



September 2001

CVARC NEWSLETTEREDITOR:
ROGER LOILER**A Good Source For Gel Cell Batteries**

By Ken Larson

A couple of months ago I was in the market for a gel cell battery to take with me on vacation to power my HF and 2 meter radios that I was taking along with me. Since I planned to do some camping, I knew that I could not depend on having commercial AC power available.

I have a 100 amp hour lead-acid deep cycle battery that I use for ARES/RACES activities. However, I didn't want to take that battery on vacation for fear that it might tip over and spill acid inside my car. It is surprising how easily it is for a loose battery to tip over when driving. It can happen by just turning the corner at an intersection.

A gel cell battery seemed like a good substitute since a gel cell is completely sealed and can not spill acid. I looked through QST Magazine and found a number of ads for gel cells. However, they seemed quite expensive and their amp hour ratings were a little low for what I was looking for.

Don Munding (K6CAB) suggested that I give Wil-Power in Ventura a call. Wil-Power is a major commercial distributor of batteries. Its home office is in San Fernando with branch offices in Anaheim, Fresno, and San Diego as well as in Ventura. I gave Wil-Power a call and talked to Tom at the Ventura store. I told him that I was an amateur radio operator and needed a good gel cell battery for emergency communications, but that I didn't want to spend a lot of money. Tom said he thought he could help me out.

Wil-Power has quite a few commercial customers who use large numbers of gel cell batteries. These customers can not afford to have any of their batteries go bad, so they replace them on a regularly scheduled basis. Wil-Power sells them new batteries and takes their old ones. Some of the returned batteries are pretty well shot. However, others are almost like new.

Tom took me back into their garage area where all of their batteries are stored. Together we went through boxes of returned batteries looking for one that was about the right size. I wanted a 20 to 30 amp hour battery that was in good condition. Tom measured the voltages on the candidate batteries that I picked out until we found one that measured 12.75 volts (a good battery). The battery that I ended up with was in great condition and had a 30 amp hour rating. Tom sold the battery to me for \$25. I think that a comparable new battery cost in the range of \$100. I took the battery on vacation and it worked great.

For those interested in contacting Wil-Power in Ventura, their telephone number is 805-644-6461. The directions for getting to Wil-Power from Thousand Oaks are as follows. Take the Ventura Freeway (Hwy 101) north to Victoria Ave in Ventura. Exit at the Victoria off ramp and turn left on Victoria Ave. Go south on Victoria, under the freeway, and continue to Olivias Park Dr. Turn left on Olivias. Proceed down Olivias to the second street, Bunsen Ave. Turn left on Bunsen. Bunsen is a relatively short street that dead-ends at Nicolle St. Wil-Power is on the right side of Bunsen just before you get to Nicolle. Wil-Power is in Unit A of the small industrial park along the right hand side of Bunsen.

73s Ken KJ6RZ

**September 13 Meeting by K7SDW
Simulated Emergency Test (SET)**



The Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club is an ARRL affiliated Special Service club. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, unless otherwise noted. Meeting location is at the Elks Lodge, 158 Conejo School Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA. Meetings start at 7:30 P.M. with a pre-meeting social hour and technical assistance session, for those who are interested at 6:30. Meetings are open to the public, and members are encouraged to bring their friends.

2001 CVARC Officers

President	Ken Larson	KJ6RZ	(805)495-9435
VicePresident	Bill Hughes	K6HB	(805)492-5511
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Public Relations	Peter Hofmann	KE6HUI	(805)496-5893
Operations	Gregory Lane	K7SDW	(805)498-0454
Social	Jonathan Becker	KC6QOQ	(805)371-1333
Member-at-Large	Don Munding	K6CAB	(805)492-2128
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VUCC (VHF/UHF Century Club) Certification:	Peter Heins, N6ZE	(805)496-1315 n6ze@aol.com



Special Interest Groups

RACES (Area 2)	Gregory Lane	K7SDW	(805)498-0454
RACES (Area 8)	Richard Tate	KQ6NO	(805)529-3934
DAT	Alberta Munding	KA6WKR	(805)492-2128
DCS	Brad Omsby	WA6GLE	(805)495-2298
VE	Jeff Reinhardt	AA6JR	(818)706-3853
WUCC	Peter Heins	N6ZE	(805)496-1315
T-HUNT	Peter Hoffmann	KE6HUI	(805)496-5893

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Ventura County area 2 R.A.C.E.S. members are encouraged to check in every Tuesday.

