



February 2016

# QUA CVARC

A Newsletter for the Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club

## President's Message

Andy Ludlum-KI6NON

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QUA CVARC Newsletter Editor

Norm Campbell-AB6ET

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The biggest benefit of being a member of CVARC is the opportunity you have to learn from other club members. We have people in the club with amazing experiences and talents who are tremendous resources, especially if you are new to the hobby.

Case in point; at the last meeting some of you may have met Cyndi and Ernie who had moored their boat, the Liberator II, in the Channel Islands Harbor as they made preparations to sail to San Diego and ultimately Mexico. They asked if anyone had any experience with an Icom M-710, a marine transceiver which also operates on the ham bands.

No sooner did they ask their question than in walked Ben Kuo, KK6FUT. Ben was not only familiar with the M-710, he'd been working on one that very day! Cyndi and Ernie were still asking Ben questions when we had to close up the Community Room at the East County Sheriff's Station. Since the meeting, Ben and his son Jonathan, KK6ODQ have spent some time on the Liberator II.

They checked out the radio and antenna tuner and helped Cyndi and Ernie understand how everything works. Ben also set them up with the Baofeng dual band radio, so now they can listen in on both UHF/VHF repeater traffic as well as marine HF and ham transmissions.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Club Meeting and Pre-Meeting Dinner, Thursday February 18

The regular club meeting is Thursday, February 18 (always the third Thursday) at the East County Sheriff's Station Community Room at 7:30 p.m. Talk-in coordination on the Bozo repeater, 147.885 (- 127.3).

The guest speaker will be Joe Sirard of the Oxnard NOAA weather station. He will brief us on the El Niño and La Niña weather patterns. The SkyWarn program is part of this discussion. See notice for more information.

Join fellow club members and the guest speaker at the pre-meeting dinner at Don Cuco's in Moorpark at 5 p.m. See notice for more information.

*President's Message, continued from Page 1*

By the time you read this, Cyndi and Ernie should be settling in at their next stop, San Diego. Ben set them up with frequencies for some San Diego hams, so hopefully they'll continue to get good advice. Well done, Ben, this exemplifies the spirit of ham radio!

While maybe not as dramatic as the Cyndi and Ernie story, I always learn something new talking with members at the meetings. And, the "dinner with the speaker" before the meeting is a great time to share ideas in a casual setting.

We have an informal committee getting together to brainstorm ideas for future speakers at club meetings. So far Brad Ormsby, W6VO and David Arata, KA9WMI are joining Tim Wheeler, K6POI and me. Anyone else who is interested is always welcome, please talk to Tim or me.

We had our Winter Field Day on Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at Thousand Oaks Community Park. For Southern California it was even a little wintery, with overcast and cool temps, even a light sprinkle but a good time was had by all. These events are great opportunities to get on the radio, especially if you haven't worked some of the HF bands and modes.

With Adrian Jarrett, K6KY, joining the CVARC board at our last meeting we have only one position left, the Social Chair. This is your opportunity to be the most popular person in the club as your efforts benefit all the members and provide the social glue (food!) for the club.

Finally, it's been over ten years since we've had a comprehensive survey of your skills and interests. Especially in this "Year of the Project," the survey results will help us target guest speakers, projects and other club activities. Mark Horner, KK6IKX has been working with the board on this and we hope to have the survey in your hands shortly.

73,

Andy  
KI6NON

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## **Flash News Update...**

The club website continues to improve and new areas are added as existing areas are fine tuned. The most recent additions to the website are the financial update of the club records, Board of Directors agendas, and Board of Directors Minutes.

Keep checking the club website and Yahoo group for news, information, and current club activities.

### ***Do you know ...***

***>Where your main circuit breaker is?***

***>How to properly fight an electrical fire?***

## Members Have Done

The first meeting of the year was held on January 21. President Andy-KI6NON outlined the direction he wants to take CVARC for 2016. There was a lot of enthusiasm and excitement in the air as he mentioned the theme for the year as "The Year of the Project." In addition, a Guest Speaker's Committee was discussed. Member surveys will be conducted to get a feel for individual preferences too, see page 12. Ben-W6JWZ was the guest speaker and discussed the new website and other social media services where members can stay current with each other and with the club. Jim Fortney-K6IYK, the recently elected ARRL Santa Barbara Section Manager, asked for participation in SB Section activities. See his notice on page 16 for more about SB Section. The pre-meeting dinner was well attended at Toppers Pizza.

Many club members attended the Winter Mini-Field Day. It was held at the park near Thousand Oaks High School where other outdoor, but nicely covered, club activities have been held in the past. There were impromptu antenna building sessions during the morning followed by analyzing and on the air testing and operating. A few hams did a bit of brief CW practice. And others had stations on the air making contacts and sharing information about HF operations and procedures. Do we need to mention the great bagels and coffee early in the day followed by pizza a little later?

Coinciding with Mini-Field Day participation, some members were involved in the VHF/UHF contest. Contacts were made from the Mini-Field Day site as well as from remote sites around Ventura County.



How many hams does it take to put up a beam?



Lots of radios, lots of antennas, lots of fun.

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## Members Are Doing

Sunday nights, Newbie Net, 7 p.m., Bozo repeater 147.885 (-127.3), all are welcome especially newer hams. Want to be net control? The procedure will be provided. Contact Todd-KD6RCM, [kd6rcm@arrl.net](mailto:kd6rcm@arrl.net).

Tuesday nights, ARES/RACES net, 7 p.m., Bozo repeater.

Wednesday nights, HF Roundtable, 7 p.m., 21.333 ±, USB, all are welcome.

Second Thursday, Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Westlake Village City Hall.

Third Thursday, regular club meeting, 7:30 p.m., East County Sheriff's Station.

