

# **President's Message -- The Web In The Shack**

**By Steve Champion, AE6NX**

Lately, I have heard several people say that they think that the decline in popularity of Ham Radio as a hobby is due to computers and the Internet. There may be a grain of truth in that, now that high-speed access makes reliable long distance voice communication over the Internet possible. But on the positive side, the World Wide Web can be a very useful source of information in the Ham shack. Here is a sampling of the web sites that I use.

First, I have to mention qrz.com. Not because you won't have heard of it, but because it is one of the most visited ham radio related sites for callsign lookup. There are other similar sites, but QRZ seems to be the one that most people use.

Contact information for a particular manufacturer or retail outlet can usually be obtained in seconds using the Web. Some manufacturers are better than others at responding to email, but at least you can easily find a contact phone number or address. Most retail sites have online catalogs and some allow you to check a stock of a particular item. Curiously, I have found instances when Radio Shack's public web site is more accurate than the stock control system used by the store. If, like me, you hate to think that you paid too much for an item, then comparison shopping is a whole new experience using the Web. It is easy to get entirely carried away though!

When considering a purchase of new or used equipment, customer reviews (at eham.net/reviews and elsewhere) can be helpful. Forum sites such as eham.net/forums and groups.yahoo.com can be a good source of information on the pros and cons of a particular piece of equipment. For used equipment, ebay.com is not just a place to buy and sell, but past sales (called "completed items" on eBay) can give a good idea what a piece of equipment is worth. Sometimes you will be surprised to find that something that you are about to throw in the trash is actually a sought-after item. I don't have any experience of buying and selling on sites other than eBay, but several sites have for sale areas or forums, including qrz.com, eham.net/classifieds, swap.qth.com. Some people have told me that they think that these sites are much better than eBay when it comes to finding inexpensive Ham equipment.

Replacement user manuals for recently manufactured equipment can often be downloaded in PDF format directly from the manufacturer's web site. Information on older equipment can often be found on mods.dk or rigpix.com. For service manuals, you may want to try the Forum sites. I was able to piece together complete manuals for a 1980's Motorola Micor repeater. This was done by a combination of trading parts and manuals on the "Micor" Yahoo Group and by buying from eBay. The Yahoo Group was essential to understanding the subtly different variations of Micor built by Motorola.

The Forum sites are also good for finding people who share your interest in a particular facet of ham radio, be it 6 meters, antenna construction, or whatever.

The arrl.org site is a mine of information. Some of the information is available to members only, but much of it is available to all. The FCC's site at fcc.gov is the definitive source for FCC data, although if you are looking for something like the text of Part 97, then the ARRL site is an easier place to find it.

On the subject of repeaters, I have been disappointed with the information available on the web. The JPL Club, TASMA, and SCRRBA maintain quite comprehensive lists for Southern California (rpplist.w6jpl.ampr.org, scrrba.org and tasma.org respectively). However, I have not been able to find a single national resource which could be relied upon by an interstate traveler. It seems as if one must resort

to seeking out local lists for the area of interest or, dare I say it, use a book!

For international travelers, information on reciprocal licensing is available at arrl.org. Depending on the country that you are visiting you may be able to find out a lot about operation in advance of your trip. For visits to the UK I have found rsgb.org a useful resource. From there I was able to find clubs in the area that I was visiting, so I was able to go to some club meetings while I was in England. Repeater allocations are centralized in the UK so a comprehensive list of repeaters on all bands is available from the RSGB Repeater Management Committee web site (also linked from the ARRL site). Sometimes there are advantages to having a more draconian regulatory authority!

Applying for a Vanity Call Sign can be a bit of a hit-and-miss process, but vanityhq.com greatly simplifies the procedure. Many people were disappointed when the site was shut down last year due to a lack of resources, but it seems to be up and running again now.

Ham radio related news can be found at several sites including arrl.org and arnewsline.org. Calendars of upcoming contests can be found at various sites. One of the most comprehensive is hornucopia.com. Even the ARRL links to this site from theirs. The rules and results for all contests are posted online.

On-line HF propagation prediction can use real-time sunspot and solar flux data to provide predictions. There are many sites related to propagation. ON4BAA ✕'s at stroobandt.com is a good one.

Interested in history? There is a lot of information regarding the history of ham radio on the web. One site that I like is ON4SKY ✕'s at astrosurf.org/lombry.

If you have some other ham radio interest you want to research, then a search on google.com or one of the other search engines will usually help. If you prefer to look through a list of pre-sorted links, then AC6V ✕'s list at ac6v.com is a good place to start.

