

The March 2000 Meeting...

Where: Hobee's Restaurant at 4224 El Camino Real, about a block south of Charleston on the "west" side of the street.

When: Thursday, 2 March 2000
5:30PM

Subject: "Thank You, Rich Stiebel, our outgoing repeater trustee."

REPEATER
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The Changeover

If you haven't heard it yet, the repeater now has a new ID. N6NFI. The changeover has been smooth so far. Though, I'm glad Rich still monitors, so he can catch the things I miss and remind me to get it together.

Rich put out an announcement about the change to many clubs and individuals in the area, but the new call still startled many users. One user, on his return from England, wondered what had happened? Where was W6APZ? Many others, in the minutes, hours and days following, couldn't figure out when the change occurred. Is it real? And one other user was nearly convinced that some jammer was on the air putting a counterfeit ID over the repeater. All in evidence that Rich, W6APZ, has made a lasting mark on the South Bay Ham community.

Looking Back

The first entry in the Rich's repeater log book is 1/24/83. Rich and Dave Honkala were at the site measuring the back-up battery voltages. Rich took over the trusteeship of the repeater from our faithful newsletter editor, Gary Hendra, W6NOE (then WA6SUW). Since then, numerous trips to the site have resulted in maintenance and changes to the repeater.

- Debugging antenna and intermod problems
 - Finding spurious signals, real and unreal
 - Moving the repeater within the building
 - Installing a new controller
 - Beefing up the regular and back-up power supplies
 - Installing the Digital Voice Recorder
 - Installing the S-Meter
 - Multiple Battery Reconditionings
 - Various hardware repairs
 - The continuing search for the "crackle"
- And many other lesser but important tasks.

There was also the matter of interference from a Sacramento machine, and the problems with our repeater coordination with

NARCC. Much time, many phone calls and letters to NARCC and the FCC, along with copious amounts of patience, resulted in the 145.23 repeater frequency pair remaining with our machine.

Programming the controller and keeping the repeater up and running has required a constant effort. Besides hardware work, learning to "control" the controller took a lot of study and creativity. (The repeater thinks the date is 22 February, 1972...Too bad, Y2K!) The hardware wasn't designed to interface together from the beginning and some roundabout methods were used. All of the programming has been done manually... one button at a time.

Looking Forward

Listen in on the repeater when you get a chance. Though there are quiet periods, the machine is in use quite a bit of the time. Besides the normal usage, there are many formal and informal nets to join and be heard:

Monday	2000-2030	SPECS Check-In (Palo Alto & North)
	2030-2100	PAARA Net
Tuesday	2000-2030	Code Practice
Thursday	2030-2100	FARS Net
Sunday	2030-2100	Chaverim Net
M-F	0900-0940	Talk Net
M-S	2300-	Night Owl Net

The plan is that repeater operation will remain the same as it has in the past. We will continue to honor the agreement with SPECS to maintain the repeater for use as a communication channel for hospital traffic in area wide emergencies. It will remain an "open" repeater. And, hopefully, the autodial and autopatch will be returned to full time availability in the near future. However, good ideas for repeater usage will always be welcome and considered.

A job well done, Rich. Thanks.

73, de Rolf, N6NFI, n6nfi@arrl.net

Meetings 2000

This year's proposed meeting dates are:

April 6	July 6	October 5
May 4	August 3	November 2
June 1	September 7	December 7

A Note from Your Newsletter Editor

If you are not receiving e-mail messages from me once or twice a month, then I don't have your e-mail address. Please send me a message at hendra.gary@ssd.loral.com, so I can get your address.

Last year, in an effort to cut down on the amount of work to produce the newsletter, and save SPARK postage costs, I began e-mailing the newsletter out in Acrobat PDF format. If you do not have Acrobat Reader, you can get it for free from <http://www.adobe.com>.

The Prez Sez...

I have again decided to exercise my presidential powers and make some changes. The March meeting will be held on the normal first Thursday, March 2 and it will be an evening social meeting (5:30 PM). I have invited people from other local HAM clubs to come and say thanks to Rich Stiebel for his service as the repeater trustee. It is also a chance for the local HAM community to meet and greet Rolf Klibo. I know that not all of you like evening meetings, but it was the best way for us to allow others from outside the club to make it. Rich has done an outstanding job with the repeater, so please, try to make a special effort to be at the meeting. The meeting will be at Hobee's Restaurant in Palo Alto. I have never been there, hopefully it will work out fine as a venue. Please try to be there, if you know of anybody else that has had an interest in the repeater over Rich's tenure, be sure to pass an invitation along to them as well.