*Send me a note if you know a recurring activity that should be listed here. -Ed.*

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## Members Are Planning (Calendar)

Feb 18	CVARC Club Meeting	East County Sheriff's Station, 7:30 p.m.
Feb 20-21	International DX Contest-CW	<a href="http://www.arrl.org/arrr-dx">http://www.arrl.org/arrr-dx</a>
Mar 1	Crop Walk?	ARES event
Mar 5-6	International DX Contest-Phone	<a href="http://www.arrl.org/arrr-dx">http://www.arrl.org/arrr-dx</a>
Mar 10	CVARC Board of Directors Meeting	Westlake Village City Hall, 7:30 p.m.
Mar 12	Palm Springs Hamfest	<a href="http://palmsspringshamfest.com/">http://palmsspringshamfest.com/</a>
Mar 17	CVARC Club Meeting	East County Sheriff's Station, 7:30 p.m.
Mar 19-20	Baker to Vegas Relay	<a href="http://www.radiobaker2vegas.org/">http://www.radiobaker2vegas.org/</a>

Go to the <http://www.cvarc.org> calendar tab for additional events, links, contact persons, locations and times.

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### Pre-Meeting Dinner

Join your fellow CVARC hams and guests this month, February 18, for the pre-club meeting dinner with our guest speaker at Don Cuco Mexican Restaurant, 254 Los Angeles Ave, Moorpark (in the Fresh & Easy Shopping Center.) Phone: 805-523-2261. We will have a reservation under CVARC/Michelle for 5:00 pm. Hope to see you all there!

Pre-meeting dinner suggestion are welcome. The March dinner will be at the Stonefire Grill in Thousand Oaks. The April dinner will be at the Szechuwan Garden in Moorpark.

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### Club Meeting Guest Speaker

For our meeting next week, February 18th, we have confirmed Joe Sirard, the Weather Spotter Coordinator for NOAA, from the National Weather Service in Oxnard. He is to brief us on the changing El Niño and La Niña situations coming up later this year and to explain the readiness required of SkyWarn personnel and how ham radio ops can participate in the program.

Guest speaker suggestions are welcome. See Vice President Tim-K6POI or one of the Speakers Committee members to give your opinion.

The guest speaker for March is Bill Stein-KC6T who will talk about computer aided antenna designs.

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### Newest Board Member

Adrian-K6KY has stepped up and was voted in as the most recent Member-at-Large. His nomination and election is a welcomed addition to the board as he brings his institutional knowledge of the club and its programs to us.

One position on the board still needs to be filled and that is the vital post of Social Director. Much of the framework has already been provided by Mark-KK6IKX and Michelle-KK6RBW who will be available to coach the new director. Contact President Andy-KI6NON or any board member for more information about nomination and election.

We need you to work with the club to be a valuable and contributing member.

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## Technician Class License Training Sessions Announced

Zak-N6PK and Tim-K6POI have announced the next club sponsored training session. The training will focus on the entry level Technician Class license and will be given on five consecutive Saturdays starting in May at the club meeting location in the Community Room of the East County Sheriff's Station on Olsen Road.

The Technician Class license grants privileges on VHF and UHF radio frequencies that are popularly used with handheld and small portable radios. Some limited HF privileges are also granted with the Technician Class license. Morse Code is no longer an entry level requirement.

The dates are May 7, 14, 21, 28, and June 4 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The classes will end the week before the FCC Volunteer Examiner license testing date of June 12, the idea being to take the classes and take the test.

There is no charge for the classes as this is a club sponsored community training activity. Study materials are required and need to be purchased before class. Contact Zak or Tim for more information.

Zak-N6PK, [N6PK@arrl.net](mailto:N6PK@arrl.net), (818) 802-8211

Tim-K6POI, [K6POI@arrl.net](mailto:K6POI@arrl.net), (805) 222-0023

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## More About Amateur Radio License Training

The Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club continues to provide amateur radio training. Zak-N6PK and Tim-K6POI just completed a General Class license training session. The results of that training will be known after the VE testing session on February 14 and announced in the March edition of the CVARC QUA newsletter.

The previous training session for the Extra Class proved to be very successful for those students who took the test shortly after the class. Other training sessions have been just as successful.

The Technician Class training starts soon. After that, the next training will be Electronic Fundamentals in July. Another training session later in the year is yet to be determined.

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## CVARC Public Relations

Joe-AI6MW has been providing club information to the local newspapers and elsewhere. Talk to him about getting our club message out to other venues. He needs some lead time to submit press releases so provide what you can as soon as possible.

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## What's Out There?

Have you ever wondered what's out there in the great electromagnetic spectrum we call radio other than what's on the amateur bands? This link to DXing.com will give you an idea. <http://dxing.com/>

Hams have very small allocations of communication frequencies compared to what is taking place all the time elsewhere. Some hobbyists do nothing but listen. Knowing what's out there gives us a better perspective of where ham radio fits in to the great scheme of things on the short wave HF, VHF, and UHF bands.

Follow the link, look at the left side on the blue banner. Select "Tuning 150 kHz to 30 mHz" for HF, or "Action Bands" for VHF and UHF activity. Look at some of the technical discussions too.

Many ham radios include a general coverage HF receiver in addition to the ham bands. The same is true with VHF/UHF radios. Short wave listening will actually improve your amateur operating. You have the radio, use it.

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## For Sale

These are Kenwood items from a friend. I have gone through each item, replaced burned out lamps, cracked connectors, cleaned switch contacts and tested the units for proper operation. The Kenwood TS-830S was tested on each band at 100 watts. I then did a detailed cleaning job on all the items and would rate them 9.5 out of 10 on appearance. I would consider selling the items separately.

I am taking the average selling price on Ebay and discounting 15% because of the Ebay and Paypal fees. The discounted prices shown are for cash.

	Ebay Average Sold Price	Sale Price reflects 15% discount
Kenwood TS-830S	\$400	\$340
Kenwood VFO-230	\$265	\$225
Kenwood SP-230	\$85	\$72
Kenwood AT-230	\$250	\$212
Kenwood MC-50	\$65	\$55

Thanks,

Jonathan Fox-KT6LA

[KT6LA@yahoo.com](mailto:KT6LA@yahoo.com) , phone 818-707-9133

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## What's Happening on the Ham Bands

There are a number of places to find information about radio contests and activities including the ARRL website and even our CVARC calendar. This link is to an 8-day contest calendar that lists type, time, and contact information for various activities. It's useful to know what is going on (or what to avoid) at certain times of the day or week.

