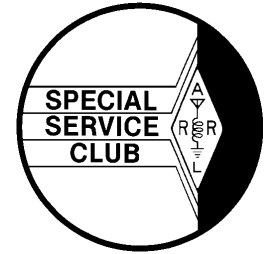




CVARS



March 2004

Website: cvars.org

Edited by Bob Willey, KD7OWN

Official Record

The CVARS Executive Board met on Wednesday, February 11th at the home of John Jackson. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM.

Present were: Kim Aiken, AC7YY, President; Bob Willey, KD7OWN, Vice President; Steve Pack, WB7VAS, Treasurer; and Board members John Jackson, KQ7JJ, John Bertels, WA7LFJ, and Jim VanderMeer, KC7ASV. Guests included Jeff Mayfield.

New Business: The Board announced the appointment of Steve Pack and Bob Willey as VHF and HF ARRL Awards Managers. The Board also discussed and voted to purchase five Technician Class instruction books and make them available to prospective hams preparing for club licensing classes. "Now Your Talking", an ARRL publication was selected and will be available at cost. Previously, local radio parts stores carried the books but they are no longer available.

Old Business: Board members discussed the general meeting presentation on JOTA (Jamboree On The Air) and voted to proceed with plans to initiate this program in the fall of 2004. President Aiken asked for ideas for another LXpedition and several ideas were discussed.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Pack reported membership up from 48 to 52 members as of February's meeting. The club also received 16 renewals.

Committee Report: John Jackson, committee chair for the Elmering Committee will be asking for assistance for an antenna party at the home of Al Jorgensen, W7ZLR. Al has been without HF capabilities for some time and wants to get back on the air!

Having no further business to discuss, the Executive Board was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

BawFaw Repeater Group

BRG has moved into another year which means membership is due once again. Many more hams use this great repeater than are actually paid members. While we all enjoy using BawFaw, the repeater does not run on good wishes alone. Your \$25 membership is very important. Don't delay. Send your membership NOW and feel good about yourself again.

Remember....If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it!



Mount St Helens

It's February and I'm tired of winter. Time to get out and do some radio work before these four walls close in on me.

Steve Pack, Johnny Jackson and I have been talking about working a special event day from Mount St. Helens on May 18th and the question came up if the road was even open this time of year to the "hole in the hill". Well, that's just the excuse needed to take a radio into the "wilderness" for some testing!

South on I-5, I took the Castlerock exit (exit 49) and headed East on Highway 504. The first St. Helens visitor's center you come across is only 56 miles East of I-5. The Mount St. Helens Visitor's Center is easy to find and open, even in February! Further up the road you come to the Hoffstadt Bluffs overview at milepost 27. It too was open with free admission and plenty of parking. At milepost 33, you find the Forest Learning Center. Although closed this time of year, the view was magnificent. At milepost 34 I came across the first snow alongside the road at 3000 feet in elevation. The road itself was completely free of snow and in great shape. Elk Rock viewpoint was next at milepost 37. At 3800 feet, there was lots of snow on the side of the road and a beautiful view of the mountain. Coldwater Ridge is the last Visitors Center you can get to in the winter. Johnston Ridge Observatory is only 4 miles from the mountain but they don't clear the road that far in snow conditions.

Since Coldwater Ridge is only 3000 feet, I turned around and drove back to Elk Rock at 3800 feet and set up an HF station using a radio, a car battery and a Ironhorse antenna. Great signals on 20 meters and 10 meters as well. I had no trouble hitting BawFaw from anywhere on the road with 50 watts.

Need to get outdoors? This is a great trip. It is 47 miles from I-5 up highway 504 to Coldwater Ridge. The road is well maintained and was completely clear of snow. Lots of pull outs to look at the views allow a nice slow drive and you miss the million tourists this time of year. It is a beautiful show and well worth the drive. Don't forget to take the radio!

Page one.....just before page two!



Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES)

Bill Harwell, ARES Emergency Coordinator announced Assistant Emergency Coordinator Terry Neumann, KQ7K, stepped down at the March meeting. Terry has given many valuable years as AEC and will be missed very much. He will be replaced by Bob Willey, KD7OWN of Centralia. In other business, upcoming events for ARES members include:

- Bunny hunt – February 29th
- Road Rally – March 6/7
- ARES Mtg – March 17th
- Communications Conference – March 20-21st
- LCSO Volunteer Desert Social – March 27th

For Your Health

The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. On the other hand, the French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. Conclusion: Eat and drink what you like. It's speaking English that kills you.

