



SPARKS



Vol. 17, No. 6

Puget Amateur Radio Society

June 2001

May program - Amateur TV

Gary Lewis, WA7BBJ, from the Western WA ATV Society, will be on hand this month to show us what's happening in the world of amateur fast-scan television.

Like most of our other electronic toys, ATV gear has gotten smaller, cheaper, and more capable in the last decade. How about an ATV transmitter and camera mounted in a model plane, a kite, or even a hard hat? ATVers are finding new uses for these diminutive devices every day. All you need to receive these pictures is a cable-ready TV switched to the right channel. Gary will bring along some of his gadgets, along with videos of local ATVers' exploits.

PARS election results

The members present at the May general meeting voted to elect the slate of officers announced in last month's *Sparks*:

President: Mark Whitaker, KD7KUN
Vice-president: Lisa Marker, K7LAM
Secretary/Treasurer: Kirk Bellar, N7UK

The officers-elect will take office on July 1, replacing current President Charles Beckmeier, KC7GMF, Vice President Al Staples, N7VOF, and Treasurer John Heflin, KD7E. Current Secretary Kirk Bellar, N7UK, will continue in his post and add the Treasurer duties, as is allowed in the By-Laws. The new officers will serve for one year.

Our By-Laws specify that an ex-officer be appointed to serve on the Board. John Heflin has

consented to be a Board member for the 2001-2 club year.

Al Staples has graciously made his home available for Board meetings for as long as Your *Sparks* Editor can recall. For the coming year, the Board will vary its venues, most likely converging on Eastside eateries. Since our choice of locale will likely be a last-minute decision, check with Kirk if you'd like to attend. PARS members are always welcome and encouraged to attend the Board meetings.

Field Day, finally!

We're just days away from The Big Event, gang. As I've reported incessantly in these pages, PARS' Field Day effort will take place in Downtown Park in Bellevue, just south of Bellevue Square, on the weekend of June 23-24. We'll set up in the parking lot at the south end of the park this year, rather than the NE corner we've used previously.

Mark Whitaker's been busily recruiting every public-safety agency he could think of to share the parking lot with us that weekend. He's also invited a group of youngsters from Helen Keller Elementary in Kirkland, and we expect to have a few Mike & Key members on hand too.

Setup will begin at 0800 Saturday, and we'll start operating at 1100. We'll have a potluck dinner at 1800. If there are enough operators available, we'll operate nonstop until 1100 or so Sunday.

This promises to be the biggest FD operation that PARS has ever hosted. Don't miss it!

Next general meeting - Thursday, June 21 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Gary Lewis, WA7BBJ, will present a program on amateur television (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 - Thursday, Sep. 6, location to be determined. Contact Kirk, N7UK, for location. All PARS members are welcome.

New controller for the PARS repeater

The members approved a motion from Your Sparks Editor at the May meeting to purchase a new controller for our 443.2 repeater. The repeater, located on Rose Hill, currently has a simple controller capable of generating a CW ID and timing out the transmitter, and little else. The repeater's existing call, as you're probably aware, is WS7K, which belongs to former member Herschel Whiting (who has reportedly just moved to Phoenix). We want to change the call to K7PAR. The present controller doesn't lend itself to ready reprogramming of the ID.

Since we needed to change the repeater call, it was a good opportunity to consider upgrading our controller. With the proliferation of no-code Techs, it made sense to me to provide a voice IDer. Thanks to Doug Bell's efforts, I had a stack of literature from the various controller manufacturers to sift through. After reviewing the range of available features and prices, I settled on the NHRC-10 from NHRC Repeater Controllers. Features of this controller include:

- ★ 4 different voice IDs and 3 voice "tail" messages. These messages are digitally recorded, not synthesized. We could use them to announce upcoming meetings, direct users to our web site, etc.

- ★ 6 voice mailboxes, so members will be able to leave voice mail for each other.

- ★ An audio test mode. This will allow you to record and play back your own voice to check your transmitted audio quality.

