



NewsLetter

December 2003

The December meeting is Video Night/ Kaiser EOC Tour this Friday, Dec. 5 from 6:30 to 9PM at 1950 Franklin St. The January meeting will be the second Saturday, Jan. 10 at Fire Station 1.

Special points of interest:

- No first Saturday meeting
- Friday, December 5, 6:30 Video Night
- Thursday, December 11, 6:30 Annual Holiday Dinner
- January meeting is Jan. 10

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President's Corner

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends, but managed to sneak in a bit of "radio time." Long holiday weekends are a great time to find lots of ham radio stations on the air and propagation conditions have just started to improve a little. November 29-30 was the CQ World Wide CW contest which makes me wonder what will happen to the code requirement for obtaining an amateur radio license in the U.S. As you may know, since the last WARC meeting eliminated at the international level any required code proficiency to use HF spectrum for world wide radio communications, many countries quickly dropped their



code requirements. Officially, the ARRL still supports a code requirement (which may change at the upcoming annual board of directors' meeting), but there are several petitions seeking elimination of the requirement pending before the FCC at this time.

Speaking of the code, there is a lot more than nostalgia and notions of rights of passage to be said for learning Morse. My wonderful mother-in-law and disabled sister-

in-law have been staying with us during the holiday. Nellie's disability has her wheelchair bound and she cannot speak without pointing to letters on a board or slowly typing on a talking keyboard. However, some years back she asked me to teach her the code to provide her with an alternate form of communication. Now it provides her with a greater sense of freedom and comfort than she would otherwise have. Remember, CW often works where other forms of communication fail because it is the first truly digital mode. Why wait for the FCC? The code is very useful knowledge to acquire. Well, you can bet that a number of those CW contest-

December Events

Video-Night and Kaiser EOC Tour:

Friday, December 5, 6:30PM
Instead of the regular Saturday morning meeting on December 6, a Friday evening December 5 EOC tour and "Video-Night" will be held at the Kaiser Permanente administrative building, 1950 Franklin St. (between 19th and 20th Streets). The film "Mir Friends" will be shown as well as training videos.

Annual Holiday Dinner:

Thursday evening, December 11, 6:30 PM
for no-host bar with dinner at 7:00 PM at Pier 29 Restaurant, 300 29th Ave. (adjacent to the Oakland/ Alameda 29th St. Bridge). Costs for dinner and desert will be approximately \$25.

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ers who went to tropical islands for the weekend are still hanging around to give stations a new one on phone so good luck on snagging some DX! Also, don't forget to party with ORCA during the holidays with movie night coming up on December 5 and the holiday dinner party on December 11. A lot of fun, awards, prizes and good cheer. Meanwhile, we'll be putting on our ARES/ RACES hats and meeting with OES this month. The next Board of Directors meeting is January 20 at the Kerry House. And finally, please remember that January's monthly

meeting is on the TENTH (10th), rescheduled in order to avoid the long holiday weekend. Come and hear from the director of the Chabot Space & Science Center.

In the meantime, HAPPY HOLIDAY to all of you and yours! Don't forget to write to Santa for that special radio gizmo you've been longing for. After all, Ham Radio is meant to be fun! C U L and 73, Jim

Meeting November 1

Attendance: ORCA meeting 11/01/2003

Herbert	Bowen	WA6CUY
Mike	Cassidy	W6UAB
George	Chong	W6BUR
Dave	Clemes	KG6GTR
Doug	Faunt, Jr.	N6TQS
Robert	Firehock	KE6IUE
James	Greene	KG6RZQ
Bill	Hardy	KF6VOG
Karen	Harris	KG6ADB
Michael	Hole	KG6DER
Randy	Jenkins	KA6BQF
Art	McLaughlin	W6THD
Norman	Morse	WB4RNW
David	Otey	WB6NER
Juan	Padilla	KE6HCD
Chris	Peebles	KE6MQW
Margery	Service	KF6GTT
Tom	Tazelaar	KG6MAC
Brian	Treusch	W6LL
Alan	Whitman	KQ6TW

Amateur Satellite Presentation by Emily Clark, W0ECC

We had the pleasure of a fine speaker at the November ORCA meeting, Emily Clark, W0ECC. Emily prepared a great talk titled, "An Introduction to Amateur Satellites".

