

SCOPE

A newsletter by and for the Palomar Amateur Radio Club of San Diego, California.



Web Site Break In Report

by Paul KB5MU

On the 12th of November I received a "dear webmaster" message from Google informing me that some of the web pages on palomararc.org could "cause users to be infected with malicious software." I investigated, and sure enough, some unwelcome additions had been made to our club's web site. I administer the CentOS Linux computer the site runs on, along with about a dozen other sites for friends and family, and I feared that all those sites would have to be nuked from orbit and rebuilt.

A survey revealed that the obvious damage to palomararc.org was limited to just a few files, and there was no similar damage visible on any of the other sites on the server. That was good news, in two ways. First, it suggested that the intruder probably didn't get full root access to the server, so the mess would be easier to clean up. Second, it left traces that I was able to follow to see exactly how the break-in was accomplished.

Some of the damaged files were part of the Zenphoto photo gallery installation, which has been part of the web site for just over a year now. Most of the web site is very simple static

HTML, which generally isn't subject to security bugs, but the photo gallery is a rather extensive PHP application. Though Zenphoto is one of the simpler and more security-oriented photo gallery packages available, anything that complicated is going to have bugs that can be exploited. I checked the Zenphoto project's web page, and found a security update bulletin, which pointed to a support forum discussion that gave plenty of details.

Those details checked out, matching what I could see in the server's logs. I could see the initial break-in happen on November 7, and I could see the intruders return daily, making the actual changes to the web site files on November 9. Armed with this knowledge and the two-day-old security patch from Zenphoto, I was able to restore everything to its undamaged state and, presumably, prevent a recurrence of this specific kind of break-in. After a re-scan, Google gave the site a clean bill of health once again.

Save the Date

Club Meeting
4 January 2012

Lithium Ion Batteries
How they work,
Why they fail
by Michelle W5NYV

Board Meeting
11 January 2012

Palomar Amateur Radio
Club board meeting at
7:00pm at K2RP QTH.

ARRL Contest
Kids Day

1800Z-2359Z, Jan 8
<http://www.arrl.org/kids-day>

Club Membership for January Edition

New Members: KJ6SQP and N6PDZ. And, five members reinstated their membership. Welcome back.

Have you visited the club Web Site lately? There is a new feature there that lists our current members by call, and lists their renewal date. Please check it out. Maybe your membership expired some time ago! If your call isn't listed, maybe membership made a mistake, but more likely your membership expired! We really do need and appreciate renewals.

AI
W6GNI

October's Fold & Staple Crew
W6GNI AI WA5ACE Sonny
KB6NMK Jo KB6YHZ Art & Janet

The ARRL San Diego Section now has a Section Emergency Coordinator.

Bruce Krypton, KG6IYN, has agreed to fill the position. I am confident that Bruce will do an outstanding job.

Steve Early, AD6VI

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Do you have a mobile installation? Do you want to have a mobile installation, and need some motivation?

We're looking for a few good mobile installations - whether they're completed, on the drawing board, or half-way done and tripping you and your passengers every time you get in and out of the vehicle - to be featured in the Scope. We'd love to show your installation.

Tips, narratives, explanations, techniques, problems encountered and solved (or encountered and evaded) are what we're looking for. Send them in!

scope@palomararc.org

Lunch Bunchers -

We had a great Friday group at Callahan's on the 2nd of December 2011 and from the QRM level at my end of the table everyone enjoyed the lunch. :-)

Many of you know that Harv introduced the Friday lunch group to Callahan's years ago and some many of us were remembering our good friend today. Harv became a silent key on February 13, 2008. This DX club bulletin (link below) is posted on Bud/N7CW website. It's a flash back for many of us and I will always remember Harv's passion for ham radio and his passion for life.

