July 2026

Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

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Next OCRACES Meeting:

Thursday, July 2, 2026, on Zoom

Guest Speaker: Bill Scholtz, W1HIJ, on Communications in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

CRO's Nest

by Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer Emeritus

Remote Base

I like to monitor 52.525 MHz FM on 6 meters, using a Motorola Maxtrac on a quarter-wave ground-plane antenna so I don't tie up my "normal" equipment for operating on other bands. 52.525 MHz is a national calling frequency, but I don't hear much activity. It's almost like an intercom between local good friends, and we hope for an occasional sporadic-E 6-meter opening to liven things up. Another 6-meter FM simplex frequency in Southern California is 50.3 MHz, with some activity in eastern Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. On 2 meters FM, the national calling frequency is 146.52 MHz. On 10 meters FM, it's 29.6 MHz. The national calling frequencies are not to be used for repeater operation, but occasionally I hear a ham mention that he is hearing a repeater on 29.6 MHz, 52.525 MHz, or 146.52 MHz, or on some other exclusively simplex frequency. Most likely, what he is hearing is a remote base and not a common repeater. So what is a remote base?

An amateur remote base station's transmitter, receiver, and antenna are at one location, often at an ideally high location for good coverage, but the station is controlled from somewhere else via a radio link (using DTMF or telecommand), microwave link, wired link, or the internet (using remote-control software/clients). Thus, a radio amateur may run a full station from a different place while the station owner (who might or might not be the same person) remains responsible for its operation.

Reasons for setting up a remote base station include DXing, contesting, accessing better antennas, sharing a club station, or emergency communications. The remote base can be configured not only for operating on an FM simplex calling frequency but also for multimode, multiband operation.

The licensee and any control operator of a remote base are legally responsible to maintain regulatory compliance. Control links and frequencies must meet FCC Part 97 rules.

The primary control point of a remote base station, if using a radio link for controlling, is essentially an auxiliary amateur station configured so that the control point is not co-located with the radio equipment. The remote station provides the same capabilities as a normal ham station (transmit, receive, antenna control, power control), but those functions are commanded from elsewhere. Most are run by individuals or clubs and may be private (not open to all hams).

§ 97.201 of the FCC rules says an auxiliary station may transmit only on the 2-meter and shorter wavelength bands, except the 144.0-144.5 MHz, 145.8-146.0 MHz, 219-220 MHz (fixed digital message forwarding systems only), 222.000-222.15 MHz, 431-433 MHz, and 435-438 MHz segments.

Under § 97.201, operators can send voice/data plus control signals (for example DTMF tones) to change frequency, power,

(Continued on page 2)

CRO's Nest *Continued from page 1*

or antenna direction. Radio control links must be above 144.5 MHz, and certain auxiliary operations are commonly on the 222-MHz band. Using wired/internet control instead, modern setups use remote-control software (Flex Radio, RemoteHams, EchoLink/IRLP gateways, or dedicated SDR clients) to stream audio and control radio functions over IP.

Under § 97.213, an amateur station may be under telecommand where there is a radio or wireline control link between the control point and the station sufficient for the control operator to perform his/her duties. If radio, the control link must use an auxiliary station. A control link using a fiber-optic cable or another telecommunication service is considered wireline. Provisions must be incorporated to limit transmission by the station to a period of no more than 3 minutes in the event of malfunction in the control link. The station must be protected against making, willfully or negligently, unauthorized transmissions. A photocopy of the station license and a label with the name, address, and telephone number of the station licensee and at least one designated control operator must be posted in a conspicuous place at the station location.

Remote base stations have some risks and tradeoffs, including security (unauthorized access if not secured), latency (internet or link delays affect real-time modes), legal exposure (misidentification or improper control), and shared-use management (who may transmit and when). These should be mitigated with strong authentication, logging, and clear operating rules.

