SCCARA-GRAM

Santa Clara County
Amateur Radio Association

Volume 22, Number 3   **March 2006**

Vice President's Prose

I love this job, particularly if you read the title backwards it means I'm president of vice. I'll save you a definition of vice. Like the Supreme Robes said, you know vice when you see it.

Clark is taking this month off. I think he has writer's cramp or was that writer's block. Whatever the reason you'll have to suffer with my wit.

First a request. Most of you have e-mail addresses. If you don't have an address I can steer you toward several free e-mail services. Of course you need to have access to the Internet and that's usually done by signing up with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). You can get dial-up service for as little $9.95 a month. Again, if you need help let me know.

OK, now you have a valid e-mail address, please send an e-mail to me, ae6ql@arrl.net and copy our secretary so we are sure of your address. You'll find her e-mail address in this publication.

While you are sending e-mail don't forget your other officers and board. Tell them what you like or dislike. If they don't know they can't act in your behalf. I particularly like to hear your recommendations for meeting speakers.

Perhaps someone is wondering with our great newsletter, why do you want my e-mail address. I agree the newsletter is fine for 95% of our communications. In fact I'm never without a copy whenever I head to either of little shacks behind the house (the one with coax going into it is the ham shack). The trouble is the newsletter goes to press almost two weeks before our general meeting. If we need to communicate anything between newsletters, like a pipe broke in the meeting room and we have a change of location, we can tell you about it. We can also send you meeting reminders.

A few words about e-mail addresses: First, ARRL members can get what is called an alias such as: ae6ql@arrl.net. An alias is not a mail box. Rather it looks like a normal e-mail address but is forwarded to your designated personal e-mail address. That way you can shorten up your e-mail address or hide it if you are afraid spammers will get your regular address. Check into the members section at www.arrl.org if you need to set up your alias.
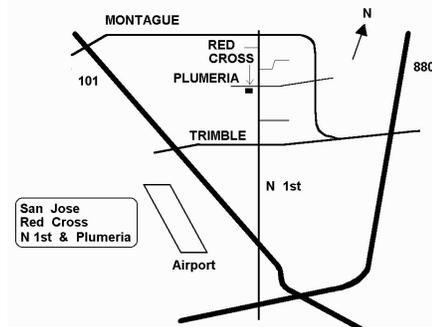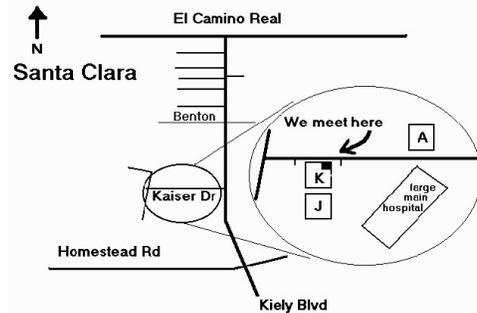
Second, e-mail addresses are always lower case. Now I know some of you like to put their call signs in upper case. That's just plain wrong and considered rude in some circles. Why? The

Calendar

<u>General Meeting:</u>

<u>Day:</u>   Monday, March 13, 2006
<u>Time:</u>   7:30 PM
<u>Place:</u>   Kaiser Santa Clara, Bld K, Rm 1
<u>Featuring:</u>

Internet is controlled using a language called unix. Unix reserves upper case for a few special cases and addresses are not one of them. If you enter your address (URL) in upper case, unix thinks it's something other than an address.
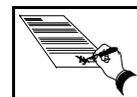
By now someone is saying I put my URL in caps and it works just fine. If it works in upper case, it probably means you are using a WINDOWS operating system. WINDOWS and a few other programs know URLs can not be in upper case so they automatically convert upper case to lower case. If you doubt this put your favorite web page in caps like GOOGLE.COM and watch your WINDOWS browser automatically convert it when you hit enter. If WINDOWS automatically converts my address why do you care? Two reasons: First if your URL is ever entered directly into an unix system it won't work and you probably won't know why. The second reason is almost trivial but important nevertheless. All upper case is considered to be rude because it is the equivalent to shouting. More importantly it marks you as a newbie. A newbie is a little bit like a 'lid' in amateur radio. It's also, it's like a 'kick me' sign on your back. Why invite trouble by being labeled a newbie or lid?

