

April 2009



Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

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Captain's Corner

by RACES Capt. Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer

Restructuring and Training

We are restructuring our current three squads into two—North Squad and South Squad—for more efficient geographical deployment during emergencies. There was really no logical explanation for having three squads. They were not based on geography or specialty, but simply functioned as a call-up tree. From now on, if an incident requiring RACES response occurs in Rancho Santa Margarita, for example, we will contact the South Squad Lieutenant (Radio Officer) to deploy his squad immediately to the scene. If further assistance is required, North Squad (or particular North Squad members with required equipment or specific capabilities) will also be deployed.

We are also restructuring our squads with training in mind. Each squad will have two Sergeants (Assistant Radio Officers), one responsible for the squad's Operations Detail and the other for the Technology Detail. The Sergeants will be responsible for member training certification. Furthermore, we are forming an OCRACES Training Council, consisting of

the Sergeants and any other members and officers who wish to serve.

Tom Tracey, KC6FIC, offers some interesting ideas on training. He suggests that we set up a programming station with a couple of Bendix-King radios (such as used during Fire emergencies), where the operators must perform a simple cloning function between two radios, following a communications plan and a set of instruction. OCSD Emergency Communications Manager Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ, expands on that idea with a suggestion that we practice programming other radios that we use commonly, plus setting up Winlink, setting up our RACES van, etc. Tom is in favor of certification for various categories, such as NIMS 100/200/700, uniforms, go-bags, identification, running nets, handling traffic and writing a log, filling out basic ICS forms, radio-room orientation, EOC orientation, Incident Command Post orientation, 800-MHz system orientation, Motorola Astro operation, van deployment, van driving, Field Day, APRS, visual communications, Winlink, Fire Patrol, weather spotting, OCFA general support, OCFA Bendix King cloning, and OCFA radio check-out.

The Next
OCRACES
Meeting is

April 6, 2009
1930 Hours

840 N. Eckhoff St.,
Suite 104, Orange

Featured Speakers:
Tom Tracey, KC6FIC
OCSD Lt. Paul Fuzzard

Next OCRACES Meeting: April 6th

The next OCRACES meeting is on Monday, April 6, 2009, at 7:30 PM, at 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, in Orange. Tom Tracey, KC6FIC, will talk about his communications adventures on February 21st during a search mission in San Bernardino County (see his article on page 4 of this issue). Also at this meeting, OCSD Lt. Paul Fuzzard will give a presentation about the Sheriff's PSR (Professional Services Responder) program.



Orange County Sheriff's Department
Communications & Technology Division

Rebuilding Together Orange County: April 25th

by OCSD Emergency Communications Manager Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ

Saturday, April 25, 2009, will be the annual National Rebuilding Day for Rebuilding Together Orange County (RTOC), and RACES members have been requested once again to provide the communications link between the job sites and RTOC's headquarters in Santa Ana. Formerly known as "Christmas in April," the Rebuilding Together Orange County organization partnerships with the community to rebuild owner-occupied homes, shelters, and nonprofit facilities for low-income residents. Services are provided particularly for the elderly and those with disabilities, so that they may live independently in warmth and safety. Rebuilding Together provides services throughout the year, but coordinates a national rebuilding day once a year. This is RTOC's largest event of the year and when communication support is needed the most. We are still waiting for the details of this year's activities, so at this time we do not know how many job sites there will be. We had 14 job sites throughout Orange County last year, so we might anticipate a similar number for 2009. Some of the job sites didn't have a communications link last year, as we didn't have enough personnel to assign a communicator for each site. Our hope is that we can provide a communicator at each job site this year. As we have done in the past, OCRACES will be seeking assistance from any interested City RACES or MOU organization. The event is too large for us alone, and we are seeking communicators for this day-long activity. RACES volunteers must have a 2-meter/440-MHz handheld radio, and have the ability to drive their personal vehicle to one or more locations throughout the day. This event usually starts by 0800 hours and runs as late as 1700 hours, although many shifts may end earlier, depending on how quickly the work is completed. If you are available for only half the day, we can accommodate that as well. In addition to the job sites, we will provide a mobile communicator to accompany the RTOC Project Development and Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Bloom-Ramos.

RTOC Director Steve Carpenter and RTOC Project and Volunteer Coordinator Mary A. Bloom-Ramos have expressed their sincere gratitude for the communications service RACES and MOU members provide each year to their volunteers. I know we will meet and exceed their expectations in 2009.

