
W6VIO Calling



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



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President:	Jim Marr, AA6QI	Emer. Comm Mgr:	Chris Carson, KE6ABQ
Vice President:	Eric Archer, N6CV	W6VIO Trustee:	Rob Smith, W6GRV
Secretary:	Courtney Duncan, N5BF	W6JPL Trustee:	Eric Archer, N6CV
Treasurer:	Chuck Sarture, KG6NF	WR6JPL Trustee:	Jim Lux, W6RML
Director at Large:	Bill Weber, N6CI	WR6AZN Trustee:	Bill Wood, W6FXJ

Upcoming Events:

- Emergency Communications Net: Every Monday Noon on the 224.08 or 445.20 repeaters (they're always linked).
 - BOD meeting every non-RDO Friday, 12-1pm in 180-703C, call-in: 4-3434, ID-7373
 - T-1745 cleanout: 10am Friday April 5th at T-1745. Respiratory pre-training required.
 - Building 173 (HF Shack) cleanup: 4-6pm, Thursday, April 18th at Bldg 173.
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Restarting the JPLARC by Jim Marr, AA6QI

What follows is a brief narrative of events over the past roughly four months (although it may not seem that brief as you read it!), from my memory & notes, or meeting minutes taken by N6CV and N5BF. My apologies for any errors in what follows. I also apologize for the length of this article; a lot has happened over these few months that many club members may be interested in knowing about.

Vanishing Repeater: Back around the turn of the New Year, the JPL ARC's 224.08 and 445.20 repeaters on Cerro Negro Peak in the San Rafael hills, went off of the air for a couple of weeks, and then mysteriously came

alive again. The 147.15 machine on the JPL Mesa also seemed to be off of the air and the 224.70 machine wasn't reachable from JPL. Having been inactive in the club for about 20 years due to work demands but still a user of these repeaters that I once helped to maintain, I decided it was time to attend a club meeting to find out what was going on with the repeaters but found that there hadn't been any club meetings for a couple of years or so.

Since there didn't seem to be anyone else doing it, I started an effort on my own to track down who controlled access to the San Rafael Lookout Tower on Cerro Negro Peak where the 224.08 and 442.50 repeaters are located. This was quite an adventure, beginning with the LA County Forestry Division that built the tower

in 1935, where I was referred to the Henniger Flats office and from there to the LA County fire stations in La Canada, but all were dead ends. I then asked the LA County Regional Planning Commission and was referred to the LA County Real Estate Division that told me that the tower was leased to the City of La Canada in 1999, so I would have to contact the City's Public Works Manager (City PWM) to gain access. After tracking down the City PWM, I arranged to meet with him and tell him the story of the JPLARC repeaters that had been in the tower since the late 1970's. He told us that we would need to enter into a sublease agreement with the City of La Canada and pay a rent of \$178/month in order to be able to stay there. Since this amount of rent is clearly beyond the ability of the JPLARC to support from dues, I met with the JPL Deputy Director, General Tattini, explaining the situation. This eventually led to JPL's Will Michael in the JPL Emergency Management Office, agreeing to negotiate a sublease agreement with the City and to pay the required rent. As of this writing, the sublease agreement is still in work but at least the City PWM has agreed not to pull the power plug on the repeaters as long as progress is being made on establishing the sublease agreement.

Meanwhile a few of us formed an **Executive Board** to discuss the future of the JPL ARC with our first meeting on **January 18th** arranged by Eric Archer N6CV. Invitees included: Ken Manett KD6CMO, Chris Carson KE6ABQ, Courtney Duncan N5BF, Jim Lux W6RMK, Bill Weber N6CI, Bob Dengler NO6B, Jan Tarsala WB6VRN,

Jim Marr AA6QI, Stan Sander N6MP, and Michael Tope W4EF.

At this meeting, Eric presented a set of thoughts about the future of the JPLARC given the current environment for clubs at JPL and suggested that the JPLARC might consider becoming just a JPL Emergency Amateur Radio Service (JEARS) and turn over all equipment to the institution, basically abandoning the concept of a separate JPL ARC. There was not universal agreement that this should be the future of the club. We agreed at this meeting that the Executive Board would continue to meet every non-RDO Friday at least until we had a clear direction for the club in whatever form it was going to take.

