

Sierra Signals

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

November 2007

P.O. Box 1005, Newcastle, CA 95658

Real Men Don't Read Instructions

(Reprinted from QRZ.com-sent by Rick, K6TF)

I like a funny story even if it is on me.

About a year ago, I bought a Yeasu FS 857 D High Frequency Ham radio and a nice ARAS 120A screwdriver antenna that automatically tunes to the frequency you have selected on the transceiver. Yesterday I decided it had set around the house long enough, and decided to install it in my truck...where it was intended to be put a year ago. I found the right spot on the truck for the

antenna and installed it. It took about an hour to run the coax behind panels and under the threshold of the door. It went without too much trouble.

(continued on page 2)

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

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Don Hay, WB6LPJ

wb6lpj@arrl.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Kevin Reid, K7TST

k7tst@yahoo.com

SECRETARY

Leslie Nye, K7NYE

k7nye@arrl.net

TREASURER

George Simmons, KG6LSB

grsim@mindspring.com

DIRECTORS

Birton Gilbert, N6UG

n6ug@arrl.net

Jim Griffith, K16AZH

jim.griffith@usamedia.tv

Wayne Stilwell, W6DT

dxwayne@juno.com

REPORTERS

Satellites: Greg, KO6TH

History: Gary, KQ6RT

Contesting: Fred, K6DGW

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 Sylvia, KF6OQY

Casey McPartland, W7IB

EDITOR

Deb Cunningham, KF6LXN

916.663.4143

kf6lxn@sbcglobal.net

2007 Calendar of Events

(Operating Events in Italics)

[Dates are local unless otherwise indicated]

Nov 3	VE Session
Nov 3-5	<i>ARRL Sweepstakes (CW)</i>
Nov 9	Regular Meeting
Nov 10-11	<i>Worked All Europe (RTTY)</i>
Nov 17-19	<i>ARRL Sweepstakes (SSB)</i>
Nov 24	Club Breakfast
Nov 30-Dec 2	<i>ARRL 160m (CW)</i>
Dec 1	VE Session
Dec 14	Regular Meeting – Christmas Party
Dec 29	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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Thirty Years Ago At The SFARC

(Reported by Gary, KQ6RT)

November 10, 1977

SFARC met at Auburn Fairgrounds to see if the local amateurs using WR6ADI want to "reactivate" the club into a more structured type as it used to be... with a complete slate of officers and an increase in dues, with changes in existing by-laws to keep pace with inflation, etc.

The next meeting of SFARC is to be held on Dec. 8, 1977 to elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Activities Coordinator. The Secretary is to also act as the bulletin editor of SFARC News until such time as a separate position is deemed necessary.

73,

Gary - KQ6RT

Real Men...

(Continued from front page)

The radio can be installed with the transceiver in a remote location with the head closer to the driver. I had built a small console that sits between the front passengers and had an ICOM 2720 remote head installed on it with the transceiver installed under the driver's seat. I wanted to install this HF rig in a similar manner with the transceiver under the passenger seat and the remote head on the little console next to the head of the 2720.

I took the 4 bolts loose from the passenger seat, turned it upside down and began the install. For your information, even a captains seat on a truck is not a really light thing and to get it out takes some maneuvering and a lot of straining...besides having to go to the front door to get those bolts out and then moving the seat as far forward as it will go and then going to the back door to get those bolts out. That does not count the number of times that I left the wrench in the front floor board when I needed it at the back and had to then get unwound from between the seats and go fetch the wrench. After about 30 minutes, I finally got the seat out and upside down so I could work on it. I finally found some holes under the seat that would align with the holes on the transceiver bracket and got it installed. That sounds simple enough until you realize that there are 4 machine screws on the side of the transceiver that holds it in place on the mounting bracket and the mechanisms under the seat only allow about a half inch on each side to get them in and then get them tight. Then I wrestled the seat back into place...no easy feat in itself...and got the 4 bolts that hold the seat back in place. Keeping in mind the reverse of the above sequence where you have to go from one door to the other and forgetting the wrench again, etc. etc. Now keep this

sequence of events in mind as the story progresses; because, it will come in handy later.

