



The PROPAGATOR

March, 2006

The Monthly Newsletter of South Orange Amateur Radio Association

Spark Gap Demonstration

Steve Jensen was first licensed as WN6RHM on July 14, 1952. Steve currently holds extra class license W6RHM. His presentation at SOARA will be on the topic of Spark Gap Transmitters. The sort of equipment that would have graced the ham shack of his grandfather in 1918.

Ham radio led Steve to pursue a career in electronic engineering and later to specialize as a consultant in Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC). Steve is the president and principal consultant of Steve Jensen Consultants Inc. with offices in Redlands, California. Most of his business is related to commercial and military aerospace EMC requirements.

Steve's interest in amateur radio stems from a long family lineage starting with his Grandfather (9YD). Steve's dad was Bob Jensen, W6VGQ(SK) and Steve's step mom was Lenore Jensen, W6NAZ. Steve's sister is KA7ITT, Cindy Wall who is the author of a series of amateur radio adventure stories. □
Steve Jensen, July 1952



New Members

Welcome to SOARA's newest member

Ricardo Ceballos K6RSA

First Timer Stumps Hunters

The March SOARA "T" hunt was held on March 6, 2006. AE6SH was the hider this time around and although the ID of the "T" was still sending last months call and was off a little longer than it was on, it did provide a fun and somewhat challenging hunt. Using Brian, NJ6N's ammo can and a rubber duck, I locked the "T" between two large trees at the east end of Marina Hills Dr. (Camino Los Padres Dr.) and placed a green trash bag over the device for camouflage. This location proved to be quite interesting because of its proximity to the south end of Mission Viejo and the 5 freeway. The signal vanished abruptly as you traveled south on the 5 freeway. After pinpointing the location, you had to go around behind it to get there. The Transmitter (all 2 watts of it) went active at 1300hrs. And the hunt was on.

Hunters included: KE6ALM, KG6USK, K6RBS, KG6GI, KF6MDF, W8RRV and KG6FCT. Karl, KF6MDF, was first to the "T" in 57 minutes. Richard,

Continued on page 3

Something New

Let's have a Tech Day!! Saturday, April 15th at Florence Joyner Park, at Alicia and Olympiad. This is an opportunity to set up some HF Stations and experiment with antennas. We have the picnic area reserved from 10:00 to 2:00. We will concentrate on setting up our stations and antennas further up the hill so we can stay later than 2:00. We will have an antenna analyzer, power, soldering iron, and heat gun to shrink tubing. This will be a good time to build and test antennas. I will have the design for the Gordo "NOA" special distributed capacity dipole antenna. All you need bring is coax cable if you wish to build one. An 80 meter antenna requires 120 ft, 40 meters requires 64ft, etc. This does NOT include feedline.

Lunch will be served around noon.

Please contact Lou KG6FCT to be active on the activity committee. He can be reached via e-mail: kg6fct@soara.org □

Last Month

Despite the rainy weather a good turn-out of SOARA members greeted Carl Gardenias, WU6D, the ARRL Section Manager (SM) for the Orange Section who presented SOARA with the Special Services Club certificate. Carl had kind words and praise for the enthusiasm and wide range of activities in which club members are involved.

Accompanying Carl on his visit was his Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC), Steve Grudzinski, AD6HT. Steve talked about emergency preparedness and ways that amateur operators have contributed to public safety and recovery from disasters. He urged every ham to avail themselves of the training available and support a local group in order to be ready when needed. □

Dave Drury, KB6CQK, SK

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of long time SOARA member Dave Drury, KB6CQK. Dave passed away in mid December after a long illness following major surgery. You may remember, Dave had served as club Secretary for over 10 years, remaining a loyal and active member after giving up that position approximately 6 years ago. Dave was a friend to all and was always ready to pitch in with club events, such as Field Day set up.

There will be a reception to celebrate Dave's life, Saturday, March 25, at the home of Dave's Father and Mother-in-Law, Bob, W6LIU, and Elizabeth, KB6VYT, Woltz. The location is 625 High Drive, Laguna Beach. Gina and the family invite you to drop by anytime between 1:00 and 4:00 PM. There is convenient parking at the church just below their home.

SOARA is looking for pictures, or other items that represent Dave's time in the club for a display table at the reception. If you have any items, please bring them to our upcoming March 20th meeting.

