

# W6VIO Calling



Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 820, La Canada CA 91012-0820

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## Meeting Notice

By Mike Tope, W4EF

The January General Meeting of the JPL Amateur Radio Club will be held January 14<sup>th</sup> at noon in the conference room in 238-543, when the new Officers will be presented to the Club.

The January JPLARC Board Meeting will be held January 28<sup>th</sup> in 161-230, where the budget will be discussed. Everyone on Lab at the time is welcome to attend either meeting – bring your lunch if you want. ■

## President's Message

By Jim Lux, W6RMK

First, a bit about me: Both my grandfather and father were hams (W6RMK and W6CZA), so I've been around ham radio for my entire life, although I didn't actually get my license until about 10 years ago.

My dad is an EE, and I've always been fooling with electronics in one way or another. Playing with audio oscillators, oscilloscopes, speakers, and so forth while my dad graded papers or soldered together a Heathkit. Watching the plates glow red on my grandfather's AM rig. The shocks I got as a kid, standing in bare feet in the garage, building yet another power supply or circuit!

Professionally, I've had a somewhat varied career, ranging from software development (everything from PDP-11 drivers to real estate database searching), Electronic Warfare systems (Frequency Hopping and Direct Sequence radios, 100% probability of intercept spectrum analyzers), physical Special Ef-

## Calendar of Events

January 14	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
January 17	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
January 28	Board Meeting, Noon - 161-230
January 31	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]
February 7	[Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana]
February 11	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
February 21	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
February 25	Board Meeting, Noon - 161-230
February 28	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]
March 6	[Fontana Swap Meet, A. B. Miller HS, Fontana]
March 10	General Meeting, Noon - 238-543
March 20	[CMRA Hamfest, Cal Poly, Pomona, 7 AM]
March 24	Board Meeting, Noon - 161-230
March 27	[TRW Swap meet, Redondo Beach]

fects (Fire, Wind, Rain, Explosions), and now, developing new architectures for space based phased array radars.

If I had to identify the single biggest lack in ham radio, it's that we don't spend enough (or any) time *communicating*. We don't tell other people (including, and especially, other hams) what cool stuff we're up to.

We get busy with our own little aspect and, with work and other responsibilities, don't get a chance to tell the world how nifty it is to "work the world on one watt", or, to hear your echo from the moon, or how cool the latest digital signal processing is.

All too often, hams come off to the general public as a throw-back to an earlier day; why would you spend all that time with an HF radio, in Morse Code for gosh sakes, when I can call anywhere in the world from my cell phone.

We need to get the "cool factor" back into the perception of ham radio. Radio doesn't always have to be useful. Millions of people own horses and spend millions of dollars on them, and I'd venture to say that the county of L.A. spends more time worrying about accommodating horse owners than accommodating amateur radio. There's probably less than a few thousand "working horses" in the country, but all those 10-12 year old girls think that horses are cool, and that's a powerful force.

As a little kid, I remember thinking how cool it was to talk to my grandfather on the radio, back when long distance phone calls were unusual, and international calls unheard of. That was cool.

Listening to the Apollo 11 landing on shortwave in a campground in Italy. That was cool. Somehow, though, I don't think my kids would find it as cool, jaded as they are by talking on the phone to their relatives in England, or mom and dad on vacation in Australia.

There are things that people (my kids and their friends) think are cool that can only be done with ham radio:

- Listening to ISS downlinks on an HT as they see it going across the sky;
- Talking to special event stations like VE7TUB for bathtub races in Canada (while driving down the 118 freeway);
- Tracking where daddy's car is on the freeway with APRS;
- Watching the ATV link back from the kite hanging over the neighborhood;

These are things you can't just pick up the phone or sit down at the computer and do.

That is enough about general philosophy. What do I want to see the JPL club do? What do I want to accomplish next year? I've got a couple things in mind.

The first is to find out what each club member is doing with radio these days. I'll start working down the list and extract just a single line or paragraph from each of you.

Maybe you're going to get to 35 WPM. Maybe you've got a cool idea for a digital radio. Maybe you've got 95 countries and are looking for the next 5. Maybe you just find it handy to have a radio around. Maybe you're running a pirate FM station? (No, don't tell me about that!)

Whatever it is, it makes you happy (otherwise, why would you do it?), and maybe, someone is looking for another doing that very thing.

We draw from a unique population at JPL compared to most radio clubs. I'll bet that we're a LOT more diverse in our interests and activities.

