

SCCARA-GRAM



Santa Clara County
Amateur Radio Association

Volume 28, Number 3

March 2012



President's Prose

Most of us in the ham radio community believe that we are ready to help out in case of an emergency. However, unless we actually take steps to verify that our equipment is ready-to-go, we may be in for a big surprise. I'm not talking about the station that you use every day – I'm talking about the equipment you'll be using when the power is off, your antenna is in the neighbor's yard, and you forgot where you left your HT.

If you plan to use a generator, do you have gasoline that hasn't turned to varnish? Have you tried to start the generator in the last year? If you plan to use batteries, are they charged? Is there any possibility that your bargain charger has boiled the electrolyte out of them? If you needed to program your HT for a different repeater, could you do it?

As I'm writing this, the temperature outdoors is 43 degrees. That's unusually cold for this area, but if I needed to evacuate or participate, I might want a coat. Not to mention food and water and personal supplies to last at least three days. Do you know where your can opener is? And do you have any cans to open? Can you stay dry if it rains? Suppose you need to buy something (if any stores are open) – how much cash do you have in small bills? Forget about the local ATM.

How about your car – if you had to leave the area now, how far would you get? I fill up when the gauge says half-full. If the car is in the garage and you've relied on the powered door opener, can you open it if the electricity is off?

These are just some things to think about. Better to be part of the solution than part of the problem.

Don, AE6PM



March Meeting

John Rosica will be speaking on Near Vertical Skywave HF Communications.

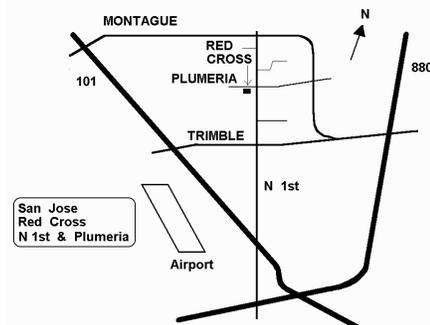
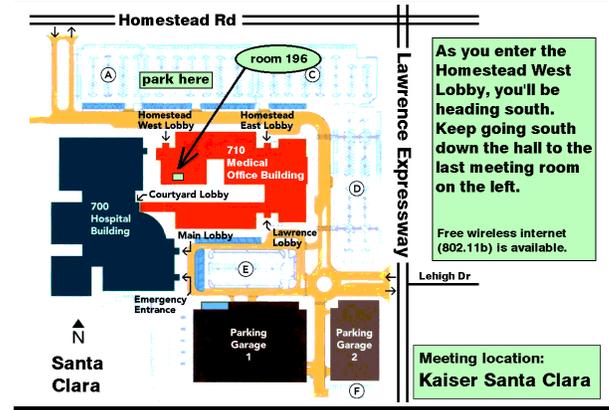
John Rosica: Has been a Ham since he was 13 years old and operational on HF/VHF/UHF and Satellite since that time Call sign is KA2FND (kept his very first call and never changed it since he grew up in Upstate Rochester NY) He was active in Rochester Amateur Radio Assn., Rochester VHF Group (sponsored by

Calendar

- 3/10 DeAnza electronic flea market
- 3/12 SCCARA General Meeting--dinner meeting!
- 3/19 SCCARA Board Meeting--(San Jose Red Cross, 7:30p, all are welcome)

General Meeting

- Day: Monday, March 12, 2012
Time: 7:30 PM
Place: Kaiser Santa Clara, Rm 196
Featuring: John Rosica will speak on NVIS



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The deadline for articles is the last Monday of the month.

SCCARA was formed in 1921 and became a non-profit corporation in 1947. SCCARA is an affiliate of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). The club station is W6UW.

Web page: <http://www.qsl.net/sccara>.

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(all officers are also directors)

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SCCARA REPEATERS

SCCARA owns and operates two repeaters under the call W6UU:

2 meter: 146.985 - PL 114.8
70 cm: 442.425 + PL 107.2

Phone auto-dial and auto-patch is available. The two meter repeater is located at Eagle Rock near Alum Rock Park in the foothills of east San Jose. The 70 cm repeater is located at the Regional Medical Center (formerly Alexian), east of downtown San Jose, north of 280 and 101.

SCCARA NETS

On our two meter repeater: Mondays at 7:30 PM, (not the second Monday--our meeting night). Coordinator: Don Village, K6PBQ. On ten meters, 28.385 MHz USB, Thursdays at 8:00 PM. Net control: Wally Britten, KA6YMD. Visitors welcome.

N0ARY PACKET BBS

SCCARA hosts the packet BBS N0ARY (Mt Umunhum). User ports: 144.93 (1200 baud), 433.37 (9600 baud), telnet sun.n0ary.org (login "bbs"). Sysop: Gary Mitchell, WB6YRU (packet info: www.n0ary.org/ncpa)

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

SCCARA contact Clark KE6KXO:	408 262-9334
ARRL/VEC Silicon Valley VE group, Morris Jones, AD6ZH:	408 507-4698

Harris RF Communications) as youth and participated in many public service events growing up. Moved to California 29 years ago. Owns and operates VHF 220 Repeater that has full HF/VHF/UHF steerable remote base and is part of the N6NAC Wide Area Repeater network in Greater Bay Area /Northern Calif which is mostly a 220 system with some 440 nodes too. He is also Army MARS (call AAR9FT) station and is ALE training coordinator under the State of California Army MARS (Reg9) Training Director. He has additionally been active in GMRS (call WPTW556) and has repeaters active there as well.

