

Sierra Signals

Sierra Foothills Amateur Radio Club
Auburn, CA
An ARRL Special Service Club

<http://sf-arc.org>

January 2006

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

New Year's Eve Reflections on 2005

(Reported by Casey, W7IB)

Here it is New Year's Eve and I'm sitting in the shack reflecting on the past year. 2005 was sure an interesting one for us all and maybe especially for amateur radio – it was a year of anomalies, some apparently good, some apparently not so good. I think that it will yield a 2006 during which amateurs, if we're using our heads, will take back some of what is uniquely ours, that is, our ability to serve the general population as that great seething "herd of cats", and not some totally regimented pool of labor.

At the Key of S.F.A.R.C.



OFFICERS

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History: Gary, KQ6RT
Digital/VE: Rob, WW6G

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marc@marcnorth.com

RESOURCES

REPEATERS

145.430 (-0.6 MHz/PL 162.2)
440.575 (+5.0 MHz/PL 94.8)
223.860 (-1.6 MHz/PL 100.0)

CLUB NET

Thursdays, 7:30PM, K6ARR/R
145.430

CLUB MEETINGS

Second Friday of the month,
7:30PM at the Library, 350
Nevada St, Auburn CA

CLUB BREAKFAST

Last Sat of the month at Susie's
Café, Cirby at Riverside, Roseville
– 8:00 AM

NET CONTROL OPS

Dave Jenkins, WB6RBE
Gary Cunningham, KQ6RT
Joe Sylvania, KF6OQY
Casey McPartland, W7IB

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In the aftermath of the hurricanes we were told by government, and served agencies, in various forms, that we really need to clean up our message handling skills. That's a comment that I agree with. Many of us really don't understand the proper and disciplined handling of traffic, and need to learn it and work on it. I've heard hams say that "getting the message through, no matter what kind of form it's in (or on), is the important thing," and that's true in a self-serving way, but if all of us worked on a standard message format, it would make things easier for everyone. (continued on page 2)

2006 Calendar of Events

(Operating Events in Italics)

[Dates are local unless otherwise indicated]

Jan 7-8	<i>ARRL RTTY Round-up</i>
Jan 8	<i>Kids' Day</i>
Jan 13	Regular Meeting
Jan 14-15	<i>No. Amer. QSO Party (CW)</i>
Jan 21-22	<i>No. Amer. QSO Party (SSB)</i>
Jan 28	Club Breakfast
Jan 29-30	<i>CQ 160 Meter (CW)</i>
Feb 10	Regular Meeting
Feb 25	Club Breakfast

We encourage members to receive Sierra Signals via email to save the Club the cost of reproduction and mailing

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Forty Years Ago At The SFARC

(Reported by Gary, KQ6RT)

Jan 19, 1966

A movie, " This Wonderful Land" was shown by Jack and Lea. It was furnished by Bob Colling who also supplied the screen and projector.

Election of officers was held. Results were:

President—Joe Merryman

Vice Pres—Frank Carman

Secretary—Dick Lund

Treasurer—Jack Schwradner

Activity Chairman—Bob Colling

Carl suggested bringing women to the meetings, hoping to create some enthusiasm in the group.

Jack made a motion to buy Sage's DC power supply for the clubs

HW-12 for \$30. Dick seconded the motion, and it passed.

It was moved to pay the \$11 trailer fee, which was done.

Members who paid dues were: Sage, Dick and Otto Ruud.

Carl and Frank will furnish cakes for next months meeting, which will be a family affair with Sage showing some of his slides taken in Japan.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard H Lund, WA6HYO

73,

Gary, KQ6RT

Reflections

(Continued from front page)

After all, the person, or persons, who make this comment aren't likely to be those that must interpret the results, and in message handling during disasters and emergencies there is no room for interpretation. Interpretation most often introduces a deviation from the original content, better known as a mistake, a misinterpretation or, more appropriately, an error - and this is an arena where an error costs time, energy, and even life!