This leads to my second idea. I've been reading over all those back issues of W6VIO calling (thanks to the website folks!) and it looks like the club is very cyclical. I think we've been in a bit of a lull; people are busy going to Mars, or working Faster, Better, and Cheaper. We get so busy we don't even know what the guy in the next office is doing, much less anyone in the radio club: The standard joke is that going to a conference gives you a chance to see what others at JPL are doing. How many of you have projects languishing because you haven't had enough time to get around to it? I've got dozens, some of which are years old, much to my wife's consternation. (A show of hands at the holiday dinner showed that ALL of you probably fit in this category!)

The radio club can help you. Maybe it's just the impetus of someone asking how that project is coming along: I know that motivates me; Hey! Someone else is interested; maybe I'd better actually do something. Maybe it's the shared group experience: raising an antenna in a party is a lot more fun than doing it by your self.

One of the big advantages of a club or group is that you can do things, as a group that is not feasible by yourself. Maybe you've got that cool digital radio, but you're at a loss getting the software side to work? Maybe you've got an idea for an antenna, and you'd like to model it, but have no idea where to start.

Let's use the club as a means to foster inter-ham communication, because, after all, communication is what amateur radio is all about. 73 for now ■

## Club Meetings

By Robb, W1EEL and Jonathan, KF6RTA

### Board of Directors Meeting, September 24

The meeting opened a little after Noon, in the usual meeting room. Those present included Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA), Chris Carson (KE6ABQ), Bob Dengler (NO6B), Rob Frederickson (W1EEL), Scott Nolte (K6SN), Bob Polansky (N6ET), Jan Tarsala (WB6VRN), Mike Tope (W4EF), and Eric Archer (N6CV, by telephone).

We briefly discussed the Christmas banquet and decided to recruit someone at the next general meeting to arrange it. We will also arrange for a committee to put together a slate of officer candidates at our next general meeting. According to the club by-laws, the slate must be selected and voted on in November.

Bob Polansky reported on an excellent Mars special event station that he and a few other JPL people operated recently. He sent out more than 400 QSL cards to Scouts. Bob led some preliminary discussion about the options for field day next year. He would like to make some preliminary arrangements for catering for next year. Bob feels it will be his last Field Day with the club because he will be retiring soon.

Chris Carson reported on some local DCS activities. The club needs to follow up on the EOC training we recently received. Chris also noted that the power in building 35 is being modified and our repeater there isn't on backup power. We will need to revisit this issue soon.

Jan Tarsala encouraged our club to improve our relationship with ARRL. He suggested nominating someone in the JPL club to run for an ARRL "Assistant Director", to be a liaison with the local clubs.

Bob Dengler let us know that he and Randy Hammock changed the Table Mountain repeater codes. Anyone needing details should contact one of them.

### Board of Directors Meeting, 24 September 2003

No official business was transacted. Topics for general meetings talks were discussed. It is hoped that a holiday party will occur some night in December. A volunteer is needed to organize this.

Bob Polansky reported on the special event of the Indianapolis Radio Club, Boy-and-Girl Scouts meet the Planet, Mars. JPL W6VIO was on the air talking to the scouts in Indianapolis.

Chris Carson discussed progress in the world of emergency communications. The DCS-EOC is reorganizing its method of coupling to Ham Radio. They now have radios in the Pasadena Fire Stations coupled to the Ham bands.

Jan Tarsala suggested that we may want to have a member designated as an assistant to the ARRL Southwest Director. This would provide more visibility to ARRL.

Repeater issues continue to occur. Bob Dengler is waiting for the club to provide equipment so he can make some upgrades. On the Mesa, building power to the repeater may be turned off as the building is rewired. Non-JPL operators seem to be using the repeater occasionally in a manner contrary to FCC rules. FCC recommendation is to ignore it as much as possible. Temporarily shutting down the repeater is a last resort only.

#### General Meeting, October 8

We welcomed a special presentation by technical representatives of Cingular Wireless on "How Cell Phone Networks Work". Many Thanks to Michael Chatt for a wonderful and very interesting presentation. We would also like to thank Randy Chepenik, Cheryl Dinkel, and Victoria Kertz for joining us and answering a variety of questions after the presentation. Finally, we would like to thank Sandy Verma for his assistance in putting together the program.

The meeting was announced to all of JPL and attracted some new people. Those present included Dipak Achani, Don Albano, Robert Beckon, Tom Brown (AB6YI), Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA) Anthony Davis, Courtney Duncan (N5BF), Gaylord Hammerwold, Booth Hartley (N6BH), Julie Heynssens, Walt Hoffman, Ken Manatt (KD6CMJ), Walter Mushagian (K6DNS), Bob Polansky (N6ET), Charles Rhodes (WB6KZE), Bob Stiver (KF6PSS), Michael Tope (W4EF), Linh Tua, and Ashton Vaughns.