- ★ Full autopatch capability. This feature is standard in most controllers, although we have no plans at present to add an autopatch. Since PSE won't let us tap into their phone system, we'd have to add a radio link to someone's house; or resort to a cell phone, with the attendant monthly charges.

- ★ Remote base capability. We could use the controller to remotely-operate an HF radio. This would, of course, be an additional expense, and we'd need permission from PSE to erect an HF antenna at the site.

- ★ Ability to control a remote receiver, base, link radio, or slave repeater.

- ★ DTMF pad test.

The repeater itself will continue to operate on the 448.2/443.2 MHz pair, with a PL of 103.5 Hz.

I ordered and received the controller several weeks ago, and have asked Steve Szombathy, our PSE liaison, to set aside some time after Field Day for us to go to the site and install it. I'm hoping to do the job in July or August. Several members have expressed interest in helping with the installation, and we'll try to accommodate everyone if Steve lets us all in. We'll collect video evidence of the installation for a future meeting.

Meanwhile, if you'd like to comb through all the details of the controller, you'll find the manual at http://www.nhrc.net/nhrc-10/NHRC-10_User_Guide.pdf. - de N7UK

PARS 2000 - 01 Club Officers:

President - Charles Beckmeier, KC7GMF 425-392-5846
Vice Pres. - Al Staples, N7VOF 425-454-2882

Secretary - Kirk Bellar, N7UK 206-542-6742
Treasurer - John Heflin, KD7E 425-828-3034

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.

Visit our Web page at <http://www.qsl.net/k7par>. This is always a work in progress, so check back often.

Send articles, comments, want ads, Mariners scores, 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.

Origin of 'Ham'?

[Thanks to Mark Whitaker for this article. I can't vouch for its veracity, but it makes for a good read nonetheless. - Ed.]

KC5TMV writes, "Have you ever wondered why we radio operators are called HAMS? Well, it goes something like this: The word 'ham' was applied in 1908 and were the call letters of one of the first amateur wireless stations, operated by some of the members of the Harvard Radio Club.

"They were Albert Hyman, Bob Almy, and Peggie Murray. At first they called their station Hyman-Almy-Murray. Tapping out such a long name in code soon called for a revision, and they changed it to Hy-Al-Mu, using the first two letters of each name. Early 1909 some confusion resulted between signals from Hy-Al-Mu and a Mexican ship called Myalmo, so they decided to use only the first letter of each name and identified their station as HAM. In the early pioneer and unregulated days of radio, amateur operators picked their own frequencies and call letters.

"Then, as now, some amateurs had better signals than some commercial stations. The resulting interference finally came to the attention of congressional committees in Washington, DC and they gave much thought to proposed legislation designed to critically limit amateur activity. In 1911, Albert Hyman chose the controversial Wireless Regulations Bill as the topic of his thesis at Harvard. His instructor insisted that a copy be sent to Senator David Walsh, a member of the committee hearing the bill. The Senator was so impressed that he sent for Mr. Hyman to appear before the committee. Hyman was put on the stand and described how the little amateur station, HAM, was built, and he almost cried when he told the crowded committee room that if the bill went through, they would have to close up the station because they could not afford the license fees and other requirements which were set up in the bill. The debate started and the little station HAM became a symbol of all the little amateur stations in the country that were crying out to be saved from the menace and greed of the big commercial stations who did not want them around. Finally the bill got to the floor of Con-

gress and every speaker talked about the poor little station, HAM.

"That's how it all got started. You can find the whole story in the Congressional Record. Nationwide publicity identified the station HAM with amateurs. From that time to this, and probably to the end of time, in radio, every amateur is a HAM."

Seapac report

Your *Sparks* Editor attended this year's ARRL NW Division convention, a.k.a. Seapac, in not-so-sunny Seaside OR over the weekend of June 1-3. This has become a regular pilgrimage for Lisa and me, although she opted to stay home this year to work on a term paper.

