

Stockton-Delta Amateur Radio Club

W6SF FLYSHEET



ARRL MEMBER P.O. BOX 690271 STOCKTON, CA 95269-0271

November, 2013

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OCTOBER MEETING NOTES

A disappointing eight members and one guest attended this month's meeting on October 10, to seek out and nominate officers for 2014. Vice president Paul **N6KZW** opened the meeting in the absence of the President. Many issues were discussed by those present. In summary:

- Vice President Paul **N6KZW** will call a Board meeting to finalize the needed changes to the clubs constitution. They will be published in the Flysheet and then voted on by the members.
- Glen **K6KJQ** requested direction to purchase crystals for the .575 voters at Sutter-Gould and at Lodi. After discussion, he will order the crystals.
- The group discussed the lack of participation in meetings and events by most of the members. Guest John KA6FVA recommended we poll the members on what they want to do. Dave **N6LHL** will put appropriate questions in the newsletter and try to get answers.
- In a wide ranging discussion, other suggestions to improve the club included finding out why a new member felt so ignored that he wrote a letter to the officers; asking the Stockton Record to attend our events; putting on a class for students at Delta College's "Kids College" program;
- Eric **W6INP**, Paul **N6KZW**, Dave **N6DCH** and Dave **N6LHL** will put together a calendar of events in which the club will participate in 2014. Again, question the members to see what they want to participate in.
- Glen **K6KJQ** was give approval to renew the W6SF website.
- Dave **N6LHL** will use the Flysheet to find out who wants to attend the Christmas dinner on December 12, and where do they want to hold it.

After discussion, cajoling and arm twisting, the following members volunteered to be officers for 2014. They will be voted on at the November 14 meeting. Further nominations can be made up until the evening of the November 14 vote.

- President – Paul Engelmann **N6KZW**
- Vice President – Charlie Johnson **WB6NVB**

- Secretary – Eric **W6INP**
- Treasurer – Dave Hardwick **N6LHL**
- Member at Large – Glen **K6KJQ**

NET CONTROL OPERATORS

A list of net control operators for this month's Monday night net follows:

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November 4	Paul N6KZW
November 11	Charlie WB6NVB
November 18	Eric W6INP
November 25	Dave N6LHL
December 2	John NZ6Q
December 9	Paul N6KZW
December 16	Charlie WB6NVB

If you have an interest in improving your traffic handling skills and moderating the Monday night net, please contact me at n6lhl@softcom.net. The script to follow is right on the website, and all you need is a pencil and paper to write down names and calls of the members who participate. The more people who participate, the easier it is on every one.

CQP FROM THE VINEYARD

On October 5 and 6, seven members of the club met at Charlie **WB6NVB**'s vineyard on Devise Road to once again do battle for the largest number of states contacted, and largest number of California counties contacted in the annual California QSO Party. We set up 20 meter and 15 meter radios, working through Charlie's newly purchased Tri-plexer. The Tri-plexer allowed us to operate both bands through his tri-band antenna at the same time. Then we put up an 80/40 meter dipole fed with ladder line, and a radio for the 40 meter band. We worked out of Charlie's shed alongside his boat and tractor.



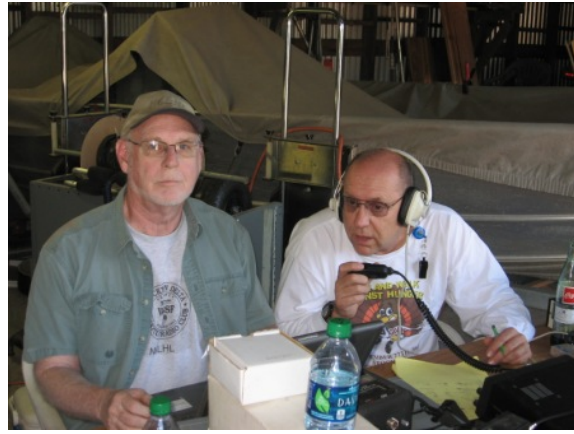
Dan **K16FTT** and Paul **N6KZW**



Eric **W6INP** and Charlie **WB6NVB**



Charlie **WB6NVB** and Randy **K6TVT**



Dave **N6LHL** and Paul **N6KZW**



Chuck **W6COB**

CQP OPERATORS FROM HOME QTHs

Steve **K6SCA**, working as a single operator on low power, reports that during the Cal QSO Party, he operated from his home high atop Red Mule Ridge near Fiddletown. Using his inverted V's on 40, 20 and 15 meters he worked by himself for 19 hours, split between Saturday and Sunday. On 10 meters he used his roof mounted vertical. He did his own logging using his computer and headset with a boom mike. Steve made 668 contacts, which got him 48 states and 49 out of a possible 58 California counties. With multipliers Steve earned 72,144 points. Way to go Steve!