If you are interested in software for a particular ham-radio application, then it can often be found on the web. Much of it is free, but that which isn't is usually quite reasonably priced and it can often be used for a trial period before buying. Again, google.com and ac6v.com are good places to start. Ben & I use software which we have downloaded from the Web for PSK31, Rig Control, Channel Memory Backup, Contest Logging, VHF Propagation estimation, and Morse Practice ☺ to name just a few applications.

Lastly, although I titled this column "The Web In The Shack", some of these resources are available away from home too. Those of you who have WAP capable cell phones will be able to access a few Ham Radio related resources which are available as WML pages. I have compiled a list which you can find by pointing your phone ✕'s browser to wap.stevechampion.com and then following the link to "Other WAP ham links". It is not a big list, but the QRZ.COM lookup is probably worthy of a bookmark.

I have abbreviated the links given here in print, but they will get you close to the right place. For most, you need to add www to the front, although if your browser is set up correctly it will figure that out. There are full links for most of the sites mentioned above on the CVARCDiscussion web site (groups.yahoo.com/group/CVARCDiscussion/links). The link list there can be edited by list members, so please add your own favorites. The list is far from comprehensive (AC6V is way ahead on that) but it makes a good starting point.

The World Wide Web truly is a mine of information. I hope that I have introduced you to at least one new resource with this list. We all use the Internet a little differently, so it is quite likely that I have overlooked some really useful sites. Please share your own finds with us.

73, AE6NX

Steve champion, AE6NX

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## **CVARC Meeting: "Now As Then"**

**By Bob Hughes, KA6HHW**

Bob Hughes (KA6HHW) will present a talk titled "Now As Then" at our August club meeting. The talk will cover Bob's many years in radio communications, including some very interesting and sensitive (at the time) military projects. Bob joined the Navy in Jan. 1955. He first went to Radiomen school, then to communication tech. school in Imperial Beach. He was stationed in the Philippines where he specialized in Chinese communications. He was involved with Sputnik, the Nautilus, and the U2s and will discuss some of that. Questions will be very welcomed. It should be very interesting.

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## **Next FCC License Examinations On August 14, 2005**

**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 \$14 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.

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## **Planning Starts Now For Field Day 2006**

**By Hugh Bosma, KF6HHS**

To make FD06 the best ever we are forming a Field Day Committee now. The committee will not replace the FD chair, but will research, plan, and establish the theme for FD06. The goal is to have a solid plan in place by years-end for our next field day. The FD chair appointment is just too much for one person to

handle. After the FD chair is elected the committee will change hats and assist the chair to organize FD.

The committee will establish the theme by polling the general membership, drawing on the expertise of the old timers, and lessons learned from this year. What is best for next year, QRP or high power stations? Should we have our Saturday evening social catered, or potluck? Is the FD site to be a mountain top, or should it have easy public access? What type of logging, manual or computer, wireless network logging? How about a media plan, distributing announcements, message board postings? Do we sponsor a pre FD radio, coax, and antenna checkout workshop? Answers to some these questions are common sense, others will require technical evaluation.

Heard this before, † we are looking for a few good folks to †† Really though, this is a great learning opportunity for new to the hobby amateurs. Lets kick it around at the August meeting and make FD06 the best ever.

Hugh KF6HHS

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## **Field Day Get On The Air (GOTA) Station: What It Is And What It's For**

**By Tom Stough, W0UFC**

Back in the "old days" of Field Day (circa 1972), nearly every club operation had a Novice station. These were crystal-controlled ("rock-bound") transmitters with 75 watts input (not output, as we do today) and were limited to CW operation on the HF Novice subbands. The purpose of this operation was to allow newly-licensed operators to have their own station. There was a healthy bonus for a Novice station and plenty of (usually young) operators † like this writer at the time.

Fast forward to the mid-1980s: the operation became a Novice/Technician station, reflecting the fact that Technician licensees by then held Novice CW as well as VHF/UHF voice privileges. By the early 1990s, the decline in Novice ranks and huge increase in newly-minted non-code Technician licensees had made a separate station irrelevant. Technicians were free to operate all modes on clubs' VHF/UHF Field Day operations. So, the League dropped the Novice/Technician station from the rules.

