

# THE GRID LEAK

The Official Newsletter of the Tulare County Amateur Radio Club May 2004 Issue

## TULARE COUNTY WA6BAI AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

P.O. Box 723

Visalia, CA 93279

TULARE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

146.880 (-) TCARC REPEATER

Blue Ridge Mountain

36.31.22N 119.12.80W

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: Karen Stevens KF6PCV  
Treasurer: Joseph Simons WB6MUD  
Past President: Ray Quinn KF6KMY  
Repeater Coordinator: Mike Irving N6BYH  
Activities Director: Tom Thompson KD6DXX

### Attendance of April 2004 Meeting:

WA6BEF Dave McElroy, Visalia,  
KF6PCV Karen Stevens, Visalia,  
KB6DAV John Stevens, Visalia,  
WB6MUD Joe Simons, Visalia,  
W6SLT Steve Lee-Thomas, Ivanhoe,  
KD5NED Jim Brunk, Orosi,  
KF6KMY Ray Quinn, Tulare,  
W6MTR Alan Vicenti, Visalia,

KC6LUB Hal Clover, Porterville,  
KG6AIR Bill Balsley, Visalia,  
KG6PBE Robert Reed, Tulare,  
N6YMM Dave Millhouse, Visalia,  
KA6HGK Bill Shearer, Sr., Visalia,  
WA6SAA Charles Ward, Three Rivers,  
N6QBK Chuck Wilcox, Visalia

### Next Meeting:

Will be May 27, 2004 at the Supervisors  
Chambers, 2800 W. Burrel in Visalia, CA  
at 7:30 P.M.

### All are welcome to attend.

Please join us every Tuesday evening at  
7:30 P.M. on 146.880 MHz for our weekly  
net. All amateurs are welcome to check in.

### Words From Our President

First let me thank Mike (N6BYH) and Doug (KM6OR) for the work they did on the repeater. Wow what an improvement. Thanks guys.

I would like to remind all members that we will be voting on a by-law change at this months' meeting. The change will add a Repeater Committee as a standing committee.

We should have the initial plans for Field Day ready to discuss at the meeting. We have a repeater to put together. Lots going on.

See you all on the 27th at 19:30

Steve W6SLT

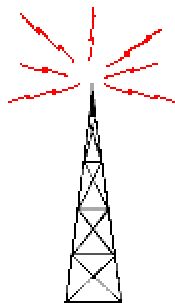
### Last Meeting Minutes:

Meeting called to order at 1941 hours on April 22, 2004 by President Steve Lee-Thomas, W6SLT.

Introductions, Attendance was taken.

### Old Business:

1. A suggestion was made to add a standing repeater committee to the by-laws, a Vote will be conducted at the May Meeting.
2. There was discussion as to the cost of the channel elements (crystals). Cost would be \$299.70.
3. The purchase of a controller to be tabled until Club decides what type.
4. WD6CNV Roger Corum & W6MTR Alan Vicenti donated items items to be sold for the club. Thank you both.



### New Business:

1. Installation of Motorola MSR 2000 at Blue Ridge on April 18, 2004.
2. Power Point Presentation by N6YMM Dave for N6BYH Mike -What is a Repeater and What kind of Controller the club needs.
3. WA6BEF moved that the club Purchase the RLC-4 Controller, Vote was unanimous in the affirmative.
4. Be ready to Vote for "Repeater Committee" as a standing committee to be added to the Club By-laws, of which a copy of the amendment was given to all members who attended the last meeting and a copy was sent to all club members on April 30, 2004.

### Treasurer Report:

\$1332.11 after \$300.00 reimbursement for Repeater crystals. Announcement of a new Member KG6UOL John Hackley. Welcome KG6UOL John.



