

August 2011

Volume 41, Number 8

*See you down the log!*

[www.fars.k6ya.org](http://www.fars.k6ya.org)

### August Club Meeting

**Date:** Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Time:** Socializing at 7PM, Meeting starts at 7:30PM

**Place:** Covington School, 205 Covington Road, Los Altos  
(near Foothill Expressway and El Monte Rd)

**Speaker:** Steve Stearns, K6OIK  
*Our very own FARS Vice President*



**Topic:** “Predicting HF Ionospheric Propagation by Ray Tracing”

Did you hear Steve talk about using VOACAP to predict HF propagation paths at FARS February 2010?

This is the sequel.

Ionospheric ray tracing is a method entirely different from VOACAP for predicting HF propagation. In many cases, ray tracing gives better insight into propagation effects than VOACAP. Steve will explain why and show real time examples using a program called Proplab-Pro 3.0, which is priced within reach of the serious DX'er.

Steve will show what it can do that VOACAP can't.

He will talk about the limits and future of both approaches to the problem of prediction.

**Snacks:** Cookies and coffee will be served.

**Questions:** Bring your hardest radio questions.

The mysterious Dr. Know-It-All reveals all answers.

**Post-Meeting Snacks:** Denny's on Mathilda in Sunnyvale.

### August Raffle Prizes

The prizes for the raffle will be:

**First Prize:** Yaesu FT-1900R

Mobile 2m Transceiver w/ 55W output

**Second Prize:** XOX-TRAK Controller

Automatic Controller for Satellite Stations

**Third Prize:** 2011 ARRL Handbook for Radio Communications

**Fourth Prize:** 2011-2012 ARRL Repeater Directory



Note:  
G-5500  
(bottom)  
not  
included  
with the  
XOX  
TRAK  
Controller  
(top)

**The Wish-You-Were-Here prize** is a **CASH** prize awarded each meeting to a member who is present and has paid their 2011 dues. Are you on the list for the drawing?

**Membership Meeting.** Our next membership meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. Our own Steve Stearns, K6OIK presents part two of HF propagation prediction “Predicting HF Ionospheric Propagation by Ray Tracing.”



**Am-Tech Day.** No word yet on a new location for Am-Tech Day. We are still looking for a new location. Check the website ([www.fars.k6ya.org/amtechday](http://www.fars.k6ya.org/amtechday)) or the email list ([www.fars.k6ya.org/mail](mailto:www.fars.k6ya.org/mail)) for the latest news and information.

**Electronics Flea Market.** The next electronics flea market is scheduled for September 10<sup>th</sup> and will be hosted by WVARA. Check out [www.electronicfleamarket.com](http://www.electronicfleamarket.com) for all the details.

**FARS Homebrew Night at the September Meeting.** Time to dig out those Ham projects you have been working on and get them ready to show off. September 23<sup>rd</sup> is your night to share your experience with our audience.

Participants are not limited to physical projects. Ham radio experiences are acceptable entries. Feel free to put up a couple of slides to help the audience visualize the experience.

Each participant will have 5-10 minutes to share. Then our audience will select the best entries for prizes.

**Membership.** New memberships are prorated to \$5 for the rest of 2011.

de Mikel, KN6QI

## CLUB INFORMATION

[www.fars.k6ya.org](http://www.fars.k6ya.org)

President: Mikel Lechner KN6QI  
Vice President: Steve Stearns K6OIK  
Treasurer: Dick Baldwinson N6ATD  
Secretary: (open)  
Radio Officer: Phil Hawkins KA6MZE  
Training Officer: Kevin Weiler K6XXX  
Relay Editor: Joanna Dilley K6YL  
FARS Board: Robert Flemate KE6TFU  
Mark Hardy K6MDH  
Peter Chow AF6DS  
Charlie Morrin KI6FXY  
K6YA Trustee: Phil Hawkins KA6MZE

Contact the FARS Board of Directors at [fars-board@svpal.org](mailto:fars-board@svpal.org).

