



RADIO-ACTIVE!

September 19, 2022, Volume 1, Issue 6



A Fair To Remember!

The Santa Cruz County Fair was September 14—18, 2022. Twenty ARES and other Ham radio operators volunteered their time to provide vital communications for the on-site Sheriff’s Deputies, Security and Fair Staff. Some of the operators have been participating for many years and are well versed on the routines for the communications as well knowledge of their favorite fair food including location within the venue and best time to obtain it. There were six new volun-



teers for the event this year.

This year was organized a bit differently. A team of approximately six volunteers met over the past three (+/-) months developing written procedures and refining the Fairground map. Previously, there was heavy reliance on ‘institutional knowledge’ of those who have volunteered in the past and their recall of what to do. Each shift (of the two per day) was comprised of at least one Shift Supervisor, one computer logger, and one or two radio monitor/s.

At least four radio frequencies were being monitored —two Fair staff (such as administration, entertainment and medical), one security and one sheriffs. The computer logger was responsible for recording any pertinent traffic into the laptop. The log was displayed on a large TV screen monitor and all staff could visualize the activity. The logged details will eventually generate one comprehensive ICS-214 document for the event. The radio monitors monitored The Fair staff and Security frequencies and responded as needed. The Sheriff’s radio was primarily managed by the Shift Supervisor. The Shift Supervisor would provide the briefing at the beginning of the shift, identify the Sheriff officers on duty and their tactical call signs and provide guidance of how to handle calls received.

Continued on page 2.

Inside this issue

- SC Fair Thank you..... ..2
- Test your knowledge..... ..3
- Call Signs and Phonetics....3
- What have I been up to5
- Hours Corner.....6
- Manual Programming6
- Technician Class6
- Antenna DIY Project..... ..7
- Who is looking at Us?8

Upcoming events

Sunday, September 25:
Santa Cruz Triathlon

THANK YOU Santa County Fair VOLUNTEERS



Alex AJ6QY
Dan N6RJX
Darin KJ6CTG
Dawn KM6RE
Don N3TET
Doug KF6EQE
Gary K6PDL
Jim KN6NCG
John N6QX
John NS6K
JoMarie KM6URE
Karen KM6SV
Kay K0YOT
Kim KF6EQD
Linda KN6SYO
Phil KE6UWH
Roberta AJ6KN
Ryan KI6UAP
Stephen KM6NEP
Vince KM6YHE

Equipment available to loan

Go Pro Hero cameras and supporting accessories to enable event participants to record content all of which can be edited to a viewable video. Contact Neil, KN6JOI at KN6JOI@slvares.org.

A Fair to Remember! - continued



Roberta AJ6KN, Ryan KI6UAP and Linda KN6SYO in Command post van discussing operations.

Many of the radio calls were related to routine of the perimeter checks performed by the officers. There were a few lost or found children and a handful of medical calls. There were also a few calls for unruly behavior or people wanting to get into the fair by not paying. One of the greatest challenges was identifying the location where something was occurring. There were great attempts to have all officers, security and fair staff use the refined map and call the locations by one name. But we still received calls of locations not of the map (such as bathrooms by the petting zoo, [no petting zoo!] or Service Entrance) or the use of alternative name (such as Iron gate for Main gate), or too generic of a location (horse arena—there are three!). Each shift had quite a bit of downtime between the radio calls, allowing the volunteers to get know each other better and also interact more with the sheriff officers.



Linda KN6SYO logging

Read page 5 for a personal experience report from Alex, AJ6QY.



Call Signs and Phonetics— How to improve?

Roberta, AJ6KN, Net Manager

Test your knowledge

What are the restrictions on the use of abbreviations or procedural signals in the Amateur Service?

- A. Only “Q” signals are permitted
- B. They may be used if they do not obscure the meaning of a message
- C. They are not permitted
- D. Only “10 codes” are permitted

Answer on page 5

I had a recently licensed ham operator advise that things were going well, but they had only one problem. They try writing down the call signs, and people go too fast and they can only get about 25% of the call. How can they improve their performance?

