

The Short Circuit

<http://www.avarc.av.org>



The official publication of the Antelope Valley Amateur Radio Club

March 2008

President's Corner

Jon Clark N6NQ

“QST! QST! QST! Calling all amateurs. Calling all amateurs.”

Does that sound familiar to you? It should if you check into the club's Wednesday evening net on a regular basis. That familiarity or predictability was recently called to my attention by a friend, a fellow ham, from the San Fernando Valley. He listens to our net and checks in now and then.

He proclaimed that our net was boring! He also said that it is so predictable that he could recite the whole net from memory, even down to who would check in and in what order. I bet he could, given that our net is recited from a script. Each week the net is recited by one of us and it is the same words, plus or minus those who checked in or did not check in the week before.

I've found myself making minor alternations to the wording here and there to try to break the monotony of calling the roll. So I have to agree with what my friend was saying.

Not being one whose feathers are easily ruffled, I explored his thoughts with him a little further when he brought this up. Having been a former club president, I felt that his thinking was valid and that he might have something to offer.

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UNITED WE STAND

Meeting Notice

Thursday, March 6, at 7:30 pm, will be the next meeting of AVARC, in the Primrose Room of the Larry Chimbole Center in Palmdale. Talk-in is available on 146.73 MHz. if you need directions.

This month's meeting will feature a presentation by **Joy Matlack KD6FJV**. Joy is the communications director for the Baker to Vegas Race. Come and learn more about this exciting event, and how you can become involved!



Joy Matlack KD6FJV

Joy Matlack KD6FJV to be featured in March

First licensed in the late 1980's as a technician, Joy Matlack, KD6FJV, upgraded to her current license as a general in 1993. She then made community service an immediate and continuing focus of her career as a Ham Radio Operator. Joy has taught Ham Radio classes to CERT members, American Red Cross volunteers and the Police Athletic League in Long Beach and the surrounding area. This, in addition to working as a VE, naturally progressed into Elmering new, and newly upgraded Hams into community service. Marathons, bike races, emergency preparedness drills, Police and Special Olympics are just a few of the events that she has worked as a volunteer.

Joy has worked the Challenge Cup Relay for over 15 years. First, by providing support for the Long Beach Police Dept. and the Lakewood Office of the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Dept.

A couple of years later, she received a call from the California Department of Justice asking for her help in setting up a communications system for their teams during the race and using that as a training ground for their agents in the Communications Division. As she spent these years working with specific teams on their internal communications she built a rapport with the race organizers, members of the Race Committee and its sponsoring organization, the Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club. This rapport led to being asked to become the Communications Coordinator for Baker to Vegas. This position provides her a unique opportunity to explore and learn about multiple aspects of Ham Radio under some of the most varying conditions, vast terrain, and extreme weather, primarily with portable equipment and power.

From the Secretary's Desk

AVARCGeneral Meeting 7 February 2008

Opening: John Clark N6NQ called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. and proceeded with the Flag Salute. Next were introductions and roll call. Thirty-four individuals participated.

A motion was made to accept the January **meeting minutes** as published the newsletter. Motion approved and minutes accepted.

The **Treasurers report** was presented by Don Jackson K6GET. Current funds: \$4,182.05. Doris and Shirley conducted an audit of the financial records for the last 3 years. Audit found the records to be 'absolutely perfect'.

Old business:

Alex's tower: Keith Hoyt K6GXO read a communication from Alex. Alex received a citation from the city of Palmdale mandating his tower be taken down. The club passed the hat and collected donations to assist with Alex's legal expenses. Approximately \$250 was donated.

Kenwood HT: (John Clark) The radio battery has been charged. Entertained ideas on how to utilize the donated system. Considered allowing new hams to use the radio temporarily until they obtain their own equipment.

Test Sessions: Adrienne Sherwood WA6YEO indicated the last session was very successful. Session had six applicants. All passed. The next session is scheduled for 1 March at 9:00 am. (The schedule is available on the club web site.) AARL cost \$14.00. ARRL volunteer examiners welcome to participate.

New business:

Paul Preter KI6DWG, Membership Chairman, has rosters for purchase at \$0.25 each.

Keith indicated the City of Grand Terrace proposed an ordinance unfavorable

to Ham Ratio. Mandates one structure per parcel, an absolute height of 20 ft. and visual screening requirements.

DMV began issuing new license plates with a space in the middle of the call sign. As of yesterday, the DMV acknowledged the practice is a mistake. Plates issued with a space will be reissued at no cost--just re-apply. (Plates with the space do not match the FCC license. California state law requires that the plates correspond with the license format.)

