



# Valley Ham News

A publication of the Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club, a California Non-Profit Corporation

## “Earth & Sky” Afghan To Be Raffled at the February Dinner Meeting



Clara, N6VRH has completed an “Earth & Sky”, a variegated afghan in shades of browns and blues, with accents of dark brown and white in a Ripple Kaleidoscope pattern. The afghan measures 83.5” x 60”. It was handmade by Clara in memory of Barry Barnes, KE6LW (sk) and Allen Hill, W6WPF (sk). Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. All monies from the sale of tickets will be placed in the YSARC Memorial Fund.

## Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 1169  
Yuba City, CA 95992

### President

Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY

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VE Test Results

Proper Repeater Operations

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## YSARC THIS MONTH....

February 5th - 1730hrs - Sweetheart Dinner at the 2 Bits  
Cafe in Yuba City (Afghan Raffle)

February 19th - 1600hrs - YSARC Board Meeting @ QTH  
of Clara, N6VRH

## Monthly YSARC Activities

1st TUESDAY: Club Meeting

3rd TUESDAY: Board Meeting

4th TUESDAY: Newsletter Items

Due to the Editor ([kb6yaf@arrl.net](mailto:kb6yaf@arrl.net))

Every MONDAY Night: NET @ 1900hrs.  
(146.085+ PL 127.3)

## ODDS & ENDS

You might have noticed a new format in this month's newsletter. This was due to the fact that my external hard drive went to the "Big Bit Bucket In The Sky". Yes, I committed the sin of not backing up the back ups as I should have, and I do realize that it was not a matter of "if", but a matter of "when"..... I also feel that I must respond to many questions about the change in the newsletter format. Many have noticed a drastic change for the newsletter content. As per some officers of the club, I was told that many of the past newsletters did not reflect the activities of just what the club is doing. I was also told that too much content of this 'rag' (direct quote from an officer) was about the editor and that had to change. Also, there was too much humor and non-ham related items inserted that was deemed 'unacceptable'. I was told that everything printed in this newsletter must reflect only the activities of the YSARC. All of this came up at the December 2012 Board Meeting, which came to a complete surprise to this editor. I have always been told by members and the officers themselves that I was doing a great job at the meetings and on the Monday Night Net. So, as a compliant person to their wishes, I am doing my best to implement their wishes since that meeting. Since that meeting, I have been receiving many emails from members submitting good material for the newsletter of which I am very grateful. Many times each month, I am left with not much to report due to the fact that little or nothing has ever been submitted, so this has been a "positive". For those of you in the club who are a bit disturbed by this, I am truly sorry. My intent has always been to put ham radio first. I have adjusted that now to put "YSARC" first and only first. If I have not been doing my job correctly in the past, I will improve as per board directives.....This editor wants to explain that this newsletter is coming out a little late due to the fact he and his XYL were attending another ham radio event out of the state, so please accept my apologies for this late edition.....February Digital Modes Workshop is being planned. There is no date, time, or place, but check into the net and log onto the website often for updates.....March will also bring some more YSARC workshops on building. Stay tuned.....April is MS Walk and BATB.....Sign ups for these are being accepted.....That's it for the O&E !!!!

## DIGITAL NET

If any of you have ever had an interest in the digital modes, there is now a weekly net on the 146.085 MHz repeater. It starts at 7 PM Sunday evening with a round of check-ins followed by discussion of the mode and frequency we will use. From there we move to 145.550 MHz Simplex in FM mode for another round of check-ins. The purpose of this net is to help interested hams learn how locally on FM simplex so they will be able to move into the world of HF Digital communications.

In simplex, each participant is asked to make note of received signal strength from other check-ins and be prepared to report. From this point until the hour is up, the focus is on sending, receiving and fine tuning settings for the mode being used for the evening.

The January 27, 2013 net was a busy one. We began as usual on the .085 machine and moved to 145.550 MHz for a quick round of PSK31 before moving to 20 meters at 14.070 MHz for another round.

Then back to 145.550 MHz for a round of Slow Scan TV.

Of course many in Northern California can get into the .085 machine, but those able to join the simplex portion of this net are limited. Give it a try. You may discover as several have, digital gets through when phone emissions don't.

So you are interested and want to get started? You'll need some equipment and some software to join in the fun. A 2 meter FM transceiver capable of 20 to 30 watts and an antenna as high as possible will allow you to check in on the repeater and we hope the simplex frequency as well. A computer with a serial port is next. You can use a USB connection if your PC doesn't have a serial port. An interface will connect your rig to the PC or Apple. These can be home brewed although you can participate without this device using the method below.

