



Hamfest 2006

Once each year, NW hams make a pilgrimage to the "Mike & Key" Hamfest shrine in Puyallup to buy, sell, talk, listen, teach and learn. All we knew for sure about what to expect was from veteran hams that had made the sacred journey in years passed. All said: "There's LOTS of keen stuff," and "go early!"

they were right on both.

We arrived fashionably late – 2 hours after it had begun. The navigator had chosen an un-crowded parking lot a block from the entrance. Even from a distance we could see a steady flow of early birds carting off their booty.

The gatekeeper accepted our 7 bucks each and allowed us to enter the 44,000 square foot pavilion – two floors of electronic garage sale. The keen and not-so-keen stuff was displayed on 4 rows of tables down the center while educational and informational booths such as the Icom, RACES, and the US Coast Guard circled the festivities. Ruellene gave her name and info about the club's interest in coordinating with the Coast Guard for emergencies and they are in the process of setting up a program with yacht clubs in the area and one of the guys manning the booth was in charge of the program, so they will be contacting the club. Several commercial vendors displayed their wares for sale or order.

Old stuff sprinkled with new stuff was as far as the eye could see. Some may have been in Marconi's basement. It was apparent that much of the "good stuff" was already gone to those door-busters who were there first – 2 hours earlier. Many of the hunters and gatherers came with carts and wagons to haul away their treasures. As noon approached, prices began to drop faster than Wal Mart for what was left. Even "FREE" signs began to pop up as sellers faced the reality of hauling their leftovers back to the car.

Ruellene, who has a black belt in shopping, advised on how to bargain. Sometimes it's a case of, "you snooze, you loose." For example: faced with the reality of carrying a power supply all over the place, I chose to "pick it up on the way out." Bad decision – it was gone when I went back to claim my bargain.

It wasn't just ham stuff that was the center of the electronic frenzy. There were thousands of computer components, audio and video equipment and parts for everything. By 12:30 we were on our way to the parking lot with our trophy – a nice wattmeter.

It was interesting to tune around Sunday evening and hear so many happy amateurs trying out their new toys. Of course there were probably a few who were talking into their microphones and nothing was coming out of their antennas!

Will we go back next year?? Would Smokey the Bear like to lead a torchlight parade through a match factory?? (Yes, of course!) – Don and Ruellene Eaton, KN0TEE and KN0TME.

FCC Exams at SYC

FCC Exams were held at Portage Bay on Wednesday, March 29th. All four FCC exam grades (E1, E2, E3, and E4) were administered by Volunteer Examiners led by Heather Ballaine

(AB7JT), Bill Whitney (WO7O), Dan Withers (WM7W), Day Chapin (W7HDC), and two guests Denny Weston (KJ7JP), and Ken Hanson (AC7CX).

Over 20 exams were given. Dwight Shaw (KC7ACP) and Chuck Steward (KE7FZU) have now passed all Amateur FCC exams and are promoted to the highest grade (Amateur Extra). Ed Brighton (KE7GCM), and David Kelly (KE7GBD) advance to General. Laura Cruz will receive a Tech license. In addition, a number of other local Amateur Radio Operators were tested and advanced in grade.

After the exam session the Committee discussed the location of Amateur Radio repeaters on Vancouver Island that will be used for summer boating communications.



Bill Whitney (WO7O) leads the FCC E1 exam (5 words per minute code test)

Radio Rendezvous

The First Annual Radio Rendezvous got off to a great start on April 1st and 2nd. Thirty-five members and 15 boats attended this inaugural event at Port Madison. The group assembled at 1500 over libations and organized for the "Open Boat" event. Each boater made an "Open Boat" sign and we all visited boats until Green Box at 1730. We gathered at the club house at 2000 for a discussion on radios, antennas, grounding strategies, and general radio topics while sampling desserts. The group also decided that they had so much fun that plans are underway for Radio Rendezvous II (stay tuned!).

The SYC Amateur Radio Committee held its last meeting before cruising season on April 26th at the Mainstation. We discussed the summer nets and equipment (radios, antennas, etc.) for summer cruising.

In the fall our meeting dates change to the 2nd Wednesday of the month, i.e., the first meeting after August will be on September 13th.



By 1730 the traditional Greenbox was in full swing with an improvised flagpole and great weather.

W7SYC - For more information about the Seattle Yacht Club Amateur Radio Committee: send an email to chapin@activesoft.net, 73s – Day Chapin, Chair.

