Pokéham GO

Pokémon GO™, a new game craze introduced in early July for smartphones, has captured the interest of millions of young people everywhere. If only we could capture that level of interest with amateur radio! During the recent HRO Ham Jam, we had many conversations about the need to bring young people into amateur radio, Teenagers or even younger kids introduced to ham radio could end up having a most enjoyable hobby for the rest of their lives, which could even trigger an interest in radio-electronics and pursuing an education and career in that field. It could also lead them to serving their community with emergency communications during a disaster, as some of them become RACES members.

Pokémon GO is a location-based game developed by Ninantic for iOS and Android devices. It makes use of GPS and the device’s camera. The game, which is a free download, allows players to capture, battle, and train virtual creatures, called Pokémon, who appear on device screens.

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Captain’s Corner  Continued from page 1

typically by the number of contests multiplied by the number of sections, grid squares, zones, or countries. Accumulating award certificates, such as Ten-Ten, DXCC, Worked All States, Worked All Zones, Worked All Zimbabwe, and thousands of others, is a game. Participating in T-hunts is a game. Even working 6-meter band openings may be considered a game.

Many of us can be too judgmental and accuse game-players of wasting time. After all, what service are you performing, or what new technology are you learning, when playing a game? In many cases, Pokémon GO is obsessive and distracts from responsibilities. The game aspects of ham radio can be that way also. Pokémon GO can also be dangerous, as players are staring too much at their screens and not paying attention to where they are walking (such as over a cliff or into a group of unsavory characters). T-hunts can be dangerous also, as hunters pay too much attention to their bearings instead of traffic conditions. But having fun while playing games, whether Pokémon GO or ham-radio contesting, has its benefits, such as relaxing, unwinding, recharging, and socializing. In the case of ham radio, preparing to earn a high score in contesting encourages improvement in station setup and operating procedures. Our recent Field Day operation was actually a game because it was a contest, but we enhanced our capabilities in working together to set up our stations and antennas, we found and repaired problems with our equipment, and we practiced and improved our operating procedures as we strived for high contest scores. Games are good, as long as they are not excessive and obsessive.

Bob Inderbitzen compares Pokémon GO with another “Amateur Radiosport”—ARRL’s year-long National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) operating event, which celebrates the centennial of the US National Park Service. “NPOTA encourages hams to operate their portable radios from official park locations. Hams who are park ‘Activators’ are sought by park ‘Chasers,’ who are other hams trying to make radio contact with activated parks.” Bob then points out that Pokémon GO has trainers chasing and capturing Pokémon, and NPOTA has chasers collecting national park activations.”

Bob continues, “Similar to collecting Pokémon creatures, the lure of radiosport is logging each radio contact for scores. Hams use computer logging programs, such as ARRL’s online Logbook of the World, to track their radio contacts. Achievements are earned by the total number of contacts confirmed with other hams in qualifying categories.”

Bob refers to the weekend ham radio contests, annual operating events, and ongoing award programs, especially ARRL’s DXCC, awarded for confirming radio contacts with a minimum of 100 countries (“entities”). “Pop-up special event stations entice hams to make contacts with stations set up at lighthouses, on islands, and atop mountain summits.” Such a special-event station is operated every second Saturday on 7250 kHz from the USS Midway in San Diego, often when OCRACES runs its ACS net beginning at 10:00 AM. If propagation causes interference, the Midway operator graciously slides off frequency during our net, and returns when our net is over, with many stations calling so that they can earn a special USS Midway QSL card for the contact. Several years ago, during OCSD/Communications’ 75th Anniversary, we had our own special event station set up outside our van at Eckhoff. Working Special Events stations can be considered a game, especially for those who like to collect Special Events QSL cards and certificates, but it’s a show of camaraderie in amateur radio as hams help each other celebrate.

Bob Inderbitzen also says, “While radiosport is check full of fun and achievement, the side effect is that hams who participate in radiosport improve their own technical and operating skill, and advance their station readiness. The competitive nature of radiosport encourages hams to assemble better radio stations, build more effective antennas, and operate skillfully on the air.”

Inderbitzen tried Pokémon GO, but he thought, “I’m being drawn into the touchscreen on my smartphone for fun that’s being calculated by some clever computing. By contrast, hams participating in radiosport have a higher amount of control of the game. The search-and-pounce is shaped by the station you’ve set up, your operating skill, signal propagation, and who else might be listening. Already, for instance, the leading ‘Chaser’ for National Parks on the Air has made confirmed contacts with 435 national park activations. Impressive, and it didn’t require any data charges!”

