

THE GRID LEAK

The Official Newsletter of the Tulare County Amateur Radio Club

P.O. Box 723, Visalia, CA 93279
 TULARE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
 146.880 (-) TCARC REPEATER
 Blue Ridge Mountain
 East of Visalia, California
 36 17.19' N Latitude, 118 50.23' W Longitude
 5,700' above Sea Level

I.R.L.P. Node # **8120**

Echolink Node # **152747 (WA6BAI-R)**

Web Page: <http://www.tcarc.net/>

Companion site at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wa6bai/>

Club Officers

President: Steve Lee-Thomas W6SLT

Vice President: Dave Millhouse N6YMM

Secretary: Jim Brunk KD5NED

Treasurer: Joseph Simons WB6MUD

Past President: Ray Quinn KF6KMY

Repeater Coordinator: Mike Irving N6BYH

Activities Director: Tom Thompson KD6DXX



ARRL WELCOMES W1WJB AS COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Bill Barrett, W1WJB, of Ridgefield, Connecticut, is the newest member of the ARRL Headquarters family. He joined the ARRL Field and Educational Services (F&ES) staff October 18 as ARRL Community Education Program Coordinator. In that position, he'll execute a pilot program to enlighten a dozen US localities about the value of Amateur Radio to community safety and security. And he'll be exploring the best ways Amateur Radio can work with Citizen Corps councils to show them what ham radio can do. Barrett plans to make the most of his experience as an ARES District Emergency Coordinator, more than 40 years of Amateur Radio experience, and his work producing video and film projects for corporate clients.

"I enjoy bringing a message to groups that expands their capabilities," Barrett said. As an emergency coordinator, he developed a PowerPoint presentation that local officials could view right at their desks. "A new presentation will grow out of that, with a lot of new material better suited to the new audience," he added.

The one-year position Barrett is filling is new at ARRL HQ. Both the position and the program are funded by a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The funding of nearly \$90,000 will enable the League to develop the Community Education Project (CEP) and carry ham radio's message to communities.

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Merry Christmas



Saturday, Dec. 4th
 from 2 to 5 pm

Family Christmas Open House & Potluck

(Bring salad or dessert, we'll do the rest)

Please RSVP so we can plan meat
 to gloriavicenti@sbcglobal.net or 733-2902

Looking forward to seeing everyone

Alan W6MTR & Gloria W6NRS
 1147 Enos – Northeast Visalia

SPECIAL THANKS for participation in the Tulare County
Flu Shot Clinic on November 8, 2004 at the Convention
Center and the Red Cross Chapter Office:

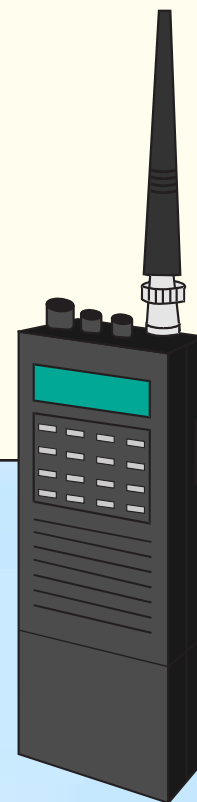
Al Drake KJ6OH

Bill Balsley KG6AIR

Bill Shearer KA6HGA

Bill Stenger K6QOG

Jon Morgan WB6AEA



All Ham News

Emergency Coordinators for Tulare County:
RACES is Jim Reeves KC6YRU - kc6yru@tcarc.net
ARES is Hal Clover KC6LUB - hal90000@sosinet.net

November ARES News

Hal KC5LUB, Emergency Coordinator, Tulare County ARES

Well, summer is over and the weather is starting to change for fall. Thanks to everyone that has been supportive of our ARES activities over the summer. We might take a minute to think about what is going on in the Southeast section of the country. While we don't have hurricanes specifically here in Tulare County, the potential for some other events does exist.

Please think about a 72 hours disaster kit. If you haven't gotten one together, it might be a good idea. With mountains rumbling and the ground shaking, you never know when an event will erupt, no pun intended. Some basic supplies include food, water and clothing. Do you know where your utility shut-offs are? Do you have a device to turn off your gas? A simple crescent wrench will do in an emergency.

