

The PROPAGATOR

September 1999

The Monthly Newsletter of South Orange Amateur Radio Association

Picnic Fun for All

The annual SOARA picnic was held on August 7, as scheduled. Early risers Paul, NZ1M, and Ray, AE6H, were on the scene early, very early, to ensure that our regular location was available.

Mike, KF6HVO, had organized the activities and they came off without a hitch. Hot dogs and HAMBURGERS were grilled and sodas chilled. Plenty of salads and chips were available. Several choices of deserts were available for those who had room left.

The picnic is very much a family event and there were lots of children in attendance to take part in the games. Prizes were awarded to the winners of the games, and it looked like everyone was a winner.

A door prize drawing added to the fun. A cool breeze from the ocean made it a pleasant day at the beach. Heiko, KD6SBI brought a HF rig and an antenna so those who wished could be "radioactive". It was another chance for the public to see Amateur Radio in operation.

New Members

A hearty welcome to SOARA's newest member.

Michael G. Pontiakos, KF6WUU

SOARA Table at ARRL Southwest Convention

SOARA plans to have a table at the ARRL Southwest Division Convention aboard the RMS Queen Mary in Long Beach. Dates for the convention are October 1 - 3, 1999. Some SOARA members have already volunteered to work the table on Saturday, Oct. 2.

Anyone interested in spending some time at the table handing out literature to promote SOARA, please contact Richard, WW7D. He can be contacted via e-mail at ww7d@soara.org



Thanks to Stan, KC6IQK, for photographs of the annual picnic.

Annual Dues Due

It's that time of year again, so watch the mail for your annual dues notice. Membership dues are used to pay for the club expenses such as repeater site rent and utilities, the monthly newsletter, and special club functions.

Prompt payment of the dues greatly reduces the amount of work and worry for the treasurer and the board as they plan the year's activities. Your timely response to the dues notice is greatly appreciated.

Get the details on the convention and a schedule of the presentations on the web at: www.qsl.net/arrlsw/hamcon. Cost of registration is \$15.00, but advanced registration (before Sept. 18) is only \$12.00.

Conventions afford the opportunity to hear talks on a variety of technical and operational subjects given by experts. There will be many commercial exhibits and the chance to make purchases at special convention prices. Registration includes access to public areas and the self-guided tour of the QM. You can even operate the amateur radio station on the ship.

Marine Radio Talk

Craig Smith, KF6QOE, is scheduled to present a talk on the topic of Ham Radio and Marine Communications. Craig recently moved to the area from Los Angeles.

Amateur radio is popular with boaters since it provides another means of communicating while out at sea. Regularly scheduled nets provide private vessels with reports on weather conditions, news of other ships in the area, and contact with family and friends.

Join us Monday, Sept. 20, to hear Craig's interesting presentation.

500 kHz — The Passing of an Era.

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Part 3. Why 500 kHz/600 meters?

I have researched the literature in order to find an answer to this question, but have found nothing. I tend to think that this particular wavelength, 600 meters, became the standard by accident rather than some body of policy-makers deciding that it was to become the worldwide calling and distress frequency. Maybe the nature of early equipment might be the reason this wavelength became the standard. The length of the antenna on some early transmitters dictated the center frequency of their very broadband signal. The fact that the antenna would run the length of the ship might have a bearing on 600 meters becoming the international CW wavelength.

Regardless of whether it was by accident or choice, what was handed down to us was a wavelength with excellent evening propagation. Starting at about 2100 local 500 would come alive. Any ship or shore station within 3000-4000 miles could be heard by an excellent combination of ground wave and sky wave - nothing was missed within this radius! Shore stations of more than 5000 miles were easily copied Australia and New Zealand boomed in nightly.

Daytime propagation consisted of only ground wave: 300-500 miles was the maximum range possible. Thus, most daytime traffic was passed on the HF channels.

The idea of combining a distress frequency and a calling frequency was an excellent one. It insured that no distress calls would be missed, and at the same time everyone knew where everyone else was! There was no need searching various frequencies looking for a particular ship or shore station. The result was a worldwide party line; if you sent so much as a single dit everyone would hear it.