OCRACES Assists at Vision Quest

by RACES Lt. Scott Byington, KC6MMF, Radio Officer

On March 10, 2009, members of the Orange County Sheriff's Department RACES unit assisted the Warrior's Society with communications support. The Warrior's Society is a nonprofit group that annually sponsors the grueling Vision Quest mountain bike race. The course covered mountainous trails through the Cleveland National Forrest with a total of 11,000 feet of elevation gain and over a distance of 56 miles.

Members Tom Tracey, KC6FIC, and Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC, worked in shifts to support the RACES communications van. The van provided advanced communications support for the official race communications director Joe Lopez, W6BGR. The van offered not just shelter but power and multiple radios that facilitated communications through various repeater systems. The communications provided contact with checkpoints along the course where nearly 200 participants passed through. Given the large number of contestants, and the terrain, communications traffic could move from race operations to that of a more critical nature at any moment.

To promote the use of the communications van as support for other RACES organizations, I conducted training and tours of the van during the race to members of the Tri-Cities RACES teams. It is important that the RACES teams from all of Orange County are familiar with the van and its features. Eight members from the Dana Point, San Juan Capistrano, and San Clemente RACES units took advantage of the opportunity to test some of the van systems.

Of the nearly 200 starting bikers, only 160 of them finished, with the oldest participants at 65 years of age, and a finishing time of 10 hours and 31 minutes. The operation began just before daybreak at 0530, and concluded at 1630 hours.



OCRACES Radio Officer Scott Byington, KC6MMF, Tom Tracey, KC6FIC, and Tri-Cities RACES Radio Officer Joe Lopez, W6BGR, with OCRACES van at Vision Quest

Baker to Vegas 2009 Was Challenging

by RACES Lt. Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, Radio Officer

Between March 12th and 15th, OCRACES completed their support of Baker to Vegas 2009, the 25th running of the Challenge Cup. While this year marked a special anniversary for B2V, it also marked one of the more challenging missions for our OCRACES members to complete. But before we discuss the challenges, let's thank the members who participated in and made the event a success.

Thanks to Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC, Randy Benicky, N6PRL, and Steve Sobodos, KN6UX, for their assistance in completing the pre-race follow-van installations. This activity on the Thursday before the race really helps make things go more smoothly on Saturday. Thanks also go to the Pahrump Command Post Crew of Jack Barth, AB6VC, Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC, and Martin La Rocque, N6NTH. (Thanks also to Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, for leading the Baker to Vegas effort, and to Scott Byington, KC6MMF, for preparing radios, TNCs, antennas, etc., for the Pahrump Command Post, and to Walt Wilson, K7WWW, for installing the Arizona AG equipment in Baker—*Editor.*)

This year we supported eight teams with APRS, including the four Orange County Sheriff's teams (up from three in previous years), two Orange County DA teams, the California Department of Insurance Fraud Investigation Unit, and the Arizona AG Team. Our Pahrump Command Post was also there to provide communications support via the linked UHF Repeaters we monitor. The value of this monitoring was graphically demonstrated this year when our RACES Pahrump Command Post staff participated in the summoning of medical aid for the Team 18 runner. The request was initiated by the follow-vehicle crew for OCSD's Team 15 from the middle of Leg 4.

When it comes to the results of the running, our Sheriff's Department's teams have much to crow about again this year: The Women's team ran the fastest actual time in their division, but a 10-minute penalty took them from first place in their division to second. This placed the LAPD Women's team (who finished about a minute behind) in First Place. The Open Class team moved up from 15th overall in 2008 to 14th overall this year and 8th among the Open Class teams. The Invitational Mixed Class Team placed 22nd in their division and 159th overall (up from 193rd in 2008!). The new OCSD Forensics team placed 36th in the Invitational Mixed Class and 239th overall. Also finishing with smiles on their faces was the OCDA's team, which took the top spot in the Invitational Mixed Class and 20th place overall (up from 27th in 2008). This year 247 teams participated in and finished the race.

Lastly, we once again invite participants from Orange County ham-radio communications units who supported the Baker to Vegas event to attend the next monthly OCRACES meeting (Monday, April 6, 2009) during which we will have a 'Lessons Learned' roundtable to discuss various aspects of ham-radio support for this event—what went well, what could have gone better, what we can improve upon for next year and how all of these skills can be applied to our primary mission of providing disaster communications support to the cities and counties of Southern California.

Field Day: June 27-28, 2009

by RACES Lt. Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, Radio Officer

Field Day 2009 will be, as always, the last full weekend in June or Saturday the 27th through Sunday the 28th. OCRACES will once again operate from the highest elevation point in Craig Regional Park in Fullerton (near the border with Brea). Although complete details have not yet been worked out, the current plan includes the following:

Our primary mission will be to keep two operating stations on the air throughout the 24 hours of the event. The equipment to be used for this mission will be the OCRACES emergency communications response vehicle (ECRV) and W6CSP's communications trailer.

