

# Mountain Flashes

R.A.C.E.S. Mountain District/ Mile High Radio Club News

## April 2007 Edition

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### KN6JV's Korner

I guess you all are getting ready for the fire inspections and the fire season in general. Good for you! The amateur radio community has a lot to offer in helping the agencies when conditions are ripe for fire. In the past we conducted roving fire patrols as well as stationary lookouts.

Today it is very costly to run around on the highway and the reimbursement support offered by the agencies no longer exists. With the likelihood that such support may not be available, we need to consider how we can best use our capabilities and support the cause. I believe the USFS will still take us on as volunteers and that should provide worker's comp. This is being looked into.

Aside from that, we will be looking for support from other sources.

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As for the repeater, the stationmaster antenna is in place but not yet connected. It has to be checked out for SWR at the operating frequency and brackets fabricated to accept the transmit and control antennas. The controller is installed and needs some additional tweaking for a better output signal.

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#### UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

**April 2:** 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month County-wide RACES Roll Call.

**April 12:** RACES training will be setting up and using our radios at IFPD. A new step-by-step guide will also be issued to operators for setting-up the station.

**May 7:** 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month Country-wide RACES Roll Call.

**May 10:** If possible, RACES May meeting will be a short field exercise, at the meeting, to get us tuned up to using our equipment and communications plan.

**May 12:** The bike race. We need at least six operators in a

non RACES event.

**May ??:** An agency Table-top exercise is planned for May. Not sure yet of the date or personnel requirements.

**July 4:** Fourth of July Parade needing 4 to 6 operators in a RACES event.

**August:** The Jazz Festival. We will be in charge of all communications for the event. We need a number of operators and will have better information on that later. This will likely be a RACES event but we probably can also use support from non-RACES amateurs.

**Bill Baker KN6JV**

**R.A.C.E.S. Mtn. Dist. Emergency Coordinator**

**MHRC President****Bill's Quiz**

- 1). Two capacitors with the same value are connected in parallel
  - a. Have twice the value of one capacitor
  - b. Have ½ the value of one capacitor
  - c. Capacitors cannot be connected in parallel
  - d. So they can withstand more heat allowing use of smaller components
- 2.) Long distance 2m signals are possible
  - a. Only at night because of the "D" layer
  - b. Only at mid-day because of the "D" layer
  - c. With wide spread temperature inversions
  - d. At frequencies above 147MHz because of the "D" layer
- 3). A diode
  - a. Changes an AC current to a pulsating DC current
  - b. Amplifies an AC signal
  - c. Changes a DC current to a pulsating AC current
  - d. Stores energy in a magnetic field
- 4). A loop antenna
  - a. Is highly directional
  - b. Cancels most electrical noise
  - c. Can be circular, square or triangular in shape
  - d. All are correct

[\(Answers at end of the newsletter\)](#)

**Bill's Comic Revue**

While working at a Pizza Parlor I observed a man ordering a small pizza to go. He appeared to be alone and the cook asked him if he would like it cut into 4 or 6 pieces. He thought about it for some time before responding. "Just cut it into 4 pieces; I don't think I'm hungry enough to eat 6 pieces."  
 Yep, they walk among Us too.

**March RACES Meeting Notes**

Seven members attended the meeting. Treasurer Mike Erlich, KQ6QY reported that the balance in the RACES account is \$2,788.83.

Bill Baker presented Bill Tell, KD6KTV, with his RACES I.D. badge which has been a long time coming. Simone Huls' membership is still in process.

Some progress has been made in getting radios installed at the elementary school. Bill has met with the maintenance man and the school principal and it has been decided that the antenna will be installed on the roof of the gymnasium and the radios will be in the computer room.

We have been having problems with the power supply for the repeater and the voltage has been dropping dangerously low. Bill Baker has worked on it and so has Tom Unwin. The new controller will be installed this coming Saturday. Bill Tell and Rick Foster both volunteered to help. Hopefully the power supply problems will be solved by then. The Station Master antenna will be installed at a later date.

The Bike Race planners have asked for our help with communications again so a sign-up sheet was passed around.