Ships operated on either a one-op or two-op schedule so our broadcasts coincided with these schedules. But shore stations had to remain on the air 24 hours a day. Late nights could become a bit of a bore for some shore operator's, heavy eyelids. So out of boredom (or maybe by ``accident'') a single dit would ring across the Pacific, only to be answered by another dit possibly from several thousands of miles away. Then all

hell would break loose: every shore station and any ships with an on-duty op would be sending dits! For several seconds 500 sounded like a machine gun - 100 or more carriers were ditting away. As quickly as it started it would fade away.

A variation of this was someone sending a single GE (good evening). Of course it would be impolite not to respond in kind so someone else would answer with GE. Within a half second at least one hundred GE's would flood the frequency! My log entry would look like this:

GE / GE / GE / GE / GE / (OPNOTE: AT LEAST 100 GE'S SENT) 500 1123Z

Some "Coasts" were unhappy with their duty assignment (Alaska, or some LORAN station in the middle of the Pacific, or on board a patrol ship) and made their sentiments known to the world. One op would send an F. A second disgruntled Coast Guardsman would follow with a T, only to be followed by a third CG op sending G - three Coasties separated by 100's or 1000's of miles of water expressing their thoughts as one. The acronym FTG stood for a very common expression in the Guard: "F___ The Guard." In the log it goes:

FTG
500 1305Z

Needless to say, the CO (commanding officer) of NMO, upon reviewing the log the following day, would attach a nasty note expressing his displeasure at seeing such an entry in an Official U.S. Government Legal Document blah, blah, blah . . . The Chiefs on the other hand would give out a hardy laugh and express their delight that this acronym was still traveling the airwaves.

After 2100 local there would be a steady stream of CW on 500 — ships calling shore stations or other ships:

KHK KHK KHK KHK KHK KHK KHK
KHK (making a pest of himself!)
DE (in other words: `Who the heck is calling me?')
DE KNLS TR K
KNLS DE KHK R UP 485 K

OK 485/480 UP
EE
EE

Translation: The ship KNLS, ignoring the usual 3X3 call sign format, was going to endlessly call the shore station KOK until he got some attention. KOK interrupted him with a simple DE after which KNLS told him he had a travel report (TR). KOK's answer was "Roger, I'll transmit on 485 kHz" to which the ship answered "Okay, you transmit on 485 and I'll transmit on 480 - let's go up." (Up in wavelength that is, not in frequency - traditions are hard to break!). By the way, KHK was a shore station located on a beach here on Oahu.

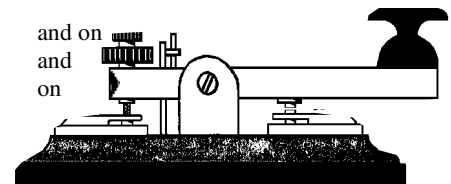
Other examples of traffic:

TTT TTT TTT CQ DE ZLD ZLD
CYCLONE WARNING NR 15 QSW 428
AR

(These types of broadcasts, prefaced with TTT or XXX, will be discussed in Part 4.)

Or:

CQ CQ CQ DE WNOP WNOP ANY ONE
HV 2100Z SOUTH PACIFIC WX? K
WNOP DE XSU GE WILL GIVE 2100 WX
ON OUR 2200 BCST K
OK TKS OM SU
SEEU
EE
EE



and on
and
on

throughout the night - very orderly. You'll note each series of transmissions end with a `dit dit' (recorded as EE); and amateur radio operators thought they invented this `prosign'!

Part 7 will contain an actual transcription of one of my evening logs. Part 6 will describe a distress in which a ship broke up in heavy seas and all hands were lost. It will contain my QSO with the ship's operator up to the last second of his life.

End of Part 3.