<http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/weeklycont.php>

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## Newsletter Editor's Reminder

*In order to save costs and confusion, and to provide a wider distribution, the CVARC QUA newsletter will only be available on the club website. A reminder link will be sent to the CVARC Yahoo discussion group when the newsletter is published, usually the weekend after the Board of Directors meeting and before the regular club meeting.*

*Direct access to newsletters is available on the website under the Resources tab which will take you to all the newsletters that are current and archived.*

*Information, stories, projects, and club member news or events is welcomed. Send me what you have and I'll print it. If you need help with a story I'll work on it with you.*

Norm-AB6ET, [radioab6et@verizon.net](mailto:radioab6et@verizon.net)

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*Jaap-KK6LMJ will provide a few stories about setting up and using Linux with digital operating, this is the first one. -Ed.*

## **Xubuntu and JT65**

For a while I wanted to make my old laptop more robust for use in the field. Finally on Black Friday I could buy a cheap Solid State Disk. In contradiction to hard disks, an SSD has no moving parts. While they are available in the same size and with the same connectors as a hard disk, it's fairly easy to upgrade. A bonus is that the computer will also perform better after the upgrade.

In general I re-install the operating system and applications after an upgrade. This laptop runs the WSJT application for JT65 and JT9 communications. So while re-installing I thought why not make a simple instruction fellow hams can use if they want to do install the same?

For this old laptop I use the Linux distribution Xubuntu. Xubuntu is an Ubuntu derivative that is easy to install and unlike Ubuntu, does not need the latest hardware to perform well. In fact my laptop is a five years old netbook. Even five years ago it was not considered a high performer. Well, enough introduction; let's start the installation.

First I used a Windows system to download the Xubuntu software from the xubuntu.org site. I downloaded the latest regular release from a US mirror. I picked the "xxx-desktop-amd64.iso" because I have a 64 bit processor in my laptop. If you are not sure then download the "xxx-desktop-i386.iso". The latter is for all 32 bit processors, but runs fine on 64 bit processors as well.

Next is to put the ISO image you just downloaded on a bootable USB flash drive. Such a drive should have a capacity of minimal 2 GigaBytes. To put the image on the USB flash drive you need software. My current preference is Rufus, which can be downloaded from: <https://rufus.akeo.ie/>. Make sure you insert the USB flash drive and know its drive assignment before start Rufus. After starting Rufus you can check or change the USB flash drive. Make sure you select the right flash drive: all data will be erased! Now you can select the ISO image you just downloaded and start the creation of a bootable flash drive. When Rufus is ready you should eject the flash drive by software before removing it from the computer.

Now it's time to install Linux on the laptop. Make sure the laptop can boot from flash drive, insert the flash drive and start. It is important to connect your laptop to the Internet before the installation process starts. Either use the laptop's Ethernet adapter (RJ-45) or configure a WiFi connection when prompted. The easiest is to leave most check boxes default. Make sure you create an account and remember the password. Without this password you will not be able to install any application in future!

Well, that's more or less the installation of the operating system. You will be prompted for updates in future. But let's install the first ham application: WSJT-X now.

To do so, click on the mouse's head on the top right of the desktop. The type "Ubuntu Software Center" and click on its appearance. When the software center has started you type WSJT-X. The application will appear, then select it and click install. The system will now ask you for your password and then install WSJT-X. Unfortunately WSJT-X does not come with decoding binaries because their licensing prohibits bundling. You will have to install these binaries separately.

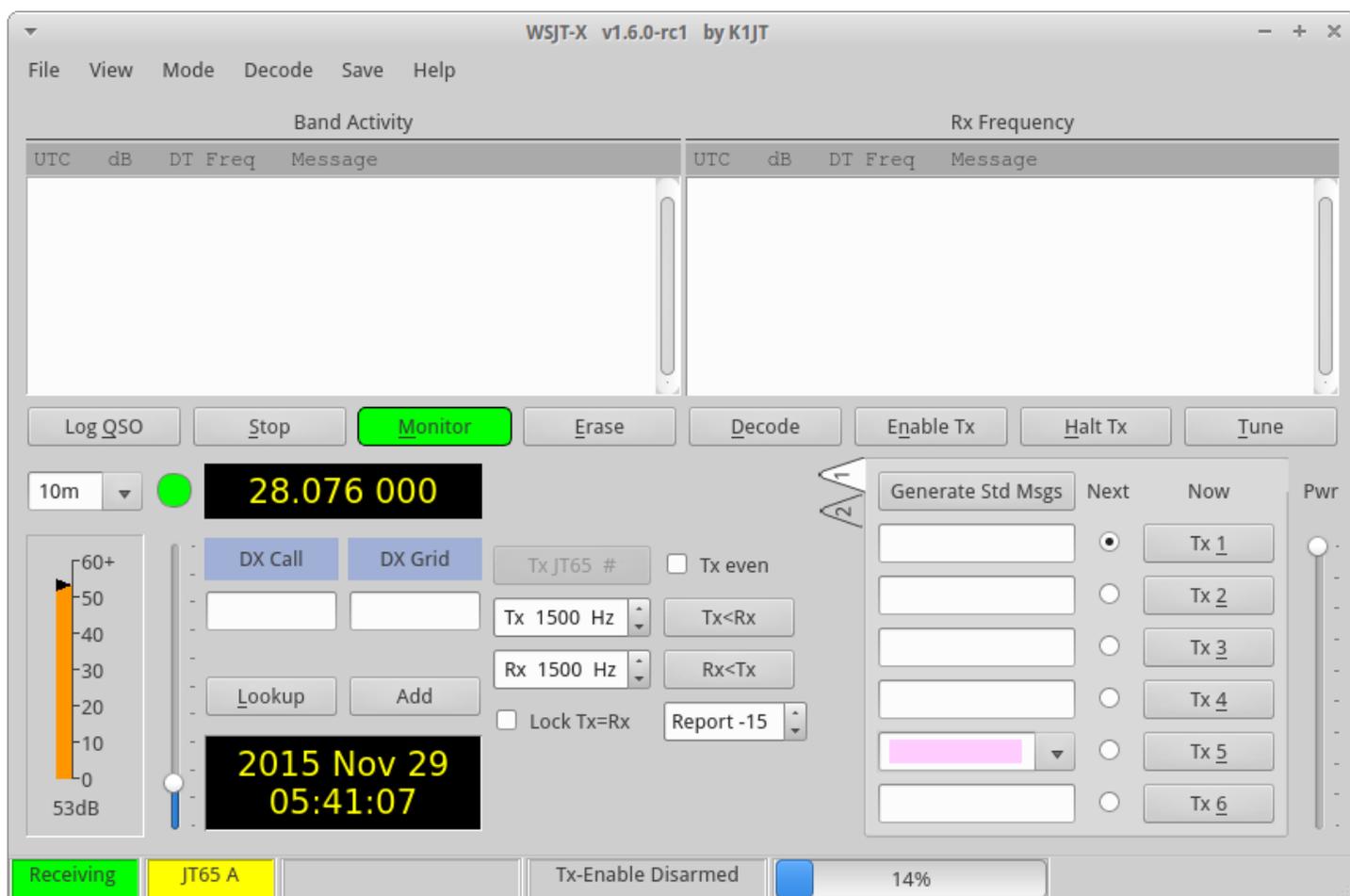
As of this writing, you can find an easy installer here: [www.launchpad.net/~ki7mt/+archive/ubuntu/kvasd-installer](http://www.launchpad.net/~ki7mt/+archive/ubuntu/kvasd-installer).