I might add that once you turn off the utilities, the utility company needs to turn it back on. This may take a while in an emergency, so don't turn the utilities off unless directed to or if they cause a danger. In an emergency, it may take several days to get them turned back on once they are off.

Lots is going on with ARES locally in the next couple of weeks. The annual Simulated

Emergency Test or SET was the first weekend of the month. It kinda snuck up on us so there were no formal plans to participate on that weekend. Instead, October 16 at 0800 is the scheduled SET for our ARES group. We will be focusing on a local response within Tulare County. Several stations will be needed and operators will be called into service throughout the county. If you are available listen in on 146.88, 146.655, 145.31 and 443.2 MHz.

A second activity that we have been invited to is the Annual Statewide Hospital Exercise. This drill is primarily for the hospitals throughout the state to practice for a large scale disaster or emergency. This year, we have been asked to provide communications support for our local hospitals and County OES. This is a weekday event and operators are needed in several locations throughout the county. There will be HF, VHF and UHF communications going on. Come out and play with the big boys if you are available.

Have a safe October and watch out for goblins at the end of the month. Keep those batteries charged and listen on the repeater during an emergency to get the up to date information. Hope to hear you out there.

-73 Hal, KC5LUB, EC ARES, Tulare County.

APRS

I am sure many of you have heard of APRS. Depending on which web site you visit, the "A" stands for **Amateur** or **Automatic**. Either way, **Automatic Position Reporting System** is an interesting mix of Amateur Radio and computers.

If you are unfamiliar with it, there are many web sites that explain its operation in greater detail. For a tracker, all you need is a two-meter radio, a **Terminal Node Controller**, or TNC, and a GPS unit. A computer can also be used to run the various software packages that are available. With this set up, others can "follow" you around as you move about. With the APRS software, along with mapping software, on a notebook computer, one could use it to find their way should they get lost. (I know, men don't get lost or ask for directions) You can send messages to other stations and even send email to any address via an email gateway.

Another option is to have a TNC and radio connected to your home computer running the software mentioned below. While this is not mobile, it does not require a GPS unit. You will just need to know your latitude and longitude. With this method, you do not require an Internet connection.

These set ups can cost some change and, if you are on a tight budget, it could be a bit out of reach.

If this is the case, I have a solution for you. Most of the APRS software available has the ability to connect to an APRS Server via the Internet. If you have a computer and have an Internet connection, you can use these servers. There are four Tier 1 servers, which are reserved for Tier 2 servers. The Tier 2 servers can be used by anyone. Lists of all known public APRS servers are at <http://www.aprs-is.net/APRSServers.htm>.

It just so happens that the Tulare County Amateur Radio Club has one of these servers up and running. The address is <http://wa6bai.tcarc.net:14501>. This will give you some information about the server, such as Server version, bytes in and out, outbound connections, inbound connections, available ports, and more.

With the APRS software, you would type **wa6bai.tcarc.net** as the server address with one of the

listed ports you choose. As of this writing, 10151 will give you a dump of the last thirty minutes and populate your map quickly. Port 10152 will give you the full APRS-IS feed, including messages, bulletins, and alerts. Port 14579 gives the California Regional feed, just as the full feed does, only regional. Port 1314 will only give you the messages sent via APRS. There is too much information to be posted here, but the Internet can give you a whole lot more.

Believe it or not, there is an even simpler solution. All you need is your favorite web browser, and, of course, your computer and Internet. Just type the address <http://javapers.tcarc.net> into your Java-equipped browser and follow the instructions below the applet. The information inside the applet is live directly from the Club's APRS server.

