

The Short Circuit

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



The official publication of the Antelope Valley Amateur Radio Club

October 2009

President's Corner

Jon Clark N6NQ

Winter is coming.

Now is the time to check your outdoor equipment. As the harsher winter weather approaches, there are a few things that deserve some consideration. The goals are trying to help your antennas and other outdoor equipment survive the winter and staying "on-the-air" through the bad weather.

The enemies are precipitation, freezing and wind. You don't want the rain, snow, etc. getting inside anywhere where it can cause damage to your antennas, coax or indoor electronics. Seal ends of any tubing in your antenna elements. Make sure that the clamps on any telescoping junctions are tight. Make sure that the "weep holes" are down on any traps. I've seen some people cover the holes with some form of goop. I'm not sure about that idea. I would worry that the inside of the trap would stay wet for a long time if water entered from elsewhere. Water in the trap can de-tune them as well as corrode the interior causing a permanent change in performance.

Another place to check is the back side of any SO-239 connector that might be on the antenna. These connectors are not really intended for outdoor use. They are actually a chassis mount connector, intended to be poking out the back of some piece of radio gear. Even so, these connectors are frequently used to connect the coax to the antenna. Depending on the quality and how hot the center-pin got during soldering, there may be a path for water between the pin and the insulator. If water does find that path, guess where it's going? It will go right into your coax. I lost the use of a brand new 100 foot piece of 9913 that way. (Actually, after two years of drying, it did come back.) Beware the SO-239 based two meter ground plane in the ARRL Antenna book. It's a decent antenna, but you have to make sure you



**UNITED
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Meeting Notice

Thursday, October 22, is the next meeting of the AVARC at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Lancaster City Hall, 44933 N. Fern Ave. in Lancaster. Talk-in is available on 146.73 MHz. if you need directions.

This month's meeting will be the annual "Anchors Away". This is an opportunity for you to clean out your shack and bring your "boat anchors" to the meeting to sell. Your trash may be someone else's treasure!

Also, we will hold our annual election of officers and board members for the upcoming year. This is an important opportunity for you to have a say in how the club will be run in 2010, so be sure to mark your calendars and join us!



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From The Veep

Margie Hoffman KG6TBR

From the VEEP:

Last weekend, October 3-4, I participated in the California QSO Party with my fellow ham friends Ron K6WLC, Dan WA6PZK, Dale KØBGL, Adrienne WA6YEO, Bill AB6CF, Dan W6DAW, and Jay KG6BXN. We ran a multi single expedition up at Ron's Ranch in the Lockwood Valley. The term multi single means were more than one operator working a single radio and taking turns operating and logging for approximately 18 hours from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon. We were able to make contact with all the States and Canadian Provinces thus making what we refer to as a clean sweep. This event is sponsored by the Northern California Contest Club and is an annual event. The requirements are the same amount of contacts for the sweep and the magic number is 58. If you live or transmit from California, the goal is 58 which includes all 50 states and 8 provinces. If you live or transmit outside of California, the goal of 58 is to get all the Counties (58) in the state of California. At the same time you are not only trying to meet your goal, but trying to accumulate as many points as possible and each additional state, province or county added to your list of QSL's becomes a multiplier which greatly increases your point total. Perfectly clear as mud??? ??? ???

If not, please refer to the web page by the NCCC in which they have the rules, past contest results and photos from the events. Also take a look at the ARRL web page as it lists all the contests nationwide that other contest clubs sponsor all around the country throughout the year. It is a good opportunity to test your operating skills and increase your collection of QSL cards from those who participate.

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President's Corner...



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get that center pin junction well sealed after you've put it together.

Now let's talk about the coax. It doesn't pass RF so well, if it has water inside. The obvious places for water entry are at the connectors. If the coax does attach to a SO-239 at the antenna, first water-proof the side away from the connector as mentioned above. A silicone sealer or some similar goop should do the job. Ideally, the chosen material should have some UV resistance.

Now go around to the connector side. You could use the same material here, but I wouldn't. Some of the goopy stuff can really be hard to clean off should you ever need to change or service something. You could try a product called "CoaxSeal", I think. It's sold by most of the amateur equipment suppliers. It's easy to apply and it comes off easily enough.

Another favorite is to wrap with black vinyl electrical tape and paint that with some type of sealer. You could use the same stuff you used above. My favorite second layer is the "paint-on" electrical tape. It comes in 4 oz. cans and is sold at some hardware stores and you can find it online.

The advantages of this two layer approach are that you have twice the chance that it is water-tight and the electrical tape will come off the coax and connectors much cleaner than the other approaches.

If you have any junctions in your coax run, treat them just the same. Keep the water out of your coax. Not only can it make it tough to tune up and get any power to the antenna, it might cause you to damage your radio by loading into high SWR. Also, think about this. Let's say that you have water getting into your coax at the top. It's 30-50 feet above your radio. If the coax can pass water, like 9913 does, where might it end up?

That's something to think about.

Freezing is only a threat if you have water inside something and it freeze. This could be problem with your coax and

antenna elements. Best thing is to keep the water out.