For those of you who've never been to Seapac, there's plenty to like about this get-together: commercial displays, including the Big Three (Icom, Kenwood, and Yaesu), seminars, flea market, banquet, door prizes, and plenty of schmoozing opportunities. The XYL and harmonics can keep themselves amused at the beach or load up on T-shirts and taffy in Seaside's numerous tourist-oriented emporia.

The seminars were a bit skimpier this year, but I managed to take in five of them, including a five-hour marathon antenna workshop Friday. Topics ran the gamut from tower ordinances to DXpeditions, APRS, digital modes, etc. I attended my first QCWA luncheon and had the pleasure of meeting ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP. Jim conducted an ARRL forum after the luncheon, stressing the importance of "selling" ham radio as a "product". He responded to complaints about the increase in ARRL dues by noting that none of the paid staffers at HQ are getting rich. In fact, they make much less than they would at a for-profit firm (Jim receives no salary as President).

A great time was had by all. I encourage every PARS member to attend it at least once... you won't be sorry. Next year's Seapac will be held on May 31-June 2. See you there! - de N7UK

Minutes of the PARS General Meeting, 17 May 2001

The members met at the Bellevue Senior Center. 13 members attended, a quorum. 2 visitors also attended. The President brought the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.

Pete Policani, K7PP, and Marty Hadfield, WB7AFV, presented a program on the Western WA Amateur Relay Association. Pete described the Association and fielded questions from the members, then Marty demonstrated a software program that could predict repeater coverage and interference. Marty had modeled the PARS' repeater coverage as part of the demonstration.

Following a break, the President reconvened the members for the business meeting. The members approved, without additions or corrections, the April meeting minutes as published in the May issue of *Sparks*.

Treasurer's report: The Treasurer reported a positive balance in the club account. [*figures are available from the Treasurer - Ed.*]

Trailer report: The Secretary promised to do some house cleaning and replace any needed consumable items prior to Field Day, and asked the President to check the tire pressure when he hauls the trailer to the Field Day site.

Contest report: The Secretary mentioned the National Lighthouse Weekend, coming up on the first weekend of August, as a possible operating activity in lieu of the RSGB IOTA contest. He also discussed the Washington Salmon Run, to be held on Sep. 15-16.

Field Day: Jim Darby polled the members as to whether they wanted to have a potluck on Saturday night during the Field Day weekend. Mark Whitaker said that he'd probably be holding a planning meeting around May 25, and that the Bellevue Parks Dept. would allow the club to use the parking lot at the south end of Downtown Park. The President said that he'd be hauling the PARS trailer to the park on Friday night or early Saturday morning of the event.

Publicity: Chair Lisa Marker was absent. The Secretary stated that Lisa would have brochures and press releases ready for Field Day.

Old Business: The Secretary moved to purchase a repeater controller from NHRC, at a cost of \$450. The members and Pete Policani discussed the available options. The members voted to approve the purchase. [*see the article elsewhere in this issue - Ed.*] The Secretary offered to contribute \$100 to defray the cost of the controller.

New Business: The President called for nominations for officer positions for the 2001-2002 club year. There were none besides the nominees previously announced. The members voted to elect Mark Whitaker as President, Lisa Marker as Vice-President, and Kirk Bellar as Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary recognized the outgoing President, Vice-President, and Treasurer for their efforts during the present club year.

The Secretary offered to buy copies of the WWARA Repeater Directory at the next WWARA meeting, for any members wishing them.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted -
Kirk Bellar N7UK, PARS Secretary*

No July, August meetings

A reminder: PARS will have no general or board meetings in July or August. There'll be no *Sparks*, either. While the new PARS board will take office on July 1, there won't be much for them to do before the Sept. 6 board meeting.

The International Lighthouse Weekend will take place Aug. 18-19, and I may mount a mini-DXpedition to one of our local lighthouses for the event. If so, I'll let everyone know where and when. Ditto for the repeater controller installation, if it takes place in July or August. Have a great summer! - *de N7UK*