



SPARKS



Vol. 15, No. 3

Newsletter of the Puget Amateur Radio Society

March 1999

Larry McIntyre SK

We begin on a somber note this month: PARS member Larry McIntyre, WB6VZU, passed away on Feb. 27. He was 62. Larry was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer just weeks before his death. He was one of our most recent members, having joined in November. We profiled him in the January issue of *Sparks*.

Larry was a frequent attendee at the meetings and at Coco's during his brief membership. Those of us who got to spend some time with him found him to be thoughtful and engaging, and never shy about expressing his opinions on whatever subject cropped up.

A southern California native, Larry and his XYL, Donna, moved to Redmond from Northridge, CA in 1994 when his employer, Spacelabs Medical, moved its manufacturing operations here. Apartment restrictions kept him from operating HF from home in Redmond; he had planned to work another year until he could retire, then return to southern CA and set up his shack again. Sadly, he never got the chance. He's survived by his wife, two children from a previous marriage, and four grandchildren.

At his request, no memorial service was held. The club will consider whether to make a donation to the Mary Lou Brown, NM7N, Memorial Scholarship Fund in his memory.

March program - QRP

Issaquah ARC President Rod Johnson, KA7YOU, will present a program this month on QRP operating. QRP, which is generally understood to mean transmitting with 5W or less output power, has added a new challenge for thousands of amateurs grown jaded from heating up the ionosphere with their linears, as well as providing them with an excuse to do some homebrewing and hilltopping. Many an Altoids tin has found new life as an enclosure for the diminutive transmitter built by a QRP enthusiast. Radios are available both in kit form and pre-assembled, from companies like Ten-Tec, MFJ, Oak Hills Research, and dozens of others.

A recent *QST* article pointed out that the reduction in received signal when going from 100W to 5W is $10 \log (5W \div 100W) = -13 \text{ dB}$, or only about three S-units; therefore, if you receive an S-9 report using a 100W transceiver, you should expect to have a respectable S-6 when running peanut power.

The avid QRPer can make up for some of this deficiency by optimizing his antenna system, or by packing his rig and heading for the nearest high spot. Portability, in fact, is a major reason for QRP's popularity: You can throw everything you need into a small backpack and operate all weekend from a battery or solar panel. The (relatively) low cost and simplicity of QRP equipment also appeal to many amateurs.

If you have a QRP rig, please bring it to the meeting Thursday for show and tell.

Next general meeting - Thursday, Mar. 18 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Rod Johnson, KA7YOU, will present a program on QRP (see article above). And be sure to join us at 5:30 PM for dinner at Coco's, 14804 NE 24th St. in Redmond. Visitors are always welcome at the meetings and at Coco's.

Next board meeting - At the home of Al Staples, N7VOF, 409 - 109th Ave. SE in Bellevue, Thursday, Apr. 1 at 7:00 PM. All PARS members are welcome.

Senior Center skyhook update

The Senior Center facilities staff has given us the go-ahead to install a vertical antenna on the roof. They had originally balked at our proposal to put up a Hy-Gain 14AVQ, donated by Dick Schwanke, W9HXM, because of concerns that the required 35-foot radials would create a tripping hazard for the maintenance personnel.

By chance, Bill Martin, N7EU, had donated a Cushcraft R-5, which needs no radials, for the hamfest. I showed the Cushcraft to the facilities manager, who agreed to let us install it. (Don't worry, Bill, you'll still get your tax write-off.) The R-5 covers 10, 12, 15, 17, and 20 meters.

We'll mount the Cushcraft on a weighted mast to avoid having to drill any holes in the roof. The facilities people will need to approve our installation, and we'll have to do some number-crunching to show that the antenna won't tip over in an Inauguration Day-style breeze. I'm still looking for someone with the know-how to take on this chore, otherwise I'll have to dust off the textbooks and try to figure it out myself.

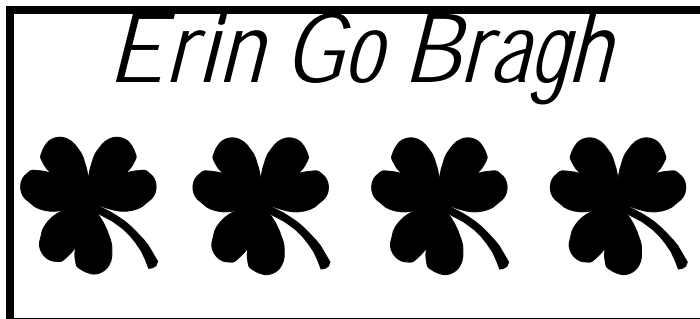
This will be a welcome addition to our antenna arsenal at the Center. We'll put the Hy-Gain to work in Downtown Park for Field Day.

