



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>

Repeaters:

English Hill: 147.315+ 88.5 / 224.180+ 88.5 /  
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REPEATER STATION  
W6SON

Volume 38, Number 8

August 2013



## August SCRA Update

by Charlie Sikes, KZ6T  
SCRA President

### Repeaters:

So now that we have IRLP up and running, have you used it? After Dave's great "how to" presentation last month I have got on it a few times. It works great!

### SCRA Programs:

This month's program is Boat Anchor and Homebrew night. Bring in your prized possession and give us your show and tell story. In addition, we will have a used equipment auction. You can preview the offering online at [http://mini-dx.com/SCRA\\_Auction/Auction\\_Notice.html](http://mini-dx.com/SCRA_Auction/Auction_Notice.html).

### Club Calendar:

Things slowed down a little in July compared to June. We had 18 turn out for Mini-Dx. Fun was had by all. I don't have all the logs in yet but I know we worked at least two club members back here in Sonoma County. The furthest QSO I had was New Caledonia. You can read more on the event elsewhere in this edition and online. Mendo Rally looked to be well staffed. I look forward to hearing about how it went.

August gives us Tour de Organics, PCAM, and a Tech class. If you know anyone interested in getting their license make sure they contact Jeff Tonelli.

Hope to see you all at the Club Meeting.

## Field Day Photos

From Michael AD6YB



More photos on pages 5 and 10.



## 2013 Club Officers

President	Charlie Siles kz6t@arrl.net	KZ6T
Vice President	John Felton	KE5RI
Treasurer	Steve Bramble	KI6TUR
Secretary	Mike Von Der Porten	AD6YB
Director	Doug Payne	KF6LMB
	Brian Torr	N6IYY
Past President	Darryl Paule	KI6MSP

## Committee Lineup/Contacts

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Antenna			
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Refreshments	John Tracy	W6SB	
ARRL DXCC/WAS			
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Club Raffle	John Chavez	KG6PEP	
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SCRA Web site	<a href="http://www.sonomacountyradioamateurs.com">http://www.sonomacountyradioamateurs.com</a>

## 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

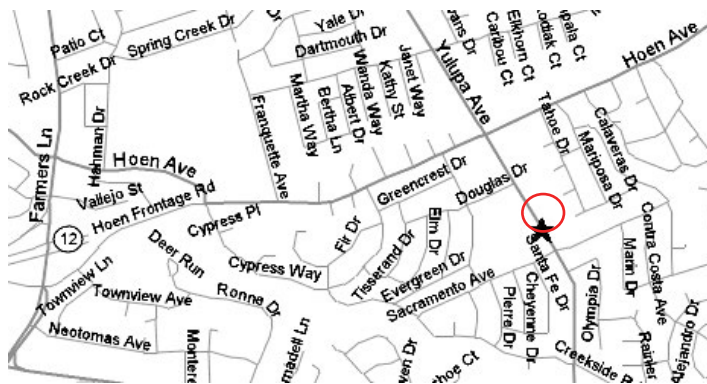
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## SCRA Club Meetings

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>



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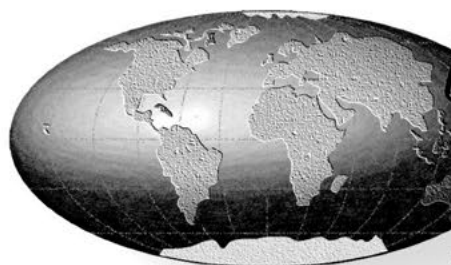
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**Great Price!**



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- Ultra compact HF, VHF, UHF
- 100w HF/6M, 50w 2M, 20w UHF
- DSP included • 32 color display
- 200 mems • Detachable front panel
- (YSK-857 required)

**Call for Low Price!**



### FT-2000 HF + 6M tcvr

- 100 W w/ auto tuner
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- Multiple DSP controlled AGC loops
- Advanced CW functions
- 101 alphanumeric memories

**The Ultimate Radio!**



### DJ-196T 2M/HT

- 5 Watt out
- 40 memories
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- CTCSS + DCS built in
- "S" meter
- Auto Dialer

**Low Pricing!**



### DR-135TP 2M mobile

- 50 Watt out • Alpha numeric display
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- Front Panel GPS in • Rear DB-9 port
- CTCSS/DCS Encode/Decode built in

**Low Pricing!**

**CONTEST CORNER by Kevin Alt, K6BSG**

Hello testers. The summer is flying by. Lots of small contests to enjoy while avoiding the heat this month. Happy DX'ing!

