

February 2005



Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service



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Captain's Corner

by Ray Grimes N8RG, Chief Radio Officer

Just when you think that everything is going well, we have a near-disaster in the form of flooding from unusually heavy and persistent rain. I say near-disaster, in that Orange County was very fortunate to have avoided extensive loss of life and property damage from flooding (unlike our neighboring counties which suffered devastating losses). As I had said last month, this is largely due to excellent public utilities, flood control management, and county zoning and planning that we enjoy but often take for granted. We can also thank the Orange County Sheriff's Department and Orange County Fire Authority for their quick response and aggressive evacuation plan that undoubtedly saved lives.

OCRACES was activated January 11th and responded well, providing member participation to staff three continuous shifts if required. It so happened that OCRACES was only needed to staff two daytime shifts which terminated at 1600. OCRACES was requested to provide SSTV images of the San Juan Creek area and members met the challenge and responded with three video field units. Thanks to Sheriff's Communications, the video feed from the OCRACES room was patched to the EOC monitors so that EOC personnel could see real-time video images of the flood waters and bridge conditions. We received reports from Emergency Management and the RDMD of their great appreciation for this valuable and timely information.

This is critical information that the county would not have had by any other resource. RACES members also established a voice link at the field command post and staffed the public safety and amateur radio consoles at the EOC. A special thanks to Steve Sobodos, Harvey Packard, Joe Selikov, Jack Barth, Scott Byington, Bryan Hovde and Ernest Fierheller for responding to the activation, and the many other OCRACES members who volunteered for second and third shifts but were not required. The expected heavy afternoon rains never came, which helped immensely in diminishing the threat. San Juan Creek area residents were evacuated due to concern that the river would dangerously overflow if we had more rain.



Steve Sobodos sends SSTV images to the County Emergency Operations Center.

A few days later, a new threat emerged in that the Army Corps of Engineers determined that the Prado Dam was leaking in the area of the construction site, threatening flash flooding. That concern resulted in an evacuation of residents living downstream from the dam in Santa Ana Canyon.

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The Next
OCRACES
Meeting is
February 7th
1930 Hours
840 N. Eckhoff St.
Orange, CA



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

Captain's Corner

Continued from Page 1

Ventura County ARES/RACES responded to their local disasters, providing communications support at shelters in the La Conchita disaster area. As you recall, the La Conchita mudslide killed 10 people and displaced many more. Several communities were cut off from the outside world as roads and utilities were destroyed. Five shelters were opened to provide refuge for over 700 displaced individuals. ARES/RACES members provided radio communications at the local hospitals, assuring continuous and reliable contact with the outside. ARES/RACES members provided emergency communications for the isolated community of Piru, assisting in the coordination of supply delivery for 500 refugees, including support of an evacuation of a Piru resident that required emergency medical aid.

There has been considerable discussion as of late regarding the value and purpose of amateur radio these days in providing emergency communications. The events of the past several weeks speak for themselves, clearly proving once more that amateur radio is always available to help, bringing countless resources and personnel that can adapt to most any situation, meeting the challenge. Thanks to the ARRL Bulletin "ARES/RACES Aid in California Flood Response" for information used in this article.



Harvey Packard (left) and Bryan Hovde staff radio positions at the EOC on January 11th.

RACES Activation

by Robert Stoffel, KD6DAQ

At 0717 on January 11, 2005, OCRACES was activated to support an EOC activation regarding south county weather related incidents. Steve Sobodos was at Loma Ridge, opened up the RACES radio room and obtained updated information from EOC staff. He then responded to the incident area and provided SSTV images back to the EOC. Harvey Packard was assigned to an amateur radio position at the EOC, and provided incident updates throughout his shift. Ernest Fierheller responded to the EOC, and then



deployed into the field providing a communications link between the command post and the County EOC (he also delivered 800 MHz pool radios to OCSD personnel at the command post). Bryan Hovde responded to the EOC and was assigned to the public safety radio console, monitoring various channels and providing updates throughout his shift. Ray Grimes and Joe Selikov relieved Packard and Hovde at the EOC for a second shift. Scott Byington and Jack Barth responded to the incident area and provided additional SSTV images.

SSTV images were distributed throughout the EOC.