Secondary missions will include:

- ◆ To conduct propagation experiments with a variety of nontraditional field-deployable antennas
- ◆ To host as many visitors and guests as possible throughout the weekend
- ◆ To have an enjoyable and well-attended picnic supper on Saturday of the event
- ◆ To have each OCRACES member attend for as much time as possible, to become familiar with the field deployment of the ECRV and the operations of the equipment contained within
- ◆ To conduct experiments with the remote operations of an HF transceiver via a laptop and wireless connection

Watch this space for more information as we get closer to the event.

Participating in San Bernardino County Search

by Tom Tracey, KC6FIC

On Saturday, February 21, 2009, I had the opportunity to work with the San Bernardino County Emergency Communications Service (SBCECS) to provide radio communications for a ground search activity. We were conducting a second ground search for evidence or clues regarding Leisa Ann Hurst, a missing 30-year-old mother of two from Barstow. I was impressed by their efficiency and professionalism, and I believe some of their procedures are worthy of imitation.

The victim was last seen on January 22, 2009, dropping her children off at school in the morning. Foul play was suspected. The male suspect, allegedly involved in a romantic relationship with her, is now in custody.

A first family-organized search for clues had been conducted on February 7th, which, although improvised, still covered a large area and had over 175 volunteers participating. It was a loose family-organized search, with the Barstow Police Department assisting in an advisory role. A friend of the family had some FRS-capable radios, which were distributed to the teams. Many people brought all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to help with the desert search.

The second search was scheduled for two weeks later, which provided time to request other resources, like the SBCECS. A nonprofit search organization, Trinity Search & Recovery, had been contacted by the family and organized the search. Trinity has had experience handling many search missions and brought skills of resources, organization, management, and reporting to the aid of the families.

A food truck from a local church organization served a chicken-soup lunch, and egg burritos for breakfast. Volunteers from off-road associations helped, and a group of a dozen "Hummers" was there. Another private company brought a small unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) drone, which was remotely piloted above one of the search areas, taking high-resolution pictures of the ground, and logging a GPS track.

Being close to the families, I inquired how to ask for mutual-aid communications support, and was advised to contact SBCECS, using information in the *RACES Guidebook* ("Yellow Book"). I made contact and sent some information, and was told they would look into helping and request approval.

I was contacted soon after by Tracy Lenocker, N6ERA, Captain of the Central Mountain ECS team, who said his group would be helping. They were classifying their involvement as a training exercise for the unit.

I was relieved when I heard they would help. They had resources including portable repeaters, frequency access, trained personnel, self-sufficient operations, and even satellite phone access if requested. I assured the families that they would have a solid communications network, and it worked out very well.

The ECS team arrived with Chevy Blazer-type vehicles with hatchbacks that opened to reveal rear-of-vehicle communications consoles. They had three vehicles that backed in to park (for quick getaways), which created a good communications setup under an Easy-Up with portable tables and chairs. They also had a portable mast/tripod with antenna for backup in case the repeater setup failed for some reason.

Regarding the communications plan, it was decided to ask for permission from a local repeater owner to use the Victor Valley repeater for amateur use, which had good coverage where the search area would be. There was also good cell-phone coverage, and this was designated as a backup method. Because many volunteers had FRS radios, a cross-band system was set up with a mobile unit and antenna atop a local mountain repeater site tower, repeating the general-use frequency over to the output of a county OES repeater frequency, which ECS had preprogrammed into their radios.

Interestingly, later in the afternoon, we heard other distant search operations in progress in the Mt. Baldy and Chino area, since the county OES repeaters all shared the same output frequency, but different input tones based on geographic location.

Procedurally, the group was highly trained and organized. They had individual roles assigned to handle radio operations, radio traffic logging, equipment check-out, and roll-call tracking also.

After the search teams were dispatched, the operators conducted roll calls of the teams on the hour and half-hour, with odd-numbered teams on the hour and even-numbered teams on the half-hour. They tracked check-ins on a dry-erase



Tom Tracey, KC6FIC, helps to flash-program radios at search command post

San Bernardino County Search *Continued from page 4*

board, and it was easy to see visually which teams maintained good communication.

Having two nets, an amateur and an FRS, was helpful to maintain contact with over 20 search teams in different modes. Four-wheel-drive vehicles, ATVs, foot searchers, and even an unmanned aerial drone were among the assets used for the search.

