



CLUB STATION
K6SON

Short Skip

The Newsletter of

Sonoma County Radio Amateurs, Inc.

P.O. Box 116, Santa Rosa, CA 95402-0116 707-579-9608

<http://www.sonomacountyradioamateurs.com>

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REPEATER STATION
W6SON

Volume 36, Number 10

October 2011



October SCRA Update

by Darryl Paule, KI6MSP
SCRA President

With this newsletter there are just two months left in this year.

Elections are next month, November 2011. All board and director positions are open for those who would like to step up and serve their club. SCRA needs leaders that are committed to serving and supporting the club. This includes growth with new members, training, public service events, disaster trainings, keeping SCRA and amateur radio in the public fore front. This is your club, and it doesn't function and progress without your support. So I invite all of you to look and see what you could to further support your club.

There have been a lot of new events this year that will continue in the future. In particular there is the Mendo Rally and the Dxpedition. There are also a couple of new events that will be occurring this year:

First the KRCB Wine auction, October 14th that SCRA will put together a phone team to take the bids. There are two purposes for doing this event. First a part of amateur radio is public service. Supporting our public service T V stations that serve our community. Secondly putting SCRA out to the community as to what we are about and amateur radio.

Another new event that is in the works for November 5th is the opportunity to have a booth at the North Bay Science Fair. Science is a part of amateur radio we will be able to demonstrate to the public and other science fair participants the many aspects of amateur

radio from CW to digital and other modes of communication in between.

For further information on either of these events you can contact me at ki6msp@arrl.net

Last weekend was the W2W bike ride. This was my first time at being the Com Boss for such a large event. Everything went smoothly. I learned a lot and enjoyed working this event in a different capacity.

October 1st is the Gran Fondo bike ride that supports the Amgen bike tour that will take place next year in Santa Rosa. The Start/Finish will be in downtown Santa Rosa.

If you're planning on working either of these events contact Craig, the public service wrangler at k6xlt@sonic.net.

The program for the month of October will be on test equipment. There will be a lot to learn here about the various ways to test your gear. As well as reviewing current procedures.

October also features the JOTA event for the Boy Scouts and other scouting organizations. Please contact John kg6pep@arrl.net to participate in this event. That weekend is also the Pacifcon which will be in San Jose this year. Go to <http://www.pacifcon.org/> for ticket and other information.

October is also the last technician class of the year. Contact John wb6frz@arrl.net for further information on this class.

Continued on page 3



2011 Club Officers

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| President | Darryl M. Paule ki6msp@arrl.net | KI6MSP 707-544-8874 |
| Vice President | Charlie Sikes | KZ6T |
| Treasurer | Jack Christensen | K6ROW |
| Secretary | Evelyn Chavez | KI6PAY |
| Director | John Felton | KE5RI |
| | John Chavez | KG6PEP |
| Past President | Dave Santori | KF6CLG |

Committee Lineup/Contacts

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|--------|--------------|
| Membership | Mike Von der Porten | AD6YB | |
| Program | Charlie Sikes | KZ6T | |
| EmComm | Rich Freitas | KF6SZA | |
| Field Day | Brian Torr | N6IYY | 707-575-5871 |
| Activity | | | |
| Public Service | Craig Gaever | K6XLT | 707-545-4133 |
| Education | John Breckenridge | WB6FRZ | 707-217-1017 |
| Repeater | John Felton | KE5RI | |
| Volunteer Exam | | | |
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| Antenna | | | |
| Ordinance-Legal | Lee Dibble | KE6EAQ | 707 544-1675 |
| Public Relations | Bill McCall | W6WDM | 707 538-2844 |
| Public Relations | Jeff Basham | KK6JAB | 707-291-7355 |
| Refreshments | Jim Draeger | KI6REK | |
| ARRL DXCC/WAS | | | |
| Manager | Chuck Ternes | N6OJ | 707 763-2528 |
| Club Raffle | John Chavez | KG6PEP | |
| Member Badges | Ken Rawles | N6PWV | |

Short Skip & Web Staff

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| | we4moo@donaldlaird.com | |
| Webmaster | Sutter Laird | KI6ZON |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| SCRA Hotline | 707-579-9608 |
| SCRA E-Mail | scra@sonomacountyradioamateurs.com |
| SCRA Web site | http://www.sonomacountyradioamateurs.com |

Tuesday Night Net

Remember to check in to the SCRA net each Tuesday evening on the 147.315+(PL 88.5) repeater at 7:00 PM. Announcements are made of upcoming SCRA and other amateur radio activities in the broadcast.

