

Squelch Tales

A Publication of The San Diego Repeater Association, Inc.
March/April 2014

Ahead in Squelch Tales

Activity Issue, *Squelch Tales* focuses on amateur radio events taking place in Southern California.

The **March 2014 SANDRA** membership meeting featured Grady Yearwood, AK4XS, presenting the activities and history of REACT. REACT, which has its roots in citizens band radio, now includes all legal radio services and has a large amateur radio contingent.

The **YUMA Hamfest** held on February 14-15 was well attended by SANDRA members. This event is inexpensive to attend, entrance is \$5.00, the banquet dinner is \$10.00, there is RV camping onsite with electricity supplied and local hotels are ~ \$40.00 a night. The Yuma Hamfest should certainly be considered as a destination for all Southern California hams.

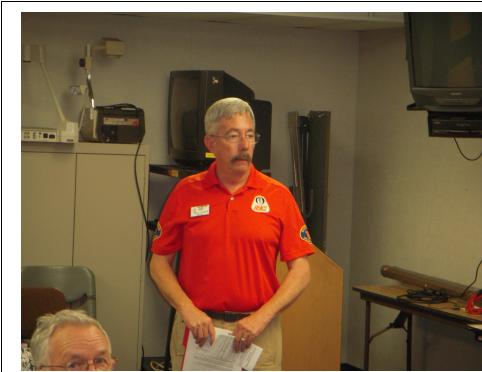
The **2014 ARRL Southwestern Division Convention** will be held in San Diego at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel. This Convention has some top speakers and valuable prizes. A Yaesu FTDX 1200 is only available to hams that register before May 31, 2014. This is a must event for SoCal hams.

Ham radio operator day will be held in the parking lots of the Fry's stores in San Diego (Murphy Canyon) and San Marcos. This is an opportunity to explain ham radio to the public and build community acceptance.

Southwest REACT

Grady Yearwood, AK4XS

The March 6, 2014 membership meeting featured Grady Yearwood, AK4XS, presenting the activities of Southwest REACT. REACT, which has its roots in citizens band radio, now includes all legal radio services and has a large amateur radio contingent. Amateur radio accounts for the largest portion of their communication network because of the installed base of amateur radio repeaters and many of their client organizations are ham radio users. React welcomes all radio communication including Citizens Band, Family Radio Service, Amateur Radio Service, Multi-Use Radio Service and Private Land Mobile Radio Service (business band). REACT installed their own business band repeater on Mount Laguna which dramatically improves business band utility in San Diego and Imperial counties.



Grady Yearwood AK4XS

REACT has its origin in an emergency situation on a Chicago freeway. In 1962 Henry B. (Pete) Kreer broke down during a January snow storm with a sick child in his car. Out of desperation, he sought help by calling for help using his new citizens band radio. The call was successful and help arrived, prompting him to start Radio Emergency Associates Communication Team (REACT) as an aid to motorists needing assistance using citizens band communication. The objectives of the organization are to use personal radio services as an additional source of communications in emergencies; to establish 24 hour monitoring to assist travelers, a function which continues today, particularly in remote rural area; to promote transportation safety; to

coordinate efforts with and provide communications to other groups (REACT began this function ahead of either ARES or RACES); to develop, administer and promote public information projects; and