Break ** Refreshments **** Sale of raffle tickets for the evening 50/50 *****

Presentation:

Jon Clark N6NQ and Dan Sherwood WA6PZK hosted a presentation of Rock-Mite QRP CW transceivers. Copies of the presentation are available via e-mail from Jon upon request. Presentation summary below.

Jon presented the theory:

What is a Rock Mite? A single board, crystal controlled transceiver with two offset frequencies approximately 500 apart. Power about 0.5 watts.

Source: Small Wonder labs.
Cost: Transceiver \$29.00 Controls & connectors \$13.50. Quiet receiver. (Bi directional flow cancels the noise.) High gain – almost 24 dB. Low ohm resistance on the control circuit.

Dan presented the build process and operating basics:

QRP is defined as communications using 5-watts or less. A QRP operation is defined as operations with less than 1 watt. Why do it? It is fun! And a challenge... QRP operating wards are available. It's not for disaster communications not reliable. Needs a lot of antenna!

Suggestions: Dedicated work area. Mitigate ESD. Good soldering iron. Dremel tool. Work light. Magnifying glass. Chip must be soldered with writing up. Pre-

sorted all caps according to value. Caps installed in order. Diodes & inductors packed by quality. Install value groups together. Tested all resistors as they were sorted. Suggest paper insulator for crystal to prevent shorting. Test with a dummy load. Check the harmonics.

A good discussion of antenna options and operating basics followed. (Call the loud contacts first they are more likely to hear you.) The rock mite is an excellent diagnostic tool for your antenna and feed line system. You can hear the birds land on your beam! Can hear the wind blowing...

Stepping-up: Small Wonders has a step up to 2.5 watts at ~ \$55.00. Others are available for up to ~ \$430. Good club: FIST. Excellent Rock Mite Internet site: AMQRP.org

Raffle: 50/50 was won by Don Jackson K6GET - \$20.

The meeting concluded at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Humpherys KI6DWE
AVARC Secretary 2008

Swap Shop

For Sale: HEIL Handi Mic, model HM-5 Compact Microphone. Pre-wired for Kenwood radios with modular RJ-15 type connector. Could be used with most other rigs, (except ICOM), if a different plug is wired on. Brand new in the box. \$65.00.

Motorola Spectrum VHF Mobile VHF antennas. 5/8 wave, high-quality commercial-grade units made in the USA. These will work for 2-meters. Includes RADIALL/LARSEN NMO thru-hole mounts and coax kits. New in shipping tubes. \$25.00 each.

Contact Dan Sherwood, WA6PZK at (661) 264-1863.

President's Corner...



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He felt that the weekly net should be the life blood of the club. Given that it happens four times as often as the monthly meeting, it certainly is a better opportunity for the members to network. *Network!* Hmm, isn't that an interesting word. *Networking* is what we should be doing with our weekly net.

"Networking about what?", you may ask. Well this a "General Interest" club. What are you interested in? What have you been doing with amateur radio lately? Do you need some help with something? Do you have some help to offer? Have you seen an interesting article that other members may be interested in? Are you working on a project? All of these might be good items to "throw" out to the net.

Throwing an item out to the net cost you almost nothing. If it *clicks* with one of your fellow members, you, they or both of you may gain. Maybe it will be someone that wants to build a kit with you, or someone that can help you with an antenna project. It could just be someone to chat with about similar projects or similar interest. All of this is what a general interest club should be about.

During the coming weeks I will be encouraging all of you to

throw a little out to the net. I will be encouraging all who run the roll call to find ways to foster this idea. I encourage all of you to think about what you are interested in and throw some of it out to the net. How knows, we could have a little more fun!

Field Day is coming!

We need to get rolling on this now. There are several things that we need to get started on yesterday. If you want to be part of Field Day, start thinking about what you can contribute and come to the March meeting ready to raise your hand. Areas that will need attention soon are:

- A chairperson
- Publicity planning
- City Recreation and Parks interface
- Invitations to local officials
- Station captains for phone, CW, GOTA, UHF/VHF, etc.
- Helpers for all stations

And a bunch of other stuff that we will figure out as we go.

I would like encourage all of you new hams and new members to join in on this event. It is a great opportunity to do some operating outside your normal routine. It is also an opportunity to show your friends, family and neighbors what amateur radio and emergency service are all about.

See you at the March meeting.

73,

Jon N6NQ



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