts through a satellite from coast to coast, on a Tech+ ham license. I was hooked.

Over the succeeding weeks and months, I became comfortable working RS-10, even with the lashed-up equipment. Doppler tuning became second nature, and finding myself on the bird only took a few seconds. I had several more contacts with Mel, and about a year later even worked Walt, thanking him for all the assistance he gave me. Many other satellites have been launched and worked, and many have had failures and gone silent, including RS-10 through which I made nearly a hundred contacts. To date, my longest distance contact has been via AO-40, with VK6DJP Don in Perth, Australia, giving him his very first satellite contact with North America, and to some extent, completing the cycle started by Walt and Mel so many years before.

73,

Greg KO6TH

May Meeting Minutes

(Reported by Wayne, W6DT)

Minutes for the meetings of May 9, 2008

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Vice-President, Casey, W7IB, a quorum being present.

Jim, K6ARR, was present to announce that he was able to extend the lease of the repeater site for 5 more years for \$1 per year.

A joint hamfest/swap meet was discussed, a preliminary organizational meeting to be held over breakfast on May 17, 2008 in Lincoln.

Field Day was discussed with Casey, W7IB, proposing separate duties for the tasks, a sign up sheet to be at the next meeting.

Two regular stations and perhaps a Get On The Air (GOTA) station being set up.

The CalStar emergency air lift program was brought up to announce to the members at the regular meeting to determine if we had the minimum required members.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25PM.

Membership Meeting

The regular May membership meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by Vice-President Casey W7IB. Flag salute and introduction of members followed.

The June meeting will be held at the United Methodist Church in Newcastle. This is the same location where the Christmas Party has been held the last couple of years.

A joint swap meet will be held later in the year. Members were urged to attend an organizational meeting to be held at Kim's Restaurant on Main Street, across from the Ace Hardware Store, in Lincoln. The date for the meeting is 5/17 at 9:00 AM with the swap meet proposed for September 6, 2008.

If anyone will not be attending Field Day, the Western States 100 was still looking for some volunteers for communication. The events are the same weekend.

Jim, K6ARR, announced to the membership that he had secured a five year extension on the repeater site for \$1.00 per year.

The CalStar emergency air lift program was discussed and members urged to get their applications in.

Greg, KO6TH, gave a satellite report. He was presented with a certificate honoring his contributions to keeping the club informed about happenings in the sky.

Chuck, KG6FFR, gave an ARES report and that included a summary of the motorcycle enduro where an unfortunate rider had broken a limb and needed real assistance.

Bob, WA6ULL, announced that the club picnic is scheduled for August 23, 2008 at Pinebrook, in Folsom. Same place last year.

Casey, W7IB, gave a presentation about bringing youth back to Amateur Radio. He emphasized outreach, intake, training, examining and "elmering".

After the drawing, the meeting was adjourned at approx. 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Stilwell, W6DT

Secretary

At the May meeting we discussed a current and ongoing problem we have in Amateur Radio – we're getting older, and older. During the meeting we discussed a few opportunities where there are openings for us to make a proactive attempt at connecting with younger candidates. They were:

Outreach

Intake

Training

Examining

Elmering

Each of these areas provide us an opening to connect with younger people and do what hams do best – Communicate.

At the end of my presentation last month, I issued a simple call to action: Think about what we discussed, and let's spend 10 minutes during the June meeting sharing those thoughts. So, I am planning that small, 10 minute time slice, just to see what has come up for you. So, bring your thoughts to the June 13th meeting (at the United Methodist Church in Newcastle) and let's talk!

Field Day 2008

(Reported by Casey, W7IB)

Well here we are, Field Day is just a few weeks off (June 28 and 29)!

As has been the case in the past, SFARC will be holding FD at the Nyack Road site (Exit 151). The weather should be good, though we always have to be prepared for warm days and the possibility of chilly nights. Additionally, the fire danger will be even higher than usual this year due to the notable lack of precipitation. As always you'll need to bring sunscreen and bug spray (for the pesky mosquitoes), water and soda will be provided by the club, as will the evening meal.

