



Mt. Vaca Radio Club, Inc.

January 2005

P.O. Box 417405
Sacramento, Ca. 95841-7405

ARRL
NARCC

www.mvrc.org

General Meeting
Sunday, Jan 16th, at 4:30 p.m.

Event Center in Raleys
1915 Douglas Blvd

The 450 club frequency changed from 444.00MHz to 443.95MHz. Please adjust your radios.



Presidents report

by Marc Reitzell, W6MAR

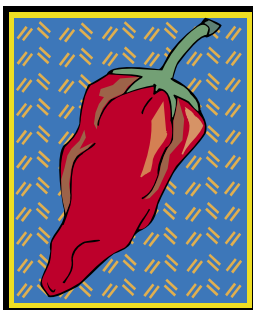
On December 26, 2004, an earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale struck off the island of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean. The resulting tsunami so far has claimed more than 155,000 lives in over 14 different countries in South Asia and Africa, with millions left homeless. The earthquake itself was the largest since the Good Friday earthquake off the coast of Alaska in 1964. That quake, which was measured at 9.2 on the Richter scale, created a tsunami which hit the northern coast of California and killed 11 people in Crescent City, California.

The reason I bring this up is that I want to remind everyone that whatever issues you may be having in your daily lives, or whatever issues this Club may be facing, are miniscule in comparison to the human tragedy inflicted by the tsunami disaster. For those of you who may feel the need to help the unfortunate victims, several charities in the United States are taking donations, including the American Red Cross, Americares, Catholic Relief Services, Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF, and United Way International. For the American Red Cross, go to www.redcross.org and select "International Response Fund" on their donate page.

Closer to home I want to make everyone aware of the miniature disaster this Club will face if we are unable to increase our membership base. Even if the current members pay their dues completely, with no losses in membership, we will still fall short on our current financial commitments by July 2005. The largest of these commitments is our liability insurance, which we must carry per our agreement with American Tower. So, for this coming year I would like to hear some ideas from everyone on how we may increase our membership base, otherwise I am afraid we may have to disband this organization. I know that

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Facts of Hysterically Historical Interest



Your Archives Committee, always on the hunt for articles of historical interest, has uncovered that the upcoming Chili Party scheduled for February 26th.

This will be the 28th such attempt at this gastronomic event. The first, held in 1977, was undocumented – probably

for good reason. We know, however, that the Chili Party (originally referred to as a Chili Contest) began after a number of our founding members had made stopping at Foster's Hotel in Chama, New Mexico for chili a regular stop when visiting the 4-corners area for 4-wheel trips & riding the D&RG.

Those early MVRC chili contests were pretty entertaining with competition high for the hottest, best, and most unusual chili (won by Dan, KH8AF for his Alpo based creation). There were even judges, who we believe, may have been corrupted by bribes passing hands before the judging began.

All that being said, why not re-institute the tradition of the Chili Contest with a panel of judges selecting winners before everyone dives in. What do you say Mad Dog Mike, Larcenous Lew and Vivant Vicki ???

See you all at the 28th Annual Chili Party.

ab, WA6CNE



Please check your information on the enclosed roster. You should also check the MVRC web site (www.mvrc.org) to insure that your E-mail and Web address are correct.

Please email Bill - WA6ACF if there are changes.

Activities

SUN JAN 16 - REGULAR MEETING - 4:30 PM -
Event Center in Raley's, 1915 Douglas Blvd, Roseville.

SAT FEB 26 - ANNUAL CHILI PARTY - 6 PM - Sun City
Lincoln Hills, QTH of Vicki, WB6PHQ, and Tom. Bring
chili or side dish. Talk-in on MVRC repeaters. Take CA-65
north from I-80. Turn right on Ferrari Ranch Rd at signal past
Lincoln Safeway, go two blocks, turn right on Sun City Blvd.
Turn right again at second stop sign to 1135 Tiger Lily on the
right.