See you all next Friday,
Tom
www.WONI.com

<http://www.n7cw.com/downloads/hillerk6qk.pdf>

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Adventures on 10m

by Michelle W5NYV

10m is my favorite band. I'm of the school of thought that the different bands attract a different crowd. The folks on 20m seem different to me than the usual suspects on 80m, and those who hang out on 40m are different still. The 10m crowd is interesting, humorous, friendly, civil, cooperative, and helpful. Plus, there are 10-10 numbers to be exchanged, and that is always a fun thing to do on the air! While this belief is somewhat self-fulfilling, in that if you believe in a positive outcome, then it seems more likely to occur, I am inevitably drawn to 10m operation, and hold a torch for that band, even during the long band closures we have experienced recently.

I've been remarkably lucky to get two extremely pleasant opportunities this past year to be the DX station on 10m.

In March 2011, a group of us YLs put together a DXpedition to Curaçao. We inhabited the PJ2T station for three days of operating, and I ended up on 10m a lot. Being the DX station is a substantially different experience than chasing DX on 10m back home, where I have a wire loop on a mountain and about 100 watts to work with. While I can be surprisingly well-heard, being on the other end of the pileup was exciting, challenging, and fun.

The weather in Curaçao was perfectly designed for my tastes. It was warm, breezy and sunny, with the deep blue ocean only meters away from our four stations arrayed in a large room with expansive windows. The galley-style kitchen was at our backs, and a constantly-in-use table separated the two areas. We had an enormously good time, and learned a lot from the experience. 10m cooperated, and there were enough people calling to keep me busy for hours at a time. I noticed how the band opening rolled across the United States, with different areas of the country being heard over time. You get an immediate appreciation for propagation effects when there are people calling you. It's difficult to see this in reverse. The DX station might come in and out, and you can explain it to yourself because most propagation effects are understood. There are, in other words, certain times of the day where you might expect to work, say, Curaçao, or France, or Hawaii. However, when you are the DX station, you hear the many stations calling, and can experience propagation changes with the many stations as samples. It makes for a strong "visualization" of propagation, and is probably my favorite thing about working pileups. Our YLDXpedition operated as PJ2W for the Russian DX Contest, and we operated under our personal

call signs. I was PJ2/W5NYV.

Back home from Curaçao, I worked CQP and another couple of contests, and made efforts to work DX stations whenever I had some free time. With the station being at a second home outside of the CC&R bound city, and not having remoted the station yet, my radio time is, as is often the case with many of us, quite limited. Paul KB5MU and I operated as W6NWG, our club call.

I enjoyed our club's Field Day (Palomar Amateur Radio Club) more than I ever had before in terms of operating. Only the anemic operator turnout was a downer, but our club is hoping to reverse this trend in the coming years.

We took our travel trailer to the Field Day site, and were assigned 40/15m to work. Not being a night owl in any way, shape, or form, I popped back up at 3am to work until after dawn, and traded short shifts back and forth with my partner Paul KB5MU until Field Day ended. While I didn't get a chance to work 10m at Field Day, it was on my mind, and I spent some time visiting all of the other stations, especially 10m.

Our 10m "specialist" in the club is Preston W6ASP. He seems to be able to work for many long hours! He is also quite a good sport, as we told him during setup that the 10m beam was missing, and sent him round and round the field to find it. He should have looked up, as it was already installed at his station. He forgave us, and we had some good runs on 10m. His was the only station with air conditioning, and it felt great since our Field Day site was a bit warm.

October 22nd was a Saturday, and I had my three kids and my mom loaded up in the minivan for a trip up to the mountain home. I was looking forward to some radio time in between all the other things that keep us busy. While in the driveway, I noticed I'd missed a call on the mobile phone. I decided to go ahead and return the call before setting out on our journey.

It was Wild Bill Wiederhold WB6BFG, and he had a question. "What's your spontaneity meter looking like today?" I had to laugh, wondering what in the world this was going to be about.

"Well," he continued. "You know that trip we've been planning to Rarotonga? We had someone drop out at the last minute. Is there any way you might be interested in perhaps coming along?"

Oh boy!

"We leave tomorrow night at 11pm."

