

# ORCA NewsLetter

Oakland Radio Communication Association  
Oakland, California

December 3, 2004

The next meeting will be on the first Friday, December 3, 6:00 PM at the Kaiser Office Building, 1950 Franklin Street, Oakland for Video Night at Kaiser.

## President's Corner



Well, I can't believe it's the holidays already! My kids are now constantly reminding me how many days are left until Christmas. Whew, way too many things left to do. Our Thanksgiving with relatives was great and I hope yours was too. I've managed to sneak in some operating time since there are holidays around the globe this time of year and many Hams are on trips to the tropics to take in a contest or two. This weekend was the CQ World Wide CW contest with wall-to-wall CW SIGs on the air, but they're way too fast for me. What's fun though are all the first class stations that can't resist operating both before and after the contest on phone.

I'm trying to do my duty as well in responding to a re-

quest from a sailor, **KB2TQB**, to help him with communications on a solo sailing voyage. Today is decision time for him on whether to venture out or stick to the inland waterway in his effort to sail from the Carolinas to Oakland. He's had problems with weather and a balky navigation system which are wearing his patience thin. We stay in touch by Winlink and tried a sked on SSB last Tuesday night. I couldn't hear him on our 20 m frequency, but read him loud and clear on 40 m. Unfortunately, he had such a high noise level in the marina he couldn't copy

much of what I said at all. We're hoping to be able to use my phone patch to connect him to his 91 year mother in Oakland once he has put to sea. Amateur Radio also will serve as his backup communications in case of trouble.

That reminds me of another ham radio story from when I was growing up in Chicago. As **WB9ELU**, I was listening to 15 m SSB one dark and snowy night when I heard a strong CQ from what sounded like an aeronautical mobile, **KP4BFI/AM**. (It's great having a log. I show the contact at 2315z on 11-28-72; 21.381 MHz. RS = 58 both ways.) I responded to the call only to discover that I was in contact with a Coast Guard Albatross out of

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Special points of interest:

- Video Night Friday Dec. 3rd
- ORCA Holliday Dinner Wednesday Dec. 15th
- Next Saturday Meeting in January

### Inside this issue:

Bike Against the Odds	2
CORE Classes Offered	3
Satellite Beacon	3
WB6NER ORCA Perspective	4
Membership Form	5
Nets	6
Board Member listing	6

## This Months Meeting

NO MEETING SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4th!

Video Night at Kaiser Friday, Dec. 3, 6:30-9 p.m.

Holiday Dinner Wednesday, Dec. 15, 7:00-9:00 p.m. – No host bar at 6:30 p.m.

- Help is needed on
- 1) ECHO: ham equipment in Oakland fire stations Dec. 4
  - 2) Skyline High radio room
  - 3) Chabot Space & Science Center radio station
  - 4) EOC Radio Room

## President's Corner

*(Continued from page 1)*

Puerto Rico on a mission over Cuba. John and I were having a great conversation, including his description of the lights of Havana at night, when all of a sudden one of their two engines conked out. The pilot was unable to restart it. They were a long way from their base in PR and very close to enemy territory. A quick decision was made to fly to an alternate base in Florida hoping they could make it. John requested that I stay with them on frequency in case they needed me, which I did until they landed safely on the mainland.

I guess the moral of the story is to spend some time monitoring your favorite frequencies. You never know what kind of adventure amateur radio may take you on right from your own home. It's also another reason why we should all stay practiced in our emergency operating skills because you never know when someone may need help from you and your station.

Remember, ORCA is on its holiday schedule with Movie Night coming up on Friday, December 3rd, no monthly meeting, but a Holiday Dinner December 15th with our next monthly meeting on January 8, 2005, to kick off the New Year. Give some thought to what you'd like to see your club doing in 2005, and let us know. I've got some ideas about projects that might be fun such as wiring up power pole connectors for emergency preparedness and programming HTs with DCS codes to create pager groups. In any event, I'm sure we all will have more fun in 2005 being radio active.

In the meantime, I hope Santa fills your stocking with goodies from the "candy store" and you all have a wonderful holiday season! C U at Movie Night and the Holiday Dinner!

73, Jim .\_.

## Bike Against the Odds

On October 24, 2004, 80 volunteers including 14 ham radio operators, 9 of whom drove their own vehicles as SAG, supported The Breast Cancer Fund's Bike Against the Odds bikeathon. About 60% of the routes of the bikeathon took cyclists to portions of Contra Costa County, including Moraga, Orinda, the Briones and San Pablo reservoirs, and El Sobrante. The remainder was in Oakland and the Tilden Park part of Berkeley.

