

Mt. Vaca Radio Club, Inc.

April 2003

www.mvrc.org

P.O. Box 417405
Sacramento, Ca. 95841-7405

ARRL
NARCC

General Meeting

Sunday, April 27, at 3:30 p.m.

Solarium/green room

Chevy's

1234 Howe Ave.

Sacramento, CA.

Dinner will follow meeting (5:30)

2nd Quarter Activities

SUN APR 27 - REGULAR MEETING

SAT MAY 17 - DAVIS DOUBLE CENTURY - Public Service.

SUN MAY 18 - NORTH HILLS HAMSWAP - Bella Vista HS, Fair Oaks.

WED MAY 21 - BOARD MEETING

WED JUN 18 - BOARD MEETING

SAT JUN 28 - WESTERN STATES ENDURANCE RUN - Public Service.

JUN 28-29 - ARRL FIELD DAY

JUL 18-20 - ANNUAL CAMPOUT - High Sierras, south of Sacramento - Tents, RVs, motels. RSVP

NOW to get reservation details. MVRC and NHRC.

SUN JUL 27 - REGULAR MEETING

Presidents comments

Hello to all.

I had the best of plans to write this over the weekend, but alas the weather was way too nice for writing. Now it is cooler and cloudy with forecasts of more rain in the next few days, so guess it is time. The newsletter deadline is also looming in just about 4 hours. At least I assume when Bill said April 1, he meant sometime before midnight. Guess we'll find out.

Interesting stuff has happened lately. We had a great chili party in February. Had nice visits with several members we haven't seen much lately. There were several pots of chili and various assorted side dishes to

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Hams provide public service

For the second year, the Solano Bicycle Classic, a 4-day stage race featuring professional bike racers, was supported by a number of ham volunteers. This year, the Thursday road race was changed to a point-to-point venue that avoided a lot of the problems we ran into last year.

The race started in Lagoon Valley, went up Pleasants Valley Road, over Cantelow into the English Hills, out into the valley and then back through Winters, where the women's race started. After Winters, the race headed north past Lake Berryessa, finishing in Angwin, where Net Control was located.

Net Control this year was lodged in the luxurious CHP CoCommBat vehicle, a command center that is used in various hot spots around Northern California.



The week and a half before the race, it had been parked in Oakland supporting the CHP officers working the San Francisco anti-war protests. A small miracle happened to get it up to Angwin for our races.

My position this year was the same as last year riding along with Sgt. Betsy Legg of the CHP to coordinate between our operators and the CHP. We had a secret weapon this year: Dave KC6YFG flying the airborne repeater and APRS digi. Sgt. Betsy couldn't believe how easy it was for us to communicate in the canyons around Berryessa where the CHP had no coverage at all. Of course, for all of us who work the Davis

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sample during the evening. If anyone went away hungry it was their own fault. The one drawback to the evening were the prizes awarded by our hosts Bill, WA6ACF and Willie, WA6ABF. They devised three classes of chili and the winner of each category was awarded an outrageous sombrero. One of them went home with us despite my trying to leave it behind.

After several meetings and a certain amount of arm twisting, I think we finally have an up-to-date inventory. Mike, KT6MJ has created a link from our web site to the listing for all to see. As equipment is moved around, sold or bought the list may be easily changed so it should remain current. Thanks go to Mike and all the others who contributed the information. Look elsewhere in this issue for a discussion of all things technical including the repairs and replacements that have occurred on the hill in the last few months.

Several of us spent a most enjoyable March day under the direction of our wagon leader Vicki, WB6PHQ. We drove the back roads to the rail museum near Fairfield and spent the better part of the day there exploring. Those of you who missed it not only missed the museum, but also a green-grass-and-flowers-day in the delta after a grand breakfast. It was another day well spent NOT writing this article. A real report of the day appears elsewhere in this issue. Also, make a note of the upcoming activities. We really do a lot of club "stuff" while also having a good time.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Shannon Mossman W6SPY who lives in Fairfield has joined our club. Shannon has already volunteered for our last public service Solano Bicycle Classic. Thanks and welcome.

