

**W6OTX****W6ARA**PAARA NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 63, NUMBER 6, June 2013**K6OTA****K6YQT**

# PAARAgraphs



The Official Newsletter of the

**Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.**Celebrating 76 years as an *active* amateur radio club—Since 1937<http://www.paara.org/>

## Contesting

### Rick Tavan N6XI

Rick Tavan was first licensed in 1961 as KN3QDD in Maryland, held a few other calls and finally settled in as N6XI in California. He is retired from TIBCO Software Inc. and now splits his time between Saratoga and Truckee. His first love in radio was CW traffic handling in the 60's, followed quickly by contesting. He joined PVRC and operated a lot of CD Parties and CW Sweepstakes. As an undergraduate, he was an officer of the MIT Radio Society and after graduation became trustee of the club station W1MX. Moving to CA in 1976, he joined the Northern CA Contest Club where he served a stint as president and other positions. The highlight of his contesting career was participation in the 2010 World Radiosport Team Championship in Moscow as teammate to K6XX. They placed in the middle of the pack but it was a pretty strong pack of world-class contesters. His highest single-operator placing was seventh worldwide (first Asia) in a long-ago running of the CQ Worldwide DX Contest (CW) as N6XI/4X. He has been on many first, second and third place teams in multi-operator categories of CQ Worldwide, ARRL DX and CQ WPX contests.

Rick's other radio interests include QRP construction and operating. He has built a variety of kit radios and currently uses the Elecraft K-3, and KX-3. He is a member of FOC and a life member of ARRL and CWops.

**June 7, 2013****7:00 pm****Cubberley Community Center****Room H-6****4000 Middlefield Road****Palo Alto, CA 94303**

## President's Corner

June 2013

CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day - It's that time of the year again. Get ready to meet us at Bedwell Bayfront Park for another fantastic PAARA FD effort. I'm hoping that the propagation gods will cooperate. Meanwhile, we had a great Flea Market, and the Maker Faire was a very fun experience.



The big June event is the 2013 ARRL Field Day exercise. For some clubs it's a BBQ disguised as a contest, or an emergency preparedness exercise disguised as a BBQ, but for PAARA it's most definitely a full-on contest, but we also have a great time doing the meet-and-greet with all of our friends and neighbors. If you want to see one of the most impressively arrayed Field Day antenna farms you will see, please plan to join us (well, even if not, please see us there anyway!) at Bedwell Bayfront Park in Menlo Park, just off Marsh Road, right by the Facebook campus. We will be there from Friday afternoon, June 21st, until Sunday afternoon on the 23rd, cranking up the antennas and then cranking out the Qs as we try to best our score from last year. Doug, KG6LWE, will be getting everything set up, and I'm sure can always use some extra help. If you want to lend a hand, please contact him using the contact information available in PAARAgraphs. Station Captains are also taking

*(Continued on page 3)*

## **My First Radio**

### **Gary Barnes**

I have lived in Redwood City all of my life. When I was young, my parents had two radios. One radio was in the kitchen and the other was in the dining room. We only used the kitchen radio. We did not have a television set. I found an article in the school's library about a Foxhole radio. This type of radio was built by World War II GIs. This radio used Gillette Blue Blade razor and pencil lead for the detector. So I decided to build the radio, however I did not know anything about electronics. I also would require a pair of 2000-ohm earphones or Cans.

The Foxhole radio had a coil wound on a toilet paper cardboard tube. Number 22 gauge double cotton covered wire was wound on the cardboard tube. I did not understand why double cotton covered wire was required. I did not have any money, so I could not go to the store and buy any of the required parts. They were building some new houses near where I lived. These houses had short pieces of telephone plastic cover copper wire. Some people suggested that I splice the wires together, but I did not know if that would work, and I did not think the coil would look very good with a lot of splices. I was sure the wires had to be soldered, but I did not have any soldering equipment. Finally the neighbor that lived on the corner told me I could use enamel coated wire and gave me enough wire to wind the coil and make a short antenna.

I wound the coil on the cardboard tube and mounted the coil assembly on a piece of wood. I scraped the enamel coating from the end of the coil leads. I used 4d finishing nails as connection posts. I got a razor blade from my dad, but his blades were not blue. A neighbor that lived across the street gave me a pair of earphones. I collected empty soft drink bottles. I would get 2 cents for each bottle at the corner grocery store. I got two egg type insulators for my antenna for 5 cents each at an electronics store in San Carlos. I mounted the antenna on the garage roof between two sticks and nailed

them to the side of the roof on the fascia. One end of the antenna was just above a cold water faucet. The antenna was about 25 feet long and it was about 10 feet above ground.

