

# ORCA NewsLetter

Oakland Radio Communication Association  
Oakland, California

The next meeting will be on the first Saturday, December 1st, 9:00 AM at Fire Station #1 media room, 1605 Martin Luther King at 17th Street, Oakland.

## President's Corner

### Special points of interest:

- **Holiday Party Date & Location**

### Net Control

- Dec. 6: Elizabeth, **KI6JJR**
- Dec. 13: Vail, **KE6WPJ**
- Dec. 20: John, **KS6M**
- Dec. 27: John, **KI6EWY**
- Jan. 3: Dave **AE6PX**
- Jan. 10: Per **KI6JJS**

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I don't know about you, but I am full! And that was the best turkey ever! Every year that is said but this year could be truly true! With the help of trusted cookbooks, TV chefs and online sages (hey - wait a minute! That is the herb we used!) a very plump and juicy bird emerged from the oven and was consumed with proper thanksgiving with many more meals to come. I like to buy extra birds at the great holiday prices and keep them on hand for that cold and rainy weekend to spice things up. Turkey-it's not just for holidays anymore!



I missed the Black Friday sales - I overslept by 14 hours! I have a hard time understanding that phenomenon but I am sure P.T. Barnum is chuckling in his grave. I am working on a sale where the last person in line gets the best bargain. No waiting involved and it might help eliminate the horde of nocturnal queesters. But then, how would TV newscasts fill their airspace on an otherwise slow news day? This idea is still in the planning stages and has been deferred to my patent laboratory.

Which brings me to the subject of 146.520, the National Calling Frequency. I seem to remember a bumper sticker that proclaimed "I Monitor 146.520." Pretty arcane unless you are a ham and underused even if you are. I have had some contacts on this frequency during my bike rides and tried to use it during a potential emergency. One contact was with a ham in

Coleville CA along Highway 395 in the Eastern Sierra. He was sitting on his back porch, watching lightning strikes igniting fires in the surrounding forests. I could see the bolts and the smoldering wood and was glad I was

motoring on. More recently I was at the summit of Tioga Pass in Yosemite. I gave a call, hoping my elevation and 75 watts would fetch a memorable DX QSO. I wound up having a nice chat with a ham who was on visible mountain top less than a mile away! Finally, while sweeping the end of a bike ride in remotest Napa County we observed a peculiar sight in the fading sunset. A high tension pole was in the last stages of breaking off at the top. Several riders and

several thousand acres of tinder dry brush were about to challenged by untold volts. I volunteered to drive ahead to cell phone range. I called repeatedly on 146.520, this time in earnest, and this time in vain. Just when you need it! I later learned the pole did indeed snap, the last riders were diverted safely, and my 911 phone call did summon the Pope Valley Fire Department. Luckily there was no blaze and no injuries. The lesson here? It can't hurt to monitor 146.520 at home or while mobile. You just don't know when that frequency may spring to life.

Two events of note in the month of December. ORCA's Holiday Dinner will be held on December 12, at Pier 29, in Alameda. Please plan

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## ORCA Calendar

December 1: Ti Michelle Connelly, **NJ6T**, ARRL's East Bay Section Manager speaking about ARRL

Wednesday, December 12: ORCA Holiday Party at Pier 29 at Ballena Bay, Alameda, Social Hour at 1800; dinner starts at 1900 (reservation coupon on page 2.)

December 31/January 1 'Straight Key Night'

Jan. 5th meeting: 9:00 AM at Fire Station #1 Media Room, 1605 Martin Luther King at 17th Street, Oakland

## President's Corner (Continued from page 1)

on attending. It is a lot of fun with great food and drink. There will be a cornucopia of raffle prizes and special guests. More details will be forthcoming at the monthly meeting at OES on December 1, 2007, at 9:00 am. The second event is Straight Key Night on December 31/January 1. All rusty fists are welcome to join in. No pressure CW at its best! If you don't want to send then try to copy for a little while. I recommend a regimen of In-tramural Thumb Wrestling and Synchronized Knuckle Cracking to limber up the fingers and plenty of Q Tips to make sure your ears are finely tuned! Straight Key Night is a special event and a reminder of the roots of wireless communication. Hope to see you there!