Inderbitzen encourages hams to check out Pokémon GO so they can tell their children or neighbor’s kids that they, too, were part of the fad. I’m not sure I agree with that. I don’t want to get trapped into something that could turn into an obsession. (I’m already obsessed with chess, the only non-ham-radio game that I play.) But we hams should at least understand a little bit about Pokémon GO, so we can give young people a credible comparison with amateur radio, which holds more excitement than Pokémon GO, not only in playing on-the-air “games” such as contesting and DXing (which, admittedly, are very enjoyable), but leads to the discovery of “mysterious” technology such as radio propagation, antennas, and “cool” equipment. It also gives new hams an opportunity to serve their community with emergency communications when disasters strike—and what could be more exciting?
Next OCRACES Meeting: August 1st

The next County of Orange RACES meeting will be on Monday, August 1, 2016, at 7:30 PM, at OCSD Communications & Technology Division, 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, in Orange. We will first meet in the Large Conference Room and then proceed to the parking lot, where we will receive training on the OASIS satellite trailer. We will attempt to power the trailer from the OCRACES van, which will be parked next to the trailer.

Because of the looming wildfire danger, we need to schedule our annual Severe Fire Weather Patrol presentation as soon as possible. The earliest this can be done is at the September 12th OCRACES meeting (no meeting on September 5th, due to the Labor Day holiday).

KM6YH Describes DMR Handheld Radio

Ken Mirabella, KM6YH, from Powerwerx, was the guest speaker at the July 11, 2016, OCRACES meeting. He talked about the new TERA TR-7400 UHF handheld DMR/analog-FM handheld radio. DMR is a TDMA (time-division multiple access) digital mode that breaks up transmissions into one of two time slots. DMR repeaters repeat both time slots, each with a 30-millisecond window. Typically in a DMR repeater, often set up as a zone in the radio, several talk groups will be assigned to each time slot. For example, in a Southern California DMR repeater, Time Slot 1 might include a local, Southern California, and other talk groups. Times Slot 2 might include a statewide, North America, worldwide, and other talk groups. Programming software for the TERA TR-7400 enables arranging zones in any order and inserting a channel anywhere in the channel list. The radio accommodates 1,024 channels, 64 zones, and 800 talk groups. Its digital monitor feature allows simultaneous monitoring of all talk groups within a time slot.

Plaques for Silent Keys

In the July 2016 issue of NetControl, we sadly reported that former OCRACES Sergeant Jim Carter, WB6HAG, had become a silent key. Comments have been made that a plaque should be made in Jim’s honor, to be mounted on the wall in the EOC RACES Room alongside plaques that had been made for two previously deceased OCRACES members—Lt. Mel Chester, KM6BT, and Sgt. Al Baird, KC6TWI. Furthermore, a plaque had never been made for another deceased member, Lt. Steve Sobodos, KN6UX, who died on January 11, 2011. Besides his dedication to OCRACES for 19 years, especially in ATV and T-hunting, Steve was also a telecommunications engineer with OCSD Communications & Technology Division and a Level II Reserve Deputy in the Search and Rescue Reserve Unit. A plaque should have been made for Steve a long time ago, and now we need one for Jim Carter, as well, who was an ATV leader in OCRACES as well as a former OCSD Reserve Sergeant who dedicated many hours to the Bomb Squad.

In honor of these two dedicated deceased members, we are asking for donations to have plaques made and mounted on the EOC RACES Room wall. Ray Grimes, N8RG, was responsible for procuring a plaque in 2000 for Al Baird from a manufacturer in Huntington Beach. Now Ray has obtained a quote from the same manufacturer for plaques for Steve and Jim, which would be just over $100 each. We are seeking donations from OCRACES members for these plaques to honor these two highly valued deceased members. Please contact Ray at 562-370-7744 (cell) if you have questions or wish to make a donation.

We plan to hold a ceremony for Steve’s and Jim’s families at the EOC, as we mount their plaques on the RACES Room wall.
OCRACES Exhibits Van at HRO Ham Jam

County of Orange RACES exhibited its emergency communications response vehicle at the 5th Annual HRO Ham Jam on Saturday, July 16, 2016, at Ham Radio Outlet in Anaheim. Tom Riley, K6TPR, drove the OCRACES van to the event, arriving before 8:00 AM for setup. OCSD Emergency Communications Manager Lee Kaser, KK6VIV worked with Tom and several OCRACES members during setup. In addition to Tom, other OCRACES members participating at Ham Jam included Randy Benicky, N6PRL, Chief Radio Officer Ken Bourne, W6HK, Radio Officer Scott Byington, KC6MMF, David Corsiglia, WA6TWF, Assistant Radio Officer Bob McFadden, Fran Needham, KJ6UJS, Radio Officer Harvey Packard, Ken Tucker, W6F, and Tom Wright, KJ6SPE. Tony Scalpi, N2VAJ, was committed to the Orange County Amateur Radio Club exhibit, but was able to spend some time at the OCRACES van. OCSD Communications & Technology Division Program Support Manager Delia Kraft worked at the TASMA exhibit and also visited the OCRACES van.

Many visitors toured the OCRACES van, and some expressed an interest in becoming RACES members. We hope to see them at the next OCRACES meeting on August 1st.

HRO gave away some very nice prizes at Ham Jam, and at least a couple of OCRACES members were winners. Tom Wright, KJ6SPE, won an Alinco dual-band transceiver, and Tony Scalpi, N2VAJ, won an RT Systems programming cable.