I am still travelling like crazy. With luck, I will be at the meeting, but if I am not there, it is because I am not on this continent. Maybe at the meeting I'll bring a copy of my Australian license. I may actually make some 2 meter contacts while I am in VK land. Until March 2,

73 de Tom Holden KN6KL

Pacific Division Update

March 2000



By Jim Maxwell, W6CF, Director, Pac Division, ARRL
 PO Box 473, Redwood Estates, CA 95044
 (408) 353-3911 (Phone and FAX)
 Packet: W6CF@N0ARY.#NCA.CA.USA.NOAM
 Internet: w6cf@arrl.org
 WWW Pacific Division Home Page <http://www.pdarrl.org/>

New Question Pools Now Available

The new, as well as the current, question pools are now available on the Web at

<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/pools.html>

Remember, the current question pools will be valid through April 14. On April 15 the new question pools will be used on all Amateur testing, using the new exam structure defined in the recent FCC restructuring order.

Thanks, ARRL.

West Valley ARA Announces Web-Based Exam Site

The West Valley Amateur Radio Association (WVARA) is providing public access to its *WVExam* online Amateur Radio exam practice software. It's located at

<http://www.wvara.org/wvexam/>

This web-based examination software was originally written for WVARA's New Ham classes in 1996 and 1997. It can be used for all current written exams until April 14, 2000. Effective April 15 the new exam pools become effective, and all exams taken April 15 and later will be based on the new question pools. Until then, though, the WVARA site can be an effective tool for those who choose to beat the deadline by taking upgrade examinations prior to April 15.

The following tests are available at the site:

Element 2 - Novice
 Element 3A - Technician
 Element 3B - General
 Element 4A - Advanced
 Element 4B - Extra

The software generates a random exam on a web form the same way that the Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) organizations would. These are from the same published question pool as the actual exams so these are real and effective practice. In addition, WVARA's practice exams can be taken a section at a time as one studies through other materials.

N6TV Resigns as CAC Rep. for the Pacific Division; N6IG Takes the Helm

Bob Wilson, N6TV (a.k.a. TV-Bob) has done an outstanding job of serving the Pacific Division as representative to the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee for the past six years. Unfortunately, business commitments made it impossible for Bob to continue in the CAC post, so he regrettably resigned effective Feb. 1. Fortunately, waiting in the wings was (drum roll) Jim Pratt, N6IG, who has agreed to take on the job.

First licensed in 1973, Jim joined Northern California Contest Club in 1975 and has been active ever since. He is the holder of Pacific Division single operator records in ARRL DX CW and ARRL November Sweepstakes, CW and SSB. He also holds the Zone 3 CQWW CW single operator record. He is co-leader of a team that holds June and September VHF QSO Party multi-op Pacific Division records. Jim is a frequent operator at N6RO multi-operator efforts, and is "chief operator" of the W6GO station. He has operated phone and CW at P40V and PJ1B/PJ4B/PJ9B in CQWW contests.

Jim was a competitor in WRTC-1996 with K4UEE, taking a fifth place finish out of 52 entries. He was recently selected as team leader for WRTC-2000 by the NCCC.

Jim is a member of the Northern California Contest Club and the River City Contesters.

Welcome, Jim Pratt!

"Bip" Bachman, W6BIP, Silent Key

The passing of Wilbur "Bip" Bachman, W6BIP, on Feb. 2 saddened Hams throughout the DXing and contesting community. Bip was originally licensed in 1928. His interest in DX led to a lifelong interest in travel, and as a result he and wife Elsie met in person many of those DX hams he had first met over the air. As a final salute to Bip, members of the Northern California Contest Club all used the name "Bip" in their exchanges during the CW North American Sprint held Feb. 12.

ULS Forms Required Beginning Feb. 17

When the Universal Licensing System (ULS) was made available for the Amateur service, the FCC's Wireless Telegraph Bureau announced that Forms 610 and 610V would continue to be usable for six months. That grace period will expire in only a few days, at midnight, Feb. 16. The Bureau will dismiss without prejudice all applications received on or after February 17, 2000, if filed using Forms 610 and 610V. From that date on, all Amateur licensing (with the exception of club stations) must employ the new ULS Form 606. Prior to filing Form 606 it is necessary to register using Form 605. Either electronic or paper versions of these two forms may be used.

An overview of the ULS system can be found at <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/uls-qa.html>. Links for obtaining copies of Forms 605 and 606 are at <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/forms.html>, while a tutorial on the basics of how to register is given at <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/uls101.html>.

Upgrading on April 15? CAUTION!

Many hams throughout the Pacific Division, as well as elsewhere, are taking upgrade exams now with the intention of upgrading on April 15. Please note the above, regarding ULS. All applications following Feb. 17, including upgrades, will need to be filed using a ULS Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). In order to make your upgrade go smoothly, be sure you register and obtain your TIN number well ahead of April 15! It's not necessary to have

any license change in process in order to register, but registry will be necessary in order to upgrade on April 15! See the article above for more information on the ULS registration process.

