

June Meeting

There is no general membership meeting this month. Field Day serves as our meeting for June. The next general membership meeting will be on September 9th, 2006.

May Meeting Summary

We reviewed the details for the upcoming Fifth Annual Guide Dog Run that was scheduled for Saturday, May 20. There was also discussion regarding the BEARONS repeater, Field Day, a brief summary of the inaugural 7QP, and we received a request from Boeing Recreation to fill out a proposed meeting and room schedule for 2007.

BEARONS Repeaters Update

The BEARONS 440 MHz repeater has been restored to full operation. The repeater antenna was reinstalled in early May. Thanks to Steve Westfall and several members of his organization and Brian Salsbery for assistance in getting the antenna back up. A user's guide was e-mailed to everyone – if you didn't receive it, a copy of it can be found on the BEARONS website. The 50 MHz repeater is still not 100% functional – the output power is still very low. Until such time that the 50 MHz repeater is restored to full operation, please do not activate the crossband repeat function. Early indications are that the coverage of the 440 MHz machine is somewhat improved from the previous iteration of antenna installation.

Upcoming Operating Activities

Field Day is the big operating event for June – it occurs on the 24th and 25th. Other events include the Quebec QSO Party, All-Asian DX Contest, West Virginia QSO Party, and the Kids Day Operating Event. See the latest editions of QST or CQ Magazine for details.

7QP Summary

The inaugural 7QP was held on Saturday, May 6th. The contest started at 6:00AM local time and ran until 12:00PM. For a first time contest, activity was brisk and the propagation conditions were decent. The contest coincided with a number of other operating events so it was a very "target rich" environment. The goal was to activate all 253 7th call area counties. The exact count is not yet known, but well over 200 counties were activated so it was a successful first run. A complete wrap-up of the contest and a list of logs submitted to date can be seen on the 7QP website. There are also soapbox comments and some photos from a couple of the planned mobile operations posted there as well.

Field Day 2006

Field Day occurs on June 24th and 25th. BEARONS Field Day will be held at Dwayne Broderson's QTH. If you need driving directions or need other specific details, contact Dwayne directly. Set-up activities will begin at 8:00AM sharp on Saturday morning, so be sure to plan ahead and be there on time. The actual contest starts at 11:00AM local time so that gives us about 3 hours to accomplish all of the set-up work and station checkout prior to the start of the contest. We plan on operating in Class 2E this year. We'll have an SSB station and a CW station on HF, also 6 meters and possibly a 2/440 set-up. Let's have a big turnout this year!

New Products

MFJ has a new high power tuner, the MFJ-9982. Rated to handle 2500 watts, all modes and all HF bands. Coax feed or balanced line inputs are available. Cross-needle indication for SWR and power out. Price is \$699.95

SMD prototyping just got a bit easier with the introduction of the Schmartboard-EZ prototyping board. Specifically designed to handle SMDs without special tools, the board uses a unique design to house multi-pin SMDs. The boards come in various sizes and types – prices range from \$5 to \$10.

Timewave has a new antenna impedance analyzer, the TZ-900 AntennaSmith. It measures SWR, impedance, reactance, and reflection coefficient over a frequency range of 0.2 to 55 MHz. It features a color TFT display and an output port for connection to a PC via USB or serial connection. Windows software is included in the package.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Recently, there have been a couple of tragic accidents that have claimed the life of 3 amateur radio operators. In one case, an amateur working atop a large tower was killed when the tower collapsed due to a chain reaction of events that began when the antenna that was being removed somehow managed to contact one of the tower guy wires and snapped it. In the other case, 2 amateurs were killed when the vehicle they were riding in went over the side of a cliff during a transmitter fox hunt. In both cases, the people involved were very experienced in the activity they were undertaking. These incidents serve to underscore the message that our hobby can be a dangerous one, even for the well-prepared. Safety must never be compromised – it should always be job one. When climbing towers - a climbing belt, gloves, work boots, and a hard hat should be considered mandatory equipment. Trying to handle large antenna arrays on a tower by yourself is an accident waiting to happen – don't be tempted to try it. Common sense should be your guide for other, less complex tasks.

When working on radios, be sure to unplug them unless you have to have power applied

to accomplish troubleshooting. Never put both hands inside a radio chassis at the same time – always keep one hand in your pocket. Discharge HV circuitry on older tube gear before poking around inside, especially when working on PAs. Employ an isolation transformer on your test gear so you don't inadvertently create a ground loop short circuit when making measurements.

Wear safety glasses when soldering or use a lighted magnifier to better see your work. Solder rosin can sometimes pop - you don't want hot solder or rosin getting in your eyes. Trimming component leads can be dangerous too – grab the excess length on a component lead before trimming to keep it from possibly flying off in some unwanted direction. If the lead is too short to grab, then angle the board or assembly towards the work surface so any flying debris ends up there.

Broken antennas and non-functioning radios can be replaced but death is permanent. Use your head!!

BEARONS VE Testing

There is a BEARONS VE test session scheduled for Wednesday, June 28th at 6:30PM at the Everett Activities Center. There's no time like the present to get your first ham ticket or going for that upgrade you've been talking about for months!!

Classifieds

No listings this month