

Snohomish County Hams Club
General Membership Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting

0800 October 24, 2020

1. The meeting was called to order at 0800 by the President Ray Smith KD7AVP.
2. Welcome
 - A. Zoom Etiquette and Protocols (Ray KD7AVP)
 - a. First & Last Name plus Call Sign in Screen Name
 - b. Keep yourself muted unless you are called upon to speak
 - c. Use the Hand Raising function in Zoom if you want to speak. The moderator will be watching for raised hands. Thanks to Dave for being moderator today. You can use the Chat or the Hand Raising.
 - B. Any First Time Visitors/Guests? None today
3. Reports
 - A. Secretary's Report - Anne K2MTN announced that the minutes of the last meeting in September 2020 had been posted on the Club website on October 6th. She requested approval of the posted minutes. A motion was made (by Ray KD7AVP) to accept the minutes as posted; It was seconded (by Tim KJ7AKV) and approved by vote. No questions.
 - B. Treasurer's report – Randy AJ7B announced that the monthly treasurer's report had been posted on the Club website. He screen-shared the report. Income of \$70.07 and Expenses of \$263.50 (we paid insurance). Checking Account Balance of \$7,154.15, Repeater Maintenance Fd \$405.42, Repeater Endowment Fd \$12,280.69, General Investment FD \$295.02. No questions. A motion was made to accept the report as posted (by Anne K2MTN); it was seconded (by Tim KJ7AKV) and approved by vote.
 - C. VE Report - Randy said people are asking him about VE Tests but he tells them that until we move to phase 3 ...there's not much chance we will have any tests. He is referring anyone looking for a test to the group named Lake Washington Amateur Radio Club which does online tests.
 - D. Education report – Ray asked if there is anything to report and Jim Blake KD7JB said “No, we are un-educated”...Ray laughed and said he could think of some great comebacks for that but he would skip it and move on.
 - E. New Member Introduction – Anne K2MTN introduced
 - a. Mark Lutch KC7JYO
 - b. Paul Flesher N5SJQ
 - F. List of Attendees – Anne K2MTN read a list of the members attending today using her attendance sheet and the names listed in participants window. There were 41 members marked here on the attendance sheet.

4. Old Business

A. Repeater Update

a. New Repeaters - Rob NR30 says he needs to make another trip up there. He has a report that the APRS isn't working and also check "the wires thing" after reconnecting the HAM WAN...There is a question about how it behaves from an EchoLink standpoint. Also, he hasn't checked yet to see if the PCs are having an issue (related to Ham WAN?). So, that still needs to be done. Ray added that he still needs Rob to conduct the annual Inventory for the Club Assets up there also.

b. Old Repeaters – Henry KH6VM says everything seems to be working now. It was a Windows update that took the repeater down a couple of times. It should be working okay now. Ray said thanks to both Henry and Rob for keeping those systems operating. Thank you very much.

B. Nominating Committee. (Ray KD7AVP and Dennis Bradford W7DEB) It is that time of year where we are taking nominations for Board positions. He introduced Dennis Bradford to speak about the Elections. Dennis said that we hope to have an election soon. We are looking for candidates. We were looking for a Board Member candidate ...we now have one but we would sure like to have more. If you are interested please let Ray, or Loren Hole, or Dennis know. Our main need is for the position of President. So, if you would like to be President for 2021, then...we want to hear from you. If you have questions about the position...we can put you in contact with past presidents. Please give that some thought in the next few days. And, any of the other positions...If you would like to run for them...please let us know. Dennis' email is W7DEB@msn.com It is also listed in the Roster in the Members Only section of our website and his phone number is there if you wish to call to discuss the positions...especially the President position. If you would like to step up or you have a friend that you would like to encourage to run for President. Clearly, don't submit their name unless they are willing to run.

The Election is going to be online this year. Dennis said we will send out a ballot by email to current year paid members (includes Life Members). It will be up to the member to initiate an email back to Dennis with their votes so that the Nominating Committee can print it out and get a hard copy and have multiple people count them. It is important that we continue our process of having multiple people count the votes and validate the results. We are hoping to send the Ballots by email in about a week or two.