Members should check in with the RACES number listed on the ID badge. Specific times and frequencies are as follows:

7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 147.885- pl 127.3 N6JMI AREA 2 (Secondary backup freq) 147.555 no pl Simplex AREA 2	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 147.93- pl 127.3 WB6WEY AREA 1
6:45 PM - 7:00 PM VOICE 52.98- pl 82.5 K6SMR 6 METER before - 6:30 PM PACKET 145.03 - VCROC early checkin	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 147.15+ pl 127.3 WB6ZTQ AREA 3
7:30 PM - 8:00 PM VOICE 146.88- pl 127.3 WA6ZTT COUNTY	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 146.97- pl 127.3 WB6YQN AREA 4
7:30 PM - 8:00 PM VOICE 224.02- pl 127.3 WB6ZTR COUNTY (county RACES simplex) 147.57 no pl Simplex COUNTY	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 145.40- no pl N6FL AREA 5
	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 147.975- pl 127.3 N6AHI AREA 6
	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 146.985- pl 127.3 WB6ZTX AREA 7
	7:00 PM - 7:30 PM VOICE 145.28- pl 100 WB2WIK AREA 8

Simulated Emergency Test: The topic for September 13th CVARC meeting

I know that each of you has a busy schedule and the last thing you want to do is go back to school to learn "anything," right? Well, learning is a never-ending process and the "be prepared" is not the "cry wolf" that Amateur Radio operators should interpret for the upcoming presentation on emergency operations. This is a course that has been outlined for the ARES/RACES members has been ready for some time now on the ARRL web site. It appears that anytime it is mentioned the "volunteers" run the other way. Why is that? Is it because you know what to do in an emergency? If so, I could use your help once a month in the Area 2 drills and equipment operating procedures that need updating and "your talent."

Don't let yourself think you have nothing to offer to the group. If you are a new ham or an old timer, each of you has something to contribute to your "hobby" buddies. Last month, Ken -KJ6RZ- gave a great presentation on emergency antennas that could be set up and used in all sort of situations. It is that kind of "hidden" talent the each of you needs to search and bring to the table for not only members of a club, but Amateur's within the community.

Some things to keep in the back of your mind, and not in any particular order, are as follows:

- a. Vigilance
- b. Readiness
- c. Operational Knowledge
- d. Rules -The Do's and Do Knot's

So, why attend a meeting on the topic of SET? One reason is you will get the chance to "test" your skills and understanding of the Amateur's role in an emergency situation. You will be provided information and the results of your "team" efforts will be scored as to your effectiveness in message understanding and handling. Thus, you will come away from the meeting with a better understanding of why you are needed and why practice makes perfect.

Every region the United States has their own need for communications during an emergency. Each of the areas also has their "team members" who are ready and able to be called upon to serve during an emergency situation. Our Ventura County is in need of ARES/RACES members in all the surrounding areas. The general population growth in our county has outpaced the number of Licensed Amateur radio operators.

You and your enthusiasm for the hobby can only keep this "natural" resource alive and well. To succeed you need basic training and can not assume that "in a pinch, you will be called and used." It is very important that we as volunteers when operating on frequencies are aware these are open to the public for listening. We need to

demonstrate a professional attitude during drills and real emergencies.

I hope each of you who read this can set aside your busy schedule and come and "play the SET game" that is in store for you on September 13th.

73 de Greg CVARC Operational Chairman Area 2 Emergency Coordinator

Call For Nominations

At our November club meeting we will be electing our CVARC Board of Directors for the coming year (2002). In accordance with the CVARC By-Laws, nominations for the board positions must be announced at the October club meeting and published in the October newsletter. That means that we must identify candidates for the new board this month (September) so that a slate of candidates will be available to present in October.

We need your inputs. Contact any of us currently on the board if you would like to serve on the board, or know someone that you would like to have as a board member. Having new members on the board is very important to maintain the health and vitality of our club. We need your help and suggestions.

All board positions are open for nominations. The list of board positions and current board members are listed in this newsletter every month. Being a CVARC member in good standing is the only requirements for becoming a board member nominee.

I and the other board members look forward to your suggestions and recommendations.

73 Ken

Holiday Raffle:

Correction from last months information on the Holiday Raffle: There will be three equal prizes, determined by the number of tickets sold and subsidized by CVARC Treasurer up to approximately \$200.00 for each prize. Your ticket will allow you a chance to win one of the three prizes if you do not attend the Holiday get-together. The other two prizes will be drawn at the party and the winners will have first choice of the three prizes offered. Tickets are \$5.00 each. October will announce the "prizes." There is only one winner per prize.

The Holiday party will be at K7SDW's QTH, just like last year. This time we need a RSVP from any member or visitor so the "pot -luck" affair can seat all the individuals, meaning, you might have to bring your own chair as well as your HT, hi hi. I hope to see you at the next meeting and ready to buy buy buy for the prize super surprise.

