



The Coachella Valley Repeater



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		REPEATER:		



Coachella Vly Amateur Radio Club PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The FCC takes a holiday! Listen on 40 CW on New Year's Eve from 8 pm till midnight to hear signals from the past. You don't have to be a CW guy to witness the signals reminiscent of 30's and 40's.

Officially "Straight Key Night" has been a non competitive contest of CW guys using "old fashioned straight keys" to celebrate the wonders of ham radio progress. And increasingly the "boat anchor crowd" has used the event to take it one step further to dust off and tune up their ancient rigs.

So the result is a parade of signals no longer heard on the ham bands today. This includes "chirps", "yoops", "growls", and signals that travel up and down the band! To allow these gems on the airways, the FCC must be looking the other way.

Most of the participants are struggling along with straight keys, but there is also a mix of "sidewinders" and "cootie keys". I invite you to tune and listen to some history!

I'll be there!

73,
Alan W6FZA since 1932
President



Coachella Valley R.A.C.E.S.

See everyone at the next Coachella Valley R.A.C.E.S. Meeting:

Date: Nov 8th, 2007
Day: Thursday
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: 425 North Civic Drive,
Palm Springs.

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District Officer, Coachella Valley
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Note from the Editor

Thank you to everyone for all your thoughtfulness, warm wishes, get well cards, emails and phone calls when I was sick this past month.

73's and 88's
Joyce KG6FHU



Desert Radio Amateur Transmitting Society

WHERE IS TORO PEAK??

If you are a radio amateur & live in Coachella Vly you really ought to know the name 'Toro Peak' as well as have some idea of where it is. Now, that's not to say that you ought to have visited it. Toro Peak is to the So. of Palm Desert & east of SR74, the road over the hills from P.D. to Anza. W6OPS was fortunate enough to be allowed on a maintenance visit to the site organized by Duane Ehrlich AD5E, site controller for the wide area Condor 220MHz system with one of their repeaters on Toro.

A separate vehicle driven by Stormy KF6BM w/Jerry N6CRI owner of a 220MHz repeater in the same vault made the journey on the same Sat in early Aug. The trip started ~7am. The 2nd 4x4 Jeep owned & driven by Bob WB6BRU left Palm Desert ~8:15am. Bob is based in Fresno so he did the journey over 2 days, meeting with Dan up in Newhall ~6am so going to Toro is not for those who want to get up late.

The 1st element of the trip is on the well paved, if winding, SR74 road & does nothing to prepare you for the bumping, grinding, truck-twisting steep gradients on the access road. The whole trip will take well over 1 hr on the rough mountain tracks & is almost as punishing for passengers as it is for truck & driver. More than 1/2 up the hill we pass in the distance the Santa Rosa radio site used by several county agencies. ~85 mins. after leaving SR74 we reach the summit.

If at this stage you are wondering whether to trip in your own 4x4 warning; there are locked & very sub-steel gates to dissuade casual visitors. The old



me that the road is so much better now that the site owners have done improvements. Incredible.

We all get some fun when one of the guys claims that they spent \$30 Million on it & gradually as we bump & roll skyward we figure out that \$30 mil might just about be enough to make a frwy to the top & so the real sum might be more like \$30K;



obviously the story gets a zero added with every re-telling. The guys also have some great stories about getting to the top by helicopter in by gone days.

The last 100 yds of the gradient is so steep that we get out to minimize the weight on the truck. Even walking on the rough surface is difficult-although it's mercifully 20 or more degrees cooler than the desert floor & at close to 9000' above sea level sun exposure will become evident on my face later in the day. At this altitude there is an oxygen shortage for those of us who are less fit than we like to admit. You get the feeling of being on top of the world & it's fascinating to be able to identify almost all of the Salton Sea.



It's little wonder that so many agencies use this site for their communications. 5 separate buildings are squeezed on to the summit & each is bristling w/ antennae ranging from huge microwave parabolic dishes to simple quarter wave end



feds. You wonder just how difficult it was to haul all the concrete needed to create the substantial bases for the bldgs & towers. Any communications buff will have a great time just trying to identify the various different types of antenna -



although for the most part trying to figure out what they might be carrying is pretty impossible.