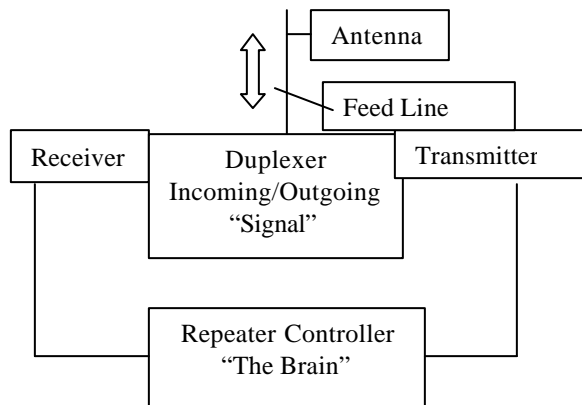
### Blue Ridge April 18, 2004

Left to right: Doug, KM6OR (in cowboy hat); Ray, KF6KMY; Mike, N6BYH, Steve, W6SLT, Dave, WA6BEF; Dave, N6YMM; and Chuck, WA6SAA.

### Repeater Committee Report:

Discussed the offer of three repeaters sites, they know where one repeater will go and the other two are still in the works, which will be discussed in more detail when the details are more concrete.

Presented a Power Point Presentation on the installation of the Motorola MSR 2000 Repeater that was installed on April 18, 2004 and What is a Repeater – see diagram



Discussion on what kind of Controller the club needs and what options are needed with the controller for later upgrades.  
Discussion on types of back-up power sources – Options are battery and solar.

## REMEMBER



Graphic From:  
[http://www.clipartgallery.com/holidays/memorial\\_day/memorial\\_day.html](http://www.clipartgallery.com/holidays/memorial_day/memorial_day.html)

### All Ham News:

#### Emergency Coordinators for Tulare County:

RACES is Jim Reeves KC6YRU - [kc6yru@tcarc.net](mailto:kc6yru@tcarc.net)

ARES is Hal Clover KC6LUB - [hal9000@sosinet.net](mailto:hal9000@sosinet.net)

#### ARES Events by Hal KC5LUB:

### ARES Newsletter

Well, springtime has sprung. Wow, it seems like just yesterday it was wintertime. Now, with the onset of higher temperatures, we know we're getting close to summer. Lots to report this month from ARES. I would like to thank all that have help on the events of the past month.

#### Baker to Vegas TCSO team # 198 – April 23-25, 2004

Jim KC6YRU, Ray KF6KMY, Byron WA6YLB, Dave KA6MEC, Andy N6IJF, Nona KF6MKJ and Hal KC5LUB.

#### WalkAmerica March of Dimes – Visalia – April 24, 2004

Steve W6SLT, Tom KD6DXX, Alan W6MTR, Bill KG6AIR, Marge Balsley, Bill KA6HGA, Leonard KG6PBE and Dave WA6BEF.

#### CDF Spring Exercise – Three Rivers – May 4-5, 2004 -*CANCELED*

Bill KA6HGA, and Hal KC5LUB.

In other non-radio events this past month, on Thursday April 29<sup>th</sup> there was a tabletop exercise with the county [see Table Top] in which amateur radio was asked to participate.

Friday April 30<sup>th</sup> the Fresno Area Radio Club hosted a 4-hour Emergency Communications seminar in conjunction with their ham fest and San Joaquin Valley Section Conference [see Conference]. Tuesday and Wednesday May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> CDF planned to host their annual spring wildland fire exercise. This was canceled due to the number of resources that have been assigned out of county. Fire season is here folks!

ARES is alive and functioning in Tulare County. To maintain our presence, your participation is needed. Please set aside 30 minutes after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday night net of each month for a quick ARES net check-in on 146.88 MHz. After checking in on 2 meters, we may add additional frequencies. We will not be connected on any links out of county, ie IRLP. To begin with, information on meetings and drills for the next month will be mentioned over the air at that time. Several events are beginning to be planned for the next couple of months so be sure to listen in on the net after the SSJFMRN. Also there will be an ARES meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month at 1830 hours in the Board Conference Room (where the club meets).

