



VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

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April 2010

President's Message

Hi All,

As I write this, the heavens have opened and I am reminded of the saying: "April showers bring May flowers."

Upcoming this month is the International DX Convention in Visalia, the ARRL Rookie Round Up and the Missouri, Georgia, Michigan, Ontario, Florida and Nebraska QSO parties. Please make time to participate in at least one of the competitions. I myself, am looking forward to the Rookie Round Up on April 18. It's a great opportunity to mentor the newest members to this hobby and encourage further participation.

We still need a few more to facilitate the weekly net on 2 meters. Kim Ware (KI6JNX) and I envisage a flexible, rotating schedule. Flexible, being the key word as this is meant to be fun!

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting on 14 April.

73,
Scott Joseph KI6YYZ

March Meeting Minutes

The board of directors meeting came to order promptly at 7:00pm by club president Scott Joseph KI6YYZ.

February meeting minutes were read and approved as submitted by a voice vote.

The February financial report was submitted, reviewed and approved via voice vote. We have a total of \$2,042.30 in the club account as of March 31, 2010.

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There was no old business.
We had some new business:

The club net has not been consistently held each week due to a lack of net control operators. A club emphasis on running the net each week is very important to keeping the net going each week. The club vice president coordinates this net.

The board of directors meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm follows by coffee, cookies and a 50/50 raffle drawing.

The 50/50 raffle drawing was won by Jerry Olive KD6WKY in the amount of \$22.00.

Following the raffle 30 minutes of spirited general conversation among the attendees and enjoyed by all.

The general meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive KD6WKY

I had a pretty good month as a radio amateur in March. I was able to participate in the CQWW WPX contest both SSB and CW. This is sort of a fun contest because the goal of course is to talk to everybody but the points multipliers are based on the prefix of the call signs. Having a KD6 doesn't seem very common so I was popular even getting some thank you's for the new multiplier from some of the big gun stations.

Aside from contesting the bands as usual open and close. I had a nice run on 17m CW one evening into Russia working very quickly about 15 stations. Then for a few days 30m was open to Russia and I'd work another bunch of Russians.

I took some time a few evenings to do some SSB work on 40m just below 7.200 MHz in the evening. I worked a couple of stations on the Old Miss Net one evening, that was fun. They had over 115 check ins from across the country for the HF net call. Wow!

I did some rag chewing with Jim KØDT, Kilo Zero Dick Tracy in Colfax, Iowa. Jim is in his 70's and loves to talk, you can hear him most evenings working anyone that wants to talk. We decided we have something in common, we both live within a mile of I-80.

I spoke with Ted WB9JOX in Chicago one evening. We got along great, we talked baseball for quite a while. Ted was up late because he couldn't sleep and was anxious about a doctor visit to determine the treatment for a bum leg the following morning. I hope it turned out okay.

The past few days the bands have sucked. I've been trying to hear a DXpedition in the Kurdistan portion of Northern Iraq to try and work them. Nothing, just nothing. They're out there, other parts of the country have worked them, but out west, we have heard little to nothing from them. That's the way it goes sometimes.

Lastly I worked Hubert R Clark K6HFA of Fresno doing a one man band DXpedition to Wallis & Futuna Islands in the South Pacific using the call sign FW5X. Hubert was working alone with a vertical antenna, a 50 watt transceiver, and a paper log. His code speed was a nice 15 WPM and he worked split meaning he transmitted on 14.041 MHz and listened for callers between 14.042 MHz and 14.045 MHz. Very clear clean signal, very easy to copy.

I sent him an email after I worked him to thank him, he answered me the following morning so I guess the internet is just about everywhere these days. I hope to see Hubert next weekend at the DX Convention in Visalia. We'll see.

March of Dime/March for Babies

Every year our club participates with this event to provide coordination and communications support to the Solano County Chapter of the March of Dimes. It's a nice deal, you get to help run a great fund raiser, it's fun, you get a continental breakfast, hamburger lunch, and a tee shirt.

Please arrive at Peña Adobe Park by 7:30am for assignment, radio check, and coordination.