Welcome New CVARS Members

At the last General Meeting of the Chehalis Valley Amateur Radio Society we gained some new members. They are:

- Alan Dittrick, KD7Y of Winlock
- Bruce Lawver, KB7VX, of Chehalis
- Eric Lawver, also of Chehalis
- Marcela Vodall, KD7RTC
- Brandon Upton of Onalaska

Welcome to these new members. CVARS is a great club and we hope you enjoy your membership.

It's Bunny Hunt Time

Bill Harwell, AC7SR, says it is Bunny Hunt time once again. For those who may be new to this activity, Bill has an able helper (usually Mrs. Harwell) hide the elusive Bunny, which produces a radio frequency signal every few minutes. The bunny is usually hidden somewhere in Chehalis and the hunters, using their skills in radio direction finding, seek out the "Bunny". First to find the Bunny wins!

Don't know how to play? Come on down anyway and ride with one of the hunters and see how this game works! The next Bunny Hunt is schedule for Sunday, February 29th. Everyone should meet at the Chehalis Baptist Church (where our meetings are held) at 1:45 PM. The game begins at 2:00 PM sharp. Come on down and have some fun.

Before criticizing others, walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them you're a mile away and have their shoes!

CVARS March Meeting March 3rd

The program for the Club's General Meeting on Wednesday, March 3rd, will be given by Ed Bruette, the ARRL Western Washington Section Manager and Jim Pack, the Western Washington Amateur Radio Emergency Services Section Emergency Coordinator. Ed and Jim will discuss their duties and responsibilities and talk briefly about BPL concerns.

Don't forget to join us for another great meeting at 7:30 PM at the Chehalis Baptist Church, 1866 S. Market Blvd. in Chehalis. We'll have refreshments, door prizes and some great fun!

Happy Birthday

Those having a birthday in March include the following:

Kim Aiken, AC7YY

Remember, if your birthday is not mentioned, I don't have you listed for the month. Let me know what month your birthday is in and I'll make sure to include it in the newsletter. Thanks.

Dates To Remember:

- March 3 – CVARS general meeting
- March 6th – Mike & Key Hamfest, Puyallup
- March 6,7 – International DX Contest
- March 10th – CVARS Executive Board Meeting
- March 13,14 – Oklahoma QSO Party
- March 18th – LC ARES meeting, PUD building
- March 20, 21 – Communications Academy, Shoreline.
- March 20th – 10-10 Mobile Contest
- March 27,28 – CQ WPX SSB Contest

Kids In Church

- 3 year old, Reese said: "Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name....."
- When asked to name one of the Ten Commandments, Susie quoted: "Thou shall not take the covers off thy neighbor's wife."
- One particular four year old prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."
- Perhaps you've not heard the part of the Lord's Prayer that says, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us some E-mail."

Communications Academy 2004 March 20-21, 2004

This year's Communications Academy in Shoreline is scheduled for March 20th and 21st in Shoreline. If you've missed me pushing you to go to this great event, you've not read the last few newsletters. This is a wonderful training weekend and the cost, if you register now, is only \$16 for both Saturday and Sunday and you can car pool with others who are going so even gas won't be your excuse! Check out Communications Academy 2004 on line for more information and you can even pay on line. Don't wait. Sign up NOW!



Tips & Tricks from a Novice Contester

By Steve Pack, WB7VAS

Let me first explain that most of these tips are not my original ideas.

These are gleaned from field day experience, newsletter articles and contest journals. I haven't been working contests or QSO parties long enough to have an original thought. Hi, Hi.

First, try your best to have fun and to help others to have fun. Give some thought to improving your contesting skills and to helping others improve their skills. Repeat these two tips until the desired results are achieved.

The best way to accomplish those first two tips is to stay in the chair. NØAX summed it up this way, "You can't win unless you are in the chair." Plan one or two 90 minute sleep breaks during the 24 hour contest or QSO party. Check the band(s) you will be working for the best and worst operating times then plan your personal down time to coincide with the time your favorite band will be at its worst.