Oh boy.

"The trip is scheduled to be two weeks long."

Oh. Boy.

I told him I'd know the answer in two hours. I called my family members and told them about the invite, and asked them if it was in the realm of possibility. I was very cautiously optimistic, as it is in my nature to up and go when the going is in the offing. However, leaving for up to two weeks during the school year on short notice was going to be, I reckoned, a big uphill battle leading to "no".

However, to my surprise, delight, and gratitude, everyone in the household was supportive! Everyone said yes, even the children. Although they don't really have as much of a vote as they seem to think they do, it's immensely easier for mommy to traipse off to play radio on tropical islands when they are excited about the trip (and even more excited when the first thing I mentioned was how many wonderful island treasures I might be able to bring back!).

The team of 8 operators and 3 companions had been assembled and planning and packing for some time, and had already collected equipment for 4 stations, to be set up at a motel on water's edge on the island of Rarotonga, in the South Cook Islands. Our goal was to compete in the CQWW SSB contest, and then operate as a DXpedition afterward. The team had been doing this contest, from places all over the world, for many years. They were all very experienced and skilled operators, and I was hoping I would fit in and that my skills would be up to the challenge.

I was instructed to pack as light as possible. This is a skill I manage to have! My check-in bag ended up weighing about 15lbs, as it was mostly space ready for equipment to be load-balanced to avoid baggage fees. When I arrived at the airport the next evening, I was able to take on a lot of extra "stuff" in the bag.

The team was friendly, welcoming, enjoyable, helpful, and interesting. Most everyone was from Southern California, with a few exceptions. I already knew Wild Bill and his comrade Ellen N6UWW. Ellen and Bill and I had all been in Curaçao together, and knew each other relatively well. The others I knew either by reputation or not at all, but by the end of the DXpedition I had a wealth of friendship to show for it. A lighter pocketbook as well, but that comes with the territory of last-minute international travel.

Our operating team consisted of Dick Norton N6AA, Art Goddard W6XD, John Cashen W5UG, John Fenoglio AB6BH, Ellen Utschig N6UWW, Wild Bill Wiederhold WB6BFG, Oliver Sweningsen W6NV, Michelle Thompson W5NYV (me) and Marty Woll N6VI.

John Fenoglio's companion Cindy, Art's wife Mary Ellen, and John Cashen's wife Maggy also joined us on the journey, with Dick's companion Cindy joining us a few days after the contest concluded. Mary Ellen brought a library's worth of books with her to share, and served us several delicious meals. Both Cindys were stellar company, with John's Cindy rising to the challenge and earning her scuba certification while we were on the island. Maggy had ready answers to all sorts of questions, was a great conversationalist, and had the best "raised eyebrow" look of the entire group.

I had a small Hello Kitty carry-on with a computer and a notebook stuffed in it, and my violin case, which went in the overhead baggage.

The direct flight from Los Angeles to Rarotonga took 9 hours. We landed at an airport ringed with volcanic mountains shrouded in the last bits of morning fog. The lovely morning light streamed down over the jagged tops, and heavy flower necklaces were presented to us in greetings compliments of Victor E51CG, a local ham and an invaluable contact and advisor. He helped us move all our baggage and recommended restaurants and services, and was immensely engaging in conversation. I look forward to his future visit to the United States.

Victor loaned us a very useful item - his five-element 10m beam! This went on the balcony of one of the ocean-facing rooms at the Kiikii Motel, which is where we stayed while on the island. The Kiikii consists of two long buildings each housing a set of rooms, with a pool and porch and yard in between. The rooms on the ends overlook the coral beach. There are two stories on the beach-facing end. The buildings drop down to single story for the inland rooms. I had the most inland room on the office side of the building. Spacious, simple, and peaceful, in this room the hot water came from a solar tank on the roof. Every room had a kitchen and a seating area. With a market within walking distance, and a fruit stand on the way, life was good in terms of being able to cook in your room. Life was equally good for going out to eat, as there were all sorts of restaurants and pubs all over the island. We tried our best to get to them all!

continued on page 6

The antennas were unpacked from their containers and put up over the first few days. For 40m, 20m, 15m, and 10m we had vertical dipoles, each with a reflector. For 80m and 160m, we put up large verticals. The 160m had a delta loop for tuning, which is a way to change the electrical length of a fixed physical length of antenna. Guying the antennas on a beach made almost entirely of large chunks of not-very-dense coral made for a challenge, but we adapted and figured out ways to make the guy wires stable and secure.