#### General Meeting, November 12

The meeting started at 12:12 pm. Those present included Eric Archer (W6CV), Jonathan Cameron (KF6RTA), Chris Carson (KE6ABQ), Bob Dengler (NO6B), Jay Holladay (W6EJJ), Jim Lux (W6RMK), Walt Mushagian (K6DNS), Bob Polansky (N6ET), Mark Schaefer (Wb6CIA), Rob Smith (W6GRV), and Michael Tope (W4EF).

Thanks to the hard work of Chris Carson, a slate of officers was recruited including Jim Lux for president, Chris Carson for vice-president and emergency coordinator, and Jonathan Cameron for secretary. There was no confirmed candidate for treasurer. The club voted on the slate of officers and approved the selections.

Jonathan Cameron and his wife, Janet Cameron (KG6JNO), agreed to organize the Christmas banquet. We plan to have it at Joselitos Mexican Restaurant on the evening of Thursday, December 11.

Eric Archer led a discussion on a few issues related to our current club computer security plans. Jim Lux agreed to help coordinate resolutions of some of the outstanding issues.

Bob Polansky reminded us that he plans to retire in a year. He needs volunteers to learn about the variety of things that he has been quietly doing for our club for many years. These include field day planning, organization, and logistics, maintaining our HF stations, and dealing with a range of people and organizations on-lab to facilitate our operations.

Bob Dengler brought up the issue of how difficult it is to access to the Cerro Negro site. This is still in flux due to unre-

solved issues of the city of La Canada-Flintridge with the site. Chris Carson will talk to Eric Fuller about the possibility getting of his assistance to get a key for the Cerro Negro site.

Jonathan Cameron let everyone know that Marty Woll has agreed to give a talk at our Christmas Banquet about his recent eventful Dxpedition to The Gambia.

#### Christmas Banquet and General Meeting, December 11

We met at Joselito's West in Tujunga, just 5-6 miles west of JPL at 7 pm in the evening. Those present included Phil and Donna Barnes-Roberts, Jonathan and Janet Cameron, Chris Carson, Bob and Melinda Dengler, Courtney Duncan and family, Jay Holladay and guest, Jim Lux and his daughter, Bob Polansky, Greg Laborde, Owen and Judy Robbins, Mark Schaefer, Michael Tope, and Marty Woll.

Only one item of business was discussed. Chuck Sarture agreed to run for treasurer. Since he was unopposed, he was elected by acclamation.

After a very nice buffet-style Mexican dinner, Jim Lux greeted the club and talked briefly about his plans for the club for 2004. After that, Marty Woll gave a very interesting and amusing talk about his recent Dxpedition to The Gambia. Although their team had a variety of mishaps and challenges, they persevered and operated well as a team. Their group was unadvertised before the contest but their ideal location (in the sense of RF propagation, not infrastructure) and their determination to overcome obstacles led to their success; they won their class! Thanks again to Marty for a wonderful talk. ■

## A Letter to W6VIO Calling

By Bob Polansky, N6ET

As many of you Club members know, I have been a strong supporter of JPLARC activities for on the order of thirty years. The time has come for me to retire from the Lab. I intend to do this sometime in March of this coming year. I plan on relocating to my new QTH in the rare Douglas County in Nevada where I intend to put together the antenna farm I've only dreamed of in the past.

I lead three significant activities on behalf of our Club. In an attempt to gracefully extricate myself from these activities, without leaving "holes" in Club activities, I am looking for several people interested in carrying on my work for the Club after I leave California. I stand willing to do whatever training is needed to make these transitions as simple as possible. If you wish to help your Club in any of these areas, please contact me at JPL Extension 44940 and we'll let the training begin.

The first area has to do with the W6VIO HF capabilities. Your Club needs someone to take on the "trusteeship" of the station. Included in this task are the leading of activities associated with HF station/ antenna upgrades and maintenance activities. This person will also become the QSL Manager for W6VIO. Failure to fill this position will result in the W6VIO stations and antennas losing operability as well as the erosion of the Club's ability to support JPL's Emergency Preparedness activities.

The second area is the leadership of the JPLARC/CITARC Field Day planning and operation activity. This has been for the past fifteen-plus years one of the two major "fun" activities which has held your Club together. Failure to fill this position will result in the need to cancel the food-preparation caterer already set up to support Field Day this coming year and will further result in our Club losing the Mount Gleason Field Day site forever.

The last area has to do with obtaining support for your Club's Emergency Preparedness activities from several organizations within JPL. We need to continue to maintain the contacts already in place at the Lab in order to keep our facilities in working order and to ensure continuation of the funding needed to supplement our Club's operational capabilities.

Don't let your Club down. Let me hear from you rapidly, since only three months, at the most, remain to transfer knowledge to others prior to my departure. I feel that it is most important to the successful continuation of your Club that these activities continue after my retirement.

