

RAINBOW CANYONS ARC

I don't know about you but this is “cabin fever” month for me. The winter weather is moderating somewhat, we have been cooped up for several months and now its time to get outside and do something. If you need a change in procedure I hear St. George is shirt sleeve weather in the afternoon. Maybe a trip down, have lunch and drive back would be just what the 'ol body needs.

I have actually spent a fair bit of time in a cold garage working on another antenna idea that may be what I have been looking for to get me on the air on 80 meters for emergency communication. Something that works, sets up easily, stores in a small area and is fairly inexpensive. By club meeting time I should have a report on how it tested out. I will keep you in suspense until I have proven it—just to protect my reputation as a tinkerer.

MEETING RECAP

Last month at meeting, Brad Biedermann, WA7HHE, was our guest speaker. Brad is a long time, local ham and knows his way around radio equipment pretty well. He has a unique part time job as a Radio Technician for the fire crews during the Summer fire season. His presentation and demonstration was very interesting. Depending on the number of fires, he has a 2 week standby time wherein he could be called to deploy within a 2 hour period! His bags are always packed and ready to go.

He talked about the number of communication networks he has to set up and maintain. Each department has its own frequency or system that needs deploying. The first few days are long and busy getting all the radios up and running for each entity. Seems they are always short handed and have, on occasion, called hams to assist in traffic handling—when they are available.

He has traveled to some exotic places, had some harrowing experiences, gets to fly in helicopters,

enjoy the matchless scenic beauty and witness the devastation caused by fire. Quite a life for a retiree—during the fire season at least.

NEXT MONTH PREVIEW

I have it on good authority that next month's special guest is someone you don't want to miss. This individual has a special *PowerPoint* presentation which has been presented to numerous clubs and even at Dayton! (Dayton, for the less informed, is the annual gathering place and week-long gala event every ham must experience at least once in his or her lifetime; the National ham radio convention, Dayton, Ohio). John Spencer, K7KF, will present “Contesting, Midwest Style”

Don't let the unassuming title fool you. Even if your are not interested in contesting you will enjoy this. Lets fill the hall to overflowing and welcome John with a good turnout.

FUTURE EVENTS

During presidency meeting we discussed a couple activities the club has been involved in and have been asked to continue. The first is the Scout Expo held in May.

This year it has been decided to introduce PSK 31. If you would like to participate, circle May 9th on your calendar. Its a fun way to spend half a Saturday.

Last year we had several Morris code keys and oscillators available for the Scouts and others to play with. Most learned enough code to spell their name. We copied their “fist” and wrote down what they sent. Some names were spelled pretty badly. Others were sent with few mistakes. One young lady was a “natural”, spelled her name correctly and with perfect cadence! Needless to say we complimented her on her ability.

The other activity is Field Day, the last full

RAINBOW CANYONS ARC

weekend in June. The presidency has decided to go “back to the mountain”. We had such a good time the previous years at Dear Haven, we want to do it again. We don't know exactly *where* on the mountain we will be but up there *somewhere*. The event will be with food as that was a big “plus” in the past. If you have a suggestion on a favorite place to set up operations, let the club officers know so we can make arrangements.

E-COM UNIFORM

During the business portion of the meeting our president, Russ Chaffee, N7BO, modeled a possible emergency communication uniform we are thinking about adopting for those involved in public service. WalMart has 3 different styles of vests that can be worn over outer clothing and lend themselves very well as an easily visible mark to distinguish communicators from other emergency personnel. As yet we have not finalized on a color (yellow or green) or a logo.

If you have a suggestion on a logo for the uniform, describing what we are and what we do, please submit it to the presidency. Possibly, we can make a contest out of it along with a prize.

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING--

A DXpedition took place this past month on an island in the Caribbean that is uninhabited by man. For years the island has been set aside as a refuge for various tropical wildlife. Before that it was used as a bombing and artillery range by the military during World War II. Live ordnance litter the island making it a dangerous place.

First discovered by Columbus in the early 1500's it has been owned by several countries and even used for a time as a pirate hideout before being given to the United States by Porto Rico.

It has taken over 3 years of intense negotiations by the group to gain access from the Federal

agencies controlling the island to “activate” **Desecheo!**

What makes it so “wanted” is that humans are not permitted on the island without special permission and escorted by the military and the National Wildlife Federation personnel. Because of those restrictions, over the years, the island has percolated to the top (number 2) of the Asian “most wanted” DX list, 3rd in Europe and 51st in North America. (The number one most wanted in the World is North Korea. That government does not allow amateur communications with its citizens.)

Fifteen operators were allowed access (with escort) to a narrow strip of land on the west side of the island. After transporting over 10 tons of radio gear, via a small helicopter, the group began operations on February 12. From then through the 26th, the bands were buzzing with people from all over the world trying to get into their log.

The operators need to be commended on their patients and skill in handling literally *millions* of contact “hopefuls” on every band and mode.

It took this ham several hours, over 4 days, to make a 5 second contact with them! I know of 2 other local hams that made contact with K5D, as well.

All of the operation was conducted over a “split frequency”. They call on one frequency and listen up the band 5 to 15 KHz. The contacts were so fast and so much QRM it was impossible to identify his method of listening. All you could do was camp on a reasonably clear frequency and keep calling when he said “QRZ”.

What fun it is to participate in a *world-class* operation like Desecheo. Good show, guys! We will be pleased to donate a few “green stamps” for the privilege of making contact with you.

If you would like to read more about the

RAINBOW CANYONS ARC

Desecheo operation, go to their web site at www.kp5.us. There are many more DXpeditions going on all around the world, most are listed on the Internet. Any ham radio site will link you to them. My favorite site is AC6V's Amateur Radio and DX Reference Guide. Just type in AC6V on any search engine and you are there.

ADVANCEMENT OF THE RADIO ARTS

I think we all have heard that statement somewhere in our radio career. It is actually part of the mission statement of the FCC we agreed to when we were preparing to become a licensed operator. The statement also includes 4 other principles which mainstream hams accepted and adopted as a personal creed and challenge. Others seem to have forgotten the whole purpose set forth by the FCC. I think it is appropriate to review basic values and evaluate where we stand next to them.

See Rules and Regulations, Section 97.1

97.1(a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.

97.1(b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio arts.

97.1(c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communications and technical phases of the art.

97.1(d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians and electronics experts.

97.1(e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international

goodwill.

Well, there you have it. Did you know that by virtue of your license, you were an *international statesman*? Or that you were considered a *expert in electronics*? That you were expected to advance both the *communication* and *technical art* of radio? I think you knew that you were in a *pool of trained communicators*, but did you expect to be called upon to *teach* others?

That little piece of paper (your license) carries some pretty lofty goals for us to live up to. Again I ask, where do you stand next to the Standard?

Are you like so many of us that have forgotten our responsibility to the Government of the United States and coast along, month after month and year after year, never doing anything with your privilege? I am sure there are as many excuses as there are people sitting by the way side.

As a good friend often says, "Life is hard—and then you die!" Are you up to the challenge to change complacency into activity? Possibly we need to step back and review our status and put our life in order.

Comments accepted and anticipated.

Richard Parker
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Newsletter Editor