73

Hal Clover, KC5LUB  
Emergency Coordinator  
Tulare County ARES

## **BAKER to VEGAS**

*Hal KC5LUB*

The annual Baker to Las Vegas Challenge Cup Relay took place on Saturday and Sunday April 24-25, 2004. Six hams from Tulare County participated in the event for amateur radio. Let's begin with a history of how the group evolved into involvement with this event.

Shortly after the conclusion (a day or two) of the '03 race, Sgt. Steve Kennedy approached Nona KF6MKJ and Hal KC5LUB while they were volunteering with the Sheriff's Department at the Porterville Substation. Sgt Kennedy mentioned that he had seen hams at the event communicating between the stations. It was made known that the department's team came in last place that year. They really didn't want to do that again. The team had relied on departmental radios and cell phones for communications. The radios only covered 2-5 miles and cell phone coverage in the area was

less than acceptable. What solutions could amateur radio offer?

Hal was quick to jump at the opportunity and began to research the event along with Ray KF6KMY. What the two concluded was that APRS trackers were used to track the runners in a follow and catcher vehicle. That would free up the human resources to provide receiver coverage and possibly radio coverage out on the course. This proved to be a much better solution than putting a radio operator in an already cramped vehicle for up to 12 hours.

The race is coordinated by the Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club [LAPRAC] and from what we could tell entrance is by invitation. Law enforcement groups from around the world participate in the 24-hour relay event. In fact, based on the number of teams entered into the race it was estimated that over 2,000 runners would be on the racecourse. One support group estimated that the number of runners and support personnel for the event

averages 6,000 each year. That's quite a lot of people to keep track of.

Orange County RACES proved to be an invaluable resource. In October 2003, Hal contacted the OCRACES group to find out what was needed to grab a slot in the tracking system that is set up with APRS so that there would be a minimum of packet collisions. Ralph W6CSP, from OCRACES, offered a time slot for the tracker.

Coordination with the SO team captain (Lt. Jim Hinesly) took place to see that everything was covered. The department agreed to continue to use the department radios. We found out that there are quite specific instructions for passing vehicles on the racecourse and the number of support vehicles that each team could operate on the course. LAPRAC designated a FRS channel for inter departmental vehicle-to-vehicle communication while the race was taking place. Since the SO already had that communication in hand, that was not an issue.

It was agreed that the hams would set up a communications post in one of the rooms at the hotel in Primm NV where most of the team was staying and the point from which each team was staging for departure to the race itself. That way the team leaders could call to the room and messages could be relayed as to the position of the department's runner.

Throughout the last two months of planning, Byron WA6YLB was an invaluable resource of information. It came about that the department had used trackers before on the event, however, they did not have a central point at the event to contact for information. Byron organized the installation of the tracking devices along with the department radios in the vehicles that were going to the race. He provided invaluable technical expertise both in the use of the trackers and APRS in general.

Friday April 23, 2004 found three of the hams assigned to track the runners en-route to Nevada from Tulare County. While the details of the road trip are not necessary, suffice it to

say that fuel was not purchased in Baker (\$2.75/gal) nor were there many stops to look at the scenery. The basics of the receiving station were set up Friday night, and by 0300 we were able to find one of the trackers up and running around.

After a quick nights sleep, contact was made with the first team going out to the racecourse at 0900. Both trackers were on the air and working. Around the hotel area, communications was conducted on 146.43 MHz simplex. This proved handy when we were trying to get the trackers up and on the air after sitting in the parking lot overnight. It also allowed for trips outside the room during the event in case anyone needed a break from watching the computer screen. Jim KC6YRU, Ray KF6KMY and Hal KC5LUB each took turns watching the progress of the runners and answering phone calls relaying information into the field. Several of the members of the department's team stopped by to view the setup in the hotel room.

Dave KA6MEC, was one of the runners for the department. Upon his departure to the racecourse, information that had been heard over the voice net setup by OCRACES was relayed to the team drivers regarding road conditions on the course. Dave's group returned sometime in the middle of the night from the racecourse. The runners were tracked at an average of 4-5 miles per hour on the up hill portion of the race. The backside of the race lended for speeds of 7-8 miles per hour.

