



The Pasadena Radio Club *Bulletin*

September 2009

September 22nd Meeting

Hospital Disaster Communications

Duane Mariotti, WB9RER

In August, 2006 Mr. Mariotti joined Kaiser Permanente Health System in Southern California as a Clinical Systems Engineer in the Clinical Technology (Biomedical Engineering) Department. His primary activities involve planning, purchase preparation, implementing and integrating complex medical technology systems in new hospital design and construction. He has completed opening of a new 200 bed hospital and an O.R. and Birthing Center addition. He is currently involved with two 300+ bed replacement hospital construction projects and another new 200 bed hospital. Total value of involved projects is over two billion dollars. Additionally he is involved in numerous other activities such as new cardiac cath lab, whole house (\$12M) physiological monitoring replacement and integration of a newly purchased community hospital. In this position he coordinates with construction Project Management, Information Technology Leadership, Clinical Technology Operations, Architects, Design and Implementation Teams as well as the clinicians.



In addition to the above responsibilities, Duane serves on several ad hoc and national committees representing standardization and implementation of new technologies including wireless integration, IT cable design and integration, IT power systems, and Intravenous Technology. **He was also appointed by the Threat Assessment Group as the volunteer coordinator of the Kaiser Permanente Amateur Radio Network (KPARN), assuring redundant radio communications in all Kaiser Hospitals and critical facilities.**

From August of 1994 through July of 2005, Mr. Mariotti worked for Harborview Medical Center as Director of Clinical Engineering. Harborview Medical Center is a 420-bed teaching hospital associated with the University of Washington in Seattle.

Mr. Mariotti received a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering with a minor in biology (including a year of graduate level work in cardiology) from Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. He was one of a core of several students that initiated the biomedical engineering program that has grown into an extensive program. Mr. Mariotti graduated in 1980. While in college, he worked his way through school as an athletic trainer, dormitory resident assistant, first aid instructor (for the physical education department), electrical engineering student instructor, and a member of the local ambulance service. He also spent his summers as a manufacturing plant engineer and as an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) inspector.

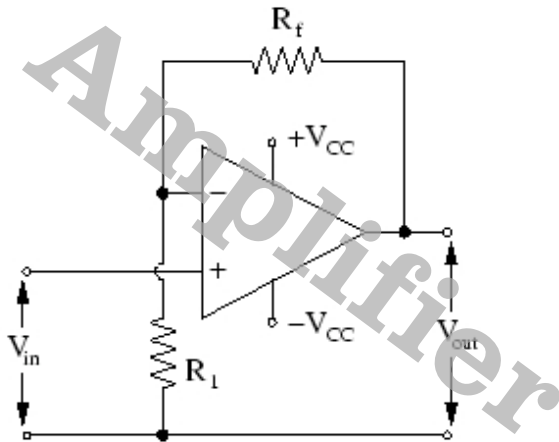
He was licensed as an emergency medical technician (EMT) for 20 years and certified as a Paramedic for over 10 years. Mr. Mariotti has also been a state-certified fire fighter and was certified in advanced cardiac life support, pediatric advanced life support, advanced HAZMAT life support, Basic Disaster Life Support, and pre-hospital trauma life support.

He has two adult daughters and a teenage son.



Several KPARN members, including club members W6ZT, W6PNW and AC6VV, were treated by Mr. Mariotti to an advance tour of the new Kaiser Permanente hospital which just opened in Downey.

The Presidential



by Tom Berne, W6TAG

CQ Worldwide DX Contest

In August and September our Club's Board explored formulated a plan for W6KA's participation in another contest this year. So the PRC will participate in the CQ WW DX Phone Contest on October 23rd to 25th (5 PM Friday to 5 PM Sunday) using the radio room at the Kaiser-Permanente building 393 E. Walnut Street, Pasadena. The contest is a long one (48 hours) and it is likely we will only work part of it. The PRC's participation was announced at the general meeting on the 25th of August and 16 members have already signed up! However **we would love to see more members involved!**

