



The

# Propagator

The Monthly Newsletter of the South Orange Amateur Radio Association

March 2008

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**Meeting:**

**March 17**

**7:00 PM**

**Unisys**

**25725**

**Jeronimo Rd.**

**Mission Viejo**

## Official Observer Program

The club meeting will be held at the UNISYS building on Jeronimo Rd., Mission Viejo. Check our website, [www.soara.org](http://www.soara.org) for a map and directions. The topic is the ARRL Official Observer Program. Our presenter is Dan Welch, W6DFW, Official Observer Coordinator for the Orange Section.

Dan has lived in Anaheim for the last 40 years and holds an Ama-

teur Extra Class license. His immediate family includes six licensed Amateurs ranging from 10 years of age to senior adults.

Dan spent his professional career in the Aerospace industry as an Electronic Engineer and later as a Software Engineer. For the last 10 years he has worked as an independent Consultant.

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## QST, QST de AE6H

The ARRL Field Day 2008, is coming up on June 27, 28 and 29, and planning is

already well underway. Mike, K16IRA, has generously agreed to be our Field Day 2008 Coordinator. Lee, K6QAX, will be coordinating and scheduling radio operators. Mike will be recruiting others at our upcoming meeting to assist him. Please see him if you are willing to help. No effort is too big or too small, and the more members that pitch in, the easier it will be for all and the more successful and fun

field day will be.

The time is coming up for the annual election. We elect the Constitutional Officers on even numbered years, and the Directors on odd number years. The election will be for the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The SOARA Board is working on the Official Slate to be presented at this month's meeting. Our current Treasurer, Steve, KR6CE, has decided to step down after 6 years service, so we are actively seeking candidates for his replacement. Steve has greatly streamlined the

*(Continued on page 3)*

## D-STAR Report



### Events:

*A hidden transmitter hunt is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month.*

*Planning for 2008 Field Day has started.*

*Please give some consideration to your participation this year. SOARA always receives a good score and the participants always have fun. Make plans to be there this year..*

*The success of SOARA activities depends on the efforts of many members. Please consider volunteering your talents as a volunteer in one of the activities. We need YOU.*

The DV (digital voice) dongle, developed and produced by Robin, AA4RC, and Moe, AE4JY, is becoming extremely popular on the D-STAR system. This slick new device is a great way to keep in touch through our D-STAR repeaters while traveling. The USB device hooks up to your Windows, Macintosh, or Linux computer and gives you the ability to participate in the International D-STAR system without a D-STAR radio. One feature users really enjoy is the ability to monitor the activity of a remote D-STAR system, something that is not currently possible with a regular "RF based" D-STAR transceiver.

HRO is currently the only supplier of the new device and the price is \$199.95. The back-end software that makes it all possible is called *dplus* and is provided to gateway administrators for free. The *dplus* software also adds functionality to our D-STAR system including the ability to echo back a transmission for testing (echo test), the ability to invoke the systems "ID mes-

sage" (useful for testing as well). We've had a lot of fun linking our system with the W6DHS system in Sacramento and other systems around the US. The new version of *dplus* that provides this functionality has just been released so we will now be able to link with more gateways.

A new version of the D-STAR gateway software, named "G2" for generation #2, from Icom will be shipping soon. The new software provides additional functionality to D-STAR gateways, including the ability to link modules from different systems together. It also promises to solve some of the gateway synchronization issues that we've had to work around in the current version.

I'd like to hear if SOARA members are interested in a mailing list dedicated to SOARA D-STAR users or if there is any interest in having a SOARA net on our D-STAR system during the week. Let me know your thoughts. My email address is [nj6n@soara.org](mailto:nj6n@soara.org). 73, Brian, NJ6N

## Raffle Report

Congratulations to the lucky winners of the one dollar raffle at the February meeting! Many thanks to Heiko, AD6OI, who donated several Amateur Radio license exam manuals to the raffle. We didn't sell enough tickets to award the five-dollar raffle prize, a Kenwood TM-V71A dual-band mobile transceiver

at the February meeting. However, I am confident that we will sell enough additional tickets at the March meeting to be able to award this excellent radio to a lucky winner! I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

73, NJ6N

## SOARA Team Wins California QSO Party!



Welcome to SOARA's newest Members:

George N6SNX

Joyce K6LUV  
(ex KI6OIZ)

SOARA's membership continues to grow. We have surpassed the 200 mark. Attendance at the meetings has been running over 50 for several months. We had over 60 at the February meeting.