The next **Executive Board** meeting was on **February 1st**, with an expanded invitee list that, in addition to those invited to the first meeting (above), included: Bob Cesarone WA6JIB, Jim McDuffie K6JLM, Chuck Sarture KG6NF, Rob Smith W6RMK, Scott Nolte K6SN, and Scott Howe KJ6OUL.

At this meeting, I presented a vision for both a newly active JPLARC that operates independently from the JEARS, and that maintains the club communications equipment that may be used in support of JEARS activities. I relayed my communications with JPL Human Relations (HR) Nancy Kapell, who now is responsible for monitoring the activities of JPL Recreation Clubs, who basically said that, while there wasn't financial support, clubs could still exist and would require a liability waiver to be signed before participation in any club activities. Part of the presentation

was a whole list of things that needed to be accomplished in order to restart the JPLARC.

The **Executive Board** next met on **February 15th** with the same invite list as for the February 1st meeting. For this meeting, Eric Archer N6CV took minutes. Attending were: In person: Jim Marr AA6QI, Bob Dengler NO6B, Bob Cesarone WA9JIB, Bill Weber N6CI, Jan Tarsala WB6VRN, Jim Lux W6RMK, Courtney Duncan N5BF, and Eric Archer N6CV; on the phone: Soctt Howe KJ6OUR and Chris Carson KE6ABQ.

At this meeting we discussed the status of negotiations with the City of La Canada regarding our repeaters on Cerro Negro, the pressure that we are getting to remove our equipment from trailer T-1745 next to our shack in building 173, the role of the JPLARC in JPL emergency communications, and the state of JPL ARC emergency communications training. Finally, we went through a list of going-forward action items that Eric Archer N6CV put together. Everyone was given the action to review the JPLARC Bylaws for our next meeting in preparation for discussion about how to reconstitute a Board of Directors.

The next **Executive Board** meeting was held on **March 1st**. Attendees were: In person: Jim Marr AA6QI, Eric Archer N6CV, Courtney Duncan N5BF, Jan Tarsala WB6VRN, Bill Weber N6CI, Bob Dengler NO6B, Rob Smith W6GRV; On the phone: Ken Manatt KD6CMO, Chris Carson KE6ABQ, Bob Polansky N5ET, and Chuck Sarture KG6NF. Eric Archer N6CV provided minutes of the meeting.

The first item on the agenda

was to appoint an Interim Board of Directors (BOD) to serve out the remainder of 2013. Three of the last elected BOD, elected in 2009 for the 2010 calendar year, were no longer at JPL, and five of the remaining seven of those officers, Manatt, Sarture, Smith, Archer & Carson, were present. Since these officers were never formally relieved of their positions, they remained empowered as the club BOD. Further, the Bylaws give the Vice President, Ken Manatt, full power to act on behalf of the President when absent (Mark Schaefer WB6CIA, the last elected President, left JPL several years ago). The Bylaws further give the President the ability to appoint replacement officers should a vacancy occur. Thus, we had what was required to allow Ken to appoint a new president, who could then fill any other Board vacancies. Jim Marr AA6QI was nominated and seconded with no dissent as the new President, after which Ken Manatt resigned his Vice Presidency. Subsequently, Eric Archer N6CV was appointed as Vice President, Courtney Duncan N5BF as Secretary, and Bill Weber N6CI as the Director at Large. All other remaining officers agreed to continue in their former positions: Chuck Sarture KG6NF as Treasurer, Rob Smith W6GRV as W6VIO Trustee, Eric Archer as W6JPL Trustee (though the Board agreed that, even though Eric now holds two Board positions, he only gets one Board vote), Bill Wood W6FXJ as WR6AZN Trustee, and Chris Carson KE6ABK as Emergency Communications Manager. Thanks to all for your willingness to help your club get back up and running.

Following the appointments, additional topics included: (1) Jim

Marr AA6QI handed out a proposed new membership application form modeled after the Pasadena Radio Club (PRC) membership application form, with the JPL Human Resources required liability waiver on the back; (2) Eric Archer N6CV discussed T-1745 move/cleanup; (3) Bill Weber N6CI discussed possible building 173 (the club HF shack) replacements.