When Victor came over with the five-element 10m beam for the contest, the vertical dipole remained largely unused until I worked 10m for three days after the contest. Since not a lot of power was put through the 10m vertical dipole, we didn't have the same sort of trouble with arcing across the insulators that we experienced on 40m and 15m, and almost experienced on 20m. The insulators near the bottom of the antennas would get salt water sprayed on them, and running 500 watts through them resulted in a high voltage at the end of the dipole. Eventually, enough salt water collected to where it arced over and burned the insulator. For 15m, Ellen suspected this was the problem with the band when it didn't treat us as well as it should have treating us, and we ventured down to the beach to investigate. Sure enough, the insulator was well-burned. We swapped the insulator in the reflector with the one in the driven antenna, and put it back up, all in about 20 minutes. While this repair didn't magically return 15m to full operation, we counted it as a repair victory.

Other challenges were antennas blowing down and the 160m delta loop being moved by someone mowing the lot that the loop was guyed down within. The mower had very kindly untied everything, mowed down the jungle, and then retied everything as best he or she could, but the tying was approximate, and therefore the tuning wasn't exactly right. We noticed it before our last night of operation, and were able to fix it.

10m for the contest was our best band. 10m stayed open and busy the entire time. I put in two shifts on 10m and the rate kept me hustling. There is an interesting phenomenon with working a pile-up. If you start out on simplex, and more and more people try to call you, your rate goes up... for a while. There is a point where there are so many people calling that you start to have real trouble distinguishing call signs from each other. After this saturation point, your rate can actually go down. At this point, it makes sense to run split and spread people out, so you can get the rate

back up. The rate was almost too fast for me, but since my shift was only 4 hours long, and the rate slowly trended up, I hung in there and worked simplex the entire time. It was fast enough to get an "atta girl" from one of the more experienced operators.

With all the logging computers connected together, you could see the contacts being made on all the other bands rolling by in a window at the bottom of the screen. 10m stayed good and hot for almost the entire time, with many hours seeing more 10m contacts than the other bands. 20m was closed during the day a lot longer than we expected, and 15m was tough going the entire time. 160m was devastated by an enormous amount of local noise, although we eked out 6 contacts. 40m was wild and woolly at night. 80m was pretty good - I worked a very early morning 4-hour shift and got to see grey line propagation first hand, as the pileup slowly marched across the United States, from the eastern seaboard until the very last west-coast station, someone in Canada, managed to get in a last QSO. Then, it went silent.

After the contest, we returned the 10m beam, took down the 160m vertical and the 40m station, and I dragged up the coax from the 10m vertical dipole antenna to the 20m station room. We left 80m, 20m, and 10m up after the contest. Oliver was active on 80m. For the next three days, I traded back and forth with Marty as he worked 20m and 10m RTTY on his K3, and I worked 10m SSB whenever we weren't visiting, eating, watching dance shows, shopping for treasures, or telling tall tales. One of my missions was to secure a real treasure. Rarotonga is known for black pearls, and I had my eye on one or more. I got my wish, as myself and two other members of the group got a recommendation and ventured out to a black pearl shop.

I got a handful of odd-shaped ones for the children to have as keepsakes, and then picked out a few more expensive ones. If all goes well, I'll design and set these into some jewelry to be handed down the children when they are older. Of course, I do plan on wearing them in the meantime! In the end, I selected three pearls: gold, silver/green, and an amazing blue.