Please turn to page 3

SANDRA goes to the Yuma Hamfest

Contributors: Roger Hunt, K7MEX

Joe Acevedo, N6SIX

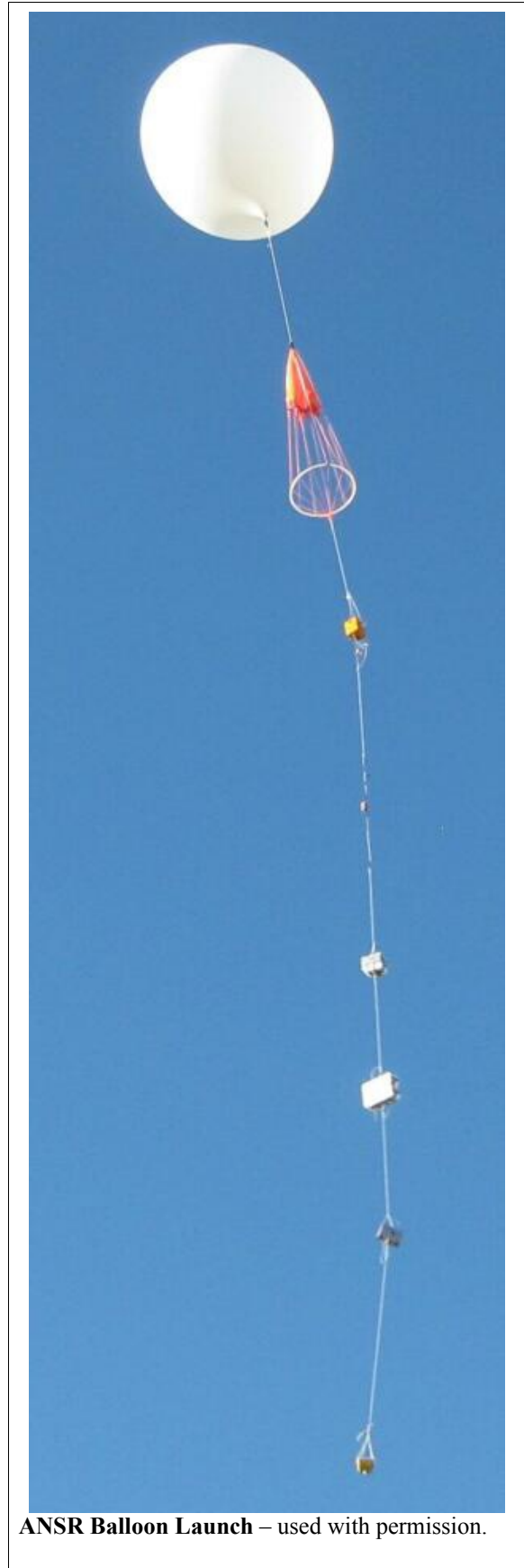
A crowd of more than 1,100 hams were drawn to the February 14-15 Yuma Hamfest. Held under beautiful blue skies and balmy 70 to 80 degree temperatures, a festive atmosphere prevailed as only can be generated when ham radio operators get together to meet those that are normally on the other side of a QSO. Hams are by their nature social individuals, spending their time meeting strangers on the radio, but nothing beats the camaraderie generated when they are able to get together in-person for an “eyeball” chat.

The Yuma Hamfest is held at the Yuma County Fairgrounds, a somewhat laid back venue that is ideal for a Southwest gathering of hams. It has a large outside area for recreational vehicle camping, including electricity and an additional half acre concrete slab for tailgating and a used equipment flea market. The large central building houses the vendors, exhibits, banquet area and a special Yuma Hamfest feature called the Country Store. The twenty-one seminar sessions and VEC testing are held in five or six smaller buildings, each of which can hold approximately 100 people. Events such as the balloon launch are performed outside in the central area.

The event is attended by hams from all over Southern California with large contingents from San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Las Vegas. There is one group that arrives from Ohio almost every year. This year there were 113 RV's camped over Friday night, which makes one large ham party – oh the QRM. One of the big attractions to the Yuma Hamfest is the rich prize package that is offered. This year \$13,700 in radio gear was given away as 16 separate grand prizes, which is the richest prize package for any hamfest in the Western U.S. In addition to the radio prizes for ham operators, there were 25 baskets of goodies for the non-hams (family members and friends) attending the hamfest and a Galaxy Tab 3 was given away as an admission prize.

The central building housed the exhibit area with 29 vendors ranging from Ham Radio Outlet and ARRL to the Civil Air patrol and the Yuma County Sheriff. There were many antenna and rf parts vendors present.

Please turn to next page



ANSR Balloon Launch – used with permission.

REACT continued

to participate in citizens crime prevention programs (participation in Red Flag is an example).

The story of REACT has been one of steady growth and advancement. In 1967 REACT petitioned the FCC for an emergency CB channel which was finally granted in 1970 as the Traveler's Assistance Channel, CB channel 9. In 1973 REACT became an Illinois not for profit corporation. The first annual convention was started in 1976. In 1977 REACT launched the first of their highway safety programs, the first was a joint program with the American Trucking Association and stressed the importance of periodic rest periods during long haul driving. 1978 marked REACT's support of non-transportation related activities as they signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Special Olympics for communications support. REACT's efforts were honored by receipt of the first President's Volunteer Action Award (now part of the the Presidents Volunteer Service Award Program) which was awarded by then President Ronald Reagan. REACT has been given the award a total of 16 times, the only group to win the award more than once.

