

# K7LED Relay



Volume 52, Issue 5

Mike & Key Amateur Radio Club – Seattle

May 2024

## President's Report

*Carl Reynolds N7CJR, President*

The countdown and prep for Field Day is well under way. David, WA7DY and Ivy, WA7IVY are heading up the effort again. I'm looking forward to another beautiful weekend at Marrowstone Island. I'd live out there if I could talk my wife into it. I would encourage everyone to help out in some way and sign up for one or more of the bands. I really have fun creating a pile up or squeezing into one. Looks like my dream of staying at what Rita called the Mike and Key Bed and Breakfast will have to wait another year. Hopefully there's a budget and its renovation has been put on the schedule already.

My activities with Renton ECS at the end of April included trips to a few fire stations and City Hall. We performed annual inventory and operations checks of 2m/70cm radios along with accessories, manuals and various forms. Good thing we do these checks as one radio would not transmit.

I have good and bad news about my 220 radio. I was able to check in to our Sunday evening net with a good signal report. 55 watts does help. However, there's an annoying buzzing when receiving and transmitting. Transmitting isn't as bad because I'm talking, but while listening to a long conversation, irritation level is very high. I'm still in the process of checking my antennas with the club analyzer. We'll see what the results are and look to improve propagation and reception.

I'm very encouraged with new activities popping up on a regular basis. POTAs, Winter Field Day, etc. Our entire club membership makes HAM radio something to look forward to as there's many different modes, special interests and ways to help our community and fellow HAMS.

Hope to see you at the May general membership meeting. FD24!

## Celebrating May Members

*By Scott Gilyeat, KC7SAG, Treasurer*

As of May 2024, these folks have been Mike & Key members for the number of years stated. Congratulations to all of you, and thank you for your participation and service. Happy Anniversary this month! Each of you makes us who we are.

*(Life Member, 25 years or more with the Club)  
(Anniversary Certificate)*

### Years

39	Michael Dinkelman	N7WA
35	Eric Snyder	N7DLV
28	Calvin D. Doss	KC7IYP
25	Atsushi Sasaki	W7KN
20	Mark Huffstutter	K7ZGT
20	Frank Tate	NA7O
17	Steve Rehnstrom	KE7KRT
12	Stephen Marth	WB7AAV
11	Adam Bruckner	KD7UAK
7	Tom Gilchrist	N7KHU
7	Dick Goodall	W7UDH
6	Tom Means	W7OXB
3	Norm Englund	K7TBI
3	Rich Gallaher	K7RCH
3	Tim Smith	W7EEE
3	Schevonne Vercueil	KJ7USZ
2	Ron Biesold	KJ7REB
2	Frank Hero III	KC1PIU
2	Stevan Olsen	KK7FQU
1	Steve Ignell	KK7MJD

**Chuck Jones, N7BV, Silent Key**

*Michael N7WA*

Chuck Jones N7BV joined the Mike & Key back in August 1996. Except then, he was KX4UH (yuck!), had just retired from the CIA, moved from Virginia, and started a sign-shop with his wife Karen. At the sign-shop he attracted the attention of Jack KB7ZS (in those days) and found the Mike & Key.

After retiring from the Navy, Chuck traveled the world for the CIA as a communications specialist and operated as 6W8FP 6W8A 9L1CA and CN8ES. He found contesting was the best way to operate as DX. While in Virginia, he also hooked to the big Potomac Valley ARC contest club.

While operating the sign-shop, Chuck was very active in the Mike & Key. Since he lived in a condo and had no home station, he became a regular at my contest multi-op's.



***Chuck's better side at a multi-op***

Using the resources of the sign-shop, he also created/donated many items as trophies, banners, and call sign plaques. My Mike & Key CW Forever banner comes off my shack wall only to go to Field Day.

Eventually, Chuck and Karen decided to fully retire to the Port Angeles area. They purchased some acreage and Chuck started an antenna farm and Karen worked the yard. Chuck setup his own multi-op station and was now the competition. He became active in the Clallam County ARC but usually reserved Field Day for CW Beach. He kept his

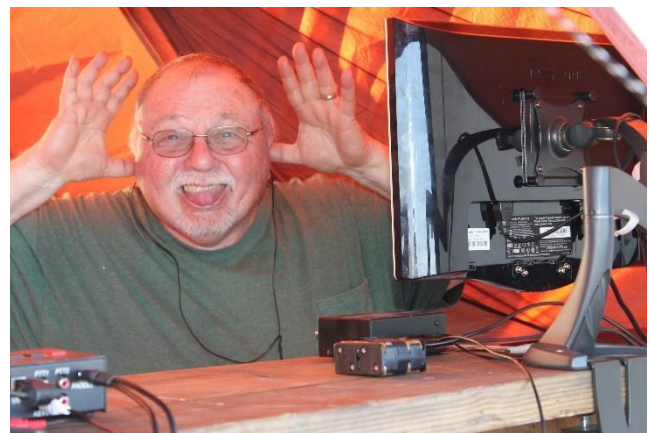
membership in the M&K, eventually achieving Life member status.



***Field Day Pot-luck***

Chuck and I would frequently travel to conventions together and share a room. (Actually, Karen was glad I could give her the occasional free weekend.) We usually did the Northwest DX Conventions and we also travelled to Visalia a couple times; once by driving down (*never again!*) .