Janet Margelli, KL7MF, manager of HRO’s Anaheim store, sent a nice note thanking us for making available the OCRACES van and “having a hot shot crew at our 5th Annual Ham Jam.” She also said, “We really do appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in terms of hours and labor to make sure RACES’ capabilities are shown in the best light. Your participation goes a long way in helping making our event such an annual success. Again, thank you for participating with us to help further the cause of ham radio! Ham Jam helps our local ham community come together to find common interests and learn about the many aspects of the hobby, and we’ve already been asked by several when the event will be next year.” We appreciate Janet’s gracious comments and HRO’s support of amateur radio in our area, and we look forward to participating in HRO Ham Jam again next year.

HRO Acquires AES Milwaukee Store

Ham Radio Outlet (HRO) is acquiring the Amateur Electronics Supply (AES) Headquarters store in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, now that AES is going out of business. HRO will undertake an extensive remodeling project to create a new HRO Milwaukee store at the same site, which will open at the end of August. All four former AES locations’ direct and toll-free telephone numbers will be redirected to the closest HRO location, and the AES Web site will be directed to HRO’s Web site.
OCRACES Member Tom Riley, K6TPR, was the fox on Monday, July 16, 2016, on the monthly cooperative T-hunt. He turned on the fox box immediately following the 2-meter OCRACES ACS net, hiding in a large shopping-center parking lot at the southwest corner of Bristol and Segerstrom in Santa Ana. Contrary to previous hunts, this hunt was relatively easy and very enjoyable, with few reflections and wrong bearings. All hunters arrived in less than 45 minutes after the hunt began.

First (and very quickly) to arrive was Richard Saunders, K6RBS, from Mission Viejo. Next was Ron Allerdice, WA6CYY, from Costa Mesa. The third team was OCRACES Chief Radio Officer Ken Bourne, W6HK, with his son Bob, K6RBI, on the loop and OCRACES Member Tony Scalpi, N2VAJ, who got an accurate initial bearing with a three-element beam from their starting point at the Red Cross parking lot in eastern Santa Ana. IDEC Operations Captain Peter Gonzalez, KC6TWS, arrived next. It was Peter’s first experience at hunting, and he came into the fox’s area very quickly, using an Arrow loop.

The next cooperative T-hunt will be held on August 15, 2016 (the third Monday in August), immediately following the OCRACES 2-meter net (approximately 7:20 PM). The fox will transmit on the input (146.295 MHz) of the 146.895 MHz repeater. Hunters will compare bearings via the 449.100 MHz repeater, and are encouraged to beacon their positions via APRS throughout the hunt. The fox will be hiding in a city or sector of Orange County (to be announced a few days prior to the hunt) on paved, publicly accessible property. No fees will be required to drive directly to the fox.

The cooperative T-hunts are held on the third Monday of the month (second Monday in October). The hunts provide excellent practice in working together to find sources of interference quickly. The hunts are not official RACES events, so DSW (Disaster Service Worker) coverage does not apply. Please drive carefully!

Fox-hunt loops and beams are available from Arrow Antenna and HRO, including the Arrow Model FHL-VHF foxhunt loop (covers 1 MHz to 600 MHz) and the Arrow Model 146-3 three-element portable hand-held yagi. The Arrow OFHA 4-MHz offset attenuator can be useful when close to the fox, to prevent receiver overload. An all-mode transceiver is quite useful, allowing hunters to switch to the SSB or CW mode for detecting extremely weak signals, or to switch in a built-in attenuator, reduce RF gain, or tune slightly off frequency when dealing with extremely strong signals. Some hunters use the DF2020T radio direction finder kit, which is a Doppler system available from Global TSCM Group, Inc. (http://www.kn2c.us). A very similar system is the MFJ-5005 Doppler direction finder. Other useful tools are the Foxhunt app for iPhones and the Triangulate app for Android phones. For some excellent information on T-hunting, see http://www.homingin.com.

OCRACES Member Ray Grimes, N8RG, who is a founder/co-director of the Orange County Sheriff’s Museum & Education Center, has been visiting some interesting museums lately in his hops around the world. In early June, he visited the Flying Tigers Museum in Chongqin, China. He then visited the Hong Kong Police Museum. He said that their department history is fascinating, going back to the British colonization. Unfortunately, no photos were allowed within the museum. More recently, Ray attended the International Police Museum Conference hosted by the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada Police Department. During that time, he took a tour of the new Saskatoon Police Headquarters facility, including a visit to their state-of-the-art Communications Dispatch Center. The weather was pleasant, but Ray learned that winter temperatures can reach –40 degrees (C and F the same).
RACES/MOU News from Around the County

Costa Mesa RACES (MESAC)
The next MESAC monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, August 24, 2016, from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM, at the Costa Mesa EOC, 99 Fair Drive. The meeting is open to the public.

Cypress RACES
The next Cypress RACES monthly meeting will be on Wednesday, August 10, 2016, from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

Fountain Valley RACES
The next Fountain Valley RACES meeting is on Saturday, August 6, 