In 1991 REACT launched the first of its formal training modules to assure a consistent level of response by its members. In 1993 REACT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Red Cross which began a focus on supporting community events. Today REACT's working relationships include the ARRL, NOAA and the Salvation Army.

Southwest REACT was started in Imperial Beach in 1966, 48 years ago. Southwest REACT is a regional element of what is now REACT International. Southwest REACT participates in many of the same events as San Diego ARES and REACT members are frequently also members of ARES and RACES. REACT brings people participating in communications outside of the Amateur Radio Service, expanding the communications network. There are many occasions where a team will work together using individuals with CB or other radio services to feed messages to ham operator who then relays them to net control, and visa versa.

REACT is expanding into countries around the world. Many of the foreign REACT organizations still use CB as their primary means of communication and are still focused on aid to travelers. -{SQ}-

Yuma Hamfest continued

A special feature of this hamfest is the Country Store. The Country Store is a place where hams can consign used equipment for sale separately from the large outdoor flea market. At the Country Store volunteers are available to sell equipment, the owner doesn't have to be present and can go out and enjoy the hamfest. The volunteers follow the pricing rules the owner sets and the owner doesn't have to be present, he/she only returns to



Country Store, where used equipment can be consigned for sale by hamfest volunteers. - used with permission.



Yuma Hamfest seminar - used with permission.

collect the proceeds. The hospitality area and drawings for the 16 grand prizes are also held in this area. The hospitality area feature drawings for 80-100 small prizes throughout the event. SANDRA members Steve Kubicek, W6SMK, won the Yaesu FTDX1200 transceiver and Paul Thompson, KJ6BYF, won the Yaesu FTM-400DR dual band digital transceiver – good going guys!

One exciting event featured by the Yuma Hamfest is the launch of a near space balloon by Arizona Near Space Research (ANSR). Please see next page

Yuma Hamfest continued

The following description of the balloon launch was taken from the Yuma Hamfest web site.¹ Near space is that region of the atmosphere above 60,000 feet but below the accepted altitude of space, 328,000 feet. Near space is far more like earth orbit than the surface of the earth, where air pressure is only 1% of atmospheric pressure, air temperatures drop to -60°F or colder and cosmic radiation is over 100 times greater than at sea level. The 1600-gram weather balloon filled with helium carried a recovery parachute and payload packages aloft at 09:02:31 MST. Payloads consisted of Fast Scan Amateur Television (FSTV), a still camera, a cross-band repeater, a Qualcomm WIFI experiment, and two APRS beacons. The jet stream cooperated and the balloon was carried east, rising to a maximum altitude of 89,115 feet, or nearly 17 miles high, to "near space." In near space conditions, with the extremely low air pressure, the balloon swells to about 60 feet in diameter until it bursts. The payload package then returns back to earth with the recovery parachute. The balloon was tracked with APRS with it's position displayed on a screen at the Yuma Hamfest. The payload package came to rest on the ground at 11:14:01 MST (2 hours 12 minutes 32 seconds later). The recovery of the payloads was accomplished at about 11:30 MST, with the recovery teams able to drive within a half mile of the payload. The package was recovered in the flat desert area between the sand dunes and the Mohawk Mountains south of Interstate 8, about 51 miles from the launch point. The cross band repeater and all beacons performed normally. However the WiFi experimental payload experienced a failure after 6,000 feet of ascent. The FSTV payload provided the ground station with video through burst and most of the descent.



Flea market – used with permission.