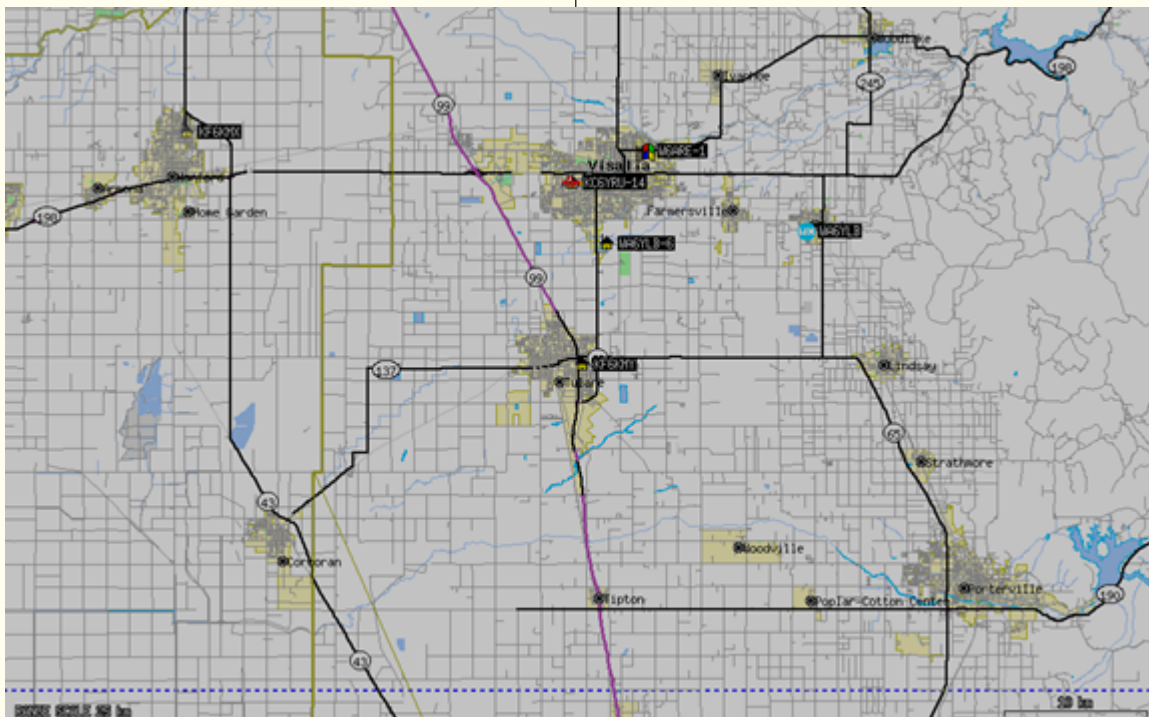
There are a few web sites that cater to specific stations. <http://www.findu.com> and <http://www.jfindu.com> are just two that I am aware of.

Links to several APRS software packages can be found at the Tucson Amateur Packet Radio web site. (<http://www.tapr.org>) or (<http://www.tapr.org/html/gpsf.html>)

I currently use XASTIR, **X Amateur Station and Information Reporting** on Red Hat Linux version 9.0. It allows several ways to get information into the program. They presently include; Serial TNC, Serial TNC with GPS on an HSP cable, Serial GPS, Serial WX, Internet Server, AX25 TNC, Networked GPS, Networked WX, Serial TNC with GPS on auxiliary port, Serial KISS TNC, Networked AGWPE, Serial Multi-Port KISS TNC, and Networked Database (coming soon).

