



Chehalis Valley Amateur Radio Society



Website: cvars.org

February 2004

Edited by Bob Willey, KD7OWN

Official Record

The CVARS Executive Board met on Wednesday, January 14th at the home of John Jackson, KQ7JJ. The meeting was called to order by President Kim Aiken and new members were welcomed.

Present were: Kim Aiken, AC7YY, President; Bob Willey, KD7OWN, Vice-President; Steve Pack, WB7VAS, Treasurer; Jon Jeschke, KD7SXV, Secretary; and Board Members John Jackson, KQ7JJ, John Bertels, WA7LFJ, Jim VanderMeer, KC7ASV and John Ellingson, K7OSK. Guests included Jill Jackson, Jeff Mayfield and Bill Vodall.

Treasurer's Report: An updated balance was given by Steve as well as a new club roster list. Steve reports that the club has two more members than last year bringing our total to 46!

Old Business: John Jackson, chairman of the club's Elmering committee, reports that there are currently two persons being Elmered. He reminded us that anyone can request an Elmer's help – not just new hams. Phil Westover is to be the speaker at February's general meeting where he will discuss the Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) program. Prior to the meeting, Kim Aiken will be taking Phil to dinner. Anyone interested is welcome to join Kim and Phil for dinner. Contact Kim as soon as possible. The Board was reminded that Gary Litteer, K7PG, will hold technician classes the second weekend of March as well as the second weekend of October.

New Business: John Ellingson will be taking over the Hamfest & Swapmeet from Bill Harwell's capable hands. Bill has indicated he wishes to turn over these duties and John has more experience with Hamfests than anyone on earth. We all owe Bill a great deal of thanks for the great job he has done. John suggested we change the day of the event to July 31st to avoid complications of the past. The suggestion was made to ask other ham clubs to join us if they wished. More info later. Guest Bill Vodall has offered to link a free Yahoo site to the existing CVARS web page that would allow e-mail, chat,

information and a host of other opportunities to club members. Bill will work with Steve Pack to make this happen and the Board authorized a three month trial period for evaluation. Having no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8:20 PM.

Dates To Remember

Feb. 4th: CVARS General meeting 7:30 PM
Feb. 7th: SAR Winter Training
Feb. 7th: 10-10 Winter Phone Contest
Feb. 21/22nd: ARRL International DX Contest
Feb. 29th: North Carolina QSO Party
Feb. 29th: Mississippi QSO Party
Mar. 3rd: CVARS General meeting 7:30 PM
Mar. 6th: Puyallup Hamfest
Mar. 17th: ARES meeting – PUD – 7:00 PM
Mar. 20/21st: Communications Academy
May 8th: Lewis County Historical Bike Ride
May 19th: ARES meeting – PUD – 7:00 PM
May 22/23rd: SAR Conference – Randle

February's Meeting Program

Phil Westover, WA7URV, will join our group at the invitation of Kim Aiken, AC7YY for this month's general meeting program. Phil knows quite a bit about JOTA (Jamboree On The Air) the ham radio / scouting event that brings Boy Scouts and radio crazy hams together to help the scouts earn necessary merit badges and have some fun with radio.

Kim has offered to buy Phil dinner at Mary McCranks before the meeting and is inviting anyone who wants to join them to come. Kim says he'll buy Phil's dinner but the rest are on their own! Tax season and he still isn't giving away money. For further information about dinner, call or email Kim Aiken.

- All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
- Junk is something you've kept for years and throw away three weeks before you need it.

Tribulations of a RTTY Novice

By Hillar Raamat, N6HR

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Well, maybe some vet administrating to pooches – but here on the island a few club members got on my case and they taught me a thing or two about this old dog learning to fetch a new schtick.....