2 Aug – **NS Weekly Sprint** – CW/Digital, 160-20 meters. See: <http://www.ncccsprint.com>.

3 Aug – **TARA Grid Dip Shindig** – Digital, 160-6 meters. See: [www.n2ty.org/seasons/tara\\_grid\\_rules.html](http://www.n2ty.org/seasons/tara_grid_rules.html).

3 Aug – **European HF Championship** – SSB/CW, 160-10 meters. See: [lea.hamradio.si/~scc/euhf/euhfc.htm](http://lea.hamradio.si/~scc/euhf/euhfc.htm).

3-4 Aug – **10-10 Summer Phone QSO Party** – Phone, 10 meters. See: [www.ten-ten.org](http://www.ten-ten.org).

3-4 Aug – **ARRL UHF Contest** – all modes, 222 MHz and up. See: [arrl.org/contests](http://arrl.org/contests).

3-4 Aug – **North American QSO Party** – CW, 160-10 meters. See: [ncjweb.com](http://ncjweb.com).

3-5 Aug – **Int'l Lighthouse-Lightship Contest** – all modes, 160-10 meters. See: [illw.org](http://illw.org).

4 Aug – **South Africa DX SSB Contest** – SSB, 80-20 meters. See: [www.sarl.org.za](http://www.sarl.org.za).

5 Aug – **OK1WC Memorial Contest** – Phone/CW, 80-2 meters. See: [www.hamradio.cz/ok1wc](http://www.hamradio.cz/ok1wc).

10 Aug – **Maryland-DC QSO Party** – all modes, 160 meters – 70 cm. See: [mdcqsoparty.w3vpr.org](http://mdcqsoparty.w3vpr.org).

10 Aug – **Fall VHF Sprints** – 50 MHz – all modes, 6 meters. See: [www.svhfs.org](http://www.svhfs.org).

10-11 Aug – **Worked All Europe** – CW, 80-10 meters. See: [www.waedc.de](http://www.waedc.de).

10-11 Aug – **Straight Key Weekend Sprintathon** – CW, 160-6 meters. See: [www.skccgroup.com](http://www.skccgroup.com).

11 Aug – **NJQRP Skeeter Hunt** – CW, 80-10 meters. See: [www.qsl.net/w2lj](http://www.qsl.net/w2lj).

14 Aug – **CWops Monthly Mini-CWT Test** – CW, 80-10 meters. See: [www.cwops.org/onair.html](http://www.cwops.org/onair.html).

14-15 Aug – **NAQCC Monthly QRP Sprint** – CW, 80-20 meters. See: [naqcc.info](http://naqcc.info).

17 Aug – **SARTG WW RTTY Contest** – RTTY, 80-10 meters. See: [www.sartg.com/contest/wwrules.htm](http://www.sartg.com/contest/wwrules.htm).

17 Aug – **Feld-Hell Gridloc Sprint** – Digital, 160-10 meters. See: [www.feldhellclub.org](http://www.feldhellclub.org).

17-18 Aug – **ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest** – all modes, 10G+. See: [arrl.org/contests](http://arrl.org/contests).

17-18 Aug – **Dominican Republic Contest** – Phone, 80-40 meters. See: [www.hi8ud.org](http://www.hi8ud.org).

17-18 Aug – **Russian District Award Contest** – SSB/CW, 160-10 meters. See: [rdaward.org/rdac1.htm](http://rdaward.org/rdac1.htm).

17-18 Aug – **Keymen's Club of Japan Contest** – CW, 160-6 meters. See: [www.kcj-cw.com](http://www.kcj-cw.com).

17-18 Aug – **North American QSO Party** – SSB, 160-10 meters. See: [ncjweb.com](http://ncjweb.com).