Chuck actually won the CQWW contest (the world's largest and most popular) one year while overseas with the CIA. His plaque never arrived. I did some research using some old CQWW archives and confirmed this wasn't one of his old war stories. I contacted the sponsors for the CQWW and paid to have another plaque made. I surprised him by presenting it to him at one of the DX convention banquets. I am sure it still hangs in his shack.



***My favorite shot of Chuck at CW Beach***



We rarely agreed when it came to politics (and he loved to talk politics) but were never disagreeable. I did have to put up with his Fox News addiction in the hotel rooms but would gladly do so again to have him back.

The past few years have been hard on Chuck's health. Unfortunately, it also coincided with Diane's health issues and the pandemic so visits became few and far between. We had planned for the convention in Spokane last August but he pulled out abruptly. The phone calls and emails quit too. Karen was also experiencing health issues and emails to her went unanswered.

Chuck passed on April 18th. Karen passed four days later. I will miss them both very much.

**What is Happening with RAMROD?  
George Thornton AE7G**

The RAMROD bicycle rally has been in the news lately.

In what would have been the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ride, National Park officials denied a permit to allow the ride to enter into the roads on the south end of the park (between Longmire entrance and Stevens Canyon entrance). The Park indicated that was a permanent decision and RAMROD would not be allowed back into the most scenic part of the ride.

RAMROD is operated by the Redmond Cycling Club, a nonprofit corporation. I am the RAMROD Director and have held that position since 2007.

The Park was willing to allow us to bypass the south end of the park using Skate Creek Road. In the past, when the southern roads were not available due to construction, we had used the Skate Creek route as the only alternative to get around the mountain. However, that route is not popular with riders.

The Redmond Cycling Club Board of Directors met and concluded the ride was not sustainable without access to the southern roads. We had already experienced a 20% decline in attendance and based on their assessment of the rider sentiment in the community they felt the ride could not be sustained with a permanent Skate Creek route.

The announcement that RAMROD was being cancelled because a requested permit as denied

sent shock waves through the general community and there were many voiced objections. Representative Kim Schreier became involved and held several meetings and discussions with Park officials and RCC Board Members.

We are pleased to report that a solution was found. RAMROD is being moved to September 4, 2024. We will be allowed into the southern roads (Stevens Canyon Corridor) and will be able to pursue our usual course.

As a pilot, Redmond Cycling Club agreed to make the suggested changes and is now actively involved in reorganizing for the September date. How successful we will be will depend both on continuing rider support as well as volunteer support.

The HAM radio community has been a fundamental support for RAMROD almost since the beginning. Without your support RAMROD could not happen. If you are available to help on the 4<sup>th</sup>, please let me know and I will pass your name on.

There will be several changes because of the September date:

1. We will start and finish at the Fairgrounds on the east side of Enumclaw.
2. We will go "reverse course" (clockwise) instead of our usual counterclockwise course
3. We will start at our usual 5 AM time and all riders need to be off the course by 8 PM. Because of this timing the ride will be in legal darkness for the first hour of the ride. Riders will need lights for at least the first hour, or wait until legal daylight to start.
4. With this route all of the serious climbing will be completed in the first 70 miles.
5. There is a new pedestrian bridge from Buckley to Enumclaw that will allow riders to avoid the major roads in the area.

We are very pleased to be able to continue the RAMROD tradition. We are proud to operate the premier high end cycling event in the Northwest.

### Sign Up for the 2024 Field Day Now!

David Yarbrough WA7DY Field Day Chair

Field Day is rapidly approaching and it's time to get an idea of who will be there and what you can do to help out. It takes many hands to make Field Day happen and we would love to have you there for this event.

Field Day is Saturday June 22nd and Sunday June 23rd. Our setup starts at 10AM on Friday June 21st. The event takes place at Fort Flagler State Park on Marrowstone Island which is near Port Townsend.

Please take a moment to sign up for Field Day using this link:

<https://forms.gle/hP44zCKooWtP3yrY6>

or the following QR code. This will help us in our planning for the event.



Additionally, if you can tow a trailer from Skyway to Fort Flagler on Thursday, returning on Monday, I would love to hear from you. I am looking for three people who could do this, two trailers to tow and one backup person. My email is [wa7dy@arri.net](mailto:wa7dy@arri.net).

### REMINDER

### May's Club Program will be about FIELD DAY!



### 7QP County Line Fun

Tim Smith W7EEE

It was chilly and wet – 41 degrees and a constant light rain – when Mark, W6IA and I began our 7th District QSO Party contest day around 7 AM at Blewett Pass. As revealed in previous editions of *The Relay*, the parking area at [Swauk Discovery Trailhead](#) is right on the line between Chelan and Kittitas counties where we could hand out two counties for each QSO, helping out-of-area 7QP contesters with their county count and doubling our score.



We were equipped with two K3s, one amp, a generator and two antennas set up the previous day at the spot at about 4,200 feet elevation: a [Mosley Mini-31A](#) – essentially a trapped dipole for 10, 15 and 20 meters – on a 24-foot mast, and a 40-meter dipole strung between two trees at about 25 feet.



