

December 2007



Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

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# Captain's Corner

*by Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer*

Our recent fire-related activities, such as the Santiago Fire and the recent Red Flag Warnings, point out how ready and willing we are to respond instantly to an activation. We also appreciate how quickly the City RACES and ACS units, as well as the Hospital Disaster Support Communications System, the American Red Cross/Orange County Chapter, and Orange County SKYWARN respond to calls for mutual-aid assistance. We can pat ourselves on the back for activating for so many emergencies and events during 2007, but are we really as prepared as we should be?

Are you keeping up with the latest technology, looking for ways to use it in RACES? I strongly encourage every RACES member to read, read, read. Subscribe to at least one amateur radio publication, and read as much as you can about new equipment and new technology.



Actually, no public-safety agency or RACES unit is as prepared as it should be. There is always new technology being developed that should be learned, and different ways of operating that we can learn from other emergency communications organizations. Debriefing an incident is one way of learning, to see what we did correctly, and to see where we need to improve. We will have a comprehensive debriefing session at our at our next City/County/MOU meeting (possibly in late January), where we will review the Volunteer Mutual Aid Drill, the City/County/MOU ACS Drill, and the Santiago Fire Incident. We hope to hold the meeting in a large auditorium, so all participants in these events can attend, and share ideas of how we can improve our capabilities.

Even read your "Yellow Book" ("Official RACES Guidebook") and know what's in there. For example, it lists the telephone numbers for all City and County law-enforcement agencies and fire services, useful if something needs to be reported such as by a unit on Severe Fire Weather Patrol. It also lists frequencies and PLs of City and County RACES repeaters. How long has it been since you've checked all frequencies in your HT, and made sure you have it programmed for the correct PL (which might change occasionally)? How long has it been since you've reviewed your HT's or mobile transceiver's operating guide? Are you able to reprogram it quickly for another RACES unit's frequencies, if you need to respond to them on mutual aid? Do you have all OCRACES

**The Next  
OCRACES  
Meeting is**

**December 3, 2007**  
**1830 Hours**

**Marie Callender's**  
**307 E. Katella Ave.**  
**Orange**

**OCRACES Holiday  
Dinner Meeting**



Orange County Sheriff's Department  
Michael S. Carona, Sheriff-Coroner

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## Captain's Corner *Continued from page 1*

frequencies and PLs programmed into your radios? Have you accessed all repeaters recently, to make sure that you have the PLs and offsets programmed correctly? Since we are not running weekly nets on our UHF repeaters, it's a good idea to check your equipment on those repeaters fairly often. Perhaps we should conduct at least a monthly net on all repeaters in 2008, to check equipment operation.

### **Are You on APRS and Echolink?**

Do you have an APRS system, or are you keeping up-to-date on the latest APRS technology? Many of us realized during the recent Severe Fire Weather Patrol that it would be useful for net control to know exactly where all units are located at all times, especially in case of emergency. Net control does not have to be at the EOC, but may be at a member's home, for example, during a fire patrol. Even the EOC RACES Room needs to have an APRS monitor, so let's make it a goal to install that in 2008, and to encourage each member to do the same at home. Each member should also be able to beacon an APRS signal from his or her car during an activation, especially a fire patrol activation. If you cannot afford (time or money) to do that now, perhaps you could borrow a beacon box (used during our Baker to Vegas event) to use with a mag-mount antenna during an activation. APRS does not need to be turned on in your car at all times, if you don't want to be tracked by unknown people, but may be turned on only during an activation, to provide location information to net control and to the served agency.

Are you active on Echolink? It allows you to communicate with another ham via the Internet, using voice-over-IP (VoIP) technology. A transceiver

can be interfaced to the system, allowing a ham outside the area to access that transceiver via his computer equipped with a headset. That transceiver could be on a RACES repeater, for example, allow the distant ham to check into a RACES net. Radio amateurs may also talk computer-to-computer via Echolink, or be in a conference consisting of computers and radios. Just think of the many applications for emergency communications! A wealth of information about Echolink may be found at <http://www.echolink.org>. Best of all, the software is downloadable and free.