The station was dismantled after the tracker was stopped for over half an hour at the finish line. From what could be surmised from the tracker, the department's team finished the race in about 22.5-23 hours. Based upon the time from the previous year, the team anticipated finishing in about 24 hours. This was far better than the previous year's time. Also, when the tracker came to rest in the finish line parking lot, there were several trackers still on the course. At about 1200 hours on Sunday, Hal declared the event completed and the process

of returning to Tulare County was begun. The last volunteer from the communications room returned in the county about 2230 hours on Sunday April 25, 2004. Now it's time to start planning next year's event.

"The radio operators that were at the (Baker to Vegas) run were a real asset," Lt. Jim Hinesly said. "We'll look forward to working with you again next year."

## **March of Dimes WalkAmerica**

*Dave WA6BEF*

Eight volunteer radio operators helped out with the March of Dimes WalkAmerica event on Saturday morning April 24, 2004. The event was coordinated from the College of the Sequoias. Dave WA6BEF organized the ARES response. The club's repeater on Blue Ridge was utilized with little difficulty from the mobile rigs. Handheld's had a little difficulty getting into the machine as the input RF level is set a little higher than before.

Overall, the event was a real success. Frequency wise, we ended up on '88 exclusively, with the exception of some FRS communication between Bill, KG6AIR and his YL Marge. We had her staff the last station alone for a time. She and Bill maintained communication on the FRS radio and he relayed one request for the van that came from her station while she was there solo.

The operators included: Steve W6SLT, Tom KD6DXX, Alan W6MTR, Bill KG6AIR, Marge Balsley, Bill KA6HGA, Leonard KG6PBE and Dave WA6BEF. A big thanks to all that made the event a success!

Our traffic consisted of providing the odd report of walkers and sending the van for those unable to finish the walk. The van was also sent after one participant who strayed from the route. One other communication concerned a missing box. It was later determined that the missing box was not to be found as it had been left in Merced.

Otherwise an uneventful outing. Thanks again to all who participated. I do believe they'll want us back again next year.

## **Conference**

*Dave WA6BEF*

*Hal KC5LUB*

A conference, sponsored by the ARRL and Fresno Amateur Radio Club, took place on Friday April 30<sup>th</sup>. Dave, WA6BEF and Hal, KC5LUB participated in the emergency communications seminar presented by Dan K3UFG. Dan is the EM COM specialist with the ARRL. Dan was very informative on the history of the Emergency Communications Courses offered by the ARRL. He reminded the group that part of our purpose is to provide emergency communications to agencies requesting it in times of need.

Dan was clearly interested in promoting the three AREC courses, as this was the point of his presentation. As part of the presentation, he indicated that ARRL is supportive of all EMCOM efforts, even those not necessarily dependent on Amateur radio. Dan pointed out that there are memoranda of understanding with most major communications groups such as REACT and AACOP and encouraged us to get in contact with these local groups. Much of the presentation was based on the east coast, where weather related events have been more the norm. Much of the session was devoted to questions and answers on what would be done locally with such weather related emergencies or the ARECC courses themselves. The interaction with other hams from throughout the section was most valuable.

Preparedness and flexibility was mentioned. Something of interest was also mentioned on the current issue of Broad Band over Power Lines (BPL). Back in about November of 2003, the Federal Emergency Management Agency or FEMA issued a statement that they did not support the BPL issue. One of the reasons given in that statement was that FEMA feared that BPL would interfere with their nationwide

emergency communications network. About 3 months after FEMA's statement, the White House issued a statement from the President that BPL was the wave of the future. The President wanted to see that BPL was implemented. Shortly after the President's statement supporting BPL, FEMA retracted their original position against BPL. While to some that may seem like politics, it also was very quietly mentioned that the Department of Homeland Security, which is operated under the FEMA umbrella supported the measure. The justification was that BPL allowed for closer monitoring of cells that might be acting within the borders of our nation.