At 1600 hours the EOC was closed and all RACES personnel were released from duty. This was an excellent use of SSTV as the images were distributed throughout the EOC at Loma Ridge. RACES volunteers also transmitted all radio broadcast updates throughout the day on both amateur and public safety radio systems. Thanks to everyone who responded and also to those willing to take night shifts if they became necessary.

Christmas in April Coming to Orange County

As we have done in past years, County of Orange RACES will once again provide logistics communications support for the annual Rebuilding Together event. Formerly known as Christmas in April, the Rebuilding Together Orange County organization partners with the community to rebuild owner-occupied homes, shelters and non-profit 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.

Although Rebuilding Together provides services throughout the year, the national rebuilding day is Saturday, April 30, 2005. This is the largest event of the year and when communications is needed the most. As we have done in the past, OCRACES will be seeking assistance from any interested City RACES organization. The event is too large for us alone, and we are seeking communicators for this day-long activity. If you are interested, please have your City Coordinator or Radio Officer contact us at OCRACES@ocgov.com and we will provide you with all the details.

2004 Rebuilding Together Facts & Figures

211 Homes and non-profit facilities rehabilitated

2,196 volunteers donated time and skills

18,900 volunteer hours recorded

Work completed in **28** cities in Orange County

\$1,690,000 fair market value of work completed



CHRISTMAS IN DECEMBER?

OCRACES proudly displayed our Emergency Communications Response Vehicle in December at Ham Radio Outlet in Anaheim. A special "visitor" stopped by to check out the "long range" communications capabilities of our vehicle. Thanks to Gordon West for submitting these photos of the visit!



The "Big Bang Theory" of Radio Coverage?

By Ray Grimes, N8RG

While reviewing some telecommunications industry articles, I came across something of particular interest. It seems that researchers at the National Institute of Standards and Technology are working to improve emergency communications by testing how radio signals behaved before, during, and after a December 18 planned implosion of the Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. A goal of these studies is to evaluate the best methods of applying radio communications systems to cover basements, shafts, or complex environments; and to understand radio propagation in the presence of rubble.

In order to perform these tests, agency officials placed 25 battery-operated radio transmitters at various locations throughout the convention center prior to demolition. Researchers would then monitor and map the signal strength levels at numerous locations throughout the facility. This is the third time that such tests were performed by the agency, having made use of a 13 story public housing project in New Orleans and similar tests at Philadelphia's Veterans Stadium. The agency cites the September 11 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center as a classic case study of the many possible complications and failures of emergency communications systems. One possible tool that could evolve from these studies would be a visual mapping device that might identify the location within a collapsed structure of a person with a transmitting cellular telephone or other two-way radio. This project is funded in part by the Homeland Security Department and the Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services Office.

Though these tests may produce volumes of data that suggest possible communications solutions for a disaster zone, telecommunications experts already understand that the RF model is unique for each situation and solutions must be adapted to support specific local communications requirements for the incident. Structural debris will fall in quasi-random patterns that may all but defy RF propagation modeling and a common solution. Thanks to USA Today for providing information for the article ("Demolition tests Emergency radio Signals", www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2004-12-21-nist-radio-demolition-test_x.htm).



RACES members Ray Grimes and Steve Sobodos capture images of the recent weather related activity in Orange County.



Watching The Web

By Ken Bourne, W6HK

Each month, "Watching the Web" offers a look at Web Sites of Interest to RACES Personnel, as presented by Ken Bourne, W6HK, Radio Officer for the County of Orange RACES.

This month Ken has featured: The Repeater Builder's Technical Information Page.

If you like to build or modify repeater systems for amateur radio communications, "The Repeater Builder's Technical Information Page" provides an amazing amount of information. The URL is <http://www.repeater-builder.com/rbtip/>. The site covers

mainly Motorola and GE mobile modifications for duplex repeater operation, including the availability of conversion parts. Other commercial and amateur manufacturers are also included.

Other pages on this Web site cover antenna system information, construction projects, repeater linking, repeater equipment suppliers, repeater-related E-mail lists, typical repeater site rules, technical information, a two-way directory, and much more.



