

Valley Ham News Sept. 2013

A publication of the Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club, an ARRL approved, Non-Profit Organization

President's Desk....

Greetings from my desk to you as President and editor for the VHN. Another day older and deeper in appreciation of this great hobby. The term "Elmer" comes to mind this month. The phone and the .085 repeater keep me pretty busy most of the time. These two communication tools allow me a glimpse into the lives of our members. The Elmers in our midst, quietly going about their good work show up time and again.

It is obvious to one Elmer that a newbie needs help with setting some traps to resonance and he offers that help. Another hears of a desire to learn how to solder and offers his place for a soldering class. Yet another hears a newbie struggling with programming their new VHF rig and offers the help of experience. Yet another hears of a ham wanting to learn Morse Code. He offers and when accepted, takes this ham on a whirlwind learning experience beginning at zero WPM and taking him beyond 20 WPM. Constantly pushing the speed limit then offering to slow down; an offer constantly refused. He even let me believe I was able to stretch his ability at speed.

Another hears of a desire to learn more about satellite communications and offers to help. And on the soldering class; when we announced the class, I was overwhelmed with the number of hams who offered to help teach, bring equipment and offer advice. For awhile, I thought we'd have more Elmers than students.

When the subject of Elmers comes to mind, we often think of
(next column)

those who took the time to show us how. Now is the time to reflect upon what each of us have done to Elmer others along this often rewarding path. Yes, you. How many of you called to help with the soldering class? I'm happy to report almost as many as attended the first class.

How often do you grab at an opportunity to help a new ham understand how the repeater system works. You hear a guy calling "CQ" on a VHF repeater and you take the time to explain the proper way to seek a conversation and get hams to talk to you. The guy with a Yaesu that beeps every time he keys up. Sure, you tell him about the button that needs to be pushed and let him know it happened to you too. Same thing with someone sitting on their mic. As members of this unique community, we reach out to those with less experience and try to help them along. Gives them more confidence and the rest of us another ham to work with. Kudos to all who have stepped up to the plate and happy hunting for that next opportunity to help.

September Club Meeting

Rather than a presentation for the September meeting, we brought three antennas from the Silent Key Service Project for all to see. One was a Cushcraft A3S three band Yagi in need of some tender loving care. This antenna covers 10, 15 & 20 meters with only 3 elements. Another was a Cushcraft A50-3S which is a 3 element Yagi for six meters. Nice little antenna. The third was a Cushcraft R5 vertical HF antenna.

(next page)

Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club

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Repeater Trustee:

Dave Gartner ----- WD6AXM

VE Liaison:

LeRoy Smith ----- KJ6DKM

Monthly with YSARC:

1st Tuesday – Club Meeting

3rd Tuesday – Board Meeting

4th Tuesday – Deadline for

submissions to the editor

Each Monday – YSARC Net @ 19:00

on the WD6AXM repeater

(146.085 + / PL 127.3)

Please join us!!

In This Issue:

Presidents Desk... Pg. 1

Club Meeting... 1

A Character... 2

Recent Activities... 2

Upcoming... 3

In The Area... 4

How to Reach Us... 5

(Sept. Meeting continued)

The R5 is a bit dirty and does need some work, but should make a nice antenna that covers 10, 12, 15, 17 & 20 meters.

Mike KM6EBY did a great job of conducting this meeting. Mike is willing to run for the job of being President of this great club. I'm stepping down and want Mike to have a little experience with conducting our club meetings as well as our board meetings. This can be unnerving for some of us, but Mike is willing and has been doing a pretty good job. My hat is off to him.

Your editor brought his camera, yet failed to bring it out and get pictures. I'll try to do better next time. If you see me at the next meeting without a camera in hand, don't hesitate to remind me!

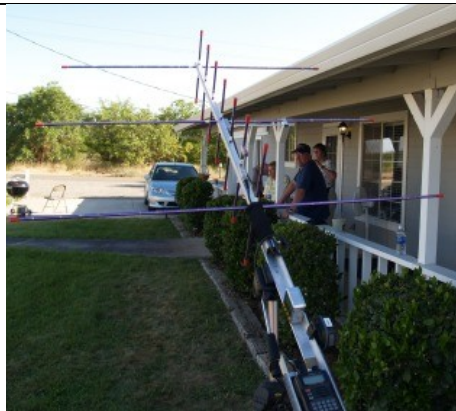
A Character...

The purpose of this column is to say a few words about a ham who has gone above and beyond. It will not be an extensive bibliography, or go into great detail. Rather, a few observations to thank them and inspire us. I began this effort in the July issue with Herb W6HBU.

