MARC Beacon

Volume 5, Issue 2

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

February 2016

President's Message

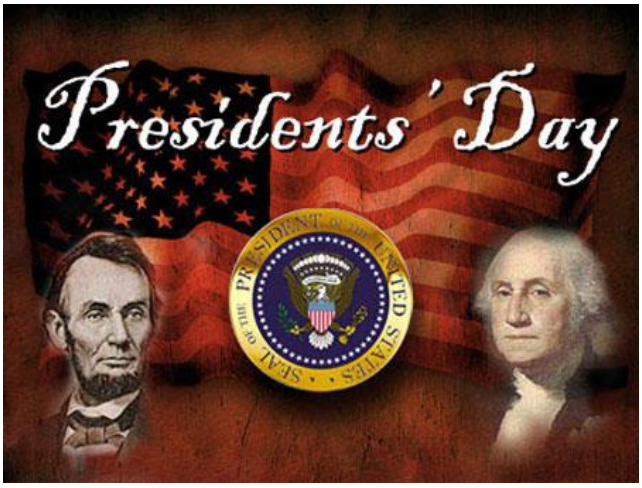
Hello everyone. This month's newsletter received some small upgrades. Our last meeting was a great success. Danny & Gina from "Proud Spirit No Borders Cooking" did an outstanding job providing the delicious food for our annual dinner. The gift exchange was a lot of fun with some unique gifts in the mix. Andy, AI6AF, gave us a very interesting presentation on digital transmissions, which allows photos to transmit using amateur radios. (I think we all know what we want for Christmas.) Mr. Bob Turner, W6RHK, the Orange Section Emergency Coordinator, was our special guest for the evening. He gave us a quick speech encouraging us to register as an Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) member at ARESDB.com. See his bio at http://orange-arrl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Bob-Turner-ARES-Bio-8-21-15.pdf.

My goal this year is to increase our membership by encouraging more people in the Morongo Basin to become licensed Amateur Radio Operators and joining the MARC club. Please assist me in passing the word to our local community on how fun it is to use HAM radios as another option to communicate. It is not hard to pass the Technician's test; in fact, all 426 questions and answers are located at ncvec.org. There is also a free 6.5 hour ARRL Amateur Radio Technician Class Training Course on YouTube at https://youtu.be/CPyidvTGJ9Y. If a book is required then I recommend the Technician Class Preparation book by Gordon West for $20 at Amazon. A reliable and very inexpensive $25 BaoFeng UV-5R radio may be purchased at Amazon. Once the interest person is ready to take the test, they can contact any of the board members for the next local test session date to take the 35 question test for only $5. Please inform the interest folks to visit the following website for more information: http://www.arrl.org/what-is-ham-radio

Rob
KK6JHI
Joshua Tree
760-401-6666

Club Meeting

Every 3rd Thursday of the month at 7 PM.
St. Christopher of the Desert Catholic Church
61261 Sunburst Dr., Joshua Tree, CA



Signal Reports

Ham Radio has a traditional system of reporting signal quality. In modes using tone, such as CW, we call it RST; readability, strength, tone. The best RST report would be 599. When listening to hams participating in a contest, you will probably hear everyone giving a 599 (five nine nine) report, even though the signal may not be that good. In this case, it's just a way of making an exchange of information and establishing a contact. If you wanted to give an accurate report, you would formulate an opinion as to the readability of the signal on a scale of 1 to 5, the signal strength on a scale of 1 to 9, and the tone quality on a scale of 1 to 9. On voice, you simply drop the "T", because there is no tone to report on. Therefore, on voice, a good quality signal would be 59 or "five nine".

Glenn N6GIW

HAM Radio and USB

I recently put a new Davis Vantage Pro2 weather station into service. The console connects to my computer via a USB cable, and feeds weather data to a program called Weather Display. The program takes the weather info and feeds it to the internet, where it can be used by the public and the National Weather Service. I was having problems with the console losing its connection to the computer. I did some reading on the internet, and found that other people have had the same problem. It turns out that USB cables without a ferrite core installed can pick up noise from surrounding equipment, and that interferes with the connection. I obtained some ferrite cores and installed one on each end of the USB cable. You have to get the proper size ferrite core and it snaps in place easily. Since then, the system has been running constantly with no problems for weeks. I think we can agree that there is plenty of potential interference in a ham shack, so this is something to keep in mind when trying to solve equipment to computer communications problems.

My weather reports can be seen at –
http://famtest.nwcg.gov/roman/cgi-bin/meso_base.cgi?stn=AR190

The station quality analysis can be seen at –
http://weather.gladstonefamily.net/site/search?site=AR190&search=Search

Glenn N6GIW

Nets

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), Mon @ 1915
Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club (MARC), Tue @ 1900
Narrow Band Emergency Message System (NBEMS)
145.645 MHz, 2nd & 4th Thursday @ 1900

Linked Repeaters

Yucca Valley, W6BA
146.790 MHz (- shift = 146.190 MHz) 136.5 Hz PL/CTCSS

Twentynine Palms, W6BA
147.060 MHz (+ shift = 147.660 MHz) 136.5 Hz PL/CTCSS

Landers, WB6CDF
447.580 MHz (- shift = 442.580 MHz) 173.8 Hz PL/CTCSS

Batteries

Here is a link to a site full of information about batteries.
http://batteryuniversity.com/sitemap/
John KI6FKP

From right to left:
Jeffrey Hardy KJ6BOI (former president), Rob Cloutier KK6JHI (current president), Chris Nichols WB6CDF (vice president), and one of our newest members, Lesley.

