The PROPAGATOR

May, 2005

The Monthly Newsletter of **S**outh **O**range **A**mateur **R**adio **A**ssociation

Auction Time Again

One of the pleasures of amateur radio is the equipment we obtain. New or old, commercial or home made, working or not, most of us enjoy examining, poking at, and operating all types of radios. The SOARA auction provides an opportunity to clear out some of the equipment and components that we have had for a while and pick up some new toys.

Our favorite auctioneer, Malcolm, KO6SY, is planning to be at the meeting this coming Monday (May 16) to entertain and enlighten us as he convinces us to part with some of our cash. Malcolm is often out of the country on business (but can be heard on the air via EchoLink or his remote base), and it will be a treat to have him at the meeting.

The meeting will start at 7:00 PM as usual, but if you are bringing items to sell, plan on arriving early in order to set up and tag your items. ☐

New Members

Welcome to SOARA's newest members

Larry Lenon	W6LSL
Gregory Scott	K7GRG
Summer Dumas	KG6YXI
Patrick Dumas	KG6YXK
Kathleen Visser	KG6YXF
John Visser	KG6YXG

Watch for these new members at the meetings and on the air. Make them welcome. Several of the new members are youth and may be a bit shy about talking to strangers over the air. Show them how friendly SOARA members can be. (They had some exposure in the recent class.)

FOX HUNT GOES TO THE DOGS

OK, here's how it was suppose to be. I talked one of my neighbors, Al, into coming out Sunday and bringing his "Big" Bull Dog, Bubba. Bubba was going to ride around the park in a wagon with the fox parked under him — AFTER the fox perched on a near by hill for about ½ hour — for all of the hunters to get a realty good starting bearing.

Every thing was ready: Richard had the picnic table staked out, Al showed up with Bubba, and I had all the eats on location. Bubba was looking forward to the ride in the park this was going to be a killer hunt! At exactly 1:00 PM the hunt was on! Now to get the dog into the wagon and let the fun begin! "It would take at least a 1/2 hour before these guys even got close to the transmitter."

Driving back to the park, Richard was already telling me some one was in the park! "What? Load the dog, Load the dog." Richard came back with: "it's too late. They are running around the park. Really, they are running!" I pulled into the lot just in time to see Howard's jeep and Dale and Karl already in the park, antennas at the ready and on the move. Dale, W8RRV, and Karl, KF6MDF, hit the parking lot at the same time as Howard, KG6GI, and Jeremy, KG6JAD. Dale and Karl were the first to hit the hill with Jeremy in hot pursuit.

They round the bend and head up the hill. Jeremy makes his move and passes Karl on the inside. Antenna waving madly, but it looks like Dale's well on his way to the T. Will he win this one by a squeaker? It looks like Dale is being gained on by Jeremy. He breaks into a run leaving the kid in the dust. BUT wait! It looks like he has no attenuator! He's slow at taking a reading. In the haste in the parking lot did he leave his attenuator? Yes, yes, he did! Jeremy takes a quick reading and dashes off to the T first. His time of 15 minutes is a new record.

Al was standing by with Bubba, and damn it, Bubba wanted that ride. So we stuffed him into the wagon and off they went, fox and all. But one trip around the park and Bubba petered out. He's a big dog and decided to walk some of the way. He didn't get far in the heat. So now we were dogless.

Kareem, KG6USK, was next on the fox at one hour, followed by Matt, KE6ALM, at 1 hour and 10 minutes. Roger and wife, W6SQQ and K6PUP, made it in at one hour and 20 minutes. They are new to SOARA's hunts, but have years of skill. Tony, AE6QT, and Joe, W6BGR, popped up at about the same time at 2 hours.

Congratulations to the winning team of Jeremy and Howard.
73, Dave, KG6QCI ☐

Last Month Revisited

The April meeting featured Lee Thomas (KF6POI) from Skywarn. Skywarn is a national effort to save lives during severe weather emergencies with an expanding network of individuals within their community. The services performed by Skywarn spotters have saved many lives. Orange County weather spotters support the National Weather Service which enables the NWS to fulfill its mission of protecting life and property.

Orange County contacts are:
- Coordinator Michael McLaughlin (KJ6EQ);
- Assistant Coordinator Charles Weyand (WC6CW) and
- Gary Lesho (KG6RXQ).

The Orange County Web site is *www.ocskywarn.org*. Much useful information can be found there.

The Sunday Night Orange County Skywarn Net meets at 1900 hours on 145.400Mhz- with PL 103.5 and 224Mhz- & PL103.5

Jim, K6LIO ☐

The Way I See It: "Getting Started"

Find yourself with APRS

APRS is the Automatic Position Reporting System, and it was developed by Bob Bruninga, WB4APR. In a nutshell, APRS is used to transmit position reports, weather information, and text messages between users over packet radio on a nationally coordinated frequency of 144.39 MHz. If you tune your receiver to that frequency right now, you'll hear lots of activity in the form of digital bursts of information.

