

The PROPAGATOR

October, 2005

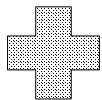
The Monthly Newsletter of South Orange Amateur Radio Association

The Ham's view of Katrina

SOARA will have the pleasure of having a team of three presenters at the October meeting on Monday the 17th. Three representatives from the Red Cross will make a timely presentation dealing with emergency communications.

Mel Goldberg, N6MEL, Gordon West, WB6NOA, and Tom Mackey, W6WC, will make a pictorial presentation of the American Red Cross response to Katrina. American Red Cross Communications disaster worker functions will be explained and related to operations in an actual major emergency.

Gordon, will give a visual review of the American Red Cross Emergency Communications Response Vehicle (ECRV). Any presentation by Gordon promises to be both informative and entertaining. We welcome the opportunity to have him visit SOARA again.



American Red Cross

Mel Goldberg, N6MEL, on behalf of Orange County Chapter of the Red Cross, will award a Certificate of Appreciation to SOARA. This is in recognition of SOARA's contribution during the recent Laguna Slides, Capistrano Floods & Prado

Dam Incident

The speakers positions with the Red Cross are:

Mel Goldberg, N6MEL, American Red Cross/Orange County Emergency Communications Lead.

Tom Mackey, W6WC, is American Red Cross/Orange County Emergency Communications Radio Room Lead.

Gordon West, WB6NOA, American Red Cross/Orange County Emergency Communications Field Training Lead.

Jim, K6LIO

Simulated Emergency

On October 1, 2005, many of you participated in the local S.E.T. as a part of the local emergency communications groups. It has been a year in which we have been reminded all too regularly that communications systems can be quickly disabled or overloaded. We may find our skills and equipment needed at any time. Will we be prepared?

Groups of hams associated with local agencies, hospitals, the Red Cross, etc. spend time to drill and plan for emergencies. Each year there is a national day when RACES, ARES, and ACS organizations are encouraged by the ARRL to hold a coordinated drill. Orange County RACES organizes the drill locally. Each participating group was assigned a number of messages to pass to other groups.

Although the results have not been analyzed and released, it seems to most observers that this years drill was more successful than previous ones. The reality of multiple major emergencies around the country helps to focus on the importance of preparation and practice.

If you are not affiliated with one of the local emergency groups it is a good time to look into joining. Below is a list of groups which are active locally. The group name is followed by a contact person and either an e-mail address or a phone number. They will be glad to hear from you as they are always looking for new members.

City of Mission Viejo RACES
Charley Speelman, WA6RUZ
wa6ruz@cox.net

City of Laguna Woods RACES
Art Welch, K7TX
awelch@fea.net

City of Laguna Beach RACES
John Kountz, KE6GFF
(949) 494-8783

View From the Top

Dino Darling, K6RIX, favored us with an informative and interesting presentation on the replacement of the guy wires on the KFI transmitter tower in March of 2004. Dino actually participated in the replacement process and took a video as he ascended the tower with the regular tower riggers. The combination of video, still photos, and hearing his first hand experiences gave the audience a feeling that they had actually been there.

He explained in some detail the techniques the riggers used to change the massive steel cables which were holding the tower upright. Dino brought one of the old fittings which gave a good feeling for size involved. Dino obtained, as souvenirs, several of the very large insulators that were being replaced.

Thanks Dino for a very enjoyable talk.

City of Laguna Nigues RACES
Al Way, KC6LNP
alway@cox.net

City of Irvine RACES (IDEC)
Bob Pestolesi, KE6GYD
ke6gyd@cox.net

Hospital Disaster Communications (HDSOS)
April Moell, WA6OPS
EmCom4Hosp@aol.com

County of Orange RACES (OCRACES)
Ray Grimes, N8RG
n8rg@ocraces.org

American Red Cross
Mel Goldberg, N6MEL
mgoldberg@oc-redcross.org

California Rescue Emergency net
Gordon West, WB6NOA
7.250 MHz, 8:30 - 9:00 weekday mornings.
All are welcome to join this HF net, Lou Frank, KG6FCT, conducts the last section of the net when SOARA members check in.