73, Jeffrey Herman KH6O

	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Propagator Deadline	2/6	3/6	4/3	5/1	6/5	7/6	7/31	9/4	10/2	10/30	
General Meeting	22 7:30 PM	15 7:30 PM	19 7:30 PM	17 7:00 PM	21 7:00 PM	19 7:00 PM	16 7:00 PM	20 7:00 PM	18 7:00 PM	15 7:00 PM	no meeting
Board Meeting	3/01	22	26	24	28	26	23	27	25	22	
VEC Testing		15 5:30 PM		17 5:30 PM	26	19 5:30 PM		13 5:30 PM		15 5:30 PM	
Spring Auction				17 7:00 PM							
ARRL Field Day					26 7:00 AM						
SOARA picnic							7 9:00 AM				
Fall Auction										15 7:00 PM	
SOARA Xmas Party											5 5:00 PM

Remember, the October meeting is at Loma Ridge. You may want to carpool. See you there.



Education

Another reminder that SOARA holds a variety of classes for that first license, for those wishing to upgrade, and for general education. In the past classes have been offered for the No-Code Tech. license, Morse code classes, and seminars on operation or advanced use of HF equipment.

These classes are offered when the need arises. In other words, when the Education Director hears from you. Please let Malcolm, KO6SY, know what classes would interest you. If you have friends or family who are ready for a Technician class, send the information to Malcolm via e-mail at: ko6sy@soara.org.

Raffle Planned

In the past, raffles of radios have proved popular with the membership. To encourage use of 220 MHz, a hand held will be raffled. Tickets will sell for \$5.00.



As in the past, tickets will be sold over a period of months. It is necessary to sell a minimum number of tickets in order to pay for the radio. Details will be available at the September meeting and tickets will go on sale. We hope to hold the drawing at the November meeting, which will be the auction. Some one will win a fine HT. It could be YOU.

FCC Catching Up

If you have had an action pending before the FCC (new license, upgrade or call sign change) recently, then you are well aware that things have been s-l-o-o-o-o-o-w. The FCC has been in the process of switching over to the Universal Licensing System. The switch over has caused a slowdown reminiscent of the "good old days" when processing was done by hand, and several weeks, if not months, was the usual wait for your new license.

Conversion to the new database, which brings all licenses under the same process, seems to be completed, and notifications are being issued. Since the new process is all electronic, it promises to reduce the time from passing a new or upgrade examination until the license is posted to just a few days.

You can get new call sign information from the ULS by pointing your browser at: <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls>. Click on "License Search" and input your name--as it appeared on the application--or your call sign. To confirm license class and reveal additional data, users must click on the pull-down menu labeled "License Options" on the bottom of the screen, click on "Amateur Administration" and click "Go."

Oh, Great . . . The first day of school and we go right into calculus.



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South Orange Amateur Radio Association

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Meeting: Monday 9/20/99 at 7:00 PM **Ham Radio and Marine Communications**

☛ **SOARA** meets at the Mission Viejo Community Center, 26932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, the third Monday of every month at 7:00 PM. Changes to the meeting time or place are announced in this newsletter and on the two-meter repeater.

☛ **License Exams:** Amateur License Exams are given prior to most SOARA meetings. Exams are from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. You must make an appointment at least a week in advance. Call Lou Parker, KA6BJO, at 951-0336. (No calls after 9:00 PM please.)

☛ **Contacting SOARA:** Questions about SOARA? Send e-mail to: info@soara.org, or leave a message at 949-249-1373: a SOARA board member will respond as soon as possible.

☛ **Web Site:** SOARA maintains a web site with current club information. The URL is <http://www.soara.org>.

☛ **Repeaters:** The SOARA 2-meter repeater is open to all licensed hams. The SOARA 440 repeater is for club members only and is currently operated on a "coordination pending" basis.

SOARA 2m — 147.645 - (110.9)

SOARA 440 — 447.050 - (110.9)

The SOARA 220 and HROC 440 repeaters are shared by members of both clubs. Each machine is subject to the operating rules of its respective club. Call AC6XG for details.

SOARA 220 — 224.640 - (123.0)

HROC 440 — 447.175 - (131.8)

☛ **Nets:** SOARA 2 m repeater open net is held on Tuesdays at 8:00 PM following the Laguna and M.V. emergency nets.

40 meter HF net (7.235 MHz +/- for QRM), Sunday 7:30 AM

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