

Middle Peninsula Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
General Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2020

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm by President Kenny Skirvin (KM4KZC) with 19 members present.

Kenny opened with a tribute to local amateur Earl Evans (KE4NBX) who recently passed away, reflecting on Earl's history with the club along with some photos. He then continued the tradition of asking everyone to introduce themselves and to answer the question – "What amateur radio goals do you have for the coming year?".

Outstanding Ham Plaque Presentation

Presentation of the "Outstanding Ham" of the year plaque was made to Will Grant. This presentation was announced at the Christmas Party, but the plaque was not available. So, the plaque itself was presented this evening to a round of applause and a few comments from Will and Kenny.

Thanks from NGA/WXGM For Christmas Toy Drive

Kenny asked Will to read a letter from the Needlework Guild of America and WXGM/FM 99 expressing their appreciation for our donations supporting their annual Christmas Toy Drive.

Secretary's Report

Minutes from the November meeting and the December meeting/Christmas party were distributed electronically by outgoing Secretary Joy Safranek (W2JMS) via our groups.io reflector for all to review prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Joy (W2JMS) to accept the minutes as distributed, seconded by Will (K4MI) and carried by the membership. There was a suggestion that we might dispense with monthly review/acceptance of the minutes. Some discussion ensued and the consensus was reached that we should continue to review and accept minutes of the previous meeting as we have done in the past.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Will Hrachovina (K4MI) reviewed the treasurer's reports for November and December and offered a brief annual report. Keith (N4KDJ) interjected a quick reminder that going forward, we will no longer have the recurrent expense for the phone line to support the repeater due to the recent ideas and effort of several club members, coordinated by Mark (N1LO) to switch to the VOIP line. Overall, there was a small net decline in our balance for the year due to the recent purchase of a replacement for the repeater amplifier. A motion was made by Will Grant (W3SG) to accept the treasurer's report as presented, seconded by Roger (KI4QAU) and carried by the membership.

W5YI Testing:

Middle Peninsula ARES

Weekly ARES Net

Norbert (KM4HVL) and Will (K4MI) continue to conduct the weekly ARES net on Thursday nights at 8:00 pm on the 37 machine with good participation.

Grid Fail Exercise

ARES Coordinator Norbert (KM4HVL) described an upcoming statewide emergency exercise simulating a wide area grid failure. This grid failure exercise will be conducted January 18 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. WinLink is expected to be the primary means for passing messages during this exercise and Norbert is working to get his system up and running to participate. The emergency organizations are advocating the adoption of WinLink by interested volunteers in order to provide emergency communications in these situations.

FEMA Certifications

Norbert also announced he has recently completed his necessary FEMA certifications and is continuing to work on the ARES ones.

Old Business:

Bylaws Changes

Kenny summarized the recent Bylaws Changes – staggering officer elections, eliminating the nominating committee and changing our fiscal year.

Captain John Smith Special Event

The 7th annual Captain John Smith special event was a big success, completing 131 contacts. There was a nice write-up in the newspaper, and a couple of photos. Will (K4MI) passed around a copy of the newspaper article.

New Board Members, Changes to Election Process

Kenny listed the new board members and Joy pointed out that in the new election scheme, in which about half the board is elected each year, with everyone having two year terms, we did not specify which of the three at large positions will be up for election on which half of the 2 year cycle.

New Business:

Repeater Power Amplifier

A new power amplifier was purchased for the repeater to replace the recently failed unit. Will announced that club member Chet Bartusiak (K4OMA) generously donated \$200 toward the repair. The club will write a letter of thanks to recognize his gesture.

Kenny contacted the manufacturer of the original system who indicates that the cost of repair to the old unit might be anything from \$100 - \$300. Mark (N1LO) recommends that we pay to

have the failed amplifier repaired and aligned and preserve it as our spare then sell the current spare Mirage amplifier. A motion to this effect was advanced by Rob (KK4R), seconded by Bill (NR4C) and carried by the membership. Kenny will put this into motion.