His company NVIS Communications is a full telecommunications systems integrator in North America (founded in 2002 in Silicon Valley) with a heavy emphasis on Fed Govt/Military Communications on HF for Voice, Data and Automated Telephone Interconnect systems. NVIS also integrates in the VHF/UHF and Satcom space and has customers in North America as well as on the African Continent. NVIS is the only Authorized Systems Integrator in North America for BARRETT COMMUNICATIONS from Perth Australia a 26+year old Manufacturer of HF/VHF Military/Govt Equipment. John helped found Barrett Communications USA in 2010.

He is well versed on the latest of Digital Communications techniques from HF thru UHF with heavy emphasis on HF. The presentation will focus mainly on NVIS Communications Techniques in HF and how this coupled with advanced HF Data and Telephone Interconnect capabilities, one can communicate or provide communications within a 500-800 mile radius without the need for any other infrastructure i.e. repeaters, satellites or related.

Much of the sophisticated automation that has up to now been reserved for only the most well-funded (very expensive) agencies/entities, has been reduced in both physical size as well as cost and is being acquired and deployed by many state and local government agencies and also commercial entities for disaster and backup communications. Some entities are using this equipment and techniques in primary day to day roles as well because of location and lack of existing infrastructure.

Fred Townsend

Work in Progress

Joe, W6SNV reports significant progress on the beam antenna installation. The hole was dug, the rebar cage fabricated and installed in the hole and concrete poured. Bubbles vibrated out and template holding the threaded studs in place. The cure is underway after which the tower will be bolted in place. Joe is still juggling through the list of possible beams that might adorn this two section tubular tower.

John, W6JPP has decided to stick with his Cushcraft beam after all and not switch to the Mosley antenna. You might remember that his current antenna has a trap which is defective. A second attempt to get this missing trap from Cushcraft was successful and it now simply remains to install it. However John is going to take the opportunity to verify all the measurements and clean up everything before he returns it to service.

Viky, KI6WDS is working out the details of her bicycle mobile rig. Using a hand held and attaching the 2 meter antenna to various places on here bicycle have worked surprisingly well. So you may soon be hearing "Bicycle Mobile" after her call sign.

Goetz K. Brandt

DX Opportunity in Korea?

A number of us gathered for dinner at Lee's Kitchen in Santa Clara to wish club member Alvin W6ATW happy travels before he set off for a year of study in Korea. He will try to borrow some radio equipment there to contact us when he can.



Alvin Wong farewell dinner

Left to right, Bob N3FAW, Joe W6SNV, Clark KE6KXO, Alvin W6ATW, Gwen KF6OTD, John W6JPP, Lou WA6QYS, and Gregg KF6FNA. Photo taken by your camera- and mic-shy secretary, Viki KI6WDS.

Viki, KI6WDS

Bike Antenna

Joining the spirit of Goetz' new column, I have made some progress on my bike-mobile project.

I took my Yaesu VX-7R and mini mag-mount antenna along on the first bike ride of this year (and possibly last year), and experimented with contacting the club repeater. Thanks to Gregg KF6FNA, John W6JPP, and Clark KE6KXO for giving me signal reports during my test-ride.

After the sad realization that the rear bike rack was aluminum and the mag-mount wouldn't stick to it directly, I experimented with some unorthodox ground plane configurations. I found that I could reach the repeater just fine with my antenna configurations shown in Figures 1 (the ever faithful pizza pan) and 2 (sidewalk box borrowed from the phone company? cable company? I passed up the larger sidewalk box that had big "Warning: High Voltage Inside" stickers all over it). I was stunned to find that I could reach the repeater at all with the setup shown in Figure 3, where I balanced the mag-mount on the top tube and the brake cable housing, although this setup was sensitive to my standing near the antenna in the direction of the repeater. Gotta love those old steel frame bikes! Stay tuned for handlebar mounting of the radio, and some kind of improvement in cable management!