Steve **K6SCA**

Shirl **AA6K** reports that he also worked as a single operator on low power from his home on the east side of Stockton for about 14 hours. Shirl used his 3 element StepIR, that is a little bent after a neighbors horse got loose and ran into one of his guy wires causing the tower to lean to the north. To work 80 meters he used his Inverted V. All together, Shirl made 613 contacts that included 47 states for a total score of 64,978 points. A great effort, Shirl!



Shirl **AA6K**

RADIO OPERATORS NEEDED!

Again, as in past years, the Stockton-Delta ARC is being called upon to provide communications for the Thanksgiving morning **Run Against Hunger** event on November 28. We will need operators at the Ball Park on Fremont Street, at Morelli Park on Weber Street, and at street corners as assigned. Details will be forthcoming from Paul **N6KZW**. The event is usually over by 9am. Our immediate need is to find willing operators for Thanksgiving morning. So, if you will assist us in this civic happening, please drop an email to Paul at n6kzw@sbcglobal.net, or to Dave at n6lhl@softcom.net.

SHAKE OUT!

At 10:17 a.m. on October 17, 2013, the club participated in the **Great Shake Out** to demonstrate our capability to operate on W6SF in the event of an earthquake. Net Control Ed **N6XMA** announced that 9 members participated this year. Thanks to those who made the time to participate and to Ed for pulling to together.

Power Lines and RFI

By Joe Green, N6JPG

As anyone who has been a ham or an SWL for any length of time can tell you, there are a number of different sources of RFI or Radio Frequency Interference that can disrupt or at least seriously interfere with reception of radio signals. RFI sources can be from natural occurrences such as solar flares or can be man-made. Some interference may be minor such as an occasional click or hum and some may sound like a buzz saw that spans multiple bands. Sources of

man-made RFI are almost limitless from Plasma TV's to the power supplies that run our equipment. One source of RFI that plagues many of us is our local power lines.

A Little Background

Power line interference can be very pervasive and engender long term disruption of even moderately strong signals on the HF bands. This type of RFI will sound like a loud buzzing sound centered around 60 Hz that is present on SSB and is even more noticeable in AM mode and doesn't disappear when you change frequencies. For those old enough to remember AM broadcast radio as being the only source of music or news in our cars, power line RFI was a frequent source of noise coming through the speaker when receiving a weaker station while driving beneath or next to a "leaky" overhead utility line. On the ham bands, it will generally be most noticeable between about 10 MHz and 30 MHz with the strongest presence on the 17 meter band. Power line RFI can come from a number of different sources on local utility poles and lines. Some of these include old transformers, lightning arrestors, loose insulator/line connection, cracked insulation jackets, bad splices, and dirt/debris that lodge between connections. Power line RFI is frequently subject to changes in the weather. Warming temperatures will often cause power lines, connectors, insulators, etc. to expand encouraging "mini-arcing" in the line generating noticeable RFI. Conversely, oftentimes after a good rainstorm, RFI may disappear as foreign material is dislodged from insulators, connectors, etc.

Tracing power line RFI can be difficult. The first step and most utility companies will encourage you to do this is to ensure that there is nothing in your home that is actually causing the RFI. Frequently common items in the home such as plasma TV's, doorbell transformers, dimmer switches, "touch lamps," or other devices can transmit RFI. The easiest way to eliminate these as possible suspects is to first use a battery-powered receiver, preferably one that will receive the ham bands in AM mode, and walk about your home and property and notice if the noise increases/decreases depending upon your location. Next you want to perform the same test again only this time after you have switched off all the power in your home by throwing the main circuit breaker in your switch box. Also make sure that nothing running on battery power in your home may be generating a signal. If you have neighbors nearby (and depending upon your relationship with them), you may ask them if they might be willing to participate in the test. Once all the power in your house is off, hold the receiver near an electrical fixture or preferably walk near the power line coming into your house and hold the receiver over your head towards the line. If the noise increases, you may have power line RFI. Often power line RFI will act as a giant signal generator and the lines themselves as an extensive long wire antenna. Finding the exact source of the RFI can be difficult and generally requires specialized equipment. If you choose to do a little neighborhood detective work, you may be able to locate the

source by driving or walking around with your small receiver. Just be aware that many onboard vehicle computers and other components generate a good bit of RFI themselves so it can make pinpointing the source difficult. If you are really into gadgets and want to trace the source yourself, MFJ makes a couple of power line RFI locators. One is a handheld yagi with a built in receiver that picks up power line harmonic frequencies. The other is an ultrasonic noise detector with a parabolic dish microphone that MFJ claims can "hear" power line arcing and RFI. Under no circumstances however should you rap on utility poles with a hammer, make any modifications to utility company equipment, or otherwise tamper with high voltage power lines. Just make note of your findings including the possible location of the RFI and any pole numbers that may be present. And do not trespass on private or utility company property to trace RFI; let the utility company handle that part.