APRS "trackers" are devices that use the Global Positioning System to encode their positions into packets of information and send them out on the air at specified intervals. Trackers consist of a GPS unit that sends position data through RS232 in "NMEA 0183" format to a device that encodes the position into a data packet and transmits it through a regular handie-talkie or other radio transmitter. Tracker devices usually listen before they transmit to avoid collisions with others sending position reports. Receivers of this information can plot the location information on a detailed map, relay the position data to other stations, or relay the data to the Internet where it is stored in a database for later lookup and display on a map.

There are many ways to get started in APRS using equipment that you already own. For example, if you already have an Internet connected computer with a web browser, you can monitor the ARPS activity in your area or any other place in the world!

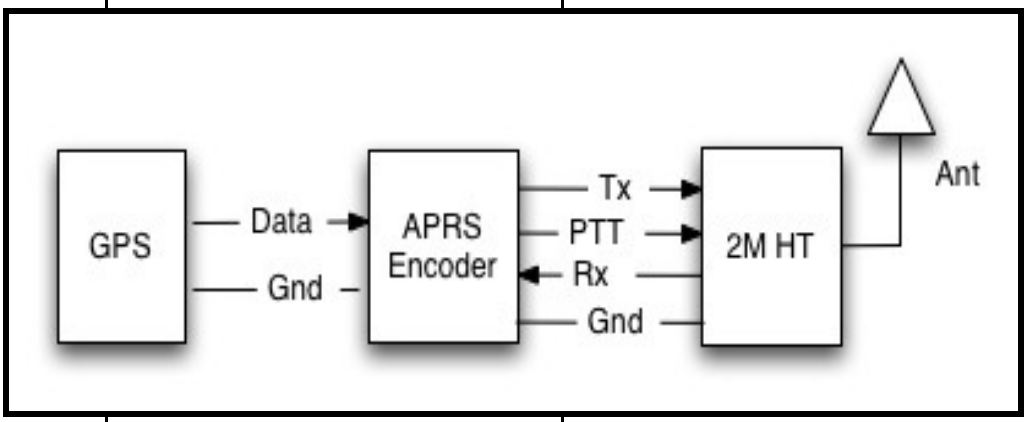
Point your web browser at the SOARA web site, *www.soara.org*, and scroll down to the "APRS Lookup" section that's located on the left hand side of the page. The SOARA APRS lookup uses the *www.findu.com* web site to search the FindU position database. You can either enter someone's call sign directly or select one from the pull-down menu and then press the "Find" button. Don't be discouraged if the first one you try has no position reports. Not everyone leaves their trackers turned on all the time. When you find one that has sent out position data within the last 10 days, their last reported position will be displayed in text form and on a map.

There are several options at this point that are provided by the "*www.findu.com*" web site. You can display a topographic map of the area the person was last reported in, or you can find other APRS stations which are located in the same area. The aerial photo feature shows you an aerial image of the location using photos taken by the US Geologic Survey. You can zoom in to pinpoint their location or zoom out to get a high-level aerial view. If you leave this page open, it will automatically reload and display the latest position data for the person you are tracking.

There are several inexpensive ways to build your own tracker depending on what you already own. For example, if you already own a handie-talkie and a GPS unit that has "serial/RS232" output, you've got two-thirds of the equipment necessary to build a tracker! If you have an old TNC (Terminal Node Controller) that you used for packet radio lying around, it can be used with APRS as well. Some newer TNCs can be used as a stand-alone tracker in conjunction with a handie-talkie and GPS unit.

If you don't have a TNC and you want to build your own tracker, you can purchase inexpensive($30-50) tracker kits or pre-built units from several sources. One is the TinyTrack 3 from Byonics (*www.byonics.com*), and another is the Open Tracker from N1VG (*n1vg.net/opentracker*). These nifty little gadgets accept the NMEA 0183 data from your GPS and send your position out through a connected handie-talkie.

Other TNC units that aren't useful as standalone trackers can be used for home APRS stations that are used to monitor local APRS activity, and periodically post your own position so that others can see that you're out there and where you are located. A TNC combined with a Windows, Macintosh, or UNIX computer, and radio transceiver are all that's required to build a home APRS station.



There are several software packages, some of which are free, that you can use for your home APRS station such as: WinAPRS (*http://winaprs.net/*), APRS+SA (*http://www.tapr.org/~kh2z/aprsplus/*), UIView32 (*http://www.ui-view.org/*), and Xastir (*http://www.xastir.org/*).

APRS is a very interesting and useful mode of operation that is used to track moving objects of all shapes and sizes from cars and trucks to rockets and balloons. I hope that you will dust off that old TNC, go to the Internet, or build your own tracker and get started in this fun and useful mode soon!

We will be demonstrating APRS at Field Day this year and also beaconing our position so that others with APRS can find our Field Day site. Feel free to stop by my web site (nj6n.com/aprs) for more information about the trackers I've built and about APRS in general.

