

W6VIO Calling



Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 820, La Canada CA 91012-0820

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Meeting Notice

By Christopher Carson, KE6ABQ

The October General Meeting of the JPL Amateur Radio Club will be held October 9th at noon in the W6VIO / KHA920 station located in Bldg. 173 near the East Gate. The Lab bus runs every ten minutes, and stops very near the East Gate, making it easy to get there from most places on Lab and easy to get back to work, lunch, etc. Come see the new shack.

The October JPLARC Board Meeting will be held October 23rd in 233-305J. Everyone on Lab at the time is welcome to attend either meeting – bring your lunch if you want. ■

Prez' Mix

By Bob Dengler, NO6B

As 2002 begins to wind down, club election time quickly approaches. I've held this job longer than I can remember now, at least 3 years. Despite the small effort it takes to run this club, it would be really nice if someone else took over for a while. The club could use a little boost in the recruitment and meeting program departments, areas that I have not been successful in.

Our other club officers have also been serving for quite some time. If you're not the "leader" type but have good (or ever so) secretarial skills, or could volunteer to be only an "occasional" president, consider running for the other club offices of Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer. Give me a call at 4-9620 or e-mail me at no6b@rprrlist.w6jpl.ampr.org if you would like to volunteer.

JPL Amateur Radio Club Home Page: <http://jplarc.ampr.org/>

Calendar of Events

October 9r	General Meeting, Noon – W6VIO/KHA920 Bldg 173
October 19	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
October 23	Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J
October 26	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]
November 2	[Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana]
November 13	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
November 16	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
November 27	Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J
November 30	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]
December 4	JPL ARC Christmas Party
December 7	[Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana]
December 21	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
December 28	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]
January 4	[Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana]
January 8	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
January 18	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]

Our ongoing technical activities continue to be very successful due largely to the constant, tireless efforts of our trustees: Randy Hammock KC6HUR (224.08 and 445.20 repeaters and IRLP), Bob Polansky N6ET (HF shack and Field Day), Bill Wood W6FXJ (145.28, 223.96, 447.20 Table Mountain. repeaters and JPL/TMO 222 MHz link repeater), and Eric Archer N6CV (VHF shack and internet access for club computers). Thank you all for your continued club support! ■

Club Meetings

By Jonathan Cameron, KF6RTA

General Meeting, September 11

The club president, Bob Dengler, opened the meeting at 12:06pm. The board members present included Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA), Chris Carson (KE6ABQ), Bob Dengler (NO6B), Warren Dowler (KE6LEA), Louise Dowler, Randy Hammock (KC6HUR), Jim Lux (W6RMK), Walt Mushagian (K6DNS), Scott Nolte (K6SN), John Repar (WA6LWD), Ken Schmader (KG6MGV), Mike Seiffert (KG6MGJ), and Gil Yanow(K6TOS).

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Bob Dengler reported on the issue of lack of funds in the EOC account. Joe Charles has agreed to restore the funding in the next fiscal year, which means sometime in October. The purchases planned for those funds include upgrades for the Table mountain repeater hardware as well as a new linear amp.

Walt Mushagian reported that he has not been able to make any contacts on the NASA Emergency HF net during the last several weeks.

Chris Carson encouraged us to think about scheduling our Christmas party as soon as possible. We also discussed possible programs. Jonathan Cameron volunteered to coordinate the Christmas dinner. A potential date of Wednesday, December 4th, was suggested.

For next month's meeting, we will ask Bob Polansky to give us a tour of the new shack in building 173.

Board of Directors Meeting, September 25

The meeting was started at approximately 12:30pm. Those present included Eric Archer (N6CV via phone), Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA), Bob Dengler (NO6B), Randy Hammock (KC6HUR), Chuck Sarture (KG6NF), and Bill Wood (W6FXJ, by phone).

Bob Dengler reported on the repeater interference complaint received by the club. Apparently, our repeater carrying the ISS audio is occasionally interfering with a repeater in San Diego. Bob talked with the TASMA coordinator and thinks that no action is necessary in the short term.

Possible ways to address the issue in the long term includes lowering our output power, stopping transmission of the ISS audio, tilting the antenna so that less signal gets towards the San Diego direction, and replacing the antenna with one that has lower gain at higher angles.

The FCC will soon decide on a request for a ruling on ISS retransmission from Glenn Research Center. When this ruling comes down, ISS retransmission may be impossible anyway. We may eventually try to switch the ISS feed to an audio stream on the Internet.