But not without major frustrations! It all started when Wayne, WJ7H, Greg AB7R, Caleb AD7U and Willie KA7RGP put out an e-mail about a RTTY contest coming up. OK – so what? But being a contest type – and not another contest in sight – and propagation being as lousy as a fleabitten bear, well, I might as well try it! Somewhere in the garage was a box with an ancient PK232 in its innards and the thought was that well – that's half the battle! Boy, how wrong could I be! I quickly learned that (a) the PK232 needs to be connected to the transceiver, (b) it needs to be connected to a computer and then (c) you need some software programs to make the whole mess receive beeps and put out some beeps! A quick "yahoo" search came up with a screenload of information which did not make any sense to anyone in my age category. Where was the book "RTTY 101 For Dummies"? No such thing! OK, RTTY troops to the rescue... The first one in was Caleb AD7U who had run RTTY from TF3IRA (Iceland) 'til the cows came home. Caleb came over, looked at my PK232 and suggested that we do some rewiring of plugs, connectors and other electronic paraphernalia. Of course none of the plugs fit into the receptacles where they were supposed to go. But after some solderburns the plugs finally fit. Caleb checked things out, downloaded a software program, unzipped it, plugged it into the computer and worked 4U1WB for a QSO and left. Yipeee! I tried to duplicate – no response! Nutting! Sent something out – I might as well have saved the electrons from this ethereal agony! Time to quit. OK, score so far: Computer 1 – Hillar 0.

Next day tried a few CQ's. Finally some kind soul came back and said I have the 'mark' and 'space' reversed! How do I now reverse these beeps? Answer – you have to talk to the PK232! How do you do that? After a few hours of trying to communicate with this dustbitten fleabox I finally found the code. I was talking to the PK232! It has a TXREV command that supposedly reverses the two sigs. Did that! Saved the command. Exit stage right! Back to the real world: "CQ CQ CQ de N6HR N6HR K K" --- silence as in interstellar space! Deep Space!

Next – checkout with Wayne, WJ7H. Wayne is freezing in his garage braving the elements—"you might be OK – maybe I am reversed!" Thanks for the 'warm and fuzzy'! Next day –

another set of desperate CQs – nothing – not even a pileup policeman! Call up Greg, AB7R. After several checks: "you are still reversed"! How can I be? Back ready to chew out the PK232 – everything OK there. What else could it be? Greg suggests changing the wiring to the transceiver – reversing the 'mark' and 'space' connections. Out with the soldering iron! But just in case – as a last resort maybe consult the directions for the xcvr. Bingo! Command 6-1 of the FT-1000MP menu reverses the signals! Disconnect the soldering iron! Score: Computer 7 – Hillar 2. (a 'safety')

CQ CQ CQ –Bingo! W6OAT, PY2 (Brazil), HR1 (Honduras), HI3 (Columbia) – the DX is answering and rolling in! Yipee! Its working! Computer 14 – Hillar 3. (as in 'field goal')

Next – the contest! Well, to do the contest you need something resembling a contest program! WF1B is it – I'm freeloading again! This WF1B looks good and maybe I can handle it. After figuring out how to change the macros from the 'canned' default messages, I AM READY FOR THE CONTEST!!! But I better go easy – start out only doing Search and Pounce.

Saturday the contest starts. Six minutes later I finally make a QSO – KH7X! He sends 59-9017. I am still QSO #1 and trying to push the right F-buttons! Mike must have been laying an egg by the time I got his answer out! But - #1 is in the log! OK, on to the next one. A bit easier! Then the next one – and the next one! Hey, I am on a roll! The band sounds like a roadrunners convention – "beep-beep-beep"! And I'm like the nincompoop coyote! But I am in there, begorrah!

14 operating hours later mercifully the contest ends. Final tally is some 380 QSO's, 51 states/provinces and 24 DXCC countries! Way down on the scoring list, but at least I got my feet wet!

Of course one learns several things! I did, at least. Here's the list: (a) I wish I could touchtype! Very helpful in RTTY contests. (b) I need a better logging program. WF1B is fine but Greg AB7R has this RCKRTTTY and that is Mucho Better! The cat's MEOW! (c) time to mothball the PK232 and go the soundcard route. And – (d) it is not advisable to spill coffee on the keyboard in the middle of the contest!!

Am I still having fun? Maybe! See you in the CQ WPX RTTY bedlam in March!

QSL Cards From Afar!

CX8CP – Montevideo, Uruguay – Steve,
WB7VAS

V73AZ – Republic of the Marshall Islands – Bob,
KD7OWN

Did you get an interesting QSL in the mail? Send me an email so we can all enjoy it.

