

THE VALLEY HAM NEWS

"The Voice of the Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club"

A California Non-Profit Organiza

February 2011



A TRIP TO QUARTZFEST 2011

My wife and I, along with 'Jazz, the traveling cat', set off down the highway with our trailer in tow headed to Quartzsite, Arizona for the ham radio gathering called "Quartzfest". Four hours later, we arrived in Visalia where we spent the night with relatives. The next morning, we faced an 8 hour drive to our destination which was just south of Quartzsite, AZ. off of Hwy. 95. The campsite was a BLM managed site where you could camp for free up to 14 days. Yes, there are no RV hook-ups. If you need fresh water, you have to bring it with you. Also, there were no dumping stations out there. All services could be had about 6 miles north into town.

Prior to the trip, I had done extensive calculations and preparation to generate our power via my solar panels, controller, inverter, and storage batteries. My system worked superb during the entire last week of January out in the Arizona desert. We brought 60 gallons of fresh water which was sufficient for our stay during that last week of January.

We were one of over 400 people that registered for the Quartzfest event. We shared the desert with many more groups that were camping there.

So, just what do you do for over a week in the middle of the desert? There are potluck dinners, HOBO stew dinners, antenna building seminars, seminars in solar panel systems, batteries, APRS, Solar panel tracker systems, ham radio swap/yard sales, camp fires, live music, ham exams, prospecting classes, crafts, soldering lessons, off road 4x4 trips, a radio astronomy presentation, evening movies, Commercial Radio exams, an APRS seminar, antenna and solar panel walk-arounds, Karaoke, trips to the RV show in Quartzsite, and so on. Did I mention that most all of the activities are provided for FREE?!?

The most valuable part of the Quartzfest 2011 is that you meet some of the nicest people! I highly encourage those who can to plan on a trip to Quartzsite, AZ for next year. We'll plan on seeing you during the last week of January 2012.

YSARC
PO Box 1169, Yuba City, CA 95992

President

Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY

Vice President

Alfred Herrmann, KD6NSQ

Secretary

Meg Burgin, KI6TLS

Treasurer

Clara Ansley, N6VRH

Board Members

Herb Puckett, W6HBU

Andy Boone, KJ6IYM

Barry Barnes, KE6LW

Lee Sheffield, KC6MCI

Russell Decker, KB6YAF

VHN Editor and Webmaster

Russell Decker, KB6YAF

Repeater Trustee

Dave Gartner, WD6AXM

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

1st Wednesday: Club Meeting

3rd Wednesday: Board Meeting

(Check the minutes for details on the Club and Board Meetings)

All newsletter submissions are due on or before the 4th Wednesday of the month

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 16th (7 pm) - YSARC Board Meeting at Herb Puckett's, W6HBU
712 King Ave. Yuba City, CA

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Monday Night Net - (7 PM) - Weekly net w/swap shop
(146.085 + PL 127.3)

Monday Night Net - (8 PM) - Butte Co. ARES Net
(146.850 - PL 110.0)

Tuesday Night Net - (7 PM) - YSARC ARES Net
(146.085 + PL 127.3)

2nd Wednesday - (7 PM) - ARRL Sac Valley Net

MEG'S MEETING MINUTES

YUBA SUTTER AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Minutes for Board of Directors Meeting of Wednesday, January 19th, 2011

The regular Board of Directors meeting was held at Lee Sheffield's QTH, KC6MCI, in Sutter. The meeting was called to order at 1910-hours by President Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Club Officers present were: President, Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY; Secretary, Meg Burgin, KI6TLS; and Treasurer, Clara Ansley, N6VRH. Vice President, Alfred Herrmann, KD6NSQ, was absent.

Board of Directors present were: Barry Barnes, KE6LW; Andy Boone, KJ6IYM; Russell Decker, KB6YAF, and Lee Sheffield, KC6MCI. Herb Puckett, W6HBU, was absent due to a cold.

Guests introduced were ARRL SV Section Manager, Ron Murdock, W6KJ; Repeater Trustee, Dave Gartner, WD6AXM; Ken Curtz, W6KEN, Ramona Traub, and Wilma Sheffield, KE6ZCR.

