

The June 1999 Meeting...

REPEATER
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**Where: SPACE SYSTEMS/LORAL
Bld 3 Auditorium**

**When: Thursday, 3 June 1999
High Noon**

**Subject: FRS (Family Radio Service) -
The New(?) Citizens' Band**

Back in the 1950s, the FCC created "THE" Citizens' Band on the former 11 meter ham band. This enabled most people to buy inexpensive equipment to talk across the street, around town, from farm to farm-house, and when the skip was in, across the country. Even then, there was a Citizens' band up in the 400 MHz range. Back in college, we used a pair of these 400 MHz "handie-talkies" (really there was nothing "handy" about those large heavy tube-type radios) to communicate from the home-coming activities back to our campus carrier-current AM radio station studio. Those 400 MHz radios were very expensive and few people seemed to use them. The 27 MHz band opened up a Pandora's box of problems and abuse with unauthorized high power amplifiers and other "legal" techniques to extend the useful range of 27 MHz communications. The FCC eventually removed the license requirements for the band and apparently gave up on enforcement. In many areas the 27 MHz band became virtually useless for the intended purpose due to the heavy QRM, especially when the skip was in.

Enter FRS. In the sense that there has been a citizens' band in the 400 MHz range for years, FRS is not a "new" CB. In the sense that the rules are new and the equipment is now very compact, FRS is the new Citizens' Band. The FCC obviously learned from their 27 MHz errors and carefully crafted the rules to minimize abuse. From reading the FCC web site information, it seems the present FRS rules coalesced from manufacturers' inputs who wanted to sell a new product, but did not want to cause problems for other equipment they manufactured in the GMRS band.

In the talk at the SPARK meeting on June 3, you will learn what can and cannot be done with FRS, which channels are available, what some of the FCC-imposed limitations on this new service are, which features various FRS radios may incorporate, and find out what they cost. You will also see a comparison of various products on the market.

The speaker, Rich Stiebel, W6APZ, has a BSEE from Illinois Institute of Technology and an MSEE from San Jose State University. He designed several 27 MHz citizens' band transceivers for Knight Electronics in the late 1950s and early 60s. He currently serves as repeater trustee for the SPARK/SARS 145.230 repeater.

For the XYL or "significant other" who refuses to get a ham license but still wants to stay in touch in the shopping mall, or while hiking on vacation, FRS may be the answer you have been looking for.

June is Field Day month...true. But contacts via repeater are not counted for field day points, so why this title? The repeater provides opportunities to increase your Field Day score. Work a station on one band, get one point. Work the same station on the same band, but a different mode and get a second point! Now what could be a better reason than that to brush up on your CW? As mentioned last month, WE6V, Jim, is providing Morse Code practice every Tuesday evening from 8 to 8:30 on the 145.230 repeater. But, did you know he is also sending code practice on Monday nights on the 146.385 (+600) repeater? Given Jim's twice/week schedule, you can still get in a lot of CW practice between now and Field Day.

I have not used CW in years, or at least so it seems. So, inspired by Field Day coming up, I got pencil and paper and started copying code last Tuesday. The first couple of words of CW started out being sent at 13 WPM instead of at slow speed as I had expected. Rattled, I missed the first couple of words. The CW then slowed down to 8 WPM and I my copy was almost solid. By the time Jim had built up his speed to 13 WPM near the end of the code practice session, I was still copying almost solid and did not even realize that his speed had increased!

Listening and copying CW on the repeater is a good way to get in shape for Field Day.

73 de Rich, W6APZ <w6apz@svpal.org



Remembering Robert Reiling, W6JHJ (SK)

by Rich Stiebel

Bob Reiling, W6JHJ, had been a member of SPARK for many, many years. He served as club treasurer for several years (and as Vice President/program chair - I think - someone may know better). He was a control operator on our 145.230 repeater as well as the Black Mountain Amateur Television (ATV) Repeater. He was one of the first SPARK members to have an AM ATV station on 900 MHz and was probably the only one to build a FM ATV station among our members. He even put together a compact 10 GHz ATV station which he demonstrated at various club meetings.

Bob was involved with computers back in the days when computers were something a only few people were home-brewing; long before one could buy a computer off-the-shelf. He was an early packet radio enthusiast.

When a project at work drew to a close and Bob saw that there were high-capacity liquid nickel-cadmium cells that the repeater could use for emergency power, he was instrumental in arranging

to have the company donate the cells to SPARK. Every year when we have reconditioned those cells, Bob has participated directly in the process by monitoring, interpreting the data, and cleaning the cells. Even this last year when he was ill, he loaned the club his cables, humongous load resistors, and fan for discharging the back-up battery pack.