We at SOARA will greatly miss Dave. □



The Way I See It: Maritime Mobile (part 2) by Tony de Witte

To recap from last month, a friend (Turk), my wife, and I set off on a delivery of a 31 foot sailboat, *Hokuao*, from Dana Point to Hawaii late in December. In order to circumvent the reported large seas from the West that had closed several harbors along the Southland, and the imminent first winter storm that spawned them, we headed south. After a stop in Ensenada we sailed to Guadalupe Island a couple of hundred miles further south and about as many off the Baja coast. While at the southern anchorage of the island, waiting to rendezvous with our friend Ron of the sailboat, *Pangaea*, I managed to get my new hastily set up portable rig with a TNC working. I checked into the morning Baja Maritime Net and fired off a few e-mails, one of which went to Richard Saunders, K6RBS, our homebase contact.

While on the Net, I heard another Maritime station check in with a position report at Guadalupe Island. We were going to have company! He was probably sailing down the leeward side of the island, and most likely heading south to our anchorage. Apparently, this boat, *Saduciente*, had a newly installed SSB, because we heard Gordon West, WB6NOA, chime in and give his blessing of a 5 by 9 report as well as many other stations as far north as Washington giving the same. Sure enough, later that day *Saduciente* appeared and anchored a ways south from us. It is unusual to have two vessels at this anchorage, and soon we'd be expecting a third, *Pangaea*!

Pangaea, our support boat, pulled in very early the next morning. We were very glad to see them. We were not able to communicate with them because of incompatibility of equipment, us with an HF radio and them with a Sat phone. We replenished our stores, water, and fuel from *Pangaea*, and then enjoyed a meal of barbecued fresh, large lobsters that we traded for a few bottles of wine, (Two Buck Chuck), with the local pangeros, Mexican fisherman in open 20 ft fiberglass skiffs. There's a small fishing village on the west side of the island. On the south end next to the anchorage, there's a Mexican Navy outpost garrisoned by

a couple of Navy officers and a few enlistees. They were most hospitable. They gave the entire crew of *Pangaea*, and one of our own, Turk, an all day tour of the island. Diane and I stayed behind with the boats.

Early the next morning we weighed anchor and left our friends on *Pangaea* and the island behind. I'd been receiving weather faxes on Winlink's Airmail GetFax. All indications suggested that we continue to head south. The Pacific High pressure system was off to the west and the cold fronts and storms were to the northwest. We really relied heavily on these weather faxes for the duration of the trip. I was also getting further information from the master weather forecaster Don Anderson of Summer Passage Radio WPXU557 on the Amigo Net and as N6HG on the Baja Net. In one Net session I discussed with Don the outlook for the next five days, and he agreed with our original plan of going south to the easterly Trade Winds, below the 25th parallel, before turning west toward Hawaii. This would add quite a bit of time to the trip, but it was the best way to go.

Out of convenience, Richard, K6RBS, and I had agreed to initiate contact on the Baja Net on a daily basis. We would either complete the contact on the Net if it was short, or move off to another frequency for a longer exchange. As time went on, as we tried to conform to the daily routine of watch standing, it became more and more difficult to maintain a regular radio schedule. The radio gear was installed in a utility box that wasn't attached to anything. And because of the length of the antenna and power cables, it had to sit on top of sleeping bags and sheets in the quarterberth where we slept. With the computer connected for e-mails and WX faxes, and the motion of the boat, it was barely manageable with everything sliding around. When finished with the radio, the computer was disconnected and put back in its case, the lid to the radio box closed, and the box tied off to the side. Sometimes I'd be on watch steering the boat at the time of the schedule. Other times there was someone in the bunk and I couldn't get to the equipment. Or, I was the one passed out in the bunk! Sorry, Richard.

A few days out from the island we developed a rattling noise and vibration on the prop shaft when running the engine. The rattling continued with the engine off. During one of the radio contacts, Richard and I were making arrangements to phone the boat broker to see if they would have an idea

of the cause. 'Gordo', WB6NOA, happened to be listening and assisted with the call. We determined it was the prop zinc, nothing serious but very annoying. Fortunately, the seas were calm enough for Diane and Turk to dive on the prop. The zinc was tightened and we were on our way again. Had the chance to chat with 'Gordo' a bit, and he also concurred with our plan of heading south to the Trades. Our contact was bolstered one more notch.

During the QSO's with Richard, K6RBS, I was verbally giving position reports. Then Richard would plot them on the SOARA website. Later, I received an e-mail from George Hiscox, WA6RIK, saying that WinLink's Airmail was capable of sending position reports. I was not aware of this. He even told me where to locate it within the program. This made it even easier for Richard and me as I could send off a report in an e-mail later in the day if I missed the early morning radio schedule.

