

Simi Settlers' Amateur Radio Club

Short Circuit

March 2004

Are We Missing The Boat?

By Dale Manquen, President

We have not been very successful in building up our membership for the last few years. I think that we are missing the boat when it comes to encouraging and enabling outsiders to enter our hobby.

At one time we offered classes that helped newcomers pass the exam and obtain a license. We were able to offer a follow-up for guests who came to our Field Day or JOTA or saw our float in the parade.

Through the classes we established an ongoing relationship with the students, and a majority of the students joined the Club.

We haven't had a Simi Settlers class in quite a few years. The last one I remember was taught by Dave Timoshik WA6AYI, Greg Owens WA6HKM, and me. We had an assortment of people, and the majority passed the exam and got licenses.

We need to offer any and all prospects a similar opportunity. If we can't run our own class, maybe we can provide guidance on books, computer programs and/or audiovisual materials from ARRL and others to help get the newcomer started. And if we can't do any of these, then maybe we should recommend other organizations such as neighboring clubs or Gordon West who can help.

What do you think? Are you willing to help with a class? Please let me know your feeling on this topic,

March Speaker

Richard Rudman

The Emergency Alert System: Where Are We Today?

Richard Rudman, **W6TIA**, was appointed to the National Industry Advisory Council (NIAC) for the Emergency Broadcast System in 1992 during the Bush administration. He served as Chair of the FCC Emergency Alert System (EAS) National Advisory Group from 2000 to 2002.

He still serves as the Vice Chair of the EAS Committee for the State of California, as an advisor to the Los Angeles County EAS Local Emergency Communications Committee, and as an EAS subject expert for the Partnership For Public Warning (PPW) and the FCC Media And Security Advisory Council (MSRC).

He has authored numerous presentations and technical papers on EAS, AMBER, emergency public information, and emergency preparedness for communications facilities for the broadcast and emergency management communities. He is also the author of book chapters on disaster preparedness for communications facilities that have been published in the National Association of Broadcasters Engineering Handbook and in electronics text books published by CRC Press.

Richard now operates his own broadcast engineering and remote broadcast services, and emergency public information consulting business, **REMOTE POSSIBILITIES**. Prior to June, 2002 Rudman was the Director of Engineering for KFWB, a position he held for 27 years. He has been a licensed Amateur since 1956 [WN1LFA].

Simi Settlers Amateur Radio Club
General Membership Meeting, February 12, 2004
Secretary, John Percival, WI6O

- Call to Order President Dale Manquen, KO6VO, called the meeting to order at 7:36pm. Bill Starkgraf, KD6UQB, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Five Board Members were present and the total attendance was 15, including one guest.
- Introductions: After Dale welcomed members to the meeting, a round of introductions was held with each member giving a brief word on their recent activities in Ham Radio or other interests.
- Program: Vice President, Rick Galbraith, W6DQE, introduced club member, Orv Beach, W6BI, who is the Simi Valley Repeater Association leader and trustee for the W6SVS repeater call sign. Orv gave a presentation on the history and present day operation of the repeaters and the Simi Valley Repeater Association. Three people started building the repeater about 20 years ago. Orv said he got involved in about 1987, and the repeater was set up in the enclosure at its present location in 1988. Orv then gave what he called a "chalk-talk" to describe the components and operation of the repeaters. He drew a block diagram of the 2Meter (147.930 MHz output) and 220 (224.060 MHz output) repeaters that are both controlled by a single controller. With the combination of battery backup as protection from AC power loss and the reliability The Repeater Association originally charged dues to help build and maintain the repeater of the equipment, the repeater has had only about 4 hours of "downtime" over 16 years. and it was separate from the Simi Settlers Club. Orv said that dues are not required at this time. Orv briefly described the Sulfur Mountain Repeater Association and the changes they will be making to its interlinked system of four repeaters.
- Break: A fifteen-minute refreshment break was taken at 8:52 pm following the end of our program. .
- Announcements: Dale announced that member Richard Johnson, N6NJD has volunteered to serve as our Membership Chairman. Richard has been calling non-renewed members or those who have been inactive with the Club for some time. Richard asked about getting an up to date copy of the membership roster. Treasurer, Larry Pyle, AD6ST, will send the latest list of the membership to Orv who will make it available in PDF format. Bill Starkgraf, KD6UQB, reported for RACES and reminded members that all of the old "yellow" membership cards will expire as of February 29th. Rick Galbraith said he did not yet have a program to announce for the March meeting. Dale mentioned that he has taken a Weather Spotter course at Santa Clarita. Weather spotters are an auxiliary service of the National Weather Service. Rick said he would bring to our next meeting a package of information on signing up for Weather Spotting. If we get ten or more signups, we can have a course set up for our people.
- Member Drawing: The name drawn in the Membership Drawing was William Hebard, N6MBV, who was not present to win the \$15 prize. The prize fund will therefore increase to \$20 for the March meeting.
- Club Raffle: The monthly prize raffle drawing was held with the lucky winners selecting their prizes.
- Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 pm.