As I called CQ on CW at the blistering rate of 23 wpm and Mark worked CW and phone stations, the weather didn't improve much and we struggled with serious RFI from an off-brand rented generator. Despite our hopes – but in line with predictions – 10 meters wasn't in play. And sometimes, CW operators were confused over the two-county exchange:

**Me:** "CQ 7QP W7EEE"  
**The other station:** "W1ABC"  
**Me:** "W1ABC 5NN WACHE / KTT"  
<Pause>  
**The other station:** "AGN?"  
**Me:** "WACHE ES WAKTT"

Despite the noise, weather and exchange challenges, the fun lasted all day. Nearly 400 QSOs, 60 mults – including European stations – and nine hours later, we called it a day, broke down and went into Cle Elum for Mexican food. I can't imagine a better time.

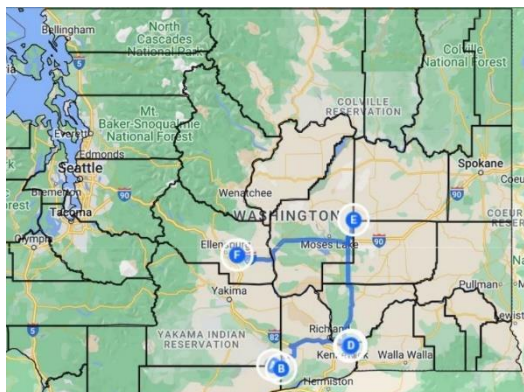
Hope to work you next year!

### **N7WA/m in the 7<sup>th</sup> District QSO Party**

*Michael N7WA*

Last year, I had my worst 7QP outing with only 250 contacts. I managed to do even worse this year. Might be time to hang up the key. (NEVER!) In reality, I didn't think I would be able to participate in the 7th District QSO Party (7QP) but I threw together a mobile station at the last minute. I've had a K4D that had been sitting around since March. It had been turned on only once so I made it the mobile rig. I had to read the manual just to get a basic familiarity.

It was also a truncated operation. I could only be away for about 24 hours (including Friday night).



I only had time for a total of 9 counties in middle Washington. Did not do well. Only made a couple hundred contacts. I didn't feel loud and I was constantly being pushed off frequency. I know it wasn't conditions since other mobiles did much better.

In order: Yakima County, Klickitat/Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Adam/Lincoln/Grant, and Kittitas. If you think Tim was having a hard time giving out his county line info, try a tri-county line WALIN / WAADA / WAGRN.



*Watching the sun rise over the Horse Heaven Hills at the start of the contest.*

### **K7TQ/m in the 7<sup>th</sup> District QSO Party**

*Randy K7TQ*

*Many on CW Beach know Randy. I stole this from his Mobile blog page. -ed*

On May 4, Jay, WA0WWW, and I put one MT county, twenty-one ID, one OR, and one WA counties on the air. After 17 and a half hours of operating time, we had 708 Qs and 59 mults in the log for a claimed score of 125,316 for our best 7QP in the previous six times.

We started on Monida Pass which is the MTBEA/IDCLA county line where in 30 minutes we collected 56 Qs. From there we meandered our way westerly through Idaho to ORMAL then north to my home in IDLAT at midnight and the end of the party. Our best county was IDADM where in almost two hours we made 79 Qs (it is a big county and one



cannot go fast). The lowest QSO count was in ORMAL with a measly four Qs.

The weather was nearly ideal this year with no rain like last year. We did have strong winds most of the day until midafternoon in IDOWY. A bit of drizzle in IDWAS and IDADM, but it wasn't a deterrent.

We were able to keep to our schedule until IDADA when a road closure resulted in us being 20 minutes late into IDBOI. Quite difficult to make up that much lost time. We cut short our supper time stop in IDWAS and got back on schedule.

This year we had to use hamsticks for 15, 20, and 40 meters because my Scorpion antenna wasn't available. Except for the longer time to change bands, the hamsticks seemed to perform well. 20m wasn't very productive after IDJEF so we spent a lot of time on 15m during the daylight hours. About 0300 GMT in IDADM, we switched to 40m and stayed there the rest of the party. Our band counts were

Band	QSOs	Mults
40	133	7
20	321	36
15	254	16
Total	708	59

Our most frequent customer was Jeff, N8II, in WV with 14 Qs. Others with 8 or more Qs were Laci, OM2VL with 12 Qs; Drew, K9CW in IL with 10; Joe, AA2IL, in CA with 8; Lar, K7SV, in VA with 8; Paul, NS2N in NY with 8; and Ed, W5TM, in OK with 8. 15 m was good for DX most of the day with OM2VL, DL3GA, KH6AQ, KL7SB, RZ1OA, HA3NU, G3WFP, SM3DMP, JN1CNJ SM2BLY, and SM6CUK all making our log.

A special Thank You to the 29 stations who kept me occupied the last hour of the party when we were in IDNEZ, WAWHI, and IDLAT. Of those 29, AJ6V, N7A, and N7EPD were there in all three counties while N7N, KE0TT, KA0PQW, NX6T, and KH6AQ were there in two of the last three.

The rig was an Elecraft KX2 and an Elecraft KXPA100 to 15, 20, or 40m hamsticks on a mag mount atop my 2002 Ford Ranger. We used N1MM+ on an HP laptop with full rig control and a MORTTY for CW keying.



