

## February Meeting

**Date:** Friday, February 27, 2004.

**Time:** Socializing at 7 pm, Meeting at 7:30

**Place:** Covington School, 205 Covington Road, Los Altos

**Speaker:** Jim Peterson, K6EI

**Topic:** Commercial HF Antenna Shootout

Tired of all the antenna advertising hype in the radio magazines? What is the most efficient commercial multi-band HF vertical? Which tri-band yagi really provides the most gain on 10, 15 and 20 meters? N0AX and K7LXC recently assembled, installed, rigorously tested, and compared the far field performance of a wide variety of commercial HF antennas against calibrated reference antennas, including eight different multi-band verticals, nine tri-band yagis, and a quad. Some of their test results may surprise you.

Be sure to bring your questions to submit to Dr. Know-It-All!

## January Meeting Report

The January meeting was the FARS/PAARA Winter Banquet. We saw a wonderful presentation by Dr. Seppo Sisatto, OH1VR, and his DXpedition to Market Reef. See pictures later in the newsletter. Great food and great fun for all!



**Dr. Seppo Sisatto, OH1VR**



**Raffle Winners**

Raffle winners and place (L to R):

2) Dave Platt, AE6EO, Garmin Etrex GPS; 6) Peter Sheerin, K6WEB, The ARRL 2004 Handbook; 7) Kit Blanke, WA6PWW, ARRL Antenna Book; 4) Dr. Seppo Sisatto, OH1VR, Grundig Crank Radio; 1) Herb Davidson, KF6BKL, Yaesu FT-817; 5) Howard Califf, KE6PWH, Coleman Powermate; 3) Stan Kuhl, K6MA, Maja Charger.



**Omri Serlin, AA6TA**, received an award for his excellent service to the club.

## Presidents Column

**Membership.** If you have not renewed your membership in FARS already, your membership has expired. Your membership is very important and helps FARS to continue to put on programs every month, put on Field Day, training classes, and our annual Winter Banquet. FARS cannot function without its members, so it's very important to renew your membership today.

**Electronics Flea Market.** The Electronics Flea Market is moving to Sunnyvale this year. This flea market is held on the second Saturday of the month from March through October. Instead of having the flea market at Foothill College, ASVARO, has made arrangements for a new location in Sunnyvale. The college has torn several of their parking lots, so the decision was made to find a better location. The new site is near Onizuka Air Force Station in Sunnyvale. It is about a block west of Mathilda Avenue just north of Highway 237. Please visit the ASVARO web site <http://www.asvaro.org> for more detailed directions. In addition to being a great place to find deals, the flea market is an important fundraiser for several of the radio clubs in the south bay and peninsula. The first market is on March 13, 2004 and is hosted by the Palo Alto Area Red Cross. Don't miss it.

- de Mikel, KN6QI

## Secretary's Report

The FARS Board held its monthly meeting on the evening of February 3, 2004. It was called to order at 7:37 PM by Mikel, KN6QI, club president. Also present were Howard, KG6GRO, Phil, KA6MZE, Herb, KF6BKL, Dick, N6ATD, Stefan, KG6MAO, Mark, KG6GRR, Mike, KG6GUE, Robert, KE6TFU, Steve, K6OIK, Dave, KE6PFF, and Martin, KD6WJW. Payment of the following expenses was approved by the board:

\*\$322.46 for raffle and some banquet expenses

\*\$154.67 for the IRS tax exemption filing fee and copying expenses

\*\$150.00 to Mike, KG6GUE, to obtain club training materials for a club library (see below)

\*\$350.00 for purchase of books for the class

Other items: money was made on both the banquet and raffle. There was a discussion of class-related expenses. The class will be free, other than the charge for the book, which will cover other class-related costs. The first meeting will be on March 2, 2004. There was a proposal to establish a lending library of ham-related items. Stefan, KG6MAO, submitted his resignation to the board because he is returning to Germany. The board expressed its appreciation to Stefan for his service to the club and regrets his departure.

- Martin, KD6WJW

## Upcoming Events

|           |         |                                     |
|-----------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Feb 27    | 7:00 PM | Club meeting, Covington School      |
| Mar 2     | 7:30 PM | Board Meeting, Los Altos Town Crier |
| Mar 26    | 7:00 PM | Club meeting, Covington School      |
| Thursdays | 8:00 PM | FARS net, 145.230(-), 100 Hz PL     |

See more events, [FARS Calendar](#)

<<http://www.fars.k6ya.org/events/calendar.shtml>>

## Secretary's Report (January)

The FARS Board held its monthly meeting on the evening of January 6, 2004. The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by the club president, Mikel, KN6QI. Other members present were Frank, K6FCW, Phil, KA6MZE, Howard, KG6GRO, Robert, KE6TFU, Mark, KG6GRR, Dick, N6ATD, Steve, K6OIK, Mike, KG6GUE, and Martin, KD6WJW. The following motions were approved:

\*Payment of various expenses. Meeting refreshments, \$14.99; monthly meeting raffle prize, \$81.13; banquet raffle prize, \$515.94

\*A proposal for expediting payment of routine expenses without formal board approval. The treasurer is authorized to sign checks for payment of routine expenses that are less than \$100. The treasurer and one other officer authorized to sign checks for expenses greater than \$100 but less than \$200. Expenditures of \$200 and more would require prior board approval.