Officer's reports:

The Recording Secretary's minutes of the December 5th Board Meeting were accepted and approved as read.

Treasurer, Clara Ansley, N6VRH, reported a balance of \$2,762.98 in the Umpqua Bank account as of this meeting, with all bills being paid to date. Clara's report was also accepted as presented.

Old Business:

President Moore, KI6ZYY reviewed the following events:

2011 VE Exam dates scheduled are: 3/5; 5/14; 7/9; and 11/15. VE Chair Sheffield earlier reported that four examinees had successfully upgraded their licenses at the January 8th exam.

Newsletter: Editor Russell Decker, KB6YAF, was commended for the excellence of the club newsletter and updating of the website.

Club Dues: Forty-seven memberships have been renewed as of this date and the club roster has been updated.

Multi Club activities are being planned. Foothills ARC would like to have a combined Antenna Day with building and testing of 2 meter antennas.

Meg Burgin, KI6TLS, was thanked for providing the location for the January 5th Club Meeting. Fourteen members attended. President Moore provided a PowerPoint program on running Net Control. The pot luck dinner was delicious. Moore also stated that CW on FM was still being processed.

New Business:

The February 2nd, Membership Meeting, a Sweet Heart dinner, will be held at the 2-Bit's Café with two entrees being offered. Ham dinner for \$10.00 and Prime Rib for \$12.00. R.S.V.P.'s will be taken on Net Night. Bob McClard, N6BOB, has been asked to provide a program for the evening about his trip through the Panama Canal.

MEG'S MEETING MINUTES - CON'T

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A motion was made by Barry Barnes, KE6LW, to run an ad in the YSARC newsletter because 2-Bit's has consistently provided such outstanding service to YSARC. All Board Members and Officers were in agreement.

President Moore would like to encourage member activity and for a member (s) to arrange for programs, and to provide simple table decorations at each of our monthly club meetings. He would like for members to sign up to act as Net Control throughout the rest of year.

The February 16th Board of Directors meeting will be held at the QTH of Herb Puckett, W6HBU.

President Moore made suggestions for Committees in the coming year:

Health & Welfare - chair needed; Library - Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY; Community Service - Runs & Events - Russell Decker, KB6YAF; VE Exams - Lee Sheffield, KC6MCI; AREA /RACES / Emergency Services - chair needed
Sky Warn / Earthquake Awareness - chair needed; Special Ops - chair needed; Newsletter / Website - Russell Decker, KB6YAF; Ham Assistance - Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY & Lee Sheffield, KC6MCI; Club Shack / Equipment - site and chair needed; Hospitality - Ramona Traub; YSARC Net - Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY; Club Presentations - chair needed; Publicity and Public Relations - chair needed

Members are requested to submit ideas for the March and April Club Member Meetings to President Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY.

Club Members are reminded to save the following dates and sign up to help with the Bike Around the Buttes, Saturday, April 16th, and the MS Walk from Sam Brennan Park also on Saturday, April 16th.

Repeater Trustee, Dave Gartner, WD6AXM, was asked to share the handling of recent episodes of inappropriate repeater use. Gartner explained that there is a process in place to deal with individual (s) and all documentation has been passed onto the FCC. He cautioned all amateur operators not to engage, challenge, or reply to offending individual (s). Dates, times of recordings and notations of offenses should be passed on to Official Observer, Norman Lucas - WB6RVR@aol.com, in Sacramento, and to send details to Section Manager, Ron Murdock, W6KJ.