**Jay is at the keyboard while we are parked alongside ID 22 in Butte County east of the town of Arco. We've made 130 Qs to this point. The snowcapped mountains are the Beaverhead Mountains. That is the 20m hamstick on the truck**

### **CW Beach – 2024 Edition**

**Michael N7WA**

CW Beach will kick off officially at 10AM on Friday June 21st. I'll probably get there a bit earlier but that's so I can enjoy that wonderful beach for a short time before we start *improving* it with radios and antennas.

We will have the usual setup - a huge tent able to shelter two complete stations. We will have a K4D for one station, a K3 for the other, and the KX3 backup. One station will cover 15/40m and the other will cover 20/80m. We will have full size ¼ wave verticals on 80m and 40m. 20m and 15m will be a 4el yagis pointed east.

On the beach, we normally run two-hour shifts. Each operator operates and does their own logging. We log using N1MM+ so it's significantly different from the SSB stations on the bluff. After one hour, you shift to the other station. That way, hopefully, no one gets stuck on a crappy band for two hours straight. If you are a CW op and want to join in, let me know. (Even if you have already told me you want to play.) We have lost several regulars this year. I'll be sending out the CW Beach organizational emails starting next week.

If you are a CW newbie and want to try out CW Beach, come talk to me. Your best bet is Sunday morning when things slow down and the rest of us are exhausted. We can probably find you a logger if it makes you uncomfortable operating and logging. We'll probably help you decode the CW too. (If you need a straight key, you should bring that.)

Even if you don't like CW, the Beach is still worth a visit sometime over the weekend. We have guest headphones and we're a pretty friendly group. We have a few folks who have no interest in CW that come down and help us setup and teardown. We are just a fun bunch to hang around with!

## **Stray – April 1933 ARRL QST**

**Michelle WA7PVE**

*(If you don't know what a Stray is, shame on you -ed)*

*W2BKO's 20-meter 'phone can be heard on the B.C. receivers of four neighbors. But that doesn't mean BCL trouble in the usual sense – these people actually refuse to let BKO fix up the interference because they like to listen to the conversations!*

*Since finding this out BKO doesn't get so much pleasure out of working the slot. No privacy at all!*

Nothing ever changes.

## **Em Comms**

**Steve Miller KG7VJW**

I have a new toy but it is for Em Comms work - a Master Communications DRA-36 sound card which I purchased so I can do Winlink via VARA from home.

Tukwila has the same setup (dedicated radio with DRA-36 and dedicated laptop) at both of its EOCs (Justice Center and Fire Station 52). Side bar if I may - VARA is de rigueur in our area as Seattle ACS reconfigured all CMS stations so they accept VARA connections but no longer accept Packet.

At the most recent 5th Saturday/EOC to EOC drill Tukwila was actually short staffed; just myself and one other member (Bob Kodama). I am the Winlink

person for Tukwila Em Comms. (i.e. all 5th Saturday EOC to EOC Winlink-related activity falls to me.)

Typically, another member (Mark Lium) sets everything up for our drill, with my assistance. Mark was absent. For the first time I set up everything with Bob assisting me (and my training him to do so)

And... everything worked. I was able to complete all Winlink-related tasks while Bob did the agency-to-agency comms (and logged success/failure details) and I did our local net.

After doing these drills for nearly 10 years the two hours of the actual drill activities always flies by.

Best always and 73!

## **Trustee Report**

**Robert Christian KJ7CBO Trustee #2**

Mike and Key in the park.

We did have a successful first Mike and Key in the park. I was at the Phillip Arnold Park in Renton and Ross was roaming around two parks near to his QTH. We did a multi park net which was loads of fun.

The overall plan is to have Mike and Key in the Park though-early to mid September so there is still plenty of time for members and the general public to join in. If you have a park idea near your QTH, do let me know! Let's do this thing!

Ross W7ROV has been a great help in getting this going, and John KJ7KSX for putting it out on the [group.io](http://group.io) page.

Nets

We soon will officially welcome two new net hosts to the roster and I am so happy about that! We are still looking for another host so if you would like to give it a try, do contact me and let's see what we can do.

Mike and Key is more than just a club; it is a place, an environment, and a friend. We here at Mike and Key welcome everyone to participate in activities that just might suit you. We have tons of stuff to go do, and see this summer, and events of one kind or another- taking place now.

If you are not subscribed to the .IO pages, please do!

Meanwhile, the nets are going strong. Lots of great ideas often flood the nets which I love hearing. So, hey if you have an idea, let's toss it around and see what we can do!

Take care everyone, Robert

### Ham Classes Update

**Daniel Stevens KL7WM Training Coordinator**

Held a couple of great Technician classes in April. The Kenmore class passed 16 New amateurs, 2 Generals and one Extra. Many thanks go to Robert Grinnell, KD7wnv, for requesting and organizing the venue in the Northshore Fire Station.