I listened to a talk on Katria by Richard W Clement, AE6QE at RadioFest 2006. Even if you never plan to participate in emergency drills you will want have your own 'go pack'. This is a bag with personal items that you can grab at a moments notice to sustain yourself in an emergency. You probably already have an idea of what to put in such a bag like water, first aid kit, etc. Dick pointed out a few items you may not of thought of. Sanitation was a big problem because they were continually slashing through raw sewage and there weren't a whole lot of washrooms around. A good solution passed along by our troops in Iraq is 'baby wipes'. They come wrapped in foil packets and are saturated with a sterile liquid. Don't let the name fool you. It doesn't take too much imagination to figure out a variety of uses.

Another tip from Bill Wattenburg is for emergency rations. His favorite was granola or trail mix. This food stock is also available in foil packets and doesn't contain a lot of water so it lasts a long time in storage and isn't too heavy to pack. It's high in nutrition so a little bit will sustain you for a few days.

Finally, I'd like to recognize the Repeater Repair Committee. Robert Forster, N6PCQ, is doing the S-meter amplifier; John Parks, KI6ANV, electrical wiring and fans; Don Steinbach, AE6PM, the rack-stack-up and inter-chassis wiring; Clark Murphy, KE6KXO, the heavy chassis mechanical; James Tyranski, KG6UDW, parts shagging; and Wally Britten, KA6YMD documentation and programming assistance.

Thanks to all.
de AE6QL

ARRL News

LEAGUE CALLS ON FCC TO DENY PART 15 RULE WAIVER REQUEST FOR 902-928 MHZ

Expressing concerns about interference potential and increased noise levels, the ARRL this week asked the FCC to deny an industry request to waive three sections of its Part 15 rules. Octatron Inc and Chang Industry Inc sought the waivers last November to accommodate unlicensed analog video and audio surveillance products they're developing that would operate in the

902-928 MHz band--an Amateur Radio allocation. The FCC opened the proceeding, ET Docket 05-356, for comments in late December.

"The manufacturer here has made a choice as to how to engineer its product," the League said in comments filed January 30. "It now seeks to avoid a series of rules specifically intended to limit interference potential of analog devices in a band allocated to various licensed radio services simply because it deliberately engineered the device in a particular manner."

The decision by Octatron and Chang Industry to employ analog, rather than digital, emissions at 1 W is at the heart of the waiver request. Section 15.247(b)(3) permits a 1 W power level for digital and spread-spectrum devices, but not for analog. The companies say they need 1 W to ensure reliable transmission. Digital devices still must meet the Part 15 power spectral density limitation, the League pointed out.

"Neither can either device meet the power spectral density requirement of Section 15.247(e), applicable to digital intentional radiators which engage in continuous transmissions," the League contended. "Finally, the devices cannot meet the specifications for high-power, point-to-point operation in certain bands using highly directional antennas set forth in Section 15.249 of the Commission's rules."

The League took issue with the manufacturers' unsupported assertion that the surveillance systems "will not create significant interference."

"Since the petitioners have apparently failed to determine, much less explain, the interference potential of their devices, it cannot be determined whether or not the underlying purposes of the rules limiting power and power spectral density for analog and digital devices in the 902-928 MHz band would be frustrated by a grant of the proposed waiver in this case," the League continued. "A waiver cannot be granted without such a finding."

The ARRL argued that given their potential to interfere with licensed services in the 902 to 928 MHz band, they should instead be operated in a Public Safety allocation, such as 2450 to 2483.5 MHz, and on a licensed basis.

"The precise purpose of the rules sought to be waived here was to preclude interference before it arises," the League said. "The purpose of this rule would be directly frustrated by permitting, without rulemaking, high-power analog devices that cannot meet the power spectral density limitation of Section 15.247(e)."

The petitioners fail to show that the devices could not have been designed to meet FCC rules, the League said, adding that it appears the lower cost of manufacturing analog devices is apparently the reason why they're seeking the waivers. "This is not a valid basis for a waiver grant," the ARRL said.

Granting "repeated waivers" for Part 15 analog devices that don't meet the fundamental interference-avoidance requirement of the power spectral density limit, the League concluded, "adds to the aggregate noise levels in the subject bands and contributes to the already prevalent 'tragedy of the commons' interference problems" in bands such as 902-928 MHz.