The membership co-directors, Horst and Marie, have done an outstanding job. Thanks also to Tom, AE6SH, for arrangements for outstanding monthly programs.

Using the call K6VO and hosted by Dana, K6NR, a team of SOARA members took first place in the Multi/Single class in last October's California QSO Party.

The team of Dana, K6NR, Heiko, AD6OI, Richard, K6RBS, Greg, N6REG, Brian, NJ6N, and Mike, KF6HVO, made a total of 813 CW and 1151 SSB QSOs. They worked all of the States and Canadian Provinces (multipliers) to get a final score of 274,833 points.

Congratulations to a great team.

**Official Observer** (Continued from page 1)

He is currently the Vice President of the San Bernardino Microwave Society and a member of TAPR which has been on the bleeding edge of Digital Radio since its founding in June 1982.

In October, 2002, Dan was appointed to the position of Official Observer. Almost three years later he applied for the position of Official Observer Coordinator and was first appointed to the post on April 1, 2005, for a period of two years. In April, 2007, he was appointed for a second two year term.

As Official Observer Coordinator he is responsible for the administrative management and support of all the Official Observers in the ARRL Orange section.

## T-Hunt News

For the story on the last T-hunt see the SOARA web site:

<http://soara.org/T-hunt.htm>

Next hunt on Sunday, April 6.

**QST, QST** (Continued from page 1)

job, adopting "Quicken" as our accounting standard, and setting up on-line banking, and automated bill paying. If you are interested in the Treasurer's post, or know of someone qualified and interested in the position, please advise me at [ae6h@soara.org](mailto:ae6h@soara.org) right away. We will also be accepting nominations from the floor, at the upcoming meeting. As always, I ask that if you wish to nominate someone for an office, please be certain that they will accept before doing so.

Another position, although not elected, needing a volunteer is that of Activities Chair. Lou, KG6FCT, who has done an excellent job for the past 6 years, wants to step down as he will be spending an increased amount of time at his second home in Northern California. Lou says he will gladly assist anyone who is interested in the position; so if you want to help out the club in this position, please let me know.

Richard, K6RBS, has once again arranged for us to hold our meeting at the UNISYS facility in Mission Viejo. This is the same outstanding venue where we met last month. Hope to see all of you there.

73 de Ray, AE6H

Year 2008	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
General Meeting 7:00 PM	28	25	17	21	19	16	21	18	15	20	17	No meeting
Program	Red Cross	DX trip N6HC	OOP Dan Welch W6DFW	TBA	Spring Auction	F.D. Prep.	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	Fall Auction	—
VEC Testing	28	25	17	21	19		21	18	15	20	17	
SOARA T-Hunt	6	3	2	6	4	1	13	3	7	5	2	7
Board Meeting	2/4	3/3	24	28	6/2	23	28	25	22	27	24	29
Special Events												
ARRL Field Day						28-29						
SOARA picnic								3				
SOARA Holiday Party												7

☛ **SOARA** meets at the Mission Viejo Community Center, 26932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, the third Monday of every month at 7:00 PM. For the months of January and February the third Monday is a holiday and the meeting is held on the fourth Monday.

☛ **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](mailto: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, KG6GL.

	2m	—	147.645	—	(110.9)	Laguna Beach
	2m	—	146.025	+	(110.9)	San Clemente
	2m	—	145.240	—	(110.9)	Trabuco
D-Star	2m	—	146.115	+	(K6SOA C)	Laguna Beach
	220	—	224.100	—	(110.9)	Laguna Beach
	220	—	224.640	—	(123.0)	Santiago Pk. (C)
D-Star	440	—	445.660	—	(K6SOA B)	Laguna Beach
	440	—	447.180	—	(131.8)	Santiago Pk. (C)
D-Star	1.2G	—	1282.600	—	(K6SOA A)	Laguna Beach

☛ **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.

### SOARA OFFICERS

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*Treasurer:* Steve Perluss, KR6CE . . . . . 949-364-6195  
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### SOARA DIRECTORS

*Repeater:* Howard Brown, KG6GI . . . . . 949-581-2634  
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*Publications:* Dale Griffith, W8RRV . . . . . 949-830-3767  
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### SOARA COMMITTEES

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## Ham Radio 101

How and What to do After Getting Your License

By Hal Silverman WB6WXO

In the February edition of the *Propagator*, I dealt with what to do on the VHF and UHF bands. Some of the protocol on the VHF and UHF bands is a little different from the HF bands. Ok, now you have studied and have passed the General Class license and have erected a station at your home QTH. Now what do you do? As a new General Class license holder, you should review the license manual for the portions of the band that are assigned to General Class license holders. I would suggest that you have a 3"x5" card with the frequencies and modes available to a General Class license holder.