### **Learn about Winlink**

Winlink is a bit more complicated, but all members should at least learn how to use it, as we are expanding our capabilities with that mode, to provide "e-mail" or printed text services to the agencies that we serve. Please make it a point to study the information at <http://www.winlink.org>.

Reading your radio's operating manuals, the Yellow Book, ham magazines, and Web site information on APRS, Echolink, Winlink, ATV, and other technologies will enhance your capabilities to serve in RACES, and will increase your enjoyment in amateur radio. Let's make it a personal goal in 2008 to read as much as we can on these subjects, and to experiment with the equipment.

I extend my personal thanks to all OCRACES members, as well as to members of City RACES units, HDSCS, American Red Cross/Orange County, and Orange County SKYWARN for your participation and dedication in 2007. We had a busy year, and I wish all of you a joyous holiday with your families.

## OCRACES Holiday Dinner Meeting: Dec. 3rd

Members of County of Orange RACES and their families will gather at Marie Callender's Restaurant, 307 E. Katella Avenue, in Orange, on Monday, December 3, 2007, at 6:30 PM, for the annual OCRACES Holiday Dinner. The Orange County Sheriff's Department, Communications Division, will take this opportunity to recognize the many hours provided by OCRACES members during 2007 for activations and drills, and for working on several projects as part of their service to the Department.

OCSD/Communications also invites OCRACES members to the Division's Holiday Luncheon on Tuesday, December 11th, at 11:30 AM, at 840 N. Eckhoff Street, in Orange.

## 118 Attend RACES Academy on Nov. 17th

County of Orange RACES offered 14 technology and operations courses at its RACES Academy on November 17, 2007, at the Orange County Sheriff's Training Facility in Orange. The Academy was open to all radio amateurs involved in emergency communications. Total attendance, including instructors and students, was 118. Each course lasted 50 minutes, and two courses ran concurrently throughout the day, allowing students to attend up to seven courses.

The following well-attended courses were offered:

- ◆ Amateur Television (by Jim Carter, WB6HAG, and Jack Barth, AB6VC, OCRACES)
- ◆ Health and Safety Considerations for First Responders (by Ray Grimes, N8RG, Engineer Manager, OCSD Communications Division; this course will be repeated at the January 7th OCRACES meeting, and all OCRACES members will be required to attend, as mandatory training)
- ◆ Winlink (by Scott Byington, KC6MMF, OCRACES)
- ◆ NIMS IS-200 (by Mike Steinkraus, N6PTN, Orange County Health Care Agency/EMS)
- ◆ Setting up a Communications Command Post (by Joe Saddler, WA6PAZ, Senior Telecommunications Engineer, OCSD Communications Division)
- ◆ HF Mobile Operations and Installations (by Gordon West, WB6NOA, American Red Cross/Orange County Chapter, who also demonstrated his mobile installation during the lunch break)
- ◆ High-Speed Multimedia Using 2.4 GHz 802.11 Routers (by Brandin Grams, KG6RWV)
- ◆ Power Systems (by Ernest Fierheller, KG6LXT, OCRACES)
- ◆ D-STAR Digital Voice and Data Protocol (by Howard Brown, KG6GI, and Brian Roode, NJ6N, SOARA)
- ◆ Developing Networks for Agency Communications ("It Takes a Network") (by April Moell, WA6OPS, Hospital Disaster Support Communications System)
- ◆ VHF and UHF Mobile Installation Procedures (by John Roberts, W6JOR, OCRACES)
- ◆ Mutual-Aid Deployment to Other Areas (by Wayne Barringer, KB6UJW, Orange County REACT)
- ◆ DC Distribution (by Jim Olliff, KE6URZ, JO-COMM/Red=Dee-2)
- ◆ Orange County 800 MHz Trunked Radio System (by Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ, OCSD Emergency Communications Coordinator)

Attractive certificates will be mailed to instructors and students who attended at least five of the above classes.

