

W6VIO Calling



Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 820, La Canada CA 91012-0820

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President:	Jonathan Cameron, KF6RTA	4-1189	Emer. Comm. Mgr:	Walt Mushagian, K6DNS,	4-3036
Vice President:	Christopher Carson, KE6ABQ	3-3888	W6VIO Trustee :	Bob Polansky, N6ET,	4-4940
Secretary:	Robb Frederickson, W1EEL	4-2105	W6JPL Trustee:	Eric Archer, N6CV,	4-7350
Treasurer:	Chuck Sarture, KG6NF,	4-2706	WR6JPL Trustee:	Randy Hammock, KC6HUR	
Director at Large:	Bob Dengler, NO6B	4-9620	WR6AZN Trustee:	Bill Wood, W6FXJ,	760-256-9576

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Meeting Notice

By Mike Tope, W4EF

The program for the April's general meeting of the JPL Amateur Radio Club will be featuring the video presentation "VP8THU - Southern Thule - South Sandwich Islands 2002 - The Microlite DXpedition" by James Brooks, 9V1YC.

The video chronicles the January 2002 voyage of the charter ship "Braveheart" to South Atlantic Island of Southern Thule in the South Sandwich Islands group, the ensuing landing and subsequent 5 day DXpedition, and an interesting history lesson on the island group stretching from its discovery by Captain James Cook's in 1775 to its relationship to the more recent Falkland Islands conflict between Argentina and Great Britain.

Even if you question the sanity of anyone who travels to the ends of the earth to yell "Five-Nine" into a microphone, you will still enjoy the breathtaking scenery of this South Atlantic wonderland, its interesting history, the abundant Antarctic wildlife, and the interesting challenges that confront these intrepid adventurers. If you missed the first showing at Caltech in March, this is your chance to catch the 2nd showing. Bring your lunch to building 238, room 543 on April 9th at 12:00 noon, kick-back, and enjoy the show.

The March JPLARC Board Meeting will be held March 26th in 233-305J. Everyone on Lab at the time is welcome to attend either meeting. ■

Calendar of Events

April 5	[Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana]
April 9	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
April 19	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
April 23	Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J
April 26	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]
May 14	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
May 17	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
May 28	Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J
May 31	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]
June 7	[Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana]
June 11	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
June 21	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
June 25	Board Meeting, Noon - 233-305J
June 27-29	Field Day

President's Message

By Jonathan Cameron, KF6RTA

The last few weeks have been rather interesting for the JPL Amateur Radio Club and for me. At the encouragement of a couple of members, I decided to run for president at the last club meeting and was elected without opposition.

As I mentioned to the group at the time, I am the "greenest" president this club has probably ever had. While I may not have the technical depth of radio expertise that many of you have, I am just as concerned for the future of our club. I want to see our club be useful and enjoyable for all of us. In order to revitalize our club, we need to devote some of our precious time and energy. After reflection and discussions with many of you, I feel like there are four primary priorities that the club needs to focus on (in rough order of priority):

1. Improving the general meetings and making them more interesting and fun for all
2. Advertising the club more effectively on lab (particularly our general meetings)
3. Developing the club's role in emergency operations at the laboratory

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4. Encourage and support hands-on radio activities (including our "shack" in B173)

With inputs from many of you and assistance of Bill Wood, our webmaster, we have a new web page on our site describing upcoming meetings and potential meeting topics. Here is the web address:

http://jplarc.ampr.org/meeting_topics.htm

(You can also reach this web page using the third button down from the top on the left side of the current home web page: <http://jplarc.ampr.org/>). Please take a look and give me some feedback: What topics interest you most? Do you have any suggestions for presenters or additional topics? Note that we already have three topics scheduled, including a very interesting DXpedition video that Mike Tope will present at our April General Meeting. After that, we have field day preparations in May, and are planning to meet with Eric Fuller at the EOC in June.

We had an open meeting of several of our club officers and trustees last Friday evening. We talked about livening up the club and many good ideas surfaced that will help us address all of the priorities above. But we can't do this without active participation from the club members. We have been encouraged to consider Amateur Radio afresh in the light of the current state of the world and technology. Along with many of you, I feel that Amateur Radio and our radio club still have a lot to offer! ■

Club Meetings

Board of Directors Meeting, February 26, 2003

By Jonathan Cameron, KF6RTA

Bob Dengler, NO6B, opened the meeting at 12:10pm. Those present included: Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA), Bob Dengler (NO6B), Walt Mushagian (K6DNS), Chris Carson (KE6ABQ), and Bill Wood (W6FXJ, by phone).