So here is how it will work. This will be a phone contest (voice only, no CW) on the HF bands using that beautiful high (~100 ft up), huge antenna that you see from the freeway and high power that should bring in lots of interesting DX (foreign contacts). We plan to form teams of 3 members each with at least one member who is experienced in contesting with each group until everyone is facile with the equipment, logging and contest operating. Each team will work for 3 hours, rotating the jobs of operator, logger and "gopher". Then a new team comes in for another 3 hour session, and so on. If we have, as a likely example lets say 6 teams, after 18 hours the first team would be up again for another shift if they want to. If some members want to drop out we readjust the team, maybe with those who want extra operating. There are several goals: (1) get experience using good HF equipment: e.g. tuning and using the filtering in the receiver, using an antenna tuner and power amplifier, working with a high gain rotating antenna, (2) practice contesting (busting pile-ups, "search & pouncing", using propagation forecasts,

pulling call signs out of the "mud" [noise]), (3) learn how to run up the score by getting multipliers: DXCC countries, CQ "zones", other continents, (4) work some good foreign stations ("DX"), (5) learn to log with contest software so we can use it at Field day and... most important... have fun with this great ham radio hobby!

More Details on How the Contest Works

The contest we are joining is sponsored by the CQ Magazine people. Their CQ WW contests are considered, along with the ARRL DX contests, as the best international competitions. Therefore, even with the poor sunspot activity, there should be lots of interesting activity. Also, remember that the good news about low solar activity is that it usually means decreased noise levels.

The October CQ WW will be similar to Field Day except we will use a fixed (commercially powered) station with one transmitter, but we will have many operators putting us in a "multi-single" station category. The exchange is simple: "...we are W6KA 59 03" (our call sign, their signal report and our CQ DX zone number).

Scoring is complicated. You get one multiplier for each different CQ DX zone and DXCC country contacted on each band. Contacts between stations on different continents are worth three points; between stations within the North American continental boundaries count two points. Contacts between stations in the same country are permitted for zone or country multiplier credit but have zero point value. The final score is the result of the total points multiplied by the sum of your zone and country multipliers. Example: 1000 points * 100 multiplier (30 Zones + 70 Countries) = 100,000 (final score). Knowing these details determines how hard you work to get what stations on what bands.

If this all sounds interesting and you have not done so, be sure to sign up at the next Club meeting or e-mail me at berne@usc.edu. Then you choose how much time you want to spend "contesting"!

Fire Cancels AC100

The Angeles Crest 100 Mile Endurance Run has been canceled due to the fires. I offer my heartfelt thanks to all of you who volunteered to support the race this year. Your spirit, enthusiasm, knowledge and skills are what make it all possible. Don't forget the race next year. We will be back to ask your help again in 2010 -- That's a promise.

73, John Minger, AC6VV
AC100 Communications Coordinator

Sub-audible Tomes

Bruce Nolte, N1BN

Southern California is Rich with Repeater Sites:

Part One - Mount Wilson

Our recent set of brush fires in our mountains presented a threat to thousands of homes but also to several mountain tops that are important to both broadcasters and Ham Radio operators. The Los Angeles area has many hills and tall mountains that aid Amateur Radio with fine repeater sites.

Mount Wilson is a unique mountain from several aspects. It has a long and rich history associated with the world of astronomy with several important discoveries have taken place using the Hooker and Hale telescopes.

One of the unique aspects of Mt. Wilson is that it is a 5,700 foot mountain only a few miles north of one of the world's major cities. And talk about a big tower, 5,700 feet is a big tower. While there are many commercial radio and television broadcasters on the summit of Mt. Wilson, we are very interested in using it as a radio site for Ham Radio two-way communication. There are several Ham repeaters on this mountain which gives them great line-of-sight paths to the thousands of licensed radio operators below in the city.



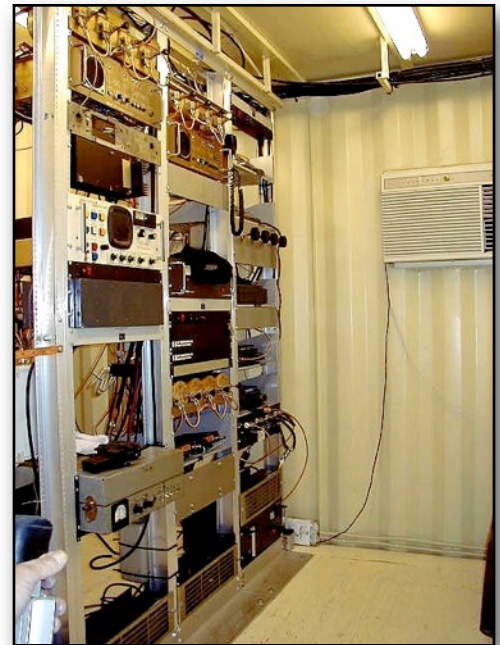
But there are huge challenges to being in such a popular commercial site. Repeaters work best when they have a quiet RF environment. The huge power from FM and TV broadcaster transmitters tends to get into the receivers of Ham repeaters - this can cause problems with poor receive sensitivity. If the repeater can't hear you - then it can't repeat your signal. The owners of Ham Radio repeaters on Mt. Wilson must