In the late 90s, ARRL decided to revive the concept as a Get On The Air (GOTA) station. Its new purpose: to encourage participation by unlicensed visitors, especially young people, under the supervision of a control operator, as well as to provide a friendly spot for newly-licensed (less than 2 years) and inactive folks to get into the FD spirit. Its goals: to increase public understanding and awareness of Amateur Radio in general and of emergency communications preparedness in particular. Like the Novice/Technician station, its predecessor, GOTA is usually a multi-band and multi-mode Field Day station. It must use a separate callsign from a club † s main Field Day operation and maintains logs for each band/mode it uses during the Field Day.

For FD 2005, Ben Champion and I operated the GOTA station under the callsign K6IDS, with the cooperation of the Champion Amateur Radio Society. For practical reasons, our operation was limited to 40 meter CW. We logged 30 contacts including a Hawaii contact. Connecticut was our only contact in the eastern United States. However, we contacted all of the western states, with the exception of Idaho, plus Texas and British Columbia. We also used our spot in the CVARC communications van to tout our club and our hobby. One of our best PR moments was having two brothers, ages 6 and 8, talk to Ben on 2

meter FM while Ben was riding up the hill with Steve, then meeting Ben in person as he arrived. They were wide-eyed and their dad was beaming!

Anyway--part of what we as a club need to decide for Field Day 2006 is whether we want to continue the GOTA experiment. Here are some advantages and disadvantages:

Pro: \* provides a convenient, non-contest oriented place for visitors to stop and check us out (a one-stop visitor center, if you like).

\* multiband/multimode means that whatever visitors express an interest in and/or whatever bands are open determine what is shown, thus maximizing public relations.

Con: \* strong possibility of mutual interference with other Field Day stations; requires choosing frequencies carefully. (But then: we pride ourselves on solving technical problems.)

\* Unless we have a solid group of newly-licensed folks who want to staff the operation, it may not offer much to the overall club effort.

Here's another idea, even though it wouldn't get us any bonus points: use the Comm. Van as a receive-only operation tuned to wherever our "action" is coming from. We could add a Morse Code reader and digital software to show guests exactly what information is being exchanged while we explain who we are and what we do. Those who are only casually curious will be satisfied and informed, while those who want to see one of the transmitting sites can be shown further. Just a thought.

In that vein, please read the article by Hugh, KF6HHS and consider being part of the club's discussion on what we want to get out of our largest annual operation for 2006.

73, Tom

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## FCC Proposes Elimination of Morse Code as an HF License Requirement

**Compiled By Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR**

On July 19th the FCC Surprised the USA Amateur Radio Community by announcing a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) that would do away with the Morse Code requirement to gain access to the HF Bands. The ARRL Bulletin on the subject said: ARLB018 FCC proposes dropping Morse code requirement entirely.

The FCC has proposed dropping the 5 WPM Morse code element as a requirement to obtain an Amateur Radio license of any class. The Commission included the recommendation in a July 19 Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in WT Docket 05-235, but it declined to go along with any other proposed changes to Amateur Service licensing rules or operating privileges. Changes to Part 97 that the FCC proposed in the NPRM would not become final until the Commission gathers additional public comments, formally adopts any new rules and concludes the proceeding with a Report and Order specifying the changes and an effective date. That's not likely to happen for several months.

"Based upon the petitions and comments, we propose to amend our amateur service rules to eliminate the requirement that individuals pass a telegraphy examination in order to qualify for any amateur radio

operator license," the FCC said. The NPRM consolidated 18 petitions for rule making from the amateur community--including one from the ARRL--that had proposed a wide range of additional changes to the amateur rules. The FCC said the various petitions had attracted 6200 comments from the amateur community, which soon will have the opportunity to comment again--this time on the FCC's NPRM.

The Commission said it believes dropping the 5 WPM Morse examination would encourage more people to become Amateur Radio operators and would eliminate a requirement that's "now unnecessary" and may discourage current licensees from advancing their skills. It also said the change would "promote more efficient use" of amateur spectrum.

To support dropping the code requirement, the FCC cited changes in Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations adopted at World Radio Communication Conference 2003. WRC-03 deleted the Morse testing requirement for amateur applicants seeking HF privileges and left it up to individual countries to determine whether or not they want to mandate Morse testing. Several countries already have dropped their Morse requirements for HF access.

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, said he was not surprised to see the FCC propose scrapping the Morse requirement altogether, although the League had called for retaining the 5 WPM requirement only for Amateur Extra class applicants. Sumner expressed dismay, however, that the FCC turned away proposals from the League and other petitioners to create a new entry-level Amateur Radio license class.

"We're disappointed that the Commission prefers to deny an opportunity to give Amateur Radio the restructuring it needs for the 21st century," he said. "It appears that the Commission is taking the easy road, but the easy road is seldom the right road."