The Yuma Hamfest got its start in 2004 when a group of interested amateurs got together and raised \$2,000 as seed money to start a local Ham Radio event. The event was moderately successful as a local event with an attendance of around 100 people. The following year they organized a giant garage sale with items donated by local area residents, raising \$4,000 to fund the event. For a number of years advertising of the hamfest was by direct mail, a post card was sent to area hams. That was followed by a small advertisements in the February issue of QST which comes out at the end of January each year. The direct mail and small adds were eventually replaced by large advertisements in both QST and CQ magazines with a much improved response. In 2012 it became an ARRL sponsored event as the official state convention. In 2011 The Yuma Hamfest became a 501C3 corporation with the tax status grandfathered back to 2004. For the past three years the prize package has increased to a rich set of 16 major prizes plus entrance and smaller prizes available all during the event. This was the first year that all 16 prizes were radios.



Live video from the near space balloon – used with permission

The hamfest gradually began to grow as the organizers figured out what was successful and what drew in attendees. The secrets turned out to a well organized fun weekend, great prizes, effective advertising and cost control. The individuals that this author talked to felt that the Yuma Hamfest was a fun, relaxed and enjoyable, one of the better events that



A big transmitter at the Flea Market – used with permission

¹ [Http://www.yumahamfest.org](http://www.yumahamfest.org)

they regularly attend. The event is inexpensive to attend, entrance is \$5.00, the banquet dinner is \$10.00, there is RV camping onsite with electricity supplied and local hotels are ~ \$40.00 a night. The Yuma Hamfest should certainly be considered as a destination for all Southern California hams. {-SQ-}

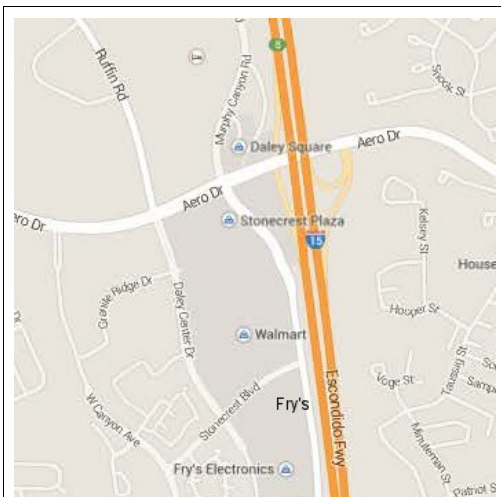
**SANDRA Board of Directors Meeting
7:00 pm Thursday April 3, 2014
San Diego County Office of Education
6401 Linda Vista Road, San Diego, CA 92111**

Room 301

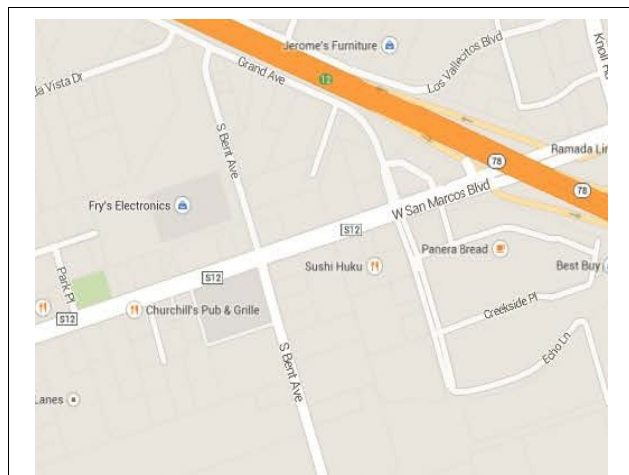
Members are invited to view and participate in BOD meetings

**Fry's Amateur Radio Operator Day
Sponsored by San Diego Six Shooters
Amateur Radio Club
Saturday April 26, 2014
9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Fry's Electronics
9825 Stonecrest Blvd, San Diego, CA 92123 (Murphy Canyon)
&
150 Bent Ave., San Marcos, CA**

Amateur Radio Operators are invited to attend and operate
This is an opportunity to demonstrate amateur radio to the public
Support Amateur Radio