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2010 ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Scott Joseph, KI6YYZ
Vice President: Kim Ware, K16JNX
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Mike Vieira, W6MAV
Director: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Glen Mitchell W6JLX

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Kim Ware, KI6JNX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

City of Manassas to End BPL Service

Once touted as "the most successful BPL deployment in the nation," the City of Manassas, Virginia has decided to get out of the BPL business, once and for all. At a Special Meeting on Monday, April 5, the Manassas City Council -- acting on a recommendation from the Manassas Utilities Commission -- unanimously voted to discontinue Broadband over Powerline (BPL) Internet service as of July 1, 2010 to the approximately 520 residents and businesses who currently subscribe to the service; these customers were told that they have three months to find a new Internet service provider.

According to Manassas City Clerk Andrea Madden, there was no discussion on the resolution to discontinue service and the motion was passed "without incident."

With the motion made by Councilman Jonathan Way and seconded by Mark Wolfe, the City Council cited three reasons for discontinuing BPL service: a declining customer base, an annual income deficit of almost \$166,000 from providing Internet service, and a determination that AMI [Advanced Metering Infrastructure] platforms don't require BPL. Way and Wolfe favored shutting down the BPL system in November 2009, the last time this matter was brought to the Council's attention. "The City needs to get out of BPL forthwith," Way said back in 2009. "It's not a good product. The whole business is not financially sound and it never has been."

Manassas residents pay \$24.95 each month to receive Internet service via BPL. In November 2009, the Utility Commission showed the Council that little more than 500 residents and 46 businesses currently subscribed to the service, which since 2008, has been run by the City. "It's costing a little more to maintain the system than we projected in the budget," Manassas Director of Utilities Michael Moon told the Council. "The original projections were that the customer base would be double this." In September 2008, the Manassas City Council voted to assume control of the BPL service from COMTek, the private company that served (back then) approximately 675 residents.

In January 2009, there were 637 residential and 51 commercial BPL subscribers in Manassas. In February 2010, those numbers had shrunk to 457 residential and 50 commercial subscribers. The Utilities Commission said that the total revenue brought in by BPL for FY2010 was almost \$186,000, but the expense of keeping up the City-owned system was costing the ratepayers a little more than \$351,000, resulting in a net loss of almost \$166,000.

"In October 2003, the Manassas City Council was told that it could expect as much as \$4.5 million in revenue from awarding a 10 year BPL franchise," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ. "Instead, six months later, BPL had turned into a money pit for the City of Manassas. Anyone thinking of investing in BPL would do well to learn from the Manassas experience."

In November 2009, Manassas' Assistant Utilities Director (Electric) Gregg Paulson told the ARRL that they had "every intention of putting BPL Internet service in the budget and the

Council can decide its fate as they work through the budget process." Paulson also said that while Internet service to consumers would "probably" be the only thing that would be cut if the Council decided to forego BPL, he left the door open as to using the BPL infrastructure for other purposes: "We still own the BPL network, but we may or may not use this network for utility monitoring or other AMI purposes."

But according to the resolution passed by the Council, the Manassas Utilities Department will not be using BPL for AMI, but instead will use "a combination of fiber and wireless technology exclusive of the BPL." According to the Agenda Statement for the Special Meeting, the BPL equipment will be removed from the system and "inquiries will be made regarding the salvage value."

Sumner said that the ARRL's concern was not with the business plan -- that he termed "obviously flawed" -- but with "the interference to licensed radio services -- and in particular the Amateur Radio Service -- inevitably caused by putting radio frequency energy on unshielded, unbalanced conductors. Manassas was touted as 'the most successful BPL deployment in the nation' when FCC Chairman Michael Powell visited the site with much fanfare -- and, the ARRL maintains, in violation of the FCC's own rules -- on the eve of the FCC's vote to adopt inadequate protection for licensed radio services against interference from BPL systems. The taxpayers and ratepayers of Manassas are not the only ones who benefit from the end of this ill-considered foray into BPL. Radio amateurs in the Manassas area have good reason to celebrate, for they have spent countless hours documenting the widespread interference caused by the system."

BPL technology uses the electricity grid in a city and the wiring in individual homes to provide direct "plug in" broadband access through electricity sockets, rather than over phone or cable TV lines. Because BPL wiring is physically large, is often overhead and extends across entire communities, these systems pose a significant interference potential to over-the-air radio services, including Amateur Radio.

The First Rookie Roundup -- Coming April 18!

The ARRL's newest contest -- the Rookie Roundup -- is getting a lot of buzz among newly-licensed amateurs. Designed as a modern equivalent to the ARRL Novice Roundup from a few decades ago, this new incarnation combines a competitive event with some on-the-air training. The first Rookie Roundup is scheduled for April 18 and will be an SSB contest.

