



RADIO-ACTIVE!

November 13, 2023, Volume 2, Issue 10

Operator Spotlight



This month celebrates one year of providing Operator spotlights in this newsletter. We have read about 13 operators in various points in their Ham radio adventure. I hope you have found it interesting to get know our fellow operators.

The month we are hearing about Ed, N6EMA (formerly KN6YHU). After obtaining his technician license in January 2023, Ed soared into his General license in October. Not long after getting his technician license, many of us got to know Ed from his willingness to take on Net Control for the SLV Net in April spontaneously after no one else signed up. He was able to acknowledge 18 operators that night. Disaster EMCOMM and helping his Ben Lomond neighbors communicate effectively and efficiently are what drove Ed to Ham radio. He currently has a Yaesu FT-60 and a couple of home-built antennas - a dual band "Palamino" J-Pole made from 1/2" copper tube, and a dual bander made from a BNC panel-mount connector and 10ga copper wire (based on an antenna

design on our xczcomm.com website). More recently, Ed has ventured into Winlink and he runs it off of a dual-boot Windows/Linux laptop both running Winlink (or Pat) & Direwolf and connecting either Soundmodem or Digirig (his current fave). Ed grew up in Los Altos, California. After moving around a bit, he currently resides in Ben Lomond with his wife. Many of his parent's family are from the Sierra Nevada foothills village of Three Rivers and nearby. This area can be identified as the gateway to the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. Ed recalls many wonderful years of fishing, hiking/backpacking, rock climbing and camping in this area. The ever-growing family including many nieces, nephews and cousins continue to gather in this area and take in it's wonders. Both an uncle and cousin have been hams for decades and are quite proficient with CW. No one else in the family are interested, but they absolutely love the ability to communicate when cell service and internet are out (which is very often in this area)! Outside of ham radio Ed also enjoys golf, motorcycling, skiing and camping in a comfy trailer. Pretty much anything where his wife and dogs can participate! After graduating from UC Davis as a mechanical engineer, Ed started as a flight control designer on Boeing 767s. (Ed commented, "Good lord, those are old airplanes now!") He then returned to the bay area and worked as a design engineer for Department of Defense missile programs on submarines and then transitioned to land-based things. Ed has also worked for NASA Space Shuttles and the International Space Station designing payloads. He currently is a project manager for aerospace projects. "Arcs and Sparks" never caught his attention, though logic design as in integrated circuits was particularly fun in school for Ed.

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If anyone has topics of interest to share with the group (a fun project you did, a great event you participated in, a how-to do something), feel free write it up, include pictures and submit to KM6URE@slvares.org.

Equipment available to loan

Santa Cruz Communications Support have two kits available for loaning to allow ham operators participate in a deployment when they have limited equipment. One kit is for a vehicle deployment and includes Mobile dual-band radio Icom IC-2730, mag mount antenna, battery and kneboard. The other kit is for stationary outdoor deployments and includes the vehicle kit with additional supplies of a tripod antenna, lighting, and pop-up.

New Technician class?

Do you have family, neighbors or friends interested in getting their ham radio license and want a class? We are taking sign-ups from people interested to assist in planning. Please share this link to those interested: <https://rebrand.ly/hamclass>

Trying Parks of the Air (POTA)

Rich, W6RGC



Pete KN6TYR and I tried Parks On The Air (POTA) last Saturday (11/4/2023). It was my first time and we chose Wilder Ranch State Park (park K-1207) because it's nearby and has rich amateur radio history (For details, visit https://k6bj.org/Club_History/Scrapbook.htm).

In 1928, Melvin Wilder W6CEH became a member of the Santa Cruz County Amateur Radio Club. He worked the world from Wilder Ranch. To honor Melvin, Pete and I operated under the Wilder Radio Club callsign, W6CEH.

We "activated park K-1207" by setting up our radios within the park, making contacts around the world, and finally uploading the logs to pota.app.



We set up near the top of Wilder, a few hundred feet walk from the Twin Gates. It was a beautiful sunny morning. Pete set up his vertical antenna in an open field, while I set up a sloping EFHW off a nearby tree. We both used 100w radios.

Continued on next page

Operator Spotlight Continued

When asked about a favorite quote or saying, Ed stated, "That's a great question! My favorite over the years has been 'Failure to plan is planning to fail'. I heard one tonight that will stick with me for a long time though: 'You can never train too much for a job that can kill you.' Ham radio probably won't kill me, but some of our partner agencies have people with jobs that just might. I'd like to be of service to minimize their risk."



New email

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) email we use to submit our DSW paperwork and documents has been changed to:

EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov

Please update any information you have stored for this email.

Trying Parks of the Air (POTA) Continued

Pete started on 20m, while I started on 10m. 20m was crowded, so Pete focused on finding other POTA operators on 20m and making "Park to Park" contacts. 10m was on fire. We found a spot at 28.314 and made our first contact with Roberta AJ6KN. We comfortably made 45 contacts over about 90 minutes, including: Canada, Hawaii, the East coast, and everywhere in between. Pete made the DX highlight for contacting Australia!