Then there is wind. Are your home brew antennas sound enough? If you have multiple elements mounted on a boom, is the boom-to-mast clamp system adequate?

Will the guy lines for your mast take the wind load of your antenna, mast and support system? (Mine are 5/16" and will support a 700 pound load. I hope that's enough). Are the guys clear of anything that might abrade them as they are worked in the wind? If they must pass close by something, can the guy be protected in some way? I have this problem with one of my guys. I put a piece of the spiral wrap plastic wire protector in the right place. The support system has been up for two years now and everything still looks good.

Now back to the coax. Is it secured well enough, such that it won't be swinging around in the wind? The repetitive motion could harm the coax. If the coax must pass over edges of your home, will it get "rubbed the wrong way"? Some stand-offs or that spiral wrap might help with this problem. That's all I can think for now, but I'm sure there is more to think about. This would be a good discussion subject on the weekly net. Let's talk about this over the next few weeks see what ideas other people have.

73,

Jon N6NQ

From the Veep...

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It also helps you get used to operating as a team to get to your contesting goal for that particular event and is a lot of fun.

This month we are continuing to nominate folks to become our new officers and board members for the year 2010 and we will be holding those elections at the October meeting. We will not have a guest speaker, but this month is Anchors Away. I refer to this event as our annual Junk-A-Thon. This means, you can show up with all your neat stuff that you no longer wish to hold onto in your closet, garage, hamshack, or the floorspace of your office. Price it, pack it up and bring it to the meeting and maybe you will be rewarded with someone standing in front of you with a fist full of green stuff that will fit in your pocket. And remember your junk is someone else's prized item. It may just be what your fellow hams are looking for for their very own.

See you at the meeting!

73,

Margie KG6TBR



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From the Secretary's Desk

AVARC General Meeting Minutes – 24 Sept 2009

Opening:

Jon Clark (N6NQ) called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm. The Flag Salute was conducted. Introductions and roll call followed: Thirty-three individuals participated.

Presentation immediately followed.

Presentation: Gary Titcomb, KI6RFT, presented information on CERT – Community Emergency Response Team.

Additional CERT information:

- A CERT refresher drill is scheduled for Sunday, November 15th. Location TBD.

- Information on the drill will be available in the newspaper.

- High Desert CERT members meet together once a month to review training.

- Next CERT class - 3 Fridays in November.

Gary may be contacted at garyt111@roadrunner.com

Earthquake drill: Sat Oct 10th at 10:00 am: Talk on FRS radio and talk on your assigned channel. Hams requested to relay FRS information to the command center.

Bicycle race: Oct 17th CERT is pairing up with REACT to provide communications for a series of races: a 26 mile marathon, a 55 mile race, and a 105 mile race. Contact Gary Titcomb to participate. 661 478-3115.

Club Business:

Announcements:

Dan W6DAW is coordinating a large, group order, coax purchase. Next test session: Saturday, Oct 26th

November meeting: Anchors Away!

November meeting: Club officer elections! Nominations:

- President - Margie Hoffman
- Vice President - Larry Bianchi
- Secretary – Dan Sherwood
- Treasurer – Don Jackson
- Master at Arms – Gary Mork
- Board Member – Dan Roland

August minutes were accepted. Financial report: club funds - \$3,102.70.

Motion made and 2nd for the club to pay Margie's ticket of \$132.00. Motion passed.

Raffle: Dale KØBGL won the cash raffle of \$17.00.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectively Submitted,
Carol Humpherys AF6OV
Secretary 2009

Bruce Mowers N6SFV-SK 1932-2009

It is with great regret that we report that long-time AVARC member Bruce Mowers N6SFV has passed away. Bruce was our membership chairman for many years, and was also an active MARS member. His MARS call was AFA6KC. Bruce was also actively involved with the Volunteer Examiner program, and participated in both GLAARG and ARRL test sessions. He was a fine amateur, and a good friend, and will be greatly missed by all those who were privileged to know him.

SWAP SHOP

FOR SALE

Yaesu MD-100A8X desktop microphone (\$139.99 new) with data sheet and in new condition at \$50. Brand new Yaesu MH-31B8 dynamic microphone in original box at \$5. Call Bill Welsh W6DDB past noon at 948-8493

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Your trash may be someone else's treasure! Swap Shop ads will be run in the Short Circuit at no charge to AVARC members. Your ad should include prices, and your name and a contact phone number. Ads may be submitted to the Short Circuit editor by e-mail to wa6yeo@sbcglobal.net, or by calling Adrienne at (661) 264-1863.





Antelope Valley Amateur Radio Club 2009 Officers

President	Jon Clark	N6NQ	305-6969
Vice President	Margie Hoffman	KG6TBR	297-6567
Secretary	Carol Humpherys	AF6OV	722-4616
Treasurer	Don Jackson	K6GET	948-4762
Master-At-Arms	Gary Mork	WA6WFC	948-8317
Board Member	Dan Sherwood	WA6PZK	264-1863
Board Member	Larry Bianchi	KG1B	538-9142
Trustee	Keith Hoyt	K6GXO	533-4025
Ex Officio	Eugene Humpherys	KG6SLC	722-4616



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