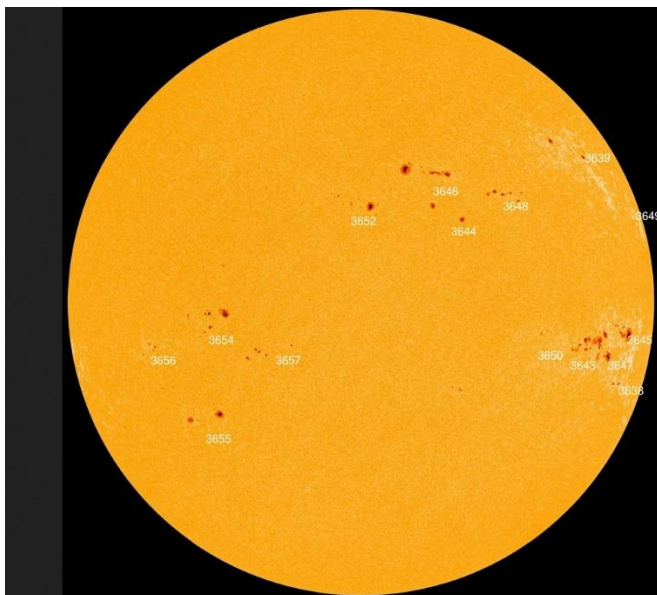
The Covington class graduated 27 New Technicians. There were several new helpers and a new instructor. Scott Gilyeat, KC7SAG and Jay Jones, AE1J came to the class and talked about emergency preparedness groups: Maple Valley and Kent, Mike and Key, and public service. Each student gets our Public Service brochure.

Forty-three new amateurs in a month are a good sign. Thanks goes to all the instructors and VEs who helped test these students. The next scheduled class will be on August 17 and 24, 2024, in North Seattle.

### Sunspots

**Michael N7WA**

Some of us have often wondered if we would ever see sunspots like this, again, in our lifetimes.



After two disappointing cycles, it's been a joy to behold and if you are not taking advantage of it on the upper HF bands (even 6 meters), you are not guaranteed a similar or better cycle next time around.

Just a few years ago, maybe more, I remember joking, with now-director Mark Tharp, about setting up a new operating event... CODA, Cul-de-sacs On the Air. I am glad we were wrong.

Last night, during the G5 storm, many old-timers were experiencing their first 6M Auroral contacts. You can work the world on 17m and up with just a few watts and a bed-spring.

Don't let this pass you by.

### HF Antenna Blues

**M&K Groups IO list**

The following plea came from David Olenjack W3TOJ on the M&K Group IO list the other day. I thought it and the resulting discussion were a great teaching moment. I've pared it down (you can always see the full text in the archives) and David gave me permission to use his original email. We have a good club here with plenty of Elmers and a wide range of experiences. -ed

I got the blues this afternoon. My HF antenna just isn't getting the job done and I'm not quite sure what to do.

I currently have a Comet CHA-250HD. It's a fine antenna from what I've read, I just don't think I'm getting it high enough. I was hearing a little activity on the bands just spinning through and I figured the bands were just bad or whatever. The bands are always bad, right?

Then I logged into a remote station hosted by the Puget Sound Repeater Group and I almost made a dent in my desk with how hard my jaw hit it. There was activity all over the bands. Clear 59 conversations everywhere I tuned. That remote station has an off-center dipole at 40' Clearly superior to my vertical antenna at a measly 25'.

So yeah, the bands weren't the problem, my setup is. I see all of these videos on YouTube with hams setting up all these different antenna configurations and they are all making phone contacts. I even saw a guy with an antenna that was a whip on a tripod



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sitting on a rectangle of mesh wire on the floor of his living room and he was making contacts.

So, I have to believe there has to be an antenna solution that will work for me. Therefore, the plan is to sell this 24' monstrosity and see if I can find something that works from the top of my roof.

This is what I'm working with:



This is the roof line on the back side of my house. I currently have a Comet CX-333 mounted for 2/1.25/70 and it works great. I need to find something for HF that I can mount in a similar fashion that is going to actually work.

I have the following restrictions: I have no trees as it's a new construction neighborhood so I can't use an end fed or random wire in a slope configuration up to a tree somewhere.

I only have a backyard width of about 30 feet which is only about 10 feet deep so I can't put any wires horizontally and my wife would prefer I didn't have a giant wire stretched across the backyard anyway, so that's out of the question.

I have a 50' fiberglass mast which I was going to mount the CHA-250 on but with such a small backyard I have no way to anchor or support it. I had it mounted and raised to just above the roofline at

about 30' and wasn't making any phone contacts at all. And even at 30' I would take it down every night for fear of overnight wind causing it to fall over.

I could conceivably attach a 67' random wire antenna to the mast and have it sloped on the side of my house but that doesn't seem like it would be very effective being sandwiched between two homes. Most of the signal would be radiating into my neighbor's and my house and I think I would be in the same spot that I am now.

So, I have 2 questions:

1) If you were in my situation and you wanted to get on HF with my restrictions, what would you put up? I am open to any suggestions.

2) If you have a type of antenna that you think would work for my setup, would you be willing to let me borrow it for a day? I am very hesitant to just keep buying antennas until I find one that works. I know I can sell them just as easily on QRZ and other sites, but shipping costs add up and my wife is currently very supportive of my hobby and I'd like to keep it that way.

I am looking for an antenna solution for 80m - 10m. Ideally 80m - 6m but if I have to mount a single 6m stick on the roof next to the CX-333, so be it.

I would appreciate any and all help, guidance, suggestions, thoughts, feelings, inspirational quotes from bathroom stalls, etc. that you would like to share. But just keep in mind the solution needs to be discreet. The HOA isn't an issue as I'm the president, it's just my wife I need to keep happy lol.

I'm feeling so discouraged right now as I've finally gotten my General and I've run into this seemingly insurmountable brick wall.

