



RAINBOW CANYONS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

CEDAR CITY, UTAH 84720

Issue 2

Club website rcarc.info

February 2009

Rainbow Canyons Amateur Radio Club

Minutes

January 13, 2009

President Russ Chaffee, N7BO, opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

Introductions given: Those present were:

N7BO	Russ Chaffee
W7KBM	Ken Oliver
K7BTE	Bill Rankin
N7SIY	Joel Clements
KB7UMU	Sylvia Clements
AE6HR	Trever Adams
KE7OCJ	Harl Adams
KB7QXB	Shirleen Chaffee
K7ZI	Richard Parker
Future	Genevieve Kidman
KE7PRF	Sam Kidman
KB7UDW	Ninfal Rankin
W7GDH	Jed Owen
NR7T	Jon Rice
KG6LRU	Jim Beal
KE7TPC	Jeff Pedersen
WA7GTU	Don Blanchard
KB7OWE	Don Carter
N7KM	Ken Munford
K7NJ	Riki Kline
N7TCE	Merlin Mackay
K6QOG	Bill Stenger

Sunday -	Dick K7ZI
Monday -	Russ N7BO
Tuesday -	Ken W7KBM
Wednesday -	Joel N7SIY
Thursday -	Bill K6QOG
Friday -	Sylvia KB7UMU
Saturday -	Dick K7ZI

4. Club dues \$15.00 per person and \$25.00 per family are do.

Jon Rice NR7T, accepted the nomination for Vice-President and the vote was unanimous.

Committee Chairman Reports:

LEPC Merlin N7TCE – There will be a CERT training March 20/21st and 27/28th. He has applications for those interested. The county may hold NIMS course classes. Will provide info when available.

LEPC Trever AE6HR – Those interested working with county emergency communications, sign-up forms will be ready soon.

ECOM Joel N7SIY – has completed the manual and needs the President to review it. When approved it will go to print. Ecom training nets meet the first and last Wednesday's of the month on the 146.76 repeater at 9:00 pm. These nets will replace the regular Friendship net nights.

REMINDERS:

1. Club Breakfast Saturday January 17th 9:00 am at Denny's Restaurant.
2. Friendship Net meets daily Sunday thru Saturday at 9:00 pm on 146.76 repeater.
3. Net control operators are the

The proposed calendar for the up coming year is:

January	PSK31
February	Antenna & Theory
March	Open
April	Open
May	Fox Hunt
June	Field Day and U/FHF
Contest	

July	Open
August	Field trip to a repeater site
September	Open
October	J.O.T.A. Boy Scouts of American Jamboree
November	Nominations for club night and Special Event Station (Iron Mission)
December	Elections and Christmas Party

Respectfully submitted.

Bill Stenger K6QOG
Secretary

FROM THE EDITOR

The floor was open for comments.

Dick Parker, K7ZI, announced Utah ARRL Convention, April 25th in South Ogden. Rocky Mountain Division convention in Estes Park, CO. May 20 & 21st and the 7 call area QSO Party May 3rd.

Joel Clements, N7SIY, suggested the 160M CW contest at the end of January and February 160M SSB contest.

Other suggestions:

- Antenna Farm
- Build-it day – build an antenna on a Saturday.
- Homebrew night, bring homebrew equipment for show and tell.

Dick Parker K7ZI would like members to submit a biography for the newsletter. There are many interesting people here.

Don Blanchard mentioned that UHF Society dues are do and if you pay immediately you will get your name and address in their membership book. Also, the 146.80 repeater lost the final amplifier stage and is now in his garage and also the antenna is in bad shape. It transmits but does not receive well.

Russ Chaffee N7BO showed a Powerpoint presentation on PSK 31 that was developed by York County Amateur Radio Society. Following the sideshow there was a demonstration of PSK31 contact. The computer was projected on a screen for all to see. There were questions, comments and discussion that followed.

The meeting was adjourned 9:00 pm.

Hello, once again, from the keyboard of your newsletter editor--

January's club meeting started the year off with a bang!. We (meaning, the club) enjoyed seeing old faces and many new ones. We hope the new folks found the meeting interesting and return often to visit with the regulars. All total, we had 23 present which is a marked improvement over previous months.

Russ Chaffee, N7BO, opened the meeting and held the business portion of the meeting to a minimum—allowing time for the presentation to take center stage. And what a stage it was!