So, where I agree with this criticism is the fact that we all must be better prepared to handle the unexpected disaster, emergency or informational message. It is incumbent upon each of us to improve our skills in message handling and the related areas in order to get the message through, or otherwise just stay out of the way - the cost is too dear. If that means we have to practice, attend classes, and expand our thinking beyond our individual shack or situation, then so be it! We will individually and cumulatively become better communicators, and that's at least a large part of our stated mission.

Where I come to a vehement disagreement with this line of criticism is when it comes from agencies, government and otherwise, that for whatever reason seem to have proven that they cannot maintain consistent communication beyond the first several minutes of a **major** "situation." Billions of dollars have been poured into the emergency communications infrastructure of our towns, cities, counties, parishes, states and federal government to ensure "inter-communication" among agencies. When Katrina hit there were networks, trunks, repeaters, cell phones, computers, and backups-to-backups-to-backups (redundant systems) in place and applied, but from all indications not much of it lasted beyond the beginning of the event! Sadly, the only community that appears to have benefited from these technological wonders are the manufacturers of *over-priced*, unproven, and *under-dependable* "communications solutions."

My point is that if it weren't for the "meager" efforts of the radio amateurs who *did* make an effort to gather and pass messages during the critical first few hours of the hurricane disasters, how much longer delays would have been encountered? During the time immediately following Katrina a regional maintenance manager of a manufacturer of commercial communications equipment was quoted in a Wall Street Journal article as saying something like 'amateur radio is one step up from having no communication capability at all'. Did we really deserve that? (By the way, within a few days, a very long retraction from the manufacturer was published in the WSJ.)

It was the hams on the ground that picked up the communication load with the outside world. It was the hams around the country that took, and passed the traffic coming to/from stricken areas. It was that *value* of being the "herd of cats" closest to the incident(s) demonstrates so clearly the value of amateur radio to the general public during disasters and emergencies. Our biggest single strength is something that the bureaucrats and agencies just can't grasp - we aren't tightly organized, we do need to be trained, we are a little bit undisciplined, and we really do need to listen more before speaking, BUT we are *already there*, on the ground, in the

middle, on the perimeter of and outside of the affected area(s) ready and willing to help in that crucial period early-on in an event!

2006 has the potential to be a year of greatness. I am in hopes that the served agencies and *our* leadership will take this opportunity to see our true value, the value of being where we're most needed, when we're most needed. At the same time, we must continuously get ourselves better trained and better practiced as communicators. Hams will likely never be perceived as the most organized group of individuals, but history does and will continue to bear out our value to the general populace in times of great need. And that, my friends, is something to be proud of!

Happy New Year & 73 de W7IB

Contesting News

(Reported by Fred, K6DGW)

The ARRL RTTY Round-up

[<http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2006/rty.html>] is a great RTTY contest that can be approached equally with a real passion to win, or in a laid-back, "Let's fool around with RTTY a little" fashion. There will be a great deal of activity and the stations will generally slop over the usual segments on each band. For example, on 20, you'll hear stations calling CQ as low as 14055 KHz or so, and often up to about 14100 KHz. I use MixW on my laptop with a RigBlaster interface. Many radios have direct FSK inputs, however I just feed the sound card output through the RigBlaster into the line audio input of the radio.

Kids' Day

Runs from 1800Z – 2400Z (1000 – 1600 PST) and is an opportunity to stimulate some interest in Ham Radio among the younger set. It really isn't a contest at all ... it's a chance for you or any other kids to operate your HF radio and make contacts with other kids. You need to be there and supervise as the control operator, of course, but with the technical skills that even small kids have these days, they can easily learn where the band edges are, how to tune the radio, and operating procedures. Even if you don't have a kid to run your station, get on the air yourself and call some of the kids calling CQ, and then send a QSL card with a short note. Who knows? You could end up giving a kid a hobby that will last the rest of her or his life. It's happened before.