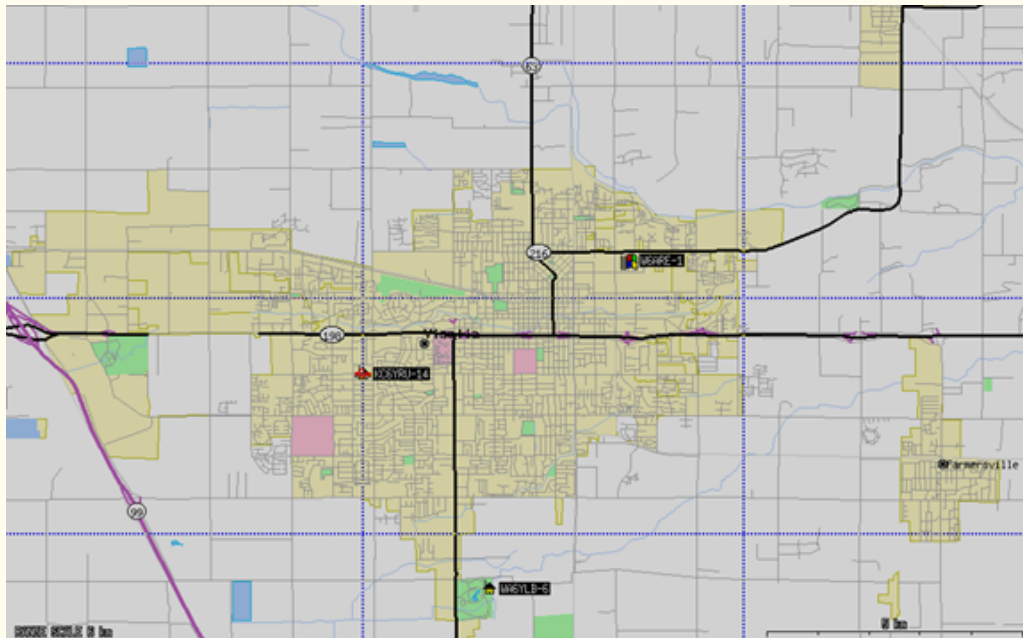
It supports the same map types as WinAPRS, MacAPRS, and DOSAPRS. It also supports GIF, JPEG, PNG, and others. It will also download maps from the Internet. It has weather RADAR maps from the National Weather Service, weather alerts, and much more. All in all, it supports several hundred map formats. XASTIR is not for the faint of heart, however. It took me quite some time to figure out how to get it going. The INSTALL instructions are now quite descriptive and can be up and running in a relatively short time if one has some patience and a little knowledge.

Below is a screen capture of XASTIR. The map is of Tulare and Kings Counties using the Tiger Map format.



Tulare County Amateur Radio Club

Below is zoom level 64. You can see that there is more detail in the map.



Below is zoom level 2 with even greater detail. This map is the U.S. Topo Map.



These are just a very small example of the power of XASTIR. For more information, you can visit <http://www.xastir.org>.

APRS is very useful in many situations. In late April, 2004, it was used by the Tulare County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (<http://www.tcares.us>) in the Baker to Vegas Run. One unit was placed in the pace vehicle (the one that followed the runner) and another in the transport vehicle (The one that transported runners from their hotel to their starting point and back to the hotel). Yet another was set up in the hotel in Primm, Nevada. From the hotel, we were able to monitor the location of the pace vehicle so the runners knew when they needed to leave. This gave the runners more time to rest before their turn. During the race, one can follow along by entering <http://javaprs.tcarc.net/b2v> in their browser.

Until just a few years ago, APRS used different frequencies across the country and around the world. The frequency used in most, if not all areas in the United States is 144.39 megahertz. Tune in sometime and listen to the packets. You can actually tell which ones are close and which ones are farther away.

One local web site with a lot of information is <http://www.theworks.com/~wa6ylb>. Byron Smith, WA6YLB has several digipeaters located in several mountainous locations as well as some personal trackers. At present, there are several locals who have trackers. They are KF6KMX-12, KE6ITF-9, KC6YRU-14, WA6YLB-13, W6ARE-8, KF6HJO-6, KF6HJO-8, KF6HJO-9, and more.

APRS is just one of the fascinating modes of operating in Amateur Radio. If you have never checked it out before, use any one of the methods listed above and go from there. Once you are hooked, you will probably never go back.

– Ray Quinn KF6KMY

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY SECTION

Report for October 2004

SM Charles McConnell, W6DPD- ASM K6YK, ACC W6DPD, SEC N6ZFN, OOC N1VM, STM K6RAU, PIC KE6IGJ, TC W6TE.

Greetings from the ARRL San Joaquin Valley Section. Happy Thanksgiving to all!!

The sixth annual SKYWARN Recognition Day (SRD) special event will take place Saturday, December 4, 2004. SKYWARN Recognition Day, co-sponsored by the American Radio Relay League and the National Weather Service, pays tribute to Amateur Radio operators for the vital public service they perform. During the 24-hour event, Amateur Radio operators visit their local National Weather Service (NWS) office and work as a team to contact other hams across the world. See the Public Service Column in the December 2004 QST for information, also <http://hamradio.noaa.gov>.