*The suggestions came flying fast... some of the discussion was related to the specified Comet antenna itself, some were a little bigger than David's yard 😊, but all were meant to help him along. This following is really snipped up but I think you can follow. -ed*

*Gregor NW7GO: My suggestion is a 9:1 random-wire end-fed. Still an inefficient antenna compared to a resonant antenna, but resonant antennas like an*

end-fed with a 49:1 balun are limited in the bands they can tune. The random wire end-fed may not have a low SWR on all bands, but if careful, can be lower than 3:1 on most bands within the length of the wire, so it can be tuned by the radio tuner.

See this white paper: <https://palomar-engineers.com/wp-content/uploads/Bullet-End-Fed-Antenna-Typical-Configuration-Notes-03192023.pdf>

I have an antenna with a wire of 92 feet and a coax before the choke of 90 feet, and I can tune 160-6. I think a 55 foot wire would allow 40-6 and fit in your backyard.

The other option might be a mag loop. Those are quite small (relative to the wavelength) but are directional and need to be specifically tuned to the exact frequency in use.

Gregor NW7GO: Yet another option--a loop around the top of your house. You'd have to see whether the circumference of your house is sufficient.

Dean N7XS: I really think you should consider a doublet antenna if you have room for an 80-meter version 120 feet long if you don't have room make it square or run it along the fence or something. run the ladder line to a 1 to 1 balun and as short as possible run of LMR400 to the back of the tuner. I had a 160 version at 50 feet it was awesome they are super easy to build. You will need a old fashion antenna tuner for this most MFJ models will work. A few down falls of this antenna is rain but if you add inductance to the tuner it should be stable except 12 and 17 meters I will include a link to a design also DX engineering has a good article about choosing baluns it may be a little intense but lots of good designs to consider I have everything to build this except the ladder line if you are interested. <https://www.hamuniverse.com/hfdoublet.html>

Jeff N7FCC: have you verified that your coax is getting to your antenna ok? What I mean is that sometimes coax connectors fail or short and give you not much from and to your antenna. A good way to check is to connect a 50-ohm dummy load at your antenna end and check for a 50 ohm load at your transmitter end and bad SWR also is a clue to this also. The club has antenna analyzers that you can check out if you don't have one that could be helpful as you work this out. Several articles on wire in the

crawl space attic have appeared in QST and other places. Outside is best if you can do it with HOA issues. Dipoles can droop and bend and still work well. Maybe along the crest of your roof and then bend down away from your house toward the ground or even run along the top of a fence. Loop idea mentioned may be a good solution.

W7GEL: What coax are you using? length? age? size? how are the connections? Have you done any testing or measurements on the current antenna and wire?

My thoughts start at the basics and verify your current setup doesn't have a fault.

David W7DAO: Are you missing the radials or counterpoises on the Comet? Verticals need these

Chuck WA7EBH: It appears that you have aluminum gutters. I lived in a corner apartment on the second floor and loaded the gutter and ran a counterpoise down to the ground. In your case you can run it over the peak of your roof. You would be limited to 100 watts or so. At my parents' house I used 18" shelf brackets along the ridge line (like you see anti bird wires) and used the gutter as a counterpoise. Ran 100 watts and worked the world. Both setups required a using a manual tuner.

Rob N7RLV: I have the Diamond version of this antenna with the telescoping aluminum whip: the BB7V. This is essentially the same antenna as the COMET 250HD. The matching unit is large and air cooled because it contains both a lossy 6:1 transformer and 4 large terminal resistors that dump power as heat in proportion to how far out of resonance the transmitting frequency happens to be. This is a compromise that allows it to be so broadband. But I don't care if 30 or 40 % of my power goes to heat. There is still plenty left for a QSO.

You should be hearing stations. Several folks have suggested you should check the coax and connections - that is the simplest explanation. Maybe something in the antenna is open or shorted. Can you transmit on it?

A couple of weeks ago I made a confirmed SSB QSO with OK7O in the Czech Republic on 15 meters. The entire contact was at 900 milliwatts, QRPp using the BB7V. Maybe all that radiated was

500 milliwatts. But the band was in great shape and OK7O has amazing antennas and low noise. They were running stacked yagis with 1,500 watts. I walked the power down to 100 milliwatts with a Finnish station a few months ago and he could still copy me. Maybe I was radiating 50 - 70 milliwatts?

My secret is the ground plane. I had it set up just above the high tide level at a saltwater beach. But I have made plenty of DX contacts without that advantage using 100 watts where maybe 50 to 70 watts radiated over ordinary ground.

At the recommended installation height of 35 feet, there is no ground and there is no plane, yet Comet calls it a ground plane antenna. I don't understand this. All there is the coax shield acting as a counterpoise. I have never tried mine more than a couple feet off of the ground.

I would try it just above the ground a foot or two to get some semblance of a ground plane. This fellow has a video & some dx QSOs with it ground mounted in his yard: [Diamond BB7 Review: a Perfect Back Yard Portable Antenna for HOA, POTA, or any Quick Deployment](#)

Mike N7WA: Ditching the Comet, you could use a mobile antenna. That could get you 80m thru 10m. Mobile antennas can be used at home too. You WILL need to provide a proper ground for a mobile antenna. Manfred, AG7NR worked DXCC as a mobile. Granted, that was CW. CW gives you a lot more bang for the watt. You could get a really expensive screwdriver or start cheap and easy with Ham sticks.