Connect a microphone to your computer and hold it near the

speaker on your rig. Or connect a speaker to your rig and position it near the microphone on your computer. This will allow the programs mentioned below to "hear" the digital signal and put it on the screen. To send, just hold your rig's mic close to your computer speaker while holding the PTT down when you want to send a digital message. Having a very quiet room is important and some have rigged up soft foam cups between mics and speakers to avoid handling noises.

There are many free software programs out there to help you get started. Digipan (primarily for PSK) and MMSSTV (Slow Scan TV) are simple, quick and easy to use. HRD or Ham Radio Deluxe is another program although it is a bit complicated for some. There is a free version and a more extensive version for sale. FLdigi is another free program which has great promise and covers a multitude of modes.

Listen in, ask questions and join the fun. 73, **Lonnie KI6ZY**

**GREAT RADIO** - AN ARTICLE BY RON MURDOCK, W6KJ

What qualifies a set of radio equipment to qualify in the GREAT RADIO category? I submit the following and hope it will generate some discussion. This covers over 45 years of continuous operation, with slight interruptions for combat duty during the Viet Nam war. I consider myself very fortunate to have sampled all the rigs I used.

When I was a novice licensee (and beginner in May 1967), each new contact was cause for joy. I used a separate National NC-190 receiver (new in the box from Allied) and a Knight Kit T-60 I built from a kit (also from Allied.) I knew that a ham band only receiver could outdo my general coverage receiver, but

hey, I was making contacts. I knew this because for three weeks at the end of my novice year I used a Drake 2C receiver owned by Joe Montana, a squadron mate. I confirmed 37 states as a novice. Not in the great category, but fun!

Near the end of my year as a novice, I built a new Heathkit HW-100, HP23 Power supply and used the same key and speaker I had for the past year. This was a recently introduced kit and was a great radio by comparison to the general coverage receiver and 37 watt crystal controlled CW transmitter I had been using. I operated either from my home on Wurtsmith AFB, MI, or from the alert facility on the same base. The HW-100 transceiver operated SSB and CW, but had no cw filter, receiver incremental tuning, or IF shift.



In August, 1968, I took it with me to Andersen AFB, Guam. There I found the HW-100 receiver to be easily overloaded by the nearby USAF transmitters, even those outside the ham bands. But in the U.S. when I was home, it was really great. While I was in Guam, or in Okinawa, I even got to use club station Collins KWM-2A, and a 30 S-1, or a 30 L-1 amplifier. Now these

were the top of any list and great radios. We ran the Collins with the receiver gain cranked back quite a bit as we were running phone patch traffic for Air Force, Army, and Navy personnel. We wanted to hear the signal not the noise.

Next came a Yaesu FT-101, purchased new in February, 1972,

from a Navy Warrant Officer at the



Guam Navy Base. I got him to throw in 30 feet of coax so I could get on the air. Believe me when I say how much worse the FT-101 was than the HW-100 when it came to overload of the receiver. This was associated with the noise blanker, and I had to use it with the noise blanker off. I took it with me to Thailand and operated from my quarters between combat missions. I worked with a 40 meter dipole, got 115 countries during the 1972 CQWW SSB contest and eventually got QSLs from 85 countries. I also flew three combat missions that weekend.



In 1978, I was promoted the last time in my USAF career and gave myself a brand new Drake TR-7, one of the first 200 made, eventually equipping it with most of the accessories. What a great radio! Digital readout to 100 Hz., IF shift, an optional noise blanker that worked, a power supply that allowed full output in any mode (important for RTTY and SSTV.) I used it for

**GREAT RADIO - CONTINUED**

ten years and never even thought of another rig, until...



The Icom 735 came along as a prize at the 1988 Pacificon banquet. This was a great radio because it came with an AT-150 autotuner. I could go portable or mobile. It was great to use on Field Day. Tony, W6ROC, had it the last time I knew.



Having been bitten by the Icom bug, I then got an Icom 737 HF transceiver. It had some new improvements and I enjoyed it for a few years before selling it to Art, W6ARN. At the same time, Kenwood came out with the TS-570 which had audio DSP (Digital Signal Processing.) I had that only a little over a year before selling it to Paul, N6XVL. The reason I let it go was another new rig, an Icom 746 with IF digital signal processing, and a few years later it was replaced by a 746 Pro. Once digital signal processing was included in the radio, a new expectation for the receiver was realized, and the 746 line had a basic spectrum display and software defined filters.

Spectrum display is a nice to have goody, and one I had dreamed about since seeing a really good one in the B52 electronic warfare position. It covered dc to daylight, as we liked to say, and gave the EWO a great idea when and where threat radars were, whether from on the ground or in the air.