Fig 1. Ever faithful pizza pan



Fig 2: Sidewalk box ground plane

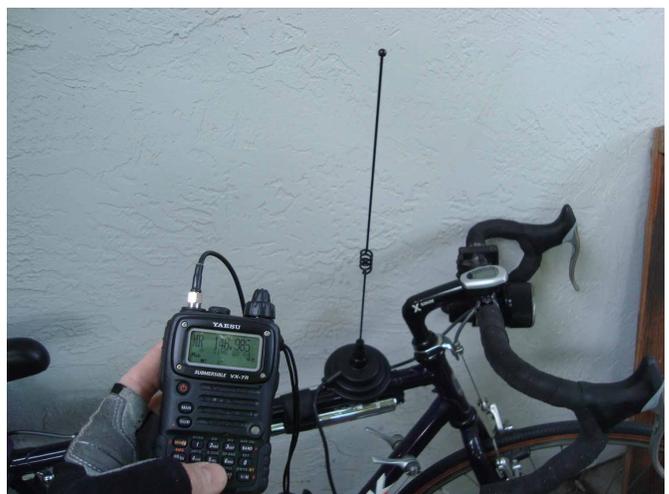


Fig 3: bike top tube

Viki, KI6WDS

160 M Beverage Antenna

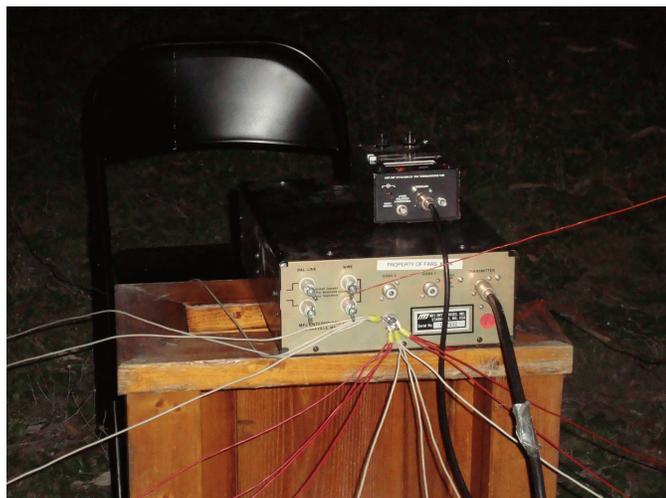
On a spur-of-the-moment outing, I stopped by the FARS 160m contest setup at MaryKnoll in Los Altos on Feb 26, because I wanted to see the Beverage antenna they use. (I was confused as to the involvement of soda cans in the construction of this antenna, but there are none: it was first patented by Harold Beverage in 1921).

Unfortunately, it was dark by the time I got there, so the only picture I have of the Beverage antenna is of one of the PVC tubes that holds the wire antenna about 5 feet off the ground. The wire stretched off into the darkness from the radio tent: I was told it was some 300 feet long. (The January FARS newsletter actually has a decent picture of the antenna wire, taken during daylight!



PVC support for Beverage antenna wire (trust me!)

The Beverage antenna is used for receiving because of its improved signal-to-noise performance. A sloping antenna some 50 feet up into a tree was used to transmit: the picture of the transmit antenna connections shows the sloper rising up and to the right out of the picture, and the radials connected to the base of this antenna, which was set up out in the field.



Transmit antenna connections

You can see the difference in noise in the two pictures of the Spectrum Trace: On the receive spectrum trace, you can see the few spikes of signals below the continuous accumulated peak hold trace. On the transmit spectrum trace (when the operator kindly switched the display to show me what he received on his transmit antenna), you see much more noise all across the spectrum, and it was much harder to hear the contacts. (sorry about the flare in the lower right of the transmit spectrum image).



Receive spectrum trace (very little noise)



Transmit spectrum trace (lots of noise)

The operators were using a Yaesu FT-950 with the DMU-200 data management unit, which created this display. Experienced operators may not be as impressed by this, but I found these spectrum traces a great help in understanding the performance difference between the antennas, and also in finding the activity in the band.

One serendipitous event was one of the residents of MaryKnoll, Fr. Theissen, stopping by the tent to visit with us. He got his license in 1945, and was active in ham radio during his 38 years in Chile. He showed us his QSL card, and got to make his first contact on 160m!

Viki, KI6WDS

Ugly Balun

My antenna farm includes full length dipoles for 160, 80 & 40 meters. When originally installed, each had a trifilar wound 1:1 air balun at the center of the dipole. These are commercially made of PVC pipe with end caps glued tight. The tops have an eye

bolt on both sides for the dipole elements and one straight up for support. At the bottom are PL-259 connectors for attaching the coax cable. These have repeatedly failed after some time in use. Checking with others on various nets has confirmed that this has happened to almost everyone.

Whilst pursuing this subject, everyone volunteered that you don't need a balun at all, but reading the literature and using common sense reveals there is ample justification for one. Since one half of the dipole is connected to the outer shield on the coax, this dipole half actually goes all the way to the transmitter. The same can be said for the other dipole half, but some of this dipole half is inside the coax and is not able to radiate. So you get a long and a short wire creating a distorted pattern.

All those who say you don't need a balun and that you can't hear the difference remind me of my buddy with the 1950 Ford pickup truck that only runs on five of its six cylinders. What the hey, it works just fine. Well I want that last cylinder to contribute, so I did some research on GOOGLE and came up with the "UGLY BALUN" article. So I followed the instructions, wound 20 feet of coax around an empty plastic parmesan cheese bottle, added some strain relief and hooked up my 80 meter dipole wires. The inductance provided by these turns theoretically stops the current from flowing down the coax, which gives it its nomenclature as a 1:1 current balun.

The first use of my 80 (75) meter UGLY BALUN gave me great signal reports from Oregon to Arizona. The best part is that there appears to be nothing that can go wrong with something so simple. Time will tell. In the meantime it's good to know that I'm firing all six cylinders, no make that all eight cylinders. For those of you who realize I have no more data than the 5 cylinder crowd, your right! It just makes me feel superior knowing I have taken the physics of the problem into account.