This is a great question, and I thought back to (not very long ago) when I was licensed in July of 2019. I would struggle with these unfamiliar letters, numbers and names, and maybe I would get the name and location but not the call or vice versa. I also had trouble with the phonetic alphabet used for ham radio and many served agencies, the ITU phonetic alphabet (see page 4). Here are some tips on how I improved my speed and dexterity for both.

► **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!** When I encourage you to write down the call signs and information on each net, trust me, I do really mean it! When I was first licensed, I listened to and copied at least 5 nets a week (not necessarily participating, but listening as an opportunity to practice). I used local nets, nets on Echolink, and whatever fit my schedule. Many times I did more than that. Multiply 6 months by 5 nets a week and you have 130 nets. Sometimes I would concentrate on just the name, then the location, and then just the call (using the verification from the operator as an opportunity to check my work). I also used QRZ (<https://www.qrz.com/>— free with sig-

nup) to “get to know” these folks – putting the call sign with a face and name really helps for local nets. Eventually, I was able to just hear the operator speak a few words and I knew their call and name immediately.

- When listening to ragchew nets, practice writing down the gist of what they are saying – just like you would need to do in a real emergency if you had to summarize what’s happening and being told to you. Don’t try to write it exactly as heard, but summarize in real time - unless you are doing a Message Handling exercise, where it is critical that you copy it exactly.
- **SAVE** your copies of the nets you write down. If the net has a roster that you can refer to, you can use that to compare to your notes and see what you left out. Closing your eyes and repeating - you get the idea. Just like taking your ham license test, lol.
- ITU Phonetic Alphabet – I had these little cards all over, on the dash of my car, in the bathroom when I’m brushing my teeth – you get the picture – to start memorizing it. In my car I would practice on license plates of cars around me (ideally while at a stop sign) and see if I could do it without peeking - but having it right there on the dash to refresh my memory was helpful.

Continued on Page 4

Photo reminders

Next time you participate in a radio related activity, take a picture or two of yourself, your friends, your equipment, or your environment (preferably a combination of these factors) and send it to KM6RMN@SLVARES.org and KN6IAB@SLVARES.org.

With your permission, Allison will use the material to make creative Facebook posts. Extra points for natural action poses, equipment still-life, or well-framed presentations. Even a funny or awkward moment is useful. If your shots involve other people, try to get permission or identifying information so Allison can make sure it is all right to use their appearance in her posts.



Call Signs and Phonetics – How to Improve?

Continued from page 3

- ▶ Other phonetic alphabets – recently I was “requested” to learn the phonetic alphabet used by the Sheriff’s office for some events I was working. I thought this a daunting task and couldn’t figure out how I would keep them straight. I took down the ITU alphabet card and put up the Sheriff’s one in my car. My new challenge. After about a month, I had it down flawlessly – using road signs, street names and license plates to practice on in my car. And the most interesting thing? I don’t get them mixed up – yet!
- ▶ Don’t expect everyone to slow down to your speed unless you are net control. In an emergency, it’s going to go much faster than our normal ARES nets, as time is of the essence. It’s likely that phonetics will be abandoned unless there is a question, and we will go with our networking knowledge of our local hams, filling in on those we don’t know with phonetics. (i.e., “was that K MIKE 6 or K November 6).
- ▶ Use meetings or even TV shows as an opportunity to “summarize” information in writing.

I hope that you will embrace logging and summarizing (and phonetics) as a critical part of being an ARES ham radio operator. I have never done computer logging, but others use it successfully, so perhaps they can share their secrets for success one of these days (NOT using a roster though!)

Yours for successful logging.

**Print,
cut out and
stick by your
station**

PHONETIC ALPHABET	
A ALFA	N NOVEMBER
B BRAVO	O OSCAR
C CHARLIE	P PAPA
D DELTA	Q QUEBEC
E ECHO	R ROMEO
F FOXTROT	S SIERRA
G GOLF	T TANGO
H HOTEL	U UNIFORM
I INDIA	V VICTOR
J JULIET	W WISKEY
K KILO	X X-RAY
L LIMA	Y YENKEE
M MIKE	Z ZULU

Reminders

- ▶ AECs submit articles for newsletter by the Sunday before the meeting to KM6URE@slvares.org
- ▶ Net Control sign-ups will be taken during the monthly meeting. Everyone is encouraged to take this on this role.