Bob Dengler noted that the new version of the rules for JPL Recreation Clubs allows contractors to participate fully, except that the treasurer must be a JPL employee. This is a significant improvement and will allow the club to operate satisfactorily. The issue of non-JPL/non-contractor members still needs to be resolved.

Additional Note on the Club Christmas Party

After a mailing to the club email list with no protests, the date of December 4th for the Christmas party has been adopted. Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA) and Janet Cameron (KG6JNO) are working on banquet plans and a very interesting program. We've invited a very colorful and well-known DXpedition team to give us a presentation on a recent trip. We will let the club know soon if that works out. In any case, we are planning to have a great Christmas party and hope that EVERYONE in the club will join us! ■

W6VIO and DX News

By Bob Polansky, N6ET

I've turned on the old HF rig no more than twice this past month, so my rather brief notes which follow are for the most part courtesy of The Weekly DX and the QRZ DX Reports. The DX spots on the DX Summit Website show that we are slipping down from the peak of the sunspot cycle.

Hopefully, the upcoming winter conditions will at least make the 160, 80, and 40 meter bands exciting. In spite of the sunspot decline, a number of exciting operations are either taking place or being planned. Here's a sampling:

CHAD - TT8ZZ has been quite active and will be giving out QSO's through November 30th. He's been spotted on 10 meters CW after 1500Z and on 17 meters CW after 2000Z. Good luck on this rare one.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA - 3C2A will be the call sign used by VE6HO during his trip here from 2 through 24 November. All band/all mode operation is planned, perhaps even 160 meters.

KENYA - Look for 5Z4DZ from 0100 to 0200Z on 40 and 80 meters. Don't know how long he'll be there, but he's been spotted on several bands including 10 meters.

SUDAN - ST0F has been reported around 21325 kHz from 1800 through 2100Z. 20 and 10 meter operation is also expected.

TANZANIA - 5H1HZ is currently operating from Zanzibar Island. He will be on the air from 80 through 10 meters through 22 October.

WESTERN SAHARA - S07L will be creating pile-ups from 9 through 13 October on all bands, primarily on SSB. ■

A Good Radio Repair Man is hard to find

By Merv MacMedan, N6NO

They used to say "A good man is hard to find". I found out recently that the old adage is still true, especially when it comes to radio repair.

Some time ago I had a mysterious malady with one of my HF radios, a 20-year old ICOM IC-730.

It was one of the first radios manufactured with bandswitching that added the then-new WARC bands, 10, 18 and 24 MHz. It worked well for me at home as well as providing bullet-proof performance under severe conditions at several JPLARC field days.

The symptom was that intermittently, in CW mode, if you pressed the TRANSMIT button or the TRANSMIT foot-switch, the radio properly switched from receive to transmit, but sometimes some sort of RF energy came out even before you touched the key. Obviously, that shouldn't happen. Mysteriously, this only occurred when the band switch was in the 18 or 21 MHz position. I say "some sort of RF energy" be-

cause when this happened, the output was apparently not at the frequency the transmitter was set to. Key up, the power level was 10-20 watts forward with 5-10 watts reflected into my otherwise flat 21-MHz antenna. I suspected some sort of oscillation in the final amplifier, but was unable to find anything in the schematic that linked only those two bands with such a problem.

I sent it to ICOM's factory service facility in Washington. They said they could not duplicate the problem, changed a "suspect" bias-setting transistor for the final amplifier, told me to check my antenna for proper SWR and returned it to me after a few weeks. Cost to me was \$85 plus shipping.

That's a reasonable charge if it fixed the problem. It worked OK when I got it back so I put it aside, thinking it was cured. The following month I installed it at my "N6NO South" station in San Diego.

Just as I chased a choice morsel of DX, it suddenly locked on again, transmitting with the key up. I called ICOM but their policy is that the customer does not get to discuss the problem with the repair technician, and anyway their 30-day repair warranty period had passed. I was so frustrated at this point I was ready to consider throwing away the radio. The intermittent nature of the problem meant I needed a local technician so I could personally demonstrate it.

My tower expert, who had spent the past few days with me rebuilding my tower in San Diego, recommended a local repair person who had been the service manager at one of the Ham Radio Outlet stores back when they actually had their own repair department. I contacted John, N6AX, at home, and took it to him to look at.

