



Stanislaus Amateur Radio Association

Quarterly Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2012

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[Don Nicolaysen, KR6US](#)

I was introduced to ham radio when I was 13 by my brother-in-law, Ron Nepote (K6UJG) who was ten years older than me. Ron's dad Leo was K6AYL, a very active DX'er near Escalon, whose station glowed with vacuum tubes, including a couple of large "finals" in the biggest linear amplifier I've ever seen. The air seemed charged with ozone when they were on the air – my hair stood on end. It was mesmerizing, and a source of wonder to hear voices from around the world and actually talk to them in a world that was still more wired than wireless.



Ron was very good at CW – and could copy at 20wpm. I learned the code with his help, and with a lot of solo practice on a code oscillator. Pretty soon I was good enough to get my Novice Class license, and was licensed as WN6PVF in 1965. A Vibroplex semi-automatic key was under the Christmas tree that year, and I was on my way to really enjoying the greatest hobby every imagined.

As a novice, I got on the air with second-hand gear we bought from a ham radio shop in Burlingame, called Amrad – it was in a retired train depot. I got my hands on a Hallicrafters SX-101A (a true boat anchor, but very good receiver), and a Heathkit DX-60 transmitter, which was crystal controlled. Figuring out how to get everything working was quite a job, but somehow the gear and a home-made dipole antenna with a relay to control the switching between receive and transmit came together, and I became active in the novice band on 80, 40 and 15 meters CW. My shack was literally that – an old farm workers shack about 50 yards from the family house, where I was often up until 3am on the weekend, looking for contacts on 40 or 80 meters, or during the day on 15.

I also was introduced to 2 meters. My rig then was a Heathkit “Twoer” which was a low-power AM rig, crystal-controlled, that I bought from Chuck Evans, WB6PME in Modesto. Operating mostly on 145.35 MHz (called Megacycles then), I talked to other hams in the area from my shack in Ripon. Often I talked with hams such as Andy Anderson (WA6KCU), Richard Bratzenia (now W6DU), Bill Kriegs (WB6PTF), John Hewitt (W6OVR), and Norman Milne (WB6PDN) among others on 2 meters AM, using just a Twoer and a multi-directional antenna. No repeaters. I even have QSLs for 2-meter contacts in San Francisco, which surprises me today.

I even did a little “Maritime Mobile” on 2 meters from a boat in the San Joaquin Delta, where I ran the Twoer on power from an AC generator. There was a lot of ignition noise from the generator, but it worked.

Ham licensing then was euphemistically called “Incentive Licensing”, which meant you get your Novice ticket with a simple written test and a practical skill of 5 words per minute sending and receiving morse code. But, you had to upgrade within a year or your Novice ticket would expire and you would be off the air. Later they extended the Novice term to two years. Since I wanted more HF privileges I vowed to go straight to General Class. I had to go to the FCC office on Battery Street in San Francisco to take the test administered by an FCC examiner, including morse code at 13 wpm. I was still 13, and most of the radio theory was beyond my junior high education. I only had a study guide for help, and anyhow, I scratched it the first time I took it, but passed on my second try, and my General came just in time before the Novice ticket expired.

As WB6TTQ (there was no vanity call system then), I entered the world of HF SSB, and had great fun in the world of DX'ing. I worked all continents including Antarctica, Greenland, the Soviet Union, Australia, and Africa on CW, and eventually acquired a 4-element beam and some R.L. Drake gear that was fabulous. I still have that Drake 4-Line.

Eventually, I moved on to college in Provo, Utah, where the club station W7OHR had a great signal through a 5-element beam about 120-feet up on the tallest campus building, and in the next year I was off to New Zealand for two years on an LDS mission. I met a few hams then, 1971-73, but had no time or means to get on the air.

Following that, I was mostly in Utah for the next 8 years, where I finished college and went to work in the independent film industry as a production manager, and met some old-school stars like Jimmy Stewart, Trevor Howard, Karl Malden, Don Knotts, the Osmonds, and others less famous behind the camera, who were equally fascinating. We were there when the first Sundance Film Festival was held. Carolyn and I had a young family then, but I managed to upgrade to Advanced Class in that period, and became KC7IU.