Getting Personal

My experience with power line RFI began this summer. Nearly every afternoon the buzzing on the radio would begin when the temperatures climbed. Although it was usually centered around 18 MHz, it was a factor on nearly every HF band above 40 meters with a noise level of S-9 in AM mode and S-4 to S-8 in SSB. As the tone of the buzz seemed to be about 60 Hz, I immediately suspected power line RFI. I took my small shortwave receiver and walked around the house and the property. Although I was able to trace some noise to a touch lamp, disconnecting it did not eliminate the noise. With the power off, I held my receiver near both the overhead power line and my antenna coax. Both locations increased the noise. After checking every other possible source I could think of, I contacted Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) via email to make a complaint. They responded to my email approximately 10 days later and referred me back to the customer service telephone number. When I called, I spoke with a very nice young lady who had no reckoning of what Amateur Radio is, the emergency services hams provide, or what RFI is. Nevertheless, she took all my information and told me that someone from their Tech department would be in contact with me.

About three weeks later, I received a phone call from Ed Cain with PG&E's Communications Division. Mr. Cain was quite well versed in radio communications and RFI. He came out to my residence the next day. He asked me where most of the interference was on the bands and I told him it was most prevalent on 17 meters. He said that most power line RFI was centered around 17-18 MHz so that made sense. He reported back to me that he believed the source of the RFI was coming from an interchange of lines approximately 300 yards down the road from my house. He assured me that a line crew would be out to inspect/repair the lines as soon as could be arranged. Three weeks later I called Mr. Cain back and asked if the repairs had been completed as I was still receiving RFI. He stated that the work was done and they found a bad splice at

that location. He then stated that he would be out to try to trace the source of the RFI once again.

The following week, Mr. Cain arrived with his equipment, which included a handheld yagi with a sensitive receiver. He traced the source to the pole right outside my shack. He found the connections so loose that if he merely struck the pole with his fist, the noise would waiver and become intermittent; I was able to duplicate these results with my handheld receiver. From there he made arrangements to have a line crew come out and replace the lightning arrestors on the pole and restring the main lines and insulators.

About a month later, a tree crew arrived on my property for the purpose of removing some trees to allow better access to a PG&E boom truck.



PG&E Boom Truck and Crew Removing Old Hardware

A few days after that, the PG&E line crew arrived armed with a fresh set of new style lightning arrestors, insulators, and two sets of copper ground lines. The old setup consisted of a single aluminum ground line. They worked for about 3 hours and completed the job.



New Lightning Arrester

Although the weather was cool on the day the job was completed, I noticed a marked difference in the noise level on my radio. The constant S-2 to S-3 noise floor I had become accustomed to was now gone. Only the future will tell if the RFI is completely eliminated, but we are off to a good start.

What Can You Do?

If you experience what you believe to be power line RFI, first of all, be patient. Make sure there are no common sources in your home or nearby. Keep a log of the date, time of day, and frequencies affected. Contact your local utility company and be prepared to take the time to explain Amateur Radio and what you are experiencing. Be willing to work with them. Hopefully your utility company will have a technician with the proper equipment and know-how to track down the source. Finally, if your utility is unwilling to work with you, filing a complaint with the FCC may be your only alternative. Power companies are subject to RFI restrictions from the FCC and may be fined if corrective measures are not taken. PG&E, despite their efforts to mitigate such problems, was fined twice in the last year for failing to eliminate RFI sources interfering with the Amateur Radio Service. Hopefully any RFI problems you may be experiencing will be solved by a little investigative work on your part in cooperation with your utility company.

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QUARTZFEST 2014

Quartzfest is a Ham Radio gathering outside of Quartzsite, AZ (about halfway between Palm Springs and Phoenix) Jan 19th – 26th, 2014. More information can be found at their website <http://www.quartzfest.org/php/main.php?home>. My wife, Kathy, and I are planning on going to Quartzfest in our travel trailer and are interested in talking to anyone who has been. Also, if other club members are interested in going, I would be happy to serve as a contact person. My email address is KJ6SVX@arrl.net plus I usually participate in the Monday night W6SF net.de Bob Camarena, KJ6SVX

KH9, WAKE ISLAND DXPEDITION IS ON!

"The Wake Atoll Commemorative DXpedition team has been approved for entry onto Wake Atoll. Our equipment is already on Wake and in safe storage awaiting our arrival.

The 12-Operator team includes: Joe -AA4NN, John-K6MM, Craig-K9CT, Mike-K9NW, Ralph-K9ZO, Lou-N2TU, Jim-N9TK, Mark-NA6M, Dick-W3OA, Joe-W8GEX, Hal-W8HC, and Jerry-WB9Z. The plan is for the team to assemble in Hawaii on 30-October, depart 01-November, arrive on 02-November and immediately erect antennas and set-up the stations. There will be two CW and two SSB stations on the air. The CW site will be located across from the Arrivals terminal and the SSB site will be housed in a "beach house" near downtown Wake.