Emily began with a brief history of amateur satellites. She then proceeded to explain how someone could contact existing satellites. She divided the talk into Low Earth Orbit satellites (LEO's) and High Earth Orbit "birds" (HEO's).

LEO's provide shorter operating opportunities due to their shorter "pass times". They also require more compensation for Doppler Effect due to their much quicker speed relative to ground. Emily discussed several of the operating LEO's, including AMSAT-OSCAR 7, which is the *oldest functioning satellite* (and I believe she said of ANY satellite, amateur or otherwise), which is 29 years old this December!

HEO's provide us with very long useful passes and minimal Doppler issues due to their very great distance from the Earth and long orbital times. An example of an HEO is OSCAR 40. Contrary to popular "wisdom" it is definitely NOT dead. Emily provided us with operating frequencies and modes for several satellites, LEO's and HEO's.

She also discussed equipment needs. They range from a large dish and 1500 watts, to a handtalkie. Yes, you can work Saudi-sat 1A (SO-41) with a 5 watt, dual-band, handtalkie. However, a good *half-wave* antenna is pretty much required.

Most amateur satellite operators conduct their operations with small Yagi's (several of which are hand-held) and/or small (less than a meter or two diameter) dishes. They also use all-mode, dual-VFO 2m/70cm radios. A personal computer with a sound-card interface is extremely useful. Add a little satellite tracking software (which is free to inexpensive and widely available), and you're in business.

Emily also provided us with several useful web sites which I tried to write down, but she assures us that she has many links from her home page. Therefore, I will start with hers and list all the others that I got down.

I think that we all greatly enjoyed her presentation and appreciate the effort that she put into it. It was one of our most interesting meetings. Thanks, Emily! *by Alan KQ6TW, VP*

W0ECC's website has useful information:
www.emilyshouse.com
 Also use: <http://www.arnsat.org>
www.projectoscar.net
www.arrowantenna.com

Repeater Equipment

Attempting to purchase a modern, high-quality repeater system is nowhere near as easy as dropping into HRO and buying one off the shelf. It turns out that the latest and greatest repeaters are essentially exclusively designed for commercial service, which has some slightly different requirements from our own. So the question is, can they be modified to meet our requirements? This primarily involves programming, so the question becomes one of determining if their software will allow them to provide our required logic signals (to interface properly with our external controller), frequency coverage, etc. To try to make a long story short, our trustee (Frank, **K6UE**) and I have had a number of telephone conversations, email exchanges and face-to-face meetings with a local communications company (after researching a number of alternatives) which handles the (commercial) Kenwood

line. They have been quite helpful, and are trying to get answers to our questions; but this all seems to take quite a bit of time. At the moment, we are hopeful that we can get the final answers within the next couple of weeks and, if they can meet our requirements, a purchase proposal should be forthcoming shortly thereafter. Don't hold your breath, but I'm hopeful that we can achieve the necessary break-through (and actually get our hands on the equipment) within the next 2 or 3 months. This is for the 2-meter system. The 440 system should follow thereafter, and should be easier since the answers to the questions should be similar to those we hope to get for the 2-meter system.

73, see you at Video Night, Art **W6THD**

ORCA's ARRL SET Oct. 4 Report

One thing can be said for sure for this years' SET event – that it was a very spontaneous experience! (Some operators were running at top speed to place exercise materials at locations.) Thanks to 13 ORCA members who sprung out of bed, checking into the established Resource Net, and leaving home for deployment on the roads to staff the Oakland Emergency Operation Center and make “house-calls” to four [out of thirty] Oakland Fire Stations.