You could move up to a trapped vertical. (i.e. Hustler 6BTV) Again, you need a counterpoise (ground).

It's better to have a resonant dipole on a single band than whiz-bang antenna that does nothing on all bands. You could put up a 10m dipole (only 16' end to end) and have a lot of fun at this point in the solar cycle.

*I hope David comes back and lets us know how it went. Good Luck!*

**Mike & Key ARC – General Membership Meeting Minutes**

Date/Time: April 20, 2024, 10:00 Pacific

Meeting Place: [Kent Senior Center, 600 East Smith, Kent, WA](#)

Attested to by Jeanne Yearian, Secretary

President, Carl Reynolds N7CJR: Call to Order (Pacific) 10:00AM

Introductions: Question of the Month: Did you see the eclipse

Vice President Paul, KI6QXV: Verified a quorum is present.

Approval of 03/16/24 General Meeting minutes: Motion made by Robert, KJ7CBO; Second: Phil, K7PIA. Minutes approved with no dissention.

**Agenda:**

**Reports**

- President (Carl Reynolds N7CJR): No report.
- Vice President Paul Petach, KI6QXV: New membership application: Christian Rhorbach, KK7AIX. All approved by the General Membership with no dissention.
- Secretary (Jeanne Yearian, KE7MES): No report.
- Treasurer (Scott Gilyeat, KC7SAG): Current membership 301. Reminder: Please pay your dues to keep current. Check the website for current payment options. Get Swap Meet receipts in by the end of May. Audit in June.
- Activities Manager (Ross VanDeen, W7ROV): If you would like to volunteer see the contact info in the booklet. It is not too early to start thinking about Winter Field Day, January 26-27, 2025. There is no group camping at Fort Casey but there are showers and a good restaurant close by. You can't make reservations until April 24. In October the general meeting presentation will be about Winter Field Day.
- Radio Officer (Steven Cook, KD7IQL): Changes in the Radio Officer and 2024 Officers has been sent in to the State of Washington

**Standing Committees**

- Technical & Special Interest (Robert Christian KJ7CBO ): No report
- Public Service (Robert Grinnell, KD7WNV): More booklets for the 2024 Public Service Event Season are available. Marathons, road rallies, have begun. Ramrod update: The decision was made this week to schedule it for the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. Same course but reverse direction,



starting at 5:00 AM, ending at 8:00 PM. Please sign up to support this event. 150 miles around Mt. Rainier, 10,000 feet of climbing. This is Ramrod's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

- Education & Training : (Jeff Hite, N7FCC): No report
- Membership (Manfred Bester, AG7NR): No report
- Facilities & Publicity (Alex Malesis, W7AEM): No report.
- Repeater (Steven Cook, KD7IQL ): No report
- Publications & IT Support (Scott Gilyeat, KC7SAG): No report.
- Relay Editor (Mike, N7WA): Keep the great articles coming in.
- Web Master: No report

### Essential Committees

- Audits: Swap meet annual audit will take place in June.  
All receipts for expenses should be in by the end of May.
- Awards (Presenter: Dean Holtan, N7XS): No report
- Finance (Scott, KC7SAG): No report
- Strategic Planning (Manfred, AG7NR): No report.

### Event Committees:

- Swap Meet (Mike N7WA): Had almost entirely positive comments. Great team effort. Look for stats in next month's Relay.
- Field Day (David WA7DY): Mark your calendars now. Beginning at noon, Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> through Noon, Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, is Field Day 2024. In May there will a full presentation on this event. The Wagon Wheel has been reserved and M&K members can camp free of charge beginning June 17. Join us for Radio Camp beginning Monday, June 17 through Field Day! Camping only. The barracks are still closed.
- Picnic (Hal N7NW): 5 Mile Park reserved for 2024.
- Annual Banquet: Manfred (AG7NR) will be working on this with the Membership Committee.

**Old Business:** (None)

**New Business:** (None)

### Good of the Order:

- 7<sup>th</sup> District (Seven Sisters) QSO party is scheduled for May.
- Carl N7CJR and those present expressed their sincere condolences to Hal N7NW on the passing of his wife, Annie.

**Next Meeting:** May 18, 2024, 10:00 AM Pacific at the Kent Senior Activity Center, 600 E Smith St, Kent, WA 98030.

**Adjourn:** Vote to adjourn at 11:25. Motion made by Phil (K7PIA) & seconded by Gil (WA7BMK). Motion approved with no dissention.

### Mike & Key ARC – Board Meeting via Zoom

Date/Time: May 7, 2024, 19:00 Pacific

Attested to by Jeanne Yearian, Secretary

### Participants:

Carl Reynolds, N7CJR (President)  
Paul Petach, KI6QXV (Vice President)  
Jeanne Yearian, KE7MES (Secretary)  
Scott Gilyeat, KC7SAG (Treasurer)  
Ross VanDeen, W7ROV (Activities Manager)  
Steven Cook, KD7IQL (Radio Officer)  
*Jeff Hite, N7FCC (Trustee #1 - Not present)*  
Robert Christian, KJ7CBO (Trustee #2)  
Robert Grinnell, KD7WNV (Trustee #3)  
*Manfred Bester, AG7NR (Trustee #4 - Board Chair not present)*  
Alex Malesis, W7AEM (Trustee #5)  
George Thornton, AE7G (Volunteer Counsel)  
*Mike Dinkelman, N7WA (Relay Editor, Swap Meet Co-chair - not present)*  
*Hal Goodell, N7NW (Swap Meet Co-chair, Repeater Committee Co-chair - not present)*  
Michelle Cross, WB7AYU (Visitor)

### Agenda:

President (Carl, N7CJR standing in for Manfred, AG7NR): Call to Order (20:00 Pacific)

Establishment of quorum (Secretary, Jeanne KE7MES):  
We have a quorum

Approval of previous Board meeting minutes: Motion:  
Paul, KI7QXV; Second: Alex W7AEM. Motion passed with no dissention.