Other items that were discussed included banquet sign-ups (50, plus 4 at the meeting); potential training class locations; a possible "bring a guest" meeting; speakers for upcoming meetings; and a balance of \$7783.04 in the club treasury.

- Martin, KD6WJW

## Secretary's Report (December)

The FARS Board held its monthly meeting on the evening of December 2, 2003. It was called to order at approximately 7:30 PM by the President, Mikel, KN6QI. Other members present were Howard, KG6GRO, Omri, AA6TA, Robert, KE6TFU, Dave, KE6PFF, Herb, KF6BKL, Phil, KA6MZE, Mark, KG6GRR, Mike, KG6GUE, Steve, K6OIK, and Martin, KD6WJW. The following motions were approved:

\*Payment of expenses: \$123.41 for purchase of an ICOM 2100 raffle prize; \$40 for mailing list expenses; \$17.97 for meeting refreshments.

\*The schedule of club activities for 2004.

\*Payment of \$1100 for the 2004 Flea Market fee. This includes an additional \$100 to cover potential losses. Insurance, the other major cost, should be coming down in the future.

\*A price schedule for the raffle tickets sold at the winter banquet.

The banquet speaker had not yet been announced. HRO will donate approximately \$200 worth of prizes for the banquet. There were numerous suggestions for future club meeting speaker topics.

- Martin, KD6WJW

## Ham Radio in the Movies

The other night I was watching a movie on the cable called "Phenomenon" with John Travolta and Forrest Whittaker. Whittaker plays a farmer, who also is a ham radio operator. He identified himself as WB6QLF. I thought that this was too coincidental in a movie and maybe it was the call of the director's son, or maybe the ham radio technical advisor or something. I was close! I looked the call up on QRZ.com and this is what I found!!

- de Frank, K6FCW

### QLF

Just about every ham knows that the Q-Signal known as QLF is an indicator of a rather poor Morse code operator. If another ham tells you to QLF he is actually telling you that you sound as if you are sending CW with your left foot. But not this time. Charlie Kotterman KA8OQF has this report that will make you think twice when you hear the term QLF:

Last summer while visiting relatives in Arizona I attended the local premier of the John Travolta film Phenomenon. You may have heard my report about the critical plot twist involving ham radio. And what appeared to be an inside joke with Forrest Whittaker's character using the call WB6QLF.

As all us cw ops know, the signal QLF is the request for a less than precise operator to send with his left foot. Imagine my surprise, when after a little digging I discovered that WB6QLF is a real person, who worked closely with his then next door neighbor who wrote the script for Phenomenon. The writer's name is Gerald Tapago:

"I knew nothing about ham radio operation, but luckily I had a neighbor who was very versed in it, so he helped me. I immediately called Charley and said, This is what I want to do in the story. How would it work. And he helped by explaining it to me. And then I sent him a draft of the script before I sent it out to anyone. So he could kind of check out that area of the script. I asked Charley if in the script I could go ahead and use his actual callsign. And he said yes. Disney had to have him sign things so he could waive that. And so that is the one inside thing I know about that. It is an actual callsign and Charley was nice enough to let me use his callsign." Tapago

The ham who helped all this come about says that all the attention he has gotten has come as a complete surprise. By his own admission, he is a bit publicity shy. But he did consent to answer the big question on my mind.

Chuck Roblin, WB6QLF, are you a real person?

"Yea, I just wanted to say that, this is on the level. And the screen writer Gerald Tapago, is a very good friend of mine. I'm the for real WB6QLF." WB6QLF

As it turns out, the fictional character is one of the years top movies does have a real life counterpart, and one that all of us can be proud of.

**Banquet Pictures**



## CLUB INFORMATION

President: Mikel Lechner, KN6QI  
Vice President: Steve Stearns, K6OIK  
Treasurer: Frank Weiss, K6FCW  
Secretary: Martin Liberman, KD6WJW  
Radio Officer: Open  
Training Officer: Mike Zensius, KG6GUE  
Relay Editor: Mark Hardy KG6GRR

FARS Board: Dick Baldwinson N6ATD, Herb Davidson KF6BKL, David Cooper KE6PFF, Howard Takaoka KG6GRO, Phil Hawkins KA6MZE, Robert Flemate, KE6TFU.