A new career in exporting came when the indie film business dried up in the early 80's. Lots of travel, raising kids and such kept ham radio and other hobbies on the back burner for about 20 years, but in 2009 I became active again, with a new perspective on the real value of our hobby and its many facets, which today includes a strong emphasis on public service and emergency preparedness.

One of the biggest thrills of my 47 years with ham radio, was to see my wife Carolyn, two sons, a daughter, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law, a grandson, and a granddaughter all get licensed as amateur radio operators in the past three years. That's almost enough to start our own club – but not to worry, none of them live close by.

Currently we enjoy being involved in Stanislaus ARES, where we have learned so much about being prepared to serve. I am also net control for a Sunday night net with many new hams and some experienced ones, where we try to prepare operators to participate in a health and welfare net supporting units of our church in two counties in the event of disaster or grid failure. That is the Modesto North Stake Emergency Response Communications Net on 145.290 MHz, each Sunday at 8:30pm, where all hams are welcome to check in.

Our station at KR6US is simple: It's a good location on a small hill North of Oakdale. The HF antenna is an Off-Center Fed Dipole for 80-6 meters by Buckmaster, and a Diamond X300 vertical covers 2m and 70cm bands. Our rigs are Yaesu FT-857D, Yaesu FT-817D, Yaesu FT-2400 (2 meters only), and several Kenwood and Wouxun handhelds. The Drake gear is not active, at the present time. Don't know how we ended up with so many Yaesu radios, but we bought them all second-hand and they do a good job.

Going back through my old QSL cards from the 60's, I found 44 states and 24 countries. I realized how many advantages I had as a young man, being involved in ham radio then.

Ham radio taught me confidence as I got on the air and held QSO's with adults from around the world on SSB and CW. It taught me geography. It taught me appreciation for our military who were fighting a war in Southeast Asia. It taught me patience, as so often only persistence kept me going when things didn't work. And, it helped me get acquainted with so many good people, who were kind and patient and offered their time as Elmers to help the new kid. Hopefully, in the years ahead I can do the same for others who are just discovering ham radio, or coming back after a long hiatus from the world of amateur radio.

CP1QQ

PAUL M^c CLEARY
CASILLA 356
LA PAZ-BOLIVIA



1917
1967



UW 9 PT

NOVOSIBIRSK
OBL 145 ZONE 18
op. Vik Shogam



Confirmation of Contact by Amateur Radio with

RADIO STATION

OX5BG

Thule Air Base, Top of the World

Dick Harris

Box 1165

1983 Communications Sq.

APO NEW YORK 09023

CONJUGATE POINT STATION

(1.3 Miles from "Down Town" BYRD, Antarctica)

80° S., 120° W.

KC4USM





Drake 4-Line



Hallicrafters



Crystals



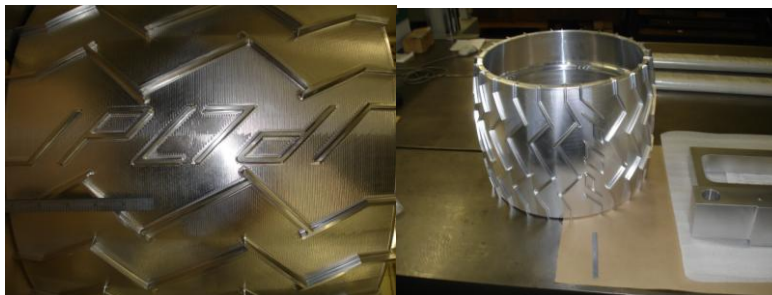
HeathKit-Twoer

INTERESTING INFO/TRIVIA ON THE CURRENT MARS LANDER/ROVER

Barry, W6EZ got this information from a guy he knows on a motorcycle forum who was the actual CNC machinist who made the wheels that are on MARS now. Originally, the wheels for the rover were to have "JPL" for Jet Propulsion Laboratory on the tread pattern. This was nixed because NASA really didn't like JPL putting its name in the tread.

In the second design JPL added some "holes" to the wheels. These were to allow Martian dirt to drain from the wheel assembly and to give a visual reference that the wheels were actually turning. NERDS are funny creatures however, and Nerdy ways will prevail. So now the wheels have holes in them that spell out JPL in MORSE CODE.