There are some new procedures for Field Day this year, as follows:

Anyone planning to attend FD will be required to pay \$5 in advance, preferably at the June meeting (when you arrive at FD the \$5 will be applied to drawing tickets for the special drawing, if you are unable to attend the \$5 becomes a donation to FD operating expense – you must be present to win.)

The club will not provide lunch this year, but will provide water and soda throughout the event. Bring a lunch or pick something up across the street at Burger King or the convenience store.

The club will provide dinner as we have in the past, consisting of the main course, bread, condiments and water or soda – please bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share.

Please plan on operating. We would like to have everyone in attendance operate during the event and get the experience of doing so under less than great operating conditions (it is FD after all!) Even if you've never operated on hf, or in any kind of contest, please come out and give it a shot – FD is a very "forgiving" event. Plan on having some fun on the air.

Bringing Back Youth or The Search for the Missing Elmer in Us All

(Reported by Casey, W7IB)

This year we are planning to make every effort to be organized in our operating practices and coordinating logs, dup sheets, and score keeping...so SFARC needs your help in making every reasonable effort to run up a score!

We will be using the club call W6EK again this year and we anticipate having 2 official operating stations as well as a GOTA (Get On The Air) station, and whatever else provides us extra points (vhf, satellite, etc.)

If you plan to help out with setup and take down (and we hope you do), please plan on being there on Saturday morning by 9:30 am or 10 am and take down should be complete relatively early on Sunday afternoon.

We will need members to help out in the following areas and ask that you sign up at the June meeting, or in advance by email (w7ib@arrl.net), so that everyone knows what they are going to do in advance. I will have a sign up sheet with the meeting sign-in sheet. The areas where we need your help are (each of the items separated by slashes in each category require coordination):

Logistics (Food & Beverages including paper plates napkins, plastic forks, knives, spoons, etc./tables, chairs, shelters, etc./set up & tear down)

Operations (Generators, power cables, etc./radios & antennas/operating logs/signs, banners, etc.)

The specifics of each of these will be covered in more detail at the meeting.

SFARC is looking forward to having a great deal of fun at this Field Day, the opportunity to practice good fellowship, make the radios perform, and maybe even learn something new.

See you there!

June Meeting Presentation

(Reported by Marc, KD6KR)

This next meeting's presentation will be on installing an HF vertical antenna on top of a 100' pine tree. It's one thing to put up a wire antenna using our trusty slingshot, bow and arrow, or fishing rod. But, most of us would probably agree that it becomes a bit more challenging when we physically need to transport ourselves to the top of a tree—preferably intact! Short of using a fire truck's 100 foot ladder, or invoking the ever-favorite, "Beam me up Scotty", or just doubling down on your life insurance policy—it won't be easy.

Marc Matheson, KD6KR (new member to SFARC,) and Ted Cowden, KG6FGT (owner of Tree Top Antenna in Grass Valley,) are co-presenters at this month's meeting. They'll show you how Ted successfully went about getting Marc's antenna in the sky, courtesy of Ted's extensive knowledge of trees, tree climbing, tree trimming, antenna (and tower) installations, and RF electronics.

Come see/ meet a fellow who's truly down to earth—even if he frequently aspires to lofty thoughts. (... ..) Expect to see several installation pictures, including a view from the top, along with some climbing and antenna installation tools.

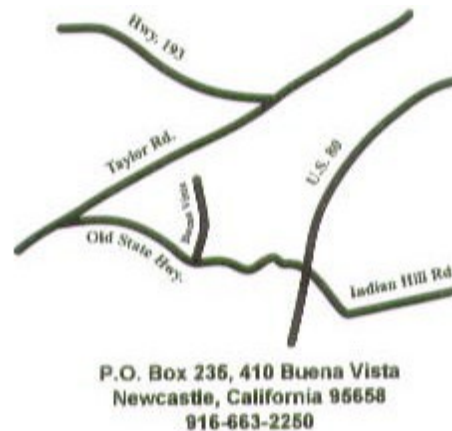
June - Change in Meeting Location

Our June SFARC club meeting will be held at the Newcastle United Methodist Church – 410 Buena Vista (the same place our Christmas party is held) due to the unavailability of the Auburn Library.