Join us next time and help us keep radios active in Wilder for 100 years. Now that Pete and I kind of know what we are doing, we are preparing to invite you all to POTA at Wilder with us. Stay tuned.

For more information about Parks On The Air, check out <https://pota.app/>.



Imagine my surprise when ...

Impressions on a POTA activation at Wilder State Park ...

Roberta, AJ6KN

I was just working at my desk, monitoring K6BJ and Fire Red, when I heard Pete, KN6YTR and Rich, W6RGC mention that they were activating a POTA station (Parks on the Air). It was the Mel Wilder call sign, W6CEH, and I heard him say "maybe someone can spot us on the pota.app". I didn't know what that was so I looked it up online. After a little discussion on the radio (K6BJ at that point), Rich said he was going to go to 10m, and ended up at 28.314kHz most of the time. I was very excited to be the first one to "spot" him on the app as well as the first voice contact, and even more excited to hear all of the contacts he and Pete were making ALL AROUND THE WORLD! I started writing down call signs and heard Canada, states on the East Coast, Hawaii and Pete spoke with Scott in Australia, VK4CZ. All in all, Rich reports he made 30 contacts on 10m, Pete made 15 contacts and they reportedly had a great time some lessons learned for next time.

Lessons? Bring some shade so they can see the screen and bring headphones
What it meant for me? I got inspired to dig out my portable HF radio/antennas and give it a go as well - will report after that happens!

Thanks Rich and Pete for the photos, the shared excitement and the inspiration!

Report your volunteer hours!

Congratulations to Chris, KN6IHS, October's drawing winner. The reported volunteer hours for October was 499 hours.

Please remember to enter your hours on the form on <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>

Reporting the time you spend on ARES and ham radio activities reminds county public safety managers that we're around and ready to serve in time of need. Also, when you report your hours, your call sign is entered in a monthly drawing. When you win, you get to select one of these valuable prizes!



Genuine Weller Soldering Iron with variable heat control. Need a reliable soldering iron for antenna or PCB work? This beauty served N6QX for years of project construction and repair work. Comes with a starter supply of solder.

Brand New Victorinox Swiss Army Knife

Keep this beauty handy for stripping wire, cutting cords, and uncorking wine. May be useful for self-defense.



Anderson PowerPole Outlet Expanders

Anderson PowerPole is ARES recommended standard connectors for 12 volt DC power. These nifty and colorful accessories expand a single outlet to three.



150 Watt Power Inverter

Turn 12 volts DC from your car's cigarette lighter receptacle into 120 VAC.



Resources

- Website: <https://xczcomm.com/>
- Reporting volunteer hours: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>
- Upcoming events: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/calendar-of-events/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ARES-of-Santa-Cruz-County-Ca-296232310799866>
- Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431308973875528>
- PIO Articles: <https://arrlsantaclaravalley.org/news/> or <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/news/>
- XCZ Comm You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChZH8TU5gh4SqHTPXSWolPA>
- Submitting deployment documents: **send in PDF form to** EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov
- Submitting personal information such as DSW application, personal data update, education certificates: email K6PDL@ARRL.net, KM6SV@SLVARES.org, and EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov

Report your volunteer hours! - continued

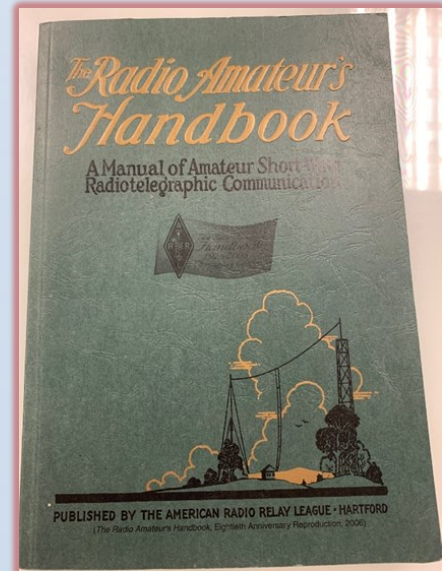


ARRL Cartoon Coffee Mug

Solid ceramic mug with classic cartoon from QST magazine. Works for both coffee and tea (not simultaneously).

1926 Radio Amateur's Handbook

Complete reproduction of the 1926 edition, showing the latest ideas and circuits used at the height of the Roaring Twenties, when radios were big, heavy, drew lots of power at dangerous voltages, got really hot, and hardly did anything.



Realistic Patrolman 6 Portable Multi-Band Receiver

Finest mid-70's electronic circuitry. Includes coverage of aircraft and marine bands. Antennas built in.

Realistic DX-160 Solid State Communications Receiver

This mid-70's receiver tunes from 150kHz to 30MHz and includes a product detector for single-sideband reception. IF strip recently aligned by N6QX. Long-wire receiving antenna and matching speaker included. Discover the world of shortwave radio!