**Email Announcements:** Members and non-members are encouraged to subscribe to the FARS Announcement list to receive reminders of FARS activities and other news. Browse [www.fars.k6ya.org/mail](http://www.fars.k6ya.org/mail), click on Subscribe/Unsubscribe and follow the instructions under "Subscribing to fars-announce". You may submit announcements to the FARS Announcement at [fars-announce@svpal.org](mailto:fars-announce@svpal.org). The list is moderated and messages will require approval by the moderator.

**Meetings:** FARS meetings are held at 7 PM on the fourth Friday of each month except January (Winter Banquet); and sometimes there are changes for June (for Field Day) and November & December (for holidays). **Visitors are always welcome!** Directions on the website as well as in this newsletter. Talk-in: N6NFI (145.23-/100Hz) or W6ASH repeater (145.27-/100Hz).

**Membership:** Annual FARS membership is \$15. A club badge is \$9. With membership you'll receive the monthly FARS Relay, and you'll also qualify for the monthly CASH Wish-You-Were-Here drawing at each membership meeting.

**Newsletter:** The FARS *Relay* is the official monthly newsletter of the Foothills Amateur Radio Society. Contributions to the newsletter from members, family, and guests are earnestly solicited! Photos, operating news, articles, etc. can be submitted to the editor at any time. Contributions are subject to editing and/or compression.

**Newsletter Editor:**

Joanna Dilley K6YL      Joanna.K6YL@gmail.com  
PO Box 51985      Also available at FARS meetings.  
Palo Alto, CA 94303      Photos © K6YL unless noted otherwise.

**What can YOU do  
to help protect and preserve  
spectrum and privileges  
for all amateur radio operators?**

**SUPPORT YOUR NATIONAL SOCIETY →**



**The Amateur Radio Relay League  
(ARRL)**

[www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org)

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

[www.fars.k6ya.org/events/calendar](http://www.fars.k6ya.org/events/calendar)

*Visitors are welcome at all events!*

### AUGUST

26 [Club Meeting](#), Covington School, Los Altos, 7PM

### SEPTEMBER

1 Board Mtg, Los Altos Town Crier, 7:30PM

10 [Electronics Flea Market](#), DeAnza College, 5AM

23 [Club Meeting](#), Covington School, Los Altos, 7PM

### OCTOBER

1-2 The [45th Annual California QSO Party](#), "CQP"

6 Board Mtg, Los Altos Town Crier, 7:30PM

8 [Electronics Flea Market](#), DeAnza College, 5AM  
**Last flea market for 2011!**

14-16 [Pacificon 2011](#), Santa Clara Marriott Hotel

21 [Club Meeting](#), Covington School, Los Altos, 7PM

### NOVEMBER

3 Board Mtg, Los Altos Town Crier, 7:30PM

18 [Club Meeting](#), Covington School, Los Altos, 7PM

### DECEMBER

1 Board Mtg, Los Altos Town Crier, 7:30PM

16 [Club Meeting](#), Covington School, Los Altos, 7PM

### **FARS Membership Dues Reduced for 2011**

Payment of dues for 2011 supports the club and provides you with current membership status – you'll qualify for the **CASH** Wish-You-Were-Here prize awarded at each membership meeting, and you'll also receive the FARS Relay in your email each month.

The FARS board has reduced the membership dues for 2011 to \$15. Use your \$5 savings to purchase raffle tickets, or put it in your pocket and be \$5 richer. If you've already renewed for 2011 at \$20, you may request a refund. Or simply leave it as a donation.

FARS is a California 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, so donations and membership dues are tax deductible with the California Franchise Tax Board and the Internal Revenue Service.

## JULY MEETING REPORT

At the July meeting we looked back at Field Day 2011 in addition to having a great speaker.

*Congrats to the July raffle prize winners!*



Walt, Robert WB2URF, and Steve K6OIK (left to right).

