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Sonoma County Radio Amateurs, Inc.
PO Box 116
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

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The Radio Amateur is:

CONSIDERATE... never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

LOYAL... offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, and the American Radio Relay League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.

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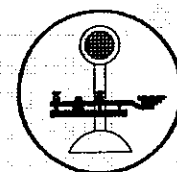
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SHORT SKIP



Sonoma County Radio Amateurs, Inc.

DECEMBER 1989

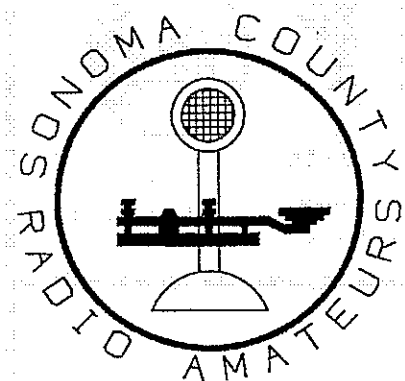
Club Station
W6LFJ

P.O. Box 116
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Repeater Station
WB6PVS

VOL 14 # 12





OFFICERS FOR 1989

PRESIDENT: Glen Crownover N6DNB 546-8955
 VICE PRESIDENT: John Wallack W6TLK 833-1873
 SECRETARY: Alan Bloom N1AL 538-7115
 TREASURER: Jim Pelmulder N6PTM 823-7947
 MEMBERS-AT-LARGE: Chuck Sabin N6DDK 795-2371
 Bob Olsten WD6DPE 546-5593
 REPEATER CHAIR: Jim Rutherford WB6PER 526-2972

SHORT SKIP STAFF:

EDITOR: Alan Bloom N1AL (e) 538-7115
 1578 Los Alamos Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95405 (d) 577-3981
 CIRCULATION MGR: Tracy Reese WB6TMY
 SWAP SHOP: Hank Davis W6DTV 823-7885

ARRL LIASON: Alan Bloom N1AL 538-7115
 ASST. DIRECTOR: Chuck Sabin N6DDK 795-2371
 BADGE CHAIRMAN: Jim Pelmulder N6PTM 823-7947
 CLUB HISTORIAN: Connie Freitas N6FYV

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 PROGRAMS: Bob Olsten WD6DPE 546-5593
 FIELD DAY: Don Boosinger KD6HQ 546-1217
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 TVI/RFI: John Lynch W6CCY 823-1357
 AWARDS: Steve Lund WA8LLY 823-4544
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Business cards: \$10

\$11 First 1/4 Column
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 (\$32 Full Page, 1 side)

Pre-printed inserts: \$32/sheet

Guaranteed circulation: 200/month
 AD DEADLINE: 15th of previous month

ARE YOU NOT AN SCRA MEMBER?

IF SO, then this is a complimentary copy. Our club is involved with almost every area of Amateur Radio: Repeaters (13/73), Field Day, license classes (Novice through Extra), volunteer exams, RACES, DX programs, packet (145.03), hidden xmtr hunts -- you name it.

We invite you to attend our next monthly meeting (see below) or check into the Tuesday night SCARS net on the 146.13/73 repeater at 7:00 PM. You will hear the latest Westlink Amateur Radio News broadcast, announcements of SCRA activities, and a Swap Shop. If you would like to join SCRA, please refer to the dues listed below. Hope to have an "eyeball" QSO with you at the next meeting! 73 ...

CLUB MEETINGS:

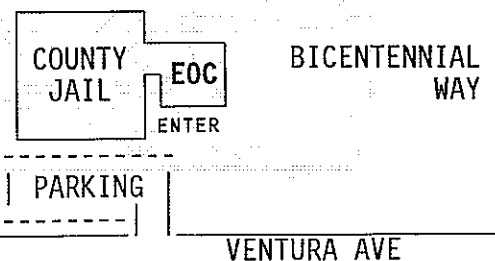
7:30 PM, 1st Wednesday each month at the EOC (Emergency Operations Center, see map below)
 All are welcome to attend.

NEXT MEETING: December 6, 1989

PROGRAM: ELECTIONS of club officers

DUES: \$12 per year, plus a one-time \$4.00 initiation fee. Dues are pro-rated \$1/month for new members. With membership, comes an SCRA call/name badge. Family membership: \$18

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Able, Boston... Yellow, Zulu

We have all heard the amazing array of phonetics used on the bands — but where did they originate?