The training this month was on what should be in our get-away bags and several members brought their bags to demonstrate. Bill will compile a list of everything to help everyone have a complete

collection.  
**Vi Hallacy K6VBH**  
**R.A.C.E.S. Mtn. Dist. Secretary**

## **March MHRC Meeting Notes**

Nine members attended the meeting thereby constituting a quorum. Also present were guests Jessica Oertel and Andrew McKnight. Bill Baker led the members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Hallacy announced that she sent a letter to the Idyllwild Community Fund detailing that the grant for the repeater controller and field radio box batteries was spent for the purposes specified in the grant. The Secretary announced that Idyllwild Cycling sent a plaque thanking the Club for its communications support for the 2006 Idyllwild Spring Challenge bicycle race.

The Treasurer's financial report was accepted.

Jim Kent's motion to send the brochure and invitation letter prepared by Bill Tell, as amended, to non-member Hams on the Hill was seconded and adopted.

Bill Tell discussed the ARRL program to provide rebates to the Club for new ARRL memberships and renewals generated by the Club. It was agreed that more information would be published in the Newsletter and the matter would be dealt with at the April meeting.

Bill Tell led a discussion of a Club website. It was agreed that for now we would update the website maintained free of charge by courtesy of Don Raridon

Jim Kent will go with Bill Baker on Saturday to initiate the Repeater Inspection Program.

Bill Baker reported on the repeater and RACES. He said the Station Master Antenna was in place, but needed tweaking. He reported that he needs to design and build mounts for the 440 control and the 2 meter transmit antennas. Bill informed the club that he had sent a letter to Jerry Holdber, Manager for the Pine Cove Water District explaining the Club's recent activities at the repeater site. Bill said the solar panel conduit needs repair and that he was considering a redesign of the repeater's transmit antenna arrangement in view of the fact that the Orange County repeater is now using a PL. This should eliminate the need for the current antenna configuration engineered to solve the problem of our interfering with them when we transmit. The April RACES training program will involve setting up the IFPD RACES radios.

In April, the MHRC meeting place will change to the American Legion Post, 54360 Marion View Drive, Idyllwild. RACES meetings will continue to be held at Idyllwild Fire.

Pat Kent suggested that a break for refreshments be taken in the middle of the meetings. The suggestion was favorably received.

**Jim Kent KF6TYZ**  
**MHRC Secretary**

## **April Meetings & Events**

### **Mark Your Calendars!**

**RACES Meeting: Thurs., Apr. 12, 7:00 PM, Idyllwild Fire**  
**MHRC Bd. of Dirs. Mtg., Tues., Apr. 17, 6:45 PM, American Legion**  
**MHRC Meeting<sup>(1)</sup>: Tues., Apr. 17, 7:00 PM, American Legion**  
**ALL AMATEURS are cordially invited to attend any of the above meetings.**

*Note<sup>(1)</sup>: Arrangements have been made to have dinner served at about 5:30 PM at the American Legion before the April 17 MHRC meeting provided there is sufficient interest. There will be a choice between two entrees. Cost will be in the \$7.00 to \$8.00 range. Reservations can be made by calling Vi Hallacy at 659-4765 or Rick Foster at 659-1938, or by making your intentions known at one of the weekly call-ins before April 17<sup>th</sup>. Families are welcome. If this*

*dinner is successful, we can make it a regular event before the MHRC meetings.*

## User Tips for VHF

The following user tips were published on the internet by Dave Schultheis WB6KHP, of San José, California to whom we are grateful. They were provided to the Newsletter editor by Christy Huss KG6AVU.

The tips will be published in three parts in this and the following two issues of the Newsletter. These are all good tips, although some may be the subject for discussion either here, or at a Club or RACES meeting. We have seen some of these tips in different form in prior issues of this Newsletter, but repetition is the soul of learning and we can all stand occasional reminders.

✍ Be sure the frequency (or "channel") is "clear" before you transmit. Think how **you** would like it if someone interrupted your conversation.

- Recommendation: when you turn to a repeater or a simplex frequency, listen for at least thirty seconds before transmitting.