From *The ARRL Letter* February 24, 2006

LEAGUE TO FCC: ORDER AN END TO ARBITRARY ACCESS LIMITS TO BPL DATABASE

The ARRL has demanded that the FCC order the United Telecom Council (UTC) to "cease its arbitrary limits" on access to the public BPL Interference Resolution Web site <http://www.bpldatabase.org/>. UTC administers the site, which FCC Part 15 rules require to be "publicly available." In a complaint <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/files/BPL-Database-Access-Complaint-0 2-06.pdf> filed February 23 with the FCC Office of Engineering and Technology, the FCC Enforcement Bureau and UTC, the League charged UTC with "arbitrarily and unlawfully" preventing some individuals and organizations--including ARRL--from utilizing the BPL database.

"Quite simply, UTC's 'management' of this database has in a very short time proven a shambles," ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, wrote on the League's behalf. "The Commission has taken no action in response to any BPL interference complaints, but UTC's restricting access to the database is directly and overtly contrary to the specific language of both the Report and Order (R&O) and ?15.615 of the Commission's rules."

According to the complaint, ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, found himself locked out of the BPL database February 14 after attempting to search a particular ZIP code. An "error" message warned: "The System has determined that this line of searching constitues [sic] unauthorized use of the database. Cease operations immediately."

"There was no unauthorized use of the database," Imlay said, adding that an ARRL staff member got the same message after trying to search two ZIP codes from an "arrl.org" domain address. "It was apparent thereafter that anyone using an 'arrl.org' domain name was unilaterally shut out of the database by UTC for an indeterminate amount of time," the complaint continued.

Imlay also cited the experience of Gary Zabriskie, N7ARE, the secretary of the Dixie Amateur Radio Club in Utah. On February 15, he attempted a search covering several ZIP codes in his club's membership area to report any BPL trials or rollouts to members. After entering the third ZIP code, he received the same "error" message. The next week, Imlay noted, a member of the ARRL Laboratory staff conducted a series of searches to determine if previously noted discrepancies in the database had been corrected. After entering his seventh ZIP code search, he received a message indicating that he had exceeded his search limit, "though you may try again later," it added.

A advisory on the BPL Interference Resolution Web Site page states: "Access via scripted or automated programs is prohibited. Each individual is allowed to search a limited number of times. Individuals are advised not to conduct random searches of the database, or their access to the database may be further restricted."

"The limits placed unilaterally and apparently variably on searches of the database are each and all improper," the ARRL complaint asserted. "There is nothing in any Commission document that authorizes UTC to limit access to the database whatsoever. Worse, UTC has decided to limit public access arbitrarily by IP address or by domain name, and apparently as few as three ZIP code searches trigger the cutoff mechanism." The League said there is no technical reason to limit the search function.

The League maintains that the design of the database and the restricted access are "clearly intended to frustrate the Commission's purpose" in requiring the database in the first place and "to inhibit complaints of interference" from BPL systems. As a result, the ARRL says, the FCC should immediately rescind UTC's appointment as the BPL database administrator or order UTC to end its arbitrary limits on access to the database.

REGULATION-BY-BANDWIDTH PETITION "A REASONABLE MIDDLE GROUND," LEAGUE SAYS

The ARRL says its Petition for Rule Making (RM-11306) to regulate the amateur bands by necessary bandwidth rather than by mode represents "a reasonable middle ground in a difficult regulatory area." In reply comments filed with the FCC February 21, the League said it was gratified to see more than 900 commenters responded to the admittedly "controversial" petition and noted that many "show the investment of a good deal of thought about the proposal." ARRL said it would have been concerned if the amateur community had not responded with a loud voice on all facets of the League's regulation-by-bandwidth proposal.

"ARRL continues to believe that its petition is a measured response to progress in digital telecommunications technology and successfully balances the interests of all, regardless of which of the polarized opinions in this proceeding, if any, constitutes a 'majority' view," the League's reply comments said. "To the extent that the success of this philosophy necessitates the participation and cooperation of all amateurs in the development of, and increased reliance on, modernized voluntary band plans, ARRL is optimistic that such participation and cooperation will be available" as it has in past "transitional phases" in Amateur Radio's history.