If anyone has a better idea about how to conduct the Election by email...please let Ray, Dennis, or Loren Hole know. If you have any questions...please let Ray, Dennis, or Loren know and they will get you answers.

C. Net Controllers. (Ray KD7AVP) We've had a couple of Net Controllers leave and we'd like to get some new participants in the Net Controller position. We are particularly looking for people who can be Net Controllers on the Sunday Net... but the Thursday Night YL Net would also like to add a person. Members who are interested in learning more about being Net Controller during weekly Nets should contact Ray to apply.

5. New Business

A. December Members Meeting (Ray KD7AVP) Normally we don't have a December Meeting we have a Holiday Party. Due to the Covid restrictions this year there is just no way we can have a party this year. So, the Board is brainstorming a plan. We still want to do something and have a get together. So, we are planning to have a Zoom meeting in December where we can all get together. It is not going to be a general meeting like this. We want a chance for members to interact with each other.

We are brain storming on what to do and also about what Date to hold it. Currently we are planning to move the December meeting to Saturday 12/19 at 8am by Zoom. We want to avoid the Holiday weekend... and so we are not going to do it on the 4th Saturday. The Christmas Party is usually somewhere around the 19th... but please let us know if you have any input on that date.

We have some ideas we are considering, but if you have some ideas for the December that gets the membership together ...we would definitely like to hear them. Please send them to Ray or the Board.

Victor Harris KI7MMZ suggested we meet in a parking lot (like Fred Meyer), socially distance, and do a gift exchange.

B. Proposed FCC Amateur License Fees NPRM (Ray KD7AVP) The FCC has proposed an increase in fees to \$50 per Amateur License add, upgrade, renewal, and official copy of your license. It sounds like they want to ding us with fees for pretty much everything.

There was an email sent by the Secretary Anne K2MTN with some information about this item and a second email with suggestions from the ARRL about how to respond. There are some ideas for what to put in your response. If you have any questions about this item feel free to ask any of the Board members and we will do our best to help answer them. Anne K2MTN pointed out that if someone became a Technician, then upgraded to General, then upgraded to Extra...that would cost \$150 (\$50 x 3). She said this is something we should all be concerned about. It might deter some people from entering the hobby or continuing. We don't want fees to be a barrier to people doing Ham Radio. John N7AME said that he did write a letter and post it to the FCC comments. John pointed out that this Rule Proposal comes from the "Budget Group" in Government and it is not a group that is familiar with the benefits of Ham Radio. He suggests we tell them that you are an Amateur and you aren't allowed to make any money for doing Amateur Radio by law (and that doesn't take into account the cost of equipment that we all invest in to do radio). John says that if you are writing a letter and need help he would be happy to share what he wrote with you to help give you ideas. He didn't copy the ARRL suggestions word-for-word because that would just be repeating the same thing over again. You can email him if you wish to discuss it.

The FCC comment deadline ends November 16th.

C. Vanity Ham License Plates in Washington (Jim Blake KD7JB). Yesterday evening Jim stopped by to get tabs for his truck. He has a Ham Call Sign Plate. His Ham license expired in July and he renewed it about a month later. Same Call Sign. No changes...There is a two year grace period for renewing. No harm no foul. 3 months later Jim went to do his truck tabs and a message popped up that said he needed to provide documentation. It was not clear what documentation they were talking about. So, yesterday he stopped by the local license place to get the tabs and the staff person looked it up and said "your FCC license has expired" and Jim said "yes, it expired and then I renewed it. I have a renewed license." 15 minutes later the staff person was able to verify that the FCC license has been renewed and it is active. However, Washington State system looks at it as if he has a new Call Sign. So, he had to spend \$140 to get new Plates printed that he doesn't need with the same Call Sign. The staff person called a manager and explained that it was the same Call Sign and the manager said that Jim still owed \$140 and the "plates are in the mail". So, lesson learned about Washington State... that if you renew your FCC license after the expiration date and you have Ham Plates...they are going to charge you \$140 for new plates whether you need them or not. Curt Green said he went through almost that exact thing but his license was not expired and his license is not a Vanity. They didn't charge him for new plates... but he did have to spend another 15 minutes at the Licensing place trying to sort it out and verify his Call Sign. He is afraid that is a pattern that will repeat again this coming year. Steve Burling said that he went through a similar thing. His FCC License was not expired ...and the Washington State's excuse for charging for new plates was that Wash State has to give you new plates every once in so often. This is because of something on the plate that the Police Scanner can read. Even though Steve's plates weren't worn out ...he had to have new plates. It is just another ding that they use to siphon a little more money off of us. Jim Blake said that he has heard that they have to replace the plates every once in a while because the reflective material wears out. In the center of your license plate...you can't actually see it...but when you drive by a police cruiser they can scan it and ID data pops up that they can see. Jim thinks that his plates weren't old enough for the reflective material to be worn out. Anne Garay said this year she had an experience kind of similar to this...What happened was her FCC license expired in May and she got it renewed ahead of time. She received a letter from the state around that time saying "we see that your FCC license is expired and we need you to send an official copy of your FCC license to the State". Anne downloaded an official copy from the FCC and mailed it to the State as directed. Note that an "official copy of my FCC License would be \$50 if that FCC Proposed License Fee Rule goes into effect. She mailed it to the State and everything was fine when her tabs came in the mail to be renewed about 3 months later.