Directions:

From Sacramento: Take Hwy 80 East toward Reno. Exit Newcastle Rd./Indian Hill exit. Turn left at the light onto Newcastle Rd. Go over the freeway, the road will bear to the left and dead end at Old State Highway. Turn right on Old State Highway (the road will take a few curves) and then turn right on Buena Vista. The church is on the left about a block from the Old State Highway.

From Auburn: Take Hwy 80 West toward Sacramento. Exit Newcastle Rd. exit. Turn right onto Newcastle Rd. The road will bear to the left and dead end at Old State Highway. Turn right on Old State Highway (the road will take a few curves) and then turn right on Buena Vista. The church is on the left about a block from the Old State Highway.



Field Day

(Reprinted from ARRL Club News – June 08)

Traditionally the last full weekend in June is ARRL Field Day. This year the event will be on June 28 -- 29, 2008. With over 3,000 entries Field Day is the most participated on air activity in North America. For ARRL affiliated clubs Field Day is a great opportunity to puff out your chest, introduce new people to Amateur Radio and to bring club members together.

Like many other activities in Amateur Radio there are various ways to play the Field Day game. Some clubs treat Field day like an emergency preparedness drill with a few groups going to the extreme of keeping the operating location secret until the "starting whistle blows." For others Field Day is a contest, attempting to work as many stations as possible and collecting all of the ARRL and RAC sections. Many clubs make Field

day a social event that includes lots of food and plenty of radio operating.

Whatever your interpretation of Field Day is, training exercise, radio sport or cookout, the most important thing is to have fun and do it safely.

Complete Field day rules can be found on the web at: <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2008/fd.html>

Sacramento Valley Section News - Hamvention

*(Reprinted from Sacramento Valley Section News – June 08 -
By Section Manager: Ronald D. Murdock, W6KJ
w6kj@arrl.org)*

If you had visited with us at the ARRL Expo at Dayton Hamvention, May 16-18, you would have been impressed, as I was, at the scope of the commitment by our national organization. While I worked in the sales area for parts of two days, I did get to meet and visit with lots of hams with questions about membership, operating modes, publications, and more. Each question was answered with an authoritative response and I learned a lot. Every area of ham radio was represented. Outside the expo area, in the exhibits, the direction ham radio is moving was very apparent. Technology rules! ARRL has adopted the fifth pillar of our efforts: 'Technology, we do that with Amateur Radio!' (The others are public service, advocacy, education, and membership.)

It is a new tag line to demonstrate that ham radio continues to grow in all directions. I attended a presentation by the Mars Society project to show how ham radio was made a part of that endeavor. I also saw Bill Ragsdale, K6KN, just before his Amateur Radio and Scouting talk. With limited time and five forum rooms going at the same time, I elected to see the AMSAT forum. But then I had seen Bill's presentation a few weeks ago. Dennis Dura, K2DCD, announced the just completed negotiations with American Red Cross and ARRL regarding the scope of background checks for ARRL members helping ARC in an emergency. The new guidelines will be part of a Memorandum of Understanding soon to be complete. They specify only name, Social Security Account Number and a criminal background check. The process is not yet complete. Keep checking the ARRL website for the latest details. Outside the arena, the flea market was well populated but not full on Friday. On Saturday, 95% of the spots were full, and there was a good crowd. On Sunday morning, 90% of those spots were vacant, but there were still five times as many sellers as you have ever seen at a California ham swap. The top tickets numbers in the prize drawings were in the 18,000 range, so I predict that number was the paid attendance. Will I go again next year? I guess that will have to wait for the projects list for 2009. I hate to miss local hamfests and I know I missed a good one in Sacramento on May 18. Speaking of ham swaps in our Section, look for one in Lincoln September 6. More details later.

During the FCC forum at Hamvention, Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, our FCC Special Council for Amateur Radio Enforcement, and Bill Cross, W3TN, of FCC's Wireless

Telecommunications Bureau, gave their assessment of the state of amateur radio in complimentary terms, though Riley wished for a new enforcement tool, 'straight jackets', to handle some of the crazy situations he sees. Riley has announced his impending retirement--July 3rd. This is the second time he has announced his retirement but it appears firm at this time.

He wanted to be able to clear the situation of our 440 repeaters and the PAVE PAWS radar at Beale AFB. The complete presentation is available at:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/images/nms/other/FCCForumMP3.mp3>.