Stolen Motorhome!

BOLO...BOLO...BOLO...(Be On The Lookout) for a 1990 32 foot Pinacle motorhome. It is described as fiberglass construction with the color as cream on top down to about chest level where a group of about three maroon stripes run the length of the motorhome. Below that the color is gray. Washington license number 211RCN.

Johnny Jackson, KQ7JJ, says theirs was stolen from the covered parking area at the fairgrounds sometime in the past weeks. They went to check on it in the very cold weather but when they went back this week, it was gone!

If you should located the motorhome, call 911 and report you've found a stolen vehicle and give them the location and license number. I'm sure Johnny would be glad to get it back soon! We'll be looking for it, Johnny!



Mark Your Calendar!

If you are an Amateur Radio Emergency Services member, there are several events coming up that you need to remember. First, the SAR winter training event is scheduled for Saturday, February 7th in the snow. Bill Harwell, AC7SR says this is great fun playing in the snow with snowmobiles, learning about snow probing and setting up an HF station outside in whatever conditions Mom Nature has to offer. Second, the Sheriff's 2004 Volunteer Appreciation Dessert is set for Saturday, March 27th at the Onalaska Grade School at 2 PM. The Sheriff always has some nice words and prizes to hand out and the dessert is both good and FREE!. Finally, the 2004 Search & Rescue Conference will be held right here in Lewis County and everyone's help is needed to make this event happen. It is scheduled for May 22nd and 23rd in Randle. This event offers some really great (and sometimes hard to find) Search & Rescue training. Don't let this one pass you by. For more information on any of these events, call Bill Harwell, AC7SR.

Did You Know?

Spiral staircases in medieval castles are narrow and generally run clockwise. This is because all knights used to be right handed. When the invading army would climb the stairs they would not be able to use their right hand which was holding the sword because of the difficulties in climbing the stairs. Left handed knights would have had no trouble except left handed people could never become knights because it was assumed that they were descendants of the devil. And now you know.

ARRL To Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access

A recent bulletin from the ARRL says that they will ask the FCC to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license that would include HF phone privileges without requiring a Morse code test. The League will also propose consolidating all current licensees into three classes, retaining the Element 1 Morse requirement – now 5 words per minute – for only the highest class.

The entry-level license class – being called "Novice" for now – would require a 25 question written exam. It would offer limited HF CW/data and phone/image privileges on 80, 40, 15, and 10 meters as well as VHF and UHF privileges on 6 and 2 meters and on 222-225 and 430-450 MHz. Power output would be restricted to 100 W on 80, 40, and 15 meters and to 50 W on 10 meters and up.

The middle-level group of licensees – Technician, Tech Plus (Technician with Element 1 credit) and General – would be merged into a new General license that also would not require a Morse examination. Current Technician and Tech Plus license holders automatically would gain current General class privileges without additional testing. The current Element 3 General examination would remain in place for new applicants.

The Board indicated that it saw no compelling reason to change the Amateur Extra class license requirements. New applicants for Extra would have to pass a 5 wpm Morse code examination, but the written exam would stay the same.

According to the ARRL, "This structure provides a true entry-level license with HF privileges to promote growth in the Amateur Service." The ARRL license restructuring design calls for no changes in privileges for Extra and General class licensees on 160, 60, 30, 20, 17 or 12 meters. Novice licensees would have no access to those bands.

For more information, see "ARRL to Propose New Entry-Level License, Code-Free HF Access" on the ARRL Web site at www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/01/19/1/.

Build the W3FF Portable Dipole

I recently built a very simple and fun portable dipole from PVC pipe and stuff I bought at Radio Shack all for under \$30. The directions (Do a search in the internet for "W3FF" and click on "antenna instructions" for directions and a parts list.) are simple and easy to follow. The antenna works on 10, 12, 15, 17, and 20 meters. It even supposedly works on 6 and 2 meters but I have not tried this. You get to wind several very simple coils but they are super easy. (continued)

I found all the parts locally with a stop at one hardware store and Radio Shack. I built it in about two days but you could do it in one day.