No. American QSO Party

[<http://www.ncjweb.com/naqprules.php>] has three sections ... CW on the weekend of the 14th and SSB on the 21st. The RTTY section occurs on the weekend of Feb 25th. In fact, there are two sets of NAQP's, the winter running and another set in summer. Each is 10 hours from 1800Z Sat – 0600Z Sun (1000 – 2200 PST Sat) which means you can get some fun on-the-air time in and still be able to get other projects taken care of on Sunday and thus enhancing marital harmony ("Happy Wife =

Happy Ham"). Power is limited to 100W which is a giant equalizer for smaller stations. The exchange is <name> <spc> ("spc" is contest lingo for State, Province, or Country). There is no requirement that you use your first name or middle name – or nickname for that matter. Have you always thought you like to be named "Ian" ... just use it. I've been working my way through the names in my family. I think last year, I was "CODY" after a grandson.

CQ 160-meter Contest (CW)

[<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/160RulesWeb111805.pdf>] is one of several topband contests that occur in the winter when nighttime conditions on 160 are at their peak. For many, the idea of operating on 160 conjures up massive antennas and structures on multiple acres, but that isn't necessarily true. If you have an antenna tuner, you can often load an 80 or 40 meter dipole on 160 pretty effectively. If you can get a fairly good RF ground to the tuner, try shorting the center conductor of the coax to the shield, and load it as an single-wire. Try using just the center conductor and leave the shield floating. Most compromise antennas will be cloud-warmers on 160 (my sloping Vee at 230' on a side is), but you can still work out to the Rockies and maybe a bit farther with a high-angle radiator.

Contests offer a great opportunity to get on the air, make a few contacts, possibly improve your code speed, and just generally have a good time. The Northern California Contest Club [<http://www.nccc.cc/>] is a large and very active contest club, and it is filled with hams who will gladly help anyone with any problem. Hoping everyone's holidays were great,

73,

Fred K6DGW

ARES News

(Reported by Chuck, KG6FFK)

Happy New Year to all. Today, as I type, the year of 2005 is only one day before its completion, and weather patterns all over the US seem to be a bit off and here in California the rain is coming (This rain makes me ponder ...how much battery capacity do I really have at my disposal?). We have trained, practiced in public events like the MS Walk and Field Day 2005, and prepared for emergency situations where we may be of service to our communities. Our State is managing the water flow and things are going well right now.

This year the ARES group has been commended for our participation in the Golden Guardian 2005 SET and Placer County Office of Emergency Services regards us as an asset in an emergency.

We have developed a level of proficiency using voice communications and have round-tabled many topics like how many tac channels do we need. What conditions we could be asked to serve under and for how long, and when to use third party Radio-Grams or tactical protocol.

In the coming year we will still focus on these as we move on to an exciting topic of low power, long distance and repeater-less communications. We always hope that there will be ample repeaters available when emergency strikes ...but the facts are emergencies happen on nights worse than nights like tonight, and many times high winds or nature renders some of our repeaters useless. Even using FM for many tac channels takes up a lot of band width. Knowing how to communicate using narrow amounts of bandwidth and on low power will be one of the key issues of focus this year.

To start the year out we will be looking to understand the whys of Morse-code...the first binary communication method. As we learn the whys we will also practice. Our intent is to develop understanding/skills using beat frequency oscillation injection for the reception of CW and sideband voice. Listening is not all there is. We will learn about band pass filters, digital signal processing, IF shift and RIT. Perhaps we will see how far watts or less can really go and ,hopefully, of most importance, we have a chance to really learn usable Morse-code working communications between each other and under the guidance of Casey,W7IB.

I want to say thank you to everyone for their participation and effort. This year has been fruitful as we are growing better!

Happy New Year

Chuck / KG6FFK

Sacramento Valley Section News

(Reported by Jettie, W6RFF)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! As we approach the year end, let us be thankful that we escaped the major emergencies that devastation the South Eastern part of the United States. A few of our section hams spent weeks and months helping in the disaster area, under adverse and primitive conditions, and we give them a Well Done.

