

DECEMBER 2010

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER of the SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

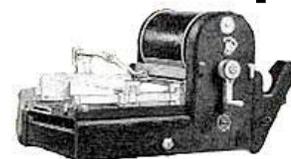
SHORT SKIP



Holiday Luncheon



The Beginning of Short Skip



Above is a picture of a device similar to the one which was used to produce the first issues of the monthly bulletin of the Santa Cruz Radio Club. It was a crude, primitive, and cantankerous piece of stuff, and the product was a far cry from the glossy and professional on-line spectacular of today.

The club had asked one WA6LCK to put out a bulletin, and the first issues were printed on one of these, but one which could only print pages the size of postal cards. WA6LCK and others had debated on the name for the publication, and the title, "Short Skip" was selected.

One reason for this name was our nightly round-table chats on 21.300 MHz, in which any number from 2 to 35 Santa Cruz operators would take turns talking with AM transmissions. Some times the gang would be surprised by some other ops joining in. The skip was not always short. One time we were joined by VR6TC, the famous Tom Christian on Pitcairn Island. (now ZL1? in New Zealand)

A Royal portable typewriter was used to cut the stencil, and the roller was coated carefully with thick black goo (ink). If the ink coating was exactly right, the stencil permitted just the right amount of ink to penetrate to the card stock. When the proper number of cards had been printed and dried, they were then addressed with the typewriter, and stamps had to be licked and fastened on. No such thing as stick-on labels in the 1960s. All this action

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CLUB MEETING FRIDAY JANUARY 21, 7:30PM

T'was the night before Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas,
And all through two-meters,
Not a signal was keying up
Any repeaters.

The antennas reached up
From the tower, quite high,
To catch the weak signals
That bounced from the sky.

The children, Tech-Pluses,
Took their HTs to bed,
And dreamed of the day
They'd be Extras, instead.

Mom put on her headphones,
I plugged in the key,
And we tuned 40 meters
For that rare ZK3.

When the meter was pegged
by a signal with power.
It smoked a small diode,
and, I swear, shook the tower.

Mom yanked off her phones,
And with all she could muster
Logged a spot of the signal
On the DX Packet Cluster,

While I ran to the window
And peered up at the sky,
To see what could generate
RF that high.

It was way in the distance,
But the moon made it gleam -
A flying sleigh, with an
Eight element beam,

And a little old driver
who looked slightly mean.
So I thought for a moment,
That it might be Wayne Green.

But no, it was Santa
The Santa of Hams.
On a mission, this Christmas
To clean up the bands.

He circled the tower,
Then stopped in his track,
And he slid down the coax
Right into the shack.

While Mom and I hid
Behind stacks of CQ,
This Santa of hamming
Knew just what to do.

He cleared off the shack desk
Of paper and parts,
And filled out all my late QSLs
For a start.

He ran copper braid,
Took a steel rod and pounded
It into the earth, till
The station was grounded.

He tightened loose fittings,
Re-soldered connections,
Cranked down modulation,
Installed lightning protection.

He neutralized tubes
In my linear amp...
(Never worked right before --
Now it works like a champ).

A new, low-pass filter
Cleaned up the TV,
He corrected the settings
In my TNC.

He repaired the computer
That would not compute,
And he backed up the hard drive
And got it to boot.

Then, he reached really deep
In the bag that he brought,
And he pulled out a big box,
"A new rig?" I thought!

"A new Kenwood? An Icom?
A Yaesu, for me?!"
(If he thought I'd been bad
it might be QRP!)

Yes! The Ultimate Station!
How could I deserve this?
Could it be all those hours
that I worked Public Service?

He hooked it all up
And in record time, quickly
Worked 100 countries,
All down on 160.

I should have been happy,
It was my call he sent,
But the cards and the postage
Will cost two month's rent!

He made final adjustments,
And left a card by the key:
"To Gary, from Santa Claus.
Seventy-Three."

Then he grabbed his HT,
Looked me straight in the eye,
Punched a code on the pad,
And was gone - no good bye.

I ran back to the station,
And the pile-up was big,
But a card from St. Nick
Would be worth my new rig.

Oh, too late, for his final
came over the air.
It was copied all over.
It was heard everywhere.

The Ham's Santa exclaimed
What a ham might expect,
"Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, good DX."

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Is Ham Radio Dying?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

If you've been around ham radio for even a year or two, you've no doubt heard or participated in the debate as to whether or not ham radio is dying. The question is as perennial as the grass.

Recently, this was a topic of discussion on the ARRL PR mailing list. Allen, W1AGP, the ARRL's Media & PR Manager, generated a chart to show that ham radio is NOT dying. It showed the number of licensees in the U.S. every year from 2005 to 2009:

2005: 661,000

2006: 655,000

2007: 655,000

2008: 662,000

2009: 681,000

2010: 694,000!