SBCECS, as well as the search-and-recovery management, used prefilled ICS forms for the activity, which were later submitted to Barstow PD to go in the case file.

Another interesting element was sending cell-phone pictures. Search teams were instructed to take a picture of any potential clues in the field with their cell phones and text them back to the assigned command-post cell phone. I ended up receiving, tracking, and logging the pictures and showing them to the supervisor. Sometimes a rover unit would be dispatched for further investigation of the location. Items included old pieces of clothing, disturbed dirt areas, or mounds of dirt, although none proved significant to the investigation.

As with any activity, there often are lessons learned. One need SBCECS recognized was to have a second call logger assigned for the second channel. Often different traffic calls came through on the two frequencies, and one call logger had a hard time logging both sets of information at once. Next time they will assign individual scribes to each channel's traffic.

The roll-call table drawn on the dry-erase board was very helpful to organize the hourly check-ins and visually identify which teams we had contact with. These two aspects of documentation assignments and team/resource tracking are worthy of imitation and should be considered when activated and supporting numerous units in the field.

Although no significant clues regarding the victim's disappearance were discovered, the operation was a great success and an encouragement to the families. Statistically, 276 volunteers participated, in over 20 search teams, logging around 2,500 volunteer man-hours and 2,000 specific search man-hours.

OCRACES Participates in 75th Anniversary

On Monday, March 2, 2009, OCS&D Communications & Technology Division celebrated the 75th Anniversary of Orange County Communications. Presentations were made by top staff of the Orange County Sheriff's Department and other agencies during ceremonies in the Service Bay at Eckhoff Street in Orange.

RACES played a major role during the celebration, with a special event station (W6OCC/75) set up at the OCRACES emergency communications response vehicle (ECRV) parked outside the Service Bay. The station used a 40-meter dipole atop the service bay, and a 3-element Cushcraft triband beam on 20 meters, installed on the ECRV's Will-Burt mast by RACES Lt. Scott Byington, KC6MMF, Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC, Martin La Rocque, N6NTH, and John Roberts, W6JOR. Scott provided his Kenwood TS-950 HF transceiver for the event.



Former OCS&D/Communications Engineering Manager Gary Gray, W6DOE (left), and John Roberts, W6JOR, at W6OCC/75 special events station, make contacts on 20 meters and 40 meters during 75th Anniversary Open House



Gonset Communicator IIB (left) and III Civil Defense models on display at 75th Anniversary of Orange County Communications

Gonset Communicator Civil Defense Models and other vintage amateur radio and public-safety radio equipment was provided in a "museum" display by OCS&D/Communications Engineering Manager Ray Grimes, N8RG. RACES Capt. Ken Bourne, W6HK, developed a RACES timeline for the display, and discussed RACES with visitors to the exhibit in the large conference room, while others visitors were given tours of the ECRV and the special-event station.

RACES/MOU News from Around the County

“RACES/MOU News” provides an opportunity to share information from all City & County ACS/RACES units and MOU organizations in Orange County.

Please send your news to:

w6hk@ocraces.org

Fullerton

Fullerton RACES Radio Officer Gene Thorpe, KB6CMO, who is also the Fullerton Radio Club Public Service Coordinator, is looking for 25 amateur radio operators for the Donate Life 5K Run/1K Walk on Saturday, April 25, 2009. The event will occur at California State University Fullerton from 0700 to about 1000. Gene says this is a fun event and takes up only part of the morning (allowing hams to participate later in the morning and afternoon in Rebuilding Together Orange County). To volunteer or ask questions, contact Gene at kb6cmo@arll.net or (714) 680-4258.

Laguna Beach

Laguna Beach Emergency Communications Team (LBECT) (RACES) Chief Radio Officer John Kountz, KE6GFF, expresses his thanks to LBECT members for participating in the Laguna Beach 43rd Annual Patriots Day Parade on Saturday, March 7, 2009. More than 10,000 persons attended as either parade entrants or spectators. John says the parade went off without incident, thanks to the Parade Committee, public-safety personnel, and others (including LBECT personnel) affiliated with conducting the event.

Providing radio communications were Mick Donoff, KG6GRC, Spence McIntyre, KI6GWX, Jay Andrus, KG6RTT, Alex Wolcott, KI6OFK, Ian Wolcott, KI6OYI, and Arlene Schwartz, KE6GFI. John, KE6GFF, served as an announcer at the grandstand. LBECT operators were stationed at the check-in area, the library, the grandstand, the dispersal area, and along the parade route. This year there were 88 parade entrants.

