

Supporting The Community

By Ken Larson, KJ6RZ

March, April, and May is the peak of the community support season. Many civic organizations schedule outdoor fund raising activities in the Spring because of the beautiful weather that we normally have this time of year.

These organizations need our help in providing them with radio communications support. I did not realize how much they depend on our support until this year. For some of the events, the organizers must show, in the form of a letter from us, that they have amateur radio support for public safety before the city will issue them an activity permit.

During this time of year there are activities throughout Ventura County that amateur radio operators are involved in. The activities that CVARC is directly involved in here in Thousand Oaks are the CLU CROP Walk on Sunday afternoon March 14 from about noon to 4 pm, the Westlake Street Fair on Sunday March 28 from about 6 am till around noon, and the Crusin Conejo Bike Ride on Saturday May 8.

For the CROP we set up a simplex base station at the Start/Finish line on the CLU campus and radio operators at two refreshment stops along the route (from the college to Moorpark Rd, to Janss, up Janss Rd toward Los Robles Hospital, and then through the residential area to Olsen Rd and back to the college). We also have one or two radio equipped cars traveling the route delivering supplies to the refreshment stops and helping walkers who need assistance (a ride back to the Start/Finish). For the street fair, we are in charge of directing the vendors from the arrival holding area onto the street in an orderly way so that they can set up their booths prior to the fair opening which occurs around 10:30 am. The Crusin Conejo Bike Ride is by far the largest and most exciting local event. Mike Bass has written an excellent article on the bike ride see [Cruisin The Conejo Bike Ride](#).

I will have sign up sheets for these events at the CVARC March club meeting. I hope that you will be able to participate in one or more of these events. They are a lot of fun!

March Program: Thousand Oaks EchoLink Node

At the March club meeting Steve Champion (AE6NX) will speak about EchoLink. He will describe how you can use it to contact hams around the world while you are driving around the Conejo Valley.

Since last year's EchoLink/IRLP presentation, several club members have been using EchoLink from their computers. Another interesting way to hook up with EchoLink is by radio and, since none of the local repeaters are connected, Steve has created a local simplex node on 2 Meters.

He will give a brief introduction to EchoLink for those who have not dabbled with it yet, and will then describe the specifics of the local node and how to use it. Steve will also talk about other nodes close to

Thousand Oaks and how to locate and use them. A demonstration will follow.

Steve first became interested in Ham Radio about 35 years ago, due to a ham neighbor. He has a degree in Electrical & Electronic Engineering, and has worked in Electronic Design for 25 years. His recent re-introduction to the hobby was sparked by his son Ben (AE6NY).

FCC License Examinations - Next Exam June 13th

By Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR

CVARC hosts FCC License Examinations at 8:30 AM on the second Sunday of even numbered months at the Ventura East County Sheriff Station on Olsen Rd. (near the Reagan Library). CVARC conducts exams for all license classes. Exam candidates must bring a form of government issued photo I.D., the original AND a photocopy of any existing license or Certificate of Exam Element Completion, a Social Security (or government issued Taxpayer I.D.) number, and \$12 ARRL VE Exam fee (cash is preferred). No advance reservation is necessary, walk-ins are welcome. Advance notice is needed for special circumstances, such as reading the exam to sight-impaired candidates. If you have any questions, contact CVARC VE Coordinator Jeff Reinhardt at 818-706-3853.

The Candy Store

By Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR

February's CVARC meeting was a treat for those who enjoy a trip to the "candy store" to view the latest equipment. Only this time, Eric Christensen KA6IHT who is manager of Burbank's Ham Radio Outlet, brought the "toys" to us, displaying gear from small to large, both in size and price.

Eric explained what's new, gave us some hints as to what may come down the road and went into some of the operating characteristics of the gear he brought to show the club.

HRO also donated a nice prize for the drawing. Thanks to Eric and HRO for a most enjoyable program!

Cruisin The Conejo

By Mike Bass, N7WLC

Cruisin the Conejo is the big event for the Conejo Valley Cyclists (CVC). This year is the 20th edition of the bike ride. For bike enthusiasts, this is one of the premier bike rides in Southern California. Last year, we had a record 1023 bicyclists on the ride! The routes have a good variety of challenges for both the cyclist and the ham operator. And the support is very good. From the Boy Scouts manning the rest

stops to you the ham radio volunteers helping to coordinate the SAG wagons and keep tabs on the cyclists.

If you would like to be a part of the action, there is a lot you can do to help. We are going to focus on two things this year ☺ and both have to do with safety. If you would like to ride along with the SAG wagons, we would like to have about 6 SAG support vehicles on the course. If you like to drive, you can even be a SAG driver. (CVC will reimburse for gas if you drive a SAG wagon.) If you would like to be at a critical place along the route, we can use you to help warn the cyclists as they approach the steep sections on Westlake/Decker Canyon and on Potrero Canyon. These places do have accidents each year and you could get help there much quicker. One rider who crashed on Westlake/Decker sent me his picture from the hospital. Trust me, this is something we want to prevent this year.