## Disney and Knott's Salute Law and Fire

As a thank-you to those involved with the Southern California wildfire response, The Disneyland Resort is offering a complimentary three-day Park Hopper ticket for admission to Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure for each individual holding a public-safety agency ID card. The offer also allows that individual to make a one-time purchase of up to five three-day Park Hopper tickets for family members at a rate of \$56 each. To acquire the tickets, you must go to the ticket booths at the resort and be prepared to present both an agency ID card and a valid California driver's license. The tickets must be used the first time on the day they are acquired. Use of the remaining two days on the ticket must be completed within 30 days of the first use. The offer is valid from November 13, 2007, until February 28, 2008. However, the blackout dates of November 22-25, December 8-9, December 25 to January 6, and February 15-17 apply. For more information and details on the offer, go to <http://www.disneyland.com/hero>.

Knott's Berry Farm has announced its 15th Annual Salute to Fire & Police Personnel, November 17 to December 21, 2007. Free admission is offered to fire and law personnel and one guest, plus up to six more people for \$12.95 each. Valid fire or law-enforcement photo ID is required. The offer includes County Sheriff and reserve/volunteer fire/law employees with valid ID. Fire/law-enforcement personnel must be present

## OCRACES Goes on Fire Patrol

County of Orange RACES activated early Saturday morning, November 24, 2007, for Severe Fire Weather Patrol duty, in response to a Red Flag Warning that had been issued by the National Weather Service. Two-man patrols operated in approximately 5½-hour shifts, covering four areas of Orange County. Net-control operators were ready to telephone reports to appropriate fire agencies, if plumes of smoke or suspicious activity had been spotted.

Morning patrols were conducted by the following two-man teams: Ernest Fierheller, KG6LXT, and Tom Tracey, KC6FIC; Ken Bourne, W6HK, and Scott Byington, KC6MMF, Area 2; and Randy Benicky, N6PRL, and Steve Sobodos, KN6UX, Area 3. Morning net control was handled by Tom Stroud, N6FDZ, on 2 meters, and Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, on 70 cm. Afternoon patrols were conducted by: Jack Barth, AB6VC, and Harvey Packard, KM6BV, Area 1; Ken Bourne, W6HK, and Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, Area 2; Randy Benicky, N6PRL, and Tony Sanchez, AE6QT, Area 3; and Nancee Graff, N6ZRB, and John Roberts, W6JOR, Area 4. Afternoon net control on both repeaters was Tom Tracey, KC6FIC.

Fortunately, the wind was relatively calm and no fires were spotted. The patrol provided a good test of radio coverage throughout a large portion of Orange County.

## County, City RACES Support Golden Guardian

County of Orange RACES, as well as several City RACES units, supported the Golden Guardian exercise on November 14, 2007. Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC, operated from the EOC RACES Room, and communicated with City RACES stations on 2 meters and 6 meters, and with EOCs and WEROC (Water Emergency Response Organization of Orange County) on VHF low-band.

Golden Guardian 2007 was sponsored by the State of California Governor's Office of Homeland Security and the Anaheim/Santa Ana Super Urban Area (UA) Security Initiative. The focus was on security and response for mass-transit and mass-gathering events. The exercise simulated a multi-discipline, UA-wide response to a high-explosive terrorist attack.

## NWS Winter Weather Workshop: Dec. 4th

The National Weather Service will conduct a Winter Weather Workshop on Tuesday, December 4, 2007, at 10 AM. The location is the Orange County Resources & Development Department, 1750 S. Douglas, in Anaheim. The agenda is as follows:

- ◆ 10:00-10:10 AM: Welcome and Introductory Remarks (Jim Purpura)
- ◆ 10:10-10:25 AM: Review of 2006-2007 Weather (Where was the Rain? Fires/Summer Monsoon/Heat) (Steve Vanderburg)
- ◆ 10:25-10:40 AM: GoTo Meetings (Mark Moede)
- ◆ 10:40-10:55 AM: Update on StormReady/TsunamiReady Communities/School Weather Radios (Ed Clark)
- ◆ 11:00-11:15 AM: Winter Outlook/Why Was Last Winter So Dry? (Jim Purpura)
- ◆ 11:15-11:30 AM: Questions and Wrap-up (All)



# Watching The Web

*Web Sites of Interest to RACES Personnel  
by Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer*

Resources for Ham Radio  
<http://www.n0hr.com>



NOHR.com has several resources of interest to amateur radio operators, including a huge links page, a PocketPC logbook, PocketPC Morse code utilities, a digital send-and-receive program for a PocketPC, and a ham radio blog.