We used 3 repeater systems to cover the terrain with the **WB6NDJ** 440 system as the primary, but as the day went on, traffic migrated to CCRA. We found the repeater coverage to be excellent, even in locations we thought would not work.

Net control began about 0730, in the comfy RV trailer owned by Rich **KD6JCT**.

We're looking forward to seeing that setup next year. Michael **KG6DER** was tracking APRS, but only 2 of the 5 Trackers in the field were working, and then only sporadically. Traffic was slow until about 0900. A steady increase of traffic resulted as the bulk of the cyclists and SAGs got on the road.

By about 1300 80% of our messages were on CCRA. Due to the rains the week before, more debris was on the roads, and more flat tires occurred than last year. Coordinating distributing lunches to volunteers and sweeping the 5 routes were the subjects of the other messages.

At about 1520 the repeaters were returned to normal operation.

All hams did an excellent job of contacting with tactical calls and concluding with personal callsigns. We encountered no QRM. I was not aware of any CCRA member feeling deprived of the use of the repeater. We had 14 hams volunteering,

There was only one minor cyclist/car accident.

One highlight of the ride was cheering on a 65 year old breast cancer survivor who rode the 67 mile route with her family.

A great round of applause goes to **KD6JCT**, **KG6DER**, **N6TQS**, **KF6YRG**, **KF6WNH**, **W6LL**, **KE6HKY**, **N6RCG**, **KE6EMU**, **WA6AWI**, **K6JAT**, **KG6NEB**, **KG6ATH** and **KB6MP**.

73,

Mike Pompa **KB6MP**

Sign up for the ORCA Yahoo Group

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orca\\_races/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orca_races/)

## CORE I & II Classes offered to ORCA members

by Adele Louise Bertaud, **KE6HKY**

CORE (Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) is a disaster preparedness program offered by the Office of Emergency Services under the aegis of the Fire Services Agency of the City of Oakland.

I have been a member of CORE since its inception in 1990 and now am a member of its Advisory Task Force. I would like to set up the CORE I and II classes to be held right after the ORCA membership meetings to be held in January, February or March of 2005. CORE I would be taught during the first session, and CORE II during the second. I would like to have these classes under our proverbial belts in time for CORE III, the hands on training and exercise which will be held in April of 2005.

CORE I deals primarily with personal preparedness: how to retrofit a single family dwelling whatever its stripe ( house, condo or apartment), what kinds of personal things you need to have packed in case you have to evacuate, how much water and food you need to have on hand for you and your family, vital papers, special needs and a host of other issues such as how to respond to different disasters.

CORE II deals with setting up an Incident Command Center and its bureaucracy such as who will be the Commander of the ICC, setting up teams such as damage assessment, search and rescue, damage mitigation, emergency first aid, communications, and others. Even though you are a licensed amateur radio operator, you may not be able to leave your neighborhood for several hours.

Once you have completed these two courses, you will then be eligible to take the CORE III classes which are administered at the O.F.D. Training Center in Oakland.

So if you have not already indicated whether you are interested in taking the CORE classes, do get in touch with me. I would like to set the classes up for January and February 2005 to be started at 1100 hours, right after the ORCA meeting. The classes run about 2 hours maximum so that means that we would be through by 1300 hours. Please sign up if you haven't already.

Some of you had CORE classes before, but it never hurts take a refresher course. For those who have not taken these classes, you will sleep better at night once you have.

*Please contact Adele through the Thursday night ORCA Net, at one of the upcoming ORCA events, or you can send an email to [KG6DER@arrl.net](mailto:KG6DER@arrl.net) to express your interest.*

## The Satellite Beacon ●●●● ●● ●●●● ●● ●●●● ●● ●●●● ●● ●●●● ●●

### This Month's Topic – Amateur Radio and the ISS

By Emily Clarke, **W0EEC** – VP of Project OSCAR

One of the most important additions to amateur radio satellites has been the addition of amateur radio equipment on the International Space Station. The amateur radio equipment on the ISS allows the astronauts and cosmonauts to conduct QSOs with schools around the world, other hams, and when not in use it provides services that all hams can use. Because it is in an environment unlike other satellites (pressurized, temperature controlled) the ISS is using the same type of radio equipment many hams use on earth! With it's huge solar panels, the ISS is also not strapped for power like most amateur radio satellites, so hearing the ISS is as easy as listening to a local repeater.

**How the ISS Communicates** — The ISS is using a Kenwood TH-D700 and usually operates at a power of 10 watts, which is almost 20 times the power of AO-51 in low power and 5 times AO-51 in high power. With this much power, the average HT is able to hear the ISS without any modifications or upgraded antennas.