9825 Stonecrest Blvd. S.D. 92123



150 Bent Ave, San Marcos



2014 Southwestern Division Convention



September 12-14, 2014

Sheraton Four Points Hotel

8110 Aero Drive, San Diego CA, 92123



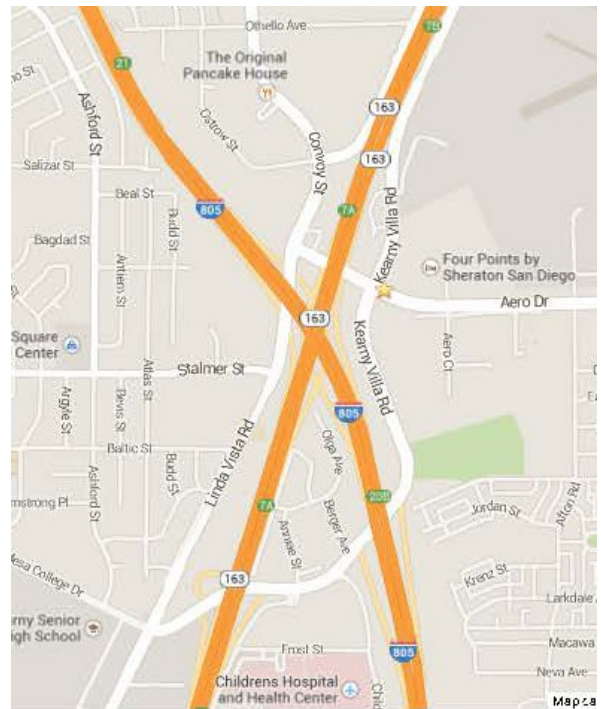
Keynote Speaker
Ward Silver, N0AX

Editor of the ARRL Handbook and Antenna Book. Author of Hands on Radio and Contest Corral.

GRAND PRIZE ICOM IC 7600



Early Bird Registration
Register before May 31, 2014
Early Bird prices \$18.00
Be eligible for the the Early Bird
registration prize
FTDX 1200



Errata, Corrections, Amplifications and Shorts: This sections acknowledges errors and omissions or allows additions to previous *SQ* issues. We rely on feedback from the readers – please write.

Larry Cox formerly K6AIL has gone back to his original call, WA6AIL. The change in call sign also effects the Sharp Hospital Repeater for which Larry is the trustee. *SQ* has made the change in our list in this issue (back page).

There is a **new swap net** at 9:00 pm on Sunday nights, directly following the SANDRA Sunday Night Net. The swap net is hosted on the Otay KN6KM repeater at 146.91 (minus) with a pl of 100. This is not a SANDRA repeater.

Repeater Status:

Otay: No changes.

Lyons: On Monday, Feb 24, John, K6RLV, made a trip to Lyons Peak and found the power amplifier putting out only 1 Watt. He replaced the PA with one putting out 100 Watts.

Sharp: No change.

Laguna: No change.

HiPass: Baird, K6GAO reports that the building will be needing a paint job soon.

San Diego: We have reports that the repeater, while still working, it is prone to ker-chunk itself. Ed, WA6YVX and Vance, W6SS will look into the problem.

Callsign	Location	Input	Output	Callsign	Location	Input	Output
WB6WLV	Mt. Otay	146.040	146.640	WB6WLV	Mt.Laguna	444.500	449.500
WB6WLV	Mt. Otay	222.460	224.060	K6GAO	Hi-Pass	144.680	145.280
WB6WLV	Mt. Otay	444.200	449.200	W6SS	Lyon's Peak	146.865	146.265
WB6WLV	Mt. Otay	1270.300	1282.300	WA6AIL	Sharp Hospital	147.285	147.885
WB6WLV	Mt. Laguna	147.750	147.150	WB6WLV	San Diego	442.320	447.320
WB6WLV	Mt. Laguna	222.600	224.200				

All SANDRA repeaters use PL 107.2

SANDRA NETS

Sunday 8:00 P.M. Mt. Otay Repeater
 Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Mt. Laguna Repeater

GUIDELINES SUMMARY

SANDRA, Inc. operates their repeaters for service in the San Diego area. The policy of the organization is that the repeaters are available for all licensed amateur radio operators to use so long as applicable rules and regulation are observed, whether members of SANDRA or not.

SQUELCH TALES

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The SANDRA membership meets the first Thursday in the Months of March, June, September and December. Meetings start at 7:00 P.M. and are located at the San Diego County Education Center, 6401 Linda Vista Road, San Diego. Board meetings take place on the first Thursday of January, February, April, May, July, October and November. All SANDRA members are encouraged to attend.

SANDRA, Inc.
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