


Yuba-Sutter Amateur Radio Club



Valley Ham News

THE VOICE OF THE YUBA-SUTTER AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
A California Non-profit Organization
PO Box 1169
YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA 95992

OCTOBER 1988

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Next Board of Directors' Meeting: The October Board Meeting will be held on October 26, 1988, at Herb's home. Time is 7:30PM, and address is 712 King Avenue in Yuba City.

Next Club Meeting: The meeting this month will feature a talk by P G & E on tracing power line noise. This was scheduled last month, but P G & E was unable to make it. See you at 7:30 PM October 11 at Gray Avenue School in Yuba City.

The Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club holds a regular net for members and guests each Tuesday evening at 7:00PM on WD6AXM/R, 146.085/.685. See you there.

NET CONTROL STATIONS--OCTOBER 1988

October 18---By invitation October 25---By invitation

CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:Larry Badger, WA6ISR VICE PRESIDENT:Roger Mason, KA6BBF
SECRETARY:Don Caskey, KB6RHM TREASURER:Jack Craig, K6ZMA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ron Murdock, WB5FIX Herb Puckett, W6HBU
Bud Peters, K6HDE Jim Giarde, WA6RZA
Dave Gartner, WD6AXM Bob McClard, WA6OWH

October 1988

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 28, 1988

The meeting was called to order by President Larry at 7:45 PM.

Board members present: Herb Puckett, W6HBU; Jim Giarde, WA6RZA; Bob McClard, WA6OWH; Ron Murdock, WB5FIX.

Officers present: President Larry Badger, WA6ISR; Treasurer Jack Craig, K6ZMA.

Minutes of the June 22, 1988, meeting were read and approved. (There was not a quorum at the July and August meetings.)

Treasurer's report: \$1733.34 in the bank account, \$611.00 of which is the repeater fund. This leaves \$1122.34 in the general fund.

Old Business:

The 911 link is not dead. A unit will probably be installed on the water tower in Yuba City. The primary site on the hill has too great a coverage area in the opinion of the local emergency agencies. Technical details are still to be worked out (dual repeaters, emergency shutdown of the primary unit, etc.).

There followed a discussion of tone-encoded squelch for users of the repeater -- ie. tone-activated receivers for emergency alert. This would allow continuous monitoring of the repeater without having to listen to traffic on the frequency continuously. This will be a subject for future discussion by the Board.

The Board then officially rescinded its action in June regarding dues for Bill, KG6GB.

New Business:

Christmas Party; Bob, WA6OWH, reported that there is an opening at Ruthy's on the second Tuesday of December. The same menu as last year would be available. Bob is presently working on price and other details.

White Elephant Sale; Proceeds of the sale are to go toward a 220 MHZ repeater as originally set up. The Board directed that it would be "cash and carry, as is, where is" type of sale.

There was then discussion of a possible Technician class in November. This will depend upon interest shown by prospective students. Nothing definite yet.

There was a discussion of the bank balance, budgets, and related topics. It was pointed out that having a nest egg in the treasury has enabled the club to purchase at least 50 "Tune in the World" packages plus portions of the parts to manufacture some code practice oscillators. Most of this has been returned over a period time as students purchase the items. Some of the names on the club roster are a result of the above policy.

The Board then designated the October Board meeting as the meeting to provide redress of perceived inequities in dues as assessed in 1987. This is a followup on the June meeting, and will be the first item of business at the October 26, 1988, meeting.

October 1988

The club has been asked to participate in the Bok Kai parade again next year. The Board took the request under consideration for action at next Board meeting.

The meeting was then adjourned at 9:36 PM.

respectively submitted,

Herbert R. Puckett, W6HBU

THE PREZ SEZ

September is behind us now and the end of the year is fast approaching. We'll be breaking out the turkey and Christmas decorations before you realize it.

Kudos go to Randy, N6QMM, for a fantastic White Elephant Sale. Not only did he prove to be quite an elephant herder, he also managed to find new homes for all of them. The club raised more than \$200 in the event. The money is to be earmarked for an eventual 220 repeater.