Goetz K. Brandt

ARRL News

From *The ARRL Letter*, February 2, 2012

FCC SETS DATE FOR MEDICAL DEVICES ON 70 CM

In November 2011, FCC Commissioners unanimously agreed to allocate spectrum and adopt service and technical rules for the utilization of new implanted medical devices that operate on 413-457 MHz (70 cm). These devices will be used on a secondary basis as part of the Medical Device Radiocommunication (MedRadio) Service in Part 95 of the FCC rules. In the Federal Register for Friday, January 27, the FCC announced that the effective date for these new rules is Monday, February 27. The new rules expand the existing MedRadio Service rules to permit the use of new wideband medical implant devices that employ neuromuscular microstimulation techniques to restore sensation, mobility, and other functions to paralyzed limbs and organs. These medical devices hold enormous promise to advance the state of medical care, lower health costs, and improve the quality of life for countless Americans. The rules will allow these new types of MedRadio devices to access 24 megahertz of spectrum in the 413-419, 426-432, 438-444, and 451-457 MHz bands on a secondary basis.

WRC-12: AGENDA ITEM 1.23 UPDATE

According to Colin Thomas, G3PSM, CEPT Coordinator for Agenda Item 1.23, WRC-12 delegates are progressing with what he calls a "compromise proposal" for an MF secondary allocation to the Amateur Radio Service. Agenda Item 1.23 calls for

WRC-12 delegations to consider an allocation of about 15 kHz in parts of the band 415-526.5 kHz to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis, taking into account the need to protect existing services.

"Progress was made with a compromise proposal on Agenda Item 1.23, drafted to take into consideration the views of those for and those against an amateur service allocation around 500 kHz," Thomas explained. "This proposal suggests a 7 kHz segment between 472-479 kHz, very close to the CEPT position of 472-480 kHz. Initial indications are that this could be acceptable to many administrations and regional organizations. However, various meetings need to take place to have these formally accepted. In order to tidy up the draft for the next meeting of the sub-working group, a weekend meeting of the drafting group will be held. At the time of writing [Saturday, January 28], the NOC (No Change) advocates steadfastly maintain their positions." Read more at www.arrl.org/news/european-proposal-for-amateur-secondary-mf-allocation-clears-important-hurdle.

From *The ARRL Letter*, February 9, 2012

NEW RULES FOR 5 MHZ (60 METERS) TO GO INTO EFFECT MARCH 5

On November 18, the FCC released a Report and Order, defining new rules for the 60 meter (5 MHz) band. These rules are in response to a Petition for Rulemaking filed by the ARRL more than five years ago and a June 2010 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. In the February 3 edition of the Federal Register, the FCC announced that these new rules will go into effect on March 5, 2012. Read more at www.arrl.org/news/new-rules-for-5-mhz-60-meters-to-go-into-effect-march-5.

{Basically, this is what had been announced previously, except now it officially goes into effect. – Editor}

ARRL FIELD DAY: 2012 FIELD DAY PACKET NOW AVAILABLE

It's that time of year again -- time to start gearing up for ARRL Field Day, June 23-24, 2012! ARRL's flagship operating event -- always held the fourth full weekend in June -- brings together new and experienced hams for 24 hours of operating fun. Field Day packets are now available for download at www.arrl.org/fieldday and include the complete rules, as well as other reference items such as forms, ARRL Section abbreviation list, entry submission instructions, a Frequently Asked Questions section, guidelines for getting bonus points, instructions for GOTA stations and a kit to publicize your event with the local press. A brief one-page flyer with basic "What is Field Day" information has also been included in this year's Field Day packet. Amateur Radio clubs and individuals are encouraged to reproduce this flyer as a handout for information tables.

From *The ARRL Letter*, February 9, 2012

AMATEUR RADIO GETS SECONDARY MF ALLOCATION AT WRC-12

It's official -- delegates attending the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-12) have approved a new 7-kilohertz-wide secondary allocation between 472-479 kHz for the Amateur Radio Service. Agenda Item 1.23 had both its first and second readings in Plenary Session on Tuesday, February 14; to become part of the ITU's Radio Regulations, each Agenda Item must be read twice in Plenary Session. While the Final Acts will

be signed on Friday, February 17 at the close of the Conference, the new allocation will not take effect until it is entered into the Radio Regulations on January 1, 2013. In any case, no amateur can use the band until his or her national regulations are revised to implement the allocation. Read more at www.arrl.org/news/amateur-radio-gets-secondary-mf-allocation-at-wrc-12.

WRC-12 DELEGATES PLACE POSSIBLE 5 MHZ ALLOCATION ON AGENDA FOR NEXT WRC

One of the responsibilities of each WRC delegation is to set the agenda for the next WRC. WRC-12 delegates approved an Amateur Radio-related agenda item for the upcoming WRC-15: To consider the possibility of making an allocation of an appropriate amount of spectrum, not necessarily contiguous, to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis within the band 5250-5450 kHz. This will be Agenda Item 1.4 at WRC-15.

"It is always a challenge to have items placed on the agenda for future WRCs," IARU President Tim Ellam, VE6SH, told the ARRL. "I am pleased that we were successful in having an Agenda Item for a potential allocation at 5 MHz on a secondary basis. There will be much work to do over the next ITU study group cycle. Much appreciation is owed to the IARU and the national delegation teams in Geneva for their hard work on this issue."

