
River City ARCS

Vol. 28 No. 02
February 2004

River City Amateur Radio Communications Society

It's Time to Renew Membership for 2004

From the President:

Our many thanks to Armand Nobel, Editor of *World Radio*, for his presentation at our January, 2004 meeting. Armand has been a long time supporter of amateur radio in the Sacramento area.

Please note that the March, 2004 meeting has been rescheduled due to the Primary Election. **The March meeting will be on Monday, March 8th @ 7:30 pm.** FYI the November, 2004 meeting will also be changed from its usual date due to the General Election. It will be on Monday, November 1st.

I would like to here more of you using the River City ARCS repeaters! Please use the 145.250 (+162.2) and the 442.600 (+100) repeaters.

Let's keep RCARCS strong and growing!

Dale Hankins, AD6CT, President

2004 Dues are Due!

VE SESSION RESULTS:

From Ken Hall, WO6J, our "VE Guy": "The next session will be February 21, 2004, at 8:45am at the Carmichael Elks Lodge, corner of Cypress and Hackberry in Carmichael. The fee is \$12.00.

"Our December 20, 2003 session had four candidates: one 'grand fathered' to General; one upgraded to Extra, and two passed CSCE,s for Element 3. The results went to the VEC by Express Mail and they got it on the 29th, nine days later. They sent it to the FCC on the same day. Ten VE's showed up for the test session.

"The VE session on January 17th yielded two Extra class operators, and two 'grand fathered' to General.

"I recall a VE telling me of a hostile situation at a VE session about the expiration date of a CSCE. An FCC department chief was involved and the VEC was not happy about the situation. On pages 42 and 43 of the VE Manual, it tells us how to count the 365 days: Day one is the day the CSCE was issued, and it expires at midnight on the day before the issue date. That's during a non-leap year. We

are in a leap year, and if February 29th is in the time frame of the CSCE then it expires at midnight two days prior to the date of issue.

"I arrive at the VE test session site at 8:00am and get it set up. Early arriving VE's get the table. The Elks Lodge doesn't allow us to bring in any outside food or drink (that includes morning coffee). Do not bring any with you. If we do not follow their rules, we will be asked to leave. See you there!"

The General class question pool (Element #3) will change on July 1, 2004, and was released for publication on December 1, 2003. The new Technician test began July 1, 2003.

Larry Hodge will hold test sessions on the first Saturday of the month. For more information, contact Larry at <larry.r.hodge@intel.com>

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RACES Gets Ready for Spring!

So far, there have been no terrorist attacks, no local earthquakes or floods. RACES is ready to offer assistance with emergency radio communications in the event of a disaster natural or man-made. If you're interested in becoming a member of RACES, contact Dale, AD6CT, at (916) 925-1062, for more information. You may also tune in to the Monday night net on 147.195 at 7:00pm.

You've Got Mail!

Thanks to about 75% of club members who have responded to this article and now receive their monthly newsletter by e-mail. It costs the club about \$.75 for each "hard copy" newsletter mailed each month, or \$9.00 per year.

If you can receive e-mail, send a message to Dale, ad6ct@arrl.net and your newsletter will arrive *before* the meeting. Great news! This saves the club postage, paper, and ink (toner, to be precise!). Just write "subscription" on the subject line and send! Do it today.

2004 RCARCS Officers/Board

President	Dale Hankins (AD6CT) . . . (916) 925-1062 E-mail: ad6ct@arrl.net
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Committees:

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Newsletter Editor: Kay Hankins, KF6IZU
VE Liaison: Ken Hall, WO6J
Education Coordinator: Bob Balthrope, KD6WTY
Holiday Dinner: Kay Hankins, KF6IZU
Repeater Trustee: Dane Westvik, KO6YD
Bylaws: Kay Hankins, KF6IZU, Chuck Freas, W6FT
Field Day General Chairman: Roy Rudebaugh, KD6LLE
Pot Luck Lunch Chairman:
Set Up/Take Down Chairman:
Publicity Chairman:
Jackets, T-shirts & hats: Mary Anne Balthrope, KE6EST

***Leave message**

CLUB INFORMATION:

DUES: \$20.00 Annually beginning January 1st
CLASSES: Class schedules, tests to license or upgrade, and general information are available by calling the RCARCS Hot Line at (916) 492-6115.
MEETINGS: Club meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, 7:30 pm, at the Sacramento County Corporation Yard, (formerly SMUD), corner of Don Julio and Elkhorn Blvds.
Board of Directors meetings are held the fourth Tuesday at 7:00 pm.
CLUB PHONE: (916) 492-6115
MAILING ADDRESS:
PO Box 215073, Sacramento, CA 95821
WEB SITE: www.n6na.org
E-MAIL: n6na@arrl.net

2004 RCARCS Calendar

February 3 rd	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
February 24 th	Board Meeting, 7 pm
March 2 nd	NO MEETING Election Day
March 8 th	CLUB MEETING, MONDAY, 7:30pm