Click "view package details" and then select the version needed. In case you installed Xubuntu 15.10 you will need the one ending in wily. (Every version of (X)Ubuntu has a code name: 15.10 is called Wily Werewolf) Now you will have to download either the i386 or amd64 variation depending on the Xubuntu variation you used.

You can open your download folder from the desktop by clicking on the “home” folder and then clicking the “Downloads” folder. Now you can double click the kvasd-installer you just downloaded. The Ubuntu Software Center will open and you can install like WSJTX. The last step is to install the kvasd-binaries. To do so, click on the mouse's head on the top right of the desktop. Then type “Terminal Emulator” and click on it's appearance. When the terminal emulator has opened then type “kvasd-installer,” enter and follow instructions. Finally exit the installer but do not close the terminal!

JT65 and other similar protocols are very dependent on the correct daytime. Your computer clock is able to synchronize with clocks in the Internet via the so called Network Time Protocol. You can easily install and enable this by typing in the terminal emulator “sudo apt-get install ntp”.

Finally, you can start WSJT-X. You should configure your call sign, locator and sound card. For PTT you can either use an external VOX (voice operated transmission) or set up an additional configuration for Computer Aided Tuning. I use a Signalink USB that functions both as a sound card and an external VOX.



That's it. Next time I'll cover updating WSJT-X to a version that can do JT4, WISPR2 and Echo as well and be using a GPS stick for time synchronization in the field.

Have fun,

Jaap de Goede-KK6LMJ

February 1, 2015

*This reprint about calling CQ is courtesy of Steve Katz-WB2WIK, former CVARC club member, who lead the club to possibly its highest Field Day score some years ago operating from Rasnow Peak. -Ed.*

## HOW TO CALL CQ

...or even answer one!

Steve Katz, WB2WIK/6

It seems impossible, but it's very true that most new hams don't know how to call CQ. And a lot don't know how to answer one, either!

We're all to blame for that. There just isn't as much "CQing" as there used to be, except during contests. One reason might be that we're mostly using transceivers with VFO control - as silly as that sounds. Here's the explanation: Back in the good old days (for me), we used mostly crystal controlled transmitters with separate, tunable receivers. The odds of having a crystal on exactly the same frequency as someone else who was on the band, and within range, at the same time was pretty slim. So, it was common to call CQ, then tune around, looking for answers.

Well, today, we needn't tune around looking for answers, any answers will be right there on the same frequency we're on. Experienced operators know it's easy to break into an ongoing QSO, if you know how and when it's appropriate to do so. I make a lot of my contacts like that: Just overhear an interesting conversation, wait for a pause, insert my call-sign, and join the group. But many newbies, as well as some old-timers, are too shy to do this, or maybe just not very good at it. And it is frowned on by most to break into a conversation when you've absolutely nothing to add to it.

So, I only break in when I do think I have something of value to add. It's also acceptable to break into a non-emergency contact (which is about 99.9% of all QSOs) to simply ask for a report, like, "Hey guys, Steve in L.A. here, with a new antenna. How's the signal?" Nobody with a heart can begrudge another ham a signal report when he's using a new antenna. Ditto goes for a new rig, microphone, or a new almost anything.

Still, tuning the bands reveals a lack of CQs, especially on "phone." On CW, the common way to garner a contact is still by calling CQ, and it's very common. But on phone, it can seem like everyone already knows each other, everyone's already in a conversation, and nobody's calling CQ. So, how do you make a contact?

Simple. When you don't hear any CQs, call one! Problem is, if you don't hear many good, experienced operators calling CQ, how do you know to do it right? This obviously is a problem, since most newbies calling CQ really aren't doing it right, at all. No sweat, we were all newbies once. Here's a good way to call CQ and actually get answers:

1. Pick what you think is a clear frequency, within your licensed band limits. (Always stay about 4 kHz clear of any band edge (or license subband edge), as using standard bandwidth SSB, it's easy to have sideband energy at least 3 kHz from your "carrier" (center) frequency of operation - there may be no carrier with SSB, but your dial usually reads the frequency where the carrier would be, if there were one.)
2. Transmit, and ask, "Is the frequency in use?" Stop transmitting, and listen for an answer. If you hear no reply, after about five seconds ask one more time, "Is the frequency in use?" If you still hear no reply, consider the frequency fair game for a CQ. If you hear a reply like, "Yes it is!" or more politely, "Yes, thanks for asking," tune to another seemingly clear frequency and start again.
3. Call CQ. *Always* include your callsign and your location in the CQ. And always make a CQ last at least 20 or 30 seconds. Enunciate clearly, and use phonetics at least once or twice. Although it seems silly, it's common to also announce the band you're on when calling CQ. This really isn't so silly when you think about it: You're actually calling "the band," since you're not calling any station in particular. So, don't laugh when, on 20 meters, you hear someone calling, "CQ 20 meters." It makes sense. Here's a good CQ format, for general purpose work. (Note: None of this pertains to contesting.)