As to whether Toro is a good monitoring port - the answer is a resounding "No". My Kenwood TH-F6A is rendered almost useless by the vast amount of RF getting into it.

Stormy & Jerry had already done work on the YQY repeater which has been down for some time. Alas, after a series of on air tests with K6BSC back at sea level they have decided that the unit will have to be taken back to P.D. for more extensive surgery & so their trip is sadly, only partially successful.

Toro Peak - Continued on Pg 3

Toro Peak - Continued from Pg 2

Toro is only accessible by road during dry summer months & the weather at the top can get very, very bad w/snow &



extreme winds taking their toll on the antenna systems. It's evident that some yagi link antennae have not been too resilient - after all, few links intentionally aim towards the ground! So it is

with the Condor system. Bob makes me feel dizzy by scrambling on to the lower levels of the tower & he quickly finds that the actual antenna is missing. The repeater is operating into the co-ax stub! He does some work to rig a temporary antenna but they just can't get a decent SWR - or a decent RF output for that matter. The guys quickly determine, to nobody's great surprise that this has done its worst to the Tx PA. Now what are the chances of having a spare PA in your possession? Well, quite high actually for these guys. Duane, who like the other veterans, has come very prepared finds a new PA unit in his box! It takes Bob & Dan minutes to remove & replace the dead unit. But who was expecting the whole thing to go smoothly?

And for evidence that it's the little things that take the time; all 4 of us are involved in trying to get a small metal cap on to the center feed of the antenna coax only to eventually discover that we cannot solder it because we wore the copper down to aluminum. Once again the savvy old tricks guys come to the rescue & "a fix" is done. Condor Toro is working again & linked into the system to Frazier Peak No. of LA & Guadalupe east of Blythe.

The trip back to the desert is just as much fun, just as bumpy, almost as long & of course very full of good humored discussion on what might have been done, what could be done, what should be done. One final note . . . it was very satisfying to be able to listen to & call in on the Condor system via Toro Peak repeater 2 days later on the Mon evening check-in!

For more info - <http://www.condor-connection.org/>

Those of you with 220MHz units are invited to use the system.

"Thanks guys for allowing me to come along to Toro with you"

Photos courtesy of Maureen K6BSC who went up w/Stormy & the Jerry repeater 2 wks later. Sadly this was also unsuccessful - more later about that, I'm sure.

Article Submitted by David W6OPS



QCWA Chapter 154 DREEP's Droppings

Our first meeting of the season will be 11:00 a.m., Thursday, November 15, 2007, at the Palm Desert Greens Country Club. No formal program is planned. We will just swap stories about our summer activities. The meeting format will be the same as last year: General rag chewing, lunch, and informal talks. Maybe we can find someone to talk about D-Star.

There will be no election of officers this year. Some of us have read the QCWA Chapter 154 by-laws and discovered officers are elected for **two** years. Current officers have agreed to serve another year, so an election this year is unnecessary.

Leo, W0GFQ, and Abigail will return to the Valley about December 1st. By our meeting time, we should have a more precise date.

See you soon!

73

Gene Pentecost, W4IMT
President

Leo Meyerson Chapter 154
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gene.pentecost@ieee.org



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SILENT KEY

Derith "Derry" Abdelnour-Susman, 67, of Desert Hot Springs was received by our Heavenly Father on Tuesday, October 16th, 2007 at Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage. She was born on May 9th, 1940 in San Diego, CA. She was the only child of Albert and Francis Mae Caraccio. Derry left San Diego in 1958 when she married John L. Abdelnour and spent the remainder of her life in the Coachella Valley. She was a Cardiovascular Technician for 20 years at the medical offices of Dr. Melvin Gonzalez. Dr. Gonzalez, along with her husband Bart and children, Lori and Randy, Michael, Tommy and Lynn; friends, Gary and Susie, were at her bedside when she passed. Her beauty was evident in death. Derry is survived by her husband, Barton Susman of Desert Hot Springs; her parents, Richard and Francis Mae Keller of Palm Desert; her children, Lori and Randy Scott, Michael Abdelnour, and Tommy and Lynn Abdelnour; and her beloved granddaughters, Katherine Francis and Hayley Lynn Abdelnour. Known as "Tita" to Katherine and Hayley, her loss for them is immeasurable. Derry was preceded in death by her father, Albert R. Caraccio.