I was not able to get my Foxhole radio to work. Later, my younger brother was given a complete crystal set radio without earphones. Enamel covered coil wire was wound on piece of a wood ½-inch thick by 1¾ -inches wide and about 4 inches long. Part of the coil's enamel coating was removed and a metal strip was used to adjust the coil's inductance which would select a radio station. There was a 220 micro-microfarad mica condenser (220 pFd capacitor) connected across the coil. The detector was a piece of galena mounted in a small metal cup filled with lead. A cat-whisker was used to find the sensitive point on the galena. Only one point could be found and it was hard to keep the cat-whisker on that spot. We used my antenna and a cold water pipe for the ground connection.

One day my uncle came over to see his brother, my dad. My uncle was a Radioman in the Navy during World War II. My uncle asked me what I was doing. I told him about my Foxhole radio with the razor blade and my brother's crystal radio with the galena and cat-whisker detector. He told me I was wasting my time and he would get me a better detector.

My dad took my uncle home and when my dad returned he had a small tan envelope with a 1N34A Germanium diode inside. The next morning I replaced the razor blade in my radio with the 1N34A diode. I connected the antenna and ground wires. Only then did my radio work. I would get up early every day in the morning and go outside to listen to my radio. I could get only one station, KNBC in Belmont. Later the radio station's call sign was changed to KNBR. The radio station's original call sign was KPO.

Between the house I lived in and the corner house was an empty field. The elderly couple that lived in the corner house had a boarder. The boarder's room had separate entrance and

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a porch. The boarder was an old man that would sit on the porch most of the time. When I told the boarder about my crystal set, he went into his room and returned with a loud speaker for my radio. This loud speaker was designed to work with crystal sets. When I connected this loud speaker to my radio in place of the ear-phones, I could hear the radio many feet away.

This loud speaker had a black painted cast iron stand with two paper cones attached around the outside with the cones facing out. There was not any name plate on the loud speaker so I do not know anything about it. I have never seen another similar loud speaker since. Metro Electric Speaker appears to be a close example to the loud speaker I had.

I found out years later that Gillette changed their process in making blue blades before the end of World War II. The new blue blades would not work as a detector, and of course the non-blue blade razor my father used would also not work.

I would go to the library to read about electronics, and I would buy magazines about electronics. I took electronic classes in high school. I worked at a radio station in San Francisco on Saturdays while I was going to high school. I would service and repair the radio station studio equipment. I went to electronics school while I was in the Navy after high school. After the Navy, I got a job working at an electronics company, in San Carlos, as an electronics technician. At night I went to college to study electronics.

*(President's Corner - Continued from page 1)*

operator scheduling requests, so please contact Rebar, N6DB, and Marty, W6NEV, for Phone stations, and Rick, N6DQ, and myself for the CW stations. We are also actively seeking operators and coaches for the Get On The Air, or GOTA, Station. If you know anyone who would be available for this, please have them contact Rob, KI6INR. We are really excited to be heading into another great Field Day for 2013, and we hope to

have another great result to report to you and to proudly display on a tee shirt near you.

Propagation leading up to Field Day has been interesting, to say the least, and I hope that we will see a nice balance of activity from the sun, without too much hyperactivity like we've seen lately. During the middle of May there were several flares and coronal mass ejections that led to radio blackouts. Some of the flares were well into the X-class magnitude, and for a while, we were getting them daily. Between the X-ray blackouts and the particle flux resulting from the CMEs, it was hard to take advantage of the very high sunspot numbers, which exceeded 200 at times. Those high sunspot numbers were some of the highest seen in this solar cycle. Now, though, the sunspot number is 75, and the solar flux index is just 105. That is only fair-to-poor. At this point it's hard to say what FD weekend will bring. We'll just have to see what happens. They say that FD brings its own propagation, though. That's true in my experience.

PAARA had a great time sponsoring the ASVARO Electronics Flea Market at De Anza College in early May. We even managed to turn a profit! Many of us were there at oh-dark-thirty, and all of you deserve a big thanks for your efforts. Next month I'll acknowledge you individually, but let me at least say, thank you very much! I personally had a great time working, chatting with everyone, and showing off my new Geiger counter. I have some wonderful pictures from the event that we can share on the website. Thank you all for supporting the Flea Market, and particularly for supporting the May Flea Market.