I got another interesting tidbit from the facilities manager: The Center is tapping into the emergency generator at the water-pumping station next door. In an emergency, the generator will power the entire Center, including the exterior outlet that the trailer's plugged into. This means

that we should have power readily available for emergency communications. The Center is designated as a secondary emergency shelter, with supplies to support up to 200 people. - de N7UK

No Mar. Board meeting

The Board didn't meet this month, due to prior commitments for the Vice President and Secretary. The next Board meeting will be April 1 (no fooling!). All PARS members are welcome at the Board meetings.



Birthdays!

Chuck Graff, K7CHV

April 4

EARS hoping you'll call

Eastside Amateur Radio Service - interested parties contact John, W7HIL, at 425-391-8026 or Chuck, WA7EBH, at 425-392-5303. Always room for more help in this community activity.

Programs, get your programs

We're still looking for programs for the May and June meetings. Call Lorie if you'd like to be a speaker, or if you have a program idea.

PARS 1998 - 99 Club Officers:

President - Jim von Seggern, KC7FEH

360-638-1715

Vice President - Lorie Graff, N7LCO

425-392-5846

Secretary - Kirk Bellar, N7UK

206-542-6742

Treasurer - Charles Beckmeier, KC7GMF

425-822-2339

The Puget Amateur Radio Society (PARS) is an ARRL-affiliated club serving radio amateurs in the greater Seattle area. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month (except July, August, and December) at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE. Visitors are always welcome.

Annual dues are \$15.00 for individual membership, \$22.50 for family (2 or more persons at the same address). PARS will prorate the dues of new members joining after Jan. 31. Call Kirk, N7UK, for a membership application.

Join us on the PARS net every Wed. night at 7:00 PM, on the WS7K repeater, 443.2 MHz (103.5 Hz PL). The repeater is located on Rose Hill in Kirkland.

Visit our Web page at <http://www.qsl.net/k7par>. We've just started building this page, so check back often.

Send articles, comments, want ads, idle rumors, etc. for inclusion in this newsletter to Kirk Bellar, N7UK, 19353 Greenwood Ave. N, Shoreline WA 98133, fax to 425-867-2160, or e-mail to n7uk@aol.com.

Send all other club-related correspondence to PARS, PO Box 32, Kirkland WA 98083-0032.

Minutes of the PARS general meeting, Feb. 18, 1999

The club met at the Bellevue Senior Center. Eleven members were present, a quorum. Secretary Bellar was absent.

Due to a last-minute cancellation by the scheduled speaker, the President proceeded immediately with club business. The members approved, without revision, the minutes of the January general meeting as published in the February issue of *Sparks*.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer reported a positive balance for the 30 days ending February 18, and reported on the deposit and withdrawal amounts for the same period. [*Financial statements are available from the Treasurer - Ed.*]

Trailer Committee: The Secretary reported (via e-mail to the President) that he had made repairs to the keyer, and that he was still waiting for the Senior Center's facilities manager to decide whether PARS could install a vertical antenna on the Center's roof. The Secretary had not yet purchased replacement batteries for the 12V distribution system. He also reported that John Heflin, KD7E, had proposed setting up a packet system in the trailer, and the Secretary recommended buying a new, packet-ready radio for the purpose, rather than trying to modify an existing radio.

The President announced that the Standing Trailer Committee, consisting of John Black, Chuck and Lorie Graff, and Herschel Whiting, had officially relinquished trailer stewardship to the PARS Board, and that anyone wishing to use the trailer should contact a Board member.

Flea Market Committee: John Heflin reminded the attendees that the Mike and Key Hamfest would take place in March, that he was still looking for donations and consignments, and offered to pick up any donated items. He passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers to tend the PARS tables, and mentioned that non-member attendees at the hamfest would be able to sign up for a complimentary copy of *Sparks*.

Nomination Committee: The Vice President reported that she had nominees for President, Vice President, and Treasurer for the '99-'00 club year. She was still looking for a nominee for Secretary. She

asked that anyone wanting to be nominated for a position on the Board should contact her.

Field Day: Chairman Bob Adams, KJ7BP, said that he had updated and made copies of the PARS brochure to be handed out at the hamfest, as well as Field Day. Bob and John Heflin discussed the possibility of operating packet and RTTY during Field Day.

Old Business: The Board had previously considered making a contribution to the ARRL's Mary Lou Brown, NM7N, Memorial Scholarship Fund in her memory. The members approved a motion to contribute \$100 to the fund.

The Board had also discussed purchase of a club banner to be used at the hamfest and at other functions. The Treasurer had contacted Fast Signs in Kirkland, which quoted a price of \$93 plus tax for a two-by-eight-foot nylon banner. The members discussed the banner's design and approved the purchase.