“CQ, CQ, CQ calling CQ 20 meters. This is WB2WIK calling. Whiskey Bravo Two Whiskey India Kilo, WB2WIK in Los Angeles calling CQ 20 meters. Hello CQ, CQ, CQ 20 meters. This is WB2WIK calling. Whiskey Bravo Two Whiskey India Kilo, WB2WIK in Los Angeles calling CQ 20 meters and standing by for a call.”

Perfect. That CQ takes exactly 30 seconds for me to say crisply and clearly, not too fast and not too slow. It announced my callsign six times, including twice phonetically. It announced my location twice. There should be little question, for anyone who tuned across my signal, who I am or where I am.

It's important to give your location during a CQ, unless you happen to be in, for example, a very small country. If I were operating from Liechtenstein, and had a local call there, I probably wouldn't bother announcing my town or city - it's a small place, and the same beam heading for anyone, anywhere, regardless of what town I'm in. But operating from the U.S. or Canada, or other large country (China, Russia, Brazil come to mind), the distance between one town and another can be thousands of miles, and require vastly different beam headings. Another reason to announce your location: Many hams tuning the bands are County Hunters, or looking for a new State for WAS, or whatever. The more information you provide with your CQ, the more likely you are to receive an answer - period.

On the VHF bands, weak signal enthusiasts (using SSB) call CQ, and usually include their grid square in lieu of other location data. This is because the grid square tells anyone listening all they need to know about your approximate location, and whether they “need” your grid or not, for an award or contest point, or whatever. Because 4-digit grid squares are quite large (1° latitude by 2° longitude) and VHF antennas quite sharp, when I call CQ on VHF or UHF, I include not only my grid square but other location information as well, to help a station hearing me weakly determine which way to turn his antenna to hear me better. It helps.

*Important note: Repeat Step (3) above if you receive no reply to your CQ! If, after five or six tries (CQ calls) on the same frequency, over a period of a few minutes, you still have no replies, try tuning up or down the band a little bit, and try again.* It sometimes happens that even though the frequency sounds perfectly clear to you, and no one answered your “frequency in use?” call, the frequency may indeed be busy for listeners in other areas, and might be tied up by a very strong signal emanating from a station too close for you to hear via sky-wave (and too far to hear any other way). Now that I've taught you how to *call* CQ, do you really know how to answer one? Many hams evidently don't, as I can tell by the answers I receive when I call CQ, myself!

Now that I've taught you how to *call* CQ, do you really know how to answer one? Many hams evidently don't, as I can tell by the answers I receive when I call CQ, myself!

How to answer a CQ: First, use the callsign of the station you're calling. Follow that by your own callsign, and your approximate whereabouts. If the station you're calling is very strong, just once will do. If he's very weak, you might double up the call. If you're calling in a pileup, timing, frequency and articulation are more important than signal strength. I'll explain.

Typical call:

“WB2WIK this is K2OWR, Kilo Two Oscar Whiskey Romeo in New Jersey calling.”

Bingo! Perfect. He told me his call, twice, once phonetically, and also where he is. Can't ask for more than that. His call took six seconds, and gave me all the data I need.

If I didn't hear him well, I might say, “QRZ? Is someone calling me? Try again please; this is WB2WIK.” And he could try again, maybe twice this time, that is, doubling up on the call, like this:

“WB2WIK, this is K2OWR, Kilo Two Oscar Whiskey Romeo, K2OWR in New Jersey calling. Copy now?”

That takes about 2-3 seconds longer, but repeats the call once more. If his signal's weak or I have a high noise level or other distraction, that should still be sufficient.

That takes about 2-3 seconds longer, but repeats the call once more. If his signal's weak or I have a high noise level or other distraction, that should still be sufficient.

I might not hear him because I'm beamed towards the Pacific, and poor K2OWR's off the back of my beam. So I'll usually say something like, "This is WB2WIK in Los Angeles, beaming Pacific. Weak station, where are you?" To which he should reply, "New Jersey, New Jersey, New Jersey, New Jersey, QSL?" or something like that, to advise me that I'm beamed the wrong way.

For those who don't have beams, remember it usually takes 60 seconds to rotate a beam all the way around, and 30 seconds to go 180 degrees. If you make your transmissions too short, we'll never be able to peak you. Those with Fluid Motion SteppIR beams can change directions 180 degrees in about five seconds, but the rest of us take longer.

Now, in a pileup, as often occurs on any "rare" station (DX, or maybe not even DX, but a special event station, rare IOTA island, whatever), it is very poor practice to make a long call. So poor, in fact, that if you are actually heard by the rare station making a too-long call, he might "blacklist" you, to be sure to never work you the entire time he's operating, just as punishment for your crappy operating. Don't be blacklisted.

Many pileups operate "split," of course, and I won't go into a whole seminar on working DX and split frequency operation. But assuming you're able to transmit on a frequency where the DX (or rare station) is listening, *timing* and *articulation* are everything, and certainly more important than signal strength in most cases. Your call must be timed precisely to when the other station's listening. Make your call very short and sweet, don't use any fancy phonetics, and although many successful DX operators use "last two" for a callsign, this really isn't good practice and I wouldn't suggest it. ("Last two" means saying only the last two letters of your callsign, omitting everything else, just to get through; for example, if your call is KG1ABC, you'd sign "BC." Don't do it.)