My comrade-in-pearl-shopping selected three matched black rose pearls as a gift for his spouse, and I can't wait to hear how it was received. They were an amazingly lovely triad.

On the first post-contest day of operation, I logged 430 contacts. I had a completely wonderful time on the air chatting and working people from all

over. I decided I would try for 1000 contacts on 10m.

Working a contest is different from working as a DX station. You don't have any time for conversation during a contest, and you're swept up in the excitement of competition. During the first part of CQWW, we tried to maximize QSO rate. During the last part, we started looking a lot more carefully at multipliers. Marty made a list of stations needed on 20m, and we began to try and coordinate. Whenever we worked a station that another one of our bands still needed, we would ask that station to check us out on our other bands. All of the information was on the networked screens - you could tell who had yet to work a particular zone, and what frequency

lot of US stations. I worked many Canary Island stations, and a few from other places. Only a few times did I have to call CQ, but one long stretch prompted Lloyd NH7RO?? to come back and tell me I had, indeed, worked out the entire band. I laughed and thanked Lloyd for keeping track, and told him I sure hoped I hadn't, since I still had another full day left of operating, and hadn't quite made 1000 contacts yet. When the dust settled on the third day, I had logged a few more than 1000, and subtracting out dupes and such, I expect that number to hold.

Alas, it came time for me to depart. I left a few days before the remaining DXpeditioners, so I didn't do much in the way of taking down the last set of antennas. I heard that the last antennas

The 5-element 10m beam can be seen in the upper right. From left to right along the beach are 160m and 80m verticals, then 10m, 15m, 20m, and 40m vertical dipoles with reflectors.



our other stations were on. The software we used is called Wintest, and although I had not used it before, it was easy to learn and by the end of the operation I was almost an old hand.

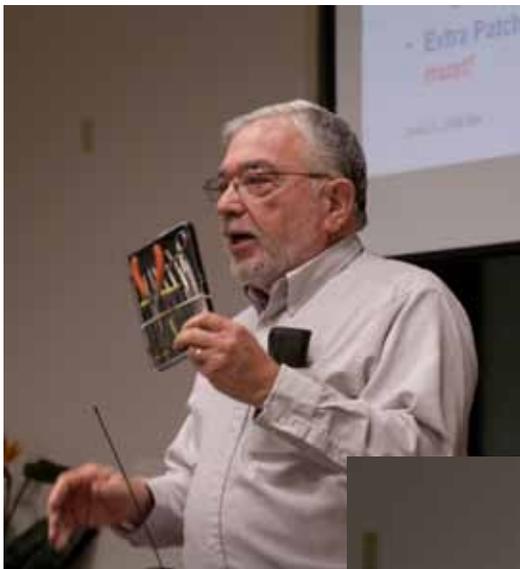
For 10m, the rule of thumb that I learned in Rarotonga is that you're most likely to contact stations that are directly across solar noon from your location. In other words, find where you are on a map, look at solar noon, and find your opposite side counterpart. Sure enough, that rule of thumb worked out well enough to be a solid predictor of radio activity on 10m.

I worked during the morning on all three days, and during the afternoon into early evening for two of those days. I worked a lot of Japanese stations, a big batch of eastern Europe, and a

came down in the rain!

I took two large suitcases of equipment back with me as checked baggage, while my belongings, in another checked bag, took a vacation through Australia, to be returned at a later date. After landing in the United States, and making it through customs and immigration with no difficulties, I met up with the owner of the equipment and handed it over before continuing the drive back to San Diego.

The DXpedition was successful, enjoyable, and very educational. I was very happy to be able to participate in a DXpedition where I could operate so many different times on 10m, and look forward to the next time with great anticipation.





Above, 2011 PARC Christmas Party Panorama, taken at Carlsbad Safety Center. Photo by Don KD6FWE.
Below, November 2011 Membership Meeting photos by Paul KB5MU.