Perhaps OCRACES should consider remoting the Elecraft K3 HF transceiver in the RACES Room at the Loma Ridge EOC. A remote console for an Elecraft K3 is typically either an Elecraft K3/0 or K3/0-Mini control head used with Elecraft's K3-Remote system, or a third-party IP link such as RemoteRig's RRC-1258MkII paired with PC control software (Win4K3Suite, HRD, or TRX Manager).

At the control point (such as at the Sheriff's new Tech Center) a K3-Remote system (K3/0 or K3/0 Mini) could be used to operate a remote K3 with full functionality. This is documented in Elecraft's K3 Remote Owner's Manual. The K3/0 Mini (Elecraft control head) provide native K3 UI, USB for PC, and full feature parity. However, it requires K3/0 or K3 remote firmware/configuration. It is best for operators wanting an authentic front-panel experience. The K3/0 (original control head) offers full hardware control, which is proven in the Elecraft Remote kit. However, it is larger than the Mini, with fewer USB conveniences. It is best for users with existing K3/0 or legacy setups.

Third-party RemoteRig's RRC-1258MKII (IP hardware link) is robust with tunneling low-latency audio/CAT/USB and keying. The units have a dedicated K3 Twin package for two K3 setups. However, there is extra hardware cost, with networks setup/ports. It is best for remote over internet with secure hardware link.

PC software (Win4K3Suite, HRD, TRX Manager, and similar programs) is flexible, providing CAT control with logging and panadapter integration. However, it depends on PC and network, and may need virtual COM mapping. It is best for operators who prefer software control and SDR panadapters.

If we want to set up for remote operation of the Elecraft K3 at Loma Ridge, first we would need to decide which control method to use: hardware control head (K3/0 -Mini) vs. RemoteRig vs. pure PC client. Our choice would be based on latency tolerance and whether we need true front-panel feel. For network/security, we would need to use VPN or RemoteRig's encrypted link and forward only required ports, and use strong passwords. For audio/CAT mapping, we would configure virtual COM/USB tunneling per the chosen hardware/software manual. We would test locally at first, to verify CAT, audio, PTT, and FSK/RTTY paths (if used) before opening to the internet. ✸

Next OCRACES Meeting: July 2nd

The next County of Orange RACES meeting will be on Thursday, July 2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., on Zoom. All OCRACES, City RACES, and EmComm members are invited to attend.

Our guest speaker will be Bill Scholz, W1HIJ, who many of you will recognize from his 28 years of serving hams at Ham Radio Outlet in Anaheim, until he retired on June 26, 2026. At our meeting, Bill will speak about communications in the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, including Winlink and GMRS.

Bill is manager of the "West Coast Region HF Net" for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. It is a voice and digital messaging net that covers the area from the Rocky Mountains west to the western Pacific (Guam, American Samoa, and Hawaii). Bill checks the U.S. Coast Guard Eleventh District into the Monday evening Cal OES California Emergency Services Net on 75 meters. He is also active on CW and FT8.

RACES PSRs are reminded to register for this meeting on the InTime Calendar. ✸

2026 Thunderbird and Whale Exercise

by Chi Nguyen, KE6MVS

On Saturday, June 13, 2026, the United States Volunteers Joint Services Command (USV-JSC) conducted the Thunderbird and Whale Emergency Exercise in support of the National Tribal Emergency Management Council (NTEMC).

This year's exercise scenario involved a sudden shift of the Earth's crust along the Cascadia Subduction Zone, resulting in a full-length "megathrust" rupture extending from Cape Mendocino in Northern California to Nootka Island in British Columbia. The simulated event generated a magnitude 9.0 earthquake.

The earthquake triggered widespread devastation, including tsunamis, landslides, and soil liquefaction. Buildings and critical infrastructure such as roads, docks, railways, airports, power lines, storage tanks, and various industrial facilities were damaged, tilted, or submerged. Affected industrial facilities included chemical storage sites, power plants (coal, oil, gas, hydroelectric, and nuclear), hazardous-waste collection points, and processing facilities, resulting in simulated spills and fires. These conditions created hazardous situations throughout the West Coast states.

