

# McARCS Minutes – July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 18:00

**Present** – Mike KC6MGM, Nick KI6RIT, Allen KN6QCY, Mary Jane WA3VUI, Dan W6AAM, Steve KJ6EIF, Valerie KN6VVV, Tim WB9NJS, Hal KM6SGQ, Ran KK6MUX, Mike K6MAH

**Welcome and introductions** – Mike KC6MGM started the meeting at 18:02

**Treasurer's report** – Tim WB9NJS

The account balance is the same as last month, \$807.19. There have been no other changes.

**Secretary's report** – Nick KI6RIT

No updates to report.

**Webmaster's report** – Nick KI6RIT

Other than routine content updates (news page, meeting agenda uploads, countywide net log), there have been no changes.

**Net Logger's report** – Dan W6AAM

No updates to report. The net log and script documents will be updated to reflect the new Thursday evening net schedule.

## **News & Event Reviews**

**Field Day** – Tim WB9NJS

This year's Field Day at the Baechtel Grove Middle School was a resounding success! Lots of fun was had, a couple of dozen people showed up during the event with a small group staying overnight, and a total of 222 contacts were made.

## **McARCS Business**

**Discussion of McARCS mission and scope** – Mike KC6MGM

Postponed until next month due to the revised version (incorporating changes discussed at last month's meeting) being sent out today.

**Discussion on how to increase local ham community activity** – Mike KC6MGM

Radio activity in our county is generally very sparse outside of net nights. Mike was scanning all day and the only activity he heard was a contact with Rick KK6PZA while Rick was at Cow Mountain. Meeting participants brainstormed on ideas on how to increase activity, listed below with comments as well.

- Dan W6AAM brought up that Erif KI6GGD takes check-ins on the inland 145.13 repeater during the Albion net on Mondays at noon. That repeater has good coverage and is a good way to promote activity during the day.

- Dan W6AAM also mentioned his Parks on the Air (POTA) activities once or twice a week. While he primarily operates on HF, he does monitor VHF frequencies as well. Try giving him a call! POTA is a great way to get outside and active on the radio.
- Dan W6AAM pointed out that a large number of licensed hams in the county primarily got licensed for emergency communications purposes, so they have little desire to participate in activities outside of that realm. He also mentioned that many of the less-experienced hams are “radio shy” or are worried that they may be tying up more urgent traffic if they were to get on the radio.
  - A practice or “beginner’s net” may appeal to those groups. Mike KC6MGM’s radio procedures and communications forms net on the fourth Thursday of each month is intended to fill that need.
- Tim WB9NJS said that if you keep things fun, more people will participate. Making it too structured or rigid lowers engagement. In-person events are important to help build connections between people. In-person events are more successful with...food!
- Tim WB9NJS also brought up the topic of the (currently offline) WIN System repeater, 147.12, on Laughlin Ridge. The WIN System is a network of dozens of repeaters from all over the country, linked via the Internet. It is normally quite active during all hours of the day and was popular with a lot of local hams.
  - Nick KI6RIT is in the process of replacing/upgrading the equipment and he gave a status update on the process. The limiting factor at the moment is a lack of spare time.
- Valerie KN6VVV mentioned the YL (ladies-only) net that used to be held years ago. It was a popular social/casual net but since the time when it was discontinued, many of the participants have a feeling of intimidation with getting on the local repeaters during the day and having a casual chat. She might try starting the net back up once she gets her antenna fixed.
- Steve KJ6EIF spoke about the Virus Net on the linked coastal (Ft Bragg/Mathison Peak) repeaters every day at 17:00. It’s a casual roundtable net where participants talk about their day, thoughts, and on most days, try to guess the meaning of two obscure words picked by net control. It has had a consistent following since its inception in 2020.
- Ran KK6MUX suggested hosting a net or event where participants travel to different areas around them, simulating an evacuation scenario, to see what repeaters they can reach. Possibly monthly or quarterly.
  - Mike KC6MGM asked if that included simplex frequencies. Ran hadn’t thought of that but liked the idea.
  - Tim WB9NJS concurred and suggested hams identify a safe area that they could travel to in 10-15 minutes and try from there. Kind of like the Walking Repeater net, but expanding on the idea with some travel and improvisation incorporated into it.
    - Mike KC6MGM added in from his experience from running the local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) chapter, in that everyone should have a primary and secondary (or more) emergency location planned out with their family, so people know where to meet up and where others are likely to be located during an emergency.
      - Ran mentioned that Laytonville has a couple of pre-defined evacuation locations in town and asked if other communities around the county have those as well. Mike KC6MGM responded that the county’s

evacuation plan has locations listed throughout the county, such as the fairgrounds in Ukiah and Boonville.