According to ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, the original 5 MHz proposal came from Cuba. "The IARU team worked hard to line up support," he explained. "The factor that worked most in our favor was that at WRC-07, a proposal for a 5 MHz agenda item for WRC-12 failed to gain enough support, so there was a feeling that the Amateur Service deserved better treatment this time around. We did have active support from a number of administrations in Latin America which helped a lot, but a lot of others also had to agree to get it on the agenda. The coordinators of future Agenda Items on behalf of the regional telecommunications organizations, such as CITEL and CEPT, eventually agreed on a package of Agenda Items that included ours." Read more at www.arrl.org/news/wrc-12-delegates-place-possible-5-mhz-allocation-on-agenda-for-next-wrc.

ARRL 500 KHZ EXPERIMENTAL GROUP SPARKED INTEREST IN MF OPERATION

In September 2006, the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology granted a Part 5 experimental license -- WD2XSH -- to the ARRL on behalf of a group of radio amateurs who were interested in investigating spectrum in the vicinity of 500 kHz. Called the ARRL 500 kHz Experiment, this group of hams -- led by Fritz Raab, W1FR -- received permission to experiment and do research between 505-510 kHz using narrowband modes at power levels of up to 20 W effective radiated power (ERP), using CW and PSK31.

The original 500 kHz license called for 23 discrete fixed sites across the US: at Raab's QTH in Vermont, as well as at sites in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. In 2008, the FCC expanded the scope of the experimental license, allowing for more frequencies, more stations and portable operations: The group could now operate between 495-510 kHz, the number of stations increased from 23 to 42 and participants could now operate within 50 km of their designated stations.

At the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-2012), delegates approved an amateur secondary MF allocation between 472-479 kHz. The ARRL would like to

acknowledge the contributions of the participants in the ARRL 500 kHz Experiment to the recent approval of a new amateur secondary MF allocation, and to thank them for their efforts. Read more at www.arrl.org/news/arrl-500-khz-experimental-group-sparked-interest-in-mf-operation.

RAC TO SPLIT ONTARIO INTO FOUR SECTIONS

On February 6, Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) issued a statement on their website that the Ontario Section would be split into four new RAC Administrative Sections, effective September 1, 2012. The reason given for the restructure was "...to create a management model that better communicates with, and represents the interests of, the overall Ontario amateur population." The Ontario Section will be dissolved and be replaced with four new RAC Sections: Ontario North, Ontario South, Ontario East and the Greater Toronto Area. The new section abbreviations will be announced when final. Read more at www.arrl.org/news/rac-to-split-ontario-into-four-sections.

NASA SELECTS AMSAT FOX SATELLITE TO JOIN PROGRAM

Project ELaNa -- NASA's "Educational Launch of NanoSat" managed by the Launch Services Program at the Kennedy Space Center -- announced on February 10 that the AMSAT Fox-1 CubeSat has been selected to join the program. NASA will work with AMSAT in a collaborative agreement for NASA to cover the integration and launch costs of satellites deemed to have merit in support of their strategic and educational goals. Read more at www.arrl.org/news/nasa-selects-amsat-fox-satellite-to-join-program.

TEXAS HAMS MAKE WORLD RECORD BALLOON ATTEMPT

A group of Amateur Radio operators hopes to establish a world distance record for an unmanned helium-filled balloon. The BLT-28 balloon will undertake a journey across the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and then on to Nanjing, China. The South Texas Balloon Launch Team released the balloon at 3 PM (CST) on February 11 from Katy, Texas, just outside of Houston.

During the trans-Atlantic crossing, when out of range of shore based stations, the balloon's APRS beacon will operate on the International Space Station (ISS) packet digipeater frequency of 145.825 MHz. The balloon payload package weighs only about 5 ounces and contains a high altitude GPS tracking system and a 144 MHz FM APRS Amateur Radio transmitter. To conserve weight and battery life, no camera equipment will be on board. The maximum altitude is expected to be above 19 miles, with horizontal speeds between 100 and 150 miles per hour. Read more at www.arrl.org/news/world-record-balloon-attempt.

NEW SATELLITES REACH ORBIT

On February 13, a European Space Agency Vega rocket lifted off from Kourou, French Guiana on its inaugural flight. It carried the Laser Relativity Spacecraft to orbit along with eight student-built MicroSats and CubeSats. The student satellites will transmit telemetry in the VHF, UHF and microwave amateur bands, with one satellite also including a voice repeater. Read more at www.arrl.org/news/new-satellites-reach-orbit.

WCC Net

The Western Country Cousin 75 meter net group are having their annual picnic and camp out in Rio Vista CA this year. This will be the first time the event has been held in Calif. for a number of years. Because of the QTH diversity of our net, we have been holding the event in Oregon as a central point.

We hope everyone can join us in our festivities and help celebrate 48 year anniversary with Special Event call W7C.

The event will be held in Solano County, Sandy Beach Park, Rio Vista CA July 25 thru 29, 2012. More information may be obtained from our web site: WWW.WCCNET.US

John, W6JPP

How Many Call Signs

I now only have four call signs, down from six. How can this be? It is all very logical and the story goes like this, not necessarily in chronological order. Years ago, back in the late sixties I applied for and got a novice license which I remember as KN6LML. This was truly a stillbirth with all the trauma of the unusable baby crib, the children's toys and clothing. Eventually I sold the Collins R-390A receiver, the Central Electronics 200V, the antennas and all the other stuff and Ham Radio would be on hold until the year 2000.