These emergencies have made officials, in the section, more aware of the problems that we could face from flooding, especially in the Sacramento and Marysville/Yuba City areas. As, I am sure, you have all read about the efforts of the many Amateur Radio Operators in the disaster areas and what they went through in helping the different agencies to protect and provide for the displaced people. There have been predictions that this will be a wet winter so, as I have said before, keep your GO bags ready to help out in an emergency. We could have flooding and heavy snow that could cause road closures or possible evacuation of residents.

BPL: The Broadband over the Power Lines is still a problem in several parts of the country. The ARRL continues to file protests with the FCC and with the organization that lists the areas being tested. Unless you query, one at a time, with a zip

code for each area in the U.S., you cannot get a list of all areas being tested. For some reason they are making this a secret!! The League does need extra funding for fighting BPL, retaining amateur frequencies and for fighting CC&Rs -- antenna restrictions. Do your share and help out with this fund.

DIVISION DIRECTORS CABINET MEETING: On Saturday December 3rd, attended by approximately 30 amateurs, the Director Bob Vallio, W6RGG, held a cabinet meeting to discuss problems, proposals and ideas to be presented to the January Board of Directors Meeting. Considerable time was used in discussing means of getting people interested in amateur radio, especially the young.

Another topic was on public relations and how best to get information out to the public and agencies on, what is amateur radio and what service we provide to these people. Attendees at the meeting were. Section Managers, Assistant Directors and Representatives from several clubs. If you have any ideas or suggestion regarding amateur radio or the ARRL, contact Bob at w6rgg@arrl.org.

RIVER CITY ARCS: The club is looking for a Newsletter Editor as Kay, KF6IZU, the former editor has been ill. The club reports that Roy Rudebaugh, KD6LLE became a silent key on December 5, in Washington State. He was a long time member and held most Officer positions with the club. He was dedicated to emergency communications and working with the Boy Scouts. They hold VE exams on the 3rd Saturday of each month at the Elks Lodge, Corner of Cypress and Hackberry in Carmichael, 8:30 to 9:30 am, code test at 9 am. Call 916-492-6115 for information.

GOLDEN EMPIRE ARS: GEARS member Sue, KG6IZM provided the club with a list of most of the hams in the Chico area. They will be contacting them with a flyer and letter to hopefully entice some new members. This is an idea that I proposed to several clubs in the past, and it has brought in new members.

SIERRA FOOTHILLS ARC: Club members, as well as others, participated in the Placer County Golden Guardian 2005 Simulated Emergency Test. Their ARES group was involved with a simulated explosion with a train carrying chemicals, and a tank car ruptured. Those not familiar with Roseville as a train switching area, may remember that many years ago a train loaded with bombs, exploded in the rail yards and caused havoc with the tracks and residential area. Within the last 5 years, or so, several more bombs were dug up during some construction work.

YUBA SUTTER ARC: The club will be holding VE exams, in Yuba City, on January 7 2006. Contact Herb at firtree25@aol.com for information. The annual Christmas Party and Pot Luck will be held December 13. They will begin a Technician Class on January 10, contact the above for info. The club provided communication support for the Lake Oroville Vista Endurance Ride. Paul, N6XVL, was the coordinator

ELDORADO COUNTY ARC: Club member Tim Leahy, KG6TIM, became a silent key in October. He is survived by his wife Phyllis, KK6SIX, and their children.

MOTHER LODE DX & CONTEST CLUB: the club has returned their meeting site to the Round Table Pizza, in Martell -- near Jackson. For information on the club and dates of their meetings, go to www.mldxcc.com. They are anxious to find out if they won the club competition for the California QSO Party -- CQP.

TAHOE AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION: The Tahoe group was involved in the State Hospital Emergency Exercise on November 17. Operation was out of the Sheriff's Office in South Lake Tahoe and the Barton Hospital. The coordinator was KC7AGI.