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

The Rookie Roundup is six hours of fun on a Sunday afternoon that is designed to give new hams a chance to get their feet wet on HF and 6 meters. Old-timers are encouraged to get on the air and work the Rookies, just as in they did in the Novice Roundups. The six hour event -- from 1800 UTC-2359 UTC -- will be held on the third Sunday of April, August, and December. SSB, RTTY, and CW will be featured in the different months.

Who is a Rookie? Any amateur licensed for three years or less, regardless of license class. If you received your license in 2008, 2009 or 2010, you're eligible to compete as a Rookie. Non-rookies are encouraged to work the Rookies and be an Elmer to those just starting out. It is an immediate, hands-on way to teach good operating practices to those just getting started.

Reception to the new event has been very strong. "I'm getting a lot of e-mail about it," said ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. "There are a lot of new hams pretty excited about this event. I'm also hearing about clubs opening their doors to help the Rookies get on the air and experience the fun of competition in a slightly more relaxed atmosphere than of a big world-wide event." Kutzko has created a [blog](#) for the event to provide up-to-date news, the official rules and answer common questions for the Rookie Roundup.

The ARRL Rookie Roundup also embraces a lot of new technology, including live scoring and reporting of the results within a few hours after the event ends. Thanks to Gerry Hull, W1VE, and the team at [getscores.org](#), results will be available very shortly after the event. To officially enter, stations should log on to [getscores.org](#) and choose one of two ways to report their score: by using a Web browser logging page to enter QSOs in real-time or from a standalone log, or by reporting their score summary using [getscores.org](#)'s Universal Score Uploader. Both Rookies and Non-rookies must complete their entries within one hour after the contest ends. More details are available on the Rookie Roundup blog.

Being the first running of a new contest with new technology, the April 18 running of the Rookie Roundup is going to be a test run of sorts. "This will be the 'shakedown cruise,'" Kutzko explained. "There will be some things that work, and some things that don't. We'll see where the wheels come off and listen to what the participants have to say. We'll also work out any bugs we encounter for the August event that will be also be conducted using SSB to encourage repeat participation. As this is going to be a recurring event, it's quite likely the rules will evolve over time as we discover what works and what doesn't." The first CW event occurs in December and the first RTTY

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at:
<http://www.jcis.net/~hewbob/vvrc/index.htm>
Club repeater in Vacaville: W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3

The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 7pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.200(-) WV6F 440.025(+) PL 127.3
W6OMF Repeater 224.540 MHz, PL 118.8 Hz

event will be in August of 2011.

The Rookie Roundup is a golden opportunity to have fun, learn new skills and provide many Elmering opportunities. We hope to see you on the air April 18!

Moonbounce for Everyone -- Courtesy of the Arecibo Radio Telescope!



Sending Amateur Radio signals to the Moon and back has never been easy. After roundtrip journeys of nearly half a million miles, even the most powerful signals generated by hams are exquisitely weak on arrival. Because of the equipment and expertise necessary for successful "moonbounce" operating, this facet of Amateur Radio has been traditionally confined to a small audience. But for three days in April even hams with very modest stations will have the opportunity to experience the thrill of moonbounce, thanks to the giant radio telescope at the [Arecibo Observatory](#) in Puerto Rico.

Joe Taylor, K1JT -- along with the [Arecibo Observatory Radio Club](#), KP4AO -- will be on the air running 400 W to the telescope's 1000 foot antenna. Their scheduled times of operation are 1645-1930 on April 16, 1740-2020 on April 17 and 1840-2125 on April 18 (all times UTC). They will be using the call sign KP4AO and operating SSB, CW and the [JT65B](#) digital mode developed by Taylor. They will be transmitting at 432.045 MHz and listening for stations between 432.050 and 432.060 MHz.

Taylor says that it should be possible to hear the Arecibo moonbounce transmissions with little more than a handheld 5-element Yagi antenna and a radio with 70 cm SSB receive capability -- all the listener has to do is aim at the Moon! With a longer 15 dBi antenna and 100 W output, Taylor said he believes it will be possible for many hams to *work* KP4AO on CW.