Short Skip Advertising Rates

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Business Cards | \$12 per month |
| 1st Quarter Column | \$13 per month |
| Each Additional Quarter Column | \$4 per month |
| Full page (one side) | \$35 per month |
| Pre-printed inserts (each) | \$35 per month |

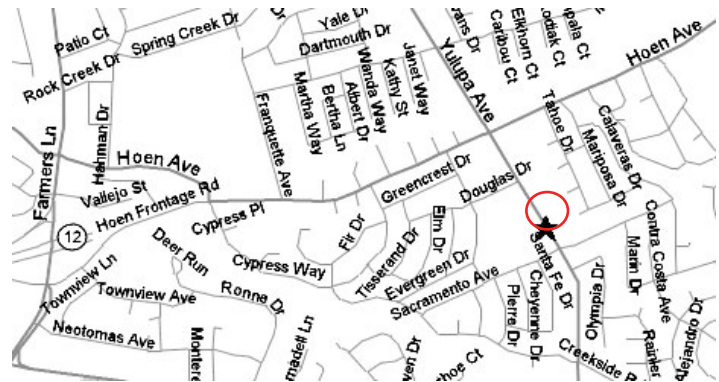
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SCRA Club Meetings

The club normally meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Exceptions are holidays or other big events.

Meeting location:
Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center
2050 Yulupa Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA



All are welcome!

Please join us at our next meeting. Anyone interested in Amateur Radio may be eligible for membership. A membership application is included in this newsletter. For more information, contact any SCRA officer, director or member.

Hungry before the meeting?

Join us for dinner! We meet at Star Restaurant,
1350 Farmers Lane, Santa Rosa.
People start showing up at 5:30 PM.
No RSVP is required.

See you there every month except December.

If you are not getting the ARRL San Francisco Section news by e-mail and you are an ARRL member, be sure to subscribe under your Members Only information or go to this Web site:

<http://www.arrl.org/Groups/view/san-francisco>



JOTA Help Needed!

WOW! I don't know how it happened but "Jamboree On The Air" is just a few weeks away. As many of you know, SCRA operators have helped with this world wide Scouting event for several years now. The Jamboree or JOTA is always the third full weekend in October. This year's JOTA will be held at the Vineyard of Faith on Arata Lane and Hwy 101 in Windsor, on October 15 and 16.

Last years JOTA had more than 700,000 Scouts and Girl Guides from more than 100 countries participating. It took the support of thousands of Hams to make it happen.

Over the last few years, our local JOTA effort has given hundreds of boys and girls the opportunity to speak with other scouts around the country and around the world. We have given these Scouts the chance to visit and learn from one another using the magic of radio. But we haven't stopped there. We have given them more than just 15 minutes of air time. With SCRA's support, we've also demonstrated many different types of radio operating modes, everything from HF CW to digital modes and live satellite contacts. We've also helped many Scouts work toward their advancement and have included teaching Radio Merit Badge courses each year.

These young boys and girls come and stay for hours. They learn about everything from Earth Satellites to the Solar cycles. We have also had young scouts catch the bug like the rest of us, sign up for SCRA's Technician Licensing course, and earn their Amateur Radio License.

By the time they leave, they've had their fill of Scouting and Radio and crafts and free candy. And by the time that the Scouts leave, we Hams are feeling tired and a little worn out, but also very satisfied and proud of our radio hobby. This public service event is different from the many of others that SCRA supports. This event can't fall back on other forms of communications. JOTA can't happen without Amateur Radio and Amateur Radio operators. It takes Hams to get Scouts on the air.

You've been waiting for it. And yes, this is the part where I ask you to come out and support one more event. Come out and help us get more young people on the radio. We need help setting up operating positions on Friday, October 14th. We'll also need radio operators on Saturday and Sunday, October 15 & 16. If you can help make our local Radio Scouting event happen, please let me know. I'll put you to work. Please sign up to help at the SCRA membership meeting, or email me at KG6PEP@arrl.net or call me at 707-326-3000.

Remember the Scouts can't do it without you.
John KG6PEP

President's Message continued

There is something for everyone this month. Have fun!