Minutes

Palomar Amateur Radio Club Board of Directors Meeting

November 9, 2011

The meeting was called to order by President Dennis Baca KD6TUJ at 7:35pm at the home of Ron Pollack K2RP. In attendance were:

President Dennis Baca KD6TUJ
Vice President Ron Pollack K2RP
Secretary Paul Williamson, KB5MU
Director #1 Don Johnson, WD6FWE
Newsletter Editor Michelle Thompson W5NYV
Membership Chairman Al Donlevy W6GNI
Repeater Technical Chairman Conrad Lara, KG6JEI

Secretary's Report

No meeting minutes were available.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer KI6LAV had distributed the Treasurer's Report by email, and copies were distributed. Motion by KB5MU to approve the Treasurer's Report as published. Seconded by W5NYV. Motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming General Meeting

K2RP reported that the December meeting will be the annual holiday social and elections. The January meeting is scheduled to be presented by W5NYV on Lithium Ion Batteries: How they work, why they fail. The February meeting is scheduled to be presented by KB5MU on some aspects of APRS.
2012 Club Officers

K2RP reported that the Nominating Committee recommended at the November general membership meeting that existing officers KD6TUJ, K2RP, KB5MU, WD6FWE, and K7ELH be re-elected, and proposed David Ochs KI6LKP for Treasurer. No nominations were heard from the floor.

KD6TUJ (as presumptive President-elect) asked each of the present committee chairs W5NYV, W6GNI, and KG6JEI if they would agree to serve again in 2012, and all agreed. The Repeater Site Chair remains open.

Membership

W6GNI reported that the membership is up a few to 266.

Repeater Technical Report

Repeater Technical Chairman Conrad Lara KG6JEI reported that power converters for the packet equipment have been purchased and received, but not installed. Don WD6FWE is planning to make a 6m J-Pole antenna for the repeater site. A TNC is ready to be re-installed. There are reports of reduced receiver sensitivity on the 145.05 MHz packet node.

Operating Day

KD6TUJ reported that the PAPA group would again participate at Operating Day, November 20.

SANDARC Bylaws Amendment

KD6TUJ reported that the San Diego Amateur Radio Council (SANDARC) bylaws amendment was defeated, 14 nay to 11 aye. A two-third vote was needed to pass. The standing Bylaws Committee remains active, and KD6TUJ has been invited to participate.

SCRRBA Band Plan Change

KG6JEI reported that the Southern California Repeater and Remote Base Association (SCRRBA) has changed channel spacing in the 70cm band plan from 25 kHz to 12.5 kHz for D-STAR channels. Implementation is some years in the future.

Cycle for Life

KG6JEI thanked the Club for use of the repeater during the recent Cycle for Life event.

Next Board Meeting Location

It was agreed that the next Board meeting would be held at the home of K2RP at 7:30pm (new time) on December 14, 2011.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Williamson KB5MU
Secretary

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<p>Open: 10a.m. – 5:30p.m. <i>Ask about our great prices</i> Monday thru Saturday 858 560-4900 or toll free 1-800-854-6046</p>		<p>Directions: On 163, take Clairemont Mesa Blvd. off ramp to East. Stay in right-hand lane. Turn right at stoplight. As you are turning right you can see our beams in this shopping center. Travel 100 yds. On Kearny Villa Rd. and U-turn back to shopping area and HRO sign. Be sure to see our equipment in action on real antennas!</p>	

Work Party, December 11, 2011

by Dennis KD6TUJ

Don WD6FWE, Conrad KG6JEI, and Dennis KD6tUJ went up the hill to work on a few items. 6 meters needed a new antenna, power converters needed to be placed into service for packet, and general checks of equipment for winter.