This is when, on a business trip to Salem Massachusetts, I wandered up to New Hampshire where, just across the border, there was a Ham Radio Outlet store. Being moderately well paid at the time and being seduced by the lack of a sales tax in this state, I was sweat talked into an Icom IC-706MKIIG. This I took back to southern California where I lived in a motel. Hard to believe, but I was on TDY for twelve years, my company having moved to Garden Grove from Santa Clara. Some how they thought I was a necessary part of their operation and provided me with a hotel room, a car, meals and all expenses paid.

So into my motel room went the IC-706, alligator clipped to a motorcycle battery which had a miniature trickle charger attached. Early on I had graduated to a suite with a front room and a back room, which allowed a 20 meter dipole to be strung between the entrance door and the back window. The balun hung from the dividing doorway. It didn't take long and just listening wasn't enough, so I let the VEC's at Long Beach State certify me as a technician which resulted in the call sign KG6HQB. Can't tell you how I hated that call sign! Took a month to be able to remember it, it was ugly and sounded worse. So off to Long Beach State for a general and then again for an extra class license. That's when I let the vanity call sign program come to the rescue. I figured I could remember my initials so I requested K6GKB, N6GKB and W6GKB, in that order, all of which were available. I got my first choice and have loved it ever since. For years I thought hams who put their call signs on their car license plates were nerdy with a capitol "N". But now, with this elegant call sign, I began to waver. When I was sent out to the parking lot for the umpteenth time by the motel clerk to get my car license plate number which I had to write down because the short return trip outlasted my memory, I caved in. Now, with the ham plate and the nine foot spring mounted whip antenna on the back bumper, my son wears a ski mask when he joins me in the car. So that's one call sign.

Years ago I got into the airplane business, which is to say I got a pilots license and bought a well used airplane. Actually, I bought the plane and used it to get the pilots license. Of course

this plane had a registration number, called a "tail number". All airplanes are so adorned and even the commercial airplanes you fly will have this number usually near the tail of the airplane. In the US they begin with an "N", have some numeric digits and end with one or more alpha characters. So my first plane was N4515X, which I still own after some 40 years. This tail number is also the call sign of the airplane and the "N" is of course one of the letters assigned to the United States. To use the VHF radio in the plane you need to obtain a station license from the FCC and this is my second call sign. I have another plane, a minute little Cessna 150B of 1960 vintage and it has a tail number/call sign N7323X (third call sign). In a desperate attempt to keep these antiques alive, I bought a bunch of wrecks and these also had N-numbers and Call signs.

Only this last year did the FAA realize they had lost control of registration numbers. Every year they would send every airplane owner a post card which requested any change to the information on record. No change, don't return the post card. Doesn't take a genius to realize what an oxymoron this is. Truly the equivalent of the guest speaker who tells his audience to raise their hands if they can't hear him. Finally the FAA admitted they had no clue how many registrations had no airplanes backing them up. The thought that they only needed to change the post card wording to read, "confirm or loose your registration" never occurred to them. So instead, they cancelled all registrations and required everyone to resubmit. And of course what used to be free suddenly cost twenty dollars and what used to last forever now only lasts 5 years. When you multiply this fee by more than 500,000 planes you are talking some serious money. The speed with which this windfall has disappeared probably makes the old saying "Like grease through a goose" look like constipation. In any case, two of my wrecks are now off the books along with their call signs.

My next call sign relates to a boat I bought to fight off the boredom of living TDY in southern California for so many years. It has a VHF radio aboard and you can go two ways in legally using this radio. You can use the radio and identify yourself with the boat name, which is done by most small boat owners. Or you can apply to the FCC for a station license and get assigned a call sign for your boat. If you wish to install and use a marine radio, this is a requirement. I applied and was assigned call sign "WCN2256". I even bought an expensive ICOM IC-710 marine radio, which is a channelized radio, most channels being duplex frequencies. This radio also allows ham radio operation as well as marine operation. However, the radio is very unfriendly for ham radio operation, knobs only allowing access to channels and free wheeling ham access not available and possible only with keyboard entry. When using the marine frequencies you use the one call sign (WCN2256), when using the same radio for ham operation you use the other call sign (K6GKB).

And that is why I have multiple call signs.

Goetz K. Brandt

Electronic Flea Market

This year's flea market season kicks off with the Red Cross hosting the first Electronic Flea Market on March 10th. The Red Cross helps all the other groups by storing and transporting the flea market equipment. Let's thank them by volunteering to help them with their booth. Send George, N6NKT, a note if you can lend a hand on March 10th. N6NKT@yahoo.com

2012 Schedule - Electronics Flea Market (second Saturday of the

Month):

Mar. 10 Silicon Valley Chapter, American Red Cross
Apr. 14 Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association
May 12 South Peninsula Amateur Radio Klub
June 9 Santa Clara County Amateur Radio Association
July 14 Southern Peninsula Emergency Communications System
Aug. 11 Foothills Amateur Radio Society
Sep. 8 Silicon Valley Emergency Communications System
Oct. 13 West Valley Amateur Radio Association

The Electronics Flea Market is located at De Anza College in Cupertino. www.electronicfleamarket.com/schedule

Lou WA6QYS

Meeting Minutes

General Meeting, Feb. 13, 2012



Kaiser Hospital, 710 Lawrence Expressway, Santa Clara CA 95051 Status: Reviewed

The SCCARA General Membership Meeting was called to order by Don Steinbach AE6PM at 19:37.