Over the years we've often wondered how the present-day phonetic alphabet was derived, and indeed an old friend of ours looked into it many years ago with a view to writing something for publication. Unfortunately it never got finished — so imagine our pleasure when the following article fell on to the editorial doormat recently: R W Cornford, G4NGK explains:

"The name is Jim — John India Mexico — and the location is Dayton — David America Yankee Thomas Oboe Norway." An imaginary contact, but one which is quite typical insofar as it demonstrates the use of phonetics which are still being used years after the introduction of a standard international alphabet. Why do they persist, and where do they originate?

It seems that old alphabets — like old soldiers — never die but only fade away; they fade so slowly because it appears to be impossible to 'unlearn' the first alphabet with which one first becomes reasonably familiar. You will frequently hear youthful-sounding stations carefully using current phonetics and then for some reason getting slightly flustered; they then immediately lapse into phonetics which were last used forty-odd years ago when the operator in question was probably wearing a tin hat!

As far as origins are concerned, it is clear that the problem of ensuring accuracy in verbal communications existed long before the advent of radio and the old joke about the message which started out as "send reinforcements, we are going to advance" and ended up as "send three and fourpence — we are going to a dance." That particular one was not only pre-decimalisation but also in all probability pre-1900. However, all joking stopped in 1914 when precision in such things became — quite literally — a matter of life or death, and soon all officers and NCOs of front-line units were familiar with what was sometimes called 'signalese'. By this was meant phonetics covering eight commonly transposed letters. It has

often been stated that this part-alphabet evolved informally but it was, in fact, prepared (except for DON, added in 1914) as early as 1904 by the professional signallers of the British Army — at that time the Telegraph Battalion of the Royal Engineers.

FULL ALPHABETS

Full phonetic alphabets were produced by the United States Army in 1916 and by the Royal Navy in 1917. Rather surprisingly, the British Army did not adopt a full alphabet until 1927, and indeed for some purposes Royal Signals personnel were still using phonetics for only fourteen of the twenty-six letters as late as 1938. Following the entry of the United States into the Second World War, the production of a common phonetic alphabet for use by all Allied forces was obviously essential. One was duly produced early in 1942 and taken into use in June 1943. However, in March 1956 all NATO forces adopted the alphabet currently in use whose origin is discussed later.

Digressing for a moment, one might speculate that it was in the 1914-18 period that troops with little to do devised the comic alphabets of the form 'Ay for 'orses, B for mutton, etc which became quite well-known during the 1920s and 30s; they were extensively featured in theatre and cabaret by Clapham and Dwyer, who were highly popular contemporary entertainers.

In the field of amateur radio, it has unfortunately not been possible

RADIO COMMUNICATION August 1989

to establish the date at which guidance in the use of phonetics was first given. However, by the mid-1930s the ARRL was suggesting the use of either the US Army alphabet of 1916 with some variations or that used by Western Union. At some point after World War II the ARRL produced the first — and probably the only — phonetic alphabet intended specifically for use by amateurs; this was still being quoted in books produced for the amateur radio market during the 1970s and indeed is still occasionally heard in survivals such as 'Q R Mary' and 'Q R Nancy'. Enquiries suggest that in the inter-war years, British amateurs used either phonetics picked up during contacts with fellow enthusiasts in the USA or those used by the Post Office on international telephone circuits. It has not been possible to date these, although the composition of the 'B' Code strongly suggests 1920-30. Code 'A' may have set the fashion for using names of cities, states and countries as phonetics, and it is interesting to note that a few of these ('Baltimore' and 'Washington' especially) are still widely used.

INTERNATIONAL USE

It seems clear that some early alphabets were constructed on a very unscientific and indeed casual basis; there are a few obviously humorous examples and some words such as CHARLIE are clearly unsuitable. However, when it became necessary in the aftermath of World War II to formulate a phonetic alphabet for international use in the rapidly expanding field of civil aviation, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) had before it the results of studies made in the USA and considered during a series of meetings in the late 1940s. Even so, the version eventually approved and taken into use in April 1952 was continually scrutinized in operational use, and changes were made in respect of six letters. The amended alphabet — which included our old friend CHARLIE — came into use in the form in which we know it today in March 1956. It was adopted by all forces in NATO later in the same year and — after twenty years of both civil and military use — was approved for all branches of radio communication by the Big Daddy of all the regulatory bodies, the International Telecommunications Union, in Appendix 16 of the 1976 Radio Regulations. The table opposite shows the various alphabets mentioned in the text; no doubt there are others.