Emergency Coordinators are needed in Mariposa, Mono and Calaveras Counties. Contact N6ZFN (n6zfn@ares-races.net) or W6DPD (w6dpd@arrl.org) if you can help.

Thanks to KR6DY for his work as EC in Mariposa County. N5FDL is the new EC for San Joaquin County.

The Western States Weak Signal Society (WSWSS) Ham Radio VHF/UHF Conference was a success.

Pacificon 04 was well attended by Amateurs from the SJV. The convention was a good one despite a power outage on Saturday and rain on Sunday.

Need to take an Amateur Exam? Exams are given on various times of each month throughout the San Joaquin Valley Section. Check the ARRL web page, www.arrl.org <<http://www.arrl.org>> for the schedule by clicking on the Exams button in the upper left corner. You should be able to fine an exam near you. You can also check your local radio club newsletter or web page for an exam schedule. Remember the General Class Exam changed on July 1, 2004.

When your affiliated club elects officers for the next year, be sure to update your club's information on the affiliated club area of the ARRL web page.

The Northern California Net (NCN), the Section Traffic Net, meets nightly on 3.630 MHz at 7 PM Pacific Time. The slow speed training session of the net meets nightly on 3.705 MHz at 9 PM Pacific Time. Handling traffic on CW is a good way to improve your CW skills. The Daytime Region 6 Traffic Net meets daily at 3:30 pacific time on or near 7.275 MHz.

It is my sad duty to report that WB6BGL and AE6W have become a Silent Keys. They will be missed.

Congratulations to the following on completing the

Kern County Central Valley ARC members helped with communications during the Kern Wheelman Spooktacular, a bike race with distances between 20 and 100 miles up steep mountains.

The Bakersfield ARA operated a special event station on Halloween.

TCARES members participated in the Groveland 49th parade.

N6QIY is web master for the LeGrand Lions Club. The club received an award from the Lions Club International for the best website of 2004. Congratulations Ron on a great job.

WA6QYR and KC6UTF attended the Microwave Update in Dallas TX.

The June 2004 VHF/UHF QSO party had 6 entries from the SJV. KF6YUV was first in the SJV and the Pacific Division in the multi-op category. K6YK was first in the SJV in the single op high power category. KF6KDA was first in the SJV in the single op low power category.

Field Day 2004 had 26 entries from the SJV. W6SW was first in 4A and highest in the section. W6GR was first and W6TO was second in 2A. WA6IRC was first and WA6BAI was second in 3A. WA6YBN was first in 3AB. WA6YGA was first and K6YV was second in 5A. W6ERE was first in 9A. W6LIE was first in 11A.

Traffic for October was K6RAU 10. PSHR K6RAU 72

Club News

The mailing lists available for TCARC are:

- gridleak@tcarc.net - Grid Leak distribution in Portable Document Format (PDF)
- gridleak-text@tcarc.net - Grid Leak distribution in text format for those who prefer or require it.
- tcarc-announce@tcarc.net - One-way announcements open to all
- members@tcarc.net - Open to all active members
- repeater@tcarc.net - New repeater committee list (committee members only)
- officers@tcarc.net - For officers

If anyone wishes to start a new list related to amateur radio or the TCARC, you may do so by sending me an e-mail. -- 73 de Ray KF6KMY

November Birthday

Dave Mcelroy WA6QNW
Nona Loeffler KF6MKJ
John Stevens KB6DAV

November Anniversaries

Larry Taylor KF6JBG & Jane
Bill Balsley KG6AIR
John Stevens KB6DAV & Karen KF6PCV
Nona Loeffler KF6MKJ

December Birthdays

Bill Stenger K6QOG
Frank Devin KE6UKK



From the Editors: If there is anything that you would like to add to the newsletter, you may contact us by email at stengerw@sti.net. The deadline to have articles included is the 10th of each month; submissions after the 10th will go in the next newsletter unless otherwise instructed. -- de Carol & Bill K6QOG