Calling all party planners

If anyone is interested in helping plan the next party in October please contact Lisa at KN6IAB@slvares.org

Disclaimers

This newsletter is made of news items provided by many of the Leadership and AECs of the ARES membership. Clarifications can be asked at the monthly ARES meeting.

EC Bob's Thoughts

On hiatus for the month,
pondering the next cool thing!



What Have I Been Up To...

Alex, AJ6QY, New Member Liaison

While I await new members, I have several projects I have been tackling.

I now have Winlink working with my Yaesu FT-991A radio on packet and VARA FM using both the internal TNC and an external Signaling TNC for full speed VARA Wide. My next project will be to get VARA HF going with that equipment.



I also modified my EFHW (End Fed Half Wave) antenna to an inverted L shape in an attempt to improve my 10m performance. I held an informal 10m "Bonny Doon Net" to test local ground wave propagation/reception and was pretty happy with the results. The net was fun too, and I'm hoping to turn that into a regular thing! We'll probably move to VHF though to allow people without HF to join as well. Anybody interested in a Bonny Doon net please contact me with preferred times. alex@slvares.org

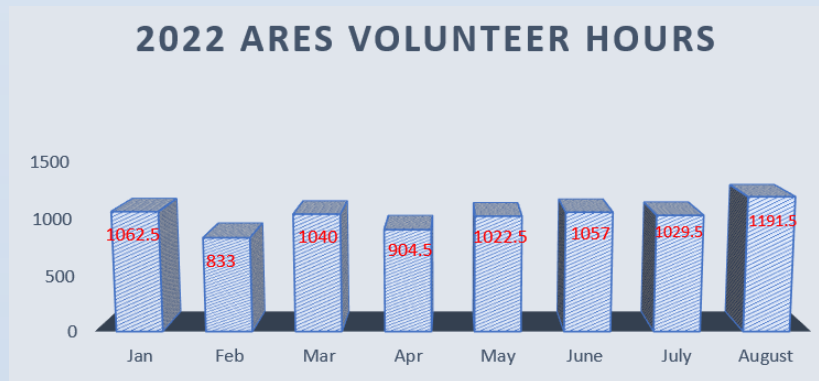


Finally, I volunteered for a first shift at the County Fair which was really interesting. Listening to and logging interaction with served agencies meant learning different ways of operating and lexicon. Even the phonetic alphabet used was different. And, of course, it was rewarding to be part of helping people in need and helping the fair personnel, sheriffs and medics get the job done!

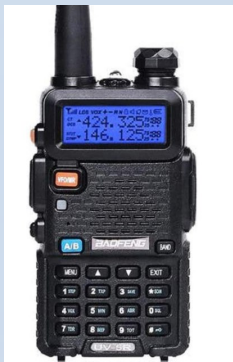
Test your knowledge from page 3 Answer: The correct answer is B. They may be used if they do not obscure the meaning of a message

Hours Corner

Another amazing month with 1191.5 total reported volunteer hours! Keep up all the great work and thank you for volunteering. Please remember to enter your hours on the form on <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>



Baofeng/BTech HT Manual Programming Class

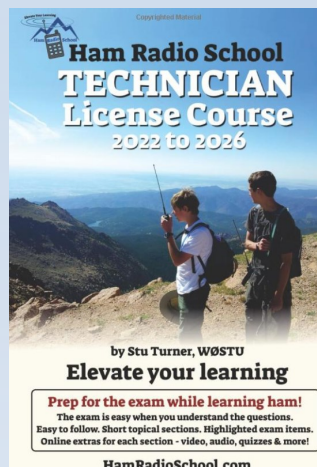


Bill, AJ6CQ will be offering a one-evening class on manual programming of the Baofeng/BTech HTs. Date pending.