MVRC Day Trip By Vicki WB6PHQ



We had nine Hams show up for breakfast at the IHOP on Bond Road on Sunday, March 23. We headed towards Howard's Landing and rode the Ryer Island ferries across Steamboat Slough and the Deep Water Channel, to Rio Vista. Both ferry crossings went smoothly and even the weakest tummies made it across without mishap. Our destination was the Rail Museum at Rio Vista Junction. This museum is devoted to the electric trains/busses which were the backbone of San Francisco's transit system in the early 1900's. We took two rides--one was about 10 minutes long on the Birney Safety Car (built in 1923) which was called the "Savior of the Trollies" as it was built cheaply and was possible to operate with only one person. The other train/trolley car we rode was built in 1904 and was part of the Petaluma/Santa Rosa Rail Road. The second ride took about 40 minutes and was lots of fun due to the abundance of lambs all along the route. Only one black sheep was spotted during the journey and I will let you guess whether it was a two-legged or four-legged one. This was a very nice trip and the museum and all the trains were a delight. I urge you to visit if you haven't seen it yet.

Our huge breakfast finally settled after our thrilling rides, so we had lunch at the snack bar attached to the museum. Doris and Mike headed for home first while the rest of us ate leisurely and waddled back home. Les talked to John, N6SEX, in Oregon, on IRLP while riding the ferries. We got home by 3:00 PM. The road crew were: Les W6TEE and Matthew W6KDJ; Sonny and Ed, Mike and Doris; Mark; Vicki WB6PHQ; and, Lew WA6ESA.

Trustee Report

We have been very fortunate for the past couple of years, we haven't experienced any interference problems on either high band or 450. This could be the result of lower activity on our bands and no "NUTS" aiming interference at our repeaters. Lets hope it continues in this direction.

NARCC normally meets in April and I should be able to attend and report the results at our April meeting.

As for the Monday night net, we need more check-ins and ideas to stir up interest and activities. So, I'm open for any input on this problem. The average check-in is about 10 and last Monday we had four, so we need participation to improve on this.

Trustee, George W6GWB

A Cool Event

The Way Too Cool 31 mile Ultra marathon was held March 8 in where else but Cool, California. The start/finish was at the Fire Station in Cool so you know Ken, KC6JSV was involved. With about 450 runners, the event went off very smoothly on a beautiful day. The Auburn Repeater on 145.43 provided good coverage for the 3 checkpoints, some mounted patrols and a mule. In addition to Ken, Vaca members working the event were Lew, WA6ESA and Adrienne, WA6CNE who used this opportunity to work on a sun tan. Members of several other clubs also working the event.

A. Barnard

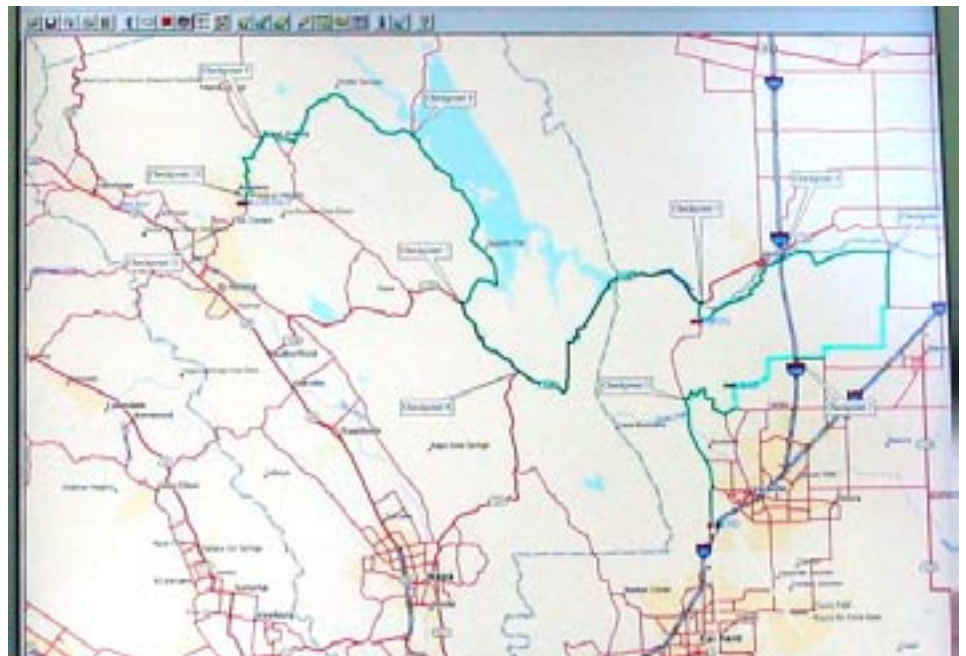
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Double Century every year, Dave's plane is routine.