Each session will start with a brief announcement and a CQ in SSB. SSB QSOs may continue for 30 minutes to an hour if the QSO rate remains high; the operators will then shift to CW. JT65B operations will probably occur on April 18.

The KP4AO crew is anticipating DXpedition-style pileups and will operate accordingly. To give all amateurs a fair chance at this rare opportunity, they are asking everyone to limit themselves to a single contact, regardless of mode. In other words, don't attempt to work KP4AO on every mode. Taylor also stated, "If we call "CQ QRP," we will listen for stations running 100 W or less to a single Yagi antenna. Please don't answer a QRP CQ if you are running more power or have a larger antenna."

Calling it "extremely fortunate" to have access to Arecibo -- the world's largest radio telescope -- for this Amateur Radio goodwill event, Taylor said that they look forward to working as many stations as possible in the allotted time.

If you make contact, send your QSL -- along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope -- to the KP4AO QSL manager: Joseph Arcure, W3HNC, 115 Buck Run Rd, Lincoln University, PA 19352.

Editor's Note—I'm told the Benicia amateur radio club will be attempting to work KP4AO as part of this adventure.



911 and dispatch centers had to provide other ways to report emergencies -- including Amateur Radio.

According to ARRL Nebraska Section Manager Art Zygielbaum, K0AIZ, Lancaster County Emergency Management Director Doug Ahlberg, activated the Amateur Radio "Y2K Plan" shortly after the switching facility went down. "This plan places hams at prominent intersections and, if need be, public emergency service locations throughout the city," Zygielbaum told the ARRL. "Since there was no 911 service in the city, the Lincoln-Lancaster Emergency Operations Center was activated. ARRL Lancaster County Emergency Coordinator Reynolds Davis, K0GND, assigned hams to the EOC and 15 major intersections around the city. Emergency bulletins on television and radio stations carried information about where hams were stationed and let the citizens know that the hams could help citizens obtain emergency services. The hams also watched out for vehicle accidents and obstructions to traffic."

Zygielbaum said that this is the fourth time that the "Y2K Plan" has been used. "It was originally established in anticipation of the loss of communications at the end of the last century. Earlier activations were due to localized loss of communications at dispatch centers."

According to *The Lincoln Journal Star*, Windstream had updated the switch and its backup eight hours earlier, said Brad Hedrick, vice president and general manager of Windstream in Nebraska. Three other switches already had been updated and

Telephone Outage in Nebraska No April Fool's Joke

Gary Elstun, KD0HZM, mans the intersection of 10th and O Streets in Lincoln, Nebraska as Amateur Radio operators stepped in to provide 911 service during a service outage on April 1. [Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Journal Star].

Early on the morning of Thursday, April 1, almost 40,000 people -- including Lincoln's government, business and emergency centers -- in Southeastern Nebraska found out that they had no landline telephone service, as well as spotty cell phone coverage, thanks to an equipment malfunction at a Lincoln switching facility owned by Windstream Communications. According to news reports, residents of 12 counties were unable to contact another was updated at the same time as the ones that failed, he said. There were no problems with those four switches. "This is a pretty major issue for us and we're working to resolve it," he said Thursday morning.

911 Center Communications Manager Julie Righter told the *Journal Star* that by early Thursday afternoon, landline 911 service for Windstream customers in Lancaster County had been restored, but cellular and other landline service into 911 still was not working at 10 PM. Service was restored to the entire region by 11:20 Thursday night.

According to Department of Human Service was out



the Nebraska Health and vices, 911 ser- for all or part



PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely

Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign _____
 Street: _____
 City: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: (____) _____ - _____ OK to Publish?(____)
 License Class: _____ ARRL Member?(____)
 E-Mail Address _____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign _____
 License Class: _____ ARRL Member?(____)
 Name: _____ Call Sign _____
 License Class: _____ ARRL Member?(____)
 Name: _____ Call Sign _____
 License Class: _____ ARRL Member?(____)

MEMBER Dues ----- \$20.00 _____
 Each Family Member -- \$ 2.00 _____
 Student ----- \$ 5.00 _____
 Repeater/Autopatch donation --- _____
 Call/Name badge ----- \$10.00 _____
 Optional ARRL membership
 ARRL dues----- \$37.00 _____
 ARRL dues (Senior) ---- \$34.00 _____
 Senior is 65 yr or older with one time proof on age.
 Total----- _____
 Paid by CASH: _____ Check # _____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143