Dennis constructed an antenna based on the plans of <http://www.qsl.net/w8cwe/6meterj.html>. Put it together at TOWizard and tried to match it. Works great at 54.14 MHz. Need to adjust better. The day is now done, take it home. At home it was set up against the tow truck to continue matching. As I go to adjust the match, the antenna decides to shift to ground level! Well at least the truck mirror stopped the fall. Now the nice, new, straight j-pole is slightly bent towards the top and the J is no longer parallel. RATS. Lets check the match to see how bad it is and if I need to start over. 1.1 to 1. Don't change a thing. Sending to the mountain. Conrad came by Sunday and used his premounted antenna transport system. (900 MHz antenna mounted on the right rear side of the bed and the right side mirror.)

When we arrived at the site, we proceeded to unlock the sheds, or not. I did not bring keys as it was not on my list. Conrad forgot to bring his keys. Got the key from the lock box, so now we can replace the 6m antenna. Checking my bag, I found old keys returned to me. NOT working, not working, worked. The key needed was so used, it was hard to open the radio rooms. After changing the antenna Don checked the match. Still 1.7, too high for the cavities to function. Change thought pattern for a while. Switch out power supplies for converters. This will bring voice, packet, and 220/Convair machines to battery backup power if line voltage is lost. A check of the repeaters showed they survived the scheduled power outage with no issues. Back to thinking about why the 6m antenna SWR did not change. Did the feed line change back to the other lead? NO. Took down an antenna, replaced an antenna, forgot about the dipole antenna that was tried and still connected to the feed through. Changed the feed line, checked the SWR and found 1.3. Much better. Narrowed down 6m problem to cavities. The project continues....

Dennis

Work party photos submitted by Dennis KD6TUJ.



METRO NET WITH CONVERTER IN MIDDLE REPLACING LARGE POWER SUPPLY



145.050 WITH CONVERTER INSIDE AT TOP RIGHT



LOWER RIGHT BNC CONNECTION LOOSE.



NEW 6M BENT ANTENNA ON FOLD OVER MA40 MAST



SNOW ON THE GROUND FROM FOUR DAYS BEFORE.

The Biggest Thank You

by Tom KI6IET

I had an accident. I fell 40 feet. It caused a lot of problems. I was in the hospital for nearly a year, and that's when my father gave me a scanner to listen to, because TV was getting boring. I started playing around with the scanner, and I came across the winsystem. K6JSI is the owner. It's a linked repeater system that is also connected in with the IRLP. 18 different states and 5 different countries are linked. I heard people from California talking to people from Australia! Hearing people talk to each other from so far away was intriguing.

It was around 11:30 at night and they were doing the Insomniac Net. The guy that owns the system, Shorty, was the net control operator. Somebody asked him for his website, and he said it out loud, and I grabbed my laptop, and went to it. I sent him an email, because they asked trivia questions on the net, and you gave answers.

"Listen, I'm not a ham radio operator, I'm in the hospital, but here's the answers to the questions."

They let me participate from the hospital, through email. This made me feel welcome and appreciated.

After the net, he sent me an email back, suggesting that I should go into ham radio. It will keep you busy. He said I might be able to do it in the hospital, depending on which part I was in.

Somebody from PARC sent me the technician tapes for the exam. I listened to that for three months. I got out in four months, and somebody sent me an email talking about Handihams.

We have this camp once a year, and if you come up here, you can take the test. If you pass, you get a radio. This was the summer of 2007.

So, I did that. Borrowed the money from my dad to go to Minnesota. And I took the test, and passed!

During the week while I was there, there was a guy named John (one of the instructors), he helped me learn the questions and the correct answers. He would read, then give correct answers. It was a week-long process.

Only missed two questions! They were diagram questions. The day after I took the test, the FCC announced that you didn't have to take code in order to get your license.

I had studied code to take the code test, but I was relieved to not have to. I got my radio, and then came back to San Diego, and went on the Palomar website to find repeaters that I could use. I was listening to 73 machine, and people talked about the club. I joined, and everyone started helping me out a lot.

N6HPO gave me a 2m/440 Kenwood GW400a as a base station. It was an older radio, but 10 memory channels, a voice chip, and big numbers in the display. He also gave me a 2m/440 J-pole.