Upcoming Activities

- Club breakfast at Olivia's, 1/11/2020 from 7:30 – 8:30AM
- W5YI testing session: 1/25/2020 9:00 – 10:30
- Squalo Antenna Building Exercise: 1/25/2020 following the testing session, Jerry (K4SKD) will host. The bill of materials required for the antenna is posted on groups.io.
- Board meeting on 1/29 at 6:00 PM, location TBD
- General meeting: 2/4/2020 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM, Roger (KI4QAU) will present Emergency Services
- Walter Reed Event: 4/25/2020 (tentative), during garden week. The site (Walter Reed's birthplace) is under new management. Kenny will work with Will Grant to work out the details.
- Tour De Chesapeake: May
- Field Day: 6/27 – 6/28 – Kenny will contact the park folks to reserve the shelter for these dates.

We still need programs for some of the upcoming meetings.

Nano VNA

Bill (NR4C) showed a "NanoVNA", a small and inexpensive vector network analyzer he recently acquired. Several members were already familiar with this device which is readily available on eBay or Amazon (or others) very inexpensively (\$50 - \$70). This particular device covers frequencies up to 900MHz and can (among other things) perform routine antenna analysis like many other, much more expensive devices. Ken Dudley (KN4MTE) offered a brief explanation from an RF engineering perspective, describing its use in various single and multi-port measurements (S11, S21, etc.). Such devices (VNAs) are a mainstay in RF engineering, but typically cost many thousands (or hundreds of thousands) of dollars. Ken indicated that this inexpensive device compared very favorably with other, far more expensive devices.

Auction

Wes (AI4FH) generously provided several great items (2 manual antenna tuners, an electronic keyer, Bencher BY-1 paddles, bracket and separation cable for an IC-706MK2) for the raffle. Will sold a bunch of raffle tickets and the items were raffled off. The lucky winners (I knew I should have bought more tickets!), took home several great items. Many thanks to Wes for his generous contribution!

Program:

Will Grant (WS3G), presented "Is Ham Radio Weird, Or Is It Just Me?" An in-depth examination of the social, artistic and philosophical implications of amateur radio and weirdness in modern society, ultimately concluding that he is definitely weird. But he encourages us to not take ham radio (or ourselves) too seriously and to be sure to have fun.

Discussion

QRP Fox Hunt

Rob (KK4R) talked briefly about QRP Fox Hunting (see <https://www.qrpfoxhunt.org>). The organization sponsors hunts on Tuesday (40m) and Thursday (80m) evenings from 9:00 – 10:30 PM. In these exercises, two stations are designated as “foxes” who transmit a low power (< 5w) CW signal on an unknown frequency within a defined range. Participants then try to locate and work (also QRP -- < 5w) either or both fox stations. Rob indicated that this is a good exercise to build your code speed and is a lot of fun.

VHF Amplifiers

Tim (N4XND) asked if anyone else had heard anything about the Chinese 100W VHF (80-170MHz) amplifier kits you can get online? Some research suggests that they operate down into the 50MHz range. He recently acquired 3 of them and was interested in building 2 into a 6m amplifier. He suggests looking into improving the low pass filtering on the units to insure you don't interfere on other, higher (150MHz) bands. Apparently, these kits come with no instructions and lack a heatsink but are very inexpensive (~\$35) and might be of interest for project work.

Adjournment

Jerry made a motion to adjourn the meeting at about 8:40 PM., it was seconded by Keith and carried by the membership.

Attendance

Members

Tom, K6AET
Bill, NR4C
Ken, KN4MTE
Will, KS3G
John, AI4QQ
Willy, K4MI
Keith, N4KDJ
Wes, AI4FH
David, KN0S
Mark, N1LO
Norbert, KM4HVL
Rob, KK4R
Robert, KN4YQV
Tim, N4XND
Joy, W2JMS
Kenny, KM4KZC
Jerry, K4SKD

Roger, KI4QAU
Marty, WM4MW

Guests
None

Submitted by MPARC Secretary, Marty Wise, WM4MW, December 3, 2019