Org. Positions

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Gary / K6PDL, K6PDL@arrl.net
- Assistant DEC and Deputy EC
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FOUND ON THE WEB—RadioQTH

Allison, KM6RMN, Public Information Officer



When I was upgrading to a General License I thought about seeking a vanity call sign. But the rules were complex. And once I came up with a cool alphanumeric combo, the call sign lookup sites only told whether it was taken or not found. Did “not found” mean that it was up for grabs? As the license test date loomed, I let it go.

Recently I stumbled on RadioQTH. This site is packed with database tools built around crafting the perfect vanity call sign. Its primary purpose: to provide all the information needed to list the best candidates for your application, lessening the likelihood of rejection. It has a page that spells out FCC rules clearly. It has a listing of soon-to-be surrendered calls with availability dates, application statuses, and even a tool for CW operators to rank the weight of desired letter combinations. (Contesters will love this feature.)

It’s a humble site. On landing, all you see is an old-style half-page dominated by a cheesy looking radio, a paragraph of text, a spartan tab bar, and a blurry logo. Tab-less headings hug the left side, a couple of shortcuts line the top, and--this is crazy-- a random license exam question pops up on the right. If you are there for the visuals, move along; nothing to see here. But don’t let its appearance fool you. The beauty of the site is the information behind those links.

Here’s an overview of the headings on the left: **Home** takes you to the landing page of course: that big old gray radio. It’s a shortcut gadget. Click on one of the buttons to get a head start in the “Available Call Signs” or “Filed FCC Applications” search pages. More on those pages later.

Call Lookup displays the call sign database often found on other sites, listing basic stats like active status, effective dates, type of license, etc. You can search by name or by call sign. There are a couple of hidden shortcuts to

other tools hidden in the description paragraph, so read it and explore!

Vanity Calls lists the vanity call signs recently granted, and expired ones now available. Note that when you click on one of them, it provides in-depth information about the last licensee, including home address and Google Earth view of their house. The obvious privacy issues concern me—I found my own house pictured there. But it’s considered a matter of public record, so not much can be done about it.

Available Calls allows you to do a filtered search for call signs that are available now, soon to be available (with a day count!) and recently applied for. You can drill down to format, district number, preferred prefixes & suffixes; and you can sort your findings by call sign or date of availability. I tried a search for all available 2x2 call signs starting with A and ending with GO. It listed 3 call signs. Each one could be clicked on to check out its previous owner and effective dates.

CW call weight: If you are a CW contester who wants that extra edge in sending speed, you can find the “quickest” call sign in a group of candidates. You type in your list, and it ranks them along with their weights, or sending speed.

Applications will take you to the *Filed FCC Applications* database, which has several tabs for different flavors of pending applications on record. At least, I think it does. I couldn’t get this tool to yield information for me, but the last tab, *Invalid Calls*, is an excellent education about alphanumeric combos the FCC finds unacceptable, and why.

There is downside to using RadioQTH’s lookup tools: if your letter combination has never been assigned before, you won’t find it anywhere. The *vanity calls* and *availability* tools ONLY list what has been attached to a license at some point. Run your idea through the call sign validation tool on the tab bar if you think your alphanumeric combo is new and unique. It will tell you yes or no, and why.

There are also links for subjects tangentially related to vanity call signs.

QSL cards lets you print customized QSL cards on the fly when you don’t have time to design your own.

Santa Cruz County ARES Purpose

- The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment with their local ARES leadership for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes
- We are not fire fighters or police or sheriff's officers. We are volunteers who care about our communities by using our emergency communication skills.
- Before volunteering in an emergency we first take care of ourselves, our family, and our home.
- We value every member's contributions, irrespective of license class, years of experience, or the price tag of equipment.

Ham Radio's Motto

"When all else fails – ham radio works". That is because, when all the normal communication systems stop working, Ham Radio is still in operation, helping people, conveying messages, and sometimes, even saving lives.

Safety First



Figure 1—KM6NEP at SC triathlon

RF Exposure—Stephen KM6NEP

(Reprint of May 2022 article)

For RF Exposure safety, there are recommended distances to maintain from your radio antenna.

Using the ARRL RF Calculator, my calculations are based on the radio operator performing Net Control duties, transmitting 5 minutes every 10 minutes.

As a net participant, these distances would be shorter, but for consistency in all situations, it is best to practice at these distances as if you are Net Control, since you could become Net Control if the situation changes.

HT 5-Watts:

Operators, keep a distance of 1 foot 2 inches or more from your whip antenna. Have all others keep a distance of 2 feet or more from your HT antenna.

- ▶ Method 1: Hold HT with one hand and use HT hand mic to keep antenna away from body and head.

- ▶ Method 2: Use a dowel/garden stake mast to hike the antenna above you with a backpack or harness. (See Figures 1 and 2)

Mobile 50-Watts:

Operators, keep a distance of 4 feet or more from your antenna. Have all others outside the vehicle, keep a distance of 6 feet or more from your antenna.

- ▶ Mag-mount or hard-mount on metal roof shields a radio operator within the vehicle from RF. Allowing you to sit under the antenna.

For those interested in my calculations feel free to contact me at KM6NEP@slvares.org
Go to www.arrl.org/rf-exposure for more RF exposure information.



Figure 2