



The Heterodyne

**Bulletin of the West Valley Amateur Radio Association
An Affiliated Club of the American Radio Relay League**

**West Valley Amateur Radio Association, W6PIY — <http://www.wvara.org>
P.O. Box 6544
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January 2009

Next Meeting: Wednesday, 7 to 9 p.m., January 21, 2009 at the American Red Cross, 2731 North First Street at Plumeria (between Trimble and Montague Expressway) in San José.
Speaker: Gary B. Gordon, K6KV — **Subject:** "Handi-Hams: A Program Designed to Recruit Physically Challenged Individuals to Become Radio Amateurs"

New ARRL Section Net: Thursdays, 7:30 p.m., K6BEN, 441.275 (+), PL 123.0.
Section appointees and all league members are invited to join this section net.

RadioFest 2009: March 7– 8: See <http://www.radiofest.org/>. This two day event is the ARRL Santa Clara Valley Section Convention.

Amateur Radio Licensing Course and Examination: Study to pass a 35-question, multiple-choice FCC examination to get an amateur radio license to use certain radio frequencies as part of your community's emergency response:

WHEN: Every Tuesday Feb. 3-24:

Class 1: Feb. 3: 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Class 2: Feb. 10: 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Class 3: Feb. 17: 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Class 4 (FCC examination): Feb. 24: 6:30-9:00 p.m.

WHERE: Menlo Park Fire Sta. 77: 1467 Chilco St. **COST:** \$40.00

MATERIAL: *ARRL License Manual* will be provided for the class.

INSTRUCTORS: David Fichou (Menlo Park Fire ARES) and Ken Dueker (Palo Alto Police Dept.)

REGISTER: Ken Dueker: kdueker@powerflare.com Say if you also wish to attend the Emergency Communications class. Sponsored by: Menlo Park Fire Protection District CERT:

www.menlofire.org/cert

This course is open to the public but is designed for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Red Cross, and other emergency volunteers, including first responders. There is a maximum of 35 students for this class (priority for disaster volunteer members).

Emergency Communications Class: This class is designed new hams and others who want to learn about communications in a disaster. It covers all radio and communications systems, including ham radio, FRS, police, fire, etc. You do not need a ham license for this class, but it is preferred:

WHAT: Emergency Communications Course for Ham Radio & CERT

WHEN: Tuesday, March 3, 2008: 6:30 pm - 9:30 p.m.

WHERE: To be announced (Menlo Park/Palo Alto area) — COST: FREE!

BRING: Your radio(s) and the instruction manuals for them

INSTRUCTORS: David Fichou (Menlo Park Fire ARES) and Ken Dueker (Palo Alto Police Dept.)

REGISTER: Ken Dueker: kdueker@powerflare.com

Sponsored by: Menlo Park Fire Protection District CERT: www.menlofire.org/cert

On-line Practice Amateur Radio License Examinations:

<http://copaseticflow.blogspot.com/2003/03/amateur-radio-pages.html>

Emcomm (Emergency Communications) "University": All radio amateurs are invited to attend "Emconn U," a one-day emergency communications workshop sponsored by San Joaquin County ARES. It will be held on Saturday, March 14th in Stockton at a brand new county-owned meeting facility.

The three-track program will feature sessions on emerging technology for emergency communication; how to organize and manage volunteer groups; and improving emergency response and operations. There will be sessions on emergency uses of D-STAR and packet, as well as discussion of real world traffic handling; how to develop better emergency exercises; how to operate more effectively during emergencies; and other topics. The Emcomm show-and-tell invites amateurs to bring emergency vehicles, response kits, and other items to show and demonstrate for attendees.

Registration is limited to 100 people. The \$25 workshop fee includes lunch and a \$5 donation to the San Joaquin County Chapter of the American Red Cross.

For more information, visit www.emcommu.com

for send email to the organizer, David Coursey, N5FDL, n5fdl@arri.net
Landline 209-835-9284, cell 209-740-7515.

Classic Exchange — A Vintage Radio Contest: January 25–26 and February 15–16:

by Mario Dianora, N2AK

Do you have any old equipment from the bygone days of radio? Are you a homebrewer who likes to make nifty low power (QRP) radios or replicas of old rigs? Well the good news is that you can put those pieces on the air in an operating event that will make you feel like you are in another era. That event is called Classic Exchange (CX) and it is held twice a year. The purpose of CX as described in their newsletter is to "*Encourage restoration, operation and enjoyment of older commercial and homebrew ham gear.*" Some years ago, I heard stations on 40 meter CW calling "CQ CX." After some research, I discovered that this was a contest for vintage and homebrew gear. It sounded like a great way to get some use from the old rigs I had in my basement. Since then, I have rediscovered the magic of radio and await the next CX event for more of it.