American Red Cross Orange County Chapter

OCRACES will exhibit its Emergency Communications Response Vehicle (ECRV) at the American Red Cross—Orange

County Chapter May-Day emergency communications exercise and seminar on May 2, 2009, at 601 N. Golden Circle Drive in Santa Ana. Events and demonstrations at May-Day will include:

- ◆ HF and NVIS communications demonstrations
- ◆ Amateur television and helicopter video downlink
- ◆ How to build an emergency “go-kit”
- ◆ Amateur radio with solar power
- ◆ Winlink 2000 on HF and Winlink telpac on VHF/UHF
- ◆ APRS with GPS, mapping, and geocaching
- ◆ HF antenna designs and applications for base, mobile, and emergency and general antenna building
- ◆ VHF signal-strength test (anything goes)
- ◆ IRLP, Echolink, and D-STAR
- ◆ Crossband system demonstrations and tests
- ◆ Battery and emergency power systems
- ◆ Emergency in-field coax splicing
- ◆ DSP and speaker system demonstrations
- ◆ T-hunting

All participants are urged to bring HTs with charged and spare batteries. Hat and sunscreen are highly recommended. Talk-in is on 144.330 MHz simplex.

Orange County

Congratulations to OCRACES Radio Officer Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, on his promotion to Construction Safety Manager, Construction Safety Department, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Los Angeles.

Congratulations to Nancee Graff, N6ZRB, on passing the National Weather Service online weather-spotter training course. She was issued Spotter Code Number RIV196.

April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6 <i>OCRACES Meeting & Weekly ACS Net</i>	7	8	9	10	11 <i>RACES/MOU Breakfast</i>
12	13 <i>Weekly ACS Net</i>	14	15	16	17	18 <i>SWACS Meeting, Loma Ridge</i>
19	20 <i>Weekly ACS Net</i>	21	22	23	24	25 <i>Rebuilding Together Orange County</i>
26	27 <i>Weekly ACS Net & SWACS Freq. Test</i>	28	29	30		

Upcoming Events:

- **Apr 6:** OCRACES Meeting, 1930, 840 N. Eckhoff St., Suite 104, Orange
- **Apr 11:** RACES/MOU Breakfast, Katella Grill, 0800
- **Apr 18:** SWACS Meeting, 0900, OC EOC
- **Apr 25:** Rebuilding Together Orange County
- **Apr 25:** Donate Life 5K Run/1K Walk, Cal State Fullerton
- **Apr 27:** SWACS Radio/Frequency Test, 2015, OC EOC
- **May 2:** Red Cross/OC May Day
- **May 13-15:** CFEDWest



www.ocraces.org



Mission Statement

County of Orange RACES has made a commitment to provide all Public Safety departments in Orange County with the most efficient response possible to supplement emergency/disaster and routine Public Safety communications events and activities. We will provide the highest level of service using Amateur and Public Safety radio resources coupled with technology, teamwork, safety, and excellence. We will do so in an efficient, professional, and courteous manner, accepting accountability for all actions. We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership with the Public Safety community to professionally excel in the ability to provide emergency communications resources and services.

County of Orange RACES Frequencies

- 10 m: 29.640 MHz output, 29.540 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL
 - 6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL
 - 2 m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 Hz PL*
 - 2 m: 147.480 MHz simplex
 - 1.25 m: 223.760 MHz output, 222.160 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL
 - 70 cm: 446.000 MHz simplex
 - 70 cm: 449.100 MHz output, 444.100 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (private)
 - 70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (private)
 - 23 cm: 1282.025 MHz output, 1270.025 MHz input, 88.5 Hz PL
- *Primary Net—Mondays, 1900 hours

Program Coordinator

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Harvey Packard, KM6BV
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**“W6ACS ...
Serving
Orange County”**

Meet your County of Orange RACES Members!



Ken Bourne
W6HK



Scott Byington
KC6MMF



Harvey Packard
KM6BV



Ralph Sbragia
W6CSP



Marten Miller
KF6ZLQ



Robert Stoffel
KD6DAQ



Jack Barth
AB6VC



Jim Carter
WB6HAG



Ernest Fierheller
KG6LXT



Randy Benicky
N6PRL



Bill Borg
KG6PEX



Chuck Dolan
KG6UJC



Nancee Graff
N6ZRB



Ray Grimes
N8RG



Walter Kroy
KC6HAM



Martin La Rocque
N6NTH



John Roberts
W6JOR



Tony Sanchez
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