Jplarc.ampr.org goes away: Early in March, JPL experienced a power failure that took out the internet connection to our server in 180-R6, causing the loss of the jplarc.ampr.org web site, the jplarc email exploder, and the 224.08 IRLP/Echolink capability. Eric Archer N6CV and Bob Dengler NO6B worked with JPL Network Services to fix a failed network interface card in Building 180 that restored service after only a few days of outage.

The first **Interim Board of Director's** (BOD's) meeting was held on **March 15th**. BOD members present were: President Jim Marr AA6QI, VP Eric Archer N6CV, Secretary Courtney Duncan N5BF, Treasurer Chuck Sarture KG6NF, EmComm Mgr Chris Carson (on the phone), giving five Board members, constituting a quorum. Also present or on the phone were: Jim Lux W6RMK, Bob Dengler NO6B, Scott Nolte K6SN, Walt Mushagian K6DNS, Merv McMedan N6NO, Scott Howe KJ6OUL, and Chris Carson KE6ABQ. Meeting minutes were provided by Secretary Courtney Duncan N5BF.

After considerable discussion the Board agreed to apply to have Jim Lux W6RMK appointed as WR6JPL Trustee to replace Randy Hammock

KC6HUR who is no longer a Regular Member and thus no longer eligible to hold a BOD/Trustee position.

Scott Nolte K6SN, a friend of Scott's, and Bill Wood W6FXJ converted the new JPLARC application form to a fillable .pdf and posted it to the jplarc.ampr.org, "Who We Are" page, under "How to Become a Member". A direct link to the form is <http://jplarc.ampr.org/applic.pdf>. This new form has a button in the upper right corner that directly sends it to Scott Nolte K6SN after it is filled in. That doesn't yet fully solve the need to send in the form with the signed liability waiver that's on the back of the form (which JPL's Human Resources is requiring all JPL recreation clubs to sign prior to participation). Jim Marr AA6QI is working with JPL's OGC to rewrite the liability waiver form to more correctly represent the role JPLARC members play in JPL emergency communications.

Cerro Negro Repeaters: City of La Canada Chief Electrician, Kent Barr, escorted Eric Archer N6CV, Bob Dengler NO6B and Jim Marr AA6QI into the San Rafael Lookout Tower on Cerro Negro Peak to service the 224.08 and 445.20 repeaters. Jim and Bob watered the 100 Ahr NiCad wet cell backup batteries and Bob made adjustments to the 445.20 repeater. Eric took pictures of the installation. Kent Barr told us that, after the sublease agreement is in place, we will need to move the repeater cabinet from the shelf that it is currently sitting on to a position in the center of the tower and feed lines need to be rerouted through conduits in the roof vents. Additionally, the 445.20 machine's Comet GP9 antenna will

need to be moved from its current mount (which belongs to someone else) to a new mount that we will need to provide.

JPL Mesa Repeaters: Work continues by Jan Tarsala WB6VRN, Eric Archer N6CV, and Jim Lux W6RMK to put the 147.15 repeater back in service. The new Kenwood repeater has some software issues that Jan and Eric are working with Kenwood but the Master II repeater is ready to install now. Getting the antenna together is the current holdup.

T-1745 cleanup is scheduled for April 5th but respirator training will be required for volunteers due to the rat feces contamination present in the trailer. Eric will schedule. Eric will also contact the bicycle, running and astronomy clubs that have equipment in the trailer.

Bill Weber N6CI is putting together a list of known hams at JPL. That list was up to 85 at the time of this meeting.

The next **Interim BOD meeting** was held **March 29th**. BOD members present were: Jim Marr AA6QI, Eric Archer N6CV, Courtney Duncan N5BF, Chuck Sarture KG6NF (call in), Bill Weber N6CI, and Rob Smith W6GRV/W6VIO; a quorum is present. Others present were: Jim Lux W6RMK, Scott Nolte K6SN, Bob Polansky N6ET, and Scott Howe KJ6OUL. Minutes were provided by Secretary Courtney Duncan N5BF.

An application has been submitted to the ARRL Club Station VE to appoint Jim Lux W6RMK as WR6JPL Trustee to replace Randy Hammock KC6HUR, as approved by the BOD last meeting.