The road race went fairly well until Sgt. Betsy and I discovered that we'd caught up to the school bus dropping off volunteer marshals. Fortunately, the famous valley north winds were blowing at about 25 m.p.h., slowing down the men's pack on our tail. It allowed the school bus to get just far enough ahead that everything worked out all right before we got into Winters. At about this same time, Dave, sitting on the runway in Davis, decided he could take off, in spite of a little concern about the winds.

The ride through the Berryessa Hills was punctuated with a stop at Moskowitz to pick up sandwiches for all the CHP officers that worked the race, and a quick stop at an elementary school one mile past Moskowitz to drop off a box full of Jelly Bellies for the kids. Sgt. Betsy knows how to get attention: lights and siren brought a very worried-looking teacher out, who was delighted at the gift (Jelly Belly is a sponsor of the race, as well as sponsoring one of the race teams).

Darrin KG6FJL and Tony KG6IOF were asked to be honorary CHP at one point, pulling over the errant End-of-Race vehicle, which contained a newly minted ham whose radio could transmit, but was otherwise deaf. He didn't know too much about repeater courtesy tones, but was quickly set straight, to the relief of all of us. Side note: SBC is responsible for seven new hams, all of whom recognize the benefits of the service. I expect the success of the race this year will lead to more new hams next year.



Unlike last year, I was not treated to any high speed rides, which would have been monitored in Anywin if I had. This year, I had a D700 in the CHP car transmitting our location. Once again, APRS was very useful in

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The public service season has started. There is a listing of the upcoming events in this issue and I hope all of you who can spare the time are willing to work those events for which we still need operators. We still lack details for some of them as the time draws closer, we will make the latest information known either through the newsletter, the Monday night net or on the air. Hope everyone is listening!

And speaking of the net . . . George, W6GWB is always happy to talk to members and check them in on Monday night. There really is a lot of information to be had on the nets, especially if it has been awhile since the last general meeting. And for a real surprise, you should listen on those nights when George can't do the net. That's when you get to hear the real amateurs take over. It is probably good George doesn't monitor on those nights. On the other hand, maybe if we do it badly enough, the word will get back to him and he will never leave town again.

All my ramblings about spring weather also means my bicycle must be dug out of the garage and made ready for commuting again in the next few days. There is a double purpose to all this. Not only do I get some needed exercise but, hopefully, I'll be ready to ride the Lung Association Bike Trek in September. Just as we were all getting complacent about knowing

the route used for the last couple of years, we have received information that it has been changed. This year they have actually shortened the basic ride by a couple of miles each day, added an extra loop for each of the first two days for the kamikaze riders, and made the entire route more painful. Lots more ups and downs in the killer foothills.

No matter how good or poor my bicycle conditioning will be, the bike trek is really great fun for all of us. There is a job for every ham who would like to participate in one of three ways: ride and talk, drive and talk, or sit in the shade and talk. Contact Ken, KC6JSV or Glen WA7SPY for more details and sign-ups for the bike trek and all the other public service events during the next few months.

Well, I am getting close to the ultimate deadline so I will close with a reminder to all to attend the general meeting in April (details elsewhere). Lots of hams will be there, some with tales of vacations taken, and vacations to come, good (and maybe not so good) stories about radio operating, all sorts of excitement. Hope to see everyone there for the meeting and please consider staying for dinner . . .

73
Doris, WA6UAF

Desert Trip - - Les, W6TEE

You may know that our desert trip to Joshua Tree National Park was cancelled. But we did piece together a replacement desert trip with a different time, place, and mode of lodging that interested a suitable group. John, N6SEX, while in Oregon, queried the local Hams for their favorite southern desert spots. They said that when they go south in the Spring, they head for Cedarville, CA. They told us to go early in April to miss the Spring Break youngsters from Oregon.

So on Saturday, April 1, our little group caravanned to Cedarville. Ed, KE6AFB, led the group via Tehachapi



Words to the Wise....



and Otherwise.

The best way to stay informed about MVRC happenings is to tune in and check into Monday night's 7:45 p.m. net.. Please check the roster for correct information.