Now I have the remote head in hand and take about an hour to fabricate a piece of wood that will fit it at just the right angle so I can see it from the driver's seat. I recessed some screws, put the block on the console, fastened the remote head mounting bracket and was ready to mount the remote head to the bracket when I realized a problem. You remember I said I had installed that ICOM 2720 before? On the remote head of the ICOM, it has a receptacle for a cable that goes from the remote head to the transceiver below the driver's seat, and on the other side of the remote head, it has another receptacle for the mike cord. A cord coming from the transceiver to one side of the remote head and a cord from the remote head to the microphone on the other side. Very simple; straight forward and logical.

When I looked at the remote head on the 857, sure enough there was a receptacle from the transceiver...now attached under the right front passenger seat..to the remote head, but no place to plug the microphone into the remote head. That couldn't be right. Why have a remote head with a 10' cord when you have to plug the microphone into the transceiver with a 3' cord? I thought that was one of the stupidest things I had ever seen a Japanese radio company do, but there was only one thing to do. I had to remount the transceiver up on the console so the microphone cord would reach. How dumb?

You remember I said to keep in mind how difficult it was to take that seat out, etc.? That is exactly what I did. When I got the transceiver out, I put the seat back with all the difficulties related above...sans the transceiver. I then found a proper place on the console for the receiver and mounted it there...after having to move a speaker about 2 inches so I could get the screws into the mounting bracket for the transceiver. Now the transceiver is mounted within 6" of the remote head...looks like s__t, but the microphone is now accessible. I found the cable that goes between the transceiver and the remote head...it wont fit. I then saw another package of cables and discovered it was the correct 10' cable that goes from the transceiver to the remote head, but what was this other 10' cable? After looking at it for about 10 minutes like a calf looking at a new gate, a terrible thought struck me...sure enough...that cable was an extension cable for the mike. Still a crappy design. If I want to have a remote install, I would now have two cables coming from the transceiver...one for the remote head, and one for the microphone instead of one cable between the transceiver and the remote head and a shorter cable from the remote to the mike. Well if that is the way those #*-*#*# guys designed it, it will not get the best of me. I am better than any radio...soooo. I uninstalled the transceiver from the console and took that front seat out a third time and reinstalled the transceiver under it...reference the above paragraph about the difficulty of taking the seat out, installing the transceiver and reinstalling the seat. Finally everything was all installed, tested and works like a charm. I am very pleased with the radio and begin putting all the tools up and throwing away all the plastic bags and boxes, etc. I got all the tools put up, got all the trash picked up and put in trash cans except one final box...the big box that the radio came in. When I picked it up, there, underneath, was the instruction pamphlet for the

"install of your new remote head and microphone". I threw it on the ground and stomped it till my feet hurt.

I am a grown man and don't need instructions.

Arlie Edwards

Wills Point

((((73)))

KE5DYD

From our Treasurer

We took in \$549.50 at the most exciting white elephant sale ever!!!

Looks like a great Christmas party on December 14th. Save the date.

Now it's time to start preparing for your next years dues payments.

Money, money, money--that's all I'm interested in. SFARC money that is.

George

KG6LSB

Contesting

The Sport of Amateur Radio

(Reported by Fred, K6DGW)

Selected Contests for November:

See Bruce's page at www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/ for a complete list. November is the start of the winter season. Galactic and terrestrial noise levels will be down, the days are shorter, and the nights are colder. What better reason to cuddle up to the warm rig, and compete some?

ARRL Sweepstakes – CW: 3 Nov 2100Z – 5 Nov 0300Z
www.arrl.org

Worked All Europe – RTTY: 10 Nov 0000Z – 11 Nov 2359Z
www.waedc.de

ARRL Sweepstakes – SSB: 17 Nov 2100Z – 19 Nov 0300Z
www.arrl.org

ARRL 160m – CW Only, 30 Nov 2200Z – 2 Dec 1600Z
www.arrl.org

Contest Chatter:

Sweepstakes: SS is sort of the "ancient guy" of contesting. It's been around for a long time, you can work a station once, regardless of band, and it has the longest exchange of any contest [it looks like an NTS Radiogram header]. Despite these negatives, SS is a really big one for North America. If you are a "small pistol," you'll want to do a lot of Search and Pounce early on Sat ... the big guns will all be calling CQ. On Sunday,

try some CQ's ... the big guy's QSO rates will be in the tank since they've pretty much worked everyone, and they'll be looking for any new blood on the bands.