I'm looking forward to talking to W6VIO operators from my new QTH in Gardnerville, Nevada. Perhaps I can talk Stan Brokl into joining me on a trip down to operate with the JPLARC group on Field Day this coming June. Please, let's keep in touch.

73 to all my friends at the JPLARC, Bob, N6ET ■

## Traveling with N6NO: Antarctica

By Merv MacMedan, N6NO

**M**y last travel report to you was for my N6NO/VP9 DXpedition to Bermuda, a nice sunny and warm place to spend a ham vacation. My next trip will be cruising to Antarctica where, in February, it should be as warm as it ever gets there.

I know several hams who have tried to operate onboard a cruise ship but were disappointed to learn most big cruise lines don't permit it. This time I found an enlightened cruise ship operator who is actually sponsoring a new program for hams. It is Lindblad Expeditions, an upscale cruise company with smaller, more intimate ships.

Our ship is the M.S. ENDEAVOUR, a comfortable cruise ship that is just short of 300 feet long. It carries 110 guests plus 10-12 guides, researchers, naturalists, geologists, historians, video chroniclers, underwater divers and submersible operators.

The purpose of the cruise is not the cruise itself as in many Caribbean cruises, but to see the beauty of Antarctica and its nature. As a result there are frequent zodiac landings and hikes to penguin colonies, etc. The TV-camera-equipped submersible allows remotely controlled exploration of underwater reaches with viewing from the comfort of the ship's lounge. For the more adventurous, there are opportunities for ocean kayaking among the icebergs and, yes, even swimming in a thermal spring. A highlight will be a visit to the grave of the famous Antarctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton.

The ham program is called "Casual DX" and is being promoted by Marc Weinberg, K9PET, of Seattle. You can find information on his web site, <http://www.CasualDX.com/>

The ship's Captain, although not (yet) a ham, has been fantastically cooperative and I will be helping install this first permanent ham station on the ship. The company is supplying HF wire antennas, antenna tuners, and 20 amp power supplies. Most probably we will be able to set it up in the ship's "Radio Room" which years ago housed the radiotelegraph equipment and operator when they were required on every ship. Today, of course, a Radio Room is no longer needed because communicating is done by satellite radio and handled directly from the bridge. What better use to put such an "obsolete" room?

For possible on-shore ham operations the company is also furnishing two 1KW briefcase-size Honda generators, two sets of Fiberglas poles for dipole antennas, and one of the new SteppIR multi-band motorized verticals that you read about in the December 2003 QST.

Having all this on board, all the visiting ham will have to bring is his rig, mike/key and ham license. That is, a Bahamian license. You see, the Endeavour is registered in the Bahamas, so when operating on the high seas it comes under Bahamas jurisdiction, not FCC. I applied for a reciprocal license from the Bahamas and received it in a couple of months. It costs \$25 and is valid for one year. My call will be N6NO/C6A.

My itinerary is to leave LAX on February 9, fly via Miami to Santiago, spend a day sightseeing there and then head for the port of Ushuaia, Argentina, where we board the Endeavour. Ushuaia is the southernmost city in the world. The ship will then head south to the South Shetland Islands, then stop at the Antarctic continent, after which it proceeds northeast to South Orkney, South Georgia, and the Falkland Islands. We disembark in the Falklands on March 3, fly to Santiago and then back to LAX. It is not known at this time whether it will be possible to do any shore operating from short stops at these rare DX islands, but I hope to be prepared with the appropriate VP8 license in case fate and the weather cooperate.

Maritime Mobile operations don't count for DXCC, but I will have my GPS with me, and will be aware of each grid square location I will be traveling through. I am sure I will be giving out contacts for many rare Grids. I understand many hams now chase Grid Squares as they once chased countries or islands. I am also planning a nice color QSL with a picture of the ship on it.

I will be looking for lots of JPLARC members on this trip, since I should be on the air at least a few hours a day for most of the month. Mostly CW, but yes, I will even have a microphone to work the phone folks (and to demonstrate ham radio on board the ship). My earliest expected operation will be February 13, and the last day will be March 2.

If club members would like to arrange a sked, they can e-mail me prior to February 8 (n6no at arrl.net). The ship does have a satellite e-mail system for its passengers (no internet access) but our shipboard address is issued only after we board. It is rather expensive, so I use it only for emergency messages.

Hope we can QSO on this trip! ■

### Newsletter Deadline:

Friday, February 27 for the March 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](mailto:bill.wood@mindspring.com)) or regular mail to: Bill Wood, 31094 Hemlock Ave, Barstow, CA 92311.

# Jet Propulsion Laboratory Amateur Radio Club

2004 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 171-B1 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