1904 BRITISH ARMY	1916 US ARMY	1917 ROYAL NAVY	1927 BRITISH ARMY	WESTERN UNION	1943 ALLIED SERVICES	ARRL	BRITISH A	TELECOM B	1956 ICAO
A ACK	ABLE	APPLES	ACK	ADAMS	ABLE	ADAM	AMSTERDAM	ALFRED	ALFA
B BEER	BOY	BUTTER	BEER	BOSTON	BAKER	BAKER	BALTIMORE	BENJAMIN	BRAVO
C CAST	CHARLIE	CHARLIE	CHICAGO	CHARLIE	BAKER	BAKER	CASABLANCA	CHARLES	CHARLIE
D DON (1914)	DOCK	DUFF	DON	DENYER	DOG	DAVID	DENMARK	DAVID	DELTA
E EASY	EDWARD	EDWARD	EDWARD	EDWARD	EASY	EDWARD	EDISON	EDWARD	ECHO
F FOX	FREDDY	FREDDY	FRANK	FOX	FRANK	FRANK	FLORIDA	FREDERICK	FOXTROT
G GEORGE	GEORGE	GEORGE	GEORGE	GEORGE	GEORGE	GEORGE	GALLIPOLI	GEORGE	GOLF
H HAVE	HARRY	HARRY	HENRY	HOW	HENRY	HENRY	HAVANA	HARRY	HOTEL
I ITEM	INK	INK	IDA	ITEM	IDA	IDA	ITALIA	ISAAC	INDIA
J JIG	JOHNNIE	JOHNNIE	JOHN	JIG	JOHN	JOHN	JERUSALEM	JACK	JULIETT
K KING	KING	KING	KING	KING	KING	KING	KILOGRAMME	KING	KILO
L LOVE	LONDON	LONDON	LINCOLN	LOVE	LEWIS	LEWIS	LIVERPOOL	LONDON	LIMA
M EMMA	MIKE	MONKEY	MONKEY	MIKE	MARY	MARY	MADAGASCAR	MARY	MIKE
N NAN	NUTS	NUTS	NEW YORK	NAN	NANCY	NANCY	NEW YORK	NELLIE	NOVEMBER
O OPAL	ORANGE	ORANGE	OCEAN	OBOE	OTTO	OTTO	OSLO	OLIVER	OSCAR
P PUP	PUDDING	PIP	PETER	PETER	PETER	PETER	PARIS	PETER	PAPA
Q QUACK	QUEENIE	QUEEN	QUEEN	QUEEN	QUEEN	QUEEN	QUEBEC	QUEEN	QUEBEC
R RUSH	ROBERT	ROBERT	ROBERT	ROGER	ROBERT	ROBERT	ROMA	ROBERT	ROMEO
S ESSES	SAIL	SUGAR	SUGAR	SUGAR	SUSAN	SUSAN	SANTIAGO	SAMUEL	SIERRA
T TOC	TARE	TOMMY	TOC	THOMAS	TARE	THOMAS	TRIPOLI	TOMMY	TANGO
U UNIT	UNCLE	UNCLE	UNION	UNCLE	UNION	UNION	UPPSALA	UNCLE	UNIFORM
V VIC	VINEGAR	VIC	VICTOR	VICTOR	VICTOR	VICTOR	VALENCIA	VICTOR	VICTOR
W WATCH	WILLIE	WILLIAM	WILLIAM	WILLIAM	WILLIAM	WILLIAM	WASHINGTON	WILLIAM	WHISKEY
X X-RAY	XERXES	X-RAY	X-RAY	X-RAY	X-RAY	X-RAY	XANTIPPE	X-RAY	X-RAY
Y YOKE	YELLOW	YORKER	YOUNG	YOKER	YOUNG	YOUNG	YOKOHAMA	YELLOW	YANKEE
Z ZED	ZEBRA	ZEBRA	ZERO	ZEBRA	ZEBRA	ZEBRA	ZURICH	ZEBRA	ZULU

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

At the SCRA Board Meeting November 8, 1989, N6DNB proposed the following amendment to the bylaws:

Replace bylaw #6

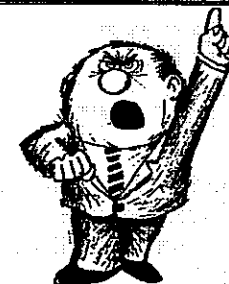
"One fifth of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum at general meetings. Four voting Directors shall constitute a quorum of the board."

With:

"The voting membership present at a general meeting shall constitute a quorum. Four voting Directors shall constitute a quorum of the board."

The board voted (m/s N6DDK/N6PTM) to submit this change to the club at the December meeting.