Tuning into the Classic Exchange allows you to hear the radios that are now just memories of the past. You can have a contact (QSO) with a station that is using equipment that was built before you were born. CX is a real contest, with much the same thrill as Sweepstakes or a DX contest. In this contest, the number of QSOs is only part of the story. The other part is the age of the transmitter and receiver. The event covers two weekends, one for CW and the other for phone. If

you are interested in getting a high score, you need to make a lot of QSOs with as many pieces of the oldest gear you can acquire. Keeping these old beauties going can sometimes lead to unexpected results. Do not be too surprised if the station you are talking to suddenly goes silent. The fireworks in his shack may be making him scramble for cover! Keeping old gear in good working order is one of the cornerstone attractions of the Classic Exchange.

Many of the radios used in CX are homebrew or military. Some are oldies but goodies from the past history of radio. All the operators are gentlemen and a pleasure to meet. If you put a homebrew radio on the air, it is automatically given a 25 year age, unless it is actually older. Your radio's age is the sum of the transmitter and receiver ages. If you use a transceiver, it is the radio's age times two. To qualify for the age multiplier, you must use the piece of equipment for three QSOs. The total score is the sum of all scores for each mode used. I do most of my CX operating on CW, but you can also use SSB, AM or FM. The bands used are 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, 10, 6 and 2 meters. You may work the same stations on each band and on each mode. Also, you can rework a station if you or the other operator has a different equipment line-up.

The radios you will hear most during CX are from Heathkit, E.F. Johnson, Hallicrafters, Collins, Drake and National. Less common are the Harvey -Wells, Central Electronics, Globe, Swan and Meissner. Some of the more exotic stations use vintage Navy rigs and even some WW II spy radios. The most interesting station I worked was WW2LST, aboard a restored Navy ship the LST-325, which hit the beach on D-Day in 1944 and was back on the air for Classic Exchange. Most stations run in the 50-100 W class, with a few running higher power. A good antenna on the low bands is always helpful for the late night contacts.

The Classic Exchange Contest

The Classic Exchange group publishes an announcement before each contest and a newsletter with the results after. The after contest [Classic Radio Exchange Newsletter](#) is a rogues' gallery of the contestants and is a joy to read. The editor is "Mac" MacAulay, WQ8U, who spins a very interesting web from all the bits of information received from the participants' feedback. Its fun to hear the comments from the other side of the QSO. Included are many interesting anecdotes, theories and observations recorded in these reports, which are interesting reading in themselves. A recent post describes a plan for reducing global warming by putting time on your boat anchors! If your station is noteworthy for some reason, it will probably be noticed by someone and show up in the newsletter. This may include some categories that are less than flattering such as Most Distinctive Note Award and Smoke Release Award. In contrast, the highly sought after Creativity Award is for the best solution to a crisis during the contest.

The first Classic Exchange was conceived by Stu Stephens, K8SJ (SK) his brother Al Stephens, N5AIT, and Bob Morgan, K8RBV. It was first called the Nostalgic Exchange and was posted in [QST](#) in 1976. The following year it was renamed the Classic Exchange and has been gathering new entrants since.

In my first CX, I got on using an old Heathkit HW-101 and Atlas 210X. I then fixed up my old Hallicrafters HT-37 and had another "heavyweight shack heater" to put into the mix. The next year I added the SB300/SB-401 Heath Twins. By the winter of 2007, I was up to about 30 pieces of classic radio gear.

It seems this aspect of the hobby has a firm grasp on me! As a retired electrical engineer, I spent my career working with electronic equipment. Restoring, building and operating my radios gives continuity and fulfillment to my retirement. There is always something you can do to improve or add to your classic station to enhance the operating experience. I use several switching methods,

mostly being able to select from various transceivers or pairing one old transmitter with a selection of receivers. Since I primarily operate CW, my switching system allows me to have a common key, sidetone, speaker and antenna lines.

I have acquired radio equipment from friends, clubs and estates. I have built homebrew projects and restored the projects of others to add to my vintage shack. For me, the number of radios I have is not as important as keeping them looking good and in working order. I get the same enjoyment that an owner of a restored 1957 Chevy would have when he takes his car out on a sunny day to be admired by onlookers. Putting an old radio on during the Classic Exchange is as good as it gets!

There is also a very warm feeling you get when both stations are using vintage or homebrew radios. Put that into a contest format and you have the Classic Exchange. I love to work boat anchor to boat anchor and it's great to hear the history of the old gear from the proud owners, even if they are adopted parents. So join the upcoming Classic Exchange contest. You will have a chance to get that old stuff out and take it around the bands again for some QSOs in this new millennium and maybe make some new friends who will enjoy hearing your radio gems.