ARRL Board Endorses Certification Program

The ARRL Board of Directors has approved the development and implementation of an initiative to promote self-education by radio amateurs. The new ARRL Certification Program will aim to inspire amateurs to continue acquiring technical knowledge and operating expertise beyond that required to become licensed and give them a chance to test their own limits. Following up on the "2010 Vision" discussions at last July's Board meeting, ARRL Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ, presented the broad strokes of the Certification Program during the Board's January 21-22 meeting in Memphis.

At this point, the Certification Program only exists as a concept, with the details to be worked out, but plans call for having the program in place by later this year. The first step in putting the program in place will be to solicit the ideas of ARRL members, via a Web-based message board, on appropriate topics to be included in the initial rollout. "The idea is to make this program what members want it to be, and not something imposed from 'on high,'" Sumner said.

The new Certification Program will offer participants an opportunity to earn credentials at various levels of depth and difficulty in different courses of study--perhaps in such areas as ionospheric propagation, receiver design, and Morse code proficiency. Sumner said the ARRL should and will continue to encourage the development of Morse code proficiency beyond the basic HF licensing requirements. He observed that the standards for ARRL certification could be more stringent and more uniform than those used for FCC exams.

As envisioned, the program would be largely self-supporting, but startup costs would be funded from the Exceptional Merit Stipend established by the late Ethel Smith, K4LMB. The Certification Program will be dedicated to her memory. Smith--who helped found the Young Ladies Radio League and served as its first president--died in 1997, leaving the bulk of her estate to the ARRL.

Thanks, *ARRL Letter*

Coming Events

- Livermore Swap Meet - 1st Sunday of each month at Las Positas College in Livermore, 7:00 AM to noon, all year. Talk in 147.045 from the west, 145.35 from the east. Contact Cliff Chiba, KF6EII, (209) 835-6715, email larkswap@usa.com.

- Radiofest2000, Feb. 19, 2000. Sponsored by the Naval Postgraduate School ARC. Held at the General Stilwell Community Center, POM Annex, 4260 Gigling Rd, Seaside, CA, starting at 8 AM. Contact Will Costello, WC6OX, at (831) 375-8133, email wc6ox@arrl.net. or the web site at <http://www.k6ly.org/radiofest>. Talk in on 146.79.

- Visalia International DX Convention, April 14-16. Sponsored by the Southern Calif. DX Club. Held at Holiday Inn, Visalia. \$60.00 prior to March 15, \$65.00 thereafter. Full registration info at <http://www.scdxc.org/dxconv2000.html> or contact Don Bostrom, N6IC, 559-651-5000, email visalia@scdxc.org.

- Fresno Hamfest, April 29, 8:00AM to ???. Sponsored by the Fresno Amateur Radio Club. Held at Coombs Ranch, Ave. 12, Madera, CA. From Hwy. 99 exit east on Ave. 12. Proceed Approximately 1 mile, after crossing Hwy. 41 on the right. Talk in on 146.34+. Contact Jim Haynes, W6PXM, 559-431-3020/559-294-8390.

- Sonoma Hamfest, April 29, 8:00AM to 12:00 noon. Sponsored by the Valley of the Moon ARC. Held at the Sonoma Veteran's Memorial Building, Sonoma. Take Hwy. 12 to Sonoma Central Plaza, First St. West, North to Veteran's Memorial Building. Talk-in on 145.35-, PL 88.5 Hz. Contact Darrel E. Jones, WD6BOR, 707-996-4494 or 523-3837.

Hoo's Hoo...



L-R: Bill Jimenez, Jack Nawrocki, Rolf Klibo, Rich Stiebel, Gary Hendra, Dick LeMassena

Officers:

President:	Tom Holden
Vice Pres:	Ian Kushner
Treasurer:	Todd Secoy
Secretary:	Rolf Klibo

SS/L Shack Trustee: Dick LeMassena, W6KH

Newsletter Editor: Gary Hendra, W6NOE -- SS/L
3825 Fabian Way, MS-G36, Palo Alto 94303
E-mail to hendra.gary@ssd.loral.com

Repeater Trustee/Control Operators(Primary):

Repeater Trustee: Rolf Klibo, N6NFI
Control Operators: John Buonocore, KD6ZL, Dan Connell, W6ASD, Rich Stiebel, W6APZ, Tom Holden, KN6KL; Gregg Schlaman, WA6ECQ

Repeater Technical Committee:

Committee Chairman: Rich Stiebel, W6APZ
N6NFI - Rolf Klibo and KN6KL - Tom Holden

Other appointed positions

Club historian:	To be announced.
Retiree Representative:	John Gibson, N6OM
Club emergency comm coordinator:	Randy Bassett, N6RUR
Club ARRL Coordinator:	To be announced
Club swap meet coordinator:	To be announced.
Club Project coordinators:	To be announced

For Address Changes, or If Undeliverable, Return to:

Gary Hendra MS-G84
SPACE SYSTEMS/LORAL
3825 Fabian Way
Palo Alto, CA 94303-4604