You may not know this, but Cruisin the Conejo supports a number of worthy causes. Boy Scout Troop 753 uses some of the proceeds to go on a big campout. The Encino Velodrome used their donation to purchase track bikes for their juniors ✕ program, maybe helping the next Lance Armstrong get started in cycling. Mission with Bikes (Mark Blum, KF6PZF) gets to buy parts to put together bikes for any kid asking for one. The Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and CVARC are among the groups that have benefited. Details are on the Cruisin web site, <http://www.cvcbike.org/cruisin>.

So what is in it for the ham operator? You get to practice handling real emergency traffic. You get to see some of the great countryside and watch crazy cyclists climb hills where no bicycle should go. We will also provide you with maps, routes, SAG signs, some water, and a bunch of inner tubes. And of course CVC treats their volunteers well. They provide a lunch for the volunteers and a Cruisin the Conejo t-shirt just for helping out.

If you would like to help out, send me an e-mail and tell me what you would like to do and when you can help. The ride hours are from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The first of the SAG wagons will get on the road by 8:00. I would like to have two waves of SAG support, so if you have a preference for morning or afternoon, let me know.

Hope to see you at Cruisin!

Mike Bass, N7WLC

n7wlc@vcars.org

805-447-1812 (days)

805-493-5714 (evenings)

ARES/RACES Emergency Communications Center

By Hugh Bosma, KF6HHS

Our new ARES/RACES Emergency Communications Center at the East County Sheriff Station (ECSS) on Olsen Road is now operational. The communications center occupies a 160 square foot (10 by 16

foot) room adjacent to the Community Room. This is an ideal location since the Community Room will become the City of Thousand Oaks Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during emergencies.

The communications center is the primary radio communications facility for the EOC. It provides the EOC with communications to Los Robles Hospital, City Government facilities including the Civic Arts Plaza and Municipal Service Center, Conejo Valley schools, Red Cross shelters, and to major corporations in the area including Amgen and Verizon. The center also allows the EOC to communicate directly with the Thousand Oaks and Oak Park Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART) which provide critically needed evacuation, disaster recover, plus search and rescue missions in residential neighborhoods prior to and following natural disasters. In addition the communications center enables the EOC to communicate with the Ventura County Government Center and EOC in Ventura, the Emergency Medical System (EMS), city and county law enforcement facilities, and the Red Cross Chapter House in Ventura. These communication resources allow the Thousand Oaks EOC to fully interact with all of the disaster recovery efforts occurring in the county. However, in an extensive natural disaster, communications within the disaster area is not sufficient. Communications is also needed with cities outside the disaster area that will serve as the staging areas for relief personnel, equipment, and supplies flowing into Ventura County to aid in the disaster recovery. To cover this requirement, the communications center includes HF and VHF regional communication resources. These regional resources have been specifically engineered to provide the EOC with continuous (24 hour per day) radio communications throughout California from San Francisco and Sacramento south to the Mexican boarder and as far east as Phoenix Arizona. This foot print covers all of the cities which could become staging areas for disaster relief in Ventura County.

The ARES/RACES Emergency Communications Center is more than just a radio room. Because of the resources that it contains and the manner in which it has been configured, it will become a major emergency communications training and research center. The training and research is expected to cover the full technical and operational range of emergency communications. This work has already begun with an extensive study on HF Near Vertical Incident Skywave (NVIS) propagation, which has now entered the operational testing phase, and development of operation deployment kits. Extensive work lies ahead in the areas of secure communications, simplex mapping, re-establishing critically needed packet communications capability, rapid deployment radio sets, dead zone communication techniques, and mutual aid communications to mention just a few of the study areas currently being planned.

To accomplish its goals, the communications center is divided into five sections or "desks", and will accommodate up to four radio operators and two message handlers. Desk functions are City communications, County communications, California Regional communications, Packet and APRS, and a Visitor/City area. Each desk is equipped with the appropriate HF, VHF, UHF radios, and computer assets to perform the aforementioned tasks. Modular radio placement allows one operator to control the entire communications center during light traffic periods, i.e. to handle City, County, and even regional communications. During the recent Moorpark/Simi fire we found one operator and a message handler were easily able to handle quiet periods, such as the midnight to 6 AM shift. What has also been learned in the past is that "a quiet period" can suddenly explode into a full crisis situation. By laying the communications center out as "area desks" operations can smoothly and seamlessly transition to full operational status in seconds.