Bob Dengler reported on the various problems with the WR6JPL repeaters (both 220 MHz and 440 MHz frequencies). A work party will attempt to repair or jury-rig the system so that a repeater will be available for the LA Marathon.

We also discussed current club membership and IRLP usage and related issues. Randy Hammock has put the control codes for IRLP for the WR6JPL repeater on the web. They are accessible from <http://wr6jpl.ampr.org/>

Bill Wood reported that water got into a transformer at the Table Mountain site and the power failed. Although our radios ran on batteries for about 36 hours, Bill had everything turned off until electrical repairs are made at the site. The backup battery is a large marine deep cycle battery, but Bill felt that it wasn't good to let the battery go completely dead.

While discussing our repeater difficulties and the way we have come to rely on the 220-440 cross-band connections, Bob Dengler suggested setting up duplicate 220 and 440 MHz repeaters on the Mesa in a normally-off mode that can be turned on if the repeaters on Cerro Negro go down. We have most of the necessary hardware.

General Meeting Notes, March 12, 2003

By Robb Frederickson, W1EEL

Bob Dengler called the meeting to order at 12:15. Members present included: Fred Vescelus (N6FV), Michael Tope (W4EF), Jan Tarsala (WB6VRN), Bob Stiver (KF6PSS), Robert Smith (W6GRV), Chuck Sarture (KG6NF), Walt Mushagian (K6DNS), Dwight Holmes (WA3NPK), Jay Holladay (W6EJJ), Robb Frederickson (W1EEL), Warren Dowler (KE6LEA), Bob Dengler (NO6B), Chris Carson (KE6ABQ), Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA) and Stan Brokl (N7YQ).

Jay Holladay, acting as the nominating committee, announced the slate of candidates for the new officers. Additional nominations were requested but none were made. The nominees were voted by acclamation. The new club officers are: President Jonathan Cameron, Vice President Chris Carson, Secretary Robb Frederickson, and Treasurer Chuck Sarture. The other special club office holders are listed on the club web site.

The JPL Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the club's participation in it were discussed. No motions were made, but several people indicated that they might provide more information at the next meeting. Apparently the club has not been active at EOC meetings and may not be well coordinated with the present EOC. A primary purpose for the club, and its justification for an on-lab shack, is its role in the EOC. We need to maintain our EOC activity.

Jonathan Cameron indicated that he plans to have speakers for the monthly meetings, and asked people to suggest topics and speakers. Many good ideas followed in rapid succession in a wide-ranging discussion. Jan Tarsala encouraged members to consider the role of modern amateur radio, and the topics that might interest potentially new members of the ham community. Since then, Bill Wood has added a page to the club web site for the purpose of listing potential meeting talk topics. Jonathan asked us to continue to suggest talks and speakers via the web site.

Jonathan Cameron said that he is organizing an evening meeting at his house on 28 March for the officers to get the year off to a fast start. He also asked people to consider whether the club should move its meetings to another day of the week instead of Wednesday.

It was suggested that the club consider creating an amateur radio Special Event to be associated with the arrival of the rover at Mars. Do we have any volunteers?

Board of Directors Meeting, March 26, 2003

Jonathan Cameron called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm.

Attendance: Walt Mushagian (K6DNS), Robb Frederickson (W1EEL), Bob Dengler (NO6B), Chris Carson (KE6ABQ), Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA), Bob Polansky (N6ET) and Bill Wood via telephone (W6FXJ).

Bob Polansky reported on Field Day preparations. Bob has applied to use the site at Mt. Gleason again. Carl de Silveira is attempting to arrange a caterer for the meals, but no agreements have been made yet. Marty Woll and Warren Dowler will attend only part time this year, so Bob is attempting to fill their shoes with other volunteers.

Bob Polansky reported on a potential donation of equipment from an Estate by a person associated with JPL. If we accepted the donation we would have to remove a motorized 64 ft tubular steel tower. The Board of Directors decided that disassembling and moving the tower is more work than we want to deal with now. Thus, the donation will not be accepted. Bob Polansky will pass the offer to the Caltech radio club.

Field Day plans will be finalized and presented to the club as the main topic for the May meeting with a short report in the June general meeting. We will attempt to have Eric Fuller of the JPL EOC (Emergency Operations Center) present his EOC program to the club at the June meeting.