18 Aug – **SARL Digital Contest** – Digital, 80-20 meters. See: [www.sarl.org.za](http://www.sarl.org.za).

18 Aug – **ARRL Rookie Roundup** – Digital, 80-10 meters. See: [www.arrl.org/contests](http://www.arrl.org/contests).

19 Aug – **Run For the Bacon** – CW, 160-10 meters. See: [www.fpqr.org](http://www.fpqr.org).

24 Aug – **ALARA Contest** – SSB/CW, 80 meters - 70 centimeters. See: [alara.org.au](http://alara.org.au).

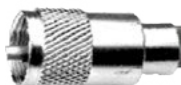
24 Aug – **Kansas QSO Party** – all modes, 80-2 meters. See: [www.ksqsoparty.org](http://www.ksqsoparty.org).

24-25 Aug – **YO DX Contest** – SSB/CW, 80-10 meters. See: <http://www.yodx.ro>.

24-25 Aug – **Ohio QSO Party** – SSB/CW, 80-10 meters. See: [www.ohqp.org](http://www.ohqp.org).

24-25 Aug – **SCC RTTY Championship** – RTTY, 80-10 meters. See: [lea.hamradio.si/~scc/rtty/rtty.html](http://lea.hamradio.si/~scc/rtty/rtty.html).

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**Contest Corner, continued.**

24-26 Aug – **Hawaii QSO Party** – all modes, 160-10 meters. See: [www.hawaiiqsoparty.org](http://www.hawaiiqsoparty.org).

25 Aug – **South Africa DX CW Contest** – CW, 80-20 meters. See: [www.sarl.org.za](http://www.sarl.org.za).

31 Aug – **CWops CW Open** – CW, 160-10 meters. See: [www.cwops.org/cwopen.html](http://www.cwops.org/cwopen.html).

**More Field Day Photos**



## 2013 Mini-DX

Charlie KZ6T

*"A million miles from everywhere..."* That is how Sunset magazine describes the King Range National Conservation Area, and we were there. A.W. Way Park was host to the 3rd annual SCRA Mini-DX, which is 236 miles north of Santa Rosa, 33 miles west of Weott, or 36 miles south of Ferndale. The Park (campground) is situated on a gooseneck bend of the Mattole River about 10 miles inland from the "Lost Coast".

Advance planning for this event began before last year's fun came to an end. Asked what they wanted in a campsite for the 2013 version and two requirements came to the top. "We want a clean grassy area with hot showers." In November I started combing over campsites I had previously visited that fit the bill and were a "reasonable" distance away. I concentrated on the north-coast and did a drive-by of half a dozen prospective venues. A.W. Way seemed to be the best fit. The location and date was put forth at the January planning meeting without objection.

A call for signups took place in May with detailed planning really taking place after Field Day. Not much changed from last year besides the location. The goal was to expand upon a social event rather than just an operating exercise. One aspect that sorely needed attention from both year one and two was involvement or participation in the workload sharing (cooking and cleanup). This year we developed a duty roster system that was very successful in sharing the experience. Everyone knew up front what was expected of them and when. A dedicated online forum was set up where questions could be raised and answered.

### T-minus 1 day

Keith AG6CI would arrive at the site a day early as he was attending a star (gazing) party in Adin Ca. I headed out on Thursday to do a shake-down run of my recently completed expedition vehicle (the jeep). Instead of traveling up hwy 101 all the way to Weott, I got off the highway at Laytonville, broke over to the coast, then took Usal Road all the way up to the same campground we stayed at for Mini-DX one. The APRS coverage was pretty good.

### Day 1

I arrived at the Park about 10:30 am to find Keith well ensconced and working HF. The Park is a flat loop campground set in a large flat meadow on a bend of the Mattole river. Lots of trees, mostly tall conifers, madrone, and a scattering of fruit trees. Two latrines/shower buildings, one of which was brand new. The individual campsites were quite spacious and most were separated from each other. Keith had picked an area of the park that had six campsites grouped together which would make a good operations center. After setting up, we both expanded our individual camps to make it look like we were a large group so that no one would take the adjacent sites.

Others began arriving from mid morning through late afternoon. We established one site as the galley/dining and started setting up gear. The antennas included 2m j-pole, 6m beam (buddipole), Norcal doublet, 80m inverted beam, a couple more dipoles, another buddipole, a vertical stick, and a 80m Windom.