Since the TH-D700 has a built in TNC, it can operate as a APRS digipeater while in packet mode (the most used configuration), or it can be used by the astronauts and cosmonauts as a voice transceiver. Additionally the TH-D700 can operate as a cross band repeater! This means that it can also be used much like a terrestrial repeater and other amateur satellites.

**Listening to the ISS** — To listen to the ISS you simply have to tune to the transmit frequency that the ISS is using. The worldwide frequency for this is 145.800 MHz. If the ISS is in packet mode, you will hear packet/APRS signals similar to what you would hear on the APRS frequency (144.390 MHz). However, don't be surprised if you hear an astronaut or cosmonaut talking

*(Continued on page 4)*



## WB6NER'S ORCA Perspective

### ECHO Activities

The ECHO Station maintenance is proceeding nicely, with the next visit to six Fire Stations planned for Saturday, December 4th, after which ORCA can celebrate upgrading twenty Stations in four one-day sessions with an ORCA team of nine radio operators, **WA6CUY**, **W6UAB**, **W6BUR**, **KF6VOG**, **KG6DER**, **W6THD**, **WB6NER**, **K6JAT** and **K6ZY**.

The maintenance and upgrade activities include installing replacement hand microphones for both radios, Anderson Power-Pole connectors in the power wiring, replacing the gel cell back up power battery and installing a smart battery charger called the "Battery Tender Jr." ECHO teams have left the stations with the power system configured with the radios attached to the battery, and the battery charger connected to an AC outlet. The power supply is left disconnected, both from the radios as well as AC power. In an emergency, a deployed operator can reconfigure the power system to use the power supply rather than the battery, presuming the station has power.

Also being deployed at the stations is a RACES Station Log. Any Operator who visits a station for any reason is asked to log their visit. Please log notes on any work done, as well as any pertinent information about the station operational performance or configuration.

### Video Night Activities [Friday, December 3, 6:30-9 p.m.]

Following a recent annual tradition, ORCA swaps the usual first Saturday meeting for a Friday video night at Kaiser's Regional EOC, 1950 Franklin St., [between 19th and 20th Streets], 2nd floor conference room 2F, for a showing of a radio communications related video. Let's give it a shot this year of pushing last year's rather light turnout of 16 members! Of all the videos suggested during a recent weekly net, the emerging title of "Contact" [based on a Carl Sagan novel] seems to resonate best. Street parking won't be a hassle after 6 p.m. No hassle too is expected with signing in with Kaiser Security just inside the entrance and then climbing the grand staircase [turn left] to the EOC. Of course, tours of the EOC radio room are available! The kicker, of course is be sure to bring your checkbook for reserving a chair for the upcoming Holiday Dinner on December 15 [\$25] and annual ORCA dues for 2005 [\$30]. See you there!

### Annual Holiday Dinner [Wednesday, December 15, 7:00-9:00 p.m. – No host bar at 6:30 p.m.]

Last year, ORCA had a record turnout for the dinner – 38 strong! Let's do it again! We have an evening scheduled at Pier 29 Restaurant, 300 29th Ave., Oakland. Good food and company, great speeches and fantastic door prizes!

Reservations: Please send your \$25 reservation check made to ORCA to the ORCA PO Box and indicate your menu category choice of either Steak, Chicken, Fish, Pasta or Vegetarian. Easiest way [and the only way I know] to find the place is off Highway 880 at 23rd Ave., and proceed toward the 29th St Ave. bridge; the restaurant is on the left just before crossing the bridge [with a large parking lot]. How can anyone get lost with a call-in frequency of **WB6NDJ** on 146.880 MHz [-] PL 77.0 Hz?

## The Satellite Beacon continued

to school children or even other hams. If the American astronaut is having a QSO they will use the callsign NA1SS. If the Russian cosmonaut is having a QSO, the callsign will be RS0ISS. If you hear hams having QSOs with each other it indicates that the ISS is in voice repeat mode and open for hams around the world to use the ISS as a repeater.

**Using the ISS for APRS** — Using the ISS for APRS is very easy – you simply use the digipath "UNPROTO VIA ARISS" and the ISS will digipeat your APRS packets. You will need to receive on 145.800 and transmit on 437.800MHz. If you are successful, you will see your packets repeated by visiting the ISS APRS website: <http://www.findu.com/cgi-bin/ariss/index.cgi>

**Using the ISS Voice Repeater** — Using the ISS voice repeater is a little more difficult. If the ISS is in voice repeat mode, you will have to receive on 145.800 and transmit on 437.800 MHz (there is no PL tone required). However, because of doppler shift, you will need to start to tune your transmitter about 5 KHz below the center frequency when the ISS is approaching, and tune to about 5KHz above the center frequency after it passes overhead. This is very critical if you expect to be heard. It's also tricky – unless you are working full-duplex you will not be able to tell if you are making it through the repeater.