With such a great driving force as Presidential Approval, it seemed to most of us in the group that what we should be doing instead of opposing BPL is to look into how to work with it. Just some food for thought. The league has spent a tremendous amount of resources both financial and human to fight BPL. It may be time to look at shifting those resources to co-existing with the service.

And as always the views expressed during the seminar were those of the participants, not ARRL or the CDLC or other groups affiliated with the courses and emergency communications training

## Table Top

*Hal KC5LUB*

Thursday April 29, 2004 was another significant day for amateur radio in Tulare County. The county Office of Emergency Services invited hams to participate in a tabletop exercise dealing with bio terrorism (BT). A tabletop exercise is usually the first round of exercises when drilling for different events. The participants generally are the ones that will then take what is learned from the table top back to their respective organizations, working from there to develop reaction, no response plans.

In emergency situations, agencies don't react. When you react to a situation, the action is not a coordinated or planned. Thus agencies

respond with an action plan that has been adapted to fit the needs of the current situation. I would say that generally we as hams react when we are called to assist in emergency communications. We "throw" our gear into a vehicle and take off for the staging area. By the time we arrive at our assignment, we may be confused about what is taking place. Focusing on what needs to be done such as equipment set-up, placement and beginning transmitting are the necessary actions that need to be completed.

I sat with two firefighters, Danny Wristen (Battalion Chief) and Dwayne Anthony (Fire Captain) during the "common" times at the exercise. They both seemed interested in what amateur radio was able to offer in terms of mobility and bands. I noticed that Capt. Anthony carried with him a guide that the fire service has put together to address different types of scenarios. It gives an outline of what needs to be done. Variations on the "script" if you will, is what actually happens on an event.

I could go on for days about what was observed and took place. I was assigned to the Public Safety group. When we broke off for discussion of the incident (planning session), the phone did not work to call another group. I took that opportunity to be a runner to get the information. In doing so, I mentioned to each of the four groups as I came in contact with them that the phone system was overloaded (busy). Hence I was chosen to be a runner. That's really what hams provide, runners over the airwaves. The information was gathered, returned and presented to the Public Safety group. Once the phone system was figured out, I was assigned to place the calls.

I got the feeling that the same old tune was being sung by some of the leadership at the exercise. Our communications are the best because we paid so much for them so long ago. I brought my group up to speed regarding the current repeater situation. They asked how many operators we could provide during an incident. I responded that we had about 18

active ARES/RACES members and could staff approximately 5 sites 24 hours a day. I also mentioned that we would probably be able to recruit additional operators over the air once an event actually began.

Ok, so what's the bottom line? Well folks, the word is WHEN the big one hits, not IF the big one hits. We need to be in on planning and participating in the preparedness exercises. Those that are ARES and/or RACES members will have an important part to play.

That part will definitely be in a communications function, however, we need to be ready to operate simple office type machines such as fax machines, copiers and phone

systems. When operating in directed nets we need to maintain a net protocol. Logs need to be kept during drills and the real thing. Do you need to keep a record of what was said, to whom you transmitted the information, or when you transmitted/received the information? Most definitely. That information will be needed by the agency that we are providing communications. It can be part of the litigation or documentation after the event for agency financial compensation.

[Hal Clover, KC5LUBEC Tulare County CA](#)

#### **SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY SECTION** Report for the month of April 2004:

SM Charles McConnell, W6DPD- ASM K6YK, ACC W6DPD, SEC K6IN, OOC N1VM, STM K6RAU, PIC KE6IGJ, TC W6TE. Greetings from the ARRL San Joaquin Valley Section.

Emergency Coordinators are needed in Mono and Calaveras Counties. Contact K6IN (k6in@mercednet.com) or W6DPD (w6dpd@arrl.org) if you can help. AE6QR is the new EC for Fresno County.

Please write your congressional representative and urge support and co-sponsorship of HR 713, the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act and HR 1478, which would apply PRB-1 to CC&Rs. Also contact your Senators and urge support and co-sponsorship of S 537, the Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act.

