

CVARC Holiday Party December 4th

All CVARC members and their guests are invited to our annual CVARC Holiday Party on Saturday December 4, 2004 at 6:30 PM. As in the past, the holiday party substitutes for our December CVARC general meeting. Each year the party is a lot of fun and a great time to relax and socialize, plus each year we have great raffle prizes. And this year Rory's wife Lisa is going to have a raffle for the wives also.

For more on this year's ham radio raffle prizes, see the article on page 7. The raffle prizes for the wives is a mystery! This sounds like fun.

The party will be held at Rory Eikland's home (KG6HCU) on 3072 Camino Del Zuro, Thousand Oaks, CA.

The party begins at 6:30 pm with dinner planned for 7:00 pm. The dinner will be pot luck. Everyone is asked to bring a dish which may be a Main Dish, a Side Dish, or Dessert.

If you plan to come, please give either Rory and Lisa a call at 805-493-4949, or Ken and Paula Larson a call at 805-495-9435 so that we will know how many people will be attending. We also need to know what dishes people are bringing so that the pot luck dinner can be coordinated. If you are uncertain of your plans, you can call as late as Friday December 3 (the evening before the party) to let us know that you will be attending.

Rory's address is 3072 Camino Del Zuro, Thousand Oaks. To get to Rory's house, take the 23 Freeway to Los Arboles. Exit at Los Arboles and go west toward Moorpark Road. Turn right off of Los Arboles onto Calle Castano, you will be heading north. Go roughly 3/4 of a mile up Calle Castano to Camino Del Zuro. Turn left on Camino Del Zuro. Rory's house is up the long driveway on your left, a few feet past the corner of Camino Del Zuro and Radcliffe Road. Radcliffe Rd is one block up on Camino Del Zuro from Calle Castano. Radcliffe Rd. is not a cross street. It comes in from the right and terminates at Camino Del Zuro. A map to Rory's house is provide on Page 7 of this newsletter.

Since Rory's driveway is a little hard to find after dark, we will have the CVARC Comm. Van parked at the bottom of the driveway with the van's yellow emergency lights flashing. We will also be monitoring the Bozo repeater on 147.885, negative off-set, and 127.3 pl if you need further directions to the party

Hope to see you there.

Building a Digital Communications Network

By Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR

Back in the 1980's a new phenomenon took Amateur Radio by storm, it was called packet and it arrived just in time to take advantage of the personal computer explosion. Two local hams, Wally, N6CDJ and Steve, KA6LAZ started to play with this new mode that allowed wireless keyboard-to-keyboard communications in an error-free format.

While Wally and Steve were frequent users of a voice repeater, they knew they were too far away (Burbank and Oxnard) to make VHF simplex packet connections. To fill the gap, they placed a digipeater on Castro Peak and the Agoura Packet Association (APA) Digital Communications Network was off and running.

Their enthusiastic conversations about packet over the voice repeater caused others to want to join in. Soon, packet TNCs (or wireless modems) were selling like firewood in Alaska and many more joined the fun. Packet then found its way into emergency communications, because of its ability to convey large amounts of written material quickly and without errors.

Wally and Steve were joined by a loose and casual coalition of packet enthusiasts and soon the system was expanded. Instead of digipeaters, which have operational limitations, packet nodes were set up, which could provide reliable multi-link connections in a "hub and spokes" model of networking. Soon it became possible to send packet messages just about anywhere in the world, as messages could be relayed overland on VHF links, on long hops through HF stations, and even through the use of Amateur Radio satellites.

The APA network also expanded. Forwarding links for "trunking" messages north and south were installed, along with low-level nodes in Thousand Oaks, Calabasas, Malibu, the San Fernando Valley and beyond. Packet bulletin boards were set up allowing for the retrieval of mail whether or not your station was on the air. All this before the internet was a household word!

APA continued to add capabilities, including a mountaintop weather station and later, APRS (Automatic Position Reporting System) digipeaters on Castro Peak and along I-5 near Sandberg.

In the first Desert Storm war, APA members conveyed hundreds of messages via packet to the troops on duty in the Middle East. In the aftermath of the Northridge earthquake, the APA network handled thousands of health and welfare inquiries for families whose phone service was down.