The ham radio links page includes a rating system, periodic validation, and ability to submit new links. It's a resource for links to antenna, amplifiers, transceivers, and other amateur radio Web sites.

MobileLog 2, a logbook for amateur radio, places many of the same features and functionality found in typical desktop logbook applications into the PocketPC platform while minimizing keyboard tasks (such as having to enter RST via keyboard).

PPCMorse is a suite of Morse code utilities for PocketPC PDAs. The freeware version, PPCMorse (aka PPCMorse-Basic) allows the user to send messages from a text buffer and configure various parameters (speed, weight, ratio, pitch). PPCMorse-Pro adds functionality to PPCMorse, such as CW practice mode.

With PocketDigi, you can plug your PocketPC into your transceiver and send and receive RTTY (teletype), PSK (phase-shift keying mode), and CW (Morse code). This open-source software is free. The newest version of MobileLog integrates PocketDigi functionality. With MobileLog 2, you can launch PocketDigi, then capture ham radio contact information (QTH, RST, etc.) and send the information back to MobileLog again.

APRS-CE is a utility to enable ham radio operators to participate in APRS with a PocketPC, without the need for a full PC.

One page on the NOHR.com Web site describes how to record amateur radio communications on some PocketPC PDAs, if they include a built-in microphone.

NOHR.com also includes propagation utilities. Propfire is a Web browser extension (for Firefox) that allows users to view HF propagation conditions on their browser status bar. PropagationStats is a small bit of code that can be easily added to a Web site to display current radio propagation indices (A-index, K-index, and solar flux index) and HF radio propagation blackout alert information. It acquires its data from WWV in Ft. Collins, Colorado.

Thanks to Bob Lawson, N6RW, of Laguna Beach Emergency Communications Team (RACES), for calling our attention to the interesting Ham Radio Toolbar at [http://www.n0hr.com/Ham\\_Radio\\_Toolbar.htm](http://www.n0hr.com/Ham_Radio_Toolbar.htm) for Firefox and Internet Explorer. With its powerful search box, simply enter some text in the box or select it in your browser, then use the search menu to search quickly any of the following: QRZ.com (call sign searches); DXwatch (spot searches); QSL manager (look up DX call signs); FindUCom (APRS location information with a call search); Ham Radio Links; Product Reviews; and Ham Radio Classifieds at eHam and QTH.com. The toolbar also includes: links to popular ham radio Web sites; access to the DXpedition map; ham radio blog feeds; customizable e-mail notifier and weather icon; UTC time; WWV gadget to show propagation bulletins; podcast player with ham radio related podcasts; and propagation data from WWV (similar to Propfire).

# RACES News from Around the County

**"RACES News" provides an opportunity to share information from all City & County RACES organizations in Orange County. Please send your news to:**

**w6hk@ocraces.org**

We have no news this issue from City RACES units or MOU organizations in Orange County. Consequently, we will take this opportunity to list Web sites of City RACES units and other emergency communications organizations in Orange County. All OCRACES members are encouraged to be familiar with all City RACES and MOU units in case mutual aid needs to be offered or requested. If possible, attend their meetings, and invite their members to attend ours.

## [Web Sites of City RACES and ACS Units in Orange County](#)

### **Anaheim RACES**

<http://www.anaheim.net/disasterpreparedness/races/races.html>

### **Brea RACES**

<http://www.ci.brea.ca.us/article.cfm?id=823>

### **Costa Mesa RACES (MESAC)**

<http://www.mesac.net/>

### **Fountain Valley RACES (FACT)**

<http://www.fvdpd.org/station/races/> and <http://www.qsl.net/fvraces/>

### **Huntington Beach RACES**

<http://www.hbraces.org/>

### **Irvine RACES (IDEC)**

[http://www.cityofirvine.org/ipd/info\\_center/idec\\_ham\\_radio.asp](http://www.cityofirvine.org/ipd/info_center/idec_ham_radio.asp)

### **Laguna Beach RACES (LBECT)**

<http://www.lagunabeachraces.org/>

### **Laguna Niguel ACS**

<http://www.ci.laguna-niguel.ca.us/index.asp?SID=301>

### **Laguna Woods RACES**

<http://www.qsl.net/w6ly/>

### **Mission Viejo RACES/ARES**

<http://www.qsl.net/races-ares/>

### **Newport Beach RACES**

[http://www.nbpd.org/programs/races\\_program.asp](http://www.nbpd.org/programs/races_program.asp)