Those who missed the meeting missed an excellent Power Point presentation on PSK-31.

Don't know what PSK-31 is? Most of us didn't either, until the meeting ended and we all were going, "WOW, this is neat!"

PSK-31 is a digital mode computer program that interfaces with a computer and an HF radio. Its selling points are; extremely narrow bandwidth, ability to transmit and receive signals **below** the noise floor, and uses very low power doing so. You actually see the signal on the computer screen in what the presenter called a "water fall" display. Actually, we saw several signals spaced out and not interfering with each other, all on the **same frequency!** And I thought CW was narrow band!

I wish to thank Bill Rankin, K7BTE, for putting together the equipment and Russ Chaffee, for hanging the 80 meter antenna (apex at 10 feet and ends at 2 feet). Getting any signal on that antenna

was a wonder in itself.

I think it is amazing what people are doing with computers. When a signal can be seen, narrower than a CW signal, zeroed in on, well below the noise threshold, contact made and carry on a conversation, via a keyboard, just as if you were talking to them with a microphone, except with no static. Now that is advancement of the “radio arts” in its prime.

Thanks again, guys, for a fantastic and awe-inspiring demonstration. I am still marveling over it!

A RETORICAL QUESTION: WHERE AM I IN HAM RADIO?

I often wonder what happens to those who spend hours and hours studying for their ham license, pass the test, obtain their license—and we never hear from them again?

Did we offend them in some way? Does their license mean anything to them? Do they have a problem with their gear? Are they too busy to get on the air—or maybe, don't know how?

If we have offended in any way I individually apologize for my behavior and for the Club as a whole. It never was our intent to do so. On the contrary, we invite all to feel welcome and comfortable, participate with us in this wonderful, fascinating, bewildering world of ham radio.

Maybe there needed to be a higher price tag affixed to the license? Maybe the Federal Government shouldn't give them away any more.

To me, my license is one of my prized possessions. I am proud to have an Extra class license and the privileges that go with it. I worked hard to get it and failed the tests several times before obtaining it. It is meaningful to me to have it. I took the added expense to frame it and hang it on the wall where all can see.

New hams are limited to VHF and a narrow portion of the 10 meter HF band for a reason. It

is to encourage them to advance to the next higher level or even the highest level. Back when I was a Novice, there were 5 levels I had to work through. Now there is only 3. You don't even need to know “code”. How easy can it get?

Maybe the new radio has too many “features” on it and you don't know how to program it. Not a problem—neither did I when I got my first used radio, and my 2nd and third! I stuck it out and learned. In doing so I learned my new, used, pristine, one owner, HF radio had a problem. I had to consult someone who could help me overcome and repair that problem—before I could get on the air. If programming that brand new, micro mini HT is keeping you off the air, call someone! That way you won't offend us by never hearing from you.

Tried to get on the air, can hear us every evening during net, but no one answers your call? Probably a simple programming error or lack of a “PL tone”.

What's a “PL tone”?

They are sub audible tones (below the normal hearing range of a human being) your radio transmits along with the RF signal which the distant repeater is “listening” for before it allows the receiver to “hear” your call. Tones are used to limit interference and other control needs at the mountain top repeater. In some locals there are tones on both the input and output of a repeater!

Refer to your owners manual and see if you have the correct one installed and saved in memory along with other correct control items, (shift, offset, etc.)

The iron mountain repeater, know as the '76, uses a tone of 123. The Frisco Peak repeater has a tone of 100. So does the “800 machine” at Blow Hard and connected repeaters in the inter mountain tie system, up and down the I-15 corridor.

The other excuse, no time, is something we all have to deal with. It has been weeks since I have

had time to do any “HF work” other than a check into a net on Saturday. I really miss not being able to sit down and “relax”.

Really now, is that T.V. show really that important? I know—that easy chair sure is inviting after a long day at work and a longer evening of meetings, etc.

Possibly you need a better antenna than what comes with the handheld. One of the easiest antennas to make, that preforms well and costs less than \$5, is the ¼ wave ground plane (well, a few dollars more for a length of coax and connectors). Plans are awash on the Internet and kits are obtainable locally (all you have to do is ask) and that HT will amaze you what it can do.

Not interested in “talking” on the air? Not a problem. Ham radio offers more than you can imagine, especially if you are a computer buff. There are literally hundreds of computer protocols and programs being experimented with in the digital mode. Slow scan T.V. and satellite too.