Equipment and Function by Desk

CITY - The City desk position handles all Thousand Oaks and Conejo Valley routine and secure traffic. It provides communications between the ECSS/City EOC, Los Robles Hospital, area schools, Red Cross

shelter(s), Civic Arts Plaza, Amgen, Verizon, and 4 field deployed 8 amateurs. This desk is equipped with a VHF 2 meter voice radio, a 900 MHz (secure) radio, and has space for a future UHF 440 MHz radio. This radio equipment is compatible with all local amateur radio repeaters, and is capable of simplex communications as conditions dictate.

COUNTY The County desk handles communications to all county assets including to the County EOC, EMS, law enforcement, and Red Cross Chapter House, as well as providing communications to each of the other 8 Ventura County cities. The County desk has the following three VHF voice radios, a 6 meter radio, a 2 meter radio, and a 220 MHz radio. These radios are compatible with all county amateur radio repeaters and simplex operation.

California Regional The Regional desk provides communications throughout California for coordinating recovery efforts with cities outside the disaster area. This desk includes an HF radio operating on 80 and 40 meters plus a 220 MHz VHF radio providing state wide communications via linked repeaters. The HF radio uses Near Vertical Incident Skywave (NVIS) technology to provide zero skip distance communications throughout California. Our test to date indicate solid communications with cities as close-in as Pasadena, and far-out as Arizona and Utah. The NVIS technology also allows the HF equipment to provide mutual aid radio links to other HF NVIS stations in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. In addition, the NVIS communications permits the EOC to communicate with rescue crews in deep canyon areas and other "dead zones" which can not be reached with local VHF and UHF repeaters.

Vertical and dipole antennas have also been installed to allow HF operations on the 20 through 10 meter frequency bands. Communications on these bands will be used to support long distance (cross country) Health & Welfare traffic when required. They will also be used to support demonstrations of amateur radio capabilities and to support training in HF long distance vs regional propagation modes.

Also located at the Regional desk is a UHF 440 MHz voice radio. This radio is primarily intended to support EOC communications via cross band repeating to field units (DART and others) located in isolated areas in and around Conejo Valley where normal 2 meter repeater operation is marginal. While this is actually a City function, the radio has been located on the Regional desk to make it easy for DART amateur radio operators to communicate with their deployed teams without interfering with city, medical, school, and Red Cross traffic being handled at the City desk.

Packet and APRS - The digital packet station permits the EOC to easily transmit and receive lengthy and complex message traffic that is very difficult to send via voice communications. Packet is critical during a large disaster. Because of its importance, packet stations are set up at each of the hospitals in Ventura County, at the County EOC, and at many of the law enforcement facilities throughout the county.

APRS integrates GPS technology, packet technology, and VHF radio. Vehicles with 4 APRS trackers 8 can be tracked and their positions plotted on computer displayed maps. This capability is very important in keeping track of mobile resources during a disaster.

Two VHF 2 meter radios, a computer, and TNC (amateur modem) are used to implement the packet/APRS station. The packet station can be configured in several modes to satisfy changing situations. It can be setup as two independent packet systems, as a packet node linking packet networks on two different frequencies, or as packet plus APRS station.

City/Visitor- The City/Visitor desk contains a VHF radio that can be used by EOC personnel to monitor National Weather Service broadcasts and County Fire Department traffic. The ability to monitor

weather and County Fire was specifically requested by East County Sheriff Station personnel. They wanted this capability during the Moorpark/Simi fires, but did not have it. Space has also be allocated at the City/Visitor desk to install a City business band radio. Installation of this radio will allow City personnel at the EOC to communicate with City workers at other City facilities, such as the Municipal Service Center, using the City repeater. In addition, this desk contains a computer for administration functions and space for message handlers to work during an emergency.

Open House- You are invited to come over and operate the communications center during the ARES/RACES open house on Saturday March 13. The open house will be helld from 8 AM till noon. We also conduct the Area 2 ARES/RACES check-in net from the communications center every Tuesday night from 7 PM to 8 PM. You are welcome to join us Tuesday nights to help with the net, obtain technical assistance on setting up your radio, or other questions you may have or just to visit. We would love to have you stop by.

Event Calendar 2004

Date	Event	Comments
Jan. 8	CVARC Meeting	General CVARC Meeting
Jan. 11	So. Cal. Orienteering	In Griffith Park near Travel Town Arrive 9:30 AM
Jan. 13	CVARC Radio Class	New class for Amateur Technician Lic.
Feb. 8	FCC License Exam	Begins at 8:30AM at East County Sheriff Station
Feb. 12	CVARC Club Meeting	General Club Meeting
Feb. 20-23	Coyote 4 Play	3 day Cross Country Race in Ojai & Santa Monica Mts.
Mar. 1	CVARC Meeting	General Club Meeting
Mar 13	ARES/RACES Meeting	Open House at East County Sheriff Station
Mar. 14	CROP Walk	Radio Support for T.O. CROP Walk
Mar. 28	Westlake Street Fair	Radio Support for street fair set up
April 3	Simi Valley MS Walk	Tentative Date Volunteers Welcome
April 8	CVARC Meeting	General Meeting