We are planning on being QRV 03-November through 15-November (Wake time). If there are any changes, they will be posted on our website.

<http://wake2013.org/pages/bandplan.html>

EDITOR WANTED!

Beginning January 1, Flysheet editor Dave N6LHL, will no longer be editing the Flysheet. After 10 years of putting the Flysheet out every month, Dave is tired and looking to spend more time with his HF equipment. So, if you have an interest in editing the Flysheet, contact Dave at n6lhl@softcom.net and tell him. Dave has promised to work with anyone who volunteers as Editor, and will be there to lend a hand and provide all the advice a new Editor can use.

A HAM'S CALENDAR

November 2 & 3 – Radio Club of America SSB QSO Party

November 2 thru 4 – ARRL November CW Sweepstakes.

November 14 – Monthly **membership meeting** of the Stockton Delta ARC at Bear Creek Community Church, 11171 Lower Sacramento Road, just north of Eight Mile Road. It's time to nominate officers for 2014. Election of officers will be held at the November 10 meeting.

November 16 thru 18 – ARRL November SSB Sweepstakes.

November 16 – **Stockton VEC Group Testing** at Fire Station #14 on McNabb Street off Thornton Road at 10am. Contact Mike Zane at N6ZW@Comcast.net at least 3 days prior to test day. **No walk ins!**

November 28 – Thanksgiving morning **Run Against Hunger**. OPERATORS NEEDED!

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Do you have any suggestions, comments or concerns? We want to hear from you. Do you have an idea that we, as a club can all benefit from? Let us hear about it. Do you have any topic for discussion that YOU could and would contribute to the club? We want to hear from YOU! To submit articles for the monthly newsletter, email the editor at n6lhl@softcom.net

W6SF CLUB INFORMATION

MEETINGS: Regular meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30pm, at the **Bear Creek Community Church, 11171 Lower Sacramento Road, just north of Eight Mile Road**. Members, guests, and people having an interest in Amateur Radio are invited to attend. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, November 14, 2013**.

WEEKLY NET: Held each Monday evening at 8pm on **147.165+ PL 107.2 Hz** Members and visitors are invited to check in. There is also an unofficial get together on Thursday evenings (except meeting nights) at 7:30pm on **28.457**. Amateurs with the proper license are encouraged to participate.

CLUB REPEATERS: Located in the Sierra at 2500 feet, the club repeater covers the southern Sacramento and Northern San Joaquin Valleys. The call sign is **W6SF**, and can be heard on **147.165+Mhz** with a PL tone of 107.2 Hz. From the same site, the club operates a 440MHZ repeater at **442.250 +** with a PL of 107.2 Hz. Locally, the club also operates a **444.575+** repeater with a PL of 107.2 from East Main Street.

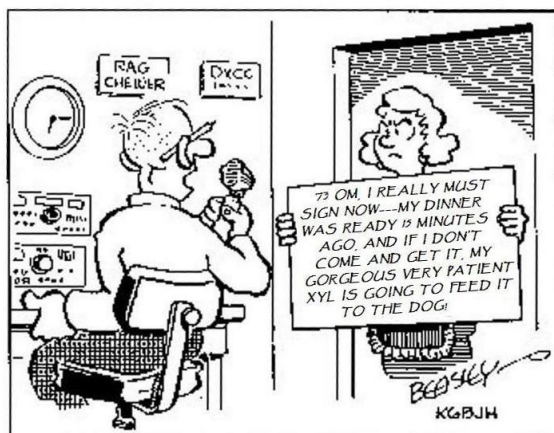
CLUB SIMPLEX FX: 147.51 MHz.

CLUB WEBSITE: <http://www.w6sf.org>

2013 CLUB OFFICERS:

President:	WB6NVB , Charlie Johnson	wb6nvb@arrl.net
Vice President:	N6KZW , Paul Engelman	n6kzw@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer:	KD6CPA , Peter Hine	selkied@earthlink.net
Secretary:	W6INP , Eric Chapa	perrla1@aol.com
Call Sign Trustee	AA6K , Shiril Rose	rosesl@prodigy.net
Repeater Trustee:	KD6FVA , John Kester	jbkester@att.net
Member At Large:	K6KJQ , Glen Pitts	kjq45@att.net
Membership Chairman		
Newsletter Editor	N6LHL , Dave Hardwick	n6lhl@softcom.net

CLUB DUES: Individual dues are \$20, family dues are \$30, payable to Stockton-Delta Amateur Radio Club at the address on the masthead. We thank you for your continued support!



-73 O.M., I REALLY MUST SIGN NOW-----