The Way I See It:

LESSONS FROM
KATRINA &
RITA

By Gordon West,
WB6NOA

Emergency radio responders may have years of training “lessons” to study after these two catastrophic hurricanes wiped out Gulf communications. These “lessons” offer significant tips on how the emergency radio responder can help in a local emergency.

As Richard and I, plus hundreds of other West Coast hams, stood ready to handle 20-meter health and welfare traffic OUT of the devastated area, we were not in the main ham radio emergency “loop.” It was 75 meters and 40 meters in and out of the disaster area for health, welfare, and emergency traffic. Twenty meters was unnecessary because ham comms were “loud and clear” during day and night on the longer wavelength bands.

Lesson: Our 7250 kHz morning and Soara 7250 kHz Sunday morning net are perfect training for handling localized emergency comms. During the day, a skywave pop of 300 miles and more is common, perfect skip distance to get calls to another ham with telephone capabilities. At night, 75 meters comes to life.

VHF and UHF repeater systems, working with battery back-up along with premium stations also self-charging with solar cells, were vitally important to traffic handling in and out of the devastated area. When back-up generator fuel becomes depleted, only those repeaters using solar cell charging methods remained on the air in the Gulf.

A voice-over internet (VoIP) was also a popular mode with the National Hurricane Center (NHC) in Miami, Florida. The net’s goal was to connect amateurs in the affected area with EOCs to National Weather Service offices and the National Hurricane Center for passage of emergency traffic, weather reports, and damage assessment.

Using radio systems and repeaters linked to the internet, amateurs from Eastern Texas and Western Louisiana were able to pass important traffic. The ability to connect Echo

Link PC users, Echo Link and IRLP repeaters and links via the same system also offered great flexibility in obtaining reports from amateurs in the affected area.

“Without the Echo Link and IRLP modes used on the VoIP hurricane net, we would not have received some of these vital reports,” comments Julio Ripoll, WD4R, a long-time veteran operator and manager of the amateur radio station at the National Hurricane Center.

“The incoming reports were posted at the National Hurricane Center for the hurricane forecasters, as well as the FEMA office that is located inside the NHC bunker next to our radio room,” adds Ripoll.

With this much interest in emergency communications and VoIP, “Shorty”, W6JSI, the operator of the linked Win System has made this offer to all Soara members, and that is to come up on any one of his UHF repeaters and work with his trained emergency responders continuously exploring VoIP paths. Go to www.winsystem.org and listen for yourself what Shorty is doing for disaster preparedness here on the West Coast.

Individual responders to evacuation centers learned the importance of the well-planned grab-and-go radio kit. Expect to encounter no lights, no power, and a need for a rapid deployment of 2 meters and 440 MHz to signal back to other ham stations outside of their local area. Arriving at a shelter with just an HT is not enough—your portable radio system needs a good, powerful, dual-band transceiver; headset for privacy; sealed battery for longevity; a small solar charger if there is no other way to replenish the gel battery; plenty of coax; and a dual-band antenna that will easily fasten outside on nearly anything available.

But more important than that is, knowing WHAT repeater system might be able to accommodate your required communications back to your shelter’s management team miles away. This was EXACTLY the Red Cross need years ago during the Laguna fire, and the Soara repeater system was the first choice. And most recently, the Laguna landslides AGAIN would necessitate Red Cross personnel choosing the Soara system to get a signal back to the Santa Ana Red Cross Headquarters.

But the repeater alone is not enough for an effective “patch”—it was the teamwork between all of the Soara personnel and Red Cross radio volunteers to work up a plan to take advantage of this terrific resource for this specific emergency.

And Lou, KG6FCT, would further demonstrate that even 40 meters has its place in getting signal in and out of rough terrain.

