

Bishop Amateur Radio Club meeting on Wednesday December 11, 2014, in combination with Eastern Sierra Four Wheel Drive Club meeting.

Many attendees headed to the Highlands Mobile Home Park for the meeting, some of which had never been in the Park. An oversight in the directions was that the predominant Highlands sign is for the Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park, the subdued red sign directs travelers to the Mobile Home Park entrance, so a few participants toured the RV area before locating the Mobile Home section. By the time the participants started to arrive, the recreation room had tables and chairs set up, including Christmas decor. A complete kitchen was available, as well as a small public address and music system. One table was covered with appetizers, the next drinks and desserts, then the main dishes lined up along the kitchen counters. A huge variety of food, and all excellent.

Business:

When the diners had settled down a bit, Mike Johnston (KJ6WXM) brought the meeting to order for the 4x4 club. He wanted to give recognition to Phil Hartz (K0RVD), and Raul and Debbie (KK6EVQ) Hidalgo for reserving and setting up the meeting room. Then, as a bulletin, Greg Weirick (KI6CYW) explained the need for local residents to support Inyo County's Adventure Trail environmental impact report. They are scheduled to decide on this issue December 30 in Independence. (I have added an "editorial" about this program at the end of these notes – JP). Another announcement was that there would be one of the 4x4 club's Adopt a Highway cleanups Saturday morning. Meet at the Chevron station in Big Pine.

At about 7:15 pm, Mike offered to turn the podium over to John Shepherd (AD6NR). John looked around the room and indicated that he didn't have any business items to pursue. Hank Garretson (W6SK) then asked for the floor, then proceeded to thank the organizers for the opportunity to participate in this joint club meeting.

Additional business:

BARC treasure, Terry (K6UN) had reported before the meeting that the communications link to the Silver Peak power meter had failed, so he had not gotten any bill from Edison. Their representative had told him that the link would be repaired soon. Dues are "due" in January.

BARC secretary, Jon (NW6C) had remembered to send last month's minutes to Bob (W6RAP) for posting on the web site. Officially, new BARC officers will take the reins in January.

Attendance: I counted about 64 people at the meeting, with new food offering appearing as new arrivals showed up, their arrival time often set by work commitments. Mark (W7WOW) was one of those workers who explained his skipping the meeting because he needed to get some rest before starting his shift on the snow plow at McGee Creek at 7:30 PM that night. He was heard on the radio going home at a little after 7 am the next morning. As it was, there was just enough chairs for everybody to sit down at a table. There was more seating, on sofas, that was not needed.

Gift exchange was started about 7:20, with a maximum of one claim per opened gift in order to keep the time within manageable limits. Conclusion was about 8:10. A special mention was made to one gift that was the last wood work of Larry Peckam. Larry made scenes from sheets of wood using a fine saw and other woodworking tools, then put them in picture frames. Creativity was a word for the variety of gifts. Microwave popcorn poppers, tools, and a dual band handy-talkies were a few of the items spotted.

Participants packed away the left over food, cleaned and removed the tables and chairs, and quickly transformed the meeting room to a recreation lounge setting as soon as the festivities wound down.

Editorial:

For those that are not familiar with Adventure Trails, it is a plan intended to make a system of County maintained roads and local streets legal for travel for small all terrain vehicles (ATVs). By California law, these must be registered similar to a regular motor vehicle (large identification sticker rather than a small sticker on a license plate), but these vehicles are not allowed on State or County maintained roads. They are allowed on non State and County maintained roads, including Forest Service and BLM roads and trails. Since the beginning of the off highway registration plan, Inyo County has seen no reason to stop these vehicles from traveling on our dirt roads, and at one time such vehicles could be street licensed in California. They still are street legal in some states. Inyo County is the first county in California to try to bring vehicle laws into line with the reality of rural areas by allowing these vehicles to be legally driven on designated roads between points of interest and to services, rather than having to be loaded into large “toy haulers” for every move. The plan is to provide a friendlier off highway experience to locals and tourists, allow improved access to our local businesses, while actually reducing the impact on the roads by use of the smaller vehicles – hundred of pounds vs. thousands. The problem is that Inyo County and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) are being attacked en mass by the extreme environmentalists who are trying to convince the public that this move will be the end of the land as we know it if this plan is approved. These are groups that don't want people, particularly people in motor vehicles, on any rural public land. The last Board of Supervisors meeting had many attendees from San Francisco and Los Angeles present to oppose approval of this EIR. The 4x4 club runs are only for street licensed vehicles, but the members are very aware of the opportunities that our dirt roads offer.

Jon Patzer, NW6C, BARC Secretary.