73 Dave **AE6PX**



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## Membership Corner

This month we have a special welcome to extend to our Technician License Class graduates. Eighteen students from our Fall 2007 consortium class (EBARC, ARCA and ORCA) passed their Element 2 exam at the VE session and qualified for their Ham ticket. One was current ORCA member Huib Nanlohy, whose ticket had lapsed and is newly **KI6MTE**—congratulations Huib (Huib is also taking the General class). The other 17 are new Hams and in addition to their licenses they earned a trial membership in ORCA through June 2008, which includes our busy line-up of spring events and Field Day.

We'd like to welcome these new Hams, and new ORCA members:

Mike Argo **KI6MTS**, Joe Chan **KI6MTQ**, Elizabeth Chan **KI6MTR**, Suzanne Christensen **KI6MTT**, Paula Costa **KI6MPD**, Janet Johnson **KI6MTN**, Kathy Kennedy **KI6MTK**, Elizabeth Lin **KI6MTO**, Alfred Lin **KI6MTP**, Matthew Madson **KI6MTM**, Trish Mathews **KI6MTA**, Muriel Montague **KI6MTI**, Lee Rosen **KI6MTJ**, Marianne Schenone **KI6MTU**, Seth Schneider **KI6MTF**, David Strahan **KI6MTB**, and Jennifer Strahan **KI6MTL**.

This brings our 2007 ORCA membership to 97. Without resting on our laurels, however, we turn to 2008—renewal dues for 2008 are \$30 and the Treasurer will accept your cash or check anytime you can find him, or please mail a check to our Post Office box, ORCA, PO Box 21305, Oakland, CA 94620-1305. See you Saturday.

Bob **KE6IUE**

## Party Time

The ORCA annual holiday dinner party on Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, promises to be another excellent event once again. If you've been in recent years, you'll know to come—if you're new, we hope you'll find your way to join us for a delightful evening of fellowship and food with local Hams and their families.

The evening begins anytime after 6 pm with no-host cocktails at the Pier 29 restaurant in Ballena Bay, Alameda. We start sitting down for dinner at 7 pm, and balance conversation with a few formal remarks and lots of laughs. The price is \$30 and you have four entrée choices: salmon with lemon butter caper sauce, chicken Marsala, prime rib or vegetarian pasta. Family and friends are welcome.

In addition, we'll have the traditional annual raffle of various radio-related prizes, from antennas to flashlights to books. Each dinner will entitle you to two raffle tickets, and, in a wrinkle, for \$5 you can buy another 5 tickets for the general raffle (limit of one extra \$5 purchase per diner).

This year we're adding something else new—a silent auction for two useful pieces of used equipment: the first is a desktop computer suitable for your 'shack' support system (Pentium III 933 MHz, 128 MB RAM, 18 GB Hard Drive, running Windows 2000, 14" monitor), courtesy of Michael Hole, KG6DER, and the second is a Yaseu VX-5R tri-band HT, with its original packaging, manual and a cigarette lighter power adapter and microphone, all from Bill Hardy's shack, KF6VOG/SK, courtesy of Una Stephens-Hardy.

So, bring your checkbooks—each item will have a starting 'bid' and throughout the festivities you'll be able to add your bids to the list up to a cut-off time around dessert. As always, one hundred percent of the proceeds of the auction and raffle will go directly into the ORCA treasury to support your Club activities, including the repeaters, newsletters and training events.

We need to know the count the week ahead, so please send in your dinner checks and entrée choices ASAP to the Treasurer at ORCA, PO Box 21305, Oakland CA 94620-1305. See the convenient tear-out coupon in this newsletter. Also, you can bring cash or checks to the December meeting, and each will be enthusiastically accepted. Reservations will close the weekend before the dinner, but a few spots at tables are usually open for walk-ins. Questions?—Bob **KE6IUE**.