The YSARC Board of Directors meeting was adjourned at 1100-hours and the Sheffield's served a delicious homemade Lemon Meringue pie for dessert.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Burgin, KI6TLS, YSARC Recording Secretary

CLARA'S CALCULATIONS

Treasurer's Report - January, 2011

Checking Balance: December 2010 \$2,899.41

Deposits

12/27 Dues: NE1CQ;KI6CWZ;N6CEL;WD6BFR;KA6FUP;NR6A;KD6NSQ
Donation: R. Mock- \$50.00
Door Prizes: KI6ZYY \$ 193.44

1/14 Dues: KB6YAF; KI6ROW; KF6EWO; KC6PPX; KI6CSO; KJ6LVN; K6SCM
Donation to the Repeater \$ 238.00
Dues: KG6RXT; KG6RXV
Total Deposits \$ 428.44
Sub Total (Balance + Deposits) \$3,247.85

Bills

1243 Voided

1244 March-Seabury & Smith - Insurance \$ 367.00

1245 Lee Sheffield - VE Refreshments \$ 11.87

1246 ARRL - VEC \$ 36.00

1247 Postmaster - PO Pox Rental \$ 70.00

Total Bills: \$ 484.87
Sub Total: (less bill total) \$2,762.98

Special Accounts

Repeater Fund: \$590.30
Drawing Money: \$176.44
VE: \$ 57.43
Memorial Fund: \$ 65.00

Special Funds Total: \$ 889.17

Club Balance: (less Special Funds) \$1,873.81

SON-IN-A-DITCH

STORY & PHOTOS BY SEAN MURPHY, K6SCM

One fateful night recently, while driving home in some less than a 10th of a mile visibility valley fog, I quite suddenly and unexpectedly encountered a large area of standing water along a low spot of the roadway. As luck would have it, my car hydroplaned, and without any steering control, the wheel quite jarringly hooked to the right, as the water and centrifugal-forces steered my tires for me along Howsley Road in the hinterland of Pleasant Grove in South Sutter County. All at once a splash and the thud of a sudden stop, and there I was, with the front of the car at an nosed-down angle in a deep roadside agricultural run-off ditch filled with water, some several feet deep complimented by the standing water on the roadway all around. The cab of my car started to flood as the water seeped in through the door seals and right up to the seats, sloshing over the center console hump and filling the cup holders thereof. After quickly freeing myself, I exited the car into hip-deep, ice-cold water, exclaiming a few choice words of excited frustration for the shock to the system, my ruined shoes and soaked pants, albeit I was fortunately feeling physically unhurt and no worse for wear, save the drenching and frigid air temperature. I made the call to 911 to report the traffic hazard I had just unintentionally created.

Operator (who also called AAA for me to arrange a tow), I then began to salvage items from the soggy cab of the car. My roller bag (a.k.a. go kit) with my two (2) HT ham radios, RS Pro-106 digital trunking scanner, laptop, myriad accessories, etc. was first. Thankfully, I had heavily sprayed the roller bag for the rainy season with some good old' Camp Dry waterproof spray and thus the many items within were spared from a total saturation, but still a bit dampened and in need of some drying out time. I shed my



now ruined shoes and soaked socks and put on my vinyl 'farmer' boots that I retrieved from the trunk. Then, while barefoot save the boots, I went into the ditch to re-enter the car one last time, submerging the boots and soaking my still frozen feet with more cold water. Getting myself balanced & steadied in that ditch then trying to keep from falling in all the way came with significant, slippery difficulty. Once I made it back inside the cab, I had to rapidly disconnect power & coax and remove my (insert "cringe" here) completely submerged Yaesu FT-7800! At that moment, after disconnecting the Anderson power poles and reaching into the stagnant ditch water that was now the interior of my car, my first thought was, "well, I'm O.K. after all, but this radio is likely a goner." I also fished out my RS external speaker, which had also submerged. Soon thereafter the Sutter Co. Sheriff and CHP arrived for traffic control and offered up some 15 minute flares and some *by-the-wayside* comic relief at my expense, hi hi.



My car's derriere was exposed at a right-angle to the fog line of the traffic lane, with no shoulder. If it went unseen by another driver rolling up in the fog conditions, it was certain to be t-boned. After tattling on myself to the very helpful & concerned

SON-IN-A-DITCH CON'T

A while after their arrival my AAA tow truck arrived. As my luck would have it that night, while the tow truck driver was maneuvering to begin the process of snatching my car from the depths onto the flat bed, the tow-truck got stuck in the other ditch across the other side of the road. *O dilemma!* After 30 minutes or so, some local gentry in a large pick-up truck arrived and in typical, helpful, all-American fashion, kindly offered their help to get the tow truck out and thus managed to snatch the tow truck out of the other ditch and right it. After a short while I was then flat-bed towed home to my driveway, and put away wet, literally.

