



RAINBOW CANYONS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
CEDAR CITY, UTAH 84720

Volume 1

Club Web Site www.rcarc.info

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CLUB MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Our new club President, Steven Judd, KB7BGS, took charge and began the meeting at 7:30pm. He introduced guests and new members.

After a short business session, the theme of the evening was quite obvious. Sitting on several tables were various radios of by-gone era. Each was a huge metal box with knobs and switches scattered about the face of each in no explainable order. Each radio was built by a different company or individual who designed his own circuitry around a specific tube or tubes. No fancy circuit boards here, everything was point-to-point wiring, back then.

According to Steve Judd, KB7BGS, each radio had its own selling point—and various draw backs as well. Each was a “bear” to tune; plug in this crystal for this frequency, turn up the high voltage, dip the capacitor, hold you jaw just right and hopefully it wouldn't go into self oscillation or something like that! Would put out a whooping 25 watts, if everything tuned up right.

Ken Munford, N7KM, show us one he had procured that was home made—and a work of art by the designer. He too, talked about the limitations of that particular radio. That is what “Ham Radio” was like in the 50's, 60's and into the 70's.

The “newest” one on display was a commercially made rig owned by Dick Parker, K7ZI, a Yaesu FT 101 ZD. It was a combination of solid state circuitry and tube final output stage, affectionately known as a “hybrid” This was the latest in technology in the mid 70's. The radio featured upper and lower side bands, AM and CW mode, 160 through 10 meters, and no WARC bands. It was a top of the line rig and still works today, once he gets it aligned and a new microphone element replaced.

Those radios are a far cry from the multi-band, multi-mode, micro-miniature radio offered by leading manufactures today. Today's radios are all “surface mounted” technology—which mean a whole lot of hard to see little specks of a chip, all jammed together on a circuit board and flash soldered together. They are “computer literate”, meaning they can be connected to a computer and much of the “function” of the radio is programmed into it with factory software.

What use to cover most of a desk top with old radios, these new ones can do in the palm of your hand. In fact, it would take 4 or 5, old time radios, to do what one radio will do today in much less space and weight.

What is in the future? SDR, or Software Defined Radio. A black box with no external controls all programmed and controlled by your laptop.

Come to think of it, they are already advertised in your CQ and QST magazines. \$3000 to \$5000 can buy you a full feature rig which does everything except wash your cloths with promised, on-line periodic updates. Those of you who remember Dick Tracy of comic book fame, back in the 50's, well remember his “wrist band” radio. It was so futuristic no one could figure how to make a radio that small.

Well, its already here and does much more than just simplex communication! Just look at your cell phone and think how blessed we really are. Now, if they can just do something to miniaturize that massive antenna out on the tower-----.

FOR THOSE WHO ORDERED-

Ken Oliver, W7KBM, informed me that the bulk order of coaxial cable is in. It is available for immediate purchase at \$.18 a foot, out the door. Those who ordered 1000 or 500 feet, it will be on spools in those bulk lengths. Those who ordered smaller amounts, bring tape to secure your cut-to-length parcel.

Ken and the cable will be at the March club meeting at 7pm (one half hour early) to dispense the order. He requests you be there early, with money in hand, to receive your order.

Those who ordered 500 or 1000 feet, remember to bring a friend to help you load it in your truck!

Your welcome!

NEW FACES and CALL SIGNS

Russ Chaffee, N7BO, held another test session prior to club meeting in February. 4 individuals challenged the test at various levels. I am pleased to report all 4 met the challenge and received either new licenses or up grades.

Congratulations are in order to Bill Rankin, K7BTE, who successfully passed his Extra exam and Tony Schriver, KF7DLQ, passing his General exam. Two new hams, Fred Sheffield, KF7GPZ, and David Myers, KF7HTE, passed the technician exam. A hardy congratulations and “at-a-boy” to all those who passed! Hopefully, I have not overlooked anyone. If I have, my deepest apologies.

We are pleased when anyone passes an exam or up-grades to a higher level. We have noted, with pleasure, both David and Fred have been checking into the nightly net. We would love to hear from others who have joined the ranks of ham radio, in the past year or so, who have not availed themselves to the fraternity/sorority of this wonderful hobby. You are welcome anytime on the air, at the meetings, or any activity involving ham radio. The hardest part of being a new ham and transmitting for the first time is that initial key-down attempt. As they say, the rest is history. Make a historical moment for yourself.

THE BANDS ARE WAKING UP

Anyone who has checked the higher frequency lately can attest to the fact that they are waking up!

Is this the actual beginning of Solar cycle 24? Lets hope so!

It has been several years since we have seen openings like this on the upper bands. Several local hams have mentioned they are beginning to work those far off exotic places, once again. I personally have worked into Europe, Canada, Japan and the pacific island of Western Samoa, all on 15 meters, on the same afternoon, using 75 watts and a wire antenna. I haven't done that for several years. Others have worked into Turkey, Germany, Russia, Africa and other countries. If you haven't joined the fun, better get busy!

To enjoy the openings better, you need to learn about Sunspots. There are many sites on the Internet that address this and other propagation phenomena. ARRL has a good website, so does AC6V—with about everything else dealing with ham radio. Once you understand the relationship of Sunspots and HF propagation you will be well on your way to enjoying great DX. Its a fascinating study.

CC&R'S KILLING YOUR HF FUN?