A word about "HMO" stations in SS: HMO stands for "Highly Motivated Operator," and is a term coined by Rusty, W6OAT, for the NCCC several years ago for a method to increase the clubs aggregate score, albeit at the expense of individual scores [it's akin to the Second Law of Thermodynamics – "there ain't no free lunch"]. Reading the SS rules very carefully [Rusty is a retired lawyer J], and looking for a way to improve rates on Sunday, his scheme works like this:

You operate your own station using your own call for 12 hours on Saturday. Then you snooze for maybe 5-6 hours, travel to another station, and operate his station under his or another call for another 12 hours. You a log for each call, each log naming your club. The rules require that once a transmitter is used to make a QSO using one call, it cannot be used again under another call. Only the transmitter is involved ... antennas, amplifiers, logging computers, etc., don't matter. There are a large number of variations on this basic theme, all of which aim to increase the number of logs submitted for our club. The ideal, of course, is two stations each with two "transmitters," and four calls, where the ops exchange locations for Sunday with a new call.

That first year, I operated the CW SS on Saturday from home using K6DGW. Early Sunday morning, I went over to WX6V's station and operated there using a transmitter he had not used on Saturday. I was then the trustee of the K16TE repeater call, and I used it, and in aggregate made just over 180,000 points for NCCC. Having left my hearing on the other side of the planet one night long ago, my SSB skills are beyond bad. So, for the SS SSB weekend, Rich operated his station as NU6T on Saturday and then came up and operated mine as K6DGW on Sunday. He made way more points on Sunday alone than I would have operating a full 24 hours.

NCCC won the Gavel that year [2003], and did again in 2004. That year, I operated at home on Saturday, slept some, and then operated a "virgin transmitter" as K6SRA at Jeff's place [WK6I] on Sunday, and managed just over 200K points, likely over 1.5 times what I could have done solely from home [Jeff had a commitment on Sunday and his station and second rig would have been idle]. By 2005, the concept had leaked out so to speak, however there are significant logistics issues involved with HMO and NCCC had two years of experience and tested procedures for planning, and again took the Gavel for a 3-peat, but by a much closer margin.

Last year was messy. The Potomac Valley RC decided to fully adopt the HMO concept and came gunning for us. When the dust settled, it appeared they had reclaimed the Gavel back to the Colonies. Then they discovered that a number of their big logs actually came from stations outside the 175 mi "Club Circle," they recalculated and resubmitted their results, and NCCC came out the winner for a "four-in-a-row" and eight-of-the-last-ten-record. You can bet your paycheck that PVRC is after the Gavel this year!

HMO also provides a real benefit to all operators in that Sunday is traditionally a very slow period in SS since you can work a station only once, regardless of band. With a bunch of

new HMO's showing up Sunday AM, rates go way up, and activity increases which equals a lot more fun for all. So, save the two weekends, get on and have some fun competing. To have your score add to NCCC's aggregate, you must be a member. Contact me at k6dgw@foothill.net or John, K6MM, at webaron@gmail.com and we'll fix you up. Dues are optional in NCCC.

WAE: We've done WAE before, it has it's unique QTC format. Lot's of fun on RTTY since your logging software will take care of all of that for you.

ARRL 160: This is a CW-only contest and scoring is loosely based on distance. It is a really fun time because an otherwise normally dead band with only a few signals will be alive with stations worldwide. An 80m dipole can often be loaded as a Marconi-T on 160 with a tuner. Just short the coax at the tuner and connect it to the center conductor of the tuner jack. Be sure you have your rig and tuner well grounded.

73,

Fred K6DGW

November is Election Month at SFARC

It's that time of the year again – Elections! At last report, we were short a few positions. So far, this is the ballot as I understand it.

President – Don, WB6LPJ

Vice President – Casey, W7IB

Secretary – open

Treasurer – open

Board of Directors – Jim, KI6AZH

Board of Directors – 2 positions open

Please let Don know if you are interested in running for any of the open positions.