take extra measures to reduce the interference from these sources using additional tuned filters of various types - beyond the normal duplexers that most repeaters use. If they don't do this they will end up with a repeater that "talks" better than it "hears" - thus a poor performing repeater that all of the users will complain about. Having a good clean receiver is usually much more important than how much transmit power a repeater or transceiver has.

On the 2 meter band there are no open repeaters located on Mt. Wilson as far as I know. The DARN system operates a "closed" membership type repeater with a stated location of Mt. Wilson on 147.360 (+) Mhz, with a PL of 103.5 Hz. Even though DARN is a membership type repeater group they welcome visitors on their system and encourage membership. They also have a UHF repeater on Mt. Wilson, 446.940 (-) PL 100.0 Hz. DARN is a linked multi-repeater system and allows several modes of operation. Go to www.darn.org for more information. And WA6DVG sponsors the 224.940 (-) PL 94.08 repeater on Mt. Wilson.

In one of the included photos you will see a large equipment rack system that contains the repeater gear for one of the DARN sites. It takes a lot of time and money to keep Ham repeaters on the air - we need to be thankful to the owners and operators who keep these great systems going.



Once the fires are over and the roads are made safe again the drive to the summit of Mt. Wilson is fun and easy - just up Highway 2 from La Canada. You will be amazed by all of the towers and hardware that sit on the top of this mountain. For more info on the radio sites on Mt. Wilson go to this super website - <http://www.fybush.com/sites/2004/site-041217.html>.

73 Bruce N1BN



Crown City HF

Tom Berne, W6TAG

Baluns and Line Isolators

So now we need to look at a few balun specifications such as power handling, impedance ratios, and “current” vs.

“voltage” types before we decide which balun to purchase. The physical size of the components inside of a balun determine how much power it can handle. Ones with higher power ratings, therefore, are larger, heavier and more expensive. Too much weight is a problem when you are using a center fed wire antenna like a dipole because it is often difficult to support the center of the antenna. Remember, for the W6KA virtual ham shack we have been building, we have been planning to use a 100 watt transmitter output, so we can use a lighter low-power one rated for ~150v watts. The impedance ratio we want is 1:1 (remember we are using 50 ohm coax and the feed point impedance of our first antenna (we will start with a dipole) will be just a little above that (depending on elevation and such) so this is the ratio most often used. Other impedance ratios (next most common is 4:1) would be for other feed line and antenna configurations. We could use up a lot of space explaining the difference between “current” and “voltage baluns”, but it wouldn’t help you much. Let’s just accept the fact that “current” baluns seem to be favored in amateur radio applications. Baluns come configured as boxes, round tub-shaped things and several other shapes. As described in last month’s CC HF article the most popular are in sealed segments of PVC pipe. The shape does not matter much electronically, but the boxes and tub-like shapes work best when bolted to a mast for a beam antenna and the PVC segments seem best for wire antennas with a hang down coax.

To finish this topic I need to mention that we can also avoid radio frequency energy coming down the outside of our coax by using a “line isolating choke”. Two common and inexpensive options are either making six to eight loops of our coax (~6” diameter, bound together), or putting several snap-on ferrite beads around the coax. These are usually placed just a few inches below the feedpoint attachment. The loops are better for beams and the ferrite beads work well on wire antennas.

I would love to finally get to some real “antenna talk”, but alas, a few more important things need to be covered first. Next month it will be “Grounding”.



The Eagle Speaks! - or - HF Part III

Kate Hutton, KD6HTN

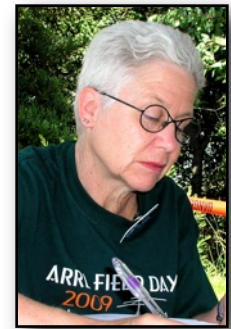
When we last left the tale of the GAP Eagle DX (August 2009 bulletin, “Journey into HF, part II”), it was functioning fine as a short-wave listening antenna. It was pulling in the occasional grayline DX from New Zealand, various pile-ups, and W1AW code practice. However, the minimum SWR on all the HF bands (40, 20, 17, 15, 12 and 10 m) was outside the ham allocation. The SWR inside most bands ranged from 2:1 to 5:1, except for 12 m, where it was 11.4:1, and 15 m, where it exhibited wild variations over small changes in frequency.