When calling in a pileup, your transmission should be *very* short, but properly timed. The average call that actually "gets through" and makes a successful contact is probably in the 1-2 second range. Practice saying your call articulately (very clearly) in just one or two seconds. Crispness counts. If you use phonetics to make a longer call because it seems that's what everyone else is doing, use appropriate phonetics. If you're calling a DX station who has an accent (sounds like he's from a non-English speaking country), try "international" phonetics, rather than the common American ones. International phonetics are often the names of cities or countries: W1ABC might be W1 America Brazil Canada. J is Japan, and Y is Yokohama, especially if calling a Japanese station! I is always Italy when calling an Italian, and G is always Germany when calling a German. Make it make sense.

Great practice: Use a tape recorder, or a digital voice recorder, and listen to yourself. Only when doing so will you know how you really sound. Most people don't sound nearly as good as they think they do. Which is why many people cringe when they hear their own voices played back!

When calling in a pileup, follow a few simple rules:

Be really sure you can actually hear the station you're calling! It makes no sense to call someone you can't hear.

If it's a split operation, be sure you have the split frequencies tuned in or programmed properly, so you're really calling the station where he's listening, or approximately so.

Become adept at listening to both the DX station causing the pileup, and the pileup itself. If you have "dual receivers," perfect. If not, use the "A/B" switch on your rig to switch quickly between the DX and the pileup, trying to hear the last station the DX worked and getting a feel for whether the DX station is sticking with just one receive frequency, or tuning around. If he's tuning around, you might note a trend, like, "Hey, he's tuning up the band, and every station he works is 200 Hz higher than the last guy." Follow the trend, and beat others to the "new" frequency.

Follow the protocol that seems to be working for others, but by all means remember that a 2-way contact is only made when you and the other station exchange call signs and another piece of data, such as a signal report. Considering the contact complete because you think you heard the DX utter your call sign suffix is lunacy.

Get really good at it, and you don't need to have the strongest signal in the pileup. Having a moderate signal with great articulation, no background noise and no distortion will get right through, if you time your call right.

So, there you have it. How to call CQ, and how to answer one. Simple, eh?

Now go practice it! See you on the bands.

Steve-WB2WIK/6

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## CVARC Information Survey

President Andy-KI6NON wants to develop ways to better serve the club and club members. Your opinions are needed on various topics. These two-minute surveys are designed to cover one subject quickly. The first survey asks for your thoughts on the recent Holiday Party.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8R7LQTW>

Mark-KK6IKX is creating and compiling the surveys.

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## Newbies and Elmers

Last month's CVARC QUA newsletter included a story about the history of CVARC's Newbie Net which is held on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. on the Bozo repeater.

Since then it's been brought to our attention that other clubs, a three state club in particular, have been doing something similar.

They also run a technical program with pre-arranged topics directed toward developing good operating habits and to provide answers to commonly asked questions about getting on the air and using radios.

Take a look at the website of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana club. Maybe CVARC would try something similar if enough interest is shown. Talk to one of the board members about your thoughts.

[http://ohkyin.org/elmer\\_net.php](http://ohkyin.org/elmer_net.php)

The next few pages are a story written about the OH-KY-IA club.

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(Logo courtesy: Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Amateur Radio Society)

# Newcomers and Elmers Net:

## Bringing Together New Hams and Old-Timers in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana By Robert Gulley AK3Q

**M**ay 31, 2015, is an exciting milestone for an experiment that started with an assumption and a hope. The assumption was that if there were a place for new hams where they could learn and apply their hobby, they would get excited about amateur radio. The hope was that mentors (what we hams call “Elmers”) would step up and share their skills and passion, giving new hams confidence to explore the many facets of this great radio hobby.

The result of this experiment, and the milestone mentioned above, is the two-year anniversary of “The Newcomers and Elmers Net.” This is a weekly, local net (on-air meeting) geared toward pairing newcomers to the hobby with Elmers willing to offer them advice and the benefit of their experience.

Like so many things in life, amateur radio is caught just as much as it is taught. Elmers and Newcomers really do feed off of each other, and excitement tends to generate more excitement. Whether it is trying new things or rediscovering long-lost passions, both newbies and old-timers alike grow from their shared experiences.

In the hopes of encouraging others to start a similar net, I will share a bit about our goals, format, and experiences over the course of the last two years, as well as report a similar story experienced by another club that saw what we were doing and decided they could revitalize their Sunday night net.

### Elmers Needed!

Some years back, as a relatively new ham, I remember discussing with a friend of mine the idea of having an Elmers website to get new hams more involved in the hobby. Mike Wagoner, KB4VKS (SK) had been an Elmer to me,

and I knew firsthand how beneficial it was to have someone to go to when I had questions.

Although our website idea never progressed much beyond the initial “what if” stage, over the years I continued to feel there was a need for something that could help new hams become more involved in the hobby. Often newcomers feel too embarrassed to ask questions on the air, concerned they might be ridiculed or appear foolish to other hams. And to be honest, all too often more experienced hams can sometimes sound a bit impatient with newbies, assuming what is obvious to them should be obvious even to newcomers.

Eventually, I became involved with an active club in Cincinnati, the OH-KY-IN Amateur Radio Society, and volunteered to coordinate some education outreach programs. After helping with several of these programs, I approached the club president Gary Coffey KB8MYC, to discuss starting a net for newcomers and Elmers. He was immediately supportive of the idea, and we brainstormed some goals for the net.

The primary goals were to have a net where newcomers could feel at ease, and where they could get information to help them explore the amateur radio hobby. This is reflected in the preamble to the net, a portion of which I have reproduced here:

*The purpose of this net is to encourage all radio newcomers or folks with questions about the hobby to have a comfortable place to learn and gain experience. We are also encouraging the participation of folks who want to help others learn about the amateur radio hobby. These are the Elmers.*

*If you don't have your license yet, you are still encouraged to listen in each week on this repeater until you do! And, if this is your first time checking into a net, rest assured*

*you are among friends!*

While the net is open to anyone, we actually try to discourage folks from just “checking in” to boost the numbers—there are plenty of other nets around for casual participation. We assume any experienced hams who check in are willing to help, and we will often call on the Elmers to give advice or share their experiences.