As I mentioned at the beginning of this news letter there are the elections. Also there will be game night. In the past it has been Ham Radio Jeopardy.

December is our annual Christmas Holiday dinner in place of your regular meeting. Further information about this will be on the SCRA Web site, here, and the weekly net meetings

So far for this year SCRA has donated about 200 pounds of food to the Redwood Empire Food Bank. Last year SCRA donated about 800 pounds of food. This is another way that you can serve your community by supporting the food bank due to the large amount of people in this area that have little to no food. I started this program at the Christmas dinner in 2009.

73
Darryl
KI6MSP



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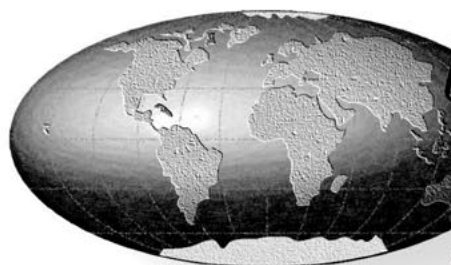
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- APRS Compatible
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- 200 Mems., CTCSS
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FT-2000 HF + 6M tcvr

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- 3 Band Parametric Mic EQ
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The Ultimate Radio!



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- 5 Watt out
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- 100 mems • Built-in TNC 1200 & 9600 Baud
- Front Panel GPS in • Rear DB-9 port
- CTCSS/DCS Encode/Decode built in

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2011 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

| Date | Program | Presenter |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Oct 5, 2011 | Test Equipment | N6IHY / WB6FRZ |
| Nov 2, 2011 | Elections / Game Night | |
| Dec 7, 2011 | Holiday Party, No Program | |

Sonoma County Radio Amateurs, Inc. Membership Application

Please Print Clearly

New ☐ Renewal ☐

Name _____ Call Sign _____ License Class _____ Date _____

Address _____ H Phone _____ W Phone _____

City/State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

ARRL Member? Yes ☐ No ☐ Receive Short Skip newsletter via email? Yes _____ No _____

Dues & Fees: March 1 to February 28

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Individual / Associate Member | \$24 (\$6.00/qtr) |
| Family Membership | \$36 (\$9.00/qtr) |
| Under 18 Membership | \$18 (\$3.00/qtr) |
| Badge | \$10 |

Badge Information

Call Sign _____
 First Name _____
 City _____

Payment Calculations: Make checks payable to SCRA

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Dues - Full Year | \$ _____ |
| Dues - | |
| Prorated _____ Qtrs. x \$ _____/qtr | \$ _____ |
| Badge | \$ _____ |
| Other - _____ | \$ _____ |
| Donation | \$ _____ |
| Total | \$ _____ |

Mail to: SCRA, P.O. Box 116, Santa Rosa, CA 95402



**Minutes of SCRA General Meeting 8/3/2011**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M.

The program was home brew and boat anchor. Members brought in antennas and other items that they made or adapted for all of us to see. Many thanks to all for great ideas and explanations.

Reports:

Charlie reported that the September program would be about satellite.

Jack reported about \$5500.00 spent, mostly for the trailer, and about \$200.00 in income.

John KG6PEP said the trailer needs racks and signage.

John WB6FRZ said 8 people passed the test after his last class. He mentioned those present.

John KE5RI was not present, but there have been no problems with the repeaters.

Craig still needs more people for 2 public service events.

There was no membership report, but it was said that Mike and Rich (ARES) are working with the firehouses for emergency preparation.

Sutter reported that the website is functional. He also requested that Short Skip articles should be sent to Donald more timely.

Old Business:

Pat said participants are ready for the Mendo Rally.

Charlie has one open spot for the DExpedition.

Darryl reminded all to support the food drive.

New Business:

Pat reported that he had more volunteers than free tickets for PCAM. It was approved that he buy 3 more tickets on a motion by John KG6PEP and Evelyn.

Darryl is still looking for more people to work the phones for KRCB on October 14. It would help publicize SCRA.

The club projector has problems. It was decided to repair or replace the projector for up to \$900.00 on a motion by John KG6PEP and Jack.

Charlie asked members to consider putting their names and calls, possibly emails, on a roster for all members with the possibility of opting out. People were in favor of the idea.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved on a motion by Charlie and John WB6FRZ.