### **Orange RACES (COAR)**

[http://www.cityoforange.org/depts/police/admin/volunteers/amateur\\_radio.asp](http://www.cityoforange.org/depts/police/admin/volunteers/amateur_radio.asp)

### **Westminster RACES**

<http://www.wraces.org/>

## [Web Sites of other Emergency Communications Organizations in Orange County](#)

### **Anaheim Police Radio Club**

<http://www.qsl.net/w6apd/>

### **Hospital Disaster Support Communications System (HDSCS)**

<http://members.aol.com/emcom4hosp/>

### **Huntington Beach CERT Communicators**

<http://www.hbcert.org/specialties/comms.html>

### **Law Enforcement Amateur Radio Network (LEARN)**

<http://www.w6ocs.org/>

### **Orange County REACT**

<http://www.ocreact.org/>

### **Orange County SKYWARN**

<http://www.ocskeywarn.org/>

# December 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 <i>OCRACES Holiday Dinner (no net)</i>	4 <i>NWS Winter Weather Workshop</i>	5	6	7	8
9	10 <i>Weekly Net</i>	11 <i>OCSD/Comm's Luncheon</i>	12	13	14	15
16	17 <i>Weekly Net</i>	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 <i>Christmas Eve (no net)</i>	25 <i>Christmas</i>	26	27	28	29
30	31 <i>New Years Eve (no net)</i>					

## Upcoming Events:

- Dec 3: OCRACES Holiday Dinner, Marie Callender's, Katella, Orange
- Dec 4: NWS Winter Weather Workshop, 1750 S. Douglas, Anaheim
- Dec 11: OCSD/Comm's Holiday Luncheon, Eckhoff St., Orange
- Jan 7: OCRACES Meeting, 840 N. Eckhoff St.; mandatory training for all members on Health and Safety Considerations for First Responders



[www.ocraces.org](http://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:

- 6m: 52.62 MHz output, 52.12 MHz input, 103.5 PL
- 2m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 PL \*
- 23cm: 1282.025 MHz output, 1270.025 MHz input, 88.5 PL
- 1.25m: 223.76 MHz output, 222.16 MHz input, 110.9 PL
- 70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 PL

\* Primary Net - Mondays, 1900 Hours

### Program Coordinator

Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ  
(714) 704-7917

### Radio Officers

Scott Byington, KC6MMF  
Harvey Packard, KM6BV  
Joe Selikov, KB6EID  
Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP

### Chief Radio Officer

Ken Bourne, W6HK  
(714) 997-0073

### Assistant Radio Officers

Jack Barth, AB6VC  
Jim Carter, WB6HAG  
Ernest Fierheller, KG6LXT

### County of Orange RACES

OCSD/Communications  
840 N. Eckhoff St. Suite 104  
Orange, CA 92868-1021

Telephone – (714) 704-7917  
Fax – (714) 704-7902  
Email – OCRACES@ocgov.com

# County of Orange RACES

OCSD/Communications  
840 N. Eckhoff St. Suite 104  
Orange, CA 92868-1021

Telephone – (714) 704-7917  
Fax – (714) 704-7902  
Email – OCRACES@ocgov.com

Visit Our Website  
[www.ocraces.org](http://www.ocraces.org)  
It's Where It's @!

Questions or Comments?  
Contact the *NetControl* Editor  
[w6hk@ocraces.org](mailto:w6hk@ocraces.org)



**“W6KRW ...  
Serving  
Orange County”**

## Meet your County of Orange RACES Members!



Ken Bourne  
W6HK



Scott Byington  
KC6MMF



Harvey Packard  
KM6BV



Ralph Sbragia  
W6CSP



Joe Selikov  
KB6EID



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 Ryo  
KC6HAM



Martin La Rocque  
N6NTH



John Roberts  
W6JOR



Tony Sanchez  
AE6QT



Steve Sobodos  
KN6UX



Tom Stroud  
N6FDZ



Tom Tracey  
KC6FIC