I went to camp again the next year, summer 2008 I earned my General license.

A Yaesu FT757 was loaned to me in order to get on the air. Everyone in the club taught me all sorts of stuff about HF. AC6V gave me one of his books, and he talked to me a lot and taught me about so many different things. He suggested to ignore people that have bad attitudes about people like me, and told me it was very important to have good radio etiquette at all times.

Some people believe that people like me shouldn't be on the air, because we may not speak or respond as quickly as they would like.

I participate in Handihams. Now that I have passed the Extra exam this year, I am going to start teaching next year.

People in the club are so nice. I may not know everyone's face, because I cannot see very well, but I recognize the voices, and I know that there are many anonymous people that have helped me out in so many ways. I want to thank everyone wholeheartedly for helping me with my radios and antennas and installations.

I'm on the radio every day, either on 2m or 440 or HF. I spend a lot of time on HF now. I want to thank the anonymous people for donating the Cushcraft antenna that I have. I want to thank Dennis N6KI especially for the 6m antenna. Bill gave me the J-pole and a G5RV. Terry helped me with a voice chip in a radio. These people help me so much. I really appreciate each and every one. For someone in my situation, I don't make a lot of money. Without the generosity of PARC and Handihams and the anonymous radio operators, I would not get to do this.

Amateur radio is a lifeline for me. It makes a huge difference.

One of my current challenges is quitting smoking. I have been a smoker for a long while, and this is

an uphill battle for me. I'm making progress on this goal, but it does make me a bit cranky! Quitting smoking is hard work, but worth it.

The city of Oceanside has this ordinance now, that says your antenna can only be so high. It can be only so many feet off the top of the roof. I am just under this limit. The best times on HF are when the weather is lousy. I get better skip when the clouds are thick. I can skip over the ocean better. Maybe it's because of my location, being a couple of blocks from the ocean and two stories up. There is nothing higher than my antenna anywhere near where I live. I'm in the redevelopment area, where the height limit is 3 stories. There is nothing in between me and the beach. I get very good signals to the west. East is kind of hard, since I can't quite get over the mountains, but there are times when I can talk all the way to Maine. I can hit different states, sometimes.

I have this list. I'm trying to get at least one contact in each state. I keep a log, and I've contacted 20 states. I'm slowly working further east as I go along. I have all the western states, and Texas and Kansas and Ohio. I've talked to Handihams on HF in Minnesota. Florida was difficult, but I managed to get a contact. Mississippi and Louisiana were contacted. I talked to a woman in New Orleans. What a conversation that was!

I usually work the radio late at night

One night about 2-3am, I got up to work the radio. I wasn't able to sleep. There was this deep voice. She was talking to someone in Kansas, and then asked if there was anyone else out there wanting to make a contact. I answered, and she came back to me!

My HT got stolen about a year ago. I go to the beach almost every day, and keep the HT in the back pocket of my wheelchair. I was listening to the radio through headphones, and it was exceptionally silent. When I got home, though, the radio was missing. The lifeguards and the police



Tom KI6IET at the October 2011 PARC Auction. Photo by W5NYV.

kept a lookout for it for a long time, because they know how much it meant to me.

I consider everybody in ham radio to be part of my family. The biggest thing is that I want to put a big thank you out to the PARC for anybody that has ever helped me with any of the many things that have benefited me and made my life better. To me, it means a lot to me. The kindness of the club members has changed my life and I want all of you to know how much it means to me.

Being able to talk with others that accept me for who I am, and talk with me about anything and everything, and aren't afraid to talk with me, makes my life so much better. By just being there, by just talking to me!

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Featured Program:

At 7:30pm on the 4th of January 2012, Michelle W5NYV will talk about Lithium Ion Batteries, How They Work and Why They Fail. There may be some shennanigans.

Arrive at 7:00pm to socialize. We look forward to seeing you at the Carlsbad Safety Center, 2560 Orion Way, Carlsbad, CA.