The ARRL is asking the FCC to replace the table at ?97.305(c) with a new one that segments bands by necessary bandwidths ranging from 200 Hz to 100 kHz. Unaffected by the ARRL's recommendations, if they're adopted, would be 160 and 60 meters. Other bands below 29 MHz would be segmented into subbands allowing maximum emission bandwidths of 200 Hz, 500 Hz or 3.5 kHz, with an exception for AM phone.

The ARRL says the changes it's proposing constitute a balance "between the need to encourage wider bandwidth, faster digital communications and the need to reasonably accommodate all users in crowded bands."

The League's reply comments countered criticism that its petition represents "over regulation wrapped in a different cloak," that increased reliance--and confidence--in the ability of voluntary band plans to substitute for subband regulation by emission mode is misplaced, or that the ARRL's proposal caters to a small minority of digital enthusiasts and experimenters. Many of those who commented expressed a desire to leave things as they are, some because they feel the advent of digital technology may threaten their favorite mode.

"They are comfortable with the status quo, because the current regulations are not encouraging toward digital modes and, therefore, the current regulatory scheme, they feel, 'protects' them," the League said. "The comfort level with the status quo is high for these licensees, and they have not hesitated to tell the Commission so."

The League emphasized, "All should be accommodated by the regulatory structure of amateur subbands, and technology changes demand regulatory changes in this instance." Its plan, the League said, "attempts to segment emission modes of similar bandwidths in a manner that accommodates the varied needs and interests of all, while insuring compatibility by grouping like-bandwidth emissions together."

Citing repeated efforts to gather input from the Amateur Radio community at large and from its members since its regulation-by-bandwidth concept was first aired in 2002, the League called the petition "the most thoroughly vetted regulatory proposal" it's ever developed.
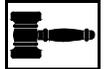
"The ARRL petition does not favor one mode at the expense of another," the League reiterated in concluding its reply comments. "It merely allows expansion of the repertoire of options that amateurs may pursue compatibly."

The ARRL petition is available on the FCC Web site <http://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native_or_pdf=pdf&id_docume nt=6518181567>. The League's reply comments are on the ARRL Web site <http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/bandwidth/Bandwidth-Petition-Reply-Comments-2-6.pdf>.

Meeting Minutes

General Meeting, Feb. 13, 2006

{No minutes received by the deadline. --Ed.}

Board Meeting, Feb. 20, 2006

{No minutes received by the deadline. --Ed.}

Packet Pieces

Downloaded from the packet network:

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   Date: 18 Feb 2004 09:04
   From: W1GMF@W1GMF
    To: HUMOR@USA
 Subject: HUMOR FOR TODAY 0205
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Today's Joke

There was a tradesman, a painter called Jock, who was very interested in making a buck where he could, so he often would thin down paint to make it go a wee bit further.

As it happened, he got away with this for some time, but eventually a local Church decided to do a big restoration job on the roof of one their building. Jock put in a bid, and because his price was so competitive, he got the job.

And so he set to, with a right good will, erecting the trestles and setting up the planks, and buying the paint and, yes, I am sorry to say, thinning it down with the turpentine.

Well, Jock was up on the scaffolding, painting away, the job nearly done, when suddenly there was a horrendous clap of thunder, and the sky opened the rain poured down, washing the thin paint from all over the church and knocking Jock fair off the scaffold to land on the lawn, among the gravestones, surrounded by telltale puddles of the thinned and useless paint.

Jock was no fool. He knew this was a judgment from the Almighty, so he got on his knees and cried: "Oh, God!

Forgive me! What should I do?"

And from the thunder, a mighty voice spoke: "Repaint! Repaint and thin no more!"

Daily Thoughts

"Economists report that a college education adds many thousands of dollars to a man's lifetime income -- which he then spends sending his son to college." Bill Vaughan

Last Laugh

A husband stepped on one of those penny scales that tell you your fortune and weight, and dropped in a coin.

"Listen to this," he said to his wife, showing her a small, white card. "It says I'm energetic, bright, resourceful and a great husband."

"Yeah," his wife nodded, "and it has your weight wrong, too."

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   Date: 13 Jan 2005 06:52
   From: W1GMF@W1GMF
     To: HUMOR@USA
  Subject: HUMOR FOR TODAY 0113
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Today's Joke

Martha Stewart Tips for Rednecks:

1. Never take a beer to a job interview.

2. Always identify people in your yard before shooting at them.

3. It's considered tacky to take a cooler to church.

4. If you have to vacuum the bed, it is time to change the sheets.

5. Even if you're certain that you are included in the will, it is still rude to drive the U-Haul to the funeral home.

Daily Thoughts

"Nothing goes by luck in composition. It allows of no tricks. The best you can write will be the best you are."