To support the exercise, the USV-JSC National Headquarters Joint Operations Center (JOC) activated Regional Commands (RCs) in seven states: Washington, Oregon, California, North Carolina, Indiana, Texas, and Florida.

Dong Ha, KJ6MBC (left), and Chi Nguyen, KE6MVS (right), at exercise.

9th Regional Command participants in Huntington Beach during Thunderbird and Whale Emergency Exercise.

Communications between sites relied primarily on amateur radio systems. Communication modes included:

- 80-meter LSB (primary and secondary frequencies)
- 40-meter LSB (primary and secondary frequencies)
- HF Winlink
- Packet Winlink
- DMR radio
- Local VHF/UHF repeaters

In California, the 9th Regional Command established its Joint Operations Center in Huntington Beach. As in previous years, amateur radio communication support was requested for the exercise.

DMR radio support was provided by Dong Ha, KJ6MBC, from Westminster RACES. Winlink message support was provided by Chi Nguyen, KE6MVS, from OCRACES.

Before the exercise began, we took the opportunity to discuss the importance of emergency communications with local RACES members and amateur radio groups. We explained how to become a licensed amateur radio operator, where to obtain study materials, and how to take the licensing examination. We also answered many questions from participants.

Two portable antenna masts were set up, one for each communication system. These systems can operate on either built-in battery power or AC power if available.

Throughout the exercise, our stations sent and received numerous messages. Winlink was heavily utilized through the 9600-baud gateways W6ACS-10 and W6ACS-11 located at Loma Ridge and Olinda. These gateways provided rapid transmission and receipt of email messages. ICS forms sped the processing of incoming and outgoing traffic. Forms used during the exercise included:

- ICS-213 General Message
- ICS-213 Resource Request (RR)
- Field Situation Report
- Winlink Check-In
- Winlink Check-Out

Dong and I were pleased to have the opportunity to work with and share our knowledge with other volunteer groups on how to communicate effectively between operations centers during emergencies.

The exercise concluded at noon. Participants worked hard, gained experience using ICS forms, and learned alternative communication methods that can be used when cell phones and conventional email systems are unavailable. ✸

ITU Acquires Ameritron and Mirage from MFJ

As reported in the May 2026 issue of NetControl, ITU Corporation in Indiana acquired the Hy-Gain and Cushcraft antenna, rotator, and communications product lines from MFJ Enterprises. On June 9, 2026, ITU announced the acquisition of two additional amateur radio and communications brands from MFJ: Ameritron and Mirage RF amplifiers and electronics.

These are FCC registered and approved RF amplifiers with power output up to the legal limit. In addition to amplifiers, Ameritron's lineup also includes antenna tuners, switching units, and several other electronic communication devices. This move expands upon ITU's earlier 2026 acquisition of the Hy-Gain and Cushcraft antenna brands.

The manufacturing operations for Hy-Gain, Cushcraft, Ameritron, and Mirage are being consolidated and relocated from MFJ in Starkville, Mississippi, to ITU's 15-acre facility in Linton, Indiana. Full product production is scheduled to begin by the end of 2026. See updates, product information, and transition details at Hy-Gain.com.

Martin F. Jue (left) and Dave Carpenter sign acquisition agreement to transfer production from MFJ to ITU.

Sen. Cruz Praises Hams for Emergency Prep.

Senator Ted Cruz, in a strong pre-Memorial Day message on May 24, 2026, publicly highlighted the critical role that Amateur Radio Service volunteers play during disasters, praising and thanking ham radio operators who provide essential communications when storms and emergencies knock out power and cellular networks and communities are cut off. Sen. Cruz observed that in these emergencies it is ham radio operators who step forward, bringing with them the tools, expertise, and the commitment to reconnect people when it matters most. He noted this dedication was clearly demonstrated in 2017 when Hurricane Harvey's catastrophic flooding devastated communities across Texas and that it was demonstrated again more recently in the horrific Camp Mystic floods. He emphasized that as the Nation prepares for yet another summer storm season, ham radio's role remains just as vital as ever. You can watch his video at youtu.be/4ZNeMXyCQ7Y.