Changing times and economics began to take a toll on the APA system. The internet began to make packet radio look outdated. A change in the ownership of Castro Peak created a demand for rent that APA members could not sustain. Ultimately, the system had to come down.

Sadly, Wally, N6CDJ passed away earlier this year, but the system hardware remains intact. CVARC now has an opportunity to help re-establish the fun and utility of the digital system. If a location can be found on Rasnow Peak or some similar location, a new generation of hams can discover the enjoyment of packet while adding to the emergency communications capabilities of the CVARC service area.

All that's needed to get on the air with packet is a two meter transceiver (an old HT will do), a Terminal Node Controller, TNC for short, and a computer. Keyboard communications are possible, along with packet e-mail and access to other networks through links and bulletin boards. Stay tuned for more exciting news about building a packet system!

Map of the APA Packet System at its peak

CVARC Communication Van Refurbishment

Extensive refurbishment of the Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club (CVARC) Communications Van has been completed. The refurbishment team of Rory Eikland (KG6HCU), Rob Hanson (W6RH), Noel Van Slyke (K6NVS), Mike Pershing (KD6IJF), and Tom Stough (W0UFC) worked hard for several months to complete the task. All new antenna wiring has been installed in the comm van, the DC wiring has all been reworked, a new high performance battery charger (working off solar panels on the comm van roof) has been installed, the battery compartment has been completely reworked, and all the radios have been tested. There is still work that the team wants to do to improve the comm van's capabilities. That will happen over the next few months. The important point is that the comm van is ready for service whenever it is needed. This was emphasized on October 25 when the comm van became a key element in providing the Thousand Oaks Police Department Celebrity Golf Tournament with outstanding communications support. It is also interesting to note that the comm van is looked upon by Ventura County as a major emergency communications asset.

Working on the comm van is a great learning experience. Those interested in helping out should contact Rory to see when the next works session is scheduled.

Radio communications Support for Police Golf Tournament

By Ken Larson, KJ6RZ

ARES/RACES Area 2 members set up and coordinated radio communications for this year's Thousand Oaks Police Celebrity Golf Tournament held October 25th at the North Ranch Country Club in Thousand Oaks. Setting up radio communications for the tournament turned out to be quite a challenge and was an excellent test of our ability as ARES/RACES to handle non-amateur radio & agency radio systems.

The club house is the center of operations for the tournament. However, there are also a significant number of police department personnel and volunteers out on the course supervising and supporting tournament play. There are 3 nine hole courses at the country club (Valley, Oaks, and Lakes) all of which were used for the tournament. In past years radio communications between the club house and support personnel out on the three courses has been very poor. Because we were successful in setting up police radios for the President Reagan memorial services, the Thousand Oaks Police Department asked if we could set up communications for the tournament using police band radios. What they wanted to do was allow support personnel on the three courses to use hand held police radios to communicate back to a base station at the club house. The job sounded pretty easy, but turned out to be a challenge.

Several days before the event, Hugh Bosma KF6HHS and myself went over to the country club for a site survey. Our point of contact at the country club gave us permission to set up a base station in the club house lounge. The lounge has a beautiful view out over the course and the mountains to the north. From the lounge we had good line of sight to the Oaks course in front of and to the right of the club house, and to the Valley course in front of and to the left of the club house. But we couldn't find the Lakes course. From the map that we had, it appeared that we should have driven past it as we approached the country club, but we didn't. The map was not to scale. It turned out that the Lakes course is south of the club house, down in a canyon surrounded by high hills and homes. The Lakes course is in such a deep hole & it is easy to see why they had problems with communications in previous years. Hugh and I drove around the neighborhood and found one empty lot where a house will eventually be built. The lot is on the ridge line and looks down into the Lakes course to the south and toward the club house and other two courses to

the north.