John has a day job, but moonlights in the evenings at home doing radio repairs. His garage was full of neat test equipment, including a spectrum analyzer, a piece of gear nearly every ham would like to have, but doesn't use frequently enough to justify the expense. We turned the radio on and found that when this condition occurs it puts out a 20-watt carrier at 31.5 MHz. No wonder the reflected power was so high! And, isn't that the band the Highway Patrol uses? I certainly wouldn't want the CHP knocking at my door for interfering with them!

Once on the bench, we found we could make it come and go from banging on the cabinet, which confirmed the intermittent nature of the problem. John took a couple of days to remove the circuit boards which are layered one on top of another in the unit, and with some probing and flexing found a couple of places that had cracks in the solder joints. He could make the problem come and go. A quick reheating of the suspect joints fixed the problem. Another \$80 for his time, but finally it was truly fixed, making this effort worthwhile.

I like to share my experiences with fellow club members. I am happy to recommend this "Good Man's" expert services if you have a tough repair problem you can't tackle yourself. John does not charge if he can't fix your problem. He seems to know what he's doing, has plenty of experience with many different ham radios, and you can sit down with him and talk about it, which is something seldom possible with the factory repair shops. You can reach John Klewer, N6AX, in Placentia, through his pager at 1-714-802-0460. ■

Classified Section

Wanted:

Donations requested: Old 2 meter handhelds and TNC's. Needed by the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep to transmit weather and water level data from remote water catchments. Contact John Carnakis, KE6DKY: Phone, 661 821-2067 or email, john.bobbi@thegrid.net

For Sale:

Kenwood TR - 7850, 2-mtr mobile, \$75. ICOM IC-3AT, 220 Handheld, \$75. ICOM IC-2AT, 2-mtr handheld, \$25. ICOM BC 30, drop-in charger for IC-3AT and IC-2AT, \$10. ICOM IC-27A, 2-mtr mobile, \$100. Or \$200 for everything! Contact Jim Sutton, ND6X, cdrsutton@attbi.com 818-352-3588.

Gillette Gen-Pro 12.5 Kw Diesel Generator, 21Hp DUETZ GRUGGERINI air cooled diesel, Electric start, 8 gal fuel tank, Low hrs. Can be viewed at <http://home.att.net/~n7hd/Gen.jpg>. Cost \$7800, sell for \$3100. Contact Buddy, 626-584-4645 days, 661-944-3864 eves,

QST 1990-1994 CD-ROM set, new. \$25 (ARRL price \$39.95) Skip, W7NWX, 818-354-9674

Icom UT-40 Tone Squelch Option Board (CTCSS) for HT models 2GAT, 4GAT, 12GAT, 32AT or for mobiles 228, 448, 901, 1201, 2400 and 2500. Cost: \$80 (AES Catalog) Sale for \$40. Contact, scott.nolte@jpl.nasa.gov or 818-354-9724

Avoid Caveat Emptor Syndrome!

Allan W6MEO is doing a personal survey to locate other hams that may have used cloning software, aka Windows Programming Soft-ware, by RT Systems, Inc., sold through dealers and direct mail. An accessory to ADI, Alinco, Icom and Yaesu VHF-UHF radios, these programs allow easy entry and manipulation of radio memory.

If members have any info regarding this company, especially comments regarding performance of software, it would be appreciated by Allan, and shared if requested. As a matter of interest, it appears that this is not a valid corporation and is headed by Rod Thompson KU4HP, of Kennesaw, GA or Huntsville, AL. Contact Allan at: a.k.chapman@ieee.org or (707) 944-1322. ■

Newsletter Deadline:

Friday, November 1 for the November issue of W6VIO Calling. Your articles, ads, photos, diagrams, letters to the editor, or technical material should be submitted to the editor via email (bill.wood@mindspring.com) or regular mail to: Bill Wood, 31094 Hemlock Ave, Barstow, CA 92311.



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First Class Mail

JPL ARC Repeaters			
Pasadena:			
WR6JPL	147.15 MHz	(+)	PL 131.8 Open
WR6JPL	224.08 MHz	(-)	PL 156.7 Open
WR6JPL	224.70 MHz	(-)	Closed Autopatch
WR6JPL	445.20 MHz	(-)	PL 103.5 Open
W6JPL-1	145.09 MHz		Packet Node/BBS
W6JPL-1	223.54 MHz		Packet Node/BBS
Table Mountain:			
WR6AZN	145.28 MHz	(-)	PL 131.8 Open
WR6AZN	223.96 MHz	(-)	PL 156.7 Open
WR6AZN	447.20 MHz	(-)	PL 94.8 Open