Congratulations are in order for our two newest board members: Ron, WB5FIX, and Bob, WA6OWH. They were appointed by yours truly at the last general meeting to serve out the remainder of the terms of Doug, N6QWU, and Bob, KF6OR. Those terms expire Dec. 31. And that brings up a related topic: Elections. The Board of directors at its next meeting will prepare a slate of nominees for various posts to be filled by election of the members at the November general meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the November meeting prior to the election. Directors conduct the business of the club, officers maintain club records. The following positions will be filled in the November election: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and two directors. The terms of the officers are for one year. The directors terms are for two years. If you think you'd like to serve your club and help set its direction, contact an officer or director before the November board meeting.

Plan to make the October general meeting. PG&E, which cancelled out on the program at the September meeting, has promised to be here in October to demonstrate and tell how they trace power line noise.

That's all for now. 73's
LARRY, WA6ISR

October 1988

USER'S REPORT ON THE KANTRONICS KAM

Once you have tried the all mode features of today's TNCs, it is difficult to go back to a system or device with fewer features. But that is what I've had to do.

I started in RTTY with a Mod. 15 and a homebrew TU. It worked (sort of...).

Next came a Mod. 19, then a PET 8k computer and a succession of programs to make it do RTTY with less noise. Finally, I got a HAL ST-5000 TU. That was a real eye opener. The TU is the heart of any RTTY system, and the program just does what the electro-mechanical printer used to do--quieter, and without the tell-tale odor. To make the whole system more compact I chose a program card plugged into a VIC, then for greater capacity, the same type of scheme plugged into a C-64. When I went to the VIC, the ST-5000 went on the shelf, and the TU became an "interface". It also was less sensitive and more errors in copy resulted. But what it lacked in sensitivity was offset in filing flexibility and ease of correction of received errors. For the last three years, this station has used a C-64, AEA MBA-Tor card, and CP-1 as the core of the RTTY operation.

I tried the AEA PK-64A/HF modem, but it created its own RFI, so I sold it to someone who could use it primarily for VHF packet. Since I was still looking for the perfect all-in-one-box TNC/TU-you-name-it, the next thing I tried was the KAM.

When working with the KAM, you can't separate its features from the separate terminal program you choose to use with it. I am currently using Bob's Term Pro, (primarily a telephone modem program.) When using parallel audio, the AEA MBA-Tor/CP-1 gets fewer errors than the KAM, but the KAM doesn't get the same errors as the CP-1. Sometimes the KAM seems to get "filled up" or befuddled, and fails to copy a few letters at a time before going on with good copy.

While the MBA-Tor program is menu-oriented, the KAM does everything like a TNC, from command mode--that is, a keyboard interrupt. Both the CP-1 and the KAM have LED tuning indicators on the front panel and both provide tuning scope output signals. But the KAM has possibilities that AEA never thought of for the CP-1. The operator can reconfigure the KAM from the keyboard for things like CW tone, bandwidth of the switched capacitor filters, speed (receive and transmit) and mode--Packet being "on" unless you command something else. There are two channels of simultaneous operation--one intended for full time VHF, and one you can use for HF, or another VHF/UHF line. As text arrives on your screen, a "/V" for the VHF, or "/H" for the HF port is appended to the line to indicate whence it came.

The KAM manual is complete and well written. My version of firmware is 2.84 and while using a loner from KE6LW with earlier firmware, I was impressed with the features added since his was made. The unit is easy to hook up to your rig and is versatile regarding the computer of your choice. Both TTL and RS-232 signals

October 1988

levels can be accomodated.

As to the RFI--as noted with AEA's PK-64 (and their PK-232 to a lesser degree), the KAM is absolutely silent. Good constuction and tight packaging result in a small, efficient package.

There is a Personal Bulletin Board which I use to store the latest ARRL Bulletins. You can access my PBBS most of the time on 145.07--WB5FIX-1 if all you need is the latest 5 or 10 bulletins. I've allocated just 10k bytes of storage for this purpose. KE6LW-1 does a fine job for normal purposes.

More can be said about this little box, but I think you could do worse if an all mode TNC is on your wish list. I have not yet mastered all the filter set-ups and so will probably find better RTTY copy in better setups. It doesn't do much better at cw than any computer when you compare it with what you can copy by ear.