This chart as drawn a good example of how you can lie with statistics. The y-axis started at 640,000, so the rate of increase in the number of licensees looked quite dramatic. Even so, the good news is that the number of licensees is quickly approaching 700,000, and should surpass that number shortly.

Upon seeing this chart, Jerry, N9TU, did a little statistical analysis of his own. Of the 83 licensees in his zip code, nine are deceased and one has expired. There are four Novices, 36 Techs, 18 Generals, 5 Advanced and ten Extras.

From this data, he deduces, "If this is an average sampling of deceased members, expired members and club licenses, there are roughly 90,000 fewer licensees than shown in the data nationwide. I have no clue of the error rate involved with my data. Your results may vary." My guess is that his zip code is probably pretty typical, and that his analysis is essentially correct.

There's also the question of activity. It's my guess that nearly half of all licensees are inactive, and that if we could figure out a way to activate those hams, then we'd really be able to say that our hobby is not dying. It's something worth thinking about, but there's certainly no easy answer to this problem. As Yogi Berra is purported to have said, "If people don't want to come out to the ball park, there's nothing you can do to stop them."

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By Art Lee WF6P

CHATTER

Don'tcha hate it when things break? I have my 2 meter rig in my little home office (read - garage). My computer and printer are there also so it is quite comfortable - and cold. I have a ten-year-old heater mounted on one wall that has served me faithfully every winter. I thought I'd wait until December to fire it up. It is now cold enough. However, the pilot light will not light. For the want of a pilot light, etc. There is no gas flow past the regulator, no nice sound of gas hissing when the pilot valve is depressed, and no comforting little blue flame showing it is lit. OK, time for some sympathy. Talked of my problem over 80 meters this morning. Op on the other end said that his 80-year-old ham friend lives in a cabin in Washington State. His ham shack is surrounded by two feet of snow. His oil-fired heater quit and he has no funds to get it repaired and running. No sympathy coming from him, I guess. I've done my troubleshooting, including banging on the regulator with a ball peen hammer. So far, no luck. Guess my next step is to pull the regulator apart and look for a stuck valve, broken spring, etc. Finding repair parts may be the usual chore.

I feel pretty good. Neither of my dipoles has fallen down this winter - yet. Strung up to Eucalyptus trees, the swinging and swaying has not begun in serious proportions so far. My XYL Donna, AB6XJ, used to be terrified in heavy windstorms when my beam was mounted just outside our bedroom window. I told her not to worry as the tower was firmly bolted to the rafters and held the house up quite nicely. The clatter she heard was not the hooves of reindeer but the elements falling on the shingles. I guess her years spent as a young girl in Minnesota made her aware that Mother Nature can be nasty.

It has been ten months since I operated from my daughter's QTH in Sacramento. Two weeks ago, as usual, one leg of my 40-meter dipole was down on the muddy ground. Before I fired up the Kenwood 430S, I made the customary inspection. The wind plays

no favorites and her very large Oak tree no longer supported my antenna guy line. My throwing arm got some well-needed exercise tossing the nylon over the highest reachable limb. Nice. SWR of 1:1.

Our November 19th club meeting was well attended. Even with folks wandering about the meeting room, I counted nearly 50. Jim Brown, K9YC, gave an enlightening tech discussion on coaxial transmitting chokes (he refused to acknowledge or call them BALUNS). Seriously, attending our club meetings always results in acquiring some new knowledge. Earlier, during the ARES portion of our meeting, Jerry Inman, AE6I, reviewed on-the-air protocol for emergency communications. Using the word "break!" confused us all. There were both the old and new interpretations to grapple with. Don Moore, W6IBN, and I chatted about his Paradise Park QTH where antennas were mounted on 200-foot tall Redwood trees. Who climbs those? Jack Scanlon, KC6QH, and I sat together and enjoyed the ham discussions. I'm glad he didn't move away to Kona on a permanent basis.

Short Skip

prompted the editor to complain of his "all glue diet". Hi!

The typewriter had been purchased in 1952, (\$92) in order to prepare a term paper for a High School English class. Being the typical procrastinator, the typist had bought it just in time to do the assignment, which he completed in one very long night's work. It was submitted to the teacher, and the work received an A for subject and composition, and another A for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The subject? Amateur Radio. (of course)

This was eight years before he became a licensed amateur radio operator.

—73 Gino Campioni, WA7NUH

Ham Radio

Overall, though, I think the numbers are headed in the right direction. Ham radio is NOT dying. Let's all keep up the good work.