ARRL Responds to Wall Street Journal Article on BPL

(Reprint from ARRL's Web Site)

NEWINGTON, CT, Mar 3, 2004--The ARRL has responded to a March 2 Wall Street Journal article, "The Web's New Outlet," that presented a one-sided, rosy picture of Broadband over Power Line while avoiding any mention of its interference potential. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, has faxed a letter to the editor of the New York-based business and financial publication to point out some of BPL's shortcomings, which were largely missing from the WSJ report.

"Any listing of the pros and cons of using power lines to deliver broadband services must mention its major disadvantage: it pollutes the radio spectrum, interfering with nearby radio receivers," Sumner said. "The only known exception is a microwave system being developed by Corridor Systems of Santa Rosa, California."



Sumner pointed out that BPL involves sending wideband RF "over unshielded wires that were not designed for the purpose." Owing to the laws of physics, Sumner continued, these power lines function much like antennas, and BPL signals passing through wires in the vicinity can interfere with radio reception.

"The frequencies in question are used by public safety agencies, the military, aeronautical and maritime services, broadcasters, radio astronomers, radio amateurs, and others," Sumner noted. He said BPL system designers have had only limited success in resolving the interference issue by notching certain frequencies.

"Yet BPL implementation cannot go forward without solving it, because for very good and obvious reasons it is a violation of

FCC regulations for a BPL system to cause radio interference," he went on. "If BPL causes interference--and it does--the BPL system must be shut down." Sumner included references to the ARRL's BPL Web page, which documents HF interference the League monitored at four BPL field test sites last fall.

"In his letter, Sumner suggested that there are better choices than BPL, even from the standpoint of business and economics."

The WSJ article, in the paper's "Marketplace" section, focuses on the announcement this week of what's said to be the largest rollout to date of BPL by Cincinnati-based utility Cinergy Corp and its BPL partner Current Communications. Cinergy and Current Communications hope to be offering the service to between 60,000 and 1.5 million Cincinnati-area customers by year's end and eventually to some 24 million potential customers elsewhere who are served by smaller utilities.

While the article concedes that BPL "is unproven in wide use," it also cites FCC Office of Engineering and Technology Chief Ed Thomas, who called the technology "ready for prime time." Thomas stopped short of saying that the same was true for the BPL industry, however. It also quotes Cinergy Executive Vice President Bill Grealis, who called BPL "the last-mile solution" and said the service--at between \$30 and \$40 a month--would be "cheaper and faster than DSL or cable."

In his letter, Sumner suggested that there are better choices than BPL, even from the standpoint of business and economics. "Potential investors in broadband delivery alternatives to DSL and cable would be far better off considering the various methods of delivering fiber-to-the-home in densely populated areas," he concluded. "For rural areas, adaptations of wireless LAN technology are generally recognized as offering far more promise than BPL."

Simi Settlers' Officers

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WEBMASTER WANTED!

Here's your chance for Glory and Fame! Well, at least the good feeling you will get from helping out your ham radio club. The Simi Settlers ARC is looking for a webmaster for their web page. Good knowledge of web tools is needed. Familiarity with Linux is helpful but not required. As a bonus, you can have a free email address and ftp site of your very own! Applicants apply at W6BI@arrl.net.

Future Speakers:

April 8th, 2004 Skip Bolnick, KJ6Y *"Installing Towers And Antennas"*
May 13th, 2004 Art Goddard, W6XD *"The Search For Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI)... Another First For Amateur Radio"*



Simi Settlers' Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 2125
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Next General Meeting

Thursday March 13, 2004

Talk-in Frequency: 147.93

PL 127.3

Seventh Day Adventist Church

1636 Sinaloa, Simi Valley