



## August 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes of the Bishop Amateur Radio Club

BARC's officers for 2020 are:

Vacant		- President
Bill Chezum	(W6WWY)	- Vice President
Terry Fenske	(K6UN)	- Treasurer
Noam Shendar	(W6RT)	- Secretary

Meeting called to order by Vice President Bill Chezum (W6WWY) at 18:59. Due to the need to observe social distancing, the meeting was held as a directed net over the club's linked 2m repeater system as well as a Zoom online conference.

Number in attendance: 10. They were, in alphabetical call sign order: AD6NR John, K6TLH Tom, K6UN Terry, N6BEV Bev, N6SIT Paul, NW6C Jon, W6RT Noam, W6WWY Bill, W7KRF Keith and WA6IQO Len.

### Minutes

#### Financial Report

Terry (K6UN) reported \$117.16 in Edison expenses (for 2 months), \$102 in hardware expenses for the work on the microwave link between Silver and Mazourka, and \$60 in dues income. There was also a \$75 wash for ham exam fees (which we collect and then pay out to ARRL). Our bank balance now stands at \$3,027.75.

#### Ham Exam Recap

Bill (W6WWY) reported that the club held an amateur radio operator license testing session with proper social distancing at Bishop City Park on Saturday, August 1. There was one successful upgrade and 2 new Technician licenses.

Terry (K6UN) confirmed that he mailed the exams to ARRL, and that a delay of about a month is to expected these days, due to both postal and ARRL delays.

Jon (NW6C) said that things can be quick, based on the fact that his nephew, who recently passed the Technician-class exam, got his call sign in only 2 days.

### **Silver Peak Site Maintenance**

Jon (NW6C) reported that he and Paul (N6SIT) installed new conduit from our building to the nearby pole, for the purpose of connecting a microwave antenna for the link between Silver and Mazourka Peaks. *[Ed. Note: See next section.]*

### **Repeater System Status**

John (AD6NR) repeated that our Silver Peak repeater site is experiencing a massive amount of noise. He measured it at 25 dB, which means that compared to a noiseless site, a handheld would need more than 300 times more power to be heard by the repeater. He added that Jeff (AA7GK) measured noise at the nearby Forest Service repeater, and it is even higher. The source of the noise is a mystery, but John confirmed that it does *not* originate within our building. He and Jeff will go back to the site to try to identify the source of this noise.

Regarding the crackling noise heard from our Mazourka Peak repeater, John says he is 95% sure it is due to a failure of our main, StationMaster-type antenna, which is 3 years old and out of warranty. The crackling is indicative of a loose internal solder joint. If we decide to replace the antenna with a like model, it would cost in the range of \$1,100-1,800. His recommended option is a Commscope, which is similar to what we have on Silver Peak, and would run \$750-900. We will first need to confirm that the antennas has failed, and then purchase a replacement. *[Ed. Note: It was confirmed that the StationMaster failed. It was removed and replaced with the defunct packet repeater's Kraco antenna. The Kraco has less gain but was mounted much higher than the StationMaster. As a result, there appears to be no loss of coverage.]*

As for the microwave link, John reports that the Silver Peak antenna is installed. However, the link is not yet operational.

While up at the Silver Peak site, John took down the packet repeater, which includes a BK radio, TNC, and Kraco antenna *[as mentioned above]*. The radio and TNC can be sold (there has been no use of the digipeater in over 16 months). The Kraco antenna can be moved to Mazourka in place of the likely failed StationMaster antenna. This can be either a temporary or permanent replacement, depending on how well it performs. We also have the option of linking the Mazourka UHF repeater to our system, using a spare microwave link.

But wait, there's more. John added that Aaron Schat contacted him and would like to put a point-to-point relay at our Silver Peak site in order to monitor the state of the internet service he is providing. He would do this in exchange for providing the club internet service at Silver Peak. Currently we are using internet service provided to and paid for by John (AD6NR) at this house, and beamed up to Silver Peak via a microwave link. With the Schat connection we should get improved bandwidth and we would eliminate the need to own and maintain a microwave link. John still needs to check with USFS to ensure this is consistent with our permit. If we proceed, we need to sign an agreement with Aaron that stipulates that he can only access the site while escorted, and which allows us to terminate the relationship in the event that Aaron violates the terms of the agreement and/or his equipment interferes with the club's equipment.

Bill (W6WWY) would like to thank Adrian (N6ZA) for his help cutting down the weathered upper part of the lower (southerly) pole at the Silver Peak site.

### **Items from the Floor**

Bill (W6WWY) asked Keith (W7KRF) if he still has a club banner and antenna in his Shackteau (and if so to please return them before relocating to Nevada). Keith confirmed he has the banner and will return it. The antenna (a Cushcraft R8) was previously sold by the club.

Jon (NW6C) noted that Aaron Schat has done some testing with us in the past.

Keith (W7KRF) pointed out that with his upcoming departure, we need net controls for the nightly 2m net and the Sunday HF net.

Tom (K6TLH) proposed a rotation schedule of net controls, so that we can have multiple people step into Keith's (very large) shoes.

Len (WA6IQO) said that his truck is down, and that he will try to get back on 80m for the Sunday HF net, but no guarantees.

Keith (W7KRF) asked if we have enough net controls. (We probably do, between Jon NW6C and new volunteers.) *[Ed. Note: Tom K6TLH volunteered to be net control on Thursdays and potentially on the Sunday HF net, and Noam W6RT volunteered to pick up a night starting in mid-October.]*

Meeting adjourned at 19:32.

Noam Shendar (W6RT)

Secretary, Bishop Amateur Radio Club, Inc. (BARC)