When not pondering whether the reports of ham radio's death have been greatly exaggerated or not, Dan operates CW on the HF bands, teaches ham radio classes, and blogs about ham radio at www.kb6nu.com. All comments welcome and appreciated. E-mail them to cwgeek@kb6nu.com.



Well folks we have almost come to the end of another eventful year of our bi-weekly CAKE sessions. Here is a picture of those who attended, how many of those present (15) can you identify? One third were young guys we haven't seen before, they were very engaged in the conversations and I hope we will see them again.

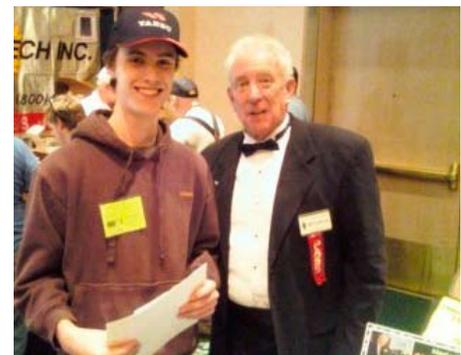


So with that I wish you all radiant health and whatever part of our hobby you enjoy most.

—73 and BCNU in the New Year,

Jan 8th and 22nd are already marked in my callender. —Ron W6W0

New Licensees



Cole Taylor - KJ6LBC (son of K6GHA), new Technician Class Ham, accepts certificate from Gordon West at Pacificon 2010.

Some additional new Hams:

- KJ6LDC Skyler Merritt
- KJ6LDB Fletcher Arnold
- KJ6LDD Oliver Pitterlering

—73, Don - K6GHA

SCCARC Board - 2010

President	Bruce Hawkins	AC6DN	689-9923
Vice President	Brandon	KJ6DKK	
Secretary	David Copp	WS2I	708-2206
Treasurer	Kathleen McQuilling	KI6AIE	476-6303
Board	Christopher Angelos	KG6DOZ	688-3562
	Mike Doern	KM6IKE	477-1161
	Rich Olsen	W1WUH	464-7474
	Cap Pennell	KE6AFE	429-1290
	Doug	KI6ZIB	
K6BJ Trustee	Allen Fugelseth	WB6RWU	475-8846

MONTEREY BAY REPEATER ACTIVITY

Santa Cruz County	K6BJ 146.790- PL 94.8 Santa Cruz (linked to KI6EH) KI6EH 147.945- PL 94.8 Watsonville (linked to K6BJ) K6BJ 440.925+ PL 123.0 Santa Cruz (not linked) • SCCARC Net Monday 7:30 PM 146.79- /147.945- /147.180+ linked • SCCARC 10 Meter Net Monday 7:00 PM 28.308 MHz USB
ARES Net	SC County Wide ARES Tuesday 7:30 PM on 147.180+ PL 94.8 and 443.600+ PL 110.9 linked
San Lorenzo Valley	WR6AOK 147.120+ PL 94.8 Ben Lomond • SLV Net Thursday 7:30 PM
Loma Prieta	AB6VS 440.550+ / AE6KE 146.835- PL 94.8 (linked for net) • LP ARES / LPARC Net Tuesday 7:15 PM
Monterey	K6LY 146.97- PL 94.8 / 444.700+ PL123 (linked for net) Monterey • Monterey Co. ARES Net Wednesday 7:30 PM K6LY 146.970- (PL 94.8) • NPSARC Net Wednesday at 8 PM on K6LY/R
LPRC	WR6ABD 146.640- PL 162.2 / 442.900+ PL 162.2 (winsystem.org) • LPRC Net Tuesday 8:00 PM 146.640-(PL 162.2) • Amateur Radio Newslines broadcast Tuesday

• Santa Clara Valley Section Traffic NET Tuesday 9:00PM 146.640- (PL 162.2)

FOR MORE INFO SEE: <http://www.k6bj.org/freq.html>

SCCARC Calendar of Events

ARES Meeting (prior to club meeting)	Friday	Jan 21
SCCARC Meeting	Friday	Jan 21
Cake Meetings	Sat	Jan 8, 22
Board Meeting	Thursday	Jan 27
Short Skip articles due	Mon	Jan 10
SCCARC Meeting	Friday	Feb 18

MONTHLY MEETINGS.

The SCCARC Meets at 7:30 PM, on the **THIRD FRIDAY** of the each month (except December). Meetings are at Dominican Hospital, Education Center, 1555 Soquel Drive, Santa Cruz.

NET CONTROL SCHEDULE

(Subject to Change)

12/13	Phil KE6UWH
12/20	Tom K6TG
12/27	Chris KG6DOZ
1/3/11	Byron N6NUL
1/10	Greta KI6NTL
1/17	Phil KE6UWH

Short Skip is published 12 times per year. Free to members.

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