EDITORIAL: THE BYLAW CHANGE —



I don't think we should eliminate the quorum altogether -- otherwise any SCRA member could legally call a "meeting" of only one member and enact any motion he wished.

Also, I would like to change the quorum for Board meetings. The number 4 was intended to be half the Board, but right now we only have 7 Board members due to the lack of an Activities Chairman. If we had 4 officers resign, we couldn't hold a Board meeting.

At the December meeting, I plan to move to amend Glen's motion so that bylaw 6 will read:

"One tenth of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum at general meetings. One half of the voting Directors shall constitute a quorum of the Board."

- N1AL

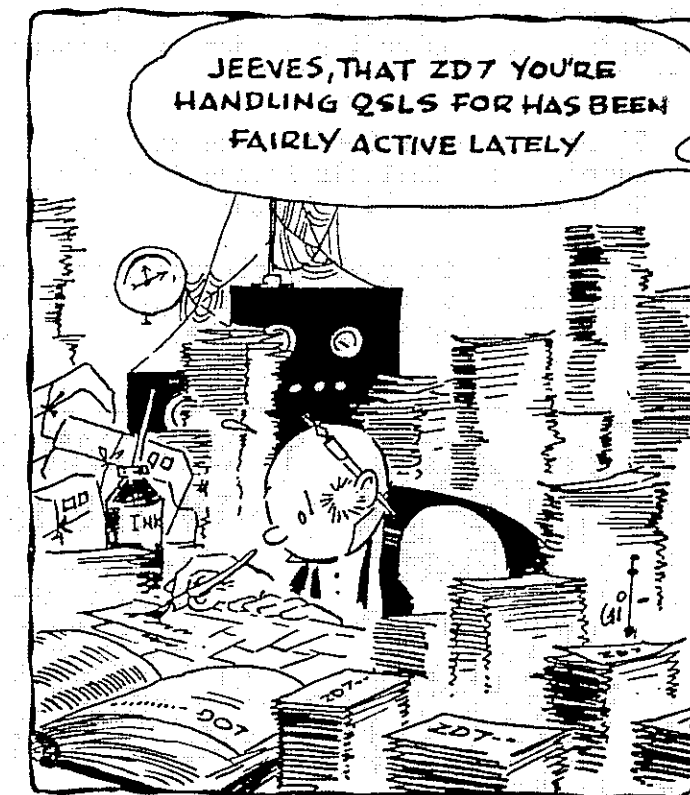
NOTICE: THERE WILL BE A MEETING IN DECEMBER

For many years, we have skipped the December meeting in favor of the annual Christmas Party. This year, there is no party, and we will have a meeting at the normal time and place: EOC, Wednesday December 6, 7:30 PM.

PRIZES: In lieu of the hundreds of \$\$\$ we normally spend on the Christmas Party, we will have some very nice ham radio prizes at the December meeting. We'll have some nice refreshments, too. If you only make one meeting this year, this is the one to go to.

ELECTIONS: We plan to hold elections of officers and vote on the bylaw change. Please come so we can have a quorum.

Mark KB6ZOL is coordinating the Dunbar School Amateur Radio Club and needs someone to demo packet, RTTY, ATV etc. He could also use some equipment for the club station. Mark Burnell KB6ZOL 575-5332.



October 24, 1989

To: Bob Sones WB6EKV

Dear Bob,

We can never adequately thank you for your generous support of the 5th Annual Waves to Wine Bike Tour. Because of you, it was the most successful fund-raising event in the history of the Northern California Chapter. We had 1600 cyclists who raised well over \$450,000.

It is heartening to see the impact the funds raised from the Bike Tour have on the daily lives of people in Northern California who live with MS. The education seminars, equipment loans, counseling and home health care that you have helped make possible will dramatically increase the quality of life of our clients.

Our goal is to put the MS Society out of business. With your continued support, we'll be able to find the cause and cure of the number-one disabling disease of young adults.

Thank you again, Bob, for your generous donation. We couldn't have done it without you.

Sincerely, Devon Cuddy, Fund-Raising
Coord., Nat. Multiple Sclerosis Society,
Northern California Chapter.

(P.S.) Bob. Please give my eternal gratitude to everyone. You guys are amazing! Hope all is well after the earthquake.

(THE FIX IS IN...)

The Nominating Committee has proposed the following slate of Officers for 1990:

President:	John	W6TLK
Vice President:	Jim	N6PTM
Secretary:	Al	N1AL
Treasurer:	Phillip	KC6BSI
Members-at-Large:	Bob	WD6DPE
	Chuck	N6DDK
	Rick	N6RXA

There will only be 2 Members at Large. Come to the December meeting, and elect officers to lead SCRA into the next decade!