NASA didn't catch that until it was WAY too late to do anything about it. The wheels need an asymmetry anyway. Without a way to be absolutely sure the wheels was rotating, diagnosing a problem during the mission would be difficult. Also during tests they found that dirt would accumulate inside the wheel if there was no way for it to fall out. Hence the holes. Those smart guys, and at least one woman who was a lead engineer, at JPL get the credit for the Easter egg (a little investigation might reveal some Hams here as well.)



ARES®/RACES Back-Up Comms for GOP Convention

Bill Williams, AG4QX, Hillsborough County (Florida) ARES/RACES Operations Manager/Assistant Emergency Coordinator and the Greater Tampa Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Liaison for the City of Tampa was asked by the Tampa Office of Emergency Management to provide emergency back-up communications for the City during the timeframe of the Republican National Convention, August 24 through September 2, 2012.

This tasking required Amateur Radio at four primary locations: the Tampa EOC, Tampa Fire Station #1, Tampa Fire Station #3 and the Tampa Fire Rescue Training Academy and Police Training Center staging area. Each location had ICOM IC-2820 radios pre-programmed with numerous D-STAR and analog frequencies, all of which were tested and could be used for emergency communications. Two training sessions were conducted prior to the event to familiarize the operators with the radio operation and the Incident Command System-compliant plans for the Convention coverage.

The assignment was treated for the City as a CERT event, and for the County, an ARES/RACES activation. Volunteer radio operators were scheduled for 24/7 coverage at the four locations, plus the Hillsborough EOC was available for any additional activations if required.

Over 1800 volunteer hours were put in to prepare for and support the city and county for the week-long operation. The city operated the Consequence Management EOC, staffed and supported by the RNC, Secret Service, FBI, State Warning Point, Hillsborough County and surrounding counties' Emergency Management representatives. A Joint Incident Command was established and operated nearby.

Even the threat of Hurricane Isaac did not interfere with the operation. Under the county plan, ARES/RACES put out the call for more operators to support Hillsborough County and the Red Cross shelter operations, and the city operation support continued unfazed. The county RACES Officer and ARRL Emergency Coordinator, Keating Floyd, KC4HSI, called on operators from the Tampa Amateur Radio Club to run a Resource Net until the storm threat passed. Hillsborough County experienced heavy rains and flooding but only minor damage was reported.

All facets of the Amateur Radio operation were undeniably successful. The RNC went off with very few problems, and congratulations are due to Williams for a job well done, along with all the CERT and ARES/RACES members who supported him and the Tampa Bay community. -- Budd Johnson, WB4J, Hillsborough County Assistant EC; Tampa Amateur Radio Club Liaison; ARRL West Central Florida Official Emergency Station;
wb4j@verizon.net

Stanislaus Amateur Radio Association

Monthly Meeting – Officer Nominations!

November 20, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.

Modesto Regional Fire Authority (OES)

3705 Oakdale Road

Modesto, CA 95357

Upcoming Events!

Nomination of Officers – November 20th Club Meeting

December 18, 2012 Club Meeting Christmas Social

S.A.R.A. Mt. Oso Repeater System

Located on Mt. Oso at an elevation of 3400 ft. with reliable coverage from Fresno to Woodland.

- 145.390 MHz Negative Offset
- 224.140 MHz Negative Offset
- 51.800 MHz Negative Offset
- 440.225 MHz Positive Offset (1/2 Watt very low power)

All repeaters require 136.5 Hz PL tone for access. All Mt. Oso repeaters can be linked to each other in any combination by authorized control operators.

440.225 repeater is back on the air after reducing transmitter power to 1/2 watt due to Pave Paws interference complaints.

S.A.R.A. Low Level Repeater

Located atop the Doubletree hotel in downtown Modesto on 145.110 MHz Negative offset PL 136.5 Hz

S.A.R.A. Packet Node

Located on Mt. Oso, It's identifier is "SARA" 144.910 MHz 1200 Baud, 438.960 MHz 9600 Baud

2012 Field Day Pictures!







ARRL NATIONAL CONVENTION (PACIFICON 2012)