Station Trustee: Stan Kuhl, K6MA  
FARS Web Page: <http://www.fars.k6ya.org>  
Download Relay: <http://www.fars.k6ya.org/relay>

Club members and non-members are encouraged to subscribe to the FARS Announcement list by browsing [www.fars.k6ya.org/mail](http://www.fars.k6ya.org/mail), clicking on Subscribe/Unsubscribe and following the instructions under "Subscribing to fars-announce."

You may also submit an announcement to the FARS Announcement at [fars-announce@svpal.org](mailto:fars-announce@svpal.org). The list is moderated and messages will be posted as approved by the list moderator.

The FARS board of directors may be reached at [fars-board@svpal.org](mailto:fars-board@svpal.org)

Club meetings are held at 7 PM on the fourth Friday of each month except January (Winter Banquet); and sometimes there are changes for June (for field day) and Nov. & Dec (for holidays).

Annual club membership is \$20. Club badges are \$6. Visitors are always welcome! Directions in this newsletter. Talk-in: N6NFI (145.23-, 100 Hz) or W6ASH repeater (145.27-, 100 Hz).

The FARS *Relay* is the official monthly newsletter of the Foothills Amateur Radio Society. Contributions to the newsletter from members, family, and guests are earnestly solicited! Contributions subject to editing and/or compression. ASCII files via Internet or diskettes preferred; but all readable forms welcome.

Here is how to reach the editor:

Mark Hardy, KG6GRR  
Mail: 2998 Jerald Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95051  
Voice: 408-243-0701 (Before 9 PM, preferred)  
Fax: 408-243-0701  
Email: [kg6grr@arrl.net](mailto:kg6grr@arrl.net), At FARS meetings.

## Radio Fest 2004

RadioFest 2004 will be Saturday, February 28, 8 AM until 2 PM, in Monterey, CA. Sponsored by the Naval Postgraduate School Amateur Radio Club, the event has evolved into a more casual hamfest with no commercial vendors. RadioFest 2004 will have free Amateur Radio exam sessions, ham equipment swap tables, guest speakers and technical demonstrations. It will be held at the Monterey Moose Family Center, 500 Canyon Del Rey Blvd (Hwy 218), Monterey. Talk-in will be on the K6LY 146.97 repeater (94.8 CTCSS) Swapfest tables are free and available on a first come, first served basis (limit 2) the morning of the event. Doors open for setup only at 6 AM. There's more information on the RadioFest 2004 Web site <http://www.radiofest.org/>.

-Brian Broggie, W6FVI

## Symbol Added To Morse Code

*The Associated Press:* Morse code is entering the 21st century – or at least the late 20th. The 160-year-old communication system now has a new character to denote the "@" symbol used in e-mail addresses.

In December, the International Telecommunications Union, which oversees the entire frequency spectrum, from amateur radio to satellites, voted to add the new character.

The new sign, which will be known as a "commat," consists of the signals for "A" (dot-dash) and "C" (dash-dot-dash-dot), with no space between them.

The new sign is the first in at least several decades, and possibly much longer. Among ITU officials and Morse code aficionados, no one could remember any other addition.

"It's a pretty big deal," said Paul Rinaldo, chief technical officer for the American Radio Relay League, the national association for amateur radio operators. "There certainly hasn't been any change since before World War II."

The change will allow ham radio operators to exchange e-mails more easily. That is because – in an irony of the digital age – they often use Morse to initiate conversations over the Internet.

"People trade their e-mail addresses a lot," said Nick Yocanovich, a Morse code enthusiast who lives in Arnold, Md.

Morse code uses two audible electrical signals – short "dots" and slightly longer "dashes" – to form letters, numbers and punctuation marks. Created in the 1830s by Samuel F.B. Morse, who invented the telegraph, the electronic signaling system spread across the world, and until the past few decades, it was used widely by the public, industry and government.

"It was the beginning of the Information Age," said Gary Fowlie, Chief of Media Relations and Public Information for the ITU, which has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

When Morse died in 1872, more than 650,000 miles of telegraph wire circled the globe. By the early 20th century, Morse messages were being sent wirelessly, via radio.

Perhaps the most famous Morse communication is the international distress signal S-O-S. It consists of three dots, three dashes, and three more dots.

But with the proliferation of digital communications technologies such as cell phones, satellites and the Internet, Morse code has lost its pre-eminent place in global communications. "There's really no reason to use it anymore," said Robert Colburn, research coordinator for the History Center of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Today it's largely the province of ham radio operators, including 700,000 in the United States. While not all of them communicate regularly in Morse, almost all are familiar with it.

Some ham operators wouldn't mind more changes to spice up the language. While Morse code has a period, a question mark, and even a semicolon, it offers no simple way to articulate excitement.

"I was hoping they'd add a character for the exclamation point," said Yocanovich, who is active in the International Morse Preservation Society. "It expresses an emotion that's difficult to get across any other way."