ARRL Pacific Division Update

June 1999

by Brad Wyatt, K6WR, Director, Pacific Division, ARRL
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The Prez Sez...

No Report

73 de Jack

A Note From the Treasurer:

Dues are due, still value priced at US\$10.00. Though I would be most happy to see you at the meetings, you may also send them in to me at:

Rolf Klubo
3825 Fabian Way, MS G-16
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Later in the newsletter you will find the Budget for 1999, and the actual costs for 1998. The latest roster is also attached. Please check your information and let me know if there should be a change made.

The following are the meeting dates for 1999:

July 1	October 7
August 5	November 4
September 2	December 2

Also, we have the opportunity to do some PR for the Klub at the annual company Health Fair. We have been offered a chance to have a table at the event, and they will plumb in power for us if we need it. This could be a great chance to expose the Klub to the employees here.

Think of the possibilities! We could have an active link to the repeater, a description of the shack, maybe get Paul, N6YNU, to bring out his ATV setup, and display our support of emergency communications for hospitals through the repeater during area emergencies. YOU probably have some good ideas, too!

Bring them to the next meeting or send them to me. And if you can volunteer for the health fair, let me know that, too.

By the way, there ARE people who are still interested in HAM Radio. Two guys in my office went out a week ago and passed their No-Code Tech tests. I hope to snag them for the Klub.

One more note. The company web folks would like to do an article on the Klub for the Internal Web Home Page. Is there someone who would volunteer to bring our Klub web site up to date? (And maintain it for a while?) I'm sure our web site will be prominent in the story.

Do you know about, or are operating on:
APRS?
PSK31?
Let me know.

Thanks and 73 de Rolf, N6NFI

League Urges FCC to Expedite Restructuring

The ARRL has urged the FCC to act "without delay" on Amateur Radio restructuring and has suggested that the Commission adopt the League's restructuring plan as its own in order to speed up the process. In a letter May 19 to FCC Chairman William Kennard and the five FCC Commissioners, the League says that the state of limbo created by the current FCC Amateur Radio restructuring proceeding, WT Docket 98-143, is stifling Amateur Radio's growth, as current and prospective hams await an FCC Report and Order.

"This is antithetical to the goal of the proceeding," the League said. It asked the FCC to adopt the League's plan in a Report and Order "at the earliest possible time."

The ARRL told the FCC that its comprehensive plan of four license classes and two Morse code testing tiers--5 WPM and 12 WPM--plus re-farming of the Novice/Technician Plus HF CW subbands "constitutes a reasonable middle ground proposal." The ARRL's restructuring proposal formed the core of the League's comments to the FCC on WT 98-143, which the FCC refers to as the Part 97 Biennial Review.

Both the FCC and ARRL proposals would eliminate the Novice and Tech Plus licenses. The ARRL's letter stressed that "refarming" of the Novice class subbands was "the most critical portion of the League's comprehensive plan, or, indeed, of any license restructuring plan the Commission may adopt." The League said refarming was "essential" to make room for anticipated additional licensees using SSB HF subbands. In addition, the League said, refarming "is absolutely necessary to preserve and enhance the incentive self-training program" and to ensure more efficient use of limited HF allocations. Under the League's plan, General, Advanced, and Extra class licensees would get additional HF spectrum for phone operation.

"The League offers its comprehensive plan in toto, as the best means of accomplishing increased growth in the Amateur Service and the continuation of the value of the Service as a foundation cornerstone of telecommunications development," the League's letter said.

Judging from comments made at the Dayton Hamvention FCC forum by William Cross, W3TN, of the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, no substantive progress has been made toward formulating Amateur Service rules changes beyond reading, analyzing, and tabulating comments. Cross said no decisions had been made on WT Docket 98-143 as of May 13. The FCC received 2250 comments from the amateur community in the proceeding.

In its letter, the League took the opportunity to express appreciation for the support for the Amateur Service by both Kennard and WTB Chief Thomas Sugrue and to thank the FCC for the renewed enforcement efforts of Compliance and Information Bureau Chief Richard Lee and CIB Legal Advisor Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH.

"Their innovation and dedication to purpose, together with your timely reemphasis on regulatory compliance, has reinvigorated the Amateur Service and represents the finest tradition of government service to the public," the letter concluded.

Thanks ARRL Members Only web site.

Hoo's Hoo...

Officers:

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Repeater Trustee: Rich Stiebel, W6APZ
Control Operators: John Buonocore, KD6ZL, Dan Connell, W6ASD,
Rolf Klibo, N6NFI, 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:

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