Upon arrival at the QTH, I immediately put my thoughts toward salvaging the FT-7800. I set out towels on a table in the kitchen near the wall heater and commenced to rapid disassembly. I was fortunate that the control head and the microphone were dash-mounted and out of harm's way so they weren't impacted by water contact. The radio case/body and wood mount plate was soaked. I then proceeded to disassemble the mount and then opened up the case assembly, screw by screw, in deconstruction. I stopped periodically to admire the MIL-SPEC engineering and construction of the FT-7800 as I went along with the process. I found it to be a well engineered, tightly enclosed, although not all that waterproof much less air-tight per se, but pretty darn close with the precision engineered, recessed, true, and well set fastener fittings of all the hardware. I disconnected the internal case connections from the top-firing internal case speaker to the main circuit board and the internal power connector to allow the top of the case, speaker, and front end piece to dry. I tilted the case over and surprisingly, no fish came wriggling out, or that much water other than a few drips to my surprise. Gotta love that ISO-MIL-SPEC engineering and construction of the radio! I also set the RS external speaker out to dry as well. I then set the components beside each other on the towel in proximity to the business end of the wall heater in the kitchen and then just walked away, trying to forget about them. There it all sat, in exploded view fashion, as if from a radio manual graphic, hopefully drying with the slow bake-out for a few days.

On the fourth day I decided it was time for re-assembly and function testing. The wood mount plate was now bone dry, good start. After some light cleaning of the radio's interior circuit boards with dry cotton swabs and a whoosh or two of canned air I noted the finest brown silt and green algae dust on the used swabs and also blown about by the canned air. Dry, powdery remnants of that material deposited within by the water that managed to get in. A short while thereafter, I decided to hook up the RS external speaker to a line-out speaker connection of another radio and tested it. After hooking it up, I turned the volume control of the test radio up, first by squelch then a frequency active with traffic and voila! The speaker worked just as fine as before! Crisp, fullness of decent audio rang out. Riding on the euphoria of that success with the radio now completely reconstructed, I cautiously hooked it up by Anderson power poles to the shack power supply and the SO-239 to the coax of a spare antenna... I hit the front panel power button and... Voila again! No smoke, and normal power on self test noises from the speaker. Everything lit up as normal, the squelch up and down, and the case speaker worked just as fine as the RS external speaker had done on receive. O.K. So far, so good. I adjusted the RF power to low, and then took the microphone in hand, and with much trepidation, I depressed the PTT, i.e. "squeezed the pickle." No smoke, no sparks, no awful noise, pheww!!! The front panel S/Rf meter read-out looked good and I ker-chunked over a 2m and then a 70cm simplex frequency while monitoring with another dual band radio. I transmitted a few modulated voice tests with my call and was amazed; the output signal was intelligible, clear and seemingly as normal as before. The radio appeared to have emerged from the depths, unscathed! I then tested it over several different repeaters, all worked just fine and all those who replied gave me decent signal and audio reports, I put the radio through its paces, tested the RF power with incremental power increases, then tested its ability to send and receive data from its programming software & cable. Once again, all tested out A-O.K!

My hat's off to Yaesu for building a fine mobile radio in the FT-7800. It's one that took a soaking, came out of the drink, went on to dry out, and then returned, unhindered, working just as good as it did before.

73 Sean, K6SCM

PRESIDENT'S CORNER.....

Greetings from the shack of your new President. I'd like to begin with a big thank you to my predecessors and those who voted me in. I stand on the shoulders of some really great people. The Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club is a great place to hang out thanks to the ongoing efforts of each of you.

When I joined the club in 2009, I was welcomed with open arms. I found a plethora of "Elmers" willing to help me on the air in the HF bands, show me how to use a grid dip meter to set resonance on my home brew traps, teach me how to use CW & patiently prepare me to serve as President today. This list is not complete by any means nor will it be as I continue to benefit from our depth of "Elmers". The best part of it is getting to give back as an "Elmer" myself.