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS

SINCE LAST MONTH

S. Lewis Newton KK6BK	Kenneth Kerwin K6UXO
4620 Rock Meadow Pl.	PO Box 1309
Santa Rosa, CA 95405	Forestville, CA 95436
538-1370	

We now have 185 members.

A Christmas lament -- "YAESU, Joy of Ham's desiring." Tnx LARK



SCRA MINUTES

November 1, 1989



The meeting was called to order by President Glenn Crownover N6DNB at 7:40 PM. Other officers present were Vice President John Wallack W6TLK, Secretary Al Bloom N1AL, Treasurer Jim Pelmulder N6PTM, and Member-at-Large Bob Olsten WD6DPE.

QUORUM: From out of the blue, Russ O'Neill N6KMJ objected that we didn't have a quorum. The bylaws were checked, and sure enough, we need 20% of club membership, or currently 37 members. (35 were present.) For this reason, we postponed the scheduled elections of officers for the 1990 model year.

PROGRAM: A videotape on the International Mission Radio Association (IMRA) was shown.

The **EARTHQUAKE** was discussed by RACES Radio Officer Jim Rutherford WB6PER. There were 98 operators in the log -- thanks especially to Mike N1DJE who opeated from the EOC. We filled 16 shifts in the earthquake region outside the county, thanks to WB6PER, N6UYB, N6RMW, N6FYV, WD6DXW and N6OLD.

N6RXA wanted to know if non-RACES members will be used in emergencies. Jim replied that we prefer to use trained RACES members, but will also use others as necessary.

Other points: Coordinate Health and welfare traffic with the Red Cross -- they maintain lists of victims. DO NOT TRANSMIT unless needed. We need to set up a training class to qualify some more Net Control Stations. **FREQUENCIES:** 146.73 Tactical Net (emergency communications) and 145.35 Resource Net (checking in and getting assignments).

The **CHRISTMAS PARTY** has not been organized as yet. Best bet looks like a potluck at the Windsor Mobile Home Park. [But see p. 2]

ELECTIONS will have to be held at the Christmas Party or at the meeting in Jan.

N1AL handed out some order forms for cut-rate *Callbook* subscriptions.

The **FLEA MARKET** netted +\$129 according to Treasurer Jim N6PTM. Not bad, considering the weather we had.

A **\$100 DONATION TO THE SALVATION ARMY**, as we did last year, was suggested by Connie N6FYV. The Board will handle this.

EDUCATION: John WB6FRZ's 10-week code upgrade class just ended. The test session will be next Wednesday at 7 PM. John will start a Novice class on Friday, 6 PM at the Salvation Army Rehab Center in Healdsburg. It will run for 12 weeks, 1 1/2 hours per night. 13 are signed up so far.

WB7AMX is the head of the Salvation Army center and has offered their 600-acre site to us for **FIELD DAY**. (Applause)

The Member lottery went unclaimed again -- it now holds \$39.11.

For lack of a quorum, the meeting was NOT ADJOURNED at 9:21 PM.

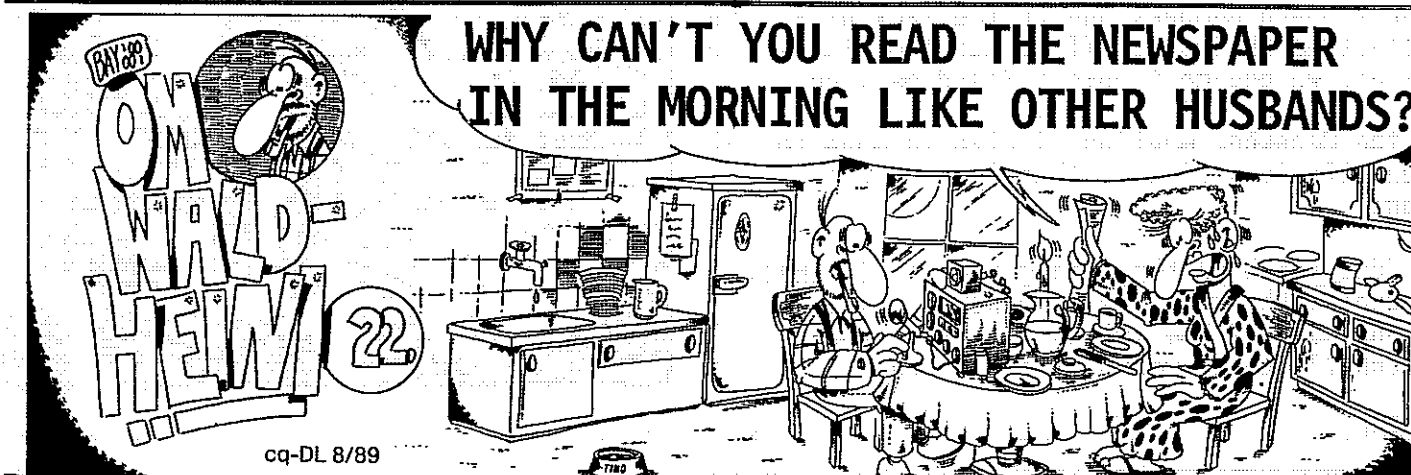
Respectfully submitted by Secretary Al Bloom N1AL.