**Steve K6OIK** –

First Prize: Yaesu FT-60R HT  
2M/440 with wide receive

**Walt** (no license... yet) –

Second Prize: ARRL Repeater Directory

**Robert WB2URF** –

Third Prize: Two dogbone antenna insulators

**Arv WA6UUT** –

Was drawn for the Wish-You-Were-Here Prize but unfortunately wasn't present to collect the cash.



**Adrian YO3GW**

Thank you, Adrian, for being a guest at our July FARS meeting. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Visiting from  
Bucharest, Romania

Jim WU0I shared his ham radio experiences in Ethiopia.



**Speaker: Jim DeLoach, WU0I**  
*United States Foreign Service*

**Topic: "Amateur Radio in Ethiopia"**

Have you ever wanted to be that rare DX station and be on the other end of the pile-ups? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be in a country where you can count the number of amateur radio operators on your fingers and toes, instead of being yet another Silicon Valley Ham? We heard Jim DeLoach, a United States Foreign Service Officer recently returned from Addis Ababa, talk about Amateur Radio in Ethiopia! Ethiopia should be Ham Radio paradise, but shipping and import constraints, high noise levels in this crowded third world city, and most importantly suspicious and unmotivated local officials make hamming a challenge. We learned how Jim overcame these obstacles, what it was like to be that rare DX station for a change, and how the Ethiopian Amateur Radio Society (EARS) club station, ET3AA, and its founder Sid, ET3SID, have played a critical role in keeping Ethiopia on the air!

Club members of ET3AA deploy the Dream Beam, a 17-element 6-30 MHz rotatable log periodic donated by the United States Embassy:





# California QSO Party

October 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011

## CQP & improving your operating skills

From an operating point of view, what do Public Service, chasing DX or working contests have in common?



They all require accurate copy of information under stress – whether the stress of the moment, the adrenaline rush of rare DX or contest pile up, you have to accurately copy and relay information.

Entering a contest either casually to give some points or as a serious effort, Contesting provides a great learning experience for information copy “under fire”.

The first weekend of October (October 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> this year) sees the annual running of the California QSO Party – a great opportunity for stations in California because everyone else HAS TO WORK US!

**\*\* We are the DX! \*\***

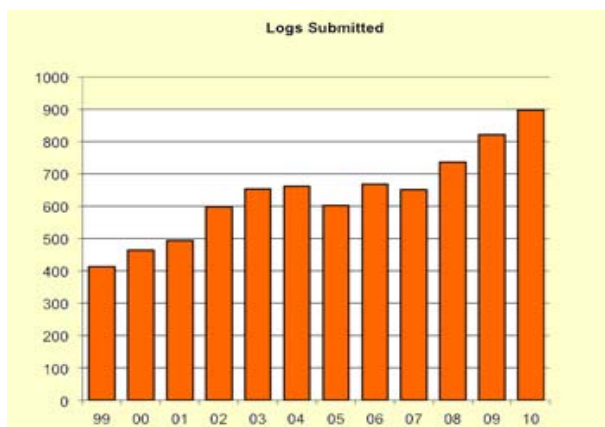
Whether you are a “big gun” with stacked yagis and 1500 watts, or a “little pistol” with 100 watts to a vertical or a wire antenna, everyone else in the world wants to work YOU to pick up one of the 58 counties in our state.

It’s a lot of fun being on the receiving end of a pile up or searching & pouncing for other states and countries.

For California stations the object of the contest is to work as many stations as possible on SSB and CW. You can work the same station on each band and each mode for score credit. Every US state and Canadian province you work counts as a multiplier – 58 total for us just like the number of counties in California.

Want to be really on the end of a pile up? Plan a “CApedition” to one of the rarer counties in California and the rest of the world will beat a path to your front end!

**Low Power, High Power? CW or SSB? CQP is a fun contest for all.**



The last 10 years has seen a great increase in the number of logs submitted from the US, the DX world and (of course!) from California.

Last year we received just over 900 logs and with 2011 being the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CQP, we are making a big drive to get well over 1000 logs submitted.