Placer County ARES

(Submitted by Chuck, KG6FFK)

What a fantastic EMSA drill last week Oct 25. Multiple messages to multiple agencies using more than one mode! While the drill ensued, more than one problem arose, yet traffic passed correctly and smoothly, as eventually problems were solved or situations changed.

This year was unique in that out of the 13 ARES members that participated, 5 had never participated in a drill before. In our ARES training we hold the belief that all members are emergency coordinators. In any given instance of necessary assistance, every ARES member is capable of taking on the roll of coordinating a Net, at what ever level necessary, to provide the assistance necessary at the time. It is much like the CPR capable person coming upon a person who is in need of CPR. You can say..."oh, I probably can't do it" and assure the victim dies, or you can give it your best shot, and perhaps save

someone's life. The yearly EMSA drills and other activities show each operator they are capable. This last week was no different. W6AFR was NCS at OES. WB9PYN was NCS for digital modes. These two took on a formidable task and did it well. I do commend both operators for a job well done. The team leader approach, we used this year, worked well. It allows for quicker more dynamic response to timing and gathering in response to each agency's needs. KG6BQG and KG6FFK both served as team leaders in Roseville hospitals. KG6YHH was his own leader as he worked HHS alone. Kaiser threw us a curve ball when we were told 3 weeks ago we would be using the HICS 213, and without warning sent a complex form containing a very long numbered list with quantities – Not HICS 213. It just goes to show you: Adaptability is paramount! Just because you were told, "this is what you are going to do", does not mean that is what you are going to do! Digital packet messages went off without a hitch for KG6YHH...but voice was barely receivable. Messages from HHS to Sutter Roseville sailed through. At that point a particularly fatal failure happened to KG6FFK's laptop...ended packet until a backup computer was setup and Outpost was reinstalled by KG6PIY including reinstalling routing relayed from WB9PYN, and since he was at it KG6PIY also setup a LAN router for Sutter IC Staff, for those without WiFi. Digital propagation waning in and out caused intermittent interruptions at OES. We still don't know why: We have suspicions concerning the high power UHF trunking system close to the digipeater causing interference, or perhaps one of the TNC's needs recalibration. Meanwhile, KC7KDZ, held up the voice communications at Sutter IC with assistance from KO6C and K6GYM (our newest ARES member), and KB6FMZ brought home the curve ball pitched by Kaiser. KI6AZH and N6UWQ stood in and passed voice traffic from OES to give W6AFR a break. KO6C took over packet at Sutter IC while KG6FFK made a quick dash up to the roof top to make a quick setup of a mobile mag-mount for Sutter Radio Room. K6FFK took over Sutter Radio Room communications by himself. A simplex test left OES off frequency for a short duration, but eventually was corrected.

The end came all too soon. Sutter's Barbra Todd was asked if she felt this was a realistic volume of traffic between hospitals and the county, she responded, by saying this was by her estimation expected volume per time unit. ARES provided full sided by side communications in service to Kaiser Roseville and Sutter Roseville and Placer County. There were a few messages that were not sent because of privacy or information that was not publicly sendable in this event. WB9PYN brought a visitor who works with CERT groups and is active in emergency preparedness within the state. OES was impressed with a team who had digital and voice and asked for follow up visits to discuss building infrastructure. Both hospitals served appreciated ARES response to assist.

This year's efforts taught us lessons and gave us some goals. We all met at Venita Rhea's for a hot wash and enjoy some good food.

If you would like to join Placer County ARES and participate in like events, please contact Chuck Minton via internet at kg6ffk@arrl.net

Hollingsworth to Stay Put at FCC

(Reprinted from ARLB024)

Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, Special Counsel for the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, has decided not to retire. He had announced last week that he would leave the FCC in January 2008.

Riley states, "After spending the entire weekend thinking about the decision [to retire], it became more and more clear to me that it just isn't the right decision for me right now. There are several issues on the table that I want to continue to work through with the amateur community."

The Enforcement Bureau is the primary organizational unit within the Federal Communications Commission that is responsible for enforcement of provisions of the Communications Act, the Commission's rules, Commission orders and terms and conditions of station authorizations, as well as enforcement of Amateur Radio rules (Part 97).