This month's stand out ham is Ken W6KEN. I first met him during Field Day in 2009 out at the home of Bob W6BO & Jannet W6JND. Ken had set up a dual band Yagi antenna on a camera tripod. This antenna was a thing of beauty and covered 2 meters & 70 cm. He was pointing it at the sky and talking about satellites.

The thing that impressed me about Ken was his self confidence. Ask him a question, he had an answer and he didn't try to dazzle you with his brilliance or baffle you with a line of BS. He had put a lot of study into the subject, was passionate about it and seemed surprised that others weren't as excited as he was.

(next column)



This is a view of his satellite system ready to chase that elusive contact. Ken is in the background wearing the dark shirt. (KI6ZYY)



This is a very nice posed shot of Ken with his antenna at the ready. I'm not sure if Bob N6BOB or Russ KB6YAF took this picture, but my hat is off to them.

There is a lot more I could say about Ken, but I'll let this suffice for now. When I'm ready to set up for satellite work, Ken is the ham I'll turn to for answers, guidance and help.

A Soldering Class

September 14 was a good day for our first soldering class. If I counted correctly, eleven were present. Lee KC6MCI taught the class in his shop. Curtis KF6VFP and his wife Marsha KI6CSN who's idea it was to hold this class were there. Also present were: Don KJ6HZN, his wife Diana, Mike KM6EBY, his wife Shari K6AVW, Eleanor KI6CSO, Claire KI6VWG, Matthew AC6MF and Lonnie KI6-ZYY who took these pictures.



Lee (on the right) is demonstrating how to prepare the braid on a piece of RG8 prior to tinning.



Lee & Curtis assist Marsha with the tinning process.

Our goal for this first class was to teach one method of soldering a PL-259 on the end of a piece of RG8 coax. This is one essential skill that so many hams don't get to learn correctly. Many problems exist in many ham shacks as a direct result of bad connections on coax ends.

Each ham wanting to learn Lee's technique, took their turn with a knife and the soldering iron to put at least one PL-259 on a piece of coax. Several took the opportunity to make jumpers for themselves. Thank you Lee for a well taught class.

(next page)

(Soldering Class continued)



Mike KM6EBY working on tinning the braid.



This close up shows the first two steps. Peel some of the insulation off while leaving a little of it on the end to keep the braid from unraveling. Then, thinly tin about 3/4" of braid.

Next step is to cut through the tinned braid leaving about 1/2" while cutting almost through to the center conductor. Use care to avoid nicking the center conductor and remove the portion you have cut.

Make sure none of the braid has been pushed into the center insulation to touch the center conductor before the next step.

(next column)

Using your knife, lightly scrape the area around each of the four holes around the connector. This simple step makes soldering much easier.

Of course the connector nut should already be on the coax facing the correct direction. Thread the PL-259 onto the coax making sure it is fully seated. Use a toothpick or some such to apply a small dab of paste flux in and around each hole making sure to keep the flux off the threads.

Apply soldering iron of sufficient size (40 watts at least. Pencil irons just don't cut it) and heat while feeding a bit of solder to fill each hole. Over doing the solder can result in a short if it gets to the center conductor. Over doing the heat can melt the center insulation, so I like to cool the connector between soldering each hole with a damp sponge.

Solder the center conductor using just enough solder to fill the hole and "wet" the center conductor. Make sure no solder drip extends beyond the tip of the pin. Any solder "bulge" can damage the SO-239 you would slip your new connection into. If you do have a bulge, remove it with a sharp knife or small file.

Test your new connection for shorts / opens and you should be good to go. If the nut won't thread onto the connector, check for solder in the threads. Just cut or scrape it out.

Of course there are as many ways of putting connectors on coax as there are ways for men and women to style their hair. This is just one. It works quite nicely and avoids many of the pitfalls associated with coax connectors.

Note the small tin can in the 1st picture in the left column. It is stuffed with heavy stainless steel wool such as you would use to scrub dishes. Forcing a hot iron into it cleans the dross without cooling the tip. Neat trick. Thanks Don.(end)

Upcoming...

Our October club meeting will take place at the 2 Bits Café in Yuba City on October 1st at 6 PM. Doors open at 5:30. Order from the menu. Since October is a month for costume parties, our Vice President Mike KM6EBY thought it a good idea for this meeting to be a costume party. I quite agree. Please come as some sort of radio component. If you are looking for ideas, contact Mike on the 146.085 repeater.

Since I agree with Mike, I will be in costume. My only fear is someone falling down when they see my get up. Just don't hurt yourselves. Please come and join us. A costume is not requisite, but would be a lot of fun.