Pass and US-395 to Alturas, then Cedarville. Most were in simplex range, except Marc, W6MAR, who knew a shortcut through Eureka, and stayed in touch with IRLP. Bill, WA6ACF, had made us reservations at the Hotel Looflirpa (Indian for "Cedar Village"), part of the Motel 60 chain. We arrived quite late.

Rising with the dawn on Sunday, April 1, we set out for our first destination, Alkali Lake, led by Jim, WB6ZII. Despite being there early in the Spring sea-

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monitoring the race.

APRS was used in the CHP lead vehicle, the mid-race vehicle (a Jetta equipped with an amazing variety of gadgets by Chris K9WWV), and the End-of-Race Vehicle, manned by Tim KG6PIL. Next year we will be interested in hardened, robust APRS trackers that can be put into cars or motorcycles.

The end of the race in Angwin was picture perfect we really got a wonderful spell of good weather for the races. And Robert KC6UDS got his request a lights and siren entrance past Net Control by Sgt. Betsy. Doesn't take much to please some people, I guess.....

Meanwhile, Dave was landing his plane in Davis into a stiff North wind. His comment: "It's been a long time since I landed a plane on one wheel."

Friday's race was a hill climb up Mix Canyon. Anyone who's been up to the repeater sites on Mt. Vaca knows what that climb is like. Brutal. We had minimal, but effective, radio coverage.

Saturday was spent scouting out sites for a temporary race radio repeater for the Sunday circuit race. The race radios this

year were rented Motorolas on 465 MHz. We decided to try a repeater as well, and with the help of the City of Fairfield, found a spot on top of one of the hilltop reservoirs to mount a Yagi pointing straight into the circuit race. For the first time in four years, the race officials were able to talk to each other over the whole course.

On Sunday, I spent all day in the Fairfield Police Mobile Comm Center, monitoring the race radio, the secondary channel for race workers, the hams working the circuit race, and my cell phone, whose number had been given out to the course marshals for emergencies. On Monday, I wanted to sleep in, but had to go to work. Some things never change.

Thanks to all the volunteers this year. The whole race was much smoother than last year, in part because of the course, but also because of the experience gained last year. The guys at Net Control say they could do the whole thing from somebody's living room next year, which is true. NC was placed at Angwin because a race committee official was going to be there as a liaison this year. And then the bike race officials gave her another job at the last minute. Oh, well...wait til' next year.... And Larry W6OMF didn't have to deal with the bees this year. - John K6JRB



Playing vhf/uhf FM in southern Oregon.

I've been lucky enough to be on an extended visit here in Southern Oregon. I brought some basic radio gear up with me in hopes that I might be able to play a little radio. To my surprise, I'm not playing a little radio, I'm playing a lot of FM repeater radio!! What fun!

Southern Oregon doesn't have millions of hams or thousands of repeaters. But, it does have some great quality hams and great quality repeaters.

I haven't tried all of the local repeaters out (yet) nor have I met all of the local hams (yet). But, I've done enough of both to make some observations:

The Dominant system here is the JARS system. It consists of multiple VHF repeaters all linked on UHF. It has quite a footprint over southern Oregon and part of northern California. It also is IRLP enabled (node #7160) and it has excellent audio in both directions. Jim KB7SKB has put a lot of work into the IRLP and it shows. Jim has also done an excellent job on the club's web page. See for yourself: www.jars-orca.org You'll find lots of information on the site including maps of coverage so sure to check this site out! If you key up on this system there is a good chance you'll find Steve WB7YQP or Johnny WA6RHK. Both Steve and Johnny along with others have put a lot of effort into the system. They claim to be an organization of "Do'ers" and not a social club. But, my observations are that they can "do" social as well.

Another large linked system here in southern Oregon is called the Rogue Valley Linking Association. It is the result of Chris KD7BCS and his posse of mostly young hams. Too many uhf machines to count on one hand ...and likely more being built as I write this. They too have IRLP (node # 5010) and are part of the Patio Network. This system is as busy with traffic as it is building up new repeaters.. Maybe not the system for everyone as it is very young in attitude, but, these guys should be commended for pushing the button on the side of the microphone and keeping our amateur spectrum warm. They are doing an excellent job of that and proof of what new young hams can do for the hobby if given the frequencies to play with.