73, Brian,NJ6N

Year 2005	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
General Meeting 7:00 PM	**24**	**28**	**21**	**18**	**16**	**20**	**18**	**15**	**19**	**17**	**21**	No meeting
Program	WU6D (Org. SM)	KG6UOS "Long Waves"	N6NHP "Ham Radio & Astro."	AA6MH Calif. ACS	Spring Auction	Field Day Prep.	Show & Tell	K3AW Video on Antennas	K6RIX Radio KFI	TBD	Fall Auction	—
VEC Testing	**24**	**28**	**21**	**18**	**16**	**20**	**18**	**15**	**19**	**17**	**21**	**—**
SOARA T-Hunt	**9**	**6**	**6**	**3**	**1**	**5**	**10**	**7**	**11**	**9**	**6**	**4**
Board Meeting	**31**	**3/7**	**28**	**25**	**23**	**27**	**25**	**22**	**26**	**24**	**28**	
ARRL Field Day						**25/26**						
SOARA picnic								**7**				
SOARA Holiday Party												**4**

With this edition of the propagator we announce "**The HROC Corner**" where we'll feature announcements and items of special interest to the former HROC folks. We'll also include tidbits about the activities of HROC'ers. Roger Kepner, W6SQQ, will write the column. Contact him with items of interest and news.

This month, I'd like to announce that we are linking the Laguna 2 meter machine (147.645-) with both the 447.180 and 224.640 repeaters on Santiago peak for the Tuesday evening net. This is to enable those of you living out of range of the Laguna site to check in on the net. Remember it is at 8 PM Tuesdays. Because the links take time to make the connections, please pause a bit longer after keying up before you start speaking, and also wait for the other end to drop before transmitting. For the time being these links will only be activated for the net. Give it a try. We'd like to have you check in on the net.

73, Ray, AE6H, SOARA President ☐

Looking ?

We are looking for volunteers for Monday, May 30, to help support the Saddleback Memorial Hospital ½ marathon. All that is required is a working 2 meter radio and the desire to communicate in case of necessity. The race starts at 7:00 AM, and our volunteers should be in place by then. The race location is in Laguna Hills along Alicia parkway, and race H.Q. is at the community center at Alicia and Paseo de Valencia. Please call me at (949) 859-3868 or send me an e-mail at *ad6oi@soara.org*

Thank You, Heiko, AD6OI ☐

Raffle Update

Congratulations to Tony, AE6QT, who won the $5 raffle for the Yaesu VX-2R handie-talkie at the April meeting. Remember, there is no raffle at the May auction meeting.

73, Brian, NJ6N ☐

Field Day is fast approaching; June 24, 25, and 26 at Gilleran Park in Mission Viejo. Friday late afternoon, early evening, is mostly party with a Hot Dog and Bake Bean Dinner. Pull strings will be placed for setting up antennas. We will use spud guns, sling shots, and good throwing arms to get the pull strings installed in the trees and light stands. Saturday is the day with set up from 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Last year we were set up by 10:00 AM. Radio operation for contesting is from 11:00 AM on Saturday until 11:00 AM on Sunday (a 24 hour period) and that means radio operators using SSB, FM, and CW with plenty of time for every one to participate.

Sunday at 11:01 A.M. starts pack up and clean up. Another Field Day goes into the history book. Saturday we will have breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the Park. Sunday we will have breakfast and lunch. SOARA has some equipment, mostly antennas and cable. We will need radios, an ATV station, solar panel powered station, laptop computers, and some ice chests. Bring what you have.

I will start with sign up sheets at the May club meeting to get things organized. A special planning meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 2 at 7:00 PM at the Norman P. Murray Community Center. Check the SOARA web site for the latest news and announcements.

73, Lou, KG6FCT ☐

The **PROPAGATOR**

South Orange Amateur Radio Association
P.O. Box 2545
Mission Viejo, CA 92690

First Class Mail

Meeting: May 16, 2005 at 7:00 PM
Spring Auction

☞ **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 147.645 two-meter repeater.

☞ **License Exams**: Amateur License Exams are given prior to SOARA meetings. Exams are from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Walk-in applicants are welcome. For information call Paul Levey, NZ1M, at 949-481-5454.

☞ **Contacting SOARA:** Questions about SOARA? Send e-mail to: i*nfo@soara.org*, or leave a message at 949-249-1373.

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

☞ **Repeaters:** The Laguna Beach, San Clemente, and Trabuco repeaters are open. The Santiago Peak repeaters are closed. For details or questions on the repeaters contact the Repeater director, KG6GI.

2m — 147.645 – (110.9) Laguna Beach
2m — 146.025 + (110.9) San Clemente
2m — 145.240 – (110.9) Trabuco
220 — 224.100 – (110.9) Laguna Beach
220 — 224.640 – (123.0) Santiago Pk. (C) 440 — 445.660 – (110.9) Laguna Beach
440 — 447.180 – (131.8) Santiago Pk. (C)

☞ **Nets:** SOARA 2 m repeater open net is held Tuesday 8:00 PM 40 meter HF net (7.250 MHz +/– for QRM), Sunday 7:30 AM.