From personal experience I prefer to work the 10-10 QSO parties. The ten meter band, if it is any good at all, is "better" during the day. That fits my weekend schedule and my preferred 90 minutes sleep cycles of 5 in a row when it's dark.

From Gary Sutcliffe, W9XT, in the November/December 2003 issue of the National Contest Journal, "If conditions are right, you can make contacts faster by calling CQ than by S&P (search and pounce)." You will need to review your rate history and determine when might be the best time to find a clear spot and start calling CQ.

Remember rule number one, have fun. Choose a contest that suits your interest. Maybe some QRP, 10-10, SSB, CW, SK31 or RTTY. Keep things in perspective. Compete against yourself or a couple of friendly local stations.

If you have any questions, comments or additional tips you wish to share, please email me and I will see that they are mentioned in a future publication of this column.

73's, Steve, WB7VAS

CVARS Clocks By W7NN

Last month, we auctioned off the great CVARS hamshack clock at the general meeting. Loyann Munyan, KC7KCJ, won the auction and got the original CVARS clock. Thanks Loyann!

Since that time, I've heard from several people who would like a clock for themselves. Ron, W7NN says he can make more for anyone who wants one. They are under \$30 and look really great. What a wonderful addition to your ham shack!. Check out Ron's website at www.HamStuff.com and order one for your very own.

- Do not walk behind me, for I may not lead. Do not walk in front of me, for I may not follow. Do not walk beside me either. In fact, get the heck away from me!
- It's always darkest before the dawn. So if you're going to steal anything, that's the time to do it!

Oh My Gosh... A Red Line!

Yup! If the envelope your newsletter came in has a nice bright red line under your name, you owe somebody some dues! Guido the Treasurer says you had January and February to pay but you didn't. Now March is here and you're out of time.

Guido says this is your last newsletter unless you pay up. Break a your legs? Nope....even worse.... No more newsletters...GASP! SHOCK & AMAZEMENT! Oh No!

But... (Hope springs in here)...you can pay at the March meeting and be SAVED! Bring money!

UTC? GMT? ZULU?

What The Heck Time Is It Anyway?

Researchers here at the CVARS Newsletter Center checked our vast library (both books) for a proper description of the difference between UTC, GMT and ZULU time. (you didn't think we were that smart did you?) We came up with answers!

Coordinated Universal Time or UTC (I know but CUT was already used and is usually followed by "ow") is the international time standard. It is the current term for what was commonly referred to as Greenwich Meridian Time or GMT. Zero hours UTC is midnight in Greenwich England, which lies on the zero longitudinal meridian. GMT is the mean or average time that the earth takes to rotate from non-to-noon. GMT is fixed all year and does not switch to daylight savings time.

Coordinated Universal Time follows TAI or International Atomic Time (yup, I know) which is calculated from the readings of more than 200 atomic clocks in over 30 countries around the world. International Atomic Time is said to be off no more than one tenth of a microsecond per year!

"Zulu" time is said to be the same as UTC but I think somebody just liked the name. It is kind of cool.

Although TAI or International Atomic Time has officially replaced UTC or Greenwich Meridian Time, most people and most hams still refer to UTC as the official time.

UTC uses a 24- hour system of time rotation. 1:00 AM in UTC is expressed as 0100, pronounced "zero one hundred". 1:00 PM is 1300, pronounced "thirteen hundred". 2359 is pronounced "twenty-three fifty nine" and is followed at 0000 or "zero hundred". There is no "twenty-four hundred".

To convert UTC to local time, you have to add or subtract hours from it. For persons west of the zero meridian to the international date line (which includes all of North America), hours are subtracted from UTC to convert to local time. For Pacific Standard Time, you must subtract eight hours. For Pacific Daylight Time, you subtract seven hours. This time of year, subtract eight hours. For example: 0400 UTC on Sunday would be 2000 (8:00PM) Saturday night in beautiful Lewis County. For former CBers...Mickey's little hand would be on the eight and the big hand on the twelve.

Anyway you look at it, don't let this time thing confuse you. Buy yourself one of the many neat little "local time / UTC time" clocks offered in any ham catalog or find two wind up alarm clocks at a yard sale and set one to local and one to UTC.

