



# CROSSTALK

A Publication of the TRW Amateur Radio Club



## SEPTEMBER 1994 CALENDAR

Every Monday: DCS Net on 145.32 Repeater at 7:30 PM

Every Wednesday: Emergency Communications Team Net on 145.32 Repeater at Noon

Every Thursday: Club Net on 145.32 Repeater at 7 PM, Club news, etc.

Every Friday: Club Breakfast in Bldg S cafeteria, 7-8 AM

Sept 6: Executive Board Meeting, E2/1200, 5:30 PM

Sept 10-12: ARRL VHF QSO Party

Sept 13: NO ECT MEETING due to picnic

Sept 13: Club Picnic at Polliwog Park, Noon

Sept 16: Technical Chairman's Meeting, Bldg S Shack, Noon

Sept 24: Swap Meet, Parking lot, NW corner of Aviation & Marine, 7-11:30 AM, T-HUNT at Noon

**EDITORS NOTES:** The deadline for CROSSTALK submissions is the executive board meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. If you have something and will be later than that please call and I will try to accommodate you.

**VE TESTING:** An updated list of local VE test locations and dates can be found on KB6AXK-1, 145.690 packet. There are VE test locations in the L.A. area almost every weekend. If someone prints a clean copy for me I'll be happy to publish it in CROSSTALK.

**CLUB NEWS:** The July picnic was fun. Only 3 of us showed with QRP rigs, Frank, WA6RAY, Dave, WA5DJJ and Bill, KJ6GR. I worked a station in Simi, CA using 2 watts and a 55 foot length of wire I threw up in the available trees. This isn't what you would call DX but it sure is fun. Dave has a neat looking setup with an old Argonaut and a homebrew small loop.

A few of the hardworking club regulars took the second tower off building 65. We will be starting to setup the new shack, please call Phil, N6PB and volunteer to help. The same people show up all the time to do the work and I know some of them are getting burned out.

Contact Ray Enriquez, KD6IGI if you are interested in this months VHF contest, he's thinking of mountaintopping somewhere(?).

## NEW TRW LOGO PATCHES

Thanks to the efforts of Ray Enriquez, KD6IGI, we now have beautiful, embroidered club logo patches. In recent weeks, I sent a patch to each club member. If you did not receive your patch, call me at 813-9351.

Nina Whiddon, KN6FL  
Membership Chairman

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## CLUB ACTIVITIES:

Activities are an important part of any club like ours. We have been getting a good turnout at the evening meetings. I personally enjoy not having to rush back to work after a meeting and there is more time for socializing. This month we will have another noon picnic, I'm not sure if it will be a QRP event but I found it too rushed to set up, operate, eat and tear down in one hour at the last picnic. Contact Brian DeAro, KN6OW for picnic details.

The club net on Thursday evenings is very popular, thanks to Rich, N6CIZ. It's nice to see so many members checking in and it provides a great way for newcomers to get involved. The latest *NEWSLINE* bulletin is usually played. Rich livened up the 7/28 net by having all checkins report how many 2 meter radios they had. I was walking by the beach with my wife and I was sure glad to hear how many radios the average person has, I was just about average with 4 (5 if you count KC6FNO's HT).

If any of you have suggestions for club activities please contact any of the board members, call the club Hotline (answering machine) or come to a board meeting.

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## For Sale:

- New IC-736 HF + 6 meter Transceiver, won in contest. \$1800 firm. (List is \$2250, HRO price is 1879+tax, I don't have it yet and I don't plan to use it.)
- Ten Tec Argonaut II QRP Transceiver, 5 watts out on all bands 160-10 meters, general coverage receiver. \$1000 firm. Excellent condition.
- Kent Iambic Paddle Key. Excellent Cond. \$50.
- MFJ-247 VSWR analyzer, 1.8-30 MHz, w/counter. Xlnt cond. \$100.

Call Bill Shanney, KJ6GR (310) 542-9899 evenings after 6 PM.

## Newcomers Guide to Books

by Bill Shanney, KJ6GR

I'm an avid reader of books and magazines about amateur radio. The growth of the amateur radio population, mainly in the technician class, has created a large market for beginner level books. The publishers have responded with a large variety of books (and videos) covering all popular modes of operation and activities. In this article I'll present books that are helpful, that doesn't mean I don't think highly of other books, just that they may not be for beginners.

I'll begin with my favorite subject, antennas. The ARRL Antenna Book is the best overall reference on amateur radio antennas available. The latest edition (17th) even comes with antenna design software. This is a pricey book at \$30 but worth every penny. Copies of the 16th edition are still available at some ham stores for \$20. For those looking for some real basics W1FBs Antenna Book by Doug DeMaw and Easy Up Antennas by Ed Noll are good choices. The series of antenna books by Bill Orr and Stu Cowan are also excellent, I've built many of their designs and they work well.