To solve the communications problem, we parked the CVARC Comm Van on the empty lot and used it as a voice relay station. The base station was set up in the club house lounge. We were given two Motorola police band portable radios to use but only one mag-mount antenna. We ran into a similar antenna problem during President Reagan's memorial. East County Sheriffs Station does not appear to have any suitable antennas for portable base station operation. To correct this problem, we built two copper pipe J-Pole antennas tuned for the middle of the police radio band. We set one antenna up on the club house patio using an umbrella stand and six foot mast. The other antenna was mounted on top of the CVARC Comm Van telescoping HF mast. To test out the system, Hugh and my wife Paula, KG6FUM, drove the Lakes course in a golf cart. Using a police handheld radio they were able to communicate with comm van up on the ridge line from everywhere on the Lakes course, including behind a substantial hill.

The communications system worked very well. Between the Comm Van and the base station, we could easily communicate with everyone on all three courses. We handled over 30 formal messages plus numerous informal messages. The base station in the club house lounge became communications central for the tournament. So we were not only responsible for communicating messages but also for tracking them to ensure that responses were received in a timely manner. The message forms and In - Out Boxes that Jerry Goldman, KC6JSO, prepared for the event worked out very well for our message handling duties.

While this was only a golf tournament, it was an excellent demonstration of our ARES/RACES emergency communication skills, including our ability to handle non-amateur radio agency equipment. East County Sheriffs Station personnel were very impressed and pleased with the services that we provided them.

CVARC Holiday Prize Raffle!!!

Come on out to the CVARC Holiday Party at Rory's home on December 4th and buy your white tickets for the prize raffle. For \$10 per ticket, you get a chance to win the Grand Prize:

GRAND PRIZE - Either a Yaesu FT-2800, 2m high power Mobil radio, or an Astron SS-30M, 30 amp switching power supply with meters. The winner need not be present to win, provided you've written your name or callsign on the ticket. If the winner is at the party, he or she may select either prize.

RED TICKET PRIZE - A red ticket prize will also be awarded. The CVARC raffle chairman has saved all of the ticket stubs from our monthly club meeting raffles. During the party, a ticket will be drawn as the year end raffle winner. For this one, you must be present at the party to win. The winner will receive the prize (the Yaesu FT-2800 Mobil radio, or Astron SS-30M switching power supply) not selected by the grand prize winner. If the grand prize winner is not present at the party, then the red ticket winner will have first choice as to the prize that he/she receives.

YOUNG HAM PRIZE - And don't forget...our young ham operators (under 18 years of age) are eligible for the "yellow ticket" prize: a Yaesu FT-60R, dual band HT radio. The person with the winning yellow ticket does not have to be present to win.

FCC License Examinations - Next Exam On February 13, 2005

By Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR

THE DECEMBER 12TH VE EXAM HAS BEEN CANCELED DUE TO SCHEDULING PROBLEMS.

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.

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 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 Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
June 12-13	VHF QSO Party	ARRL VHF QSO Party
June 13	FCC License Exam	Begins at 8:30 am at East County Sheriff's Station
June 26-27	Field Day	CVARC annual field day event, you don't want to miss it!
July 3	Moorpark Fireworks	Support for Moorpark's 3rd of July Fireworks
July 8	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
July 20	CVARC Radio Class	Spouses Amateur Radio License class
Aug. 8	FCC License Exam	Begins at 8:30 am at East County Sheriff's Station
Aug. 12	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
Aug. 15	CVARC Picnic	CVARC Picnic at Conejo Community Park - 3 PM
Sept. 9	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
Sept. 11-12	VHF QSO Party	ARRL VHF QSO Party
Oct. 2	Country Days	Moorpark country Days Parade (www.countrydays.org)
Oct 10	FCC License Exam	Begins at 8:30 am at East County Sheriff's Station
Oct. 14	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
Nov 11	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
Dec 4	CVARC Holiday Party	Annual CVARC Holiday Party at Rory's House

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	Bozo - N6JMI
Area 2	Simplex	Voice	147.555	No pl	_____
Area 2	Backup Repeater	Voice	146.850 -	94.8	Grissom - K6AER
Area 2	Amgen Repeater	Voice	449.440 -	131.8	KE6SWS
Area 3	7:15-7:30 pm	Voice	147.915 -	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	KN6OK
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/>

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ARRL

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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