BPL. All Amateurs are urged to contact President Bush (president@whitehouse.gov) to urge him to change his position on BPL. Also, please contact your senators and representative to urge them to oppose the implementation of BPL. Check the ARRL web page (arrl.org) for more information, sample letters and email addresses.

Clubs should consider contacting schools in their area to see about getting Amateur Radio classes in the schools. The ARRL Amateur Radio curriculum (Big Project) has been aligned to the California Standards so it fits into the California Curriculum. For assistance, contact Mark Spencer, WA8SME (wa8sme@arrl.org)

The SCDXC did a great job with this year's International DX Convention.

Prize winners were W6YDE, W6YEP, and W6TE. K6XJ and W6MWY were on the winning team in the golf tournament.

The M Squared open house/WSWSS meeting was well attended. This is a popular event.

The Fresno Hamfest/SJV Section Convention was a success. Dan Miller, K3UFG, from ARRL HQ gave an ARECC Seminar. K6XJ won the FT 920.

The Bakersfield ARA has a R5 vertical on its trailer.  
 The Fresno ARC has a new trailer.  
 WA6QYR received a Life Time Achievement Award from the San Bernardino Microwave Society. Congrats Bill.  
 W6PTH, WA7RIW, and WA6QYR from the Sierra ARC provided an Amateur Radio experience for Kern County Boy Scouts at the Camporall.  
 CART School in Fresno held a 1 day Technician Class and got 19 new Technicians.  
 Kurt, HB9MX, attended the Fresno Monday Breakfast and joined the Fresno QCWA Chapter.  
 WK6S is a Silent Key.  
 W6RU reports the end of an era. The 125 foot tall <sup>3</sup>Big Bertha<sup>2</sup> rotating tower installed in 1987 is now cut up in 4 sections. The tower and some antennas are heading to the east coast.  
 QCWA Fresno Chapter 213 now has the call sign, WQ6CWA.  
 Congrats to the following who completed ARECC Level 1: KO6UW, W6EZ, KF6FBX, and K6FGE.  
 Traffic for April was zero. PSHR K6RAU 54.

Happy Birthday To:			Happy Anniversary To:		
W6ARE	Ed Cowley	May	WD6FUF & WD6CNV	Sarah & Roger Corum	May
WD6CNV	Roger Corum	May	KE6UUK	Frank Devin	May
KG6QNW	Arlene Gregory	May	KA6HGA	William Shearer, Sr.	May
N6QBK	Charles Wilcox	May	K6QOG	Bill & Carol Stenger	June
KG6AIR	Bill Balsley	June			
KJ6P	Dave Gregory	June			
KF6PCV	Karen Stevens	June			
KD6DXX	Tom Thompson	June			

**Equipment; Sale/Trade/Seeking:** Nothing to report in this newsletter

**Note from the Editor:**

If there is anything that anyone would like to add to the newsletter you may contact me by e-mail at [kf6pcv@tcarc.net](mailto:kf6pcv@tcarc.net). The deadline to have anything included in the newsletter will be the 10th of each month; submissions after the 10th will go in the next newsletter issue unless you notify me to not include it or it is date sensitive.

Thank you KF6PCV  
**de Karen**

# TULARE COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

---

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
Self Family Member  
CALLSIGN \_\_\_\_\_ CALLSIGN \_\_\_\_\_  
Self Family Member  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

LICENSE CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ LICENSE CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ RES PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ BUS PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
Self Family Member

EQUIPMENT \_\_\_\_\_

BANDS \_\_\_\_\_

INTERESTS - Please Check

EMERGENCY SERVICE \_\_\_ RAG CHEWING \_\_\_ BUILDING \_\_\_  
TRAFFIC HANDLING \_\_\_ Dxing \_\_\_ ANTENNAS \_\_\_  
CINTESTS \_\_\_ QRP \_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_

DESCRIBE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Dues: (\$20.00 - Individual - \$25.00 - Family)**

Mail To:  
Tulare County Amateur Radio Club  
P.O. Box 723  
Visalia, CA 93279