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

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RACES News from Around the County

HUNTINGTON BEACH RACES

In late 2004 HBRACES joined together with their CERT organization and provided public service communications for two events outside of the city limits, reports Peter Barbour, N6RAS, Assistant Radio Officer. "These events proved that we can work well together," said Peter. The next big event for HBRACES is the Pacific Shoreline Marathon on February 6th. This is a full 26-mile marathon held along the beach and attracting hundreds of runners from Southern California and beyond. HBRACES will position about 25 radio communicators along the course to monitor the race and report status to the net control station.

HOSPITAL DISASTER SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

HDSCS responded to Kaiser Hospital Anaheim at their request when concerns developed about the Prado Dam. "We did respond on an emergency basis but our role was to be on standby with the hospitals staff at the hospital EOC," reported April Moell, WA6OPS, Emergency Coordinator, Hospital Disaster Support Communications System. Other than helping clarify some information for the hospital HDSCS didn't handle any emergency communications. So why were they there? "The hospital knows our group and they know the importance of back-up communications. Having us there gave them an extra level of confidence should there be flooding

that could isolate their facility or should an evacuation be ordered," explained April. "It is our HDSCS mission, backing up communications critical to patient care."

LOS ALAMITOS & SEAL BEACH RACES

The 25th Annual Los Alamitos 5K and 10K Race will take place on the Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB) runways and taxiways on Saturday morning, February 26, 2005. Los Alamitos and Seal Beach RACES will be supporting the event. They will communicate each race's start time to the timers located at the mile markers throughout each race, and also handle health and welfare traffic. "Both of these done in real time provide good practice and experience for us to help prepare for the "Big One", whatever it may be," explains Tom Rothwell, K6ZT. The Los Alamitos PD Communications Van is slated for use by the Net Control operator.

HOSPITAL DISASTER SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

In the late afternoon of Wednesday, January 19, 2005 a car accident in Huntington Beach caused a local power failure which affected Huntington Beach Hospital, reports April Moell, WA6OPS.

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

February 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 <i>Weekly Net</i> OCRACES	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 <i>Weekly Net</i>	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 <i>Weekly Net</i>	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 <i>Weekly Net</i>					

Upcoming Events:

- **February 7:** OCRACES monthly meeting, 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Orange, 1930 hours
- **March 2:** Disaster Exercise, John Wayne Airport, OCRACES Activation
- **March 7:** OCRACES monthly meeting, 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Orange, 1930 hours
- **March 9:** SONGS Dress Rehearsal – OCRACES Activation
- **April 23 & 24:** Baker-to-Vegas – OCRACES Activation
- **April 30:** Christmas in April – OCRACES Activation

RACES News Continued from Page 6

In addition to the power failure, all normal phone lines failed, inside and out. Following established procedures, the hospital notified HDSCS via cell phone at 4:45 PM and the Call-Up system was placed into motion. The first member arrived 25 minutes after the call and began external communications from the hospital Command Post. Within an hour after the call, five hams were in place. At the peak of the activation, seven operators were deployed throughout the facility at locations including general patient care, Emergency Department, Cardiac Telemetry, Intensive Care, Transitional Care, and "shadowing" the House Supervisor. Operations continued until complete service was restored and all systems were stable at 8:30 PM.



HDSCS hams are quite familiar with this facility, having provided communications during a daytime Mass Casualty drill and an overnight telephone upgrade in the last six months. The grounds have also been the site of HDSCS Field Day for the last three years. Initial responders and relief operators were Bob Evans W6TQC, Gale Fajardo, Jr. KD6AYP, Tom Gaccione WB2LRH, Fred Lochner WA6FRA, Jim McLaughlin AB6UF, Marshall Shipley KG6SKD, Ken Simpson W6KOS, Clay Stearns KE6TZR and Fred Wagner KQ6Q. Base station, Net Control and support operators were Paul Broden K6MHD, April Moell WA6OPS and Joe Moell KØOV. Seven additional members were standing by for possible relief deployment when the incident ended.

County of Orange RACES

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It's Where It's @!

Questions or Comments?
Contact the Net Control Editor
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**"W6KRW ...
Serving
Orange County"**

Meet your County of Orange RACES Members!



Ray Grimes
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Robert Stoffel
KD6DAQ



Jack Barth
AB6VC

Bill Borg
KG6PEX

Scott Byington
KC6MMF

Ernest Fierheller
KG6LXT

Nancee Graff
N6ZRB

Bryan Hovde
KD7CRA

Walter Kroy
KC6HAM



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