Something had to be seriously wrong. Either 1) the antenna was assembled improperly (the favored explanation of GAP tech support), 2) some of the aluminum pieces were of the wrong dimension, 3) something was wrong in the wiring, 4) there is enough metal in the house stucco and in the yard to detune the antenna, 5) it was a poor choice & just plain does not work, 6) something else. On August 1, Allen KC7O, Steve Katz WB2WIK, and I, with logistical support from Pam W6PNW, took the Eagle down and laid it out on the roof.

Steve is an old acquaintance of Allen’s and has some experience with GAP antennas, unfortunately most of it less than positive. He has a great deal of experience with antennas in general and turned out to be quite an asset to our effort.

Having received a list of part dimensions (which were not all included in the manual) from GAP, we measured each piece and found no discrepancies. We rechecked the wire connections per the manual, tested them with an ohmmeter, and found no problems. Then we measured the SWR’s again a couple of times, maybe hoping we’d get different results.

There was only one component left to check. At the very top of the antenna, there is a capacitor ... two in parallel, actually, encased in the same block of epoxy. We remove this component and measured it. Allen happened to have the proper meter to do this, which he went home to fetch. Bingo! The value varied between 2200 pF and about 30 pF, depending on how much physical pressure you put on the leads! Something was not right. It was possible to see through the epoxy, sort of, so Allen determined that the leads were crimped into the connectors, but not





soldered, and the size of the lead wire was probably too small for the crimp used.

That discovery ended the day's work. We left the Eagle lying on the roof, and I FedEx'd the suspect component back to GAP in Florida. (Also, I confess to using Google Earth to try to find out if GAP is a garage or an industrial building. No luck: the address landed me in the middle of an intersection. One corner is a house, with a garage, and opposite is an industrial building.)

GAP immediately replaced the component, and we had two of them (one potted in epoxy and the other not) before the next weekend. Tech support insisted that such weak connections were very rare. In answer to Allen's insistence that there should have been solder, there was not really a reason given. It was not an omission, at least; it is not their practice to solder this part. "It is not generally a problem."

Steve and Allen were both convinced that GAP was not taking quality control issues seriously. Steve

writes articles for various ham publications, so he's rather a bad person for GAP to negatively impress. You can read his version of this very tale at <http://www.eham.net/articles/22265>. Steve did some statistics on the eham reviews and found that 25.5% of them reported problems with the Eagle, some resolved and some not. It is the opinion of GAP tech support that these users had not assembled the unit correctly. If that is so, then the manual, our other main complaint after the capacitor, must indeed be poor!

However, I later discovered an e-mail reflector devoted to GAP antennas (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GapAntennas/>). A substantial number of the posts in the archive deal with the capacitors, either getting or using the ones for the wrong model antenna, or bad ones like the one we got. The lesson here seems to be that a huge amount of research can be done via the Internet about a product that you may want to buy. I had done some, but apparently not enough.

Allen managed to solder the crimped connections within the connectors on the potted caps, without melting anything, as GAP had predicted would happen.

With the caps re-installed and the Eagle re-erected, the SWR's were still not perfect. Most didn't meet the advertised specs of "better than 1.5:1". With the exception of 15 m, however, they were all better than 3:1 and they did all dip inside the ham bands. So we had found and corrected a definite problem. Since the Yaesu FT-897D will not apply full power if the SWR is greater than 1.5:1, I took the expedient solution. I trundled back to HRO and bought an antenna tuner (the LDG AT-897, which bolts right onto the side of the Yaesu). Now, as the expression apparently goes, "I can load up almost anything." That got me on the air!