Dinner was served by team KI6TUR around 6:00pm which included made to order pizza and salad. It was capped off with fresh churned ice cream and fruit. (Big hit)

### Day 2

I stumbled out of our sleeping loft to the smell of breakfast. Team W6IBC got the flatop going with pancakes and sausage. It became apparent that no one was going to go hungry on this trip.

We completed erecting and placing the popups and started operations for the day which mostly comprised of SSB, CW, and PSK. It was all pretty informal. You got on the air when you wanted to, others took walks, read books, or just rag-chewed with each other. The weather was great, hitting 80 with clear skies.

**Continued on next page.**





**Mini-DX, continued.**

Team AE6SF put out a huge lunch spread of assemble your sandwich, which was capped off by team KZ6T's dinner feast of roast pork, mac&cheese, and salad. The night-cap was fruit cobbler and ice-cream. As I said, no one was going to go hungry.

AG6CI had brought up his telescope and set it up in the middle of the meadow. Once the sun went down we were treated to views of the setting moon, Saturn with its moon Titan, a double star, galaxies, and Keith's fantastic knowledge of all of them. What a way to end a great day.

**Day 3**

Team W1EJ / N2WD had eggs, bagels, and fruit going for us early. Conversation mostly centered around the routes we all would take to get home. Some were headed north for Ferndale, others would take the more direct route returning the way they came.

A little operating occurred after breakfast, then the tear-down began and people started leaving as early as 10:15. We packed up and left via the route to Ferndale. Its a terrific scenic drive with a few hills to go over. There is one 10-mile section of rugged coastline that is completely deserted. We had lunch in Fortuna and made it home around 4:00.

Thanks to all who participated. You made this another very successful event.

You can find more information in the online version at [http://mini-dx.com/2013\\_Mini-DX/2013.html](http://mini-dx.com/2013_Mini-DX/2013.html)

73

Charlie KZ6T

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**My First Year in Amateur Radio**

by Andru KJ6YFD

This is the story of a 37 year old man who was able to spend the past year feeling all the best joys of childhood thanks to an exciting hobby and wonderful people.

"Hey Andru, my roommate and I are going to get our amateur radio licenses this weekend. Do you wanna come with us?"

Those words, spoken by my colleague Matt (soon to be KJ6YET), were the beginning of my journey in amateur radio.

I was stunned. "You can get an amateur radio license in only one weekend?" I asked. "I thought it took months of study and Morse code practice and lots of complicated stuff to get an amateur radio license."

"You don't need to know Morse code any more, and the class is only one day long," he replied.

"How much?" "\$30, including the test fee."

I knew pretty much nothing about radio, but I had always been fascinated by the stories I'd heard about hams talking to each other all over the world.

**Continued on next page.**



**My First Year, continued.**

I figured I could afford to take a chance. Even if I failed the test, I'd probably learn something fun, so I went for it. I told my Dad (soon to be Clarence KJ6YFE) and he thought it would be fun to talk to each other on the radio. We invited some other friends as well.

On June 2, 2012, 6 of us piled into a minivan and drove down to Redwood City for a class put on by baears.com.

When we arrived, we were in a class of around a hundred. We were told that we were going to learn how to pass the test that day, not how to be amateur radio operators. We were told that afterwards, we needed to join a club and find mentors in order to learn to be operators. We then spent six hours studying the Technician question pool and took the test.

After the test, we were all standing around outside the building as the VEs brought out CSCEs and yelled names. Each time, the person came forward and the VE said "Congratulations, you're a ham!" and shook the new ham's hand. The excitement was amazing, and became more enthralling as time went on. Although most of us didn't know each other, we were, at that moment, all very excited for each other.

In the end, six of us drove down without licenses, and six of us drove back with Technician licenses.

Then the real studying began. We all emailed each other link after link during that first week. We found the ARRL. We started trying to decide which books to buy.

Matt was the first to buy a radio. He bought a Baofeng UV-5R. The rest of us bought the same radio so we could share information and settings more easily.

Matt also found SCRA and contacted Daryl KI6MSP for information. A few of us went to the June 6, 2012 club meeting, where we met Daryl and also Jeff KI6PBF and John WB6FRZ and Brian N6IIY. It was wonderful to experience an environment where everyone was willing to talk to me and answer my questions, no matter how little I knew. I never had to prove myself before someone would talk to me. This was my first taste of the amazing and neighborly environment in amateur radio.