Its a fact of life, many of us are bound by strict rules and regulations in relationship to what and where we call “home” Most modern apartment complexes, subdivisions and individual homes have stifling rules about external and outside antennas, among other things. Though not intended, they do affect ham radio operators who wish to use HF privileges. VHFers can hang a J-pole from a thumb tack in the ceiling and get along quite nicely. HFers, on the other hand, have to deal with some form of lengthy, bulky or “unsightly” outside antenna—and therein comes the “rub”.

The folks who wrote the rules about no outside antenna didn't consider “the other half” of an HFers, radio.

In fact, they didn't consider ham radio at all! At face value it looks as if your HF fun is not possible from your present abode—but wait!

Do not despair. There are numerous ways “around” the rules if you really must live in such restrictive environment.

The first thing you should do is obtain a copy of the “rules and regulations” read and understand them carefully. Possibly there are “exceptions” you can explore with “management”. Diplomacy is a far better tactic than all out war at this stage of the game.

Visit with your local area Coordinator with the ARRL (it would be advisable to become a member first). They have many and varied resources available to assist you in getting “all your ducks in a row”. They have fought this battle numerous times in virtually every city in this country. They understand the legality and ordinances protecting both you and the “management” as well as the illegal clauses in the fine print. Your representative for this area can be found on line at: arrl.org. They just completed a case for folks living in the Pleasant Grove area in central Utah, concerning tower restrictions.

Once you have done your “homework” then its time to have a meeting with “management”. I would think an exploratory venture in regards to their “interpretation” of what they have written (in many cases, adopted without due cause) may surprise both you and they. Use the meeting to become “comfortable” with each other and gain respect and perspective. Are they defiantly belligerent or are they flexible and willing to “work with you” within reason? Once you know where you stand then you can plan you next move.

Is it time to propose a simple, but adequate, wire antenna in the attic or a removable vertical antenna or do you need to call in the “heavy artillery”? Are they are “sympathetic” to having an alternative “emergency communication system” available—just in case the big one hits?

Whatever your course of action, don't let anger get the best of you in their presents. Better go outside and take it out on a replaceable tree or bush or something. Always be cool and diplomatic in their presents. If a temper is your downfall, may be best to let someone else talk for you.

If all else fails, there is mobile HF. Many hams are turning to that as an easy fix to the CC&R problems they face. Possibly a friend who lives near by and is without restrictions may be more than willing to have you over as a guest operator.

Another answer is QRP. That is low power, usually 10 watts out, SSB mode or 5 watts CW. If you have never tried QRP there is a whole new world of ham radio just waiting for you to explore. It is surprising what low power can accomplish. Many hams use this mode exclusively because it solves not only CC&R problems but also resolves interference in modern and unshielded multi-media electronics.

QRP can be taken to a city park or a neighbor's field with a few trees in it. A simple and light weight wire antenna draped over some low branches will get you out several hundred miles. Get the antenna over the top of the trees and you are good for thousands of miles—propagation permitting. Or a vertical can be tipped up and guyed down quickly and you have an excellent, low radiating angle antenna, also good for DX.

Whatever the conditions are, don't let an obstacle restrict your operating privileges. Think how happy you will be working some great contacts while your landlord is stewing over how to make his renters miserable with more restrictions.

Good luck! Your experience would make a great “read” for this publication and would certainly help out other ham caught up in the same trap.

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

This newsletter would be much larger and lengthy is I had more to write about. If you have anything to add, say, complain about, stories or ham related happenings, your editor would be grateful to have them published here.

Email me at: rrparker@netutah.com

Minutes for
February 9, 2010

President Stephen Judd, K7BGS, opened the meeting at 7:29 p.m. with 16 people present. He welcomed all and extended congratulations to the four persons taking and passing the FCC examination: One Extra Class, one General Class and two Technician Class.

The minutes were read and approved.

Dick Parker, K7ZI, mentioned having a special event station at the Scout Expo was a go. It is urgent to get a notification to ham radio outlets. This possibly can be done by internet. Dick will check into it.

Unfinished business from last month is vest for emergency communications. The purchase of such and what to put on it will be posted in the newsletter.

There were no further comments or questions so the meeting went into the main presentation: Boat Anchors.

Stephen brought a Swan 260. Stephen gave a brief history of the Swan, developed by Herb Johnson in his garage and later moved to a manufacturing plant in Southern California. He also brought a Heathkit DX 60B, HR 10 receiver, and HG 10 external VFO and Yaesu 101Z.

Stephen explained that with separated transmitter and receiver it was necessary to have a relay to switch the antennas to the transmitter from the receiver and mute the receiver while transmitting.

He also explained the meaning of zero beat so the transmitter and receiver would be on the same frequency. He talked about the pros and cons of tube type radio versus solid state radios.

Ken Munford N7KM brought a Knight Kit T-60 transmitter and the construction manual with step by step process of building a kit radio. He also brought an old Hallicrafter receiver and a homebrew transmitter that some one built from a schematic from a book. In the old days before VFOs frequency was determined by crystal. Ken demonstrated a line telegraph key and an old military squeeze key or thumb key from a B 24 bomber. On the wall Ken had qsl cards from around the world and explained how he got them.

Ken connected his radio to an outside antenna and attempted to contact a six call sign station on c.w. The contact was not made so then he demonstrated using Stephen's radio across the room.

A question and answer period followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted;

Bill Stenger K6QOG
Secretary