Apr 24-25	Baker to Vegas Run	Supporting Ventura County Sheriff Dept.
May 8	Cruisin Conejo Bike Ride	Radio communications support for the bike ride
May 13	CVARC Meeting	Club Meeting
May 15	Sea To Summit Bike Ride	Radio support for bike ride from Ventura to Mt. Pinos
June 10	CVARC Meeting	General Meeting
June 13	FCC License Exam	License exams given at sheriff station at 8:30 AM
June 26-27	Field Day	CVARC annual field day event, don't miss it!
July 3	Moorpark Fireworks	Comm. support for Moorpark's 3rd of July Fireworks

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

Ventura County Area 2 R.A.C.E.S. members are encouraged to check in every Tuesday night at 7:00 pm on the Area 2 Check-in Net. Specific ARES/RACES times and frequencies are as follows:

ARES/RACES Times And Frequencies

Area	Time	Mode	Frequency	PI	Repeater
County	7:30-8 pm	Voice	146.880 -	127.3	WA6ZTT
County	7:30-8 pm	Voice	224.020 -	127.3	WB6ZTR
County	Before 6:30 pm	Packet	145.710	No pl	Hospital Net
County	RACES Simplex	Voice	147.570	No pl	_____
Area 1	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	147.930 -	127.3	WB6WEY
Area 2	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	147.885 -	127.3	N6JMI
Area 2	Simplex	Voice	147.555	No pl	_____
Area 2	Backup Repeater	Voice	146.850 -	94.8	K6AER

Area 2	Amgen Repeater	Voice	449.440 -	131.8	KE6SWS
Area 3	7:15-7:30 pm	Voice	147.150 +	127.3	WB6ZTQ
Area 4	7:15-7:30 pm	Voice	146.970 -	127.3	WB6YQN
Area 5	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	145.400 -	No pl	N6FL
Area 6	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	147.975 -	127.3	N6AHI
Area 7	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	146.985 -	127.3	WB6ZTX
Area 8	7:00-7:30 pm	Voice	145.280 -	100	WB2WIK
6 Meter	6:45-7:00 pm	Voice	052.980 -	082.5	K6SMR

The Net Controller's script for the Area 2 weekly RACES check-in net is on the CVARC website, in printable form. Every member is encouraged to periodically serve as net controller. RACES members should remember that their RACES card is issued for only two years. When your card is due to expire call Jackie at the Office of Emergency Services in Ventura for an appointment to renew your card. Call (805) 654-2551 or toll free from the east half of the county at (800) 660-5474. For packet, call coordinator Dan Dicke KE6NYT (805) 983-1401. To register for Red Cross Disaster Services Classes, call (805) 339-2234 ext 0 Ventura County ARES/RACES web site: <http://home1.gte.net/res19999/>

2004 CVARC OFFICERS

President	Rory Eikland	KG6HCU	(805)493-4949	cim@earthlink.net
Vice President	Rob Hansen	W6RH	(805)376-9350	w6rh@aol.com
Secretary	Noel Van Slyke	K6NVS	(805)482-3744	vanslyke@vcnet.com
Treasurer	Mike Pershing	KD6IJF	(805)493-1934	mpershing@earthlink.net
Editor/Publisher	Ken Larson	KJ6RZ	(805)495-9435	kj6rz@highstream.net
Operations	OPEN	—	—	—
Education	Karl Moody	KE6WVZ	(805)523-0622	Karlsharon@aol.com
Public Relations	Jeff Reinhardt	AA6JR	(818)706-3853	aa6jr@arrl.net

Technical	Hugh Bosma	KF6WVZ	(805)498-1987	hrbcrb@aol.com
Social	OPEN	—	—	—
Member-at-Large	Alan Masson	K6PSP	(805) 498-9920	K6PSP@arrl.net
Member-at-Large	Neil Waybright	KG6QEL	—	—

ARRL

ARRL Southwestern Division Director:	Art Goddard, W6XD, 2901 Palau Pl., Costa Mesa, CA 92626	(714)556-4396 w6xd@arrl.org
ARRL Southwestern Division Vice Director:	Tuck Miller, NZ6T, 3122 E. 2nd St., National City, CA 91950	(619)434-4211 nz6t@arrl.org
ARRL Santa Barbara Section Manager:	Robert Griffin, K6YR, 1436 Johnson Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401	(805)543-3346 k6yr@arrl.org
ARRL VUCC (VHF/UHF Century Club) Certification:	Peter Heins, N6ZE	(805)496-1315 n6ze@aol.com

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 pm. with a pre-meeting social and technical assistance session, for those who are interested at 7:15 pm. Meetings are open to the public, and members are encouraged to bring their friends.

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Editors: Ken and Paula Larson