TREASURER'S REPORT

FOR MONTH ENDING October 31, 1989



ACCOUNT	REVENUE	EXPENSE
Activities (Field Day)		55.07
Refreshments at meetings ..	4.59	42.80
Dues and Initiations	68.00	
Fund-Raisers (Flea Market).	422.87	
Badges		14.84
Misc(Donation)	100.00	
	(Unknown) 20.00	
Repeater		38.16
Short Skip Newsletter	74.00	30.00
Westlink Report		100.00
Membership Supplies.....	55.50	
	744.96	280.87
ASSETS:		
General Fund Account	1773.07	
Cash/checks on hand	104.42	
Total General Fund	1877.49	
Total Repeater Fund	1785.07	de N6PTM





HAM RADIOS ILLEGAL? Recently several state and local governments have outlawed the use of any radio capable of monitoring police or public service frequencies. In New Jersey, you must now obtain police permission to use any type of shortwave radio in a car.

The ARRL Executive Committee has instructed Counsel Chris Imlay N3AKD to request FCC for a declaratory ruling to pre-empt local laws restricting Amateurs from using any Amateur equipment. *Tnx Westlink Report*

ROD STAFFORD KB6ZV was unopposed in the recent ARRL Director elections and will start his third term Jan 1. *Tnx ARRL Letter*

CHOO CHOO . . .



Did everyone see the article and large full-color photo of Kermit W6JFN on page 1 of section D in the November 12 *Press Democrat*?

I never knew that Kermit was born on an indian reservation. He had 19 sisters and brothers but was raised as an "only child". He stormed the beaches of the Philippines a week before General Douglas MacArthur made his historic return, and he is now the chief engineer of one of the nation's most elaborate model railroads.

I'll bring a copy of the article along to the December club meeting. ■

Radio Shack

STORE NO. 3855

ZANE BATES
MANAGER

510 FARMERS LANE
SANTA ROSA, CA. 95405

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546-8423



COMING EVENTS:

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Tuesdays at 7 PM.

VE EXAMS HOTLINE NR:
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DECEMBER:

- 1-3 - ARRL 160 Meter Contest
- 4 - RACES etc. Net, 7:30 PM
- 6 - SCRA meeting 7/7:30 PM
- 9-10 - ARRL 10 Meter Contest
- 18 - RACES etc. Net, 7:30 PM
- 21 - CDF/VIP Meeting 7:30 PM
- 31-Jan 1 - ARRL Straight Key Night

JANUARY 1990:

- 1 - RACES etc. Net, 7:30 PM
- 3 - SCRA meeting 7/7:30 PM
- 3 - ARRL RTTY Roundup
- 15 - RACES etc. Net, 7:30 PM
- 18 - CDF/VIP Meeting 7:30 PM
- 20-22 - ARRL VHF Sweepstakes
- 26-28 - CQWW 160M Test, CW
- Jan 27-Feb 4 - ARRL Novice Roundup

FEBRUARY:

- 5 - RACES etc. Net 7:30 PM
- 7 - SCRA meeting 7/7:30 PM
- 15 - CDF/VIP Meeting 7:30 PM
- 19 - RACES etc. Net 7:30 PM

MARCH:

- 7 - SCRA meeting 7/7:30 PM
- 1987 DUES PAYABLE!
- 10 - First Foothill College Flea Market

SEPTEMBER:

- 15 - SCRA Flea Mart, Seb. Holy Ghost Hall

After Field Day we didn't feel well.
Something we disagreed with was eating us.

Tnx ARNS Bulletin

A-O-K ON KOSRAE

by Nancy Vander Velde AA6EA

At the Kosrae International Airport, there is a public telephone. To travelers from the United States, such a sight may not seem to be remarkable, but in Micronesia, public phones are often too few and far between, and their performance makes their existence of questionable value. Yes, this is just one case of things that are A-O-K on Kosrae.

