



Skagit Static

Serving the interests of Radio Amateurs in and around Skagit County

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Ragnar 2012

Well, we apparently made it through another year of volunteering at the Ragnar Relay, Northwest Passage edition. For those who don't know, the Ragnar Relay is an overnight running race, testing your limits. Run over two days and one night, it started in Blaine on July 19th and ended up in Langley on Whidbey Island, July 21st.

To keep everyone safe, you know with traffic and such, 21 volunteers from the local ham communities took up radios and coffee to man checkpoints throughout the course. RASC members took care of the Skagit County side of things.



These are KF7PKC, Herb and Anne Fuge at both Exchange 18 in LaConnor and Exchange 19 in Anacortes and a nighttime view of crossing Fidalgo Bay. courtesy of Mary O'Farrell, KE7FQJ

Technician class graduates

by Norm W6NIM

At the conclusion of Ken Sousa's, N7AXJ, Technician class on July 14th we held a testing session for the students and several walk-ins, with the following results:

New Technician

Corrina Marote, KF7WUO ~~ Tanner Clawson, KF7WUP

Upgrade General

James Farrington, KF7ORY call changed to K7AMF ~~ Tyson Clawson, KF7PUY

Upgrade Extra

Beverly Fitzgerald, W6LDP ~~ Brandy Tinch, KD8SBY

Congratulations to the new licensees, and thanks to Ken for his much appreciated efforts in teaching the classes that have proved so successful in generating new Hams. And more thanks to the RASC VE team

John Bellinger, K7LVJ ~~ Dave Glassman, KF7LQQ
Steve Case, WA7ETE ~~ Norm Stewart, W6NIM

Our Mission: The Radio Amateurs of Skagit County is a service organization dedicated to promote amateur radio, provide communications support for other organizations, and encourage visitors interested in Ham Radio.

The wonder of J-Poles

By Robin Sizemore

I recently received my license, yeah, but that came with a boat owners problem. In other words, a hole you pour money into. At least that is my perception. I have two radios, one is a Yeasu handheld that is both 2m and 70cm. The other is an Alinco handheld about the size of a pack of cigarettes.

The Alinco is run by three AA batteries and I keep it in my purse for emergencies, although, my mobile phone is better for that. The Yeasu, I use primarily. Only problem is I hear fine, but people say they receive a scratchy signal.



I figured I needed an external antenna. And so starts the money into the black hole. I wanted one that works for both bands that I could semi permanently mount and not have my landlord screaming at me. That left whip antennas or the ever popular J-Pole. I looked at both and finally decided on the J-Pole.

Robert Cummings, KC0SO

While there is as many configurations out there as there are cars, they all do share the same characteristics:

- They are easy to erect.
- There are no radials.
- They are pretty much "stealth".
- Minimum static charge build up.
- They are easy to put up.
- And many many more.

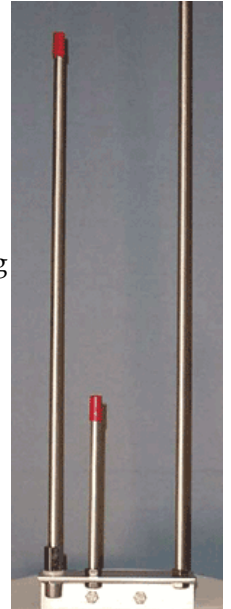
Now a days, people make them from copper tubing, aluminum rods, or PVC with 300 ohm twin lead inside it. I have also seen twin lead with a hook on the top so you can hang it from a tree and roll it up and put in your pocket when done.

Robert Cummings was at the last RASC meeting and had

his J-Pole for show-in-tell. His was a popular design that is currently sold by Arrow Antennas. The difference is they charge \$39 plus \$12 shipping and you wait two weeks to get it.

His version looks the same and is constructed from parts available at a hardware store or Amazon.com spending a total of \$20 and you can have it running hours after buying the parts.

The design is simple with a 490 mm driven element made out of 10 mm aluminum rod, a 70 cm resonator next to it, 162 mm long and a 1462 mm 2 m resonator completing the package. All mounted on an aluminum plate. The work is threading the rods to accept a SO239 stud mount.



When done, it has a low SWR of 1.5:1 and works for base stations, mobile, and handheld rigs.

If you want specific details, please contact Robert Cummings, KC0SO.

As for myself, I have ordered one online and am waiting anxiously for it's arrival. I hope it solves the scratchy signal issue. Put it up on a pole and cross my fingers.

If that works well, I think I will go to the effort to build one using these directions to mount on my 5th wheel.

The next step is a cheap whip antenna for my VW and an undecided antenna type for my Bronco.

Historical note for the History Channel types, which I'm sure you know, the J-Pole is a descendant of the Windom Antenna made famous by Loren Windom in 1923 and featured in QST in 1929. Something good from the Great Depression era. He described it as a compromise multiband antenna.

His antennas are still being used today.

My next foray into this mess will be to get a HF rig, preferably a mobile unit I can swap between my RV and my cars.

I can only afford a small boat at this point. The black hole will still be small.

