

W6VIO Calling



Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 820, La Canada CA 91012-0820

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March 2003

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|---|---------------------|
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Meeting Notice

By Christopher Carson, KE6ABQ

The March General Meeting of the JPL Amateur Radio Club will be held March 12th at noon in the conference room in 233-543. Don't forget to bring your 2003 dues!

The March JPLARC Board Meeting will be held March 26th in 233-305J. Everyone on Lab at the time is welcome to attend either meeting – bring your lunch if you want. ■

The JPL ARC Needs You!

By Merv MacMedan, N6NO, Jay Holladay, W6EJJ, and Bob Polansky, N6ET

As most of us are aware, your club is in a period of decline. It's getting tired and is now nearly asleep. A few people have shouldered the load for the past few years, and it is now time for others to step up and help. Otherwise the spreading apathy could kill the club altogether. The authors of this article believe this sleeping giant can be resuscitated, but only with YOUR help.

To start the process, we'd like you to ask yourself three questions:

1. What kind of a JPL Amateur Radio Club do I want?
2. What kind of activities am I willing to support?
3. What am I willing to do to help the Club?

Calendar of Events

| | |
|----------|---|
| March 12 | General Meeting, Noon - 238-543 |
| March 26 | [CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM] |
| March 26 | Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J |
| March 29 | [TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach] |
| April 5 | [Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana] |
| April 9 | General Meeting, Noon - 238-543 |
| April 19 | [CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM] |
| April 23 | Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J |
| April 26 | [TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach] |
| May 14 | General Meeting, Noon - 238-543 |
| May 17 | [CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM] |
| May 28 | Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J |
| May 31 | [TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach] |
| June 7 | [Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana] |

There are many possibilities:

- Provide a program once a year. (You don't even have to give the program – just find us a speaker!)
- Volunteer to be a club officer
- Check in to our Monday noon net
- Contribute a news item or article to W6VIO Calling
- Volunteer for our JPL emergency communications support team
- Help with B173 and B180 facility maintenance and upgrades
- Plan and support Field Day activities (antenna raising, on-air operating, mentoring kids)
- Help with antenna or repeater maintenance and upgrades
- Participate in community service: Marathon or bike race communications, licensing classes, exams, Kiwanis talks, kids radio projects
- Make 5 contacts from W6VIO – HF or VHF, whichever you prefer

As you can see, there is a wide range of activities and levels of commitment, but we need everyone who cares about the future of the club to take on one or more of the above activities.

Next, think about the wonderful facilities we have today. For the first time, the club has its own dedicated building (Building 173) in which is housed three complete state-of-the-art, full power HF radio operating positions with networked computers. On the Mesa, 800 feet above B-173, is our world-class antenna farm enabling our signals to be heard around the world.

For those of us who could never field such an installation at home, because of lack of funds or real estate, this station is available for members to enjoy operating but few take advantage of it. It also has VHF and UHF repeaters on three bands that serve the local community as well as JPL proper, and a packet relay station and an amateur radio satellite station being assembled in Building 180 along side a 6-meter station.

These capabilities help us provide emergency communications support for JPL and give us a "reason for being" as a part of JPL's Emergency Response Team. All of this has been accomplished over the years by a few dedicated individuals, but now that this infrastructure is in place we need the people to participate in the club to train, operate, maintain and upgrade this stuff ... YOU!

To revitalize the club, we would first like to see more members populate our withering membership list. Have you renewed your dues for 2003? If you're not a member, please consider joining!

We would also like to see more attendance at our monthly meetings (second Wednesday of each month in 238-543). Visitors are always welcome. Of course, more people will "find the time" to attend if the programs are attractive, informative and educational. Part of the revitalization plan is to improve the programs - what programs would you like to see?

Finally, please help us kick off this revitalization effort by attending our next meeting on March 12. Everyone present will be invited to address the leadership of the club on where the club should go in the future, and how it should get there. Your opinions will be welcome, whatever level of participation you choose.

You can also e-mail your comments and suggestions to Jay.Holladay@jpl.nasa.gov ■

Prez' Mix

By Bob Dengler, N06B

Although February got off to a poor start in that we failed to achieve a quorum at last month's club meeting, some key club members pulled together to make our biggest public service communications effort a total success.

I'm referring to the 18th Los Angeles Marathon held on March 2nd. As in years past, JPLARC club members provided critical support to the medical net. This net, led by Steve Jenkins N6UNI and Greg La Borde KD6MSM, is primarily responsible for getting medical transportation dispatched when requested by doctors on the course and is the most important marathon net.

In addition to the medical net, club members were also heard on the shadow and lead vehicle nets. These nets provided tactical communications and lead runner position information for the race officials. A big THANK YOU to all that participated!