About the 11th day out from Guadalupe Island, we lost all radio contact. I couldn't even get weather faxes. I attributed this to poor propagation. And, the QRN, noise that was barely noticeable before was surprisingly louder. I also figured that I must be out of radio range from the Baja Net and Richard. Several days passed and nothing changed. I even tried to contact Hawaiian stations but to no avail. I had planned to use west coast stations until half way across and then switch to Hawaiian stations as needed as we approached the islands. You may question my logic on this, but I never was able to connect to a Hawaiian station, not even the Hawaii Weather Fax broadcast station KVM70! We relied on west coast stations the entire way, though it became increasingly difficult.

Too many days later, I decided to give the Baja Net one more try. I was receiving them and checked in to my and their surprise! I was told that K6RBS had asked the Net to alert him as soon as they had heard from us. Net control asked me for Richard's phone number and in a matter of minutes he was on the air. We re-established contact to everyone's relief! Richard relayed a message from the owner that we were to arrive at the Aloha dock of the Hawaii Yacht Club, Ala Wai Harbor. We were still 320 miles out, two and a half days. That was our last QSO. I have to thank Richard for his commitment and dedication. He was always there for us, though we were not always there for him. □

Year 2006	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
General Meeting 7:00 PM	23	27	20	17	15	19	17	21	18	16	20	No meeting
Program	AE6SH	WU6D	W6RHM Spark-Gap Xmtr		Spring Auction	F.D. Prep.	WB6WXO				Fall Auction	—
VEC Testing	23	27	20	17	15	24	17	21	18	16	20	—
SOARA T-Hunt	8	5	5	2	7	4	2	6	3	8	5	3
Board Meeting	30	3/6	27	24	22	24	24	28	25	23	27	
ARRL Field Day						24/25						
SOARA picnic								6				
SOARA Holiday Party												3

T-hunt Continued from page

K6RBS, was a very close second with a time of 61 minutes. Dale, W8RRV, was third in at 76 minutes. Matt, KE6ALM, had to bow out with clutch problems on his vehicle. Howard, KG6GI, ran out of time because of another commitment (he is busier than three men should be). Unfortunately Kareem suffered an equipment failure and was guided in by APRS after getting very close the old fashion way. Brian, NJ6N, stopped by to say hello and to pick up the "T" at the end of the day.

Inside the bag was the sign-in sheet and

the directions to the park where a light snack, a cold drink and good company were waiting for all who arrived.

The next hunt will be April 2, 2006, and Brian, NJ6N, has graciously agreed to do the hiding. Team up with one of the "Seasoned" hunters and learn from the best or get out there and just give it a go. Who knows, you could spoil the experts. It's a lot of fun!

73, AE6SH

Early Registration for Convention

I would like to invite everyone to attend the 2006 ARRL Southwestern Division Amateur Radio Convention to be held on September 22, 23, and 24, 2006 at the San Diego Marriott in Mission Valley.

Please visit the convention website at www.sandarc-conv2006.org for details.

Note that the Early Bird Registration deadline is April 30, 2006. If you register prior to April 30, 2006, registration is \$15.00, which includes a convention pin (while supplies last). After April 30, 2006, Pre Registration is \$17.50 and an At Door Pass for the convention will be \$20.00.

Paul, KC6QLS, Convention Assistant Co-Chair and Media Chair

SOARA's own Dave Seroski, KG6QCI was featured on the cover of the latest issue of *CQ VHF*. Way to go Dave!



Elections are upon us again, and it's the year we elect a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, as well as fill any open Director positions. As is required by the SOARA Constitution and By-laws, the Board of Directors will be presenting a proposed slate of officers for this election at the March meeting.

If you have an interest in running for any of the above offices, as well as the currently open position of Education Director, we truly encourage you to do so. Also, if you would like to suggest someone else for any of these positions, please let us know as well. We will be taking nominations from the floor at the meeting, but if you are unable to attend, please email me: ae6h@soara.org with your suggestions so we may contact these people to be sure they are interested in accepting nomination.

Hope to hear from you and to see you at the March 20th meeting. Ray, AE6H, SOARA President

Oops! Last month I indicated that **Hi-Tech Liquidators** was in the wrong city!! Hi-Tech is located in **Costa Mesa**. They **are** worth visiting.

Phone: (949) 646-1686

Raffle News

Congratulations to the 13 winners of the \$1 raffle at the February meeting! There will be plenty of new prizes this month for the \$1 raffle and again we thank Hi-Tech Liquidators for donated items.

We expect to sell enough \$5 tickets to be able to raffle the Yaesu FT-840 HF transceiver. I hope to see you all at the next meeting,



73, NJ6N

The PROPAGATOR

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



Meeting: March 20, 2006 at 7:00 PM
Steve Jensen, W6RHM

☛ **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 8:00 AM.

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