Remember... If at first you don't succeed, maybe skydiving is not for you.

Facts...Facts....and more Facts!

- You are 66% more likely to be prosecuted in the USA than in France.
- The USA has more personal computers than the next 7 countries combined.
- The largest iceberg ever sited was in the South Pacific Ocean in 1956. It was 208 miles long and 60 miles wide or about the size of Belgium!



DXer Tips Of The Month

Dxing is the process of working those 335 "current entities" the ARRL has specified as foreign contacts. For those of you who are just starting in the world of

DX, here are a few general tips.

- Listen to any DX station for a few moments and you will begin to hear how the operator chooses his next station. Is it the loudest? Does it have an unusual call sign? Is it a Mobile or QRP station calling? Many times he is grabbing the last call he hears or the first call he can understand after the immediate pile-up of a thousand stations. In many cases, waiting for the pile-up to thin (about 1-2 seconds) and then giving your call sign helps. I have also included the words "Washington State" after my call sign and had the operator come back simply because he once visited our state! Everyone else is just giving their call sign. Try something different.

- Friday is a great day to get some special foreign country contacts. Friday is the Sabbath for the Muslim religion and it is the only day of the week they are off work in many cases. All the countries in Africa and Asia are heavily populated with Muslims. Put some heavy listening time in on Thursday afternoon and evening, and Friday morning, afternoon and evening. You stand a good chance of working a good station that may not be there other days of the week.

- The first rule of DXing is tune, listen, tune, listen...and tune some more. I found Antarctica this way. I heard the operator, just new to Antarctica, setting up his station and talking with a friend in the U.S. I waited patiently until he was done with that conversation and then asked if I could have a quick contact. We spent a very nice few minutes and I got a QSL card.

- Use a DX Cluster. There are several on the internet. Some feel like it is cheating but others know the information can be very valuable. If you feel it's cheating, don't use it. For you listening and finding that DX station is magical. For others, some hard to find DX stations would not be contacted if it were not for the DX clusters. You choose. Ham radio should always be fun and after all, it is a hobby. Good luck and good DXing!

QSL Cards

With a Technician License

A QSL card is considered the final courtesy in a ham contact. Most people think you can only get a QSL card from HF contacts. Most people are wrong. Do you only have a Technician License? Why wait. Start collecting those QSL cards right now. Here are a few tips on how to snag'em:

- Haven't got a QSL card of your own? Make one. You can make a 3" X 5" card on any computer using Microsoft word or any other similar program. You can also buy a simple postcard and use that. Pick one that is local such as Mt. St. Helens or your own community. As a last resort, send a hand written letter asking for a QSL and explaining that you are new and don't yet have QSL cards.

- Don't have HF privileges? How about 2 meters? Yup, even those on 2 meter repeaters are real hams just like you. Many of those hams also have HF privileges and also have QSL cards just waiting to be mailed. Just because it is 2 meters doesn't mean it wasn't an official amateur radio contact. While the contact may not count for some awards, you can certainly send the other ham a QSL card and request one in return.

- Ask a ham with HF privileges if you can come over and spend an hour or so working HF with him or her. Most hams are very generous with their time and would be glad to have you see their station. Using the HF operator's license privileges and with him/her there, you can make HF contacts too. It is a great way to get that first DX QSL card (confirmation of contact with a foreign station).

- Set up a scheduled contact with another ham willing to QSL after a 2 meter conversation. My e-mail address is kd7own@arrl.net so shoot me an email or find me on the air and let's make a contact and I will send you that first QSL! Let's make a schedule and see how much fun we can have! I'll bet I have a few ham friends in the area also willing to send you that card.

So don't wait for those HF privileges to start collecting QSL cards. Hey, they're great fun and everyone enjoys getting a QSL card in the mail.

March is Class Month

Don't forget. If you know anyone who needs a ham license, this is the month. Gary Litteer, K7PG will be holding his twice-yearly classes on the second weekend in March. Be sure to let him know if you want to participate. Don't delay. Get that license now. It is easier than you think! Call Gary for more information.

Remember: It may be your sole purpose in life to serve as a warning to others...

And

If you think no one cares whether you live or die, try not making a couple of car payments.

Page last...see you down the coax, 73's, Bob