CQP is sponsored by the Northern California Contest Club led by the NCCC “Green” team chaired by Rick “The Rhino” N6RNO as CQP Contest Chairman. A group of NCCC volunteers help with PR, planning county expeditions and processing all the logs to score the contest.

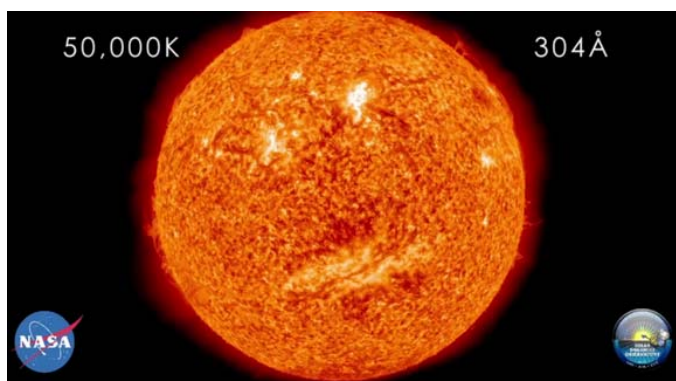


## PHOTO TIME: SUN SPOTS FORM SMILEY FACE

### Smiley Face on the Sun? New Video Shows All

By Clara Moskowitz, SPACE.com Senior Writer

Date: 02 August 2011 Time: 04:00 AM ET



This still from a NASA video shows an apparent smiley face on the sun as seen by the Solar Dynamics Observatory. The solar happy face is seen in different wavelengths in a video posted on July 25, 2011. CREDIT: NASA/SDO/GSFC

[View full size image](#)

Our sun is apparently a happy star according to the latest video from a NASA observatory. The video shows a pattern of sunspots that, when viewed from afar, forms a vast happy face smiling across face of the sun.

Sunspots are darker, cooler patches on the sun caused when intense magnetic activity blocks heat convection. These spots are normal, but they don't usually align to give the sun's face such character.

The smile on the sun is visible through 11 photographs taken by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, which images the sun from Earth orbit. Each picture was taken at the same time, but through a different filter that separated out a narrow wavelength band of light. The images range from lowest temperature to highest.

[View Video of Smiley Face on Sun](#)

## IS STOR IN YOUR LOG?

Members of the DX Friends and the Intrepid-DX Group recently activated South Sudan, a brand new country on the DXCC list. This was a huge effort and a great DXpedition.

QSO's: 121,286

Unique Call Signs: 27,991    DXCC: 175    CQ Zones: 40

CW: 55,458

SSB: 47,696

RTTY: 18,132 (new world record!)

First QSO: July 22, 2011 at 15:36

Last QSO: August 10, 2011 at 07:01

## OPERATING REPORT: ARRL Rookie Roundup 2011 on RTTY August 21<sup>st</sup>

The objective of a [Rookie Roundup](#) is for newly licensed operators to experience competitive Amateur Radio. Experienced operators are also strongly encouraged to participate in order to help new operators – either on the air or in person. This event is held 3 times each year, with one contest each for SSB, RTTY and CW. During 2011 a Rookie will be defined as a ham first licensed in 2009, 2010 or 2011.

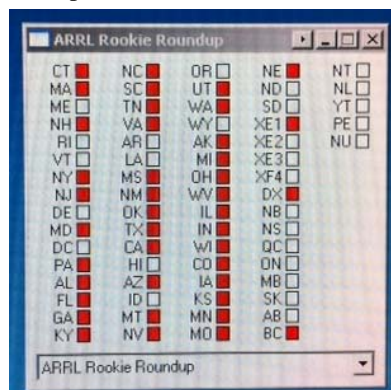
RTTY was held August 21<sup>st</sup> and Rookies from across the country participated.

### What is RTTY?

[RTTY](#), also known as Radioteletype, allows communication using two radios and a modulation technique such as frequency shift keying (FSK). Many ham radio operators enjoy using modern PCs and soundcard software or TNCs to take advantage of this fun mode.

### K6YL's Participation:

I had the great opportunity to operate this contest from up at the Stanford station, W6YX, and thoroughly enjoyed my 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt at this different mode.