This month I also got a chance to hop over to the Maker Faire, despite not being a part of it this year. I got to meet with many people whom I've met in the past, and to see what Mikey, NE6RD was up to with Nixie tubes. I also got a live demo of reversible laminar Taylor-Couette flow. That's an 'only at the Maker Faire' experience. I topped it off by having dinner with the guy who made my Geiger counter; the president of International Medcom. What fun!

Well, that's all from me for this month. I'm really looking forward to seeing all of you at Field Day. CU AT BAYFRONT PARK DE K6WX

*PAARAgaphs—June 2013*  
*Celebrating 76 years as an active ham radio club—Since 1937*





**May 2013 Board Meeting Minutes**

The Board Meeting was held at the Palo Alto Red Cross building, commencing at 7:30 PM on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2013. Attending were Kristen McIntyre K6WX (Pres), Marty Wayne W6NEV (VP), Rick Melrose K6RDM (Sec, Database), Rob Riley KI6INR (Dir), Byron Beck N6UOB (Dir), Larry Rebarchik N6DB (Dir), Darryl Presley KI6LDM (Dir), Doug Teter KG6LWE (Field Day Coordinator), and Gerry Tucker N6NV (Property Manager) A quorum was present.

President’s Report: Kristen K6WX commented that our Silicon Valley is often perceived as an epicenter of ham-craft technology, methods and culture, a fact we should keep in mind. Accordingly, she is working with other area hams to ensure a diversity of topics at this year’s Pacificon coming in October. Kristen told us that our hosting of the ASVARO ham flea market on May 11<sup>th</sup> went well. At 119 spaces, we’ve seen both better and poorer numbers but our margin will be helpful for the club’s finances. She also remarked that we have some interesting submissions of articles for future PAARAgaphs and are still looking for new submissions.

Secretary’s Report: Rick K6RDM reported that there were 7 new members and 2 renewals at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Director Byron N6UOB reported that our planned visit to the California Historical Radio Society is now scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in July, the 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be a \$5 entrance donation and a lunch will be available for \$7. Transportation will be by individually arranged car or carpool.

Club VP, Marty Wayne W6NEV, reported that the club T-Shirts continued to sell well at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The featured speaker at our June 7<sup>th</sup> meet-

ing will be by John Miller K6MM irreverently titled, “Contesting, why bother?”

Treasurer’s Report: Ron W6AZ was unable to attend due to prior commitments. We are deferring the full “state of the club” financial report until he returns from his travelling.

Field Day will be the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. Doug Teter KG6LWE reported that he is in communication with the site administration and has invited the Menlo Park mayor to visit us during the event. Arrangements were discussed for practice with the erection of new antenna tower equipment at a new antenna work party to be scheduled and announced via email.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

There were 7 new members at the May meeting:

Paul Grigorieff	N1HEL	Half Moon Bay
Alex Chen	KK6CKO	Palo Alto
Frank Fox	AF0XX	Hayward
Charles Garner	N6AF	Redwood City
Karen Misenhimer	No call	Hayward
Jeff Norris	KA6UIX	Redwood City
Amanda Wigylus	KK6CWV	Sunnyvale

**Badges Ready for Pick-up:**

K6FTF	Mark	San Jose
KJ6GBE	Sreendish	Redwood City
KG6GYG	Art	San Jose
N6JCY	Joani	San Jose
KI6JLS	Joanne	Palo Alto
KG6QKN	Francis	Palo Alto
KG6QKO	Kali	Palo Alto
KJ6SGT	Xiande	Campbell
KF6SRD	Chuck	Palo Alto
K6TSR	George	Portola Valley
K6VVK	Vincent	Palo Alto

**May Winners — Left to Right**

N6DB, KG6GLU, AF0XX, N6DQ, K6DOX, KG6HJU (bottom), KG6UEF



**Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.**

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 k6rdm@arrl.net  
 Treasurer .....Ron Chester, W6AZ 408-243 2221  
 ron@taxhelp.com

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 n6db@arrl.net  
 Director ('14) .....Darryl Presley, ki6ldm 650 255-2454  
 ki6ldm@arrl.net

**Appointed Positions**

Membership .....Vic Black, AB6SO 650-366 0636  
 ab6so@smrn.com  
 Database.....Rick Melrose K6RDM 408-341-9070  
 k6rdm@arrl.net  
 Chaplain.....*Position Vacant*  
 Public Affairs .....*Position Vacant*  
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 Station Trustee K6OTA.....Ron Chester, W6AZ  
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 dteter@wcwi.com  
 HistorianPosition .....*Position Vacant*  
 Raffle Coordinator.....Jim Rice, K6AK 650-851-2274  
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 Photographer .....Bill Young, K6VWO  
 jdsinger@sbcglobal.net