And now we come to a really great radio--the Flex 3000. An ad in QST showed up the day I was leaving for Pacificon. I ordered one at the show that October and I received the 14th one made in April the following year. For those not familiar with Flex radios, they are software defined radios (SDR) and require a pretty healthy computer to do all the control functions. The front panel of this 12" by 12" by 2" high box has only a power switch, a key jack, a mic jack, and a headphone jack. No volume control or passband knob or anything else on the front except the name and the model of the radio.

Once you load and start the software, the computer screen comes alive with a beautiful spectrum display and waterfall display if you want that. All control functions are placed around the spectrum display in little boxes discretely labeled for use with your mouse. Some are sliding controls, like volume, drive, and the equivalent of RF gain. There is a

complete list of boxes for PTT, VOX, CW speed, weight, nine filter bandwidths per mode, and a thing called virtual audio cable.

One who refers to modern radio as 'wireless' hasn't tried it lately. Most of the time you end up using various accessory boxes connected by lots and lots of wires. Some of those go between your computer and your radio, and your radio and your Packet TNC, and your radio and some other neat device to do other neat things. In the Flex, a lot of that is not required, and you can do it with software like the VAC, virtual audio cable.

Software defines the radio and software can be updated. Since getting the Flex 3K, I have updated it with free updates about a dozen times. The update is so easy and quick there is no reason not to do it. Without a hardware change the onboard Flex antenna tuner has been made much more flexible; it now allows tuning a 6:1 SWR where when it arrived here the figure was 3:1 SWR. That was all in a software update for free.

I have been using the Flex for most of the time since April 2009. During that time I also had a Kenwood TS2000 and a Yaesu FT1000MkV Field. All of these radios have excellent features and made hamming lots of fun. The more you invest in this hobby, the more you can expect from your rig. Computer connection is a common feature, sometimes to customize a radio feature set, help with logging, and make contesting and DX'ing more efficient and fun. New features are always coming out and make these new rigs really great. Some are world class, and I have a new one (for the last 14 months) I'll tell you about in the next issue.

## FUTURE “YSARC” EVENTS

YSARC is working on holding a “Ham Fest” on Saturday, June 1, 2013 at the American Legion Hall in Linda, CA

YSARC is planning on helping with communications for the **Yuba Sutter MS Walk** to be held on Saturday, April 20, 2013 which starts at Sam Brannon Park in Yuba City. (POC is Lonnie, KI6ZYY)

YSARC has been asked to provide communications for the 28th Annual “**Bike Around The Buttes**” also held on April 20, 2013. (POC is Russell, KB6YAF. If you worked this event last year, you can keep your same position if desired.)

The March YSARC Dinner Meeting's Theme is “Aloha Tuesday” Please wear your ‘loudest’ Hawaiian type shirts/clothes.

In May, YSARC is looking to hold a BBQ/Picnic. Ideas for a good location can be submitted to any officer or board member.

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## VOLUNTEERING PERSONAL INFORMATION OVER THE AIR

It has come to the attention of the YSARC Board of Directors that certain personal information has been passed over the 146.085 repeater without the expressed permission of subject operators who wish to remain anonymous. In order to keep personal information of an operator ‘personal’, YSARC is asking all operators not to volunteer any personal information over the 146.085 repeater about another operator.

For instance:

When an operator makes a call for another operator, and the operator being called doesn't answer, please **do not** volunteer any information about the whereabouts of the operator being called. It is not any one's business!!

The operator being called may be out of town, or may be in the hospital, and he or she doesn't want anyone to know for obvious reasons.

Many people are listening to scanners and gain much information about operators simply by going to QRZ.COM and finding their addresses. If the criminal element is listening, and finds that an operator is out of town or for some reason away from his or her house for an extended time, their home becomes a potential target for burglary.

So please, if you know where the operator that is being called is, but doesn't answer, keep it to yourself. You could save that operator a lot of grief.




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## JANUARY 2013 VE TESTING RESULTS

LeRoy, KJ6DKM reported that there were 5 exams given out of which 4 passed. The results are: Timothy J German, Extra Class; Joseph S Herman, General Class; Theodore P Herman, Technician Class; and Gary Demine, General Class. Thanks to all the VE's that showed up to help make the session complete.

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## YSARC'S “HAM SHACK OF THE MONTH” PROJECT



It has been suggested by a YSARC member that it would be interesting to feature a photo and/or description of a YSARC member's ham shack every month. So, we're going to give this a try. If you would like to see a photo of your ham shack in an issue of “The Valley Ham News”, then submit your favorite photo of your ham shack to the editor as an email attachment. The photo should be clear, generally in focus, etc. If you would like to have a photo taken of your shack, that can be arranged. If chosen, the photo will only be published in the VHN and be subject to the approval of the editor and the person submitting it.