New Business: The President asked for a volunteer to head the fox hunt, scheduled for May. He had contacted the vice president of the North Kitsap ARC, who was willing to present a program on fox hunting at the April general meeting. The fox hunt will be held jointly with the Maple Valley and Issaquah ARCs. Doug Bell agreed to head the activity.

The President solicited members who would be available to open up the trailer for emergency communications if needed. These members would occupy the trailer until relieved by Bellevue ARES or RACES personnel. Tim Monk, KD7DEY, volunteered for the job.

John Heflin recommended that the club buy a used TNC and radio for the trailer, in order to operate packet and RTTY. No one moved to do so. After considerable discussion among the members, John offered to loan the club a TNC and radio so that members could give it a try.

With no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at approx. 7:45 PM. An extended break followed.

*Respectfully Submitted -
Kirk Bellar, N7UK
PARS Secretary*

Hamfest notes

By now, the '99 Mike & Key flea market is just a fond memory. I'll report on our success next month. Congratulations are in order for John "Heftin" Heflin, KD7E, for chairing the hamfest committee, hauling the treasures around town without benefit of a FedEx truck, and allowing us to take over part of his garage for a few months. Our thanks also to those of you who signed up to tend the tables this year, and especially to those who made donations or brought items for consignment. Be sure to pester me if I haven't given you a tax receipt.

If you just can't resist those opportunities to add to your toy collection, the next area hamfest will be in Vancouver WA on April 24th, at the Salmon Creek American Legion Post. Phone 360-896-8909 for info. - *de N7UK*

Icom wants you!

Icom HQ in Bellevue is looking for a Technical Customer Service Representative. The job involves talking with customers regarding technical and non-technical questions and issues about Icom product options, features, problems, and operations; attending trade shows and presenting Icom products to customers; and assisting in handling all warranty-related functions, including processing paperwork and follow-through.

Candidates should have 1-2 years experience servicing or providing technical customer service on 2-way radios, strong working knowledge of common technical problems in 2-way radio, excellent communication skills, ability to "diffuse upset customers" (their phrase), 1 year training or experience in communications/2-way radio repair, 2-year degree in electronics or related field, knowledge of RF, and a ham license.

Kenwood and Yaesu owners need not apply. (Just kidding!)

If you're interested, fax your resume to Icom Human Resources at 425-454-1509.

Radio Depot comes to Seattle

Amateur equipment retailer Radio Depot has moved from Bremerton to new digs in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle, near the site of the late lamented Amateur Radio Supply, and is open for business. The address is:

Radio Depot

5963 Corson Ave. S, Suite 176

Seattle 98108

phone 206-763-2936 or 800-291-9067

Also of note: ABC Communications in Shoreline has started carrying a limited inventory of new Icom radios. They continue to sell new accessories (antennas, coax, batteries, etc.) as well as consigned ham gear, CB and marine radios, and scanners. Their address:

ABC Communications

17541 15th Ave. NE

Shoreline 98155

phone 206-364-8300

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ **PARS BAZAAR** ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Buy, sell, or trade your ham-, electronic-, or computer-related treasures here. Ads are gratis for PARS members. Call or e-mail Kirk, N7UK, to place your ad. The Editor reserves the right to capriciously refuse any ads for items he deems unsuitable, e.g. Teletubbies or crocheted poodles.

WANTED TO BUY Ham radio and test equipment that glows in the dark (anything with tubes). I enjoy restoring and most of all operating these beauties from a BYGONE ERA. They will get a loving home. Also will buy any tubes, parts, extra manuals, pre-1970 CQ-73-ARRL handbooks, or anything else relating to ham radio of that era. These items are of great value as a resource when restoring equipment. Jerry, WA7BUY, 360-457-6671 or **kit-susa@olypen.com**.

KEYS WANTED - Collector wants to buy straight keys, bugs, keyers, other telegraph-related instruments, books, and ephemera. Kirk, N7UK, 206-542-6742 or **n7uk@aol.com**.

Spectrum protection bill in Congress

From the Mar. 5 ARRL Letter: "It's round two in Congress for the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act. At the request of the ARRL, Rep. Michael Bilirakis introduced the 1999 version of the proposed legislation, HR783, on February 23.

"The bill is aimed at ensuring the availability of spectrum to Amateur Radio operators. It would protect existing Amateur Radio spectrum against reallocations to or sharing with other services unless the FCC provides 'equivalent replacement spectrum' elsewhere. Bilirakis, a Florida Republican, also sponsored last year's measure, which attracted upwards of 83 cosponsors on both sides of the aisle. Rep. Frank Pallone Jr, a New Jersey Democrat, is the initial cosponsor of the 1999 bill.