✍ Using Q-signals **too often** is bad form. Although Q-signals have a very valuable place in Amateur Radio, they are not universally accepted on FM voice channels. Using them during EVERY TRANSMISSION is really annoying.

- Recommendation: use Q-signals sparingly. Once in a while. Not very often.

✍ Using the phrase "clear and monitoring" is not really necessary. Neither term is required by the F.C.C. or anybody else. If you call another amateur, using his/her call sign and yours, and that person does not answer, it is **not** necessary to advise "clear." You have already identified your station and any other identification is superfluous.

- Recommendation: use "clear" **only** to mean that you are shutting down operation and will not be there to answer any subsequent calls. Under normal circumstances, when you are finished with a contact but will continue listening, it is sufficient (and just right!) to merely say your call sign.
- Contrasting Recommendation: If you attempt to contact someone and there is no answer, you can notify others that you are finished by saying, "KF6xxx clear," or "no contact, this is KF6xxx clear (on) W6ABC repeater." This allows someone who may have been standing by to go ahead and make his or her call.

✍ Be sure to learn the usage, protocol and/or policies of repeaters you are using. Just because a repeater is "there" does not mean that you are welcome to switch to it and use it for long, extended rag-chews. Some repeaters welcome newcomers, some do not. A sensible person does not want to spend time where she/he is not welcome. Even though your license allows you to operate on any frequency within the bounds of your license class, a wise amateur avoids "closed" repeaters and repeaters that are operated by small, unfriendly groups.

- Recommendation: listen to a repeater for a while before you make a decision to use it. You might even ask someone on the repeater if you are welcome to use it for occasional conversations.

✍ Using the term "for I.D." is not necessary (*the Editor takes note!*). There should be no reason to transmit your call sign **other than** to identify your station. Identification is required every 10 minutes during a conversation and at the end of a conversation or series of communications. Conversations need not come to a halt while you identify. ("Stand by, everyone, while I say my call sign.") Simply say your call sign once within 10 minutes.

- Recommendation: while talking, say your call sign once every ten minutes. Don't say "For I.D.,

this is KF6xxx." Don't say "For license preservation purposes, this is KF6xxx" more than once or twice per year. Identify properly, but do not over-identify.

- **Contrasting Recommendation:** if you hear someone say "for I.D.," they may be trying to gently remind you that 10 minutes have passed and you should identify your station. Take the hint and say your call sign the next time it is your turn to talk.

MORE GOOD TIPS NEXT MONTH!

## **ARRL Club Membership Rebate Program**

As was indicated in the March MHRC Meeting Notes, the Club is considering participation in a new rendition of an old ARRL program involving rebates to the Club if members become new ARRL members or renew ARRL memberships through the MHRC. The following is quoted from ARRL information on the subject:

"... ARRL is bringing back commissions for renewals in addition to the existing commission for new member sign-ups. You'll (the Club will) still receive a \$15 commission for each new or lapsed (over 2 years) membership you submit, but in addition, you'll receive a \$2 commission for every renewal you send in. So, as far as shoring up your club treasury is concerned, the sky's the limit."

In response to his question about how the program would affect present ARRL members' renewal dates, Bill Tell received the following response from the ARRL:

"The renewals would be added on to the end of their membership. (For example) if their membership would expire 8/31/2007, and they renewed now, it would pick up 9/1/2007 to 8/31/2008." While the language it is a little less than artful, it seems to mean that the renewal would just extend current memberships for a year—in other words, you would have renewed early. It's a way to have you membership in ARRL contribute to the Club. Obviously, participation in the program would be voluntary.

We'll consider whether to participate in the program as a Club at the April MHRC meeting. If you have opinions for or against adoption of the program, be sure to come the meeting. If you don't, come anyway because as a member of the Club, you should come every once in a while to see what we're doing. *(Thanks to Bill Tell for searching out this information.)*

## **MHRC Website**

In the MHRC Meeting notes, the MHRC website is discussed. You may access the MHRC website at [www.milehighradioclub.org](http://www.milehighradioclub.org).

## **Bill's Quiz Answers**

(1) a    (2) c    (3) a    (4) d