

April 3, 2004

# ORCA NewsLetter

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The April meeting will be the first Saturday, April 3, 9:00 AM at Fire Station 1 media room, 1605 Martin Luther King at 17th Street, Oakland. The following meeting is May Day.

## Special points of interest:

- Last call for dues
- EchoLink talk (tentative)
- Dues due: page 3
- **KA6NZZ** repairs
- Sonoma HamFest
- EOC Radio Room mapping software

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## President's Corner

I'm glad to see our membership picking up for 2004 and to hear all the enthusiasm evident on our nets as well as at the monthly meetings. As everyone knows, we have a lot on the agenda: Chabot Space & Science Center, Skyline High School Radio Club, ECHO fire station maintenance and the EOC Radio Room completion. No rest for the weary.

EchoLink is another new phenomenon in Ham radio that seems to be revitalizing more than a few long standing repeater systems. Our featured speaker



for the April meeting will acquaint us with this mode. From personal experience I can say that there's nothing quite like hooking into an internet connection from your mobile and talking with someone on the opposite commute on the other side of the world. Of course, to make this all happen we need a new controller and some additional hardware, so membership support is critical.

Our all volunteer Technical Committee has performed miracles, but they need your support.

April is the month for Spring Breaks so I'm sure many of you may be out of town at one point or another. But, if you're near a radio just remember the exotic locales some of your colleagues will be visiting. Doug, **N6TQS**, should be on Banaba Island (T33) an uninhabited Pacific atoll which is very high on the world's "Most Wanted List" but should be an easy catch from California. Meanwhile,

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## April Meeting Speaker

We hope to have a speaker at the April meeting talk about the latest revolution in ham radio: internet connected repeaters. One example of this is EchoLink. EchoLink® software allows licensed Amateur Radio stations to communicate with one another over the Internet, using voice-over-IP (VoIP) technology. The program allows worldwide connections to be made between stations, or from computer to station, greatly enhancing Amateur Radio's communications capabilities. There are more than 121,000 registered users in 147 countries worldwide! You can get a free copy of the software at [www.echolink.org](http://www.echolink.org)

**President's Corner, from page 1**

yours truly should be operating V26DX during the CQ WPX Phone Contest at the end of this month. I may even operate casually after that for a few days under another V2 call sign.

That's all for now so 73 and gud DX! de Jim, **K6JAT**

**ORCA on the web:**  
**[www.qsl.net/orca](http://www.qsl.net/orca)**

**NOTES FROM ORCA MEETING, Saturday, March 6, 2004**

**President's Report** - Jim **K6JAT** reported on several items. They are continuing to work on setting up stations at Skyline High School and Chabot Space and Science Center; planning for Field Day needs to start now; and a speaker on EchoLink will make a presentation to ORCA in the near future (EchoLink ties the Internet to two-way radio).

**Treasurer's Report** - David **WB6NER** gave the report in the Treasurer's absence. There are 25 members that have not re-upped. The final date for paying dues is March 31; anyone not paid by that date will not receive a Newsletter. The number of paid members to date is 54 (includes about 7 family members). We hope for 75-100 members. We have been spending money on the repeater.

**Chief Engineer Report** - Art **W6THD** reported that the new antennas are up, one sticking up and one sticking down. We are transmitting on one and receiving on the other. They are 40 feet off the ground and both are omni-directional. He would like to know if people have trouble with getting into the repeater now and vice versa.

Jim **K6JAT** said the repeater did well in the recent storm, which had high winds.

Art **W6THD** proposed a resolution of thanks to Sherrick Slattery **KA6NZZ** who spent 4-5 hours working on the antennas, which involved some difficult pole climbing. The resolution was passed unanimously.

**Field Day Report** - David **WB6NER** passed around a signup list. The site will be the same as last year: the Sequoia Arena off Skyline Blvd. We made a donation of \$100 to the Metropolitan Horseman's Association for the use of their arena. It has not been decided whether or not to have a site also at the EOC as we did last year. Having two sites stretched the resources of the club.

**RACES Report** - Jim **K6JAT** said we have done a proposal, with a budget, to complete the radio room at the EOC. We will rely on the present configuration and have five operating positions. We are working with Colleen on this. It should be professional, slick and functional.

Colleen reported briefly on the August emergency exercise - she is not sure of the exact date. She will bring a camera for the April meeting for those members who need new **ID cards**.

Other Business - Randy **KA6BQF** announced a NALCO (Northern Alameda County ARES/RACES) meeting Thursday evening, April 1, at 7:30 at 997 Cedar St., next to Berkeley Fire Station #6. Also, an 11-week Entry Level Tech License class will be given by the East Bay Amateur Radio Club and West Contra Costa Adult Education, starting Tuesday, March 30, (7:30 to 9:30 pm) at Alvarado School, 5625 Sutter St., Richmond. Contacts: John Wood **KF6HFA**, 234-0527 or Randy Jenkins **KA6BQF**, 526-4089.

Weekly Net Control operators were designated, and the last part of the meeting focused on the AAL International DX Contest in the EOC Radio Room.

73, Vail **KE6WPJ**

## Money and Members

At press time we counted 62 members for 2004, close to our goal of 65. Twelve of the 62 are new full members, so if we can get just a few of the 20 yet to renew from 2003, we will reach our annual goal for the year. Nine of us are family members; 11 people took advantage of the opportunity to pay 2005 dues at the same time (so we have a good start on 2005 already!).

Welcome to new member **Terence Richardson, KF6BYJ**, and to **Read Heath, KF6VBQ**, renewing after a brief hiatus and accompanied by future family HAM **Mike Heath**. Also, welcome back to full family members **Chelsea Taylor, KF6YRA**, **Alexander Taylor, KG6DFU** and **Lisa Askew, KF6BYI**.