No phone lines are visible leading from the phone to the Kosraean terminal, which is miles and miles out of town. So how does it work? The "rural phone" system in the more out-of-the-way sites on this steep-cliffed island use a full-duplex VHF system that not only is an efficient means of communication, but prevents the spectacular landscape from being marred by unsightly poles and wires.

These rural phones, as well as the regular phone lines found in greater abundance around the Lelu/Tofol capital area, are all controlled by a surprisingly large, and very neat, communications office. The equipment may be slick and modern looking, but a home town friendliness is maintained. The operator still can track down a person, even if they are not near their home phone.

Not far from the communications office in Tofol is the Kosrae state-run AM radio station, WTFL, broadcasting at 1500 MHz in both English and Kosraean. On Kosrae itself, the quality of transmission is "mwona" (good). However DX-ing WTFL from afar is difficult due to a high-power easy-listening station from Honolulu on the same channel. But for an island of only 7000 people to have its own language station at all is, yes, A-O-K.

Ham radio is equally A-O-K on Kosrae. The number of operators is in proportion to the limited population of the state. Kosrae is also a popular sailboat port of call, so quite a few "marine mobile" calls drift through every year.

Like all of Micronesia, Kosrae suffers from the lack of a consistent spelling system. All the indigenous tongues were spoken long before the advent of Westerners man and

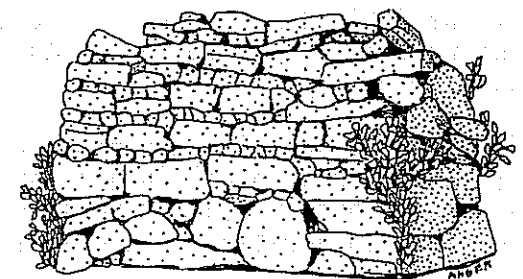
their alphabet. These "lettered" people tried to represent non-European sounds with European symbols. That is why "Kosrae" will often be written "Kusaie" on older maps, and the ruins of the ancient capital city of "Lelu" are also spelled "Lelah" or "Lele", depending upon the mood of the writer.

In Kosraean, "yes" is consistently spelled "A-O-K" and is actually pronounced as it is spelled (aow-k). A concerted effort is being put forth by linguists throughout the Pacific to standardize spelling. But it is really only the outsiders who have trouble with the variable spellings. Kosraeans have always called their home "Kosrae", regardless if others wrote "Kusaie".

Is English all that much better? Take the term "A-O-K" itself, which comes to us from the space program. "A" appears to be from "all" or "A-1", "top quality" -- that is understandable. But "OK" is, according to most linguists, an abbreviation of "Oll Korrekt"! Who can't spell?

Even the "great white fathers" who determine the world's call signs have trouble spelling things in Micronesia. Until recently, the Federated States of Micronesia, of which Kosrae is one of four states, was KC6, but this is now under transition -- V76 is more accurate. So, don't complain about Micronesian spelling, just enjoy it.

Good radio communications and inconsistent spelling seem to be opposites in the refined discipline of conveying information from one person to another. But, just as the public phone at the Kosrae airport with no visible wires leading to it may seem to uninformed outsiders as if it should not work, the same with the "creative" spelling system. They both do the job; that is what is important. On the Micronesian island of Kosrae, both types of communication are, yes, A-O-K. ■



Stone ruins of the ancient royal city of Lelu, Kosrae are surrounded by the modern town.

HAMS HELP

SACRAMENTO (UPI) -- Minutes after Tuesday's earthquake disaster, when people were desperate to communicate and telephone lines were suddenly jammed, ham radio operators at state emergency headquarters took to the airwaves.

No sooner had the earth stopped shaking when the elite corps known as RACES -- Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services -- swung into action.

They manned the radio room at state Office of Emergency Services headquarters 7 miles from the Capitol and have kept it going around the clock, receiving and relaying reports on death, damage and destruction as well as demands for supplies and assistance.

"In an emergency you never have enough communications," Stan Harter, assistant chief of telecommunications for the governor's Office of Emergency Services said in a Friday interview.

Harter supervises the radio operation that acts as a backup for telephone communications in emergencies and also links the OES to disaster areas without phone service.

Hams relayed reports on road closures, whether someone's relative had turned up dead or alive, and instructions to move supplies around.

Messages flew from the earthquake ravaged communities to government emergency centers.