Another aspect, which was important to us, was to make the net as “non-denominational” as possible. While the net would be hosted on our club’s repeater, this was by no means meant to be just a club net. The focus is on helping newcomers, not bolstering our membership! We try very hard to refrain from pushing our club over any other club in the area, and welcome participants from all groups. We always encourage newcomers to get involved with whatever local club is best for them.

Since our area of coverage is the Tri-state region of southwest Ohio, we regularly have people checking in from OH, KY, and IN, with a number of different clubs represented by both newcomers and Elmers. The repeater in use has excellent coverage, easily reaching 50+ miles in almost every direction. (On a particularly good night of skip propagation we actually had a check-in from Illinois!) This broad diversity also means we have a wide range of expertise on any given net to help with questions which might arise.

## Structure

One of the most important decisions we made was to have a specific topic for discussion each week to guide the net, and this has greatly contributed to its success. All questions about the hobby are still welcome, but a topic ensures something will be covered. Far too often local nets fall into the rut of a check-in round, an announcement or two, and then a comment round consisting of folks saying “Hello,” and, “Not much going on here so I’ll turn it back to net control.”

Typically after the check-in round we will handle any initial questions, announcements, etc., then move into the topic. Sometimes we ask questions as a way of introducing the topic, while at other times we dive right into the “lesson.” Some topics lend themselves to back and forth discussion for the duration of the net, while others are better presented as a whole, followed by the opportunity for discussion and questions.

I use the term “lesson” rather loosely in that I do not want to suggest the material is dry or just a recitation of a chapter from some textbook. We do however encourage anyone presenting a topic for the net to have notes which we make available online. The notes are then posted on the Elmers Net web page shortly after the net. (For those who might be interested in seeing the topics and/or notes, the web page may be found at [http://www.ohkyin.org/elmer\\_net.php](http://www.ohkyin.org/elmer_net.php)).

When presenting a topic, I usually work from an outlined set of notes, but that is just a personal preference; I find it helps me stay on topic. I also want to make sure I respect

the people who are spending their Sunday evenings participating in the net by not just “winging it” or being otherwise unprepared. Preparation time takes only a few hours per week for someone experienced in a given topic—perhaps a bit more if the topic requires research.

Since our goal is to help newcomers to the hobby, or those who may be unfamiliar with a subject, we try to keep the information manageable for folks listening over the radio. This means some topics are probably best left for other presentation methods, such as learning to read Smith Charts or calculating impedance/reactance values for antenna circuits.

Some of the topics we have covered include:

- Repeater Etiquette (Do’s and Don’ts!)
- Basic Antenna Theory
- Experimenting with Different Antennas
- Propagation
- Homebrew Project Ideas
- A Basic Ham Station
- Satellite Operations
- Computer Control and Logging Software
- Troubleshooting Issues
- Radio Frequency Interference (RFI)
- Simple Wire Antennas
- Road Trip! Going Portable
- All About Feedlines
- Working Low Power (QRP)
- Apple and Android Apps for Amateur Radio

Topics are announced for the upcoming month on the OH-KY-IN website to help folks anticipate subjects in which they might have an interest. Also a weekly email is sent out before the net with a reminder of that week’s topic on several mailing lists. The weekly reminder has turned out to be an important part of net promotion, as there is a direct correlation between the number of participants each week and whether or not an email has been sent out.

## Response to the Net

The response to the net has been, frankly, overwhelming (in a good sense!). Over the past two years the average number of check-ins has been about 25-30 per week, with the lowest being 12 (a holiday weekend) and the two highest hitting 40 check-ins (remember this is just a local 2-meter net!). We rarely have less than 20. I mention the numbers not to brag about the net, but rather to underscore the interest such a net generates, and why I want to encourage others to do something similar.

Every week we have a least one or two new people joining in the net, and of course not everyone can make it every week. As an example, a recent net had 40 check-ins, with 19 of those being hams who have had their license for less than two years. This is a typical ratio of Newcomers-to-Elmers, regardless of the number of check-ins.

The number of folks, who just listen to the net because they either cannot check in or they do not have a license yet, has pleasantly surprised me. Some folks listen while at work, while others listen in while they are studying to take their first exams. There have even been folks who listen in on their police scanners!

While net participation is still going strong after almost two years, more important than the net itself is the growth and outreach of the newcomers; they are trying new things and sharing their excitement and experiences with the group. Repeater activity in the area is up, more folks are being licensed (and upgraded!), Field Day and special event participation is up, and memberships in several area clubs have increased (not just ours!). Even "old-timers" have said they are learning some new things, which just proves we are all never too old to learn. Several local clubs actively promote the net to their members, and build on topics we have covered during their meeting times.

In addition to the weekly net, we have started a local Yahoo group for contact throughout the week, and an "Elmers Corner" column in our newsletter and web page. Future plans include audio streaming, having a get-together for folks to put names and calls together with faces, as well as some online participation events to encourage more activity and interaction. We are also looking at the possibility of starting an annual one-day seminar in the fall offering several levels of seminars.

### **An Honor and an Inspiration**

Several months ago our club president received an exciting email from a club in Toledo, Ohio telling us about a net they started similar to ours. Here is the main text of the Email:

**Subject: Toledo Mobile Radio Association Newcomers & Elmers Net**

Gary  
FYI...

