

Pre meeting announcement: John (AD6NR) piled a table with good “stuff” to be found a new home or be thrown in the trash.

BISHOP AMATEUR RADIO CLUB Minutes for meeting on July 14, 2015.

Meeting called to order by President (John) at about 7:05 pm.

Self intros, attendance: 19 members and 2 guest responded. (Another member and guest showed up late).

Minutes: Approved as posted. (Later 2 corrections were made – N1MM and Colombia).

Treasurer's Report: Terry (K6UN) called before the meeting to say that his wife had gotten sick, he had taken her to see a doctor, thence he would miss this meeting. So, no report. Should be similar to last month with deductions for Field Day food and probably a power bill. Everyone was hoping for a good outcome on the medical aspect.

Upcoming Activities:

Para-glider competition at the end of September.

BARC breakfast next Saturday at 8 am.

T-hunt scheduled for same day starting on Red Hill at 10 am? This will probably be postponed due to members committed to other activities.

80m net, Monday at 7:30 pm is doing well.

First slow CW net was last Monday at 7:30 pm. HF frequency was selected and announced on the local 2 m repeater system prior to net time. Adrian (AD6NR) was the organizer, who was open to any suggestions for improvement. It seemed to generate a lot of interest.

Program:

John Hudson (WA6HYQ), Assistant Chief for Communications Coordination, California Office of Emergency Services (OES) Regions 1 and 2 (Southern Region), spoke to us about how he ended up in that position, and emergency communications from his viewpoint. His schedule included being at the Tri-county Fairgrounds the next day for a training exercise in emergency radio interoperability.– (see more in postscript following minutes). He has been representing this area for 27 years. He commented that the number of Amateur radio licenses in the US has climbed to 700,000, but their activity has not followed that number. It seemed that more mentors were needed to guide these new licensees in the many rewarding uses of their licenses.

For government response in emergencies, communication and coordination are essential. COWs (Cell On Wheels) and COALTs (Cell On A Light Truck) are available from OES in emergencies. These both use satellite links to enable communications when cable paths are lost. A current example of this was our recent Round Fire, starting in the Round Valley, just north of Bishop. This fire damaged the Verizon fiber optic cable that was overhead at that location. Most of the cable is buried.

Communications were lost from that point north, with radio dispatch in Bridgeport trying to keep things going. A patch was quickly made to the new Digital 395 fiber to restore normal communications.

OASIS (Operational Area Satellite Information System) is a means for filling in communications gaps. There are 8 of these orbiting satellite systems per county. Volunteers are in the thick of any of these emergency activities. California OES head Stan Harter, about 1985, did major work in integrating Amateur Radio in emergency communications. There is a weekly RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) net at 10 am on Wednesdays, 7.23 MHz, for agency check ins. Jon (NW6C) and

then Mike (KA6HII) have been checking in from the Caltrans District 9 (CARS 9) station for many years.

There was a push for more linked radio systems in 2007. California laid out a microwave linking system that costs 3 million dollars. Amateurs had developed the Cactus system on the 440 MHz band, full duplex, which provided linked communication to most of California. The State then entered into an agreement with the Cactus Inter-Tie System to have primary use of that system during emergencies. This Eastern Sierra is one of the gaps in the Cactus coverage. This system is checked with a net on Monday nights. Bishop can be linked to the Cactus system via the Edison Amateur Radio Network (EARN) on 220 MHz, but this link is on a secondary basis with So. Cal. Edison. Cactus provided excellent communications in the Calexico earthquake.

Eruptions in the Mammoth Lakes area have been similar to that of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. Electrical activity from the charged gases wiped out HF communications. The ash itself blocked microwave communications. Local 2 m signals still worked.

John also explained some other limits of satellite phones, such as they don't have a chance of working indoors. The signal just bounces off the ceiling. Because the satellites for this system (Iridium) rotate over the earth's poles (rather than the equator), they don't work very well in east/west valleys. John would like to see the Cactus System expanded to the Owens Valley, with a probable link from Silver Peak to Mount Potasi in Nevada. John emphasized that he is not a Cactus member himself, but it is not required to be a member to use the system for drills or emergencies. New members have to be sponsored by an existing member and approved. Dues are then \$140 a year, and access to all of the control codes are then made available. John (AD6NR) had some experience with the system codes and said that it was scary, knowing that a mistake could bring down part of the system.

John (WA6HYQ) emphasized that a lack of knowledge by agencies as to how vulnerable their communications are is a major problem. Fiber can fail!

John (AD6NR) had talked to the Cactus contact (Mel) about access on Silver Peak. It was plausible. For their installations, everything is done to best practices professional commercial installation standards, including cleaning up other gear in the facility as needed. Robin is their "tech" guy. John then asked - Are we interested in a Cactus installation at Silver Peak? The club's answer was Yes! Information is available on their website - Cactus-Intertie.Org

John Hudson needed to leave in order to prepare for the exercise tomorrow. Batteries in one of the response vehicles had been totally discharged and needed some serious attention.

Raffle: The 50/50 raffle was handled by Rich (KF6YLW).

New business:

Phil (K0RVD) announced that a Veterans Administration Health Care event was coming to Bishop on August 7.

BIH (the Silver Peak packet radio node) is now operational, but it really needs a better installation. Parts to accomplish this will cost about \$475. A motion was made to allow up to \$500 from BARC funds to provide the parts. Motion was approved.

More discussion about the new slow CW net, first on the air July 13. Adrian reported that there were three check ins for the first session, which was on 80 meters. Keith (W6KRF) has suggested before the meeting that Wednesday might work better, as it would allow Ridgecrest operators to check in. They have an existing net on Mondays. It was decided to keep it on Mondays for the time being. A change to 7 pm rather than 7:30 seemed to be acceptable. Slow, not hurried! The preamble is at 12 words per minute (WPM). Adrian's rig has a lower limit of 7 WPM.

Keith has put the BARC on Facebook. We now have links. Pictures are sent to Keith for posting.

Paul (KK6BAF) was the 50/50 winner.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Jon Patzer, NW6C, Secretary.

Postscript:

1. Cactus started with a lone repeater north of Palm Springs in 1971.
2. Since the time John (AD6NR) did some controlling on Cactus, they have added a system-wide reset at midnight. A botched control is then cleared.
3. Three of our club members were invited to the Radio Rodeo on Wednesday. John (AD6NR) had his Red Cross hat on, Jeff (AA7GK) was there for the Forest Service, and Ed (K6END) represented BARC and Inyo County Search and Rescue. The report from the attendees was that it was very educational, mainly in learning what is involved for State response to communications needs in an emergency. As for the radio interoperability test itself, the participants did very well. Only the CHP link initially failed, and that was corrected with a simple "patch".

Jon, NW6C.