Sumner said ARRL officials and the Board of Directors will closely study the 30-page NPRM and comment further once they've had an opportunity to consider the Commission's stated rationales for its proposals.

In 2004, the League called on the FCC to create a new entry-level license, reduce the number of actual license classes to three and drop the Morse code testing requirement for all classes except for Amateur Extra. Among other recommendations, the League asked the FCC to automatically upgrade Technician licensees to General and Advanced licensees to Amateur Extra. In this week's NPRM, the FCC said it was not persuaded such automatic upgrades were in the public interest.

The FCC said it did not believe a new entry-level license class was warranted because current Novice and Tech Plus licensees will easily be able upgrade to General once the code requirement goes away. The Commission also said its "Phone Band Expansion" (or "Omnibus") NPRM in WT Docket 04-140 already addresses some of the other issues petitioners raised.

A 60-day period for the public to comment on the NPRM in WT 05-235 will begin once the notice appears in the Federal Register. Reply comments will be due within 75 days.

The NPRM is open to comment by the public, including interested members of the Ham radio community. The complete 30-page document is available in Adobe Acrobat format at . The NPRM may also be downloaded in Word and text formats by substituting .doc or .txt for .pdf in the above address.

Ham chat rooms are already alive with opinions pro and con on the proposal. The FCC document was not unexpected, given that many other countries have done away with the Morse requirement. What remains is a lively discussion on what the exam elements will be for licensing in the future.

## CVARC Trailer For Sale

The CVARC Board has decided to sell the small CVARC Camping Trailer and focus attention on maintaining the CVARC Comm Van since the trailer is rarely used. Sealed bids for the trailer will be accepted from CVARC members through August 11th. Minimum bid is \$150. All bids will be opened at the August 11 CVARC Club Meeting. If no bids are received from the general membership, then verbal bids will be accepted. If no bids are received then hopefully we will find a home for the trailer in the recycler, or if all else fails, at the home for old trailers. The condition of the trailer is posted on the web site. It was used as the 20 CW station this year for Field Day.

The trailer does not have any 12 VDC batteries installed and the generator has been removed. There are two additional spare tires, making 3 total, with one attached to the trailer. The propane tank will remain unless the owner does not want the tank.

The trailer make is a 1976 EVELA, License no. 1GL4669, issued in December with a license cost of approximately \$33.00 per year.

The new owner will be responsible for the cost of title transfer.

73 de Greg



# Event Calendar 2005

Date	Event	Comments
July 3	Moorpark Fireworks	Support for Moorpark's 3rd of July Fireworks
July 12	Technician Class	CVARC Technician License Class Begins
July 14	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
<b>Aug. 11</b>	<b>CVARC Club Meeting</b>	<b>General CVARC Club meeting</b>
<b>Aug. 14</b>	<b>FCC License Exam</b>	<b>Begins at 8:30 am at East County Sheriff's Station</b>
Sept. 8	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
Oct 9	FCC License Exam	Begins at 8:30 am at East County Sheriff's Station
Oct. 13	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting
Nov 10	CVARC Club Meeting	General CVARC Club meeting

## 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	Pl	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

<b>Area 2</b>	<b>7:00-7:30 pm</b>	Voice	<b>147.885 -</b>	<b>127.3</b>	<b>Bozo - N6JMI</b>
<b>Area 2</b>	<b>Simplex</b>	Voice	<b>147.555</b>	<b>No pl</b>	—
<b>Area 2</b>	<b>Backup Repeater</b>	Voice	<b>146.850 -</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>Grissom - K6AER</b>
<b>Area 2</b>	<b>Amgen Repeater</b>	Voice	<b>449.440 -</b>	<b>131.8</b>	<b>KE6SWS</b>
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

Net Control operations for the weekly ARES/RACES Area 2 check-in is run from the ARES/RACES communications center at East County Sheriff Station on Olsen Road each Tuesday at 7:00 PM. Visitors are welcome and have the opportunity to operate the station equipment. Contact Jerry Goldman KC6SO (805) 241-9187 if you plan to attend. RACES members, should remember that their RACES card is issued for only two years. When your card is due to expire call Jackie (805) 646-2551 at the Office of Emergency Services in Ventura to renew your card. For questions concerning ARES/RACES call Area 2 Emergency Coordinator Ken Larson KJ6RZ (805) 495-9435 or go to the ARES/RACES section of the CVARC website at <http://www.cvarc.org>.

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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.

Editors: Ken and Paula Larson