SECTION NET: The Sacramento Valley Section Net meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. At 7 pm on 146.085 MHz, PL-127.3 -- Yuba Sutter repeater, and at 7:30 pm on 3987 KHz. There are also nets at 7:30 pm on 3987 KHz on the other Wednesday of the month. K6SOJ is the manager.

MISC: I hope all of you have a pleasant holiday season. It is the time to be with your family and friends, and to contact hams throughout the world. I wish to thank all those who have held ARRL appointments and to all who have volunteered their time. For the new Club Officers, please update the club information on the ARRL web pages. The search for information on www.arrl.org has greatly improved.

Take care and have a Happy New Year 2006.

73, Jettie

Items for Sale

(From Bob Balthrope)

Al Hansen, N6GGH, is getting out of the radio hobby and has asked me to help him dispose of his gear so here is a list of the equipment he wants to sell. The prices listed are somewhat negotiable but not too low. The final negotiations will have to be done with him.

FT411e YAESU HT W/ 7.2 volt ni-cad (condition unknown, but it still works the radio), Yaesu speaker-mike and NC-29 drop-in quick charger-----\$ 150.00 obo

FT2700 RH YAESU 2meter/70cm mobile w/bracket and speech chip (oldie but goodie has PL and works like it came out of the box ----\$125.00 obo

DENTRON swr meter and small volt/ohmmeter ----\$10.00

KENWOOD tm 241a 2 meter mobile w/mounting bracket, standard mike and Kenwood mc-60 desk mike w/pre-amp never installed in car ---- \$175.00

KENWOOD sw100b swr/pwr meter 2meter/70cm ----\$25.00

KENWOOD sp 120 speaker/w/case----\$25.00

ASTRON rs 12a regulated power supply ----\$40.00

ASTRON rs 35m (with built-in amp/volt meter) regulated power supply ----\$75.00

2M/70cm mag mt antenna----\$15.00

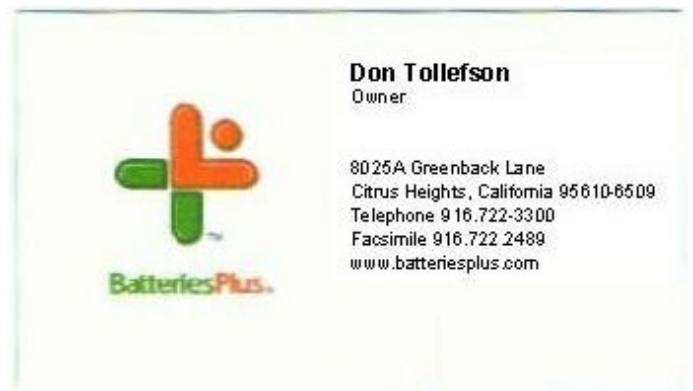
None of the above equipment has been mounted outside or in a vehicle.

If interested call me, Bob KD6WTY at 916-682-9871 or leave a message on the machine and I'll get back to you or Mary Anne will talk to you (she talks to anyone).

Editors note: Anyone wishing to submit items for sale may do so by emailing me with the details (in a plain text or Word document) and I will publish as space permits.

Wanted

We are looking for a new Raffle Chairperson. Gary, KQ6RT, will be retiring from that position this year. He says he will be happy to help out the new person by passing along the things he has learned over the years. If you are interested please contact Gary email KQ6RT@sbcglobal.net or phone (916)663-4143.



Don Tollefson
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2006 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name: _____ Call: _____ Class: _____ e-mail: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Associate Name: _____ Call: _____ Class: _____

Phone Number: _____ Application: (Circle One) New Renewal

Member Dues: Circle Amounts That Apply. Applications received in the middle of the year will be pro rated. Contact the President or Treasurer for exact rate.

Membership:	\$22.00	Name Badge:	\$7.00
Associate:	\$ 7.00	Repeater Donation:	\$ _____
Auto Patch Donation:	\$ _____	Newsletter Booster:	\$ _____
Miscellaneous Donation:	\$ _____	Christmas Donation:	\$ _____
Worldradio Renewal:	\$ _____	TOTAL:	\$ _____

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