*Just wanted to pass on the good news of how successful our Northwest Ohio Newcomers & Elmers Net has been. We started this net 11/24/2013 after reading about your net and the graduation of our November 2013 Tech Licensing Class. Our Sunday night TMRA Q & A Net had fallen into disuse. We wanted to give it a boost and give the new Techs a place to get on the air ASAP.*

*We started on the TMRA 2-meter repeater at 147.270 to be easy to find and tune into for the new folks with a new HT or mobile rig at 2000 hours on Sunday nights.*

*The first net had eight check-ins and lasted for 75 minutes, but the word soon got out and now we average twenty plus check-ins for 90 to 120 minutes! The net boosted our attendance for a Spring Tech Class and got a lot of new hams on the air in a friendly atmosphere of fellowship and learning.*

*As we celebrate our first year anniversary and the grad-*

*uation of another November Tech class we want to thank your club for the idea of this net and the outreach to the Newcomers in amateur radio. Our attendance at Field Day is up and our Technical Committee has sponsored several workshops for the Newcomers to build antennas and learn about amateur radio.*

*Club meetings are livelier with Newcomers attending and having face-to-face QSOs with the Elmers they have met on the net. The Elmers are rejuvenated with the enthusiasm of the Newcomers and look forward to the net and answering questions and giving advice.*

*In our Net Script we give OH-KY-IN Amateur Radio Society credit for the idea of the net and recommend your website for further information. -- 73, Dave Shugar KD8EVN Maumee, Ohio*

We are truly honored and inspired by what they have done!

### **Closing Thoughts**

There is nothing magical here or formulaic, just an effort to offer a place where new hams can feel comfortable exploring the possibilities of what amateur radio has to offer. In essence we have tried to create a safe place for new hams to feel relaxed and welcome. All it takes to get started are some friendly hams willing to help as Elmers; one or more folks willing to present topics each week, and various outlets to spread the word about the net.

Why not give a net like this a try in your town? I bet there are newcomers just waiting for the opportunity to connect with other hams, and a good amount of Elmers willing to help! I would love to hear your success story! If I can help or answer any questions, feel free to write me at the email address below.

*About the Author:*

*Robert Gulley AK3Q is an Extra-class amateur radio operator; SWL, milcom, utility and scanner enthusiast. Robert's love of the radio hobby started at a young age with AM DXing, and almost every area of radio is still fascinating to him. Robert was licensed in 2007 and quickly upgraded to Amateur Extra by May 2008. He has served as vice-president of the Northern Kentucky Amateur Radio Club, and is now the chair of the education committee for the OHKYIN Amateur Radio Society.*

*Robert enjoys writing about the hobby and has had articles published in QST and Monitoring Times, as well as writing regular columns for Antennex and Scanner Digest magazines. He has also authored several books on antennas (Antennas: The Basics and Beyond Volumes 1 & 2), and one on various radio topics (The Radio Corner Volume 1).*

*A retired professor and minister; he is now a full-time caretaker for his wife who has advanced multiple sclerosis. He is grateful for his wife's enthusiastic support of his various radio interests! ak3q@ak3q.com*

## **ARRL Santa Barbara Section**

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**<http://www.arrl.org/Groups/view/santa-barbara>**

**Santa Barbara Section Webpage**  
**<http://ARRLSB.org>**  
(A complete list of Section Appointments is available here.)

**Santa Barbara Section eMail Reflector Registration**  
**<http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/arrlsb>**  
Every Amateur in the Section should subscribe to this list.

### **Important Information:**

All existing Section Appointments remain in effect. An assessment program including a personal assessment by each of the appointees and a review of Section needs is being conducted in January.

Our Motto will continue to be “Success through Teamwork”. This means that in order to be successful and make Amateur Radio FUN, productive, and effective, we will all need to work together. Lots of opportunities for volunteering will be available.

Communications will be the primary goal in developing a successful team. This means all forms of internal communications between Amateurs, and an enhanced program of communications with the general public. Social Internet tools will be incorporated to enhance the involvement of younger generations.

Twitter - #ARRLSB

Facebook - @ARRLSB

### **I invite your participation**

Amateurs are needed to help prepare Public Relations releases, keep track of Clubs operating in the Section, maintain Activity Listings, maintain Net Listings, help us keep everyone in the Section informed. If you want to help send an email to: [K6IYK@ARRL.org](mailto:K6IYK@ARRL.org)

# General Information about the Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club, CVARC

## CVARC is a Special Service Club (SSC)

The Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club is an ARRL affiliated Special Service Club. To be recognized by the ARRL as a Special Service Club, the club must regularly show that it is actively involved in certain areas, including: New Ham Development and Training, Public Relations, Emergency Communications, Technical Advancement, and Operating Activities.

## Meetings and Location

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month, except December. The meeting location is the Community Room at the East County Sheriff Station, 2101 E. Olsen Road, Thousand Oaks. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. with a pre-meeting social and technical assistance session beforehand or as announced. Meetings are open to the public, and members are encouraged to bring friends.

Visitors are always welcome at our monthly meetings, and we do not pressure newcomers to join. If, however, you would like to support the club and its activities by becoming a member then we will be pleased to have you join.

## CVARC Membership Rates

The simplest way to join (or to renew) is to give a check bearing your name and address to the Treasurer in person or by mail. Make the check payable to "CVARC" and please put your call sign and email address on the memo line.

Current annual rates are: Regular Membership \$25. Family Membership \$30. Special discounts are available for new members (licensed in the last 12 months) \$10. Full-time Students \$10. Regular members renewing for multiple years \$20/year. Family members renewing for multiple years \$25/year. An application to join is found on the club website.

Name, call sign, or address changes may be e-mailed to the Treasurer.

## QUA CVARC

"QUA CVARC" is the club newsletter published monthly, not later than the Monday preceding the CVARC club meeting, by the Conejo Valley Amateur Radio Club, AA6CV, PO Box 2093, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358-2093.

Opinions expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the club, its board, or its members.

## Tax Deductible Donations to CVARC

CVARC is an IRS-certified 501(c)3 charitable organization and donations are deductible pursuant to IRS rules. If you have working radio equipment or ancillary equipment that you can and wish to donate to the club, please contact one of the board members and we will be happy to talk to you about the process to help fund and grow CVARC.

We cannot accept certain donations, and have to place some restrictions on them such as, no hazardous materials, nothing we could not sell, etc. If you are interested in donating, contact any board member at a meeting or via email.

Many companies will either grant or match employee's gifts to non-profit organizations like CVARC. Please determine if your company is among these and contact a board member for more details.

**For the current list of CVARC officers together with their contact information, please visit the club's web-site at <http://www.cvarc.org>. You may view past newsletters on the website.**