Jim Marr AA6QI reviewed OGC's Kerry Slatter draft Volunteer Agreement modeled after the USAR volunteer agreement that would replace our current Liability Waiver. Those present considered it an improvement. Comments were collected which Jim were fed back to Kerry.

Jim Marr AA6QI reported that Will Michael KC6LOK is making progress on the Cerro Negro repeater site sublease agreement with the City of La Canada.

Jim Lux W6RMK reported on the 147.15 repeater restoration, saying that the equipment is all up at building 35A on the Mesa above JPL, except for the antenna, which needs to be assembled and installed. Bill Pickett will provide a bucket truck to install the antenna. Expect to be back on the air in a few weeks. No progress yet with the Kenwood vendor (Foothill Communications) but Eric Archer N6CV plans to contact Kenwood directly.

Jim Lux also reported that work is also progressing on a 440 machine for the Mesa. Jan Tarsala WB6VRN and Bob Dengler NO6B have worked the coordination (frequency and PL) and have the duplexer ready.

T-1745 cleanup: Eric Archer N6CV reported that airborne contamination respirator training is scheduled for April 2nd. Eric reported that the astronomy and running clubs are non-existent but the bicycle club would remove their fiberglass bicycle shipping container from the trailer. He reported that JPL HR's Nancy Kapell told him to get rid of any running or bicycle club equipment left in the trailer. Remaining items from the trailer will eventually go into

another TBD storage area. The T-1745 work party will start at 10AM on RDO April 5th.

Bylaws discussion was tabled until a later meeting.

Meeting Structure: Bill Weber N6CI is putting together a survey to poll all known licensed JPL amateurs regarding a number of things, including meeting frequency, time of day, length, and how to include members not on lab. Marr pointed out that we need to fix the current general meeting location web pointers (HR site and jplarc.ampr.org), which show 238-543 and the JPL Visitor's Center, respectively.

Committees: Bylaws require Education, Publicity, Repeater, and Station Facility committees. Marr proposed additional committees as: Membership, Bylaws, Web, Program, Bulletin, EmComm (JEARS), Field Day, Public Events, Nominations, Refreshments, Banquet, History. Will discuss and nominate members one at a time.

Education Committee: Jan Tarsala WB6VRN, Eric Archer N6CV, Courtney Duncan N5BF, and Jim Marr AA6QI, all holding VE credentials, agreed to meet and decide what to do. Later Merv McMedan N6NO also volunteered for the committee and Eric Archer checked and found that his VE credential is not current but agreed to serve anyway.

Publicity/Membership: Bill Weber N6CI and Scott Nolte K6SN agreed to serve.

Repeater Committee: Bill Wood W6FXJ/WR6AZN, Jim Lux W6RMK/future-WR6JPL, Jan Tarsala WB6VRN, Bob Dengler NO6B, Scott Howe KJ6OUL, and Randy Hammock

KC6HUR were nominated and agreed to serve.

Station Facility: Rob Smith W6GRV/W6VIO and Eric Archer N6CV/W6JPL agreed to serve. Getting some capability back on HF is a priority of this committee.

Emergency Communication Net:

This net, held every Monday at Noon on the 224.08 and 445.20 repeaters is one of the few things in the club that has continued to work well over the past few years. This net is conducted weekly to ensure that the repeater link to Table Mountain, and thus Goldstone, is working; give members practice working within a controlled net, and to give members a chance to listen to the ARRL audio news weekly. Weekly check ins also allow members to ensure that their own radios are in working order. Each week there are usually a dozen or so check ins. Thanks to Chris Carson KE6ABQ and Charles Rhoades WB6KZE for keeping this net running and encouraging members to take a turn at running the net.

May 2013 Issue of VIO Calling: The next issue will cover the April 12th and April 26th BOD meetings as well as any other activities that take place, such as the T-1745 cleanup, Building 173 cleanup, the 145.17 repeater restoration, and any other relevant activities. There should be pictures next issue, too.

Dues Are Due: One final reminder, JPL ARC dues are essential to keeping the club going. Please renew if you haven't already done so.

Thanks and 73—Jim/AA6QI