Hate computers, but want to be of service to your community? Ham radio and local service groups use radio all the time to communicate between members and during emergencies. They would love to have you join their circle.

All this “technology” confusing? Have you used all the “features” on your cell phone recently? I thought so!

In fact, ham radio is probably the only “sport” out there that is so diverse in things to do, in it. Yes, it will cost you for equipment but there are ways to reduce the cost. Used equipment is available and is about as abundant as used cars—and a lot cheaper!

So now, what is your excuse? Too many “irons in the fire” you say?

Can't help you there. Only you can manage demands on time and what you do with it. I do have a keen understanding your plight—I too

have many irons in the fire, some mine and a lot from other sources. Only you know which one to pull out next.

In all sincerity, we (the club members) would really like to see you and help you journey down a path in the wonderful world of ham radio.

INTERESTING WEBSITES TO EXPLORE

Here is a small list of websites dealing with ham radio that you may like to explore. Just do a “search” using the key words below. All have links to other sites.

- arrl.org
- at6v
- cq.com
- qrz.com

GOOD NEWS FOR CC&R RESTRICTED HAMS

Verbatim form CQ Magazine, February, 2009, page 9.

Hams, Homeowner's Associations, Begin Talks

A small ham radio advocacy group called Hams for Action (HFA) says it is involved in a “constructive dialogue” with the Community Associations Institute (CAI), the national organization of homeowner's associations. Many, if not most, of these associations, severely limit the ability of hams to put up outdoor antennas and are beyond the reach of the FCC's “reasonable accommodation” rule.

According to HFA, the CAI has posted an article on its website which discusses the value of amateur radio and encourages individual associations to consider “voluntary accommodation” of “modestly scaled” ham antennas. The association is also offering advice to HFA members on how to propose changes in a homeowner's association regulations on ham antennas. The FHA is also developing a database of “ham-friendly” community associations.

Amateurs who know of such groups are encouraged to forward the information to Cameron Bailey, KT3A, at [<hamsforaction@comcast.net>](mailto:hamsforaction@comcast.net).

Additional and updated news is available on the Ham Radio News page of the CQ website at [<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com>](http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com).

Now don't rush out and buy that \$2000 tower just yet! These are only "talks". There is a lot of work to be done and a lot of HOA's to sign on to this thinking. Contact your HOA and ask them to investigate this variance for future adoption. This will go a long way toward improving relations with them on your end. Even though it is early news it is also first time news.

OPERATING ACTIVITIES

February is the beginning of the contesting and operating activities for 2009. Everything from full blown contests to simple, relaxed, contact events begin this month and continue throughout the year. Some are year-long, others only a couple hours. On the 7th of this month are no less than 3 state QSO parties, VHF SSB and digital contests, international DX contests and even an HF opportunity for Technicians—the 10-10 SSB winter QSO party. For the QRPer, there are sprints and contests of every kind. Look up the *contest corral* on the ARRL website for complete listing or the numerous contest calendars elsewhere on the internet. Good hunting!

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

Beginning this month a publications that most hams are familiar with will no longer be sent through the mail as a tabloid. Instead, *World Radio* will now be an on line publication owned by CQ magazine. For complete details of the change, log onto CQ magazine and read for yourself. A novel way to use the Internet. And, it's FREE!

EMERGENCY UNIFORM

The club is investigating the possibility of a standardized uniform for those involved in emergency communication services. When dealing with agencies it is well to be identified quickly by those in authority, as well as the public, as to who we are.

We have toyed with this over the years but could never come to an agreement as to what was wanted, needed or acceptable by members. No, you don't have to buy one if you don't want to. It is being designed as "identification" for those involved in community service as volunteer communicators, just as a policeman's uniform sets him apart as a peace officer, at a quick glance—but not as fancy or expensive.

Then again, maybe the membership will adopt it as a club uniform, we just don't know at this point. Come to meeting and the examples will be there for viewing and possibly voting on.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

In closing, I would encourage you to subscribe to either QST or CQ magazine. If you are remotely interested in ham radio these publications are good reading. They are professionally published and cover the gamete of ham radio. There are articles for those new to the hobby, all the way up to the engineer level. They do a great job in having something for everyone regardless of personal interest. Your dollars spent on a years subscription will be money well spent for the information you will obtain from the material inside—as well as staying abreast of the new developments in the radio arts.

73's

K7ZI