Introductions of members and guests were made.

Announcements:

Lou WA6QYS announced flea market season is here again, starting on March 10th (second Saturday of the month). He will let us know when ours is. The fee to host one is again \$1625.

Don AE6PM made the announcement for Don K6PBQ that the station will be open for operation the last Saturday of February.

Fred AE6QL reported the Field Day information is up on the ARRL web site. He also showed a map for the Monterey RadioFest March 3 at the Moose Lodge near the Monterey airport. See the web site <http://n6spd.com> for all the details.

Don AE6PM announced that in October, Pacificon will be held in conjunction with the ARRL National Convention at the Marriott Hotel in Santa Clara. Fred AE6QL and John W6JPP have been in contact with the convention organizers; volunteers will be needed, the organizers will call us in a couple of months. He encouraged club members to donate their time, at registration or security.

Viki KI6WDS passed around rosters of people who she was aware had renewed, but the roster did not include all the people who had renewed since January 1; she received those forms at the meeting and they will be on the next roster.

Don AE6PM mentioned that ham license testing is held the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at the Saratoga Firehouse from 8am to 10:30 (be there enough before 10:30 to take the test!). They provide testing for all license classes.

Don AE6PM reported that the board voted to raffle off the items donated by the ARRL in the general meetings, starting tonight with a Repeater Directory: the tickets would be available at break time. The 2009 ARRL Handbook will be raffled off in the March meeting.

Gwen KF6OTD announced that April will be our dinner meeting.

John W6JPP announced an upcoming antenna party at his house, weather permitting: Sunday February 26 10am.

Goetz K6GKB brought some free magazines for people to take home.

Doug Pietrok AF6CI brought an AEA PK-12 Packet Controller, for anyone who is interested.

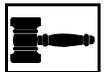
Fred AE6QL explained that the NVIS talk has been postponed to the March meeting because of the room change (no convenient access to the antenna demo from tonight's room). The NVIS talk will be a continuation of the Forest Service technology.

Fred AE6QL introduced tonight's speaker, Ian Klufft KO6YQ, who in addition to being a member of San Jose RACES, and a volunteer on the advisory committee to the San Jose Airport Commission, is a member of the volunteer organization Stratofox Aerospace Tracking Team. They provide tracking, search and recovery of high-altitude rockets and balloons. He gave a fantastic presentation describing some of the recent launches and recovery missions they have participated in. They follow the balloons with light aircraft and ground vehicles, with both cellphones and amateur radio equipment. They have recovered payloads (and rocket parts) tracking them with APRS and cellphones signals, from the rough backcountry of the Black Rock Desert in Nevada, to ranches, treetops and back yards in central California. They didn't get to recover one of their most recent record-setting balloon payloads, because it exceeded distance expectations all the way to the Mediterranean Sea: they tracked it all across the country and then worked with amateur radio operators in Nova Scotia, the Azores, Portugal and Spain to track its progress and to determine when the balloon burst and the payload parachuted into the Med. You can see more about their work at their web site www.stratofox.org, and scroll down to read about some of the missions described in the presentation. Ian also encouraged people who might want to volunteer with them to check out <http://www.stratofox.org/join>; a ham radio license is one qualification to join.

After a question-and-answer period, the raffle was deferred to the next meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 21:22 by Don AE6PM.

Viki Moldenhauer, Secretary KI6WDS

Board Meeting, Feb. 20, 2012



Red Cross Building, 2731 N 1st St, San Jose CA Status: Unreviewed

The SCCARA Board Meeting was called to order by Fred AE6QL at 19:38.

Attendance: Vice President: Fred Townsend AE6QL; Secretary: Viki Moldenhauer KI6WDS; Treasurer: Goetz Brandt K6GKB; Trustee: Don Village K6PBQ; Directors: Lou Steirer WA6QYS, Gregg Lane KF6FNA, Gary Mitchell WB6YRU; Wally Britten KA6YMD; Absences: Don Steinbach AE6PM, John Glass NU6P; Visitors: Gwen Steirer KF6OTD, Clark Murphy KE6KXO

Announcements: Fred AE6QL announced the Radiofest Monterey Bay on March 3 2012, and the resumption of the Electronics Flea Markets, starting Saturday March 10th. The Red Cross will run the first one. Lou WA6QYS will let us know when ours is. The table is in the same location as previous years.

Secretary's Report: The January Board and General and February General meeting minutes were approved as submitted and amended for typos, and the remaining minutes from last year were approved as submitted. The Welcome Packet was discussed: Gary will send it out again. Gary moved to table further discussion of the new member Welcome Packet until the March Board meeting; Gregg seconded; all approved.