Of course, I have a vision for 2011, and it boils down to providing service to our communities while having as much fun as we can. That fun would include more dinner meetings, more pot lucks, more members involved in our service projects, more opportunities for members to participate in our newly created committees, more activities and opportunities to learn.

I'd like to get acquainted with all of our members, see more of you involved in the fun and do our part to move amateur radio forward. We need to reach out to our friends, neighbors, and those who ask about our mobile antennas, as well as the schools. While our numbers are higher today than ever, the majority of us have one or more grey hairs, so we need to help more youngsters get "bitten" by this "bug". Let us combine the various

aspects of this hobby to increase our numbers. 'Glow in the Dark' equipment, Morse Code, PSK31, satellite communications, Emergency Communications, Earth-Moon-Earth, meteor scatter, contesting, gray line communications, QRP, and building antennas, etc. can all be used to garner interest and promote what we do.

Also, a big thanks to those who helped make our January & February meetings a success. If you didn't make it, you really missed something each time. Our dinner meetings appear to be quite popular with good numbers attending. We have a lot of fun with these and none leave hungry. We do plan to have a few potlucks through the year as well, so bear with us.

Your help is needed and welcome. Please share your thoughts and feelings with me as we work our way into 2011.

Thank you & 73, Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY "CU on the air"



Creamy Chocolate Dipped Strawberries - from www.hersheys.com

1 cup HERSHEY'S SPECIAL DARK Chocolate Chips or HERSHEY'S Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips

1/2 cup HERSHEY'S Premier White Chips

1 tablespoon shortening (do not use butter, margarine, spread or oil)

Fresh strawberries, rinsed and patted dry (about 2 pts.)

1. Cover tray with wax paper.

2. Place chocolate chips, white chips and shortening in medium microwave-safe bowl. Microwave at MEDIUM (50%) 1 minute; stir. If necessary, microwave at MEDIUM an additional 15 seconds at a time, stirring after each heating, just until chips are melted when stirred.

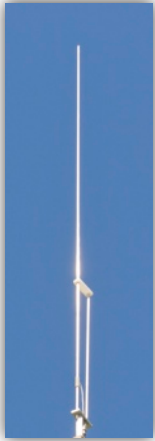
3. Holding strawberry at top, dip bottom two-thirds of each berry into melted mixture; shake gently to remove excess. Place on prepared tray. Refrigerate about 1 hour or until coating is firm. Cover; refrigerate leftover dipped berries. For best results, use within 24 hours. About 3 dozen dipped berries. (3/4 cup coating)

CONVENTIONAL DIRECTIONS: Cover tray with wax paper. Melt chocolate chips, white chips and shortening in top of double boiler over hot, not boiling, water;; stir until smooth. Remove from heat; prepare, dip and store berries as directed above.



HAM STUFF to BUY, SELL, or TRADE

Here are the rules: Any YSARC member can list a ham-related item(s) to sell, buy, or trade. Give a brief description of the item(s), an asking price, and a way to contact you (email address would be a good way). Please limit the amount of items to (4) per month. The items will be run in the YSARC newsletter. Please submit your listing on or before the 4th Wednesday of the month.



FOR SALE: Aluminum J-Pole Antenna (available for either 144 MHz / 222MHz / 450 MHz

These J Poles are hand made using T6061 aircraft grade aluminum and stainless steel fasteners. These antennas are omni-directional and have around 3dB gain. They can be mounted on any camera tripod as it is drilled and tapped w/ 1/4" x 20 thread.

Cost: \$30 (locally) (or \$35 for the special collapsible model.)

Call Russell at 530-821-5882 or email at kb6yaf@arrl.net

How to CONTACT US.....

Valley Ham News Editor & YSARC.ORG Webmaster - Russell Decker, KB6YAF kb6yaf@arrl.net

YSARC President - Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY ki6zyy@yahoo.com

YSARC Secretary - Meg Burgin, KI6TLS mburgin@syix.com

YSARC Treasurer - Clara Ansley, N6VRH claraansely@openrange.net

YSARC VE Testing Coordinator - Lee Sheffield, KC6MCI leesheffield@comcast.net



The "2 Bits" Cafe

1272 Colusa Ave - Yuba City, CA - (530) 755-2012
YSARC Breakfasts - Every Wednesday Morning
at 8:30 am.



1199 Butte House Rd
Suite D, Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 671-9905

**Batteries Plus of Yuba City offers a discount to all YSARC Members*

EXCITED ABOUT RADIO !!