Social Media,

Club web page:
http://www.w6ba.net
Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/MorongoBasinAmateurRadioClub
W6BA Live Feed:
http://www.broadcastify.com/listen/feed/10199/web

Upcoming Events

King of the Hammers: 28 Jan – 7 Feb,
http://ultra4racing.com/category/king_of_the_hammers/

Yuma Hamfest: Feb 19-20, www.yumahamfest.org

The Emergency Communicator Course: Mar 2, 9, 16, 19, Chris Nichols, WB6CDF, 760-285-3560

Palm Springs Hamfest: Mar 12, palmspringshamfest.com

Extra Class: Starts Mar 28, http://desertrats.am/classes/

(More Arizona Hamfests at www.arca-az.org)

Editor Point of Contact (POC)
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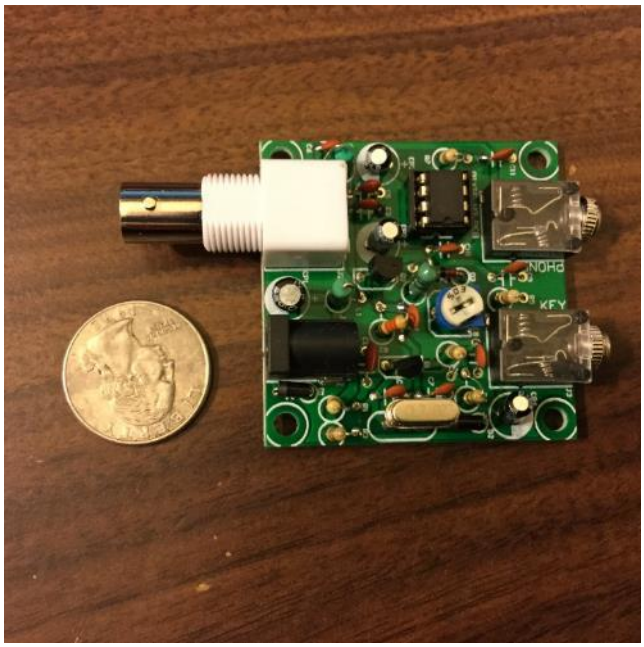
Submission deadline is 2 days before the 1st of each month

Morse Code

A ·–	J ·–––	S ···	1 ·————
B –···	K –·–	T –	2 ··–––
C –·–·	L ·–··	U ··–	3 ···––
D –··	M ––	V ···–	4 ····–
E ·	N –·	W ·––	5 ·····
F ··–·	O –––	X –··–	6 –····
G ––·	P ·––·	Y –·––	7 ––···
H ····	Q ––·–	Z ––··	8 –––··
I ··	R ·–·	0 –––––	9 ––––·

Phonetic Alphabet

A – ALFA	B – BRAVO
C – CHARLIE	D – DELTA
E – ECHO	F – FOXTROT
G – GOLF	H – HOTEL
I – INDIA	J – JULIET
K – KILO	L – LIMA
M – MIKE	N – NOVEMBER
O – OSCAR	P – PAPA
Q – QUEBEC	R – ROMEO
S – SIERRA	T – TANGO
U – UNIFORM	V – VICTOR
W – WHISKEY	X – X-RAY
Y – YANKEE	Z - ZULU



Pixies

How would you like a complete HF transceiver? Would you like it to work as well? Are you broke like me?

I have an answer to all your questions! Pixies, yep Pixies. No, not the little gnome like creatures, a Pixie transceiver.

These wonderful little beauties can be assembled in an evening, after of course learning engrish.

You can purchase them from Banggood for the grand sum of $4.16 including shipping. Of course, they come from China on the slow boat, which can mean a 4 to 8 week delivery time.

When connect to my G5RV without a tuner, I could hear several CW stations, some quite strong, and once in a while a broadcast one as well.

The Pixie is a crystal controlled CW rig, centered at 7.023 MHz. It is supposed to output 500 mW at 9 volts, and 1.2 Watts at 12 volts. This disagrees a little with AL7FS values of 200 mW and 800 mW respectively. It uses a diode and a potentiometer to tune around this frequency, this approach give about 1 or 2 kHz tuning. It is direct conversion receiver and gives about 100 - 250 mW of audio output. The crystal oscillator runs all the time, effectively making the receiver one with a zero IF frequency.

I took the little darling around to Andy Frees, AI6AF who helped me test it. I was impressed with its size and the quality of SW signal (no chirps).

There is a nice write up on it, at AL7FS's web site:
http://www.al7fs.us/AL7FS2.html

It can be found in the internet at:
http://www.banggood.com/DIY-Radio-40M-CW-Shortwave-Transmitter-Kit-Receiver-7_023-7_026MHz-p-973111.html

Another useful item at Banggood is a QRP 1-30 MHz Manual Antenna Tuner Tune Kit. A little more expensive than the transceiver, at $14.01, again with free shipping from China.
http://www.banggood.com/QRP-1-30-Mhz-Manual-Antenna-Tuner-Tune-Kit-p-914663.html

I have plans next month to use an Arduino to make a keyer for it. Stay tuned for more details.

Steve KI6HGH

February 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
	ARES Net 7:15pm	MARC Net 7:00 pm 		**ARES Meeting 6:00 pm** Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Yucca Valley		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	ARES Net 7:15 pm	MARC Net 7:00 pm		NBEMS Net 7:00 pm 145.645 MHz		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	ARES Net 7:15 pm 	MARC Net 7:00 pm		**MARC Meeting 7:00 pm** St. Christopher's Catholic Church Joshua Tree		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	ARES Net 7:15 pm 	MARC Net 7:00 pm		NBEMS Net 7:00 pm 145.645 MHz		
28	29	1	2	3	4	5
	ARES Net 7:15 pm	MARC Net 7:00 pm		**ARES Meeting 6:00 pm** Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Yucca Valley		