These radios are notoriously less user-friendly for manual programming than the more expensive models from more traditional brands. But once you've mastered the menu system, and understand the parameters needed for a repeater (receive frequency, transmit offset and direction and tone code, it's manageable. Manual programming can be a valuable skill if for any reason you need to use either a repeater or simplex frequency not on the stand-

Technician Class scheduled

The next Amateur Radio Technician License class has been scheduled. It will begin Monday, October 3rd at 1900 on Zoom and run each Monday evening until November 14th. The class has been updated using the new question pool and a new resource book, Ham Radio School Technician License Course 2022 – 2026, by Stu Turner. The class can accommodate 50 students—please feel free to share the information and encourage sign-ups. A poster is available here: <http://63.249.81.58/plesk-site-preview/xczcomm.com/uploads/2022/09/Class-Flyer-Oct-2022.pdf>



Resources

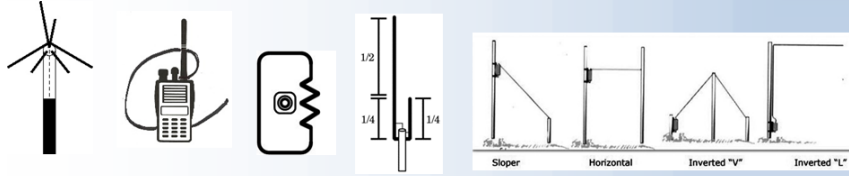
- Website: <https://xczcomm.com/>
- Reporting volunteer hours: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>
- Upcoming events: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/calendar-of-events/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ARES-of-Santa-Cruz-County-Ca-296232310799866>
- Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431308973875528>
- PIO Articles: <https://arrlsantaclaravalley.org/news/> or <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/news/>
- XCZ Comm You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHZH8TU5gh4SqHTPXSwolPA>
- Submitting deployment documents: **send in PDF form to** EOC.ARES@santacruzcounty.us and your appropriate EC (Bob: KO6XX@slvares.org)
- Submitting personal information such as DSW application, personal data update, education certificates: email K6PDL@ARRL.net, KM6SV@SLVARES.org, and EOC.ARES@santacruzcounty.us,

Org. Positions

- DEC
John / N6QX, jfgerhardt@gmail.com
- Assistant DEC
Gary / K6PDL, K6PDL@arrl.net
- Assistant DEC and Deputy EC
Karen / KM6SV, KM6SV@slvares.org
- Operations and Events
Dan / N6RJX, N6RJX@slvares.org
- Webmaster
Nate / KM6THA, KM6THA@gmail.com
- Administration
Dawn / KM6RME, KM6RME@slvares.org
- Safety Officer
Stephen / KM6NEP, KM6NEP@slvares.org
- Public Information officer
Allison / KM6RMN, KM6RMN@slvares.org
- Net Manager
Roberta / AJ6KN, AJ6KN@slvares.org
- EC Loma Prieta
vacant
- EC Coastal and SLV
Bob / KO6XX, KO6XX@slvares.org
- AEC-Antenna Specialist
Neil / KN6JOI, KN6JOI@slvares.org
- AEC-CERT Liaison
Liz / W6LTS, W6LTS@slvares.org
- AEC-Coastal
vacant
- AEC-Education Coordinator
Bill / AJ6CQ, wtyler@gmail.com
- AEC-Logistics
{temp vacant}
- AEC- Meeting Trainer
Jim / N6EWP, N6EWP@arrl.net
- AEC-MRC Liaison
John / KN6DCA, drjohnrx54@gmail.com
- AEC-Net Trainer
Kathy / KE6VTY, KE6VTY@slvares.org
- AEC-New Member Liaison
Alex / AJ6QY, AJ6QY@slvares.org
- AEC-Packet Radio /Digital
Sebastian / KK6FBF, Sebastian@steinhauer.info
Ryan / KI6UAP, KI6UAP@gmail.com
- AEC-Photographer
Lisa / KN6IAB, KN6IAB@slvares.org
- AEC-Scribe
JoMarie / KM6URE,
KM6URE@slvares.org
- AEC-SLV Safety Officer
Tom / KK6NMZ, KK6NMZ@slvares.org
- AEC-SLVEN Liaison
vacant
- AEC-Video Production Team
vacant