Net control:

| | | |
|------|--------|--------|
| 8/9 | Brian | N6IIY |
| 8/16 | Jim | K6HKY |
| 8/23 | John | WB6FRZ |
| 8/30 | Sutter | KI6ZON |
| 9/6 | Darryl | KI6MSP |

The raffle netted \$38.00.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Evelyn



Cut out for your VIP Discount Card



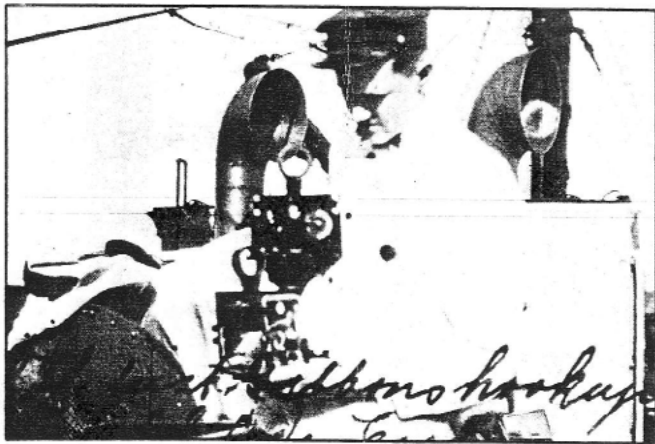
Radio Mystery

Charles Christian, W6CLC

Originally from Popular Communications, February 1990:

What a month for a cruise! Let's take one on the S/S Admiral Evans, courtesy of reader Charles Christian, SSB Network member SSB-32Q, of Santa Rosa, CA. Charles sent us a photo of his dad taken aboard that good ship in 1921 when he was a waiter aboard the Evans. This was a 2,393 ton steel steamer, 253 feet in length, that carried 194 passengers and a crew of 45. It was built in 1901 and spent much of its career in Alaskan trade, although it spent a few years in the early 1920's cruising between Portland and San Diego. The ship was to up for scrap in 1937.

In the photo Charles submitted, his dad is posing on the deck while holding several pieces of radio gear. Written in longhand across the bottom of the photo is the caption, "The first Gibbons hookup." Charles asks if we can put any of this together to shed some light on what the photo's all about.



"The first Gibbons hookup," wrote Charles Christian's dad about this photo in 1921. It seems to refer to the two radios he's holding, but the exact meaning is open to speculation.

First, let's note that the S/S Admiral Evans didn't turn up (under that name, anyway) in records until the early 1920's. It was first assigned the callsign KICZ on 425, 500, 730, and 1000 kHz. By 7928 the callsign had been changed to WGCB and the authorized frequencies were 123, 743, 375, 425, and 500 kHz-later modified to 143, 150, 157, 375, 425 and 500 kHz. However, what we see being held in the photo isn't wireless gear.

What we see is very early broadcast receiving equipment. The first commercial broadcasting stations were licensed beginning late in 1921, although a number of stations had been operating under experimental authorizations prior to that. Personally owning a radio receiver in 1921 was a definite status symbol, something worth having a photo while you displayed the equipment.

The reference to the "first Gibbons hookup" is a bit confusing in view of the photo being dated 1921. There was no brand of radio called a Gibbons, and the only significance I could find for that reference would be to Floyd Gibbons. Gibbons was a well known and very colorful reporter for the Chicago Tribune. His WWI military exploits had cost him an eye, and the eye-patch only added to his image and aided in making him somewhat of a national personality. Yes, Gibbons eventually became well known as a newscaster and a sportscaster, and for telling about his wartime adventures. I believe that Gibbons' broadcasting career began over Chicago's WGN, which commenced broadcasting on June 7, 1924 with Gibbons' debut on Christmas Eve of 1925. That was years after this photo was snapped.

It may be that Gibbons had made earlier appearances, and that's what the photo caption means. Or, it could be that a "Gibbons hookup" refers to something totally different, such as the name for a type of homebrewed circuit that Charles' dad had constructed in those days when receivers were so expensive. You may recall that sometimes early circuits were known by the names of their designers-Colpitts, Hartley, DeForest, Armstrong, and so on. Was the reference to the "first Gibbons hookup" intended to recall that, or something else?

We hope some of our readers can offer some thoughts on this. By the way, Charles' dad ended his nautical career in the early 1960's as Director of Passenger Service of Matson Lines in San Francisco. He passed away in 1972.