Amtor is just as easy with this box as with the others, as is ASCII. It has a Weather Fax mode but I haven't mastered that yet either..it does require a separately loaded program that Kantronics will be happy to sell you. (Weather FAX is a solution to a problem I don't have.)

I will be happy to give you more groups of words if you need them or a demo here at Radio Ranch/Mission Control.

73, Ron, WB5FIX

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

Well, your Editor is back from vacation and already feeling ready to go for another one next year. That sort of thing could get to be habit forming!

We went camping while the kids and kids-in-law went deer hunting up near Chester.

Some of the Ham gear went along, powered by a brute of an RV battery on 12 volts, DC. We worked several stations, including KA6BBF and K6SAD here at home. We could hear the repeater at times, but it eluded us when we tried to bring it up from camp. Looks like a better antenna or higher power or a higher location is in order.

Then it was on to Oregon for some sight seeing. As usual, we were virtually never out of range of several two-meter repeaters during the trip. It's a good feeling to know you are always only a shout away from help if the need arises. No HF gear on the Oregon trip. We limited it to the mobile two-meter rig in the pickup and the hand held.

While we were gone, Roger, Ka6BBF and Larry, WA6ISR, proved that not even your Editor is indispensable. They put out a fine newsletter in our absence. We haven't heard any offers to do the job permanently, however. Oh, well---

Many thanks, guys and gals. We appreciate the effort you all put in.

October 1988

If you didn't make the scene at the white elephant sale, you missed a real blast. Randy, N6QMM, did an outstanding job as auctioneer, getting amazing prices for some real elephants and boat anchors. Good job, Randy. It was well worth the heat of standing around in the sun just to hear Randy do his thing.

Your Editor fell victim to the buying urge, and parted with some dollars for "dogs". Actually, we are pleased with most of what we ended up with, and have gotten most of it to operate somewhat satisfactorily. Dave and the other technicians will cringe, but we got one of the Plectrons (How's that for a brand name??!) to going on the repeater. We used a 37.00 MHZ crystal out of the junk box and retuned everything that wasn't soldered down. Now it hears 146.085 fine business. Of course, it will come in handy during the cold winter nights as a heater, and that 60-cycle noise coming out of the vibrating metal cabinet will let me know it is on and working.

We've never seen a radio that tunes quite like the Yaesu FRG-7 we fought to buy, but it does work. In fact the FRG-7 has allowed us to play with the FAX capability of the PK-232. The best picture so far has been from Tokyo and consists of a page of Japanese script characters that I can't read.

Randy also got to Tom, KB6YAD, who did more than his share to help swell the 220 fund. Tom's small car was dragging the rear bumper when he left (He had already been to the flea market in Sacramento!), and we have not heard of him since the sale. We did drive past his home later on Saturday, and saw no blood, so maybe his XYL is as understanding as your Editor's better half.

What all this is saying is that you who missed the thing lost out on a good opportunity for some fun and good fellowship. Oh, yes---Larry, WA6ISR reported in sick that day and stayed home in bed. Hrrmmmmmmmm.

We have a contribution from Ron, WB5FIX, this month. This is the sort of article we can all benefit from, and we'd like to see more like it. Thanks a heap, Ron. Tom, KB6YAD, is still using the Battery charger he built up, and reports he has duplicated it with good results. If your Editor can get his act together, we will have the thing in a future issue. Barry, KE6LW, is back with another Packet Corner offering this month. Incidentally, for those of you on Packet, I understand there is a lot of work involved in operating a Bulletin Board such as KE6LW-1. I think we all owe Barry a lot for his burning of the "midnight oil" to keep the thing going. Your Editor appreciates it, Barry.

Congratulations to the new Board members. Welcome aboard. 'Course, both Ron and Bob are old hands at Club business, but it's still good to have them back in harness.

Don't forget the October Board meeting if you feel your dues were not quite what you expected in 1987. Show up at the meeting and the Board will listen to your voice. Also, don't forget that a lot of the business of the club will be addressed in the next month or two. If you have an opinion, show up at the Board meeting. We can almost promise that there will be calorie-free cookies, cake or some such thing at the October meeting at 712 King Avenue. Anyway, the

October 1988

Board would like to see you at the meetings. They are not all dry, formal business-type affairs.