"... Specifically, HR783 would amend the Communications Act to require the FCC to provide "equivalent replacement spectrum" to Amateur Radio and the Amateur Satellite Service in the event of a reallocation of primary amateur allocations, any reduction in secondary amateur allocations, or 'additional allocations within such bands that would substantially reduce the utility thereof' to amateurs.

"... A copy of the measure is available via the Thomas Web site, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>"

HAARP to conduct amateur tests

Also from the Mar. 5 ARRL Letter: "The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) facility in Alaska, will conduct a second HAARP Listening Test in late March. HAARP also will conduct an Amateur Radio experiment earlier in the month.

"HAARP will transmit March 26 0800-0830 UTC and March 27 0700-0730 UTC, seeking reports from hams and SWLs in Alaska and in the 'Lower 48.' The HAARP facility rarely transmits, but its previous listening test in March 1997 was so successful that it has decided to conduct another one.

"The listening test transmissions will be on or about 3.4 MHz and 6.99 MHz. HAARP will send a CW message and request signal strength

reports. HAARP's Ed Kennedy, K3NS, points out that the test times are early ones for those on the East Coast, but he says they represent the best chance for listeners in that part of the world to hear HAARP ...

"The 1999 listening test will begin on the hour on 6.99 MHz with an ID, followed by three four-minute periods of carrier only for signal-strength measurements, then a CW message. A somewhat shorter test will begin at 20 minutes past the hour on 3.39 MHz, with an ID, followed by one four-minute carrier and a CW message. QSLs will be available only for reports mailed to HAARP, PO Box 271, Gakona, AK 99586.

"HAARP also will conduct what Kennedy calls 'a true Amateur Radio experiment' in conjunction with the March research effort. The ham experiment, March 20, 2200-2400 UTC, is being organized by Ed Cole, AL7EB, with cooperation from several participants in Alaska and Canada. As Kennedy explains it, 'HAARP will attempt to generate field-aligned irregularities in the F-region over the HAARP facility, and the participants will attempt to establish communication links by scattering VHF signals off the FAI.'

"Each HAARP transmitter can produce 10 kW of RF output between 2.8 and 10 MHz. For the listening test, HAARP will use all 48 available antenna elements but run transmitters at half power, around 480 kW. During the Amateur Radio test on March 20, HAARP will run full power -- 960 kW.

"HAARP's stated scientific purpose is to study 'the properties and behavior of the ionosphere, with particular emphasis on being able to understand and use it to enhance communications and surveillance systems for both civilian and defense purposes.' For more information, see 'The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (QST, Sep 1996, p. 33) or visit the HAARP Web site:

<http://w3.nrl.navy.mil/haarp.html>"

AMRAD gets LF experimental license

And finally, this from the Mar. 8 ARRL Web Extra: "Some US amateur activity is coming to LF! The FCC has granted a one-year experimental license to the Amateur Radio Research and Development Corporation to conduct tests on the frequency 136.75 kHz. Experiments would be carried out from 12 Northern Virginia sites using the call sign WA2XTF. These experiments are to gain low-frequency experience in anticipation that the FCC may allocate a band at 136-kHz to Amateur Radio.

"Last October, the ARRL petitioned the FCC to create two amateur LF allocations at 135.7 - 137.8 kHz and 160-190 kHz. The League asked for a 200W PEP power limit (no more than 2W EIRP) and asked that the new bands be made available to those holding a General class or higher license. The League proposed permitting CW, SSB, RTTY/data, and image emissions. Its petition was designated RM-9404.

"Several countries throughout the world already enjoy LF allocations around 136 kHz. These include New Zealand, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and several European nations.

"Emissions authorized for these tests include 173-Hz and 450-Hz frequency-shift data (173HF1D and 450HF1D) and 100-Hz CW (100HA1A). The authorized transmitted power is 1 W ERP. The 12 stations will operate experimental transmitters, antennas and receiving systems using digital signal processing techniques. Low-frequency operation and DSP are two of AMRAD's prime areas of interest.

"... While the list of stations is closed and new transmitting stations cannot be added, others are invited to join the project by listening and reporting results. Reception reports should be sent via e-mail to Andre Kestleloot, N4ICK, n4ick@amrad.org.

"AMRAD is a worldwide club of Amateur Radio and computer experimenters incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia and affiliated with the ARRL. Among its other

accomplishments, AMRAD aired the first Amateur Radio spread-spectrum transmissions and contributed to spread-spectrum rules development and developed the AX.25 packet protocol. AMRAD is recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt scientific and educational organization. Further information concerning these LF experiments will be available in the *AMRAD Newsletter* mailed bimonthly to AMRAD members and available at <http://www.amrad.org>."