APR 8-11 - ANNUAL DESERT TRIP - Joshua Tree Nat Pk.
- Black Rock Campground, Yucca Valley. Tents or RVs, no
hookups. 7 families going so far. See instructions on making
reservations.



Membership Report:

Membership is happy to report the addition of a new member to the club roster. We welcome Pete Walker, KD6RB, who lives in Sun City Lincoln Hills. Pete recently organized an amateur radio club in Lincoln Hills.

Thanks for joining us Pete and we hope to see you at a future meeting or social get-together.

A.Barnard, WA6CNE
Membership Chairman

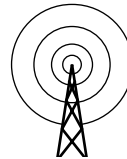
Making Reservations for the April Desert Trip

April reservations opened in December. Campsites are each limited to 6 people, 3 tents, and two vehicles (including trailers). To make reservations (\$10/nite), call 1-800-365-CAMP (1-800-365-2267) OR go to <http://reservations.nps.gov>. These directions are for the web page, but the same information applies to a phone reservation.

You will need your credit card and for discount a Golden Age or Golden Access discount card. If you are at least 62 and don't have a Golden AgePassport, get one before making your reservation. The card has a one-time cost of \$10 but gives you a \$15 discount (50%) on this 3 night reservation. After you make the reservation, it is too late. The BLM office in Sacramento, or any National Park, etc. sells them. You also avoid all park entrance fees for your whole car.

The reservation web page is available 7 AM - 7 PM Pacific. Scroll to their reservation link UNDER the graphic. Next select "Joshua Tree National Park", then "Black Rock" campground. Select your tent or RV type and date (Apr 8). Select 3 nights. In the "Comments" box type, "with Les Cobb group". If you have not used the reservation system and don't have a Customer ID, it will ask for name and address, phone, and e-mail. Give your credit card number and any Golden Age or Golden Access number. You will receive an e-mail confirmation. Make a hard copy to take with you to check in at the campground. I need to know your name and Reservation ID number from the confirmation so I can get us together. Let me know if you varied from Apr 8 arrival or 3 nights on your reservation. You can delay making a reservation, but the camp may fill early. It will definitely be full well before we take the trip. To read up on

JoshuaTree National Park,
go to <http://www.nps.gov/jotr/>.



SUN CITY SCOOTER ALERT

Investigation by the FCC's has revealed that battery chargers--apparently used to charge some electric scooters--were causing interference.

The FCC stated that "These devices were observed to be generating radio frequency pulses on various high-frequency radio bands. These radio frequency pulses were determined to be causing harmful interference to the Amateur Radio Service."



SEE YOU ALL AT THE MEETING!

CLUB MEMBERS: Remember to bring pictures of recent activities to be included in the club's historical archives.

amateur radio clubs around the country are experiencing a similar fate, but I'm sure virtually no one wants to see the last nail in our coffin.

On the technical side, our IRLP node (3895) is back on the air after a two-week absence. Prior to the Christmas holiday, I took the node off the air for an upgrade to the computer system. When I attempted to reboot the computer, it failed the memory test. Since the computer was becoming underpowered with the newer IRLP versions coming out, I decided to build a new computer using an inexpensive motherboard on sale at Fry's and a 1.8 GHz AMD processor. After several days of pulling my hair out since the new machine would not boot, I came to the conclusion that the processor I was given was defective. Upon replacing the processor (which was only \$50 to begin with), the computer now boots normally with the latest Redhat Linux Fedora version. The upgrade I was originally attempting was a more versatile weather script written by Randy Hammock, KC6HUR. This new script creates a text file from Weather Service METAR stations located at airports around the country. This text file is converted to a WAVE file using the free Festival text-to-speech synthesis system written by students and faculty at the University of

Edinburgh. While the audio is not as clear as my original script, it is far more comprehensive and versatile.