Stating that while future emergencies will come, Sen. Cruz pointed out that so would Amateur Radio—ready to respond, ready to serve, and to make a difference. He ended his statements, thanking ham radio for its courage and commitment, noting that Amateur Radio's work strengthens our communities.

Senator Cruz is Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. His comments align with the ARRL's ongoing efforts to strengthen and protect Amateur Radio's role in emergency preparedness and public-service communications.

His comments also reflect growing Congressional recognition of the value Amateur Radio Operators bring to communities across the country. ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio continues to advocate for legislation that protects and strengthens Amateur Radio's role in emergency preparedness and public-service communications.

ARRL's nationwide grassroots campaign supporting the bipartisan Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act has generated more than 155,000 letters to members of Congress in support of H.R. 1094 and S. 459. The legislation seeks to ensure that Amateur Radio Operators can install and maintain effective outdoor antennas at residences where private land-use restrictions might otherwise prohibit them, helping communities maintain resilient emergency communications capabilities during disasters.

ARRL Legislative Committee Chairman and West Gulf Division Director John Robert Stratton, N5AUS, said the continued outreach effort has required "long hours on the ground and an uncountable number of personal meetings with Senators, Representatives, and their staffs" to raise awareness of the importance of Amateur Radio to the nation.

"The most recent proof that those efforts have, and are, increasing Congressional support for Amateur Radio is evidenced by the decision of Chairman Cruz to publicly share his personal views on the value and importance of Amateur Radio to the Nation," Stratton said.

ARRL encourages Amateur Radio Operators to participate in its letter writing campaign, located at Send-A-Letter.org/HOA, in support of the Amateur Radio Emergency Preparedness Act and to share information about the public service role Amateur Radio plays in communities nationwide.

"EmComm Jamboree" Planned for Sept. 26

As a sequel to the "EmComm Go-Kit Event" that Scott MacGillivray, KM6RTE, organized last December 6th when he was part of OCRACES, Scott is planning to configure a similar event ("EmComm Jamboree") on Saturday, September 26, 2026, once again in the open field at the OC Sheriff's Regional Training Academy in Tustin. Last year's event brought together various OCRACES and city RACES units and members from around the county. It was organized as a "show and tell" for organizations and individuals to share and discuss EmComm equipment.

Scott believes an event like this is a great way to bring AuxComm operators together to share ideas and learn from each other.

OCSD Mutual Aid Bureau Sgt. Mike Evans attended last year's event and is supportive of holding it again on September 26th. OCSD Emergency Management Division Deputy Director Lee Kaser, KK6VIV, also is supportive and will deploy the Control 7 emergency communications vehicle to the event, with OCRACES members trained in its operation.

Scott is exploring possibly having individuals give presentations on various aspects of EmComm. Scott hopes for participation not only from county and city RACES units but also from other EmComm units such as American Red Cross, OCHEART, and SKYWARN.

Holding this event in September is timed just right, since it is National Preparedness Month. Scott points out the need across Orange County and Southern California for an in-person gathering for hams to learn about EmComm equipment, emergency preparedness, what others are doing, and much more. That's why he has invited short presentations to be given.

This event will take a lot work to put together, and all RACES and EmComm members are urged to help. Scott is asking for canopies, chairs, and even a PA system to be provided and set up. OCRACES members are invited and urged to help with event logistics.

"EmComm Jamboree" is shaping up to become the most important and popular amateur radio EmComm event ever held in Southern California. ✸

ARRL Offers Product Review Comparison Tool

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio has introduced a new member benefit: the *QST* Product Review Comparison Database. This online tool makes it easier to compare amateur radio transceivers, receivers, amplifiers, and transmitters by allowing users to sort and filter equipment based on their own selection criteria.