Bob Dengler reported on the repeaters. He and Randy Hammock repaired a repeater in time for the LA Marathon, and also fixed a receiver desense problem on 440. JPL has donated two 440 antennas (DB-638) to the club. Bob is considering where and when the antennas will go up. Bob also reported that several times non-members have monopolized the repeaters on IRLP, preventing members from using the repeaters. The club needs to consider what to do if the problem persists. Several options were discussed briefly at the meeting, but nothing was decided. Are there any ideas?

Dengler learned that we cannot purchase the FT100B using EC funds via a P-Card and the process of using a purchase requisition has its disadvantages. He will look into the club treasury to see if it can be purchased using those funds, and report his findings to the Board of Directors. ■

W6VIO and DX News

By Bob Polansky, N6ET

The yearly inventory of my JPL assets is upon us. I will be scanning all the JPL assets within the walls of B173 sometime this coming week. If you happen to have tagged JPL hardware that has been removed from B173 for any reason, please see to it that it has been returned prior to the end of day, 4 April so I can accomplish my yearly accounting to JPL. Thanks in advance.

The W6VIO shack continues to perform in an exemplary manner. Given enough time at the controls, we were able to complete many QSO's with STORY on any band we could hear the operation on. Sadly, by the time you receive this article, the operation will have probably ended (end date of 2 April). We await the completion of our 12-volt bus, an exhaust fan in the entry room, and a more global solution to "the ant problem" to make the facility fully under control.

Now for the DX news, giving credit as usual to *The Weekly DX* and *QRZ DX* publications.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND – A VK9XI operation is planned from 7 through 21 April. A second operation from 26 April through 2 May will be undertaken under the following calls: VK9XC, VK9XE, VK9XK, and VK9XY.

FAROE ISLAND – Look for a number of hams from PA-land to operate with OY/ appended to the front of their calls from 31 March through 10 April.

FRANZ JOSEF LAND – R1FJ plans operation from 3 through 13 April.

GUERNSEY – A group of Polish hams will provide QSO's to the deserving from GU-land from 2 through 8 April. They will sign MU/(home calls).

MALTA – 9H/home calls will be signed by many Austrian hams from 20 through 27 April.

NEPAL – While 9N7YJ will continue to provide Nepalese contacts through the end of the year, 9N7DX will be active for a shorter period from 22 April through 20 May.

SARDINIA – Look for IS0/IZ1EPM who plans on giving out lots of contacts from 19 April through 2 May.

ST. PETER & PAUL ISLAND – ZW0S will keep the bands active from 1 through 14 April. W6VIO needs this on SSB.

SYRIA – From "the hot zone", YK1BA will be active from 15 through 27 April. This is another entity that W6VIO needs on SSB.

Enough for this month. Additional specifics on the above operations are available by looking at our source papers posted on the W6VIO shack shelf next to the internal entryway. Enjoy!! ■

Traveling With N6NO: Return To Bermuda

By Merv MacMedan, N6NO

Last year at this time, Claire and I rented a ham-friendly apartment in Bermuda for a week and I had a lot of fun making about 1500 QSO's as N6NO/VP9. I was happy to work a few JPLARC members but would like to have worked more. Where were you?

We enjoyed the island, the apartment and the whole ham radio setup so much we decided to go again this year, although with a somewhat different objective. The propagation between Bermuda and Asia/Oceania is a difficult one and I would have liked to have given more JA's a shot at Bermuda on my last trip. This time I will make a special effort to work that part of the world. Using W6EL's nifty propagation program (w6elPROP), I found that the best openings to Japan occur between about 3 am and 8 am local time. Not being a morning person, this will be a big sacrifice for me but the ham spirit is what counts and I am determined to give it a shot.

But I still have lots of QSL's left over from last year so I will be on the air as much as possible during "normal" hours (whenever I am not eating, sleeping or sightseeing), hopefully giving out "new country" or "new one on this band" contacts and, of course, QSL's. I plan to favor the "new" bands (12, 17 and 30 meters, previously called the "WARC" bands) since they seem to be the more popular challenge these days, but will work any band that seems to have propagation and for which I can muster an antenna. Fortunately, Claire is an avid reader: give her a good mystery and a comfortable chair on the sunny porch and she's content for hours!