**ISS QSL Cards** — If you are lucky enough to log a QSO with one of the astronauts you will qualify for an ISS QSL card. Refer to the ISS website for QSL and other information at: <http://www.rac.ca/ariss/>



# Oakland Radio Communication Association

Club: WW6OR  
Repeater: WB6NDJ

## New Membership and Renewal Form

New Member     Renewal

Family membership—number of additional Hams: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Call \_\_\_\_\_ License: E\_\_ A\_\_ G\_\_ T+\_\_ T\_\_ N\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletters will be emailed only to members who specifically request them. All others will receive them by mail. Email?

Best Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Best is a:  cell  work  home      Alternate is a:  cell  work  home

Are you an ARRL Member? Yes  No

Family Hams name/call sign/license class:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please remit a photocopy of your FCC license (and any Family Ham licenses) with a check payable to "ORCA" to

**ORCA**  
P.O. Box 21305  
Oakland, CA 94620-1305

2005 new members:      \$30.00 up to March 31, 2005  
2004 members renewing for 2005:      \$30.00 due by February 28, 2005  
[\$22.50: 4/1/05-6/30/05;      \$15: 7/1/05-9/30/05;      \$7.50: 10/1/05-12/31/05]  
2005 additional family Hams:      \$5 each other Family Ham (not prorated)  
2006 dues will be accepted:      \$30, plus \$5 each other Family Ham

Final acceptance of this application and membership in ORCA with repeater privileges is subject to review and/or approval by the ORCA Board.

I agree, for myself and for any Family members included in this application, to abide by the rules and regulations set forth in the ORCA Bylaws and the applicable repeater operating procedures.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



*Friday, December 3rd Video Night*

### Monthly events

1st Sundays Livermore Swap meet Las Positas CC  
1st Saturdays ORCA ARES - Oakland OES 9:00  
2nd Saturdays Electronics Flea Market in Sunnyvale  
2nd Fridays East Bay Amateur Radio Club  
3rd Fridays Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club  
3rd Fridays Hayward Radio Club  
3rd Wednesdays Rocky Ridge Repeater Group  
4<sup>th</sup> Fridays Amateur Radio Club of Alameda

East Bay Amateur Radio Club meets 7:30PM at the  
Salvation Army, 4600 Appian Way, El Sobrante.

Hayward Radio Club meets at 1401 West Winton Ave in  
Hayward behind Hayward Fire Station 6, next to the  
Hayward Air National Guard Base.

Amateur Radio Club of Alameda meets 7pm at Building 522  
West Midway on Alameda Point.

Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club and the Rocky Ridge  
Repeater Group meet at Our Savior Lutheran Church,  
1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette.

NOTE: Livermore Swap meet is moving from the Las  
Positas CC location after the December 5th event. At this  
time, no new location has been announced.

**ORCA on the web:**

**[www.qsl.net/orca](http://www.qsl.net/orca)**

### Nets

Thursdays Oakland ARES/RACES Net  
7:30 PM 146.88 MHz minus PL 77  
Thursdays Alameda ARES/RACES Net  
7:00 PM 146.88 MHz minus PL 77  
Thursdays NALCO ARES/RACES  
7:15 PM 147.480 MHz simplex

### ORCA Officers and Board

President:	Jim Tiemstra	K6JAT
Vice Pres.:	Dave Clemes	AE6PX
Treasurer:	Bill Hardy	KF6VOG
Secretary:	Art McLaughlin	W6THD
Director:	Adele Bertaud	KE6HKY
Director:	Michael E. Hole	KG6DER
Director:	David Otey	WB6NER
Director:	Brian Treusch	W6LL
Director:	Alan Whitman	K6ZY

### Ex-Officio Directors:

ARES Liaison	Mark Violet	N6RCG
Repeater Trustee	David Otey	WB6NER
RACES RO	Jim Tiemstra	K6JAT
WW6OR trustee	Jim Tiemstra	K6JAT

The ORCA NewsLetter is published monthly.  
Any articles can be used with attribution.  
Articles, news and photos submitted make for a  
more interesting newsletter; thank you!

Please submit materials for the next issue by  
Dec. 23 to Michael **KG6DER** kg6der@arrl.net or  
fax to 707 215-6124. Thanks again!