**Future PARRA Meeting Dates**

July 5<sup>th</sup>, Aug 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sept 6<sup>th</sup>

**VE Exams**

3rd Saturday each month, 10:30AM, 145.23- PL=100Hz  
 Redwood City Main Library, Community Conference Room  
 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City, CA  
 Contact: <http://amateur-radio.org> or Al, [WB6IMX@att.net](mailto:WB6IMX@att.net)

**Electronics Flea Market**

Sponsorship by A.S.V.A.R.O. — Association of Silicon Valley Amateur Radio Organizations  
 Second Saturday of month, March-October, 6am-2pm  
 Howard M. Krawetz, N6HM 650-856-9761  
 Contact: <http://www.electronicfleamarket.com/>

**PAARA — Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Friday 7:00pm each month at Room H-6, Cubberley Community Center; Net 145.230 - PL 100Hz Mondays at 8:30. See our website at <http://www.paara.org> for more information or contact: Joel Wilhite KD6W, [kd6w@ARRL.NET](mailto:kd6w@ARRL.NET), 650-325-8239

**FARS — Foothills Amateur Radio Society**

Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Friday each month at 7:30pm  
 Contact: <http://www.fars.k6va.org>

**NCDXC — Northern California DX Club**

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 7:30pm each month,  
 Repeater for member info 147.360, Thursday 8:00PM  
 Contact: <http://ncdxc.org> or Mike Gavin W6WZ, (650) 851 8699

**QCWA Chapter 11**

**Northern California Quarter Century Wireless Association**

Meets third Wednesday monthly at Harry's Hofbrau in Redwood City @ 11:30 AM.  
 Guests are welcome. Saturday morning net on 146.850 MHz, PL 114.8

**NorCalQRP — Northern California QRP Club**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday each month  
 Contact: <http://www.norcalqrp.org>

**SPECS**

**Southern Peninsula Emergency Communication System**

Meets each Monday 8:00pm on Net 145.27, 440.80 MHz  
 Contact: <http://specsnet.org> or Tom Cascone, KF6LWZ, 650-688-0441

**SCARES**

**South County Amateur Radio Emergency Service**

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 7:30pm each month, Belmont EOC, Belmont City Hall, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont CA 94002. Net is on 146.445 [PL 114.8] & 444.50 (PL-100) 7:30 Monday evenings. Contact: President Gary D. Aden, K6GDA 650-743-1265 (D), 650- 595-5590 (N)  
 Web: <http://k6mpn.org> E-mail: [pres@k6mpn.org](mailto:pres@k6mpn.org)

**SCCARA**

**Santa Clara County Amateur Radio Association**

Operates W6UUU & W6UU/R, repeater 146.985-pl  
 Nets: 2m, 7:30pm Mon; 70cm, 442.425+ (pl 107.2) Thur.  
 Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Mon each month @ 7:30 PM.  
 Contact: <http://www.qsl.net/sccara> or Clark Murphy KE6KXO 408-262-9334  
 ARRL/VEC license testing contact 408-507-4698

**SVECS — Silicon Valley Emergency Communications**

Operates AA6BT repeater (146.115 MHz+)  
 contact: <http://www.svecs.net> or Lou Stierer WA6QYS 408 241 7999

**TEARS — The Elmer Amateur Radio Society**

Dedicated to operational training, knowledge building & FCC exam testing.  
 KV6R repeater under construction.  
 Contact: [AA6T@ARRL.NET](mailto:AA6T@ARRL.NET)  
 Most members are Extra Class or VE's. See QRZ dot com/kv6r for class info

**WVARA — West Valley Amateur Radio Association**

W6PIY six-meter repeater on 52.58MHz. Normally, six-meters is linked with 147 and 223, while 441 and 1286 repeaters are linked.  
 VHF: 52.58 (-500) 151.4 ctcss UHF: 441.35 (+5.0) 88.5 ctcss  
 147.39 (+600) 151.4 ctcss 1286.20 (-12m) 100.0 ctcss  
 223.96 (+1.6) 156.7 ctcss  
 Meetings are 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month.  
 Contact: <http://wvara.org>, Bill Ashby N6FFC, 408-267-3118, [N6FFC@Juno.com](mailto:N6FFC@Juno.com), or [N6FFC@ARRL.NET](mailto:N6FFC@ARRL.NET)