March 23 rd	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
April 6 th	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
April 27 th	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
May 4 th	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
May 25 th	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
June 1 st	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
June 22 nd	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
June 26-27	Field Day 2004
July 6 th	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
July 27 th	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
August 3 rd	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
August 24 th	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
September 7 th	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
September 28 th	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
October 5 th	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
October 26 th	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
November 2 nd	Club Meeting (tentative)
November 23 rd	Board Meeting, 7:00pm
December 7 th	Club Meeting, 7:30pm
December 28 th	No Board Meeting

Sweep Riders of the Sierras

By Mary Anne Balthrope, KE6EST
(Reprinted courtesy of Worldradio, February 2004)

Sweep Riders of the Sierras is a volunteer group of hams on horseback. They provide communication services and search and rescue assistance during two international events: The Western States Endurance Run with a lottery entry of over 400 runners, and the Western States Trail Ride with over 225 riders. Both of these events are completed in twenty-four hours. Working with approximately sixty other hams at aid stations and hams in numerous horse ambulances, they cover the entire 100-mile route of the Western States Trail during these events.

The Western States Trail stretches from Utah to California. First used by the Paiute and Washoe Indians, the trail was later indelibly imprinted upon the high mountain ridges and through the deep river canyons by the boots of the 49'ers and the hooves of their horses and mules. For many years, the trail served as the most direct route between the gold camps of California and the silver mines of Nevada. Today, although portions of the trail follow dirt roads and three miles are paved, most of the trail remains in its natural condition. The start of the events is high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and finished in Auburn, California, the Endurance Capitol of the World.

The first Western States trail ride was held in 1955. The first endurance run was created in 1974 when a rider's horse went lame and the entrant decided to run the course on foot.

For years, there were no sweep riders, just volunteers who would ride for the fun of it. Communication started in 1961 at check points with CB radios placed five miles apart and relayed on 11 meters. Communications graduated to 6 meters for six or seven years, using dynamotors for power.

A lot of jumper cables were used because vehicle batteries died. These volunteers did the best they could, but it was difficult without coordination and organized riders.

In the late 1970s and the 1980s, aid station operators went to 2 meters. Search and rescue came into the picture

to sweep the trail but none of them had ham licenses, so they used law enforcement frequencies. The sweeps discovered that coverage was poor, with a lot of black holes. In 1996, UHF was added and packet radio was added in 2000 at some stations.

In 1995, Tevsweep was born, but the name was soon changed to Sweep Riders of the Sierras as a non-profit 501c(4) organization.

Starting with one licensed ham on horseback with a dual band HT, the group has now grown to over 40 members with 30 licensed ham operators. A five watt HT with an external battery power supply is about the maximum weight and power that is feasible for a mounted rider to carry. A helmet configuration has evolved to replace the rubber duck thanks to Bob Balthrope, KD6WTY. This set-up uses a flexible antenna on a mounting bracket attached to a helmet and an internal copper screen for a ground plane between the helmet shell and the helmet lining. The rider's ability to send and receive using low power improved tremendously with this type of antenna. The radio and battery are carried either in a chest pack or fanny pack, rider's choice. Using an external speaker-microphone or boom mic allows for hand-free operation. With the addition of almost complete radio communication coverage on the trail, doctors and veterinarians can give direct advice to the sweeps.

These riders are required to have a current CPR and First Aid certificate, to pass a qualified test of the horse and rider as a team, and to be physically fit. They are encouraged to get their FCC license. The sweeps ride in teams of two with at least one radio or a team of four with two radio operators. They ride in relays between check points, with cutoff times, to cover the entire one hundred miles. This combines two great hobbies: horses and ham radio.

All traffic is run through a controlled net with a team of net control operators. Computers with specialized computer programs are used to track each entrant and can be accessed through the Internet, worldwide. For more information, check out our website: <http://home.foothill.net/~andrea/SOS.htm>.

Did You Know?

In the 1500s most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell so brides carried a bouquet when getting married. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women, and finally the children – last of all, the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, “Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water.”

Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the dogs, cats, and other small animals, including mice and bugs, lived in the roof. When it rained the roof became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off. Hence the saying, “It’s raining cats and dogs.”

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could really mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That’s how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying “dirt poor.”

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they kept adding more thresh until when you opened the door it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway, creating a “thresh hold.”

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes the stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme, “Pleas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old.”

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man “could bring home the bacon.” They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and “chew the fat.”

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach into the food causing lead poisoning and death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or “upper crust.”

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock them out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. There were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a “wake.”

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a “bone house” and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, one out of twenty-five coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they thought they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the “graveyard shift”) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be “saved by the bell” or was considered a “dead ringer.”

And that’s the truth. . .

**March Meeting Rescheduled to:
Monday, March 8th**