When I tested it with Johnny Jackson's help at his house, we contacted N5PZ in Arizona on the very first CQ and got a "59" report!

This whole antenna breaks down to small parts of 22" or less for easy transport and weighs around 3 pounds!

This was the very first antenna project I ever built and let me tell you, if I can build this thing, anyone can build it! So get with it and give this project a try. Always a good idea to have a portable, multi-band antenna tucked away for an emergency.....or just a day of fun!

2004 Communications Academy

The 2004 Communications Academy at Shoreline Conference Center in Shoreline, Washington is just around the corner. This is a great place to spend a cold, late winter weekend and learns lots of fun stuff about Ham Radio.

Dates for the conference are set for March 20-21. If you register before March 16th, the cost is only \$7.50 per day (\$15.00 for the two days). If you wait and register later it will cost more (duh!) so register soon!

The keynote speaker this year is Jeff Boyd, a retired Police Chief and former volunteer Fire Chief and a licensed ham since 1958. He is the author of five books, two on law enforcement subjects and three on amateur radio emergency communications. He is also the author of dozens of articles in professional and amateur radio journals.

Jerry currently serves as a public safety consultant and university/college instructor on law enforcement/public safety topics.

This is going to be a fun and educational weekend so don't delay and longer. Get in there and register. (Your mother called and said to do it right now before you forget. You know how you are!) For more info, check the web for www.commacademy.org.



DX Tip Of The Month

Just getting started towards that DXCC? Got your first foreign QSL card and now you're bit by the bug? OK, good for you! Go out and order "The ARRL

DXCC List" from (guess who?) the ARRL. It will cost you about \$4.00 but you will need it every time you log that next DX QSL. This booklet lists every DX country accepted by the ARRL and a few that are no longer in the running. My booklet lists 335 entities. This list allows you to mark off that confirmed QSL by country, band, mode, zone (both ITU and CQ) and continent. So get started now. Start calling "CQ DX" !

Bring Money – Buy Clock!

OK, this clock was supposed to be auctioned off in January but snow made the meeting go away so I still have it. I have to tell you, I thought about just hanging it on my wall and seeing if you would forget but I am an honest, upright human being (ok, my wife said I had to do it) and wanted to give you a "chance" to but this timepiece. (I say chance because I 'm probably bidding too).

Steve Pack, WB7VAS, ordered up this great one-of-a-kind clock for us. The clock is a 10" round clock sporting a black frame with hours in both 12 and 24 hour combinations. What makes this clock a "CVARS Special Edition" is the bright red Chehalis Valley Amateur Radio Society logo in the center of the clock face. Profits from it's sale will go to the club's general fund so bring your money to the February meeting and "try" to beat me in the bidding! Thanks, Steve, for your generous gift to the club!

CVARS Sunday Nite Net Controllers:

Feb. 1 st :	Loyann Munyan, KC7KJC
Feb. 8 th :	Steve Pack, WB7VAS
Feb. 15 th :	Bob Willey, KD7OWN
Feb. 22 nd :	John Jackson, KQ7JJ
Feb. 29 th :	Bill Harwell, AC7SR

Psssssst, hey buddy.....

OK, at least I got your attention! Now let's discuss your dues situation. Don't you feel bad? I can help! Just watch the swinging shiny object. Feeling sleepy? Good. Now repeat after me...."I want to pay my dues...I want to pay my dues.... Where is Steve Pack so I can pay my dues?...." OK, wake up! Now go to the next CVARS meeting a happy person and don't forget to take your checkbook. Why? When you see Steve, you'll know! "watch the shiny object".....



ARRL Affiliated Club

The Chehalis Valley Amateur Radio Society is an ARRL Affiliated Club. This means that more than 51% of our club's voting members are licensed amateurs and belong to the ARRL. Your ARRL Section Manager is Ed Bruette, N7NVP, 305 NW Paulson Rd., Poulsbo, Washington, 98370 (360-698-0917), n7nvp@arrl.org. Ed will be visiting us in the very near future as one of our programs. The ARRL is always looking for information or emails from members about what is going on in their clubs so send him an email if you have news to share,

- Politics is supposed to be the second oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.