"This tool, introduced by the ARRL Lab, offers a familiar experience for anyone who has shopped online in recent years," said ARRL Laboratory Manager George Spatta, W1GKS. "For decades, the Lab has been making standardized measurements that are published in *QST* Product Reviews. While those reviews have long been available online, finding and comparing products often required knowing exactly what you were looking for. The new database makes it much easier to discover and evaluate equipment based on the characteristics that matter most to you."

The comparison database includes every ARRL Lab-tested device in the previously listed categories, dating back to 2012. Users can apply filters to narrow results to specific types of equipment and then sort products using select specifications and laboratory measurements. Multiple products can be selected and compared side by side, making it easier to evaluate options before making a purchase decision.

The tool has a lot of flexibility in the ways you can sort the data. Options include sorting the product name chronologically from newest to oldest published, and alphabetically. The data columns can be sorted by performance metric, and columns can be easily rearranged to display information in the order most useful to the user. If you know the name of the device you'd like to view, there is a search field available as well. When two or more products are selected for comparison, the results open in a new browser tab, allowing users to keep their place in the main database.

Whether you're purchasing your first radio or considering an upgrade to your current station, the *QST* Product Review Comparison Database provides an objective, data-driven, customizable way to evaluate equipment. A companion guide explaining the various measurements and specifications is also planned to help members better understand the technical data when making an informed purchasing decision.

To access this new member benefit, members should log in to the ARRL website and visit compare.arrl.org.

Join ARRL

ARRL membership gives you access to the complete archive of *QST* Product Reviews and Lab test results, the new *QST* Product Review Comparison Database, and the ARRL Technical Information Service, where experts can answer your operating and technical questions by email or phone. Learn more and join at www.arrl.org/join. ✸

Countywide RACES/EmComm News

"RACES/ EmComm News" provides an opportunity to share information from all City & County RACES/ACS units and EmComm organizations and supportive amateur radio clubs in and near Orange County, as well as from Cal OES and federal agencies.

Please send your news to *NetControl* Editor Ken Bourne, W6HK, at:

kbourne.ocsd@earthlink.net

Amateur Radio Exam Sessions

SANTA ANA
Sponsor: Orange County Amateur Radio Club
Date: July17, 2026
Time: 5:30 p.m. (no walk-ins / register or call ahead)
Contact: Kenneth O. Simpson
(714) 651-6535
Email: VEtesting@w6ze.org
VEC: ARRL/VEC
Location: Orange County Red Cross
600 Parkcenter Dr Rm 213
Santa Ana CA 92705-3518
Website: https://hamstudy.org/sessions/W6KOS-OC/all

FULLERTON
Sponsor: The PAPA System
Date: July 25, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m. (no walk-ins / register or call ahead)
Contact: Rick Norton
(562) 698-7758
Email: rick@rnorton.com
VEC: Greater LA VEC
Location: Sizzler Restaurant
1401 N Harbor Blvd
Fullerton CA 92835-4105
Website: https://hamstudy.org/sessions/WM6M-OC/all

Ham Radio Outlet (HRO)

Friday, June 26, 2026, was the last day at Ham Radio Outlet in Anaheim for Bill Scholz, W1HIJ. Bill worked at HRO for over 28 years, and was known for his friendly personality, knowledge, and booming voice. Bill will be the guest speaker at the next OCRACES meeting on Thursday, July 2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., on Zoom.

ARES LAX Northeast

On May 30, 2026, the ARES LAX Northeast executed "DARK WIRE," a drill that tested the resilience of hospital connectivity during a catastrophic "Digital Quake" scenario. The exercise simulated the total loss of cellular and internet infrastructure, exacerbated by a power-grid failure and a major M 6.3 earthquake in the San Fernando Valley. Through digital protocols and inter-agency collaboration, amateur radio operators maintained situational awareness across multiple medical facilities.