Within a few days, in spite of the blank Sun, I had made my first QSO's, on 40 m CW. I have to say this was among the more stressful experiences that I have ever had; it is true, what they say, that your palms sweat the first few times you try to use CW on the air, no matter how much you've practiced! They almost drip! Via the Internet, I had scheduled a contact with a willing member of the FISTS CW Club, Paul N6MYA in Reno. I had anxiety attacks all day. The

See Eagle, continued on page 6

The Eagle Speaks!, continued from page 5

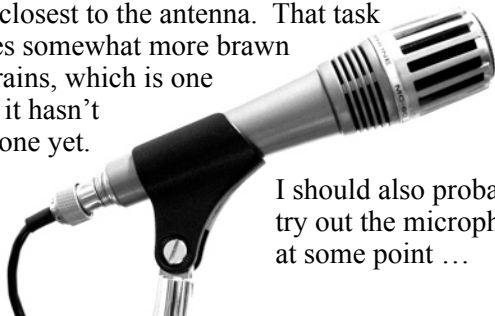
QSO turned out to be problematic and embarrassing, but not because of my bad code, which is what I expected. All the other party sent was "EMAIL ME". By e-mail, he delivered my signal report: 119! This certainly did not inspire any confidence in my antenna!

On my second attempt, at a probably more reasonable skip distance, I did somewhat better, and with considerably less sweat. Discovering someone with a relatively strong signal calling CQ, at about my speed, I answered. This is when I ran into problems with being ham-fisted. The QSO was not pretty, but it did happen and the customary information was exchanged. On the third night, I did the same thing, and found myself conversing with the same guy, Joe KE7ICY in Oregon! On both these occasions, I got a 559 signal report. So it is possible! The Eagle will speak.

I immediately set about designing a QSL card and getting some printed, so I had something to send him for all his patience!

My knowledge of propagation is still hit or miss. Mark W6MES in Tujunga had expressed some interest in brushing up on his conversational Morse code. I knew that I could usually hear a 10 m beacon station in Long Beach, so we thought we would try that band, in the evening when no-one was on it, to do some serious ragchewing. We coordinated our test by HT through the Telco repeater, which must have caused some chuckles for anyone listening, including Phil WA6DZS. Neither Mark nor I could hear the other's 10 m CW, but Phil (very close by in Altadena) could hear me just fine. I later tried something similar with someone in Encinitas (Arnie Lewin W7BIA), coordinated this time by Gmail chat, with the same negative result. If I'm going to do radio in the evenings, I may need to make more friends in other parts of the country.

I have several things on my agenda to try. It is clear that the length of the feedline matters. We got much better results with an extra 50 feet of coax, beyond what we physically needed to reach the rig. It might be productive to try to find a "magic number" length that could improve things further. Also, there is room in the yard for me to move the chain-link dog run that is closest to the antenna. That task requires somewhat more brawn than brains, which is one reason it hasn't been done yet.



I should also probably try out the microphone at some point ...



N6LL Photo

Bill Wysock, N6UXW, drawing a long high voltage arc from a Tesla coil to a wire held in his hand, at last month's meeting

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Vice President Pamela Royce	W6PNW 626-285-8987
Secretary Bruce Nolte	N1BN n1bn at charter dot net
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**September Refreshments
will be by Mark Seigel and
Cynthia and Tom Berne**

PRC Bulletin Online:

<http://www.qsl.net/w6ka/>

The Pasadena Radio Club meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Kaiser Permanente Walnut Center, located at 393 East Walnut Street, at the corner of Los Robles Avenue in Pasadena. Enter the parking structure at the Los Robles Avenue entrance and mention "Pasadena Radio Club". Everyone is welcome to attend. Please sign in at the front desk and security will direct you to the meeting room.

Membership in the Pasadena Radio Club is open to anyone interested in Amateur Radio. Dues are \$20 per year, \$10 for students. Request a membership application at the club's mailing address, on the club website, www.qsl.net/w6ka, or in person at the monthly meeting.

The Pasadena Radio Club, W6KA, conducts a weekly net every Tuesday night, except on meeting nights, at 7:00 p.m. The frequency is 145.180 MHz (-) PL 156.7. All licensed amateurs are invited to participate.

The club has a packet station on 145.630 and on 223.600 (cross-band capable) with a PBBS of W6KA-10 and a node name of MIRDOR.

There is an unofficial Yahoo Group for club members at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PRC-Club/>. All members are invited to join as this allows for rapid dissemination of information to members via e-mail.

Bulletin Submissions: please submit any articles, photos, or ideas for future articles via e-mail to [AC6VV at arrl dot net](mailto:AC6VV@arrl.net), please include "PRC" in the Subject line. Other modes of submission may be arranged in advance on an individual basis. Submissions are due by the Friday after the board meeting.