### Reports

- Chairman of the Board (Carl, N7CJR, standing in for Manfred, AG7NR)
- President (Carl, N7CJR): No report
- Vice President (Paul, KI6QXV): New membership applications (9): Dave Hutchison W0JKT, Tom Sayles KE4HET, Troy Wells W3LLS, Ryan McOmber K7AEK, Joe Decuir KF7BMD, William Swearingen KV2B, Karma Yoakem AG7YZ, Dave Olenjack W3TOJ, Venkatram Pramod KK7TAS. All were approved to move to a vote of the membership
- Secretary (Jeanne, KE7MES): No report

- Treasurer (Scott, KC7SAG): Active roster: 303; Books are in order; there was one bill submitted by Bill Swickard for AV equipment in the amount of \$107 and 61 cents. We're gonna have to increase the budget for field day because they wanted over a thousand dollars for SaniCan rental. The Mike & Key call sign will have to be renewed next year with the FCC.
- Activities Manager (Ross, W7ROV) The schedule has been posted in The Relay. Changes will be added to the website as well.
- Radio Officer(Steve, KD7IQL): Hal and Steve went up to Tiger mountain to measure how much Philly strand replacement wire is needed: 250 feet - as well as anchors and hardware. Due to the cost, this will be a multi-year plan to replace the guy wires. Planning work to setup remote control of the repeaters via Internet.

### Standing Committees

- Technical & Special Interest (Robert, KJ7CBO): On May 5th activated 2 parks for the first Mike & Key in the Park event. No update on scheduling another rest stop event.
- Public Service (Robert, KD7WNV): Volunteer Events are listed in the 2024 booklet. George, AE7G (director of Ramrod) has been working on the RAMROD event, now scheduled for Wednesday, September 4, and will be run in the opposite direction. Riders will gather at the Enumclaw Fairgrounds at 5:00 AM. The first hour of the ride will be in darkness.
- Education & Training (Jeff, N7FCC): No report
- Membership (Manfred, AG7NR): No report
- Facilities & Publicity (Alex, W7AEM): We continue to monitor attendance and adequacy of the meeting room. Suggestions for other locations will be explored.
- Repeaters (Steve, KD7IQL): Would like to put together a Repeater Committee. Will be seeking input.

### Publications & IT Support

- Relay Editor: Articles for the April Relay will be due on Friday, May 10.
- Web Master (Scott, KC7SAG): Updating the online software applications.

### Essential Committees

- Audits: N/A
- Awards (Scott, KC7SAG): No report.
- Finance (Scott, KC7SAG): Swap Meet audit to be held in June 2024
- Strategic Planning (Manfred, AG7NR): No report

### Event Committees

- Swap Meet: Post-event review, plans for next year (not discussed)
- Field Day: Not discussed
- Picnic: Not discussed
- Annual Banquet: Not discussed.

### Old Business

- Policy #21 amendment proposal Re: First-year free membership for newly licensed hams who have completed a Mike & Key club organized training class. George, AE7G (Volunteer Counsel) put together a policy that includes that wording. They must apply within 9 months of receiving their Technician License. A motion to approve Policy #21, submitted by George AE7G was made by Scott KC7SAG, seconded by Ross W7ROV. Discussion followed. A vote was taken. The motion passed with no dissention.
- Assembly of a Corporate Minutes Book (Manfred, AG7NR; Jeanne, KE7MES) The book has been assembled.
- Annual signing of the Conflict of Interest Policy (Jeanne, KE7MES) Lacking one signature to be complete. This will be part of the Corporate Minutes Book.

### New Business

- We need new home for the Club library (books, magazines, test equipment). The new storage facility in Covington will be used for now.
- Robert KJ7CBO requested the board approve special hardship fund for those who can't afford to pay dues. It was suggested that the person donating and person receiving the donation should both be anonymous. Board will review the request in confidence. George AE7G (Volunteer Counsel) will draft a proposal for the Board to approve.
- Recruit club historian.

### Good of the Order

- None discussed

### Action Items

- See "New Business" items above

### Next Meeting

- June 4, 2024, 18:45 Pacific remotely via Zoom (no change in meeting date/time/location)

### Adjourn

- Motions to adjourn by Steve, KD7IQL and Robert, KJ7CBO at 20:50 Pacific

**Contact Us:**

Email: [info@mikeandkey.org](mailto:info@mikeandkey.org)

Message Bd/Reflector: <https://groups.io/g/mkarc>

Website: [www.mikeandkey.org](http://www.mikeandkey.org)

Officer contacts info:

<http://www.mikeandkey.org/officers.php>

**Postal Address:**

P.O. Box 4234

Renton, WA 98057-4234