Northern Florida’s Section Emergency Coordinator, Joe Bushel, W2DWR, who was a key player in Katrina mutual assistance administration, offers this great advice:

Before the next emergency, contact your emergency coordinator and set up a jump team. This gives you the future benefit of working with people you already know. It is also easier on the person sending you if, when you are contacted, you can tell him or her the names and calls of others who will go with you. Finally, plan ahead. Set your jump kits in advance of the need. A radio may be of no value if you are missing one coax connector. That same radio could have been a critical communications link. Don’t wait until the last minute to get prepared—you will forget something that will turn out to be especially needed.

Finally, one enterprising Red Cross communications supervisor sending emergency radio responders out to distant shelters at ground zero only picked those operators properly dressed for the occasion, who had radio communications equipment beyond just a handheld, who demonstrated radio power compatibility with Anderson connectors, and who also had a proper ID card showing qualifications as a radio responder.

“I could tell you in 10 seconds by looking over the operator and his or her equipment that they were going to do more good or more harm by sending them to a distance shelter—the good emergency radio responder should be equipment and personal ready for an immediate response—nothing less.”

Thanks to Soara for all of the emergency preparedness you continuously train for; and if anything big ever hits Southern California, your local Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross radio volunteers and Soara members are ready to respond! □

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	Red Cross	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	18	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

Time to go to class!

If you have been waiting for a class to upgrade to the General license, the time is here. SOARA's Education Director, John Walker, AC7GK, has announced that arrangements are complete and the class will start on Tuesday, October 18, and continue for six weeks. The final class on November 22, will include a testing session.

Classes will be held at the Mission Viejo Community Center and will start at 7:00 PM and run until 9:00 PM. The

text book we will be using is the *ARRL General Class License Manual*.

If you are interested in the class, or if you have questions, please contact John Walker. We need a count in order to have the needed supplies on hand. John can be reached by phone at (949) 212-5533 or at ac7gk@soara.org.

Join your fellow club members in the class and upgrade. See you in class.

CQ JOTA, CQ JOTA

On October 15 & 16, the 48th JOTA will be on the air. If you would like to help with SOARA's support of the local activities, contact Heiko, AD6OI, for details. He can be reached by phone at (949) 859-3868, or by e-mail at ad6oi@soara.org.

SOARA members have participated in the past by providing equipment and acting as control operators. This is an excellent way to make contact with youth who may become future amateur operators. So for an opportunity to spend a day of Amateur Radio, call Heiko and join in the activities.

Raffle Update

Congratulations to Tony, AE6QT, Duane, WB6GGF, Dave, KG6QCI, Knute, K6HIV, Everett, W6EQM, Howard, KG6GI, Bill, K6BWZ, and Carl, AB7KD, for winning prizes in the one dollar raffle at the September general meeting! Our club president, Ray, AE6H, was the lucky \$5 raffle winner of an Alinco dual band handie-talkie.

The \$5 raffle prize at the upcoming October meeting will be a Yaesu VX-2R - "the world's smallest HT with 1.5/1 watt output on 2M/440!"

Remember, there is no raffle in November due to the auction and no raffle in December due to the Holiday party so this is your last chance of the year to win a radio or radio accessory!

See you at the meeting,
73, Brian, NJ6N

Return Dues Payment Early

You should have received your dues notice letter from SOARA. It is through the annual dues that SOARA is able to support the activities and services that the club provides. In addition to monthly general meetings, the monthly newsletter, a web site and e-mail reflector, SOARA holds three major events for members. These are Field Day, the annual picnic in August, and the Holiday Party in December. (See the enclosed notice announcing details of the party.)

SOARA supports several local emergency groups with the seven repeaters we support. All of the repeaters have provisions for emergency power. The repeaters are also made available to support various civic activities such as bicycle races, which require communications. Please support your club by returning your dues payment early.

The PROPAGATOR

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



Meeting: October 17, 2005 at 7:00 PM Red Cross

☛ **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: info@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.

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