Treasurer's Report: Goetz K6GKB reported balances of: checking = \$5286.59, savings = \$500.07, cash = \$195.45.

Vice President's Report: Fred AE6QL announced John Rosica will be our March speaker with the NVIS presentation. The dinner meeting will be April 9th; the location was discussed. Our previous site, HomeTown Buffet, has filed for bankruptcy. Gwen reported the Elephant Bar is no longer in consideration because of unsuitable facilities (noisy, no separate room), leaving Harry's Hofbrau and the IHOP still in the running. There will be a decision by the March meeting, and possibly in the SCCARA-gram before then.

Newsletter/BBS Report: Gary WB6YRU reported both the newsletter and the BBS are running fine. He suggested various activities we could do at the general meetings: having a raffle or an auction at every meeting, of items that members donate, or even a meeting dedicated to an "unload" party where members can bring in their excess equipment for a mini swap-meet.

Repeater /Webpage Report: Wally KA6YMD reported that both repeaters are ok, and he is keeping the web pages updated.

Station Trustee: Don K6PBQ will have the club station open this next Saturday (the last Saturday of the month) for anyone who wants to come operate. Lou had made a contact with the Malpelo Island DXpedition recently from the club station.

Christmas Party: There was some discussion of considering different locations for the Christmas party, with Clark KE6KXO and Lou WA6QYS looking into Holder's Country Inn on DeAnza: they have a back room, would allow everyone to order individually with separate checks, and can handle 35 people. As mentioned in previous meetings, Don K6PBQ already has paid the deposit for this coming year, but a location change will be revisited in the December or January meeting. Goetz K6GKB will reimburse Don for the deposit for this year.

VHF Repeater committee: Lou WA6QYS reported the 19ö cabinet is on its way to the new repeater location.

Old Business:

- Goetz K6GKB looked into putting PayPal onto the web site, so someone could fill out an online form to enroll in the club, with a box for the amount to pay, click a "PayPal" button, and go to a PayPal window. Goetz and Fred AE6QL will get together offline to work on this.

- Goetz tried to access the ARRL web site to identify people with new licenses that we could send email invites for membership to, but all the different sorts end up with way too many people (10,000).

- Clark KE6KXO heard from someone at Santa Clara University that they are interested in setting up a station, and will find out more, in case we can help them.

- Don K6PBQ sent in 2 forms for change of address of the club station's PO Box to the ARRL for the station licenses: one was processed, the other was not. Fred AE6QL will be talking to the vice director of VEC tomorrow and will pursue.

- Gary WB6YRU had previously raised the question of raising dues for those receiving paper newsletters, and the BoD had rejected doing so. He proposed a discount for internet instead; after discussion the response was there would be too much

difficulty for the treasurer then having to track who receives which format.

Fred AE6QL adjourned the meeting at 20:51.

Viki Moldenhauer, Secretary KI6WDS

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.

Antennas, feed-lines, tuners: WB6EMR, W6JPP, K6PBQ, WB6YRU
Lightning protection, grounding: WB6YRU
Station set-up, equipment: K6PBQ, W6JPP
TVI/RFI: WB6YRU
Homebrew projects, construction: KD6FJI, WB6YRU
Computers: older IBM PC: WB6YRU
Packet Network (BBS, forwarding): WB6YRU
Code operating and installations: WB6EMR, K6PBQ
DX (long distance/propagation): WB6EMR
Emergency operating/preparedness: WA6QYS
HF operating techniques (SSB, CW): WB6EMR, K6PBQ
Legal/FCC rules: WB6YRU
SCCARA (club inner workings): K6PBQ, WB6YRU, WA6QYS
EchoLink: KK6MX

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

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

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

W6JPP, John Parks, (408) 309-8709
e-mail: w6jpp@arrl.net

K6PBQ, Don Village, (408) 263-2789
e-mail: donvillage7@yahoo.com

WA6QYS, Lou Steirer, (408) 241-7999
e-mail: wa6qys@arrl.net

WB6YRU, Gary Mitchell, (408) 269-2924
packet: home BBS NOARY
e-mail: wb6yru@ix.netcom.com

Newsletter Notes

Thanks to Goetz K6GKB and Viki KI6WDS for contributing several articles to the SCCARA-GRAM this month.

73, Gary WB6YRU, editor



SCCARA

Santa Clara County Amateur Radio Association
PO Box 106
SAN JOSE CA 95103-0106

Affiliate of the ARRL,
American Radio Relay League



FIRST CLASS

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SCCARA Membership Form for 2012

If none of your info has changed, fill in name and call only

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

Address: _____ Licensed since (yr): _____

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

Telephone: () _____ New Member Renewal
 I'm also a member of the ARRL

E-mail: _____

Memberships begin January 1 and expire December 31.

If renewing: annual membership dues (base rate) are: \$20 Individual, \$25 Family, \$10 Student (under 18)

For new members:

If joining in January: base rate

If joining in February through October: base rate x (11 - month) x 10% (e.g. for June, that would be: base rate x 50%)

If joining in November or December: free for November and December if paying the base rate for the following year

\$ _____ **Dues payment for:** individual family student

For family memberships (at the same address), please include a separate form for each family member.

I want the newsletter by: U.S. Mail internet (make sure your e-mail address is legible and correct)

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