The backbone of the exercise was a high-speed digital network on 2 meters. Operators leveraged the capabilities of VARA FM, using VARA Chat for rapid, real-time messaging, and Winlink for formal traffic and reporting.

Pinpoint APRS provided a continuous, real-time visual map of hospital service levels (color-coded by operational status) and operator locations. This visual dashboard allowed emergency managers to access facility readiness—from staffing percentages to system uptime.

DARK WIRE introduced offline, lightweight HTML forms for data transmission. Critical data, such as HAvBED reports, LA County ICS-213 resource requests, and capacity surveys, were exported into tiny, structured JSON files. This ensured that congestion-free digital transmissions could proceed without the bottlenecks that typically plague busy emergency nets.

Orange County Amateur Radio Club (OCARC)

The next meeting of the Orange County Amateur Radio Club (OCARC) will be on Friday, July 17, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., at the American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive, Santa Ana).

South Orange Amateur Radio Association (SOARA)

The monthly SOARA member meeting will be held on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Norman P. Murray Community and Senior Center, 24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo. Visitors are welcome.

Clairemont Repeater Association (CLARA)

The bimonthly CLARA breakfast meeting will be held on Saturday, July 18th, at 9:00 a.m., at Denny's restaurant, 1571 El Camino Real, in Tustin, in the meeting room in the back corner of the restaurant. If you plan to order breakfast, arrive at 8:00 a.m.

July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 OCRA-CES Meeting	3	4 Independence Day
5	6 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	7	8	9	10	11 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
12	13 Weekly 2 m ACS Net & SOARA Meeting	14	15	16	17 Orange County Amateur Radio Club Meeting	18 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
19	20 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	21	22	23	24	25 Weekly 60 m ACS Net
26	27 Weekly 2 m ACS Net	28	29	30	31	

Upcoming Events:

- **July 2, 1900-2100 hours:** OCRA-CES meeting on Zoom, with Bill Scholz, W1HIJ, as guest speaker
- **July 2 1900 hours:** San Bernardino Microwave Society Meeting, American Legion Hall, 1024 S. Main Street, in Corona
- **July 4:** Independence Day
- **July 13, 1830 hours:** South Orange Amateur Radio Association (SOARA) meeting, Norman P. Murray Community and Senior Center, 24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo
- **July 17, 1900 hours:** Orange County Amateur Radio Club (OCARC) meeting, American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive, Santa Ana
- **July 18, 0900 hours:** Clairemont Repeater Association bimonthly breakfast meeting at Denny's restaurant, 1571 El Camino Real, in Tustin

Mission Statement

■ **To provide emergency communication services for the County of Orange under the guidance of the Orange County Emergency Manager and Emergency Management Division Personnel**

■ **These services include, but are not limited to:**

- **Support to the County of Orange Emergency Management Division with auxiliary communications capabilities from County Emergency Operations Center radio room and field locations to and from:**
  - **The general population,**
  - **Orange County city RACES, EmComm, and Public Service organizations,**
  - **Adjacent counties, and**
  - **State and Federal Government organizations**
- **Provide voice and digital communication services in the event of the loss of existing communications infrastructure including public service radio services, cellphone service, internet service, conventional power, and any combination of these services**

County of Orange RACES Frequencies

60 m: 5371.5 kHz USB (dial) (Channel 4) (OC ACS Net—Saturdays, 1000 hours)
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: 146.595 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: 448.320 MHz output, 443.320 MHz input, 141.3 Hz PL (private)
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)
70 cm: 449.680 MHz output, 444.680 MHz input, 131.8 Hz PL (private) (off-air)
*Primary Net—Thursdays, 1900 hours

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Visit Our Web Site
https://ocraces.org
It's Where It's @!

Questions or Comments?
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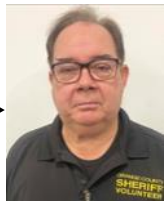
"W6ACS ... Serving Orange County"

Meet Your County of Orange RACES Members!

Officers →



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