The SCRA education team very kindly offered to put on their "Get on the air" class just for us. Five of us went to the class, and there we learned enough to actually operate our radios without embarrassing ourselves too often.

I bought a copy of the ARRL Antenna Book and the ARRL Operating Manual. With great enthusiasm I studied the various forms of propagation and the various bands. And then, as I learned about groundwave and skywave propagation on each band, I looked at my privileges.

Aaaaand, I discovered that to talk long distances, or even to get over a mountain without using a repeater, one needed a General class license. So, my Dad and I began studying together.

I went to the SCRA June 23-24, 2012 Field Day and had a wonderful time. I had my first experience talking long distance on HF at the "Get On the Air" station. I forget exactly what states I contacted, but I remember they were far away, and I remember being very excited.

Brian N6IIY led a wonderful exercise building a 10 meter loop antenna, and also very kindly and patiently explained to me how a J-Pole works despite my not yet understanding much of the necessary theory. Again I

**Continued on next page.**





**My First Year, continued.**

pestered multiple people with an endless series of ignorant questions, and again everyone was happy to talk to me, no matter how little I knew. Again, I felt no need to prove myself before people would talk to me.

Over the weekend of August 24-26, 2012, I attended the SCRA Technician class taught by Daryl KI6MSP, Jeff KI6PBF, and John WB6FRZ. I already had my Technician license, but I wanted another shot at learning anything I missed the first time.

After the class, I took the General test, and passed. They offered to let me take the Extra test as well (At no extra charge! Wow!) and somehow I passed that as well. A few weeks later my Dad earned his General.

Then I had to set up an HF station. When I bought my radio, I wanted to test it. John WB6FRZ kindly sold me a dummy load.

I set up my first antenna so embarrassingly wrong that I won't even try to describe it. Still, John and I were able to make an arranged contact on October 3, 2012, on 7170 KHz LSB. My first HF QSO!

John helped me again by kindly loaning me, with an option to buy if it worked, a balun and some ladder line. It worked!

He also invited me to join him at his place for some contesting during the California QSO party the weekend of October 6-7, 2012. It was an invaluable introduction to operating procedures and on the air etiquette, and he kindly fielded hundreds of my curious questions.

Some time around November or December of 2012 I found the Chicken Net (<http://www.chicken.net/>), a group of locals who meet on the 145.19 repeater every night at 10:00 PM just to share how their day was. I became a regular and have had countless pleasant QSOs with the Chickens.

I also found the Coffee Mug Net (<https://sites.google.com/site/wb6iym/>), a west coast HF net that meets weekly at 9:00 AM on Saturdays at 7188 +/- QRM for a round table.

I received my VE accreditation in January of 2013, and was able to serve at my first VE session on February 17, 2013. It felt really good to take a turn being the one to say "Congratulations, you're a ham!"

I participated in the Morse code class taught by John WB6FRZ, Brian N6IIY, and Bob KG6ZDN from January 18, 2013 to April 12, 2013. Those little beeps and dits and dahs that had been nothing more than sounds a few months earlier were becoming the voices of real live people sharing fun and good fellowship.

I bought some keys from a member of the Coffee Mug Net, and made my first CW contact on April 3, 2013 with Don VE7DXF in Vancouver Island, BC.

I then had a few arranged CW QSOs with hams from the Chicken Net and the Coffee Mug Net, which was a comfortable way to get my feet wet while I was starting out.

I made my first ever DX contact. It was on April 23, 2013, using CW, with Atsu JE1TRV in Japan. That was beyond cool. Simplex. To Japan.

I recently learned about a slow code net on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM on 7121 ([http://www.naqqc.info/cw\\_nets.html](http://www.naqqc.info/cw_nets.html)), which I find is an excellent way to practice.

**Continued on next page.**



**My First Year, continued.**

I've had some of the best fun of my life this past year. I cannot express how grateful I am to the amateurs of yesteryear who claimed and have held on to our portions of the spectrum, or for the great fun that I've had playing on the radio.

But most of all, I cannot express how grateful I am for all of the kind, neighborly, generous, welcoming, and helpful people I have met through this wonderful hobby, and to SCRA for providing a place where I was able to meet so many of you.

...and best of all, I know that my journey is only beginning!

73!

Andru KJ6YFD

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