"The guy who invented the first wheel was an idiot. The guy who invented the other three, he was the genius."

"The economy depends on economists about as much as the weather does on forecasters."

"There are no stupid questions. Just stupid people."

Need Help?

Amateurs have a long history of helping each other. An experienced amateur who helps another is traditionally called an "Elmer." If you have a question or problem, you are encouraged to ask one of SCCARA's Elmers. Below is a list of topics including who to contact for each.

If you consider yourself to be reasonably competent in at least one area of amateur radio and would be willing help others, please fill out an Elmer form from the club secretary.

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Antennas, feed-lines, tuners: WB6EMR, K6PBQ, WB6YRU
Lightning protection, grounding:  WB6YRU
Station set-up, equipment: K6PBQ
TVI/RFI:  WB6YRU
Homebrew projects, construction:  KD6FJI, WB6YRU
Computers: KB6NP;  IBM PC:  WB6YRU
Packet Network (BBS, forwarding):  WB6YRU
Code operating and installations:  WB6EMR, K6PBQ
DX (long distance/propagation):  WB6EMR
Emergency operating/preparedness:  WA6QYS
FM (VHF/UHF, repeaters):
HF operating techniques (SSB, CW): WB6EMR, K6PBQ
Classes/license upgrading:  W6ACW
Legal/FCC rules:  WB6YRU
SCCARA (club inner workings): K6PBQ, WB6YRU, WA6QYS
Children's Discovery Museum, volunteer operator:
K6PBQ
EchoLink:   KK6MX

W6ACW, Ed Hajny, (408) 739-6105

WB6EMR, James D. Armstrong, Jr.,
evening & msg: (408) 945-1202

KD6FJI, Lloyd DeVaughns,
day: (408) 918-4635, evening: (408) 225-6769
e-mail: kd6fji@arrl.net

KK6MX, Don Apte, (408) 629-0725
e-mail: kk6mx@aol.com

KB6NP, Jon Dutra, day & msg (408) 428-2058
evening (408) 867-8654
packet: home BBS NOARY
e-mail: jad@aol.com

K6PBQ, Don Village, (408) 263-2789

WA6QYS, Lou Steirer, (408) 241-7999
packet: home BBS NOARY

WB6YRU, Gary Mitchell, msg (408) 265-2336
also (408) 269-2924
packet: home BBS NOARY
e-mail: wb6yru@aenet.net
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Newsletter Notes

For the membership roster, we were using an old database program (First Choice) up to just a couple of years ago. It's an old DOS program, but very easy to use. When David AE6MV became secretary, he switched us over to Microsoft's Access.

Access isn't as simple as First Choice. It does more, but of course you know what that means. There's a significant learning curve, and we have a new secretary now.

This is just a "heads up" for the membership that if something is wrong, (e.g. not receiving the newsletter or you notice something else, wrong) please let us know.

73, Gary WB6YRU, editor

SCCARA Membership Form for 2006

(Fill in name and address if there is no mailing label below; make corrections if the label is incorrect)

Name: _____   Call: _____   Class: E A G T+ T N

Address: _____   Licensed since (yr): _____

City: _____   State: ____   Zip: _____ _____   Licence Expiration
                                                                     Date (mo/yr):

Telephone: (   ) _____   ☐ New Member   ☐ I'm also an   _____
                                             ☐ Renewal   ARRL member

E-mail: _____   Packet: _____

For family memberships (at the same address), please fill out a separate form for each. Indicate the
"primary member" here for mailing purposes: _____

Annual membership dues are payable at the first of the year and expire the following December 31.
New members joining on or after July 1, pay half the membership dues.

Annual Membership dues: ☐ $20 Individual   ☐ $25 Family   ☐ $10 Student (under 18)

Give this completed form (or copy) with payment to the Secretary or Treasurer at any meeting or mail to the
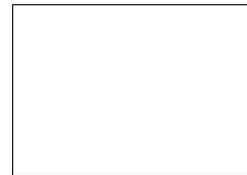return address below.

Rev. 5/17/2005

===>   PLEASE DO NOT TEAR OR CUT FORM   <====

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