On a more local level (greater Medford area) there are a lot of great options:

Arlen W9PCI is a super guy (and an O.K. ham ?). Arlen has multiple machines on vhf and uhf -some of which are linked. Arlen is a "technology driven" sort of fellow and his system reflects that. IRLP (node # 7700) and an HF remote base are two of the items in his toy box of fun. Pretty tough not to enjoy oneself over on these machines. Arlen advertises his website via announcements on his repeaters. So, be sure to comment on his website (www.w9pci.com) that you heard of the site from his repeater.

Jim, KB7SKB, in addition to contributing to the ORCA system, has 147.100 here in southern Oregon. It is a really nice machine that sounds good too! It is active with A.R.E.S. and that sort of stuff. This machine will soon be IRLP enabled (hint hint).

147.000 -Does that frequency sound familiar? These guys opted for the (+) offset. Good thing or the MVRC power users would likely be interfering with them! Albert WB7AWL and company are nice guys and do a fine job with this repeater. Very nice machine that is low level in Medford. It plays very well in Medford proper, sounds great and is also IRLP enabled (node # 5780). It is possible that you will find MVRC member Chuck KN6WW on this machine now that he's relocated to southern Oregon. This is also the machine of choice when 1.2bob W6CYX connects up to southern Oregon to talk to Chuck (every Thursday morning).

Southern Oregon has some really great repeaters and some really great hams. If you come this direction be sure to bring your radio and find out for yourself.

73rrrrrdds to you and yours from me and mine, ...
John N6SEX



Please check your information on the enclosed roster. You should also check the MVRC web site (WWW.MVRC.ORG) to insure that your EMAIL and Web address are correct. Please email Bill - WA6ACF if there are changes.

INTERESTING TRIVIA

DAY TRIP pictures

Checking the maps, the Dumbarton Bridge is a part of CA-84. The San Mateo Bridge is a portion of CA-92. In fact, CA-84 starts at CA-1 and goes over I-280 at Woodside where it becomes an expressway, then crosses US-101 where it turns into a freeway and crosses the Dumbarton Bridge and goes into Fremont. From there it crosses I-680 and winds its way to Livermore, where it quits at I-580. My AAA map of Central California doesn't have enough detail of the delta area, but from what I can tell, when we got off the first ferry at Steamboat Slough on CA-220, if we had gone right instead of left, we would have remained on CA-220 to CA-84 (Jefferson Blvd. in West Sacramento). By going left, we traveled on a county road in Solano County on Ryer Island. This was the correct and shorter route, but it was not a continuous state highway.



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WB6ZII. Despite being there early in the Spring season, we found the lake overrun with college-age water skiers, and the boat motor noise was overwhelming. John, W6QAC, led us to Goose Lake, where it was quieter, but there was no water. But this was quite suitable for our picnic lunch. We returned to our hotel led by Lew, WA6ESA, via the historic Lassen Trail.

Monday, April 1, was our last day in Cedarville and we mostly shopped at the Factory Outlet Mall, and W. T. Grants. Our departure dinner was at the Cedarville Red Lobster at the suggestion of Glenn, WA7SPY, who flew in for the evening on business.

Everyone checked out of the Hotel Loofirpa, then pointed their vehicles for home on Tuesday, April 1, and enjoyed more fine radio caravanning. The following made it home:

Mt. Vaca Radio Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 417405
Sacramento, Ca. 95841-7405



First Class Mail

GENERAL MEETING NOTICE
Check page one for time and place

Club web address: www.mvrc.org

The Mt. Vaca Radio Club, Inc. (MVRC), operates repeater station K6MVR on 2 Meter and 440 MHz., from locations on Mt. Vaca and within the Sacramento area for communications over a wide area. All Amateurs are welcome to use the open repeaters on 147.00 (-) (PL 136.5 Hz.) and in open contacts which do not impede the use by others, except when K6MVR is used for Public Service activity. Club simplex operation for public service and other activities will use 147.585 MHz.

CLUB NET: The MVRC net is every Monday at 7:45 PM on the 147.00 repeater. Club activities are announced. Members, Sponsors, and Visitors are asked to check in.

Members Dues: Membership dues are \$48 per year, due and payable June 1 of each year. (out of area members \$18 per year)

Sponsors: Support for the open repeater. Anyone can become a Sponsor for one year by sending \$15 or more to the Membership Chairman. Sponsors will receive the Mt. Vaca News.

Information on system operation or on membership is available from the Membership Chairman. There is no obligation to become a Sponsor or Member to operate on the open system.