As a reminder, the revised family membership policy allows additional household and family HAMS of a full dues paying member to become full members for \$5 for the year for each additional HAM. You can lock in the 2004 dues level for 2005 by paying both your 2004 and 2005 dues now.

At the risk of sounding heavy handed, anyone who has not renewed by March 31 is considered delinquent, and beginning next month we won't send you the newsletter. Twenty HAMS who were full members last year have not yet renewed. Our intention is to reach out to all those recent members and try to get them back into full status. Please renew now with your check payable to **ORCA**, and mail it to **ORCA, P.O. Box 21305, Oakland, CA 94620-1305**. Let us know if you are willing to receive the monthly newsletter only by e-mail (and include your address). Thanks in advance for your support and confidence.

On the fiscal side of things, we are ending the quarter with a balance of just over \$7000. Without getting into the line item details of what's encumbered and what's allocated to 2005 dues and so forth, suffice it to say that so far our actual 2004 experience is in line with our budget projections. A more detailed report will be presented by the Treasurer at the April meeting. Now, get on the air!

Bob **KE6IUE**

The ORCA NewsLetter is published monthly. Any articles can be used with attribution. Articles, news and photos submitted make for a more interesting newsletter. Please submit materials for the May issue by April 11 to Dave **KF6EPQ** [dpm24@cornell.edu](mailto:dpm24@cornell.edu) or fax to 540-7045. Thank you!

## Hams Wanted

The Mount Diablo ARC is going to be providing radio support of a number of events in April and May. As some of these events take place on the same weekend, with a couple at the same time, they need just about everyone they can get. Dates of the events as well as contact information can be found here:

<http://www.mdarc.org/publicservice.html>

Please note that the MS Walk at Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek in the listing has been re-scheduled to April 18th. At the time of writing this the date is incorrect on the web page. Working on events like this is not only fun, but great practice for Emergency Communications.



Here are a couple of pictures, taken on Feb 8, 2004, of Sherrick Slattery, **KA6NZB**, at work on the WB6NDJ antenna pole, in preparation for the installation of our new antennas.



## Sonoma Hamfest

Hi, I am Jim Hill, **K6UUW**, and I would like to invite you and your club members to the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club (VOMARC) hamfest on **April 24th** in beautiful Sonoma.

Activities include a swap meet, VE session, breakfast, fox hunt, and a lot of friendly folks. Go to our website [www.VOMARC.com](http://www.VOMARC.com) for more info and a map or email to [hill@vom.com](mailto:hill@vom.com)

Hope to see you there. 73, Jim **K6UUW**

## Learning the Code

Several times in the past I made a stab at learning Morse Code. However, each time I would get to the fourth letter ('N' in the standard teaching order) and my brain would just go on the fritz. I just could not hear the difference between A (the third letter taught) and N. Despite being a Ham, only hearing something is the worst way for me to retain information. If there is no visual component to something it just won't stick in my brain. Fortunately there is hope for those poor souls in my predicament. It's a program called "Code Quick 2000" and for me it worked. It not only has a different letter teaching order than the "standard" method, it also includes the visual component that I need to be able to learn anything well. In the case of Code Quick it takes two parts. You learn each character with a phonetic phrase that matches the dits and dahs of each character. For example, for the letter D the phonetic is "DOG did it" (-.). Each phonetic has an amusing drawing as the second part. It helps to attach that visual image to each letter so I can remember it better. I'll leave it to your imagination for what that one is for D.

It comes with 12 groups of lessons (called "Takes"), and each has 5-7 parts. Each teaches you 3-5 characters per Take. With the program set at 5 words per minute it takes about 1 and a half to 2 hours to get through each group. The advertisements say you can learn the code in 12 days. I tried that, but having to work late a couple of nights put me off schedule so a few times I was not able to get through a full take. Even with that I was ready to take my test after three weeks. Had that not happened, I would like to believe I would have finished in 12 days. You can get more information and purchase the program online for \$34.95 at <http://www.cq2k.com/> If you want to learn the code but, like me, really need to SEE something to learn it, then I highly recommend the program.

And yes, I did pass the test. Michael E. Hole **KG6DER**

## EOC Mapping Software

Interestingly, The ORCA Yahoo group was originally formed due to a conversation about the need for some sort of computer mapping software for the Radio Room at the EOC. I am very happy to say that mapping software was installed today. A map with the majority of Oakland Fire Stations marked on it has been created and is located on the desktop of the computer. **KG6DER**

Go to [http://groups.yahoo.com/orca\\_races](http://groups.yahoo.com/orca_races) and request to join.

*Editor's note:*

*Thanks to Michael **KG6DER** for donating the mapping software to the EOC Radio Room.*



*April Speaker will talk on EchoLink*

### Monthly events

1st Sundays	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 Wednesdays	Rocky Ridge Repeater Group
4 <sup>th</sup> 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
Treasurer:	Bob Firehock	KE6IUE
Secretary:	Art McLaughlin	W6THD

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

#### Ex-Officio Directors:

ARES Liaison	Mark Violet	N6RCG
Repeater Trustee	Frank Clasby	K6UE

*Thanks to the many authors of articles in  
this month's ORCA NewsLetter!*

NOTE: The Foothill Flea Market has been  
relocated to the Lockheed Martin parking  
lot west of the Satellite Test Center ( Blue  
Cube) for this year starting on March 13th.

Go to <http://www.asvaro.org> for maps, dates  
and general info. Hope to see you there.