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**YES, please sign me up for the ORCA Holiday Dinner:**

Name/call \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

Entrée choices: \_\_\_ prime rib \_\_\_ chicken \_\_\_ salmon  
 \_\_\_ vegetarian

Send your check payable to ORCA (\$30/person) to:  
 ORCA, PO Box 21305, Oakland, CA 94620-1305

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## How Ready are We?

This column might have to become a semi-annual feature. Last March, after the 4.2 Calaveras quake, we surveyed members regarding their response to the event. We repeated our readiness quiz in November, as part of this year's SET, this time in response to the 5.6 San Jose quake, also on the Calaveras fault. Each time we ask whether or not people felt the quake, how they responded and then how prepared they were to deploy.

In November, 26 people responded, and of those 21 felt the quake (sadly, your author didn't). For the most part, the responses to the quiz questions were similar to the March responses, when 28 people answered, of whom 23 felt the quake. There were two areas of 'improvement' in November. Over 50% of those who felt the quake got on 146.88, while in March it was less than 25%. In November, 3/4's of us said we were prepared to deploy for 72 hours on 30 minutes notice, an improvement over the 55% who were ready in March. Overall preparedness was about the same; about 70%+ of us feel we are prepared to self-sustain at home (with our families) for at least 72 hours.

In other results, 57% had their go-bags ready (too low a number and not much of an improvement over March, when 50% were at the ready); over 90% had at least a half tank of gas in their primary vehicle and 96% knew where their family members were. Deploying to help with emergency communications requires certain preconditions—first and foremost, you need to know that your family is safe and secure. Since gas may not be readily available, keeping your tank 1/2 full is a good preparedness measure in any circumstances. Finally, while a less than ready go bag usually can be supplemented more easily than finding gas or your family, it's still good practice to check it frequently and keep it refreshed and outfitted. One best practice might be that each time you get the ORCA newsletter, take 10 minutes to open your go bag, inventory the contents and add or replace items as necessary. When you need it, you'll be glad it's there.

One final note—curiously, the 4.2 earthquake came just days before we were scheduled to do RACES basic training. This latest one came on the Thursday before our annual SET. Either we've got good reality support for our RACES training schedule or we should cancel it altogether...

73 de Bob **KE6IUE**

## UPGRADE TIME?

The final class for the General License will be on November 27<sup>th</sup>. A VE session has been scheduled for Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007, at 7:00 pm and is open to all.

Tests for element 2 (Tech), element 3 (General) and element 4 (Extra) will be offered. Reservations are not required, but please be sure to bring government issued ID (drivers license or passport) and \$14 (exact amount would be appreciated). If you are going for an upgrade also be sure to bring your current FCC license together with a copy (which will be retained).

The session will be held at the Alameda Fire Department Training Center at 431 Stardust Place, Alameda, CA 94501 (Alameda Point). If you need more information please contact Bob Firehock **KE6IUE** or David Haycock **KI6AWR** (510 846-0011).

## November SET a Mixed Go Bag

ORCA held its annual Simulated Emergency Test on Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. We had the largest participation ever, with over **forty** amateurs checking in to the resource net, deploying to fire stations and/or helping to conduct the exercise. This became the 'bad news', too, as the overwhelming response contributed to slow deployments, dead air time and frustration by some who felt they had to wait too long to be deployed. While there were contingency plans for a small turnout, responding to this number of operators forced us to be creative on the fly, not always successfully.

Despite these bumps, the exercise itself was a success. In terms of the stated ARRL objectives of identifying strengths and weaknesses, providing a public demonstration and gaining experience, it appears we accomplished all three. For one we learned that we have to train and drill more often if we expect to be able to respond well in a call-up for a communications' emergency—finding this out is one reason we do drills. We also need to pay more attention to radio room and on-air procedures and protocols—the Operations Manual on the Web site is a great place to start. On the plus side we activated the radio room and operators checked in from 9 fire stations. In addition, we made contact with Piedmont, Alameda, a Red Cross operator and EBMUD, passed NTS traffic and had an excellent debrief.