Once again, this crew of 13 operators demonstrated capacity to utilize the ORCA repeaters for resource and command activities (on emergency power too) and also utilize simplex frequencies to conduct tactical assignments coordination between the Oakland EOC and Operators on deployment to assigned Fire Station destinations. To top this experience for 2004, a few take-aways are extant. In Octo-

ber 2004, why not at least double SET participation to 26 or more operators? The SET offers ORCA an opportunity to fully assess the status of the ECHO amateur radio installations of 30 Oakland Fire Stations. Also, the local SET activity offers excellent opportunities to liaison with Alameda County and possibly Regional SET activities. So, let's put the October 2004 SET activity on the ORCA July meeting agenda (no sense in letting down after Field Day) to launch the detailed planning of this worthy event.

A hearty thank you to the 2003 participants! An event report to ARRL will be filed for 132 points!

73, David **WB6NER**

PARTICIPATION

Adele	Bertaud	KE6HKY
Herbert	Bowen	WA6CUY
Mike	Cassidy	W6UAB
Dave	Clemes	KG6GTR
Robert	Firehock	KE6IUE
James	Greene	KG6RZQ
Michael	Hole	KG6DER
Joe	Kohler	KL7IDY
David	Otey	WB6NER
Juan	Padilla	KE6HCD
James	Tiemstra	K6JAT
Mark	Violet	N6RCG
Alan	Whitman	KQ6TW

ORCA on the web:

www.qsl.net/orca

January Guest Speaker

Saturday, January 10, 2004 at the OES media room Dr. Glen Dahlbacka, who is the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Chabot Space and Science Center and a Senior Program Manager at Lawrence Berkeley Lab, will be our guest speaker. Jim is planning on

Including in his presentation a discussion of satellite communications, space science, and will probably include an overview of what Chabot is all about. Dr. Dahlbacka will give a fascinating lecture so plan on being there. 73, Adele **KE6HKY**



December meeting is Video-Night Friday, the 5th

Monthly events

1st Sunday	Livermore Swap meet Las Positas CC
1st Saturdays	ORCA ARES - Oakland OES 9:00
2nd Saturdays	Los Altos Hills Flea Market
2nd Fridays	East Bay Amateur Radio Club
3rd Fridays	Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club
3rd Fridays	Hayward Radio Club
3rd Weds	Rocky Ridge Repeater Group
4 th Fridays	Alameda Radio Club Assn. (ARCA)

East Bay Amateur Radio Club meets 7:30PM at the Salvation Army, 4600 Appian Way, El Sobrante.
Hayward Radio Club meets at 1401 West Winton Ave in Hayward behind Hayward Fire Station 6, next to the Hayward Air National Guard Base.
Alameda Radio Club Assn. meets 7pm at Building 522 West Midway on Alameda Point.
Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club and the Rocky Ridge Repeater Group meet at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette.

ORCA Officers and Board

President: Jim Tiemstra, K6JAT
Vice Pres.: Alan Whitman, KQ6TW
Secretary: Art McLaughlin, W6THD
Treasurer: Bob Firehock, KE6IUE

Director: David Otey, WB6NER
Director: Brian Treusch, W6LL
Director: Bill Hardy, KF6VOG
Director: Dave Clemes, KG6GTR
Director: Adele Bertaud, KE6HKY

Ex-Officio Directors:
ARES Liaison Mark Violet, N6RCG
Repeater Trustee Frank Clasby, K6UE

MONEY AND MEMBERS –Treasurer’s Report

It looks as if our transition year to a merged club was a successful one. In 2003 we have a paid membership of 71. We should end the year with about \$7300 in our account. Our annual operating expenses, including outreach for new members, repeater operations, the newsletter and Field Day, will be about \$1900—basically, the membership sustained operations with a bit left over to go to our capital budget. After we close the calendar year, the Treasurer will compile a more complete and detailed report.

We expect to spend about \$3250 from capital funds to acquire the new two-meter repeater (\$3000 is encumbered currently, but shipping, taxes, etc., will raise the final number). This will leave around \$4000 to go to next year’s capital needs.

While the Board hasn’t acted formally yet, the Treasurer is prepared to recommend that dues remain at \$30 for 2004. Remember that in 2004 we are instituting a new Family membership category, in which additional household or family HAMS of a full dues-paying member may become members for \$5.00. We will also accept two-year dues’ payments (\$60 for 2004 and 2005) —save a little time and paper (with a tip of the hat to Vail, **KE6WPJ**, for this idea).