Derry will be missed by too many to mention. She had so many friends from all walks of life. She was very active in the community with her husband Bart, serving on a number of emergency response and ham radio organizations. She and Bart began the Sky Valley Emergency Team and co-chaired the organization for many years. She was the Coachella Valley R.A.C.E.S. Secretary for many, many years. She ran the emergency NET communication system every Monday night. Her call sign was KE6AMI which will be reassigned to her daughter, Lori. Derry had recently earned her General Ham Radio upgrade. All would agree, she really had the gift to gab! Derry had adopted a number of Dr. Gonzalez's patients. In Dr. Gonzalez's words, she did the work of four and was the "heart" of his practice. She adored her boss and said she would not retire until he did because he needed her. The two of them shared a relationship that could be described as mother & son. She affectionately referred to him as Dr. G. Derry's life can be best described as a beacon of light for her family, friends and so many people that found her smile, humor and enthusiasm for life contagious and motivating. The loss to her family cannot be described, but her love in Christ and human kind guarantees we will see her again. A celebration of Derry's life will be announced at a later date.

Wiefels Funeral Directors, 760-327-1257.



*Derry,
you will be
greatly missed.*

November 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7 pm CV RACES NET	2	3
4 8:30 am RACES NET	5 7 pm RATS NET	6	7	8  7:15 pm RACES Mtg 425 N. Civic Dr, P. Springs 7 pm CV RACES NET	9	10
11 8:30 am RACES NET	12 7 pm RATS NET	13  7 pm CVCARC Mtg Cathedral City Fire Dept, 32100 Desert Vista Rd	14	15  11 a.m. QCWA Mtg @ Palm Desert Greens In the Palm Room 7 pm CV RACES NET	16 11:00 am LUNCH @ Palm Desert Greens	17
18 8:30 am RACES NET	19 7 pm RATS NET	20	21	22  7 pm CV RACES NET	23 11:00 am LUNCH @ Palm Desert Greens	24
25 8:30 am RACES NET	26 7 pm RATS NET	27 7 pm RATS Mtg PSPD Training Center, next to PSPD on Civic Dr 	28	29 7 pm RACES COMM. TEST 146.025+ pl107.2	30 11:00 am LUNCH @ Palm Desert Greens	

H A P P Y B - I D A Y S

OCTOBER

Nick Mutascio, K6GQ0	Oct 7
Don Claunch, K6CEK	Oct 9
Ron Luttringer, K6XC	Oct 9
Tom Averett, AE6WL	Oct 9
Maureen Hiemstra, K6BSC	Oct 16
Frances Bolen, KF6BUD	Oct 23
Vic Hansen, WB6SEL	Oct 26
Gail Hopke, KF6UEY	Oct 26
Frankie Mathis, KD6FXO	Oct 29
Linda Nelson, K6EYN	Oct 31
David Sambol, KE5LLM	Oct 31

NOVEMBER

Ken Nelson, W6NEL	Nov 2
Chris Kahn, K6KZP	Nov 8
Alan Margot, W6FZA	Nov 10
Jim Meyers, KD6TCU	Nov 15
Roy Cheatwood, KA6UIO	Nov 16
Glenn Tobey, AB6PA	Nov 16

NET(s) FREQUENCIES: Sundays 830 hrs - RACES Net (3.945 MHz)
 Mondays 1900 hrs - Desert RATS Net (146.940-, 107.2 pl)
 Thursdays 1900 hrs - Coachella Valley **RACES** Net (146.025+, 107.2 pl)