BY RON MURDOCK, W6KJ, SACRAMENTO VALLEY ARRL SM

Do you remember the excitement of getting into ham radio? Not just passing the exam, but really getting on the air fully for the first time? I remember the first QSO (WN9UCU) the first kit I built, the pleasure of my first commercial-built transceiver, the first time I worked all states (number 50 was Maine from Southern California on 75 meters at night!) and the first time I was the DX and causing a pileup. If you remember things like this, then you realize why I have been helping Minh Bui, KD6MB, really get on the air.

Minh, actually Dr. Minh Bui, a medical doctor, cardiologist, and pacemaker expert, got his Technician license in the 90's at one of the evening classes I gave at Yuba City High School. He had to learn the code, pass the separate Novice and Tech exams, and was ready to go on the air, but never did. I met him again one evening at the fire station in Yuba City where I was working as an election clerk during the general election. I told him that if he wanted to reenter ham radio in an active way I would help.

Minh showed up a few months back at one of our VE sessions. He passed the Tech again but did not try the General. Shortly after that he had an Extra, having studied and passed both the General and Extra exams. Then he and I began talking about radios and antennas. Minh had a Yaesu FT817 QRP; all band, all mode portable transceiver. At a maximum 5 watt output, he was completely readable into the WD6AXM repeater, but for serious HF work, something more powerful would be required.

Of course we discussed antennas. I asked him to stop by my station so I could point out the various configurations I have on my normal sized residential lot. He liked the idea of the off center fed Windom. Minh began putting together a shopping list and we jointly surveyed his backyard for antenna placement and for routing the antenna feedlines. I realized we would need some help and asked for an antenna party to support this effort. I believe that was early December, 2010, and then it began to rain for the rest of the month.

In the meantime, we had time for Minh to make his antenna purchases, take delivery of some very nice coaxial cables, patch cords, and a new 160-6 meter Icom

transceiver. The excitement was almost too much, but then the rain stopped and the construction began. The antenna party consisted of helpers hired by Minh, Bob, N6BOB, myself, W6KJ, and most importantly, Lee, KC6MCI. After a start and a stop to get the right materials, Lee built a new 40' push up mast for Minh. It is guyed at two levels, and supports the Diamond X50A dual band vertical, and an 80-6 meter off center fed dipole. An electrician routed the coax, installed a ground terminal box, and brought the coax into the operating position. Minh was ready to go.

As you talk to Minh, you can tell that this is his dream come true. He started thinking about ham radio while serving in the armed forces with U.S. troops during the Viet Nam War. He never lost the idea, but had a lot of learning to do to become the respected cardiologist he is today. Excitement! Oh, yes. Just ask him about the DX he has worked and you will feel his enthusiasm.

73,

Ron, W6KJ



PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS OF QUARTZFEST 2011

by Russell, KB6YAF



The Quartzfest QTH of Russell, KB6YAF and Deb, KI6ROW



KB6YAF & KI6ROW

The "Silver Twinkie" at Sunset in the Arizona desert



Gordon West, WB6NOA, giving a talk on Tropo-ducting from Hawaii to the West Coast



Omer Whipple, K16JNT, giving a seminar on solar panels



Quartzfest 2011 "Headquarters" hosted by Steve, KO4QT, and his wife Linda. They did a spectacular job!



QUARTZFEST 2011

One of the many wonderful Arizona sunsets as seen from our location at Quartzfest - Quartzsite, Arizona

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS OF QUARTZFEST 2011

by Russell, KB6YAF



Gordon West's Comm-Van with his hitch mounted mast for his HF antenna



One of the many 'screwdriver' antennas



A "Solar Tracker" built by Bill, K6ACJ



A homebuilt "Moxon" HF antenna



A wind generator cranking out 400 watts



Beautiful Saguaro Cactus