Now is the time to begin your Antenna DIY Project

Neil, KN6JOI, AEC Antenna Specialist



Have you considered starting one of these “Cool” DIY projects to improve your radio operations without going into debt? DIY-ing is a terrific way to gain new skills or knowledge. A DIY project allows you to focus, plan, work with your hands and enjoy the empowering feeling of creating something on your own. DIY-ers rely less on the products, services, and expertise of others. There are 5 “Splendid” DIY projects to choose from. These projects include the matters of wave propagation, RF parameters, wavelength, antenna tuning, and testing. While strengthening your skills in basic hand tools, soldering, mechanical, and electrical methods.

The Antenna DIY Menu:

Counterpoise Tiger Tail by KN6JOI

Dual Band 2m 70 cm Vertical Ground Plane Antenna by KN6JOI

Dual Band 2m-70cm “Roll-up” J-Pole Antenna by KN6JOI

End Fed Half Wave 10-15-20-40-meter Antenna by KN6JOI

RF System Antenna Dummy Load by KN6JOI

Note: Once you have a Project started and would like build support, please ask KN6JOI@slvares.org

DIY Build documents available on the following sites:

XCZ Comm You Tube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHZH8TUSgh4SqHTPXSWolPA?app=desktop>

XCZ Comm Website

<http://63.249.81.58/plesk-site-preview/xczcomm.com/https/63.249.81.58/index.php/antennas/>

Amateur Radio emergency Communications

<https://studio.youtube.com/channel/UCnt11yW90Rrkfm-c0VDmDywc=UCnt11yW90Rrkfm-c0VDmDywc>

Santa Cruz County ARES Purpose

- We serve the public, not our egos and the best service we can render in a truly major event. To provide and distribute a corps of trained operators into the right places of the scene in that first, critical 48 hours (sometimes weeks).
- We are not Fire personnel, Police Officers, Sheriff's Officers, or any other authority. We are volunteers who care about our communities by using our emergency communication skills.
- Before volunteering we first take care of ourselves, immediate family, friends, and some of our relatives.
- We value the contributions that everyone makes, irrespective of license class, years of experience, or the price tag of your radio.

Ham Radio's Motto

"When all else fails – ham radio works". That is because, when all the normal communication systems stop working, Ham Radio is still in operation, helping people, conveying messages, and sometimes, even saving lives.

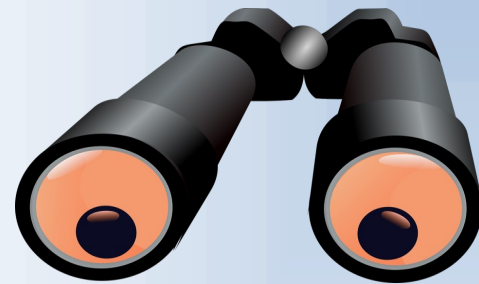
Who Is Looking At Us?

Neil, KN6JOI, XCZ You Tube Manager

Here is our XCZ You Tube analytics as of September 2022.

Currently there are 84 subscribers

The channel got 133 views in the last 28 days.



Top Views Last 28 days XCZ Video	
End Fed Half Wav (EFHW) 10-15-20-40- meter Antenna	39
DIY Dual Band 2m 70cm Vertical Ground Plane Antenna	35
DIY Dual Band 2m 70cm J Pole Roll-up Antenna Retail Build Kit	20
Amateur Radio Technician License Course Class 1 of 6	12
DIY Tiger Tail Counterpoise Antenna	10

How viewers find our videos	
You Tube search	58.7%
Google search	29.3%
Direct Unknown	5.3%
Suggested Videos	3.0%
Browse Features	2.3%
Others	1.5%

Top Channel Views So far XCZ Video	
DIY Dual Band 2m 70cm Vertical Ground Plane Antenna	2,215
End Fed Half Wav (EFHW) 10-15-20-40- meter Antenna	1654
DIY Tiger Tail Counterpoise Antenna	717
DIY Dual Band 2m 70cm J Pole Roll-up Antenna Retail Build Kit	529
Amateur Radio Technician License Course Class 1 of 6	221