Once in a great while, there are spirited conversations at the meetings. See you there.

We received a note the other day from Don Johnson, W6AAQ, advising that he is in the third printing of his book, "The Best of HF Mobileeering". You will remember we had an ad for the book in the newsletter recently. Also, Don's name and call appear on the Title Page of the 15th edition of the ARRL Antenna Book.

Congratulations, Don, and keep it up.

Tom, KB6YAD, is having trouble finding volunteers for the job of Net Control for the Tuesday Night net. To help you volunteer, we have included a copy of the net script with this issue. Please feel free to use it when you volunteer for your turn on the net.

***** PACKET CORNER *****

I have had a few requests from some folks that would like a better understanding of how the KE6LW-1 BBS works and how to use it. The following is a brief explanation of what it is and how it works.

The system consists of a COCO computer and 4 disk drives numbered 0 to 3. Each drive has about 156K of usable space. The 0 drive is the systems drive and contains the BBS program and all the configuration information and files necessary to run the system. Drives 1 thru 3 are available to users and store files.

When you first check into the BBS it will ask for your name. Enter N (space) (name). You must always enter a space after each command. Each time you check into the system it not only will remember your name but also remembers the last time you checked in. To list the messages on the system just enter L. It is not necessary to spell out the commands such as List, Read, Send...etc, the first letter is all that is necessary in either upper or lower case.

The BBS will list the date, time, and size of each message as well as to and from whom. To read a message enter R (Msg. No.). Don't forget the space. R 2234 will let you read Msg. No. 2234. To send a message enter S (callsign) and the BBS will prompt you for a message title and for the message. When you end the message always send the control Z or /EX on a separate line.

Each time you check into the BBS it updates and will only list new messages since your last checkin. If you wish to find previous messages use the LL command. LL 12 will list the last 12 messages, LL 15 will list the last 15 messages....etc. To view the files in the system use the W command. W will list all the files on all the drives and the amount of space remaining on the disk. You will note that it will not list any systems files for you. To read or download

+++++++VALLEY HAM NEWS+++++++

October 1988

any file just enter D (filename:drive No.). For example to read PACOR.003 on drive 3 use the command: "D PACOR.003:3". To upload a file to a disk use the U command. For example you want to upload a repeater list to drive 2 you could use: "U RPTLIST.001:2". A filename can have up to 8 characters to the left of the period and must have 3 characters to the right of the period. Any file entered that does not designate a drive number will automatically be loaded to drive 0. You can also load a file in the form of a message and if you leave me a note I will file it on a disk for you.

To send messages out into the BBS system you will need to use the @ BBS designator. To send mail to a specific BBS, lets say to K6RAU BBS, use the following format: "SB ALL @ K6RAU". Your mail will then be forwarded to K6RAU automatically. If you use SB (send bulletin) a copy will remain on the local BBS after forwarding. If you use just S (send) your message will be killed on the local system after forwarding. Use SB for Bulletins and S for private mail to a specific callsign such as SP KD6XS @ K6RAU. The P in SP makes the message Private and it can only be read by you and the callsign of the addressee. A list of the BBS designators is available on drive 3 in the file HOWTO.FWD. This will list the NET designators for sending general information, for sale, wanted...etc.

Because of the limited message space on the COCO system I find frequent maintenance necessary on the system. Maintenance consists of killing old messages, moving large messages to files, then recovering the space on the disk. I try to do this in the "off hours" but sometimes find it necessary to do it during "prime" user time. If you find the BBS "BUSY" try again later.....It will come back on line.

If you are encountering a problem while connected to the BBS you can, after you receive the command prompt, enter a T. This will ring a bell on the BBS and if I am within hearing distance I will answer and try to help. Don't hesitate to ask questions. The BBS is there for the users and if you can't use it there is not much sense in the whole thing. (Not that there ever was in the first place..HI)

73 Barry KE6LW
SYSOP KE6LW-1