73 de Greg,

Raffle Chairman

Antenna Project Update

I have only received 4 inputs for the antenna project and with this number and short schedule to the end of the year, I will have to cancel. Therefore, I will re-schedule this effort for Jan, 2002 so each of you can make plans and get back to me with your interest. If you have some other interest in a project or activity, please bring it up at the General Meeting or let a board member know. This should not keep any of you out there with email from dropping me a note so I can start a "subject interest." Go for it!

73 de Greg

If you can't get an ARRL field checker to review your QSL cards for the Century Club award, maybe THIS field checker can come to YOU!



**Capt.Pete's Fly-In
VUCC Certification Service**

By Bill Pasternak WA6ITF

Peter Heins, N6ZE, has that "one in a million job" that everyone seems to envy. Several times a week, Captain Peter Heins gets behind the controls of a Boeing 767 wide-body airliner and takes several hundred people to their vacations, business destinations, reunions with loved ones, etc.

When Pete is not "driving" a giant jet, you will either find him at home in Thousand Oaks, California or in some hotel during a layover between flights. No matter where Peter is, a VHF or UHF radio is always at hand. This is because N6ZE (formerly K1FJM) is among the nation's most active weak-signal DX enthusiasts.

As Pete tells it, his interest in the world above 50 MHz led him to discover the ARRL's VHF-UHF Century Club (VUCC) program. That's the "above 50 MHz" equivalent of the high-frequency DXCC program. After qualifying for the award himself, Pete learned that there was a need for volunteers to field-check QSL cards, so he offered to help. That was way back in 1992, and in almost a decade of checking cards for frequencies between 50 MHz (6 meters) and 474 THz (TeraHertz), he has made over two dozen certifications.

What sets apart N6ZE from others in the VUCC Field Certification Program is where, when, and how Pete performs this volunteer service. Simply described, Capt. Peter Heins, N6ZE, has his own de-facto fly-in certification service. Here is how it works: Airlines permit pilots to "bid" for the destinations to which they want to fly. The more seniority you have, the better your chances are of getting assigned the "first choice" destination that you select. Thus, Pete, and all other pilots, have a good idea a few weeks ahead of time of their work schedules, including the number of hours that they will be laying-over in a given location. This is the secret of Pete's ability to do VUCC certification across the land.

He uses the very popular W6YX VHF/UHF weak-signal internet remailer (see note) to inform the ham radio public of where he will be on given days. A typical message might read (paraphrased): "N6ZE will be available to perform VUCC certification in Miami on the 9th and Boston on the 10th. Contact <k1fjm@aol.com> to set up meeting."

Pete then watches for return e-mail and sets up schedules to meet with those needing his certification services. He also instructs applicants to download the latest VUCC application forms from the ARRL website (<http://www.arrl.org>) and to complete them before arriving for a certification session. Filling out the forms beforehand saves both Pete and the applicant a lot of time. At the pre-arranged time and place, he and the applicant meet and Pete checks the QSLs.

In a telephone interview N6ZE told me that he decided to start his fly-in VUCC certification service because he could not find anyone to check his own cards. He had to go to New England to have his entry for 6 and 2 meters checked off after a 1500 mile flight. Pete then decided that he would make himself available to perform VUCC certification in those hours when he was "...on the ground but away from home." I also asked Pete what he considered the most interesting of all the certifications he has performed. He said it was a 474 THz contact made by Jim Sharlow, WB20DH, oft the top of Frasier Peak, California, in grid square DM04. From that 5000 foot hilltop location in the northeast corner of the grid Sharlow managed to work five other grids with what is essentially laser-light communications technology.

Here's the bottom line: If you find yourself in need of VUCC certification and there is nobody in your area to do it, sign up for the W6YX VHF reflector and keep an eye open for postings from Capt. Peter Heins, N6ZE, saying when he will be landing in a city near you.

Note: The W6YX VHF reflector is an internet remailer available to hams interested in all facets of VHF and UHF communications with the exception of FM and repeaters. To subscribe, send an e-mail request to <vhfrequest@w6yx.stanford.edu>. To contact the list maintainer, send e-mail to <vhfapproval@w6yx.stanford.edu>. Please do not post questions or comments dealing with FM, repeaters, or other wideband modes.

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Tri-Band Antenna and Rotor for sale
The antenna is mounted on an 8 foot roof tower.
Contact Friend Adams N6MJW (805) 499-1288

(Western States Weak Signal Society) VHF/UHF conference will be held in Ventura on September 21 to 23, 2001
http://www.wswss.org/2001_conference.html

Bt Pete

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