QSO's:

31 Rookies

95 non-Rookies

126 Total

Multipliers: 41

(shown at left)

Score: 6437

So far it looks like this score might place 1<sup>st</sup> for W6-land!



Joanna K6YL being elmered by Rebar N6DB (left) and Dave AA6XV (right) during the 2011 ARRL Rookie Roundup RTTY on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Thank you! Photo © Rick N6DQ

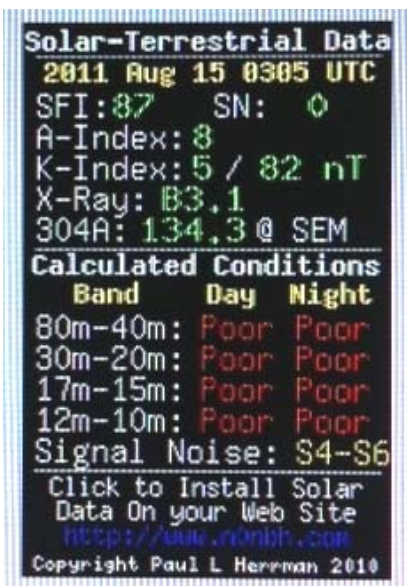
**Next up is CW !!**

**ARRL Rookie Roundup CW is on December 18<sup>th</sup> !!**



**PHOTO TIME:  
HOW MANY SUN SPOTS DID YA SAY?**

Ouch! During the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August the number of sun spots went all the way to zero, for the first time since January 27<sup>th</sup>.



*Congratulations to Tom  
on his new call sign  
K6AET  
(formerly AF6YW)*

***FARS Member Badges***

We're ready to take your order.  
\$9

*Available for pick up at the next club mtg*

**FARS Relay**

*Have a photo, article, or operating  
news to share?*

*Please contact [Joanna.K6YL@gmail.com](mailto:Joanna.K6YL@gmail.com)*

**FARS Weekly Net**

**Thursdays @ 8 PM**

N6NFI repeater, 145.23-/100Hz

**This net is open to all interested hams.**

The purpose of the net is to keep club members informed about club activities; to exchange other club-related info; and to socialize.

**9AM Talk Net**

**Weekdays @ 9 AM**

N6NFI repeater, 145.23-/100Hz

**This net is open to all interested hams.**

This is an informal net that is very popular.

[www.9amtalk.net](http://www.9amtalk.net)

**Ready to Upgrade Your License?**

What is a Passing Score you might ask?

Technician & General exams – 26 out of 35 (74.2%)

Amateur Extra exam – 37/50 (74%)

[www.baears.com](http://www.baears.com) – This group holds “Ham Crams” 4 times a year. Pre-registration required, sign up on the website. \$30

- Saturday 9/24, 8 AM @ Redwood City

[www.amateur-radio.org](http://www.amateur-radio.org) – The Sunnyvale VEC holds test sessions on Saturdays alternating between Sunnyvale and Redwood City. Walk-ins only, no pre-registrations. \$15

- Saturday 9/10, 10:30 AM @ Sunnyvale
- Saturday 9/17, 10:30 AM @ Redwood City

[www.pdarrrl.org/vec/vecscv](http://www.pdarrrl.org/vec/vecscv) – The Silicon Valley ARRL VE holds test sessions on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of each month. Arrive between 8 AM and 11 AM to the Saratoga Fire Station at 14380 Saratoga Avenue. Walk-ins only, no pre-registrations. \$15

- Saturday 9/3
- Saturday 9/17

[www.sbara.org](http://www.sbara.org) – The Tri-City VE Group holds test sessions at Hurricane Electric in Fremont each month, alternating between Saturday morning and Tuesday evening. The address is 48233 Warm Springs Blvd. Walk-ins welcome. \$15

- Saturday 9/10, 9:00 AM
- Tuesday 10/11, 6:30 PM

## BAEARS Ham Cram

Next Session: Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>  
8 AM  
Redwood City, CA  
[www.baears.com](http://www.baears.com)

## Electronics Flea Markets 2011

Saturday 5 AM to 12 Noon

3/12 hosted by PAARA 7/9 hosted by FARS !!  
4/9 hosted by SPARK 8/13 hosted by SVECS  
5/21 hosted by SCCARA 9/10 hosted by WVARA  
6/11 hosted by SPECS 10/8 hosted by SVCARC

[www.electronicfleamarket.com](http://www.electronicfleamarket.com)

## FARS Email Notices

Easy to subscribe!