The CW portion of the CX will run from 1400 UTC January 25 to 0800 UTC January 26, 2009 (9 a.m. Eastern Time on Sunday to 3 a.m. Eastern Time Monday). The AM, SSB, FM portion of the CX will run from 1400 UTC February 15 to 0800 UTC February 16, 2009 (9 a.m. Eastern Time on Sunday to 3 a.m. Eastern Time Monday).

WVARA Tuesday Night Net Check-ins — X = checked in; # = net control.

Call Sign	Name	Dec. 9, 2008	Dec. 16, 2008	Dec. 23, 2008	Dec. 30, 2008	Jan. 6, 2009
AB6XS	Kevin	X	X	X	X	X
AD6CL	Chuck	X	X			
AD6RE	Grant	X				
AD6RY	Scott	X				
AD6YU	Loren	X	X #	X #	X	X
K6EBN	Eben		X			
K6QFO	Mike		X			
K6SBH	Sheri		X			
K6WAR	William		X		X	X
KD6VOR	Marv	X				
KF6EMB	Svend	X	X	X	X	
KF6UTE	Casey		X		X	X
KG6BKI	Brian			X		
KG6SEA	Tom					X
KG6SVJ	Jeanett	X				
KK6VF	Kevin	X #		X	X #	X #
N6EEE	Ray	X	X			
NU6P	John	X	X			X
W6HOC	Howard	X	X	X	X	X
W6TQG	Phil			X	X	X
W6ZZZ	Marc	X		X	X	X
WB6KHP	Dave	X		X	X	X

Club Net: Tuesday, 8:30 p.m. on our club repeaters:

WVARA Repeaters (W6PIY)			
Band	MHz	PL	Status
6 Meters	52.580-	151.4 Hz	Operating
2 Meters	147.39+	151.4 Hz	Operating
1.25 Meters	223.96-	156.7 Hz	Operating
0.70 Meter	441.35+	88.5 Hz	Operating
0.23 Meter	1286.2-	100 Hz	Operating

Good Word for the Day: "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot? What in the heck has our liberal education system done to our children? Indoctrinate them with a bunch of dimwitted nonsense?"

Calling Former Novice Licensees — by Don Melcher, W6CZ (ex-WV6VZX, WN6FGZ, etc.)

I was a Novice - twice! I still have my original novice "ticket"- signed by Ben F Waffle (I always thought that was such a funny name) and a photo that appeared April of 1962 in the Hayward Daily Review along with a story of me getting my license at age 9, making it 4 hams in one family. The picture is of my dad Al, W6YQB (now W6ARM), my two brothers, Dick, WA6MDI, and Bob, WA6MJM (now K7BOB) and myself (then WV6VZX). They are standing around me and I am seated at the operating desk with my right hand on a bug (that is still part of my collection). On the desk are a NC-173, HT-32 (dad had borrowed that from Elmar to check out SSB), Gonset Communicator III (2M), Heath DX-20 (my novice TX) and a Heath HG10 VFO (mainly for the Gonset).

I have all those rigs in my boat anchor collection except for the "Gooney Bird" (the nickname for the Gonset in the day). I remember taking the Gonset to my elementary school and doing a show and tell contact - must have been either 4th or 5th grade - with the school janitor that lived across town. I was using just a 19" spike on the top of the Gonset. He had a small yagi. We had set up a schedule and I called him while he peaked the antenna on me (cross polarized too - AM was normally horizontal - the Halo was a common antenna for mobile on 2M & 6M). Once he found the best direction to me, I had him turn his antenna while transmitting and demonstrated how the signal strength changed as he called out the direction of the antenna. I also had prepared (with the help of one of my brothers) a basic explanation of how a 3 element yagi worked.

At home - we had a 22 element Cushcraft "Spiral Array" – circular polarized at about 40'. My best DX on 2M was Grass Valley. I spent too much time over the next year on 2M AM and didn't get my code speed up or study for the Tech license - so I was only on for a year the first time around. But I made a few life-long acquaintances - most of who are now SK's.

I got interested again in 1976 when I moved to Crestline in Southern California and had room for antennas. Found a local ham to give me my novice. While I was waiting for it to come in the mail, I listened to W1AW CW practice on a HW-7 that I had borrowed and studied for the General test. The day after it came in the mail, I went to the FCC field office in Long Beach and passed the general theory, but I was too late to take the code so I had to go back the next week and take that. So I was a Novice (again) for a day (I guess they must have changed the rules - it used to be that you could only be a Novice once) and a Tech for a week. On the way back home, stopped in at HRO in Anaheim and picked up a shiny new TS-520S that I had my eye on during previous visits.

West Valley Amateur Radio Association

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