- Steve KJ6EIF liked Ran's idea, and brought up that the county's evacuation zone maps only show evacuation zones, with no roads or locations marked in them. He made his own map with roads drawn out, so he knows what evacuation zones he needs to travel through to get to a specific location. He suggested trying to participate from different evacuation zones along your route.
- Mike KC6MGM asked meeting participants that if the event were to be held quarterly, when would be the best day and time to do it?
  - Ran suggested Monday evening; Mike mentioned that there's a few regional nets on Mondays, as well as these meetings once a month.
  - Tim floated the idea of holding it on a Saturday afternoon and possibly adding a game or competition factor to it (whoever makes the most contacts wins), with possibly an in-person meetup afterwards to discuss and add a more social element to it.
  - Mike KC6MGM asked if the second Saturday of the month would work, so that it could be announced on the weekly McARCS and WARS nets immediately before. There was consensus with meeting participants for holding it on that day.
  - Mike KC6MGM also asked about either having it quarterly or bi-monthly. Meeting participants liked the idea of holding it bi-monthly. Mike picked even months.
- Steve suggested calling it the "Signal Scavenger Hunt" and give people some locations that they can try making contact from.
- Dan W6AAM suggested making a bingo card of sorts with the different frequencies in each square.
- Here's a summary of what was decided on:
  - Bi-monthly on even months, second Saturday in the afternoon.
  - A list of frequencies to try should be published - countywide repeater system, standalone repeaters around the county, and simplex (146.52, 145.555, 446.0, etc). One MHz difference on simplex can make a big difference!
  - Mike KC6MGM will work on putting together a draft version and send it out to meeting participants to discuss.
- Dan W6AAM mentioned that in addition to the 2-meter calling frequency that is highly recommended to have programmed into all radios, 146.52, there's the "adventure channel" as well, 146.58. It's used for Parks on the Air (POTA), Summits on the Air (SOTA), and other general outdoor activities and has become quite popular. He also mentioned that there's no nets scheduled on the countywide repeater system on Friday through Monday – plenty of room to start up a net or three!

## ***Other Business***

### ***WARS update*** – Dan W6AAM

The monthly on-air meetup was held last Thursday, the first one with the new time at 7 PM. Unfortunately, turnout was low. Plans for the next few monthly meetups are being finalized, including one at the Whitesboro Grange in Albion and Harwood Memorial Park in Laytonville.

### ***MACS update*** – Mike KC6MGM

Mike sent out information on how to become a MACS member. There are currently around 20 members in the county. More members will be needed during an activation, both to cover the number of facilities around the county and to cover shifts (e.g. two people for 12-hour shifts or three people for 8-hour shifts).

### ***Training update*** – Mike KC6MGM

The training net is scheduled for the fourth Thursday of the month. Topics include radiogram and ICS-213 form practice, and radio operating procedures.

### ***GMRS recruitment*** – Ran KK6MUX

A GMRS repeater was recently installed in Laytonville. Ran asked if there were any consensus or efforts from McARCS on recruiting more people to get their GMRS license, for those that obtaining an amateur radio license is too high of a barrier to overcome. Mike KC6MGM doesn't have an issue with McARCS helping people obtain their GMRS license and providing assistance with radios and not gatekeeping efforts to only hams.

Nick KI6RIT will be adding GMRS information to the McARCS website, likely under the Repeaters page. This will have information on obtaining a license and a list of known GMRS repeaters around the county.

## ***Future activities***

### ***International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend*** – August 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>

Given that the event is relatively right around the corner and no planning or preparation has started yet, Tim WB9NJS proposed canceling McARCS participation of the event.

### ***Great Shakeout exercise*** – October 23<sup>rd</sup>

Mike KC6MGM will start preparations for the event next month. More information to come via email.

Meeting adjourned at 19:04

The next meeting will be on August 11th @ 18:00