Gibbons Circuit Revisited

Last February we ran an old snapshot of someone holding a piece of apparatus. A handwritten inscription on the photo described the unit as a "Gibbons

Continued on page 8



Minutes of the General Meeting 9/07/2011

Introductions were made.

A very informative presentation was given by Clint Bradford K6LCS by Skype about Amsat. Did anyone work that next day pass? Many thanks to Mr. Bradford for a great program.

John WB6FRZ reminded all of the next tech class Oct. 21-23.

There was a report of static on the tail of the computer and Darryl will forward the report to John KE5RI.

Craig reported that Waves to Wine is about ready and will be handled by Darryl. He also said the Oct. 1 GranFondo has openings for help and that this is an excellent opportunity for hams to shadow others to learn. He mentioned the need for APRS.

Mike reported 107 members in SCRA at present.

Darryl again asked the members to support the food drive.

Darryl still needs people for the KRCB auction night phones.

New Business:

There will be elections at the November meeting for positions on the board of directors. Most positions will be open due to term limits. Please volunteer if you have any interest in working on the board.

John KG6PEP reminded all that he will need hams for Jamboree on the Air in October.

Net control:

| | | |
|------|-------|----------|
| 9/13 | Saraj | KI6TII |
| 9/20 | Steve | KI6VKJ ? |
| 9/27 | Craig | K6XLT |
| 10/4 | Brian | N6IYY |

There was a question about a picnic this year. No decisions were made.

Saraj received donated equipment. It was auctioned after the meeting.

The raffle netted \$35.00 to SCRA.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Evelyn

Radio Mystery, continued

hookup.” The hope was that one of our readers might step up to tell us what this “Gibbons” paraphernalia might be, because it wasn’t at all familiar to us.

To the rescue came Patrick W. Tracy, KB8AJI, of Toledo, OH who builds and operates antique-style ham gear. He sent us a photocopy of page 29 of The Literary Digest for November 4, 1922. This page contains a recap of a construction project for a receiver that appeared in an earlier issue of the San Francisco publication entitled Radio. The project was an “all wave” single-tube set written about by David P. Gibbons. Photos of the set show it to look identical to the one being proudly displayed by the gentleman in the 1920’s photo we ran in February. Apparently he had built it himself and was proud of his accomplishment. Mr. Tracy pointed out the Gibbons made no claims to being the original designer of the circuit in this receiver. With only a couple of very minor exceptions, it is basically the famous DeForest Ultra Audion circuit that dates back to at least late 1919.

Sonoma County Radio Amateurs, Inc.
P.O. Box 116
Santa Rosa, California
95402-0116





Dealing with Noise and PG&E

Pat Coyle KG6JSL

I had a new license, HF rig and vertical antenna about 10 years ago when the last sun cycle peaked. I also had an intermittent broadband crackle up to 2 meters, and an S9 buzz on the HF bands. I got an external DSP filter at a swap meet and DX was pretty good. My furthest QSO was Australia, and I heard an Antarctica station but could not bust the pile up.

The sun spots were gone by 2004 and so was DX. Even North American contacts were difficult and irritating with the noise so I decided to go to work on it.

The first thing was to turn off the house power and operate on battery. The noise was unchanged, proving the house was not the problem. I had a Yeasu VX-7 with wide coverage, multi-mode receive capability, so I started wandering around with the Yeasu tuned to the HF bands in AM mode. Any portable radio will do. The noise increased near one of the PG&E poles so I gave them a call.

The contact person was nice, promised to report the problem to the service department and someone would call in about a week to schedule an appointment.

After two weeks I was still waiting so called again. Another promise. This went on for a couple of months and finally a lineman came out in his truck, listened to the radio, looked at the lines, agreed I had a problem and advised he could not help. He said I needed the RFI technician and someone would call. No one called so I called them a few times over the next couple of months but nothing happened. I gave it up and essentially abandoned the HF part of the hobby.

In January, 2011, with the sunspots coming back up, I decided to try again. Now retired, I had more time to deal with PG&E and vowed not to surrender.