Note: my journal into the every changing world of becoming a world class ham. - Robin

Earthquake Drill in Washington for first time

by Robin Sizemore KF7UXL

As most people know, Washington State is part of the Ring of Fire around the Pacific ocean. We also have tectonic plates right under us. A potential double whammy staring at us. You could be anywhere when an earthquake strikes: at home, at work, at school or driving down the road.

Now is how we will determine what our life will be after our next big earthquake. Are you prepared to survive the initial shock? Or will you be self sufficient until help can come, which by estimates is a few days at least?

Across the country there is an event called the Great ShakeOut. Locally, The Great Washington ShakeOut is a statewide opportunity to practice how to be safe during big earthquakes: “Drop, Cover and Hold On”, is what it is called.



The ShakeOut has also been organized to encourage you, and others to review and update emergency preparedness plans and supplies, and to make sure your space is secure in order to prevent damage and injuries.

The ShakeOut Drill is scheduled for 10:18 a.m. on October 18, 2012. What this means is wherever you are at that moment – at home, at work, at school, anywhere – you should **Drop, Cover, and Hold On**. Pretend there is a major earthquake occurring at that very moment, and stay in this position for at least 60 seconds. The ShakeOut is not something you need to leave work to participate in, just let people know what you are doing and invite them to participate. Businesses, organizations, schools, and government agencies can register and have their employees practice.

The main goal of the is to get Washingtonians prepared for major earthquakes. You can sign up for free at www.shakeout.org/washington/ and be counted in the ShakeOut Drill, get email updates, and more.

Since we are hams, the real question is, what will we be doing? What can we organize for your community? Take this time to do a net check in as if there was a real earthquake. The weekly net is one thing, actually having a “real” change to see how it works is even better.

There is even a PDF flyer for ham organizations to get you started located at: http://www.shakeout.org/washington/downloads/ShakeOut_WA_2012_radiogroups.pdf

Reverse 911 coming to Skagit County

What do you do if you have an emergency that needs a first responder to your location fast? You call 911, everyone knows that.

Well, what does the county do, when it has a really big emergency and needs to tell it's denizens what to do? Well? In the past it was police driving by with a speaker or fire department knocking on doors.

Skagit 911 has entered the modern age with reverse 911. Federal mandates make it necessary for Skagit County to have a notification system in place due to the Tesoro Refinery being so close by. If there is a major disaster, people need to be notified to either leave the area or take shelter in place.

Since 911 has all hard line phones in it's system, that's a start. However, this is the mobile age, where people use smartphones, VoIP, and other digital devices and may not have a POTS (plain old telephone system). They would not be able to contact you.

The county has implemented a system that will track all numbers and in the case of an emergency can ring up to 10K numbers a minute to get a message out. In the event of a major crises, they can call 15k numbers a minute. The calls will come from out of the area, so if you see an unknown area code, this is why. I can only assume they are taking lines where they can find them.

Locally, it is called the Communication Notification System of Skagit County, as Reverse911 is a name belonging to a communication company. But it is the same thing. If you go to Skagit911.com, you will find directions on how to add your numbers to their system. It is easy to do and you can change you information at any time.

It can also be configured by you to get calls about other than disasters, like public safety needs that are localized to a small area.

Give is a look and sign up!

Upcoming Events

Monthly Meeting

RASC meets at 7:00 PM on the second Friday of each month in the Cascade room of the Skagit Valley Hospital, 1415 East Kincaid, Mount Vernon. This is a business and social meeting, with occasional presentations of general interest to the members. Visitors are invited.

Silent Keys

Paul Douglas Cook, 64
(June 23, 1948 to July 19, 2012)

A resident of Moses Lake passed away Thursday, July 19, 2012 at home. He was born in Seattle, Washington on June 23, 1948, son of Dale and Ruth (Albrecht) Cook. He served in the U.S. Army and worked many years for Boeing.



Paul Cook family

According to Roger Monroe (K7NTW), Paul Cook (WA7WZQ) was one of the founding members of R.A.S.C.

The club wanted a repeater but was thinking small; Paul envisioned it on Lyman Hill and he knew it was going to cost a lot back when club was mostly broke. He started asking everyone he knew, non-hams included, to pitch in to the repeater fund. Look out if he knew you had a few bucks stashed away! The rest, as they say, is history.

Paul eventually moved to Greenbank on Whidbey Island, then to Moses Lake.

There will be a Memorial Service at 1pm on Saturday September 1, 2012 at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, 17010 NE 9th St Vancouver WA 98684. 360-885-7780) followed by a Celebration of Life in the Church Hall immediately proceeding the Service.

Family & Friends - All are welcome. If you have questions, Please contact: Sophia Stead at 206-650-7674 or sophiastead@hotmail.com

Thanks again Carol for your generous donation of coffee for the club fundraisers at Smokey Point and Bow Hill! Their coffee can be purchased at any of these locations:

“Same ol’ Grind”, “Rexville Store”, “Valley Co-op”, Blue Heron Café” and “Barb’s Beans”.



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Editor’s Note

E-mail your stories to rasconline@gmail.org and we’ll be happy to help you get it in print – in your very own club newsletter.

You don’t need to be a professional writer – we can provide editing services if you need them.

Robin Sizemore - Editor

KF7UXL