



Amateur Gazette

Paso Robles
Amateur Radio Club

Club Meeting Minutes for October 6, 2008

Paso Robles Amateur Radio Club meeting was held at Centennial Park on October 6, 2008 and commenced at 1900 hours. There were no minutes to approve from the previous meeting but old business was discussed. There were 13 members present with an additional prospective member, Ed Linskey NY6S.

Club business included scheduling assistance for the upcoming Paso Robles Pioneer Day Parade and the Colony Days Parade held in Atascadero. Bill Sundius AA6CT reports he has sufficient help already signed up for Pioneer Day which will be held on October 11th. Bill Palmerston requested help for Colony Days and a sign-up sheet was passed around the room. The event will be held on October 18th.

Elections will need to be held next month since we do not have a December meeting. All interested persons please attend the next meeting and make your intentions known so we can vote for you. Ron Patterson W6FM has agreed to accept the responsibilities as Club Treasurer. We will need to vote for the positions of President, Vice-President if needed, Secretary and have someone volunteer to put out the minutes in a Newsletter format each month. Ron Patterson has also requested assistance from someone who is capable of posting pictures to our website. The club has a lot of old photographs that could be scanned and posted as well.

Other business included our annual Christmas Party and the need for someone to take charge and get the event to the planning stages. Shane Faulkenberry KI6QFI volunteered to contact John Dallons and determine if he and Berna would be willing to host the event as they have done in the past. Shane will provide a report at the November meeting.

Discussions during the meeting included whether or not a permanent station was established at the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse and the California QSO Party held last weekend. Larry Miller W7CB talked about awards for working all counties and unscrupulous operators that run mobile stations in multiple counties.

An excellent presentation tonight on APRS was provided by Carson Buckley KG6TRN. It appears as though Packet Radio has come a long way in the last few years.

The next meeting will be held November 3rd, 2008 and beginning at 7:00 PM. For those of you that have not attended in a while, this is a reminder we do start at 7:00PM. As always the meeting will be held at Centennial Park and we will be back in the White Oak Room.

Respectively submitted,

Acting President/Secretary
Jeff Joynt NBST

Members in attendance

Jeff Joynt N6BST
Larry Miller W7CB
Harry Wolf W6NKT
John Foster N6FVY
Shane Faulkenberry KI6QFI
Jon Root KG6NXX
Joel Kaye AD6KH
Carson Buckley KG6TRN
Charles DeCraene N6DIQ
Bill Sundius AA6CT
Mike Kelley K6AJ
Ron Patterson W6FM
Dan Powell KG6JYJ



Here is a picture from the early days of the club.

Hi--

My name is Dan Romanchik, and my callsign is KB6NU. For over five years, I have been blogging about ham radio at www.kb6nu.com, and for almost a year, I have been writing a column for ham radio newsletters that I have been offering for free to any club that wants to publish it. Sometimes the material is directly from my blog, sometimes it's original material. I'm attaching a couple of columns so that you get a taste for the length of the columns and the topics I write about.

Ham Cram, or the One-Day Tech Class by Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I used to be skeptical of one-day ham radio classes, sometimes called "Ham Cram" classes. After teaching a couple of these classes over the past year, however, I've become a supporter of this method of teaching, at least for the Technician Class license test.

One reason I'm an advocate of the one-day class is that I think a lot of people "learn by doing." I'm not an expert on pedagogy, but my guess is that more people learn by doing than learn by reading or by listening. That being the case, isn't it a good thing that new hams get their licenses quickly so that they can begin doing--thereby learning--more quickly?

Second, people are busy. Tell them that the class is going to eat up one evening a week for six to eight weeks and a lot of them will tell you that they just don't have the time to do it. Squeezing in six to eight hours on a Saturday is, however, something that they can do.

Critics of the one-day classes say that if people just cram for the test, they may learn enough for just long enough to pass the test, but they really don't know enough to be "good hams," whatever that may be. There's some truth to this. It's important not to abandon them once they get their tickets. I encourage all of the students to join a ham radio club and make myself available to answer any questions they may have as they get started in ham radio.

Critics also say that releasing this horde on the amateur bands will create nothing but chaos. Fortunately, I've personally seen no evidence that the hundreds of folks that have taken these classes across the country have created said chaos.

Make Your Next Class a One-Day Class

I would encourage you to give this a try. Make your next Tech class a one-day class. You don't conduct Tech classes? Well, get started! Another benefit of the one-day class format is that it's easier to find teachers since it takes less time for them, too.

As I mentioned previously, over the past year, I've taught two "ham cram" classes. We've learned a few things along the way.

Perhaps the most important thing is to stress that students should study the material before coming to class. The study guide we use is one that I've written. You can find the KB6NU No-Nonsense Study Guide online at <http://www.kb6nu.com>. You can also purchase a pre-printed version of the study guide at www.booklocker.com/books/3408.html.

Another key is to not get bogged down on a particular topic. Our class runs from 9 am to 3 p.m., at which time, the VEs come in and give the test. To cover all of the material, you have to keep one eye on the clock and keep plowing ahead. To help you do this, a set of PowerPoint slides for teachers of Ham Cram Tech classes is available at <http://w9pe.us/>.

We conducted our first class last August. Nine out of twelve passed the test that day; the remaining three passed on their second attempt. In early May, we taught our second one-day class. This time, eleven out of twelve passed. In September, we held our third class and thirteen out of fourteen passed.

I am encouraged by these results, and I am planning to make these one-day classes a regularly-scheduled event here in Ann Arbor. Time will tell if these people become active, life-long hams, but so far, so good. If you have any questions about our experience with the one-day class, please e-mail me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.