We also scored more ARRL points this year than last, another of our Club goals for the exercise. While the on-air time for operators varied greatly and traffic was down from last year, as a group we certainly gained valuable emergency communications experience. In the written evaluations people expressed lower satisfaction after the exercise than their expectations were ahead of it. This indicates a general failure to meet people's expectations for the event. Nevertheless, on balance people thought the exercise was in the middle range—not great, not a flop—and the hotwash brief received high marks.

A fuller written report is being compiled for the Board, as well as the formal score sheet to the ARRL, and both will be shared with everyone when they are done. Two recommendations are almost certain to be implemented—a mid-year event of some sort (akin to last year's April Set Lite) and more training throughout the year. Thanks to all who participated in planning, conducting and participating in the SET—this is how we learn.

73 de Bob **KE6IUE**

## FEMA

Emergency Management Institute  
Independent Study Program  
**FREE** online courses in assorted  
emergency topics.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS>



## **December Meeting: Ti Michelle Connelly, NJ6T, ARRL's East Bay Section Manager**

### **Monthly events**

1st Saturday	ORCA Monthly Meeting - Oakland OES 9:00 a.m.
1st Sunday	Livermore Swap Meet (closed in winter)
2nd Friday	East Bay Amateur Radio Club
2nd Saturday	Electronics Flea Market in Sunnyvale (closed in winter)
3rd Friday	Hayward Radio Club
3rd Friday	Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club
4th Friday	Amateur Radio Club of Alameda

Amateur Radio Club of Alameda meets 7:00 PM at  
431 Stardust Place on Alameda Point.

East Bay Amateur Radio Club meets at 7:30 PM at the  
Salvation Army, 4600 Appian Way, El Sobrante.

Hayward Radio Club meets at 7:30 PM 1401 West Winton  
Ave. in Hayward behind Hayward Fire Station 6,  
next to the Hayward Air National Guard Base.

Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club meets at 7:30 PM at  
Our Savior Lutheran Church,  
1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette.

### **Weekly Nets**

Thursdays 7:30 PM	Oakland ARES/RACES Net 146.88 MHz minus PL 77
Thursdays 7:00 PM	Alameda Emergency Preparedness 146.88 MHz minus PL 77
Thursdays 7:15 PM	NALCO ARES/RACES 440.9 MHz plus PL 131.8
Mondays 7:30 PM	EBARC 10M "Explore Net" 28.425 MHz, USB
Sunday 7:30 PM	VHF NTS Net 145.110 (-) PL82.5

### **ORCA Officers and Board**

President:	Dave Clemes	<b>AE6PX</b>
Vice Pres.:	Michael Hole	<b>KG6DER</b>
Treasurer:	Robert Firehock	<b>KE6IUE</b>
Secretary:	David Otey	<b>WB6NER</b>

Director:	Paul Bailey-Gates	<b>KA6GEM</b>
Director:	Karen Harris	<b>KG6ADB</b>
Director:	Art McLaughlin	<b>W6THD</b>
Director:	Tom Tazelaar	<b>KG6MAC</b>
Director:	Jim Tiemstra	<b>K6JAT</b>

#### Ex-Officio Directors:

ARES Liaison:	Mark Violet	<b>N6RCG</b>
Repeater Trustee:	David Otey	<b>WB6NER</b>
RACES RO:	Jim Tiemstra	<b>K6JAT</b>
WW6OR trustee:	Jim Tiemstra	<b>K6JAT</b>
N6ORC trustee:	Michael Hole	<b>KG6DER</b>

The ORCA NewsLetter is published monthly. Any articles can be used with attribution. Articles, news and photos submitted make for a more interesting newsletter; thank you!

Please submit materials for the next issue by Dec. 28th to Bruce **KI6CYT**, [KI6CYT@arrl.net](mailto:KI6CYT@arrl.net). Thanks again!

**ORCA on the web:**

**[ww6or.com](http://ww6or.com) and**

**[groups.yahoo.com/  
group/orca\\_races/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orca_races/)**