We will have a drawing for an antique Silver-tone radio as part of this club meeting. We plan to have it on and tuned in to make a little music. Tickets are going for \$5 each or 5 for \$20. Help us raise some money for the club. Feel free to buy tickets even if you don't have room for this beautiful piece. You could always donate it back to the club or even to someone really wanting it.

November will be our biggest meeting of the year. The annual election for club officers and board members is an important part of what we do as a club. In addition, we have updated our bylaws and need the approval of our members on these important changes. Our Secretary Larry KE6LAW will be emailing important information to each of you in the days and weeks leading up to this important meeting. Please, plan on being there.

The Yuba Sutter ARC has been asked once again to provide communication support for the Veteran's Parade in Marysville on November 11.

(next page)

The role we play in each of the events we support is different. For the Veteran's Parade, we team up in pairs and organize the parade entrants on each of the side streets. Each entrant is assigned to stage on one of these streets. Our job is to get each street organized such that we can get them inserted into the parade in the correct order once the parade starts.

Sometimes your street will seem over crowded and you find ways to move them around. For instance, if my street has two horse groups, I'll put them together on one side of the street away from the motorcycle group. I'll ask the leader of a group of Ford Model A automobiles to back their vehicles against the curb side by side at a 45 degree angle in the correct order. This gives them something to do and gets them out of my hair while I work on doing the same thing with the motorcycle group on the other side of the street.

The high school band will want the entire street from curb to curb to line up and warm up. Of course we can't move anyone around with this, so I'll have them line up on the empty block to our east to work out their kinks and bring them in after those in front have been inserted into the parade. For the most part, they appreciate having someone in charge, knowing they will be called in at the correct time.

The parade organizer has had good experiences with us in the past. Having our radios with us and staying in touch with net control helps the organizer know we are on the job and taking care of things.

Paul N6XVL has been the tail twister on this event for many years and has done a bang up good job. Ted KN6TED is helping out by keeping a record of volunteers. Each of the events we support is my favorite in some way or another. The best part of working the Veteran's Parade is getting to work shoulder to shoulder with so many Vets and active military. These fine folks give so much and it is such a privilege to work with them.

In the Area...

The Lincoln Hamfest was even more successful this year than in years past. September 7th dawned on McBean Park in Lincoln as the vendor area filled to near capacity. Buyers had to search for parking due to the continuing success of this event. Kudos to the Western Placer ARC for doing such a fine job.

People come from far and wide to enjoy a good hamfest and there was no exception to that rule for this one. Vendors bring their goods to sell and try to look the competition over for good deals before the

(next column)

buyers show up. The buyers show up looking for a good deal on that VibroPlex bug they have been wanting for some time or that coveted Collins receiver. Each of us has something we watch for.

Then there are the brand new people who slowly wonder along knowing they want to take something home, but having no idea of what they need.

Most of us look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones. I spent so much time visiting, I almost missed the chance to look over some of the merchandise. However, I did find a few things which



Jason KK6EJD, Andy KJ6IYM and Paul N6XVL catch up and compare notes.



Gene N5EUG and Alfred KD6NSQ swapping stories. Gene made his way around on his new leg which made many of us quite proud of him.

gave me reason to smile on the way home.



Two of my favorite people. Bob W6BO and his best half Jannett W6JND enjoying a moment with friends at the Lincoln Hamfest. Bob with both hands full tell the tale of a nice hamfest.



John K5JCH, Larry KE6LAW, Ed KI6IGV, a rack of Lee's DK3 antennas for sale, Ramona (my best half) and Lee KC6MCI.

California QSO Party

This fun event takes place October 5 & 6 this year. Hams from surrounding states and countries make an effort to contact stations in each county in California. Stations in California work to give these contacts as well as contact stations in each county within our state. This is an easy and fun contest to work and gives new people experience. Come join us.

We wanted to have a Field Day like event for CQP this year, but things just didn't come together for a venue. Maybe next year. So work the contest from home or set up somewhere in the field.

JOTA (Jamboree On The Air)

This great joining of amateur radio and the scouting program takes place October 19 & 20. Let your local scout leaders know you are available if you want to participate. Register with JOTA via ARRL or myscouting.org so other JOTA stations will know you will be there. This is a great way to introduce young people to our hobby. One scout from Troop 91 had a twenty minute QSO with a scout from St. Paul, Minnesota. It was hard to tell who had more fun, the scouts or the hams on either end. Join in this year.

Contact Us...

Mailing information is located at the top right of the first page. Our web site is located at ysarc.org and we welcome your visit there.

Membership applications can be found on our web site.

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Sincere apologies for this issue being so late. I'll try to do better in future. Lonnie