This time I started asking for supervisors and after a couple of visits by linemen and promises to send the RFI tech, a lineman with a bucket truck arrived. I followed him around with the HT, listening to noise as he perfunctorily shook poles. Suddenly the noise pitch changed as he shook one pole. He actually got interested and promised that someone would call. It took

more time and more calls but eventually PG&E sent a full crew which replaced the old glass line insulators. To the surprise of everyone this actually eliminated the broadband crackle. However the S9 buzz remained.

After numerous additional calls, and enlisting John, KE5EI, to help search the neighborhood for sources, the RFI Tech came to search for the buzz. He was a very nice guy with neat equipment. He had a detector/amplifier with a highly directional hand held antenna and we cruised the neighborhood listening on 80 meters. He found a set of outside lights controlled by a photo-voltaic switch on a medical building 2 blocks away. This reduced the buzz. He promised to come back later to work on the remaining buzz. By this time it was apparent there were multiple noise sources.

It took a more phone calls to supervisors, but the Tech came back and traced a second buzz to a guy with grow lights for his "medical marijuana" crop about a half mile away.

Noise is now down to about S3 on SSB for all HF bands except 40 meters at S5, and 10 and 20 at less than three. There is a remaining buzz that the tech went looking for and when he came back he said simply "You're screwed." Seems he traced it to the traffic lights on the corner. I have not yet called the City to tell them they have to replace all the microprocessors and relays in their light controllers.

There are lessons learned. Essentially, the service department does not listen to the complaint department. Complaints to the FCC and PUC were unavailing.

First, you have to do an investigation to find some connection to the power lines, if only as an antenna. Eliminate your house and equipment as a source. This was PG&E's first question. Being a ham carries some credibility, but noise is low priority. Having the lineman actually hear the noise change as he shook the pole validated the line complaints. The more you can do to trace a source the better.

The buzz noise was not really a PG&E problem but they had to trace it if only to eliminate their responsibility. I also stumbled across the fact that the DigiPan PSK31 waterfall display is a crude spectrum analyzer

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PG&E, continued

and Al Bloom, N1AL, identified 120 cycle traces. I reported this as evidence of a power line problem.

I put the phone next to the radio speaker a couple of times when speaking to the representatives. That seemed to convince them that there really was a problem. Also check with your neighbors to see if they are having noise problems. In my case 3 neighbors also had the line crackle in their radios. This too I reported, and the neighbors were happy someone was doing something about it.

Start building a paper trail by recording every contact. You will be given a case number. Record it in your log. After a few calls and promises, start asking for supervisors. I had to get to third level supervisors before the service department started to respond. I finally found a high level supervisor in San Jose who gave me her name and I would ask to be connected to her direct. She was able to get people to move. Persistence is the key.

It is possible to deal with noise problems and PG&E. All the people were nice, but it is a bureaucracy. Responsibility and interest shifts as you deal with different people. Get to as high a level as you can, and get a name you can maintain contact with. And keep at it. It will take months, at times be frustrating, but the result is worth the effort.

Pat Coyle KG6JSL

VE Session in October

We hope to have our next VE exam session in October. We do not know yet if the date will be Saturday, October 8 or Saturday, October 29. The time will be from 9am to noon. Walk-ins will be accepted and all test elements will be administered. Please check the SCRA Web site for further updates on the date and location.

Candidates should bring the following:

- One (1) photo ID or two (2) non-photo ID
- Social Security Number (if not currently licensed) or FCC Registration Number (FRN, if licensed)
- Original and photocopy of your current amateur radio license (if licensed)
- Original and photocopy of any valid CSCEs (if applicable)
- #2 Pencil and eraser
- \$15.00 exam fee. Checks may be made payable to "ARRL-VEC"

Calculators may be used, but it must be demonstrated that all memories and programs have been erased. The calculator function in a cell phone or PDA may not be used! If you have any special needs, please contact Brian Torr, N6IYY in advance.

Good Luck!

Brian Torr, N6IYY
n6iyy@arrl.net
(707) 575-5871

SmartMeter Antennas Spotted

These antennas recently appeared on a utility pole on Manor Drive in Santa Rosa right near Guerneville Road.

These are the antennas for receiving and sending SmartMeter gas usage data.

Note the conduit down the pole and the electronics box below.

Mike Von der Porten
AD6YB



Waves to Wine Photos from Darryl KI6MSP



Darryl KI6MSP at net control



Lee KE6EAQ at net control

Ästrid KJ6JTP



Laguna Rest stop