Here are a few tips to be aware of when you begin to make contacts on the HF bands. It is very important to give your call sign every ten minutes or less. It is an FCC requirement, and in fact, most hams operating on the HF bands will give their call signs every time they turn over the transmission to the other ham in the QSO. It is also proper to call CQ on the HF bands, if you are looking to make contact with any licensed ham. If you are looking to make contact with a ham in another country, then it is OK to call CQ DX. Calling CQ allows you to get a feeling if the band is open and where it is open to. When I say that the band is open, what I mean is that there is radio propagation to a particular part of the world and that the band is active.

If you have an inclination to work DX stations (foreign stations), then listen very carefully to find where stations are transmitting. If you meet someone on the air, and you want to set up a pre-organized schedule, you would pick a time and frequency to call each other. Just remember, the frequency is not yours. You will have to exercise courtesy toward the other hams. You may have an alternate plan on Instant Messenger on the computer to move frequencies. You may break in politely and ask the people involved in the present QSO if you can call your contact with the idea of moving frequencies. Always conclude with your call sign, name and, of course, a polite "thank you" and "73" (best regards). You may think that this goes without saying. After being on the air for over 40 years, I have heard a lot of transmissions that are rude and crude. Always exercise a lot of patience and politeness.

There are a number of nets that are from all over the world. Listen to see if they ask for guest check-ins. Then go ahead and check in. It will give you an idea of what the propagation is like and what other hams are using for equipment. It is ok to have a guest in your shack and have that person talk on the air as long as you control the station. It is proper to announce that an unlicensed person is going to say "hello". It may be a way of getting an unlicensed ham interested in ham radio. Remember, controlling the station is an FCC requirement.

If you work a DX station and want to exchange QSL cards (contact confirmation cards), ask the DX station if he will exchange confirmation cards with you. You will have to send your card first. He will give you directions as to how to go about it. If he tells you to send the

card directly to his home, then look up his QTH (mailing address) on the web. A good site is <http://www.qrz.com>. If the operator tells you to send the card via the bureau, then check the ARRL web site for outgoing QSL services. Don't forget to send a SAE (self addressed envelop) with a US dollar enclosed to cover his postage.

If you attended the last SOARA meeting, then you heard and saw the presentation given by Arnie, K6HC, about the DXpedition to St. Brandon's Island. DXpeditions usually go to some spot with no, or few, hams in order to give people that rare chance to make contact with that location. If you come across a rare DX station and you want to work that station, listen for a while and see if the station has any specific instructions. The DX station may be using a split frequency (stations call him on a frequency other than the one he is using to transmit). He may want to contact other hams from different parts of the USA or different parts of the world before working a 6<sup>th</sup> district USA station. Once you make contact and exchange contact information, the DX operator will announce the QSL information. Listen to several contacts to get the information before calling him.

This article has only touched on a few aspects of operating on the HF bands. Learn the personalities of the propagation characteristics by listening on the different bands. Remember that propagation is governed by the sun spot cycle. At this writing the sun spots are just coming out of the low point of the 11 year cycle. This favors propagation on the 160m, 80m and 40m HF bands. However, as the months pass, there will be openings on 15m, 12m, 10m and 6m. Take some time and listen. Sometimes I will tune my rig for a 10m FM repeater. If the band opens up, then the repeater will get active. My other suggestion is to enjoy this aspect of ham radio. There are many slices of ham radio that are now available to the new General Class license holder. Pick out a slice that interests you, and then add to it as time passes.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [WB6WXO @ SOARA.org](mailto:WB6WXO@SOARA.org).



A class to teach and review the FCC rules and regulations will begin March 13, 2008. There will be a second class March 20, 2008. The classes will be held at Saddleback College, Technology and Applied Science Building Conference room. There is a required \$2.00 parking fee. A coin and bill machine will deliver a one day parking permit. There is a link to the Saddleback Campus map and driving instructions posted on the SOARA web page.

If you have any questions or want to sign up for the class, please contact me at [WB6WXO@SOARA.org](mailto:WB6WXO@SOARA.org)

73....Hal WB6WXO