This year the marathon requested the use of 3 club repeaters: 224.08, 224.70 and 445.20. Unfortunately, both of our Cerro Negro Peak repeaters had serious receiver problems, some of which were discovered only a few days before the marathon. Thanks to some quick remote diagnostic testing, a rushed crystal order for a replacement receiver crystal for 445.20 and some timely site access negotiating by Randy KC6HUR, we were able to correct all these problems less than 48 hours before the marathon. As a result, all of our repeaters provided solid handheld coverage throughout the entire marathon course.

APRS was also used again this year. I understand there were some problems tracking some of the vehicles. Due to some communications problems between the marathon office and the site manager, we were unable to visit the downtown LA APRS digipeater site this year to check up on it, so it may have a receiver problem as well. We won't know for sure until next year, provided we are able to gain access to the site at that time!

Finally, I hope everyone who reads this can attend our next club meeting on Wednesday, March 12th at noon in 238-543. Remember, it's time to "do your dues" if you haven't already. With the apparent loss of ERC grant funding, your club dues will be even more important to the continuation of club activities such as Field Day and maintenance of the club stations and repeaters. At only \$11, it's a lot cheaper than most other clubs! ■

W6VIO and DX News

By Bob Polansky, N6ET

It is time for another W6VIO article. This month, it will be brief, as emphasis has been placed on an article regarding our Club's survival appearing elsewhere in this issue of *W6VIO Calling*. Several sessions at detuning our Rohn tower to improve performance of our 160-meter low noise loop antenna have taken place. I'm happy to report that a significant improvement has resulted from this work. In all cases during the last 160-meter contest, the SNR from the selected direction of the loop antennas has been better than the SNR received from the 160-meter Inverted Vee antenna used for transmitting. More improvement is possible, but we may run out of the 160-meter season prior to doing the additional work needed. An additional half-dozen new band-entities have been put into the W6VIO log during the last several months.

There are a few exciting operations planned for this coming month according to *The Weekly DX* and *QRZ DX* publications. Additional information exists in the W6VIO shack where these publications are posted.

DUCIE ISLAND – VP6?? will appear nominally between 8 and 14 March from this very new DX entity. This will be the second operation from Ducie. All band, all mode operation from three simultaneous stations is planned. Should be relatively easy QSO's from our spot on the southwest corner of the USA.

MACQUARIE – VK0MQI will be leaving this "southern tip of the world" QTH the end of March. Work him if you can find propagation. He normally operates local Saturday nights only from 8 through 10 PM local time. Look on 21365 kHz to see if the propagation gods favor you.

MOUNT ATHOS – This is another rare entity operated by Monk Apollo. He has been reported near 7048 kHz at about 0000Z and listens up for USA stations around 7200 kHz.

NIGER – 5U7JB is a Peace Corp Director in Niger. I understand he will be there for some time and expects to be reasonably active.

QATAR – Look for A7??? (possibly A71ROG) starting in March for three months. Operation is planned from 40 through 10 meters on SSB.

SUDAN – An STORY operation is planned from 19 March to 2 April. I understand this is an all band, all mode operation. A nice catch for the deserving. W6VIO needs this on SSB.

Enough for this month. Work them while the sunspots are still above 100. ■

Newsletter Deadline:

Friday, March 28 for the April 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.

Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club

2003 Membership Form

Name: _____ Call: _____

License Class: E A G T+ T N

License Expiration Date: _____ ARRL Member? _____

Mail Stop: _____ Lab extension: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Home address: _____ Home Phone w/Area Code _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____



MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

JPL Employee: _____ Retired: _____

On-Lab Contractor: _____ Retired: _____

Family: _____ Off-Lab: _____ Caltech/Other: _____

Please renew your JPL Amateur Radio Club membership for 2003 by completing the following three steps:

1. In addition to your name and call enter any new or corrected information on the membership form above. Please enter your current electronic mail address if you have one.
2. Return this form with your personal check for 2003 dues as listed below (check the appropriate boxes) to: Scot Nolte, JPL Mail Stop 306-392 or JPLARC, PO Box 820, La Canada, CA 91012-0820. Please make checks payable to JPL-ARC

- Regular; Retired, Off-Lab or Caltech/Other: \$ 10.00 each
 (\$11.00 If not Paid by Feb. 28, 2003)
 Immediate Family Members living at the same address with a Member above: \$5.00
 Newly Licensed Amateurs - Free for the first year

Please check additional action(s) desired:

- I have already paid my 2003 dues.
 There is an error in the club records, please correct as shown above.
 I no longer want to be a JPL Amateur Radio Club member. Please remove my name from your list.

Thx and 73, Scot Nolte, K6SN



Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 820
La Canada, CA 91012-0820

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 |