I will be at the same QTH as last year, using the resident antenna systems provided by VP9GE. This time I may be able to use his resident TS-940S transceiver instead of bringing my trusty IC-706. (It may help if I don't need to transport this strange gear through airport security. Did I tell you that last year Security at JFK didn't look at the transceiver in my carryon, but challenged my "Antenna Tuner"? They wanted to know if it was a Satellite Antenna Tuner. Having no idea of what a Satellite Antenna Tuner would be, I said no, it was for ham radio. They referred to some sort of equipment list and then, after a lot of huddled conversation, finally decided that "as long as it wasn't a satellite antenna tuner it was OK." Go figure.

Here are the rules of engagement: The dates of the operation are MAY 14 THROUGH MAY 21. (This year I will NOT be in the CQ WPX Contest, which is May 24-25.) The call will be N6NO/VP9, license already issued. Look for me in the lower 25 kHz of the band. If too many are calling I will go split, listening up a couple of kHz from my frequency. To find what band I'm on, look at DX Summit on the web for recent spots. I expect to focus on CW but will respond to requests for SSB contacts if you need one. If you wish, I will be glad to make an individual sked with any club member provided you e-mail your request to me before I leave, May 11. E-mail: n6noATarrl.net QSL's, of course, go via N6NO.

Good luck and I hope to work you! ■

Newsletter Deadline:

Friday, May 30 for the June issue of W6VIO Calling. Your articles, ads, photos, diagrams, letters to the editor, or technical material should be submitted to the editor via email (bill.wood@mindspring.com) or regular mail to: Bill Wood, 31094 Hemlock Ave, Barstow, CA 92311.

Treasurer's Report

By Chuck Sarture, KG6NF

March, 2003

General Club Account

Beginning of Month Balance:	\$3,154.27
Income:	
Membership Dues	\$116.00
Total Income:	\$116.00
Expenses:	
No Expenses This Month	\$0.00
Total Expenses:	\$0.00
End of Month Balance:	\$3,270.27

Emergency Communications Account

Beginning of Month Balance:	\$1,843.05
Income:	
Special Grant for Table Mountain repeater upgrade	\$1,832.00
Total Income:	\$1,832.00
Expenses:	
Table Mountain Repeater Upgrade -	
Repeater Controller	\$1,575.00
I/O Board	\$75.00
DVR Digital Recorder	\$100.00
VHF Band Reject Filter	\$82.00
Total Expenses:	\$1,832.00
End of Month Balance:	\$1,843.05

Chuck Sarture, KG6NF
2003 Treasurer

Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club

2003 Membership Form



Name: _____ Call: _____
 License Class: E A G T+ T N
 License Expiration Date: _____ ARRL Member? _____
 Mail Stop: _____ Lab extension: _____ E-mail Address: _____
 Home address: _____ Home Phone w/Area Code _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

JPL Employee: _____ Retired: _____
 On-Lab Contractor: _____ Retired: _____
 Family: _____ Off-Lab: _____ Caltech/Other: _____

Please renew your JPL Amateur Radio Club membership for 2003 by completing the following three steps:

1. In addition to your name and call enter any new or corrected information on the membership form above. Please enter your current electronic mail address if you have one.
2. Return this form with your personal check for 2003 dues as listed below (check the appropriate boxes) to: Scot Nolte, JPL Mail Stop 306-392 or JPLARC, PO Box 820, La Canada, CA 91012-0820. Please make checks payable to JPL-ARC

- Regular; Retired, Off-Lab or Caltech/Other: \$ 10.00 each
 (\$11.00 If not Paid by Feb. 28, 2003)
 Immediate Family Members living at the same address with a Member above: \$5.00
 Newly Licensed Amateurs - Free for the first year

Please check additional action(s) desired:

- I have already paid my 2003 dues.
 There is an error in the club records, please correct as shown above.
 I no longer want to be a JPL Amateur Radio Club member. Please remove my name from your list.

Thx and 73, Scott Nolte, K6SN



Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club
PO Box 820
La Canada, CA 91012-0820

First Class Mail

JPL ARC Repeaters			
Pasadena:			
WR6JPL	147.15 MHz	(+)	PL 131.8 Open
WR6JPL	224.08 MHz	(-)	PL 156.7 Open
WR6JPL	224.70 MHz	(-)	Closed Autopatch
WR6JPL	445.20 MHz	(-)	PL 103.5 Open
W6JPL-1	145.09 MHz		Packet Node/BBS
W6JPL-1	223.54 MHz		Packet Node/BBS
Table Mountain:			
WR6AZN	145.28 MHz	(-)	PL 131.8 Open
WR6AZN	223.96 MHz	(-)	PL 156.7 Open
WR6AZN	447.20 MHz	(-)	PL 94.8 Open