**American Red Cross, Santa Clara Valley Chapter**

Contact: <http://santacalaravalley.redcross.org> or Scott Hensley KB6UOO, (408) 967 7924 [shensley@Novell.com](mailto:shensley@Novell.com)

(Please send changes to [PAARAgaphs editor](mailto:PAARAgaphs editor))



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 Sales Manager

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 Direct: 650•802•1511 jfarrey@jameco.com

www.jameco.com

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**Badges are ready for pickup.**

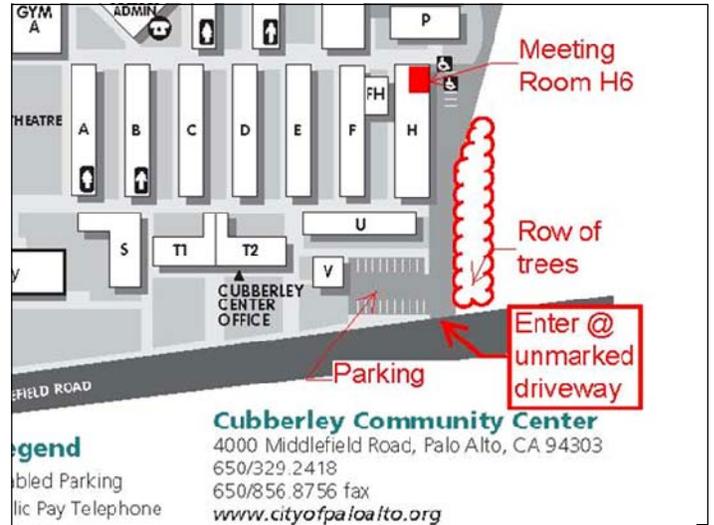
If you would like to order a badge, see **Doug Teter, KG6LWE.**

**PAARA Weekly Radio Net**

Info and Swap Session every Monday evening at 8:30pm on the N6NFI 145.230 MHz repeater

<u>Week</u>	<u>Control Operator</u>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Open
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Doug - KG6LWE
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jack - N1VSL
4 <sup>th</sup>	Marty - W6NEV
5 <sup>th</sup>	Up for Grabs!

If you're interested in trying out at Net Control, Contact Doug, KG6LWE. It's good practice, and lots o' fun! Give it a try.



**Meeting Location — Middlefield Road between San Antonio and Charleston in Palo Alto. 4000 Middlefield Road**

<http://www.foto.mail.ru/list/shkurkin>

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**Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association**  
 P.O. Box 911, Menlo Park  
 California 94026-0911

Club meetings are on the first Friday of each month, 7:00pm at the Room H-6, Cubberley Community Center.

Radio NET & Swap Session every Monday evening, at 8:30pm, on the 145.230 –600 MHz repeater, PL 100Hz.

Membership in PAARA is \$20.00 per calendar year, which includes one subscription to PAARAgaphs \$6 for each additional family member (no newsletter).

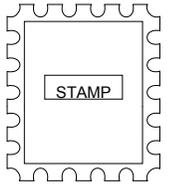
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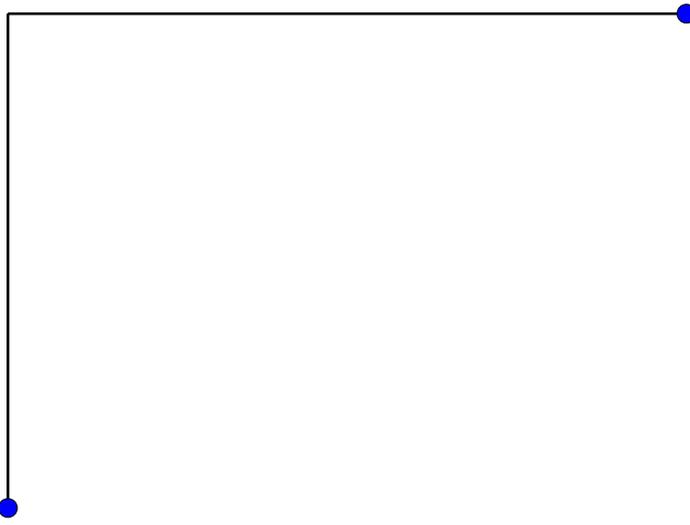
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Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.  
 PAARAgaphs Newsletter  
 P.O. Box 911  
 Menlo Park, California 94026

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**



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 (800) 444-8017  
 2000 W. Main St.  
[salem@hamradio.com](mailto:salem@hamradio.com)

## 12 STORE BUYING POWER



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