[www.k6ya.org/mail](http://www.k6ya.org/mail)

Receive reminders of activities and other news.

## Weekly FARS Net

Thursdays @ 8 PM

N6NFI Repeater 145.230(-), 100 Hz PL

## ARRL Rookie Roundup 2011 on CW!

The objective of a [Rookie Roundup](#) is for newly licensed operators to experience competitive Amateur Radio. Experienced operators are also strongly encouraged to participate in order to help new operators – either on the air or in person.

This event is held in SSB, RTTY and CW.

CW is up next on **December 18<sup>th</sup>!**

During this event a Rookie will be defined as a ham first licensed in 2009, 2010 or 2011.

Time to learn & practice CW:

4 months!

Did you enjoy the contesting aspect  
of Field Day?

Consider participating in the  
**2011 California QSO Party**  
(CQP)  
October 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011

[www.cqp.org](http://www.cqp.org)



All 58 CA  
Counties will be  
on the air!

**California stations**  
work all stations in or out of California  
(with a bonus/multiplier for each of the 50 US states  
and 8 Canadian provinces).

**Stations outside of CA work stations in CA only**  
(with a bonus/multiplier for each of the 58 counties).

The ARRL Pacific Division Convention

**Pacificon 2011**  
comes to Santa Clara, CA  
October 14-16<sup>th</sup>, 2011

[www.pacificon.org](http://www.pacificon.org)



Tickets are already on sale, including to the  
Sat. Banquet and Fri. Antenna Seminar!



## FARS Membership Renewal Form

Note that the dues for 2011 have been reduced to \$15. You may also renew online by logging onto the FARS website, then using PayPal to pay.

<https://www.fars.k6ya.org/membership> Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE fill out the form for all new/renewal members.

Name(s) & Callsign(s) & Class (E-A-G-T-N-None): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRL Member? \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Modes (e.g. HF-SSB/CW/VHF/QRP/Other): \_\_\_\_\_

I'm willing to Elmer new hams with: \_\_\_\_\_

Special topics of interest / suggestions for club meeting speakers: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: \$15 per year. Membership runs from January 1 to December 31. New membership applications accepted later in the year may have their dues prorated (see dues schedule). Please include \$9 for a club badge if desired. Your call sign and first name as it appears above will appear on the badge. Renewing members should provide at least their name, call, and the date. Also include any info that may have changed. Put "N/A" where you wish to remove (or not provide) info.

Send your check payable to FARS, to:

FARS c/o Michael Lechner, 436 Memphis Drive, Campbell, CA 95008



### **How to get to FARS meetings** *(Visitors are always welcome)*

Meetings are held at the Covington Elementary School (directions below) on the fourth Friday. Socializing at 7 PM with the regular meeting at 7:30 PM. There may be changes in the meeting dates for January, June, November, and December.

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

**From Interstate 280.** take the El Monte exit Northeast. Cross Foothill Expressway. (A) At the first traffic light turn right on Covington. (B) Immediately at the fork take the left street (Covington). Go about 1/10th of a mile. Turn left into the parking lot. The gym is the tall building to your right with red and white stripes.

**From Foothill Expwy.,** take the El Monte exit and go Northeast; then follow directions as above at point (A).

**From US101 or El Camino:** take San Antonio Road west (to Foothill Expressway). Then follow directions above at point (A).

**TALK-IN** via the [N6NFI](#) (145.230-; 100Hz PL) repeater or the [W6ASH](#) 145.27- (100Hz PL) repeater.