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Please submit any address or e-mail changes to the Treasurer.

We can take your files on disk or via e-mail



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**This Month:
Duane Mariotti, WB9RER
Hospital Disaster
Communications**

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Sep 20	Sep 21	Sep 22	Sep 23	Sep 24	Sep 25	Sep 26
		PRC Club Meeting 7:00 pm	KPARN Nets 12:15 pm 448.280 Mhz, 52.700 Mhz, 7.228 Mhz	AC100 Meeting		
Sep 27	Sep 28	Sep 29	Sep 30	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3
Yom Kippur		PRC Net 7:00 pm 145.180 - PL 156.7				Calif QSO Party
Oct 4	Oct 5	Oct 6	Oct 7	Oct 8	Oct 9	Oct 10
Calif QSO Party		PRC Net 7:00 pm 145.180 - PL 156.7				
Oct 11	Oct 12	Oct 13	Oct 14	Oct 15	Oct 16	Oct 17
	Columbus Day	PRC BOARD 7:30 pm PRC Net 7:00 pm		The Great Shakeout		Chino Swap Meet
Oct 18	Oct 19	Oct 20	Oct 21	Oct 22	Oct 23	Oct 24
		PRC Net 7:00 pm 145.180 - PL 156.7			CQ WW DX/SSB starts 17:00 PDT	CQ WW DX/SSB
Oct 25	Oct 26	Oct 27	Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Oct 31
CQ WW DX/SSB ends 17:00 PDT		PRC Club Meeting 7:00 pm	KPARN Nets 12:15 pm 448.280 Mhz, 52.700 Mhz, 7.228 Mhz			TRW Swap Meet Halloween Last Day of DST

Bonus Online Page

Pasadena Radio Club General Meeting Minutes - 8/25/2009

submitted by Secretary, Bruce Nolte, N1BN

General Meeting August 25, 2009

About 50 members and guests in attendance.

Meeting started at 7 pm

Announcements and Refreshments while the Tesla gear is assembled.

Speaker Bill Wysock N6UXW give a lively talk on Tesla and Tesla coils and then demonstrated a large coil to an amazed membership.

Bruce Nolte presented his W6KA 2009 Field Day video, with a running time of 26 minutes. It was well received.

More announcements.

Tom Berne discussed the upcoming need of a slate of officers for 2010 and that we need input from the membership.

Meeting ended at 8:55 pm

Pasadena Radio Club Board Meeting Minutes - 9/8/2009

*submitted by Secretary, Bruce Nolte, N1BN
(Not yet approved by the board)*

In attendance: Bruce Nolte, Peter Fogg, Phil Barnes Roberts, Kate Hutton, Pamela Royce, Tom Berne, Cynthia Berne, John Minger, Fred Lopez, Mark Seigel

Meeting started at 7:30 pm

Secretary: a receipt to turn in is the only business.

Treasurer: Cash flow sheet passed out. In spite of our new \$20 membership fee, we are doing well in the budget department. Bruce Nolte turns in a \$17.30 expense for power cord and power strip for the club projector. Peter Fogg moved and Cynthia Berne seconded, approved by all.

VP report: Upcoming speakers: 22 September Duane Mariotti, WB9RER - Hospital Disaster Communications. 27 October William J. ("Bill") Weber, N6CI - Deep Space Network. 24 November William E. ("Bill") Fletcher, AA1OU - "22,000 Miles on the Water with Ham Radio"

Bulletin: . Discussion about switching it to email only for publication ensued. A survey of the membership may occur at the future meeting. Monthly printing costs are about \$98 per month for 70 copies, including postage.

Refreshments for September by Mark Seigel and Cynthia and Tom Berne.

A discussion about having a raffle at the November meeting ensued. Peter Fogg moved that we have a door prize / raffle at the November meeting and have the club produce seed money to make it happen. No one seconded the motion.

A discussion about the December "unofficial" restaurant meeting ensued. No decision yet.

Nominations for next year's board membership discussion ensued. Tom Mikkelsen expressed an interest in being Treasurer. Fred Lopez is interested in President. Other names are being considered.

Contest Planning discussion ensued. 16 people signed up for the event. October 23, 24, 25.

New Business:

Pasadena Marathon is scheduled for February 21, 2010. A discussion ensued about what kind of activity to have at the marathon.

Meeting ended at 9:05 pm



Congratulations, KC7O!