Detailed information on all kinds of amateur operation as well as awards can be found in The ARRL Operating Manual, I consider this book a must have. The best overall technical reference available is The ARRL Handbook For Radio Amateurs. The ARRL also publishes books aimed at getting beginners started in popular activities. I find Your Packet Companion by Steve Ford, WB8IMY very helpful. Other titles in this series include Your VHF Companion, Your QRP Operating Companion, Low Profile Amateur Radio, Your RTTY/AMTOR Companion and The DXCC Companion.

CQ also publishes beginners books and videos. The VHF "How To" Book and its companion video "Getting Started in VHF", The Packet Radio Operators Manual and "Getting Started in Packet Radio" and Ham Radio Horizons: The Book and "Ham Radio Horizons: The Video" are among their offerings. The CQ "Buyers Guides" and new "Beginners Guide" contain excellent introductory articles on a variety of subjects of current interest to hams.

When I get interested in something new I usually buy a beginners book on the topic to become familiar with the basics, ask some questions of knowledgeable hams already involved in the activity and then invest in equipment. I also look back over the past few years of QST and CQ magazines for "how to" articles and read the monthly columns that pertain to the subject of interest. I recently got interested in 6 meter operation and used Six Meters: A Guide to the Magic Band by Ken Neubeck, WB2AMU (Worldradio Books) as a guide. It was like having an Elmer right there and saved me lots of frustration while trying something new (and fun!).

I highly recommend two magazines, QST and CQ. The "New Ham Companion" series in QST is excellent for beginners or more experienced hams looking for something new to try (it got me interested in six meters). CQ magazine usually has several articles aimed at newcomers plus a column by Bill Welsch, "Bill's Basics" which is a potpourri of interesting information on basic amateur radio. Both magazines have regular columns on DX, contests, propagation, VHF, etc. for those with special interests.

## **Book Review: The VHF "How To" Book, by Joe Lynch, N6CL**

Reviewed by: Bill Shanney, KJ6GR

Joe Lynch, N6CL, CQ magazine's VHF editor has written a very interesting and informative book on VHF + operation. I found it to be enjoyable reading and especially liked the use of short stories to illustrate important points. I highly recommend reading this book to new Technician class operators or any ham interested in getting started or back into VHF + operating. The book's 19 chapters and 3 appendices cover all popular forms of operation, propagation, contesting, awards, band plans and much more.

Part I of this book starts with a discussion on the various factors that go into assembling a station. Basic equipment and antennas are discussed and some good advice is provided for determining the right equipment for your interests. Antenna installation and shack construction are covered with an emphasis on safety. Several chapters are devoted to popular operating modes including FM repeaters, satellites, packet, and amateur TV.

Part II is all about weak signal communications. Propagation modes such as sporadic-E, Tropo, meteor scatter, aurora, EME and F2 are discussed along with operating hints and protocols. Grid locators, contesting and awards are also covered. Some good advice on mountain topping and rover operation as well as QSL practices round out this part of the book. The appendices contain a wealth of information on band plans, clubs, newsletters and propagation beacons.

The book is written so the average Technician class operator can understand the material but contains enough detail to satisfy the more technical amateur. References are cited for further reading by those more technically inclined. I originally bought this book to give to my son, KC6FNO, but he will have to wait until I reread a few chapters. This is the best beginners level VHF overview book I've seen to date.

## **Book Review: Six Meters. A Guide to the Magic Band by Ken Neubeck, WB2AMU**

Reviewed by: Bill Shanney, KJ6GR

I had never operated 6 meters but after reading a few articles in QST and listening to a few club members talk about sporadic-E propagation my interest was piqued. Wanting to learn more, I ordered a copy of Ken Neubeck's book from Worldradio Books. Ken's enthusiasm for this interesting band is evident in the book. It really rubbed off on me, I now have a TS-60 and a 6 element Yagi.

The book begins with an overview and a short history of 6 meter operating. A summary of the wide variety of propagation types found on this interesting band and their capabilities is well presented. New and vintage equipment is reviewed along with a little history that brought back memories of ads in QST when I was a teenager. Antennas are summarized for fixed and portable use (it's surprising how well simple antennas work on this band).

There's a chapter on 6 meter DXing, both working foreign stations and rare grid squares is covered. A discussion of TVI occupies another chapter. Mobile and mountaintopping operation covered as well as some unique operations such as radio control and AM. A whole chapter is devoted to the causes of Sporadic-E and Aurora Propagation.

This book contains everything you need to get started on 6 meters. It is well written and easy to understand. Never before has so much information on this band been put together in one book. I highly recommend it to all hams with an interest in "The Magic Band".

# W6TRW Field Day Results '93 & '94