D. Plug for President Position Rob Salsgiver NR3O wanted to say to the members that if anyone is considering running for President ...this would be the year to do it. You are following 2020 when we weren't able to do much together or do many activities. The bar is set pretty low to have a Great Year in 2021 that surpasses expectations and exceeds what we did in 2020. If you've considered it...This would be a good year to give it a go. (It is also a good year to do Field Day Coordinator, or 7QP, or pretty much any of those)

E. Victor Harris KI7MMZ said his dog is named "Dennis" for Dennis Rodman who is a Detroit athlete. Rodman was drafted in 1986 by the Detroit Pistons. The trainer has a tradition of naming the dogs after Detroit athletes.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34am. Moved by Ray KD6AVP second by Anne K2MTN, passed by vote.

Presentation: Rob Salsgiver NR3O and Randy Mather AJ7B did a presentation which was an overview of their "Homemade Antenna Tuner". The Powerpoint they shared was titled "Getting Loopy...Adding a 160m loop to the NR3O Antenna Farm".

Rob NR3O started upgrading his single radio to a hamshack sized for the family of 4 starting in 2017. His hamshack is set up for 4 operator stations with sufficient antennas to support those. Goals include contesting and remote operation capabilities.

Using a 4 x 8 antenna switch...the plan is to allow up to 4 operators to select from up to (eventually) 8 antennas. A 160m loop is one of the planned options.

A 160m loop design... was chosen for several reasons. 1) few Antenna designs support 160m, 2) fortunate enough to have the space/terrain, 3) a loop typically has one of the Lowest noise floors of any antenna.

NR3O Loop details...Loop feed point is 200' from hamshack. Initial loop was 500' long. 25' of 450ohm ladder-line from feed point to coax junction box. DX Engineering Balun transition from ladder-line to coax. 180' of LMR-400 from tower on hill down to shack. Loop operates up to 1500 watts.

Tuner thoughts... Best position for tuner is at the Antenna Feed Point. AJ7B/NR3O went with a remote tuner. Randy has a 160m loop and a manual tuner home-built and based on the design by Richard Measures (AG6K) in 1990.

Rob and Randy shared lots of pictures of Randy's tuner and also the new tuner they built for Rob. They made it remote control using an Arduino "Uno" Dual Motor Driver (later the Arduino was updated to a "Mega"). Added a variable capacitor with more capacitance. Had to find a motor with a dual shaft gearbox. Randy wrote a small software app to control the tuner remotely.

Anne Garay asked...How much did all the parts cost? The largest Inductors were \$170 each. The capacitors were \$100+

Jim Blake asked if they were using a serial port? No, they are using 10 pins of the Arduino.

Victor Harris asked if the Antenna was Vertical or Horizontal? ...And, what is the orientation of the Antenna? The Antenna is Horizontal and not movable. It is square in orientation.

Eric KI7ZYC asked what language the software app that Randy wrote was using? Using Arduino Code (Java?)

Submitted by Anne Garay K2MTN
SCHC Secretary