To access the weather data from the repeater system, enter the following commands:

Sacramento Metro Airport (SMF) - 763
Sacramento Executive Airport (SAC) - 722
Mather Field (MHR) - 647
Truckee-Tahoe (TRK) - 875
South Lake Tahoe (TVL) - 885
Reno (RNO) - 766
San Francisco (SFO) - 736
Redding (RDD) - 733
Eureka-Arcata (ACV) - 228
Crescent City (CEC) - 232
Portland (PDX) - 739
Meford (MFR) - 637

Follow the commands above with either an "A" for the old, abbreviated report, or the letter "B" for the newer report. The older report accesses the Internet for the data in real time, so if the web site is busy or the Internet is down, you may encounter an error message. Try again later at this point.

Please Read The Specs.

Not all FM mobiles or hand held radios are created equal. When shopping for a new unit, it pays to do a little home work. After determining the type of unit you are looking for, survey the brands available and read the manufactures specifications. Most folks read the poop sheets and are overwhelmed with the great features of the radio and overlook the technical specifications of the unit. You need to read the specs.

Will I hear a distant repeater?

The first thing to check is the sensitivity of the receiver. Remember the hotter the receiver is, the more intermod you will experience. Look for a rating of .2 μ V @ 12db SINAD. If the spec shows .16 or .14 μ V you should expect some intermod problems. Yaesu has reduced the sensitivity on their new radios resulting in a better intermod spec. Kenwood allows you to change the receiver sensitivity for less intermod.

Will I hear the repeaters adjacent to ours?

You will if the selectivity spec is poor. In California, part of 2mt band plan is 15 khz channels. You will need a receiver with 70db @ 20 khz channel spacing to handle the 15 khz channels. Also make sure the intermod spec is 70db or greater at 20khz. Only Kenwood and Yaesu have a few radios with these specs.

Will I hear the receiver in a crowd?

The audio spec is important especially for a hand held. Most of the mobiles have 2 watts of audio which is good when you use an external speaker. On a hand held you need to read the spec. The unit should be rated at 400 mw or greater @ 5% distortion.

Unfortunately all ham units are rated at 10% distortion. Icom has only one hand held with a good audio spec. Kenwood and Yaesu have several to choose from.

Will it stay on channel?

This is the frequency stability spec. The unit should be rated at \pm 5 ppm from -10°C to +50°C. All Yaesu units have this spec. Kenwood has some units at \pm 2.5 ppm. All Icom units are rated at \pm 10 ppm. This is very poor stability.

How long will my battery last?

The last spec to check is the transmit current drain on a hand held unit. At 5w the current drain should be <1600 ma on VHF and <1800ma on UHF @ the battery voltage of the unit. Most Icom, Yaesu, and Kenwood single band units have a good current drain spec. The spec are not as good on the small mulyty-band hand held units with small batteries and high current drain.

What should I do?

If you want good specifications in a mobile or hand held unit, buy a single-band radio. Most dual band radios are a compromise in design. The best dual band radios are the ones that receive only one band at a time. If you want great specs buy the commercial version of Icom, Yaesu, Kenwood or Motorola.

If you want to check the specs of a unit, go to ARRL web page and check the ARRL test lab report on the unit. They are very thorough. If you want to read user reviews of a unit go to www.eham.net/reviews

Good shopping - Lew WA6ESA

Annual Mount Vaca Chili Party

Come One! Come All!



**Where: QTH of Vicki, WB6PHQ, and Tom
1135 Tiger Lily
Sun City, Lincoln Hills**

**When: Saturday, February 26
5:30 PM – 9:00 PM**



Bring: Your favorite chili and whatever you want to drink.

Alternatives to Chili – salad, appetizers, deserts!



Talk-in on MVRC repeaters.

Take CA-65 north from I-80. Turn right on Ferrari Ranch Rd at signal past Lincoln Safeway, go two blocks, turn right on Sun City Blvd. Turn right again at second stop sign to 1135 Tiger Lily on the right.