"We're purely communicators. We don't originate anything. We don't act on messages," said William Musladin, a RACES operator and retired Air Force lieutenant colonel who has been tinkering with radios since 1934.

Three of the OES's six regional offices statewide were heavily involved in the earthquake emergency.

Most of the state agencies and many county and city governments in California have RACES ham operators on standby to jump in and move vital information in a crisis.

In event of major fires, floods or earthquakes, the radio room becomes a

nerve center of the OES, the agency that coordinates all state agencies involved and takes stock of the situation from hour to hour.

The radio room has a mixture of old and new technology. Venerable two-way radios squawk with party line chatter from far away voices, and silent high-tech computers flash a bulletin board of information on a screen.

The "hams" who operate the radio room are volunteers, federally licensed and registered with the OES. There are 35 RACES members in the Sacramento area.

"They put in thousands of hours (of work)," Harter said.

Les Ballinger, assistant radio officer for the state Department of Transportation and a radio buff since high school, began serious ham work after a stint in Korea with the Navy. He shows up during major brush fires to string up two-way radio communications at remote California Department of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service fire camps to put them in touch with the outside world.

"It's exciting going into a fire camp with no electricity," Ballinger said, recalling how more than once he has used a slingshot to hoist a radio antenna into a tall pine tree.

The system came in handy during the 1986 floods across Sacramento and has been relied upon heavily during every emergency since, including the 1988 "49er" brushfire.

Today's two-way radio technology has added new features the hams of yesteryear didn't have -- computer printouts of the information so there is a tangible record, and color video cameras that can photograph a disaster from land or air and immediately transmit the pictures to a television screen in the radio room.

"You feel good when it's over. There's personal satisfaction in being able to help out," said William Pennington, who retired from the Air Force as a master sergeant in July. He has been a licensed ham for 27 years.

Tnx Patty Winter N6BIS via Unix Notes

ARRL UPDATE: LICENSE FEES DELETED!

by Steve Mendelsohn WA2DHF, Hudson Div. Dir.

The Conference Committee on HR 3299, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989, has approved deletion of the amateur license fees from the legislation.

In its report released today, the Conference Committee stated: "Both the House bill and the Senate bill include fees on licensees in the amateur radio service. The Conference Report strikes all of the fees for amateur radio licensees. The Conferees recognize that amateur licensees do not operate for profit and play an important public safety role in times of disaster or emergency."

There is essentially no chance of the fees being reintroduced into the legislation when it is considered for final passage in the House and Senate.

We have every reason to be proud of the League's success in reversing the tide on the fee issue. In the current budgetary environment, avoiding fees altogether is an enormous accomplishment which was achieved against heavy odds. Hearty congratulations are due all concerned, and especially to our congressional relations consultants, Chwat-Weigend Associates, Perry Williams, and the many League field volunteers who played an active role in writing to their Senators and Representatives helping in the defeat.

Tnx Unix Notes

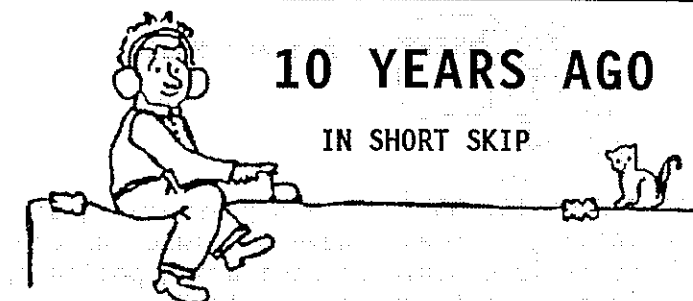
FLEA MARKET

The Flea Market next year will be at the Holy Ghost Hall on Mill Station Road in Sebastopol. Thanks to Hank W6DTV, the place is already reserved and the \$100 deposit paid.



10 YEARS AGO

IN SHORT SKIP



Short Skip had a new editor as of December 1979. Lyle N6BLN, with the help of Hank W6DTV took over from Ron WB6NBR. Beware though, Ron will continue to contribute the Pot Pourri column and "he has big ears."

Novice classes were nearing completion, and volunteers were needed to help Hoppy K6MUP in refurbishing some old radios to get the new kids on the air.

The Swap Shop column included such gems as a Heath Apache transmitter for \$40, the matching Mohawk receiver for \$75 and a 36-foot triangular aluminum tower with rotor plate and teflon bearing for \$65.

\$\$\$

Here's a fund-raising idea for the club in the years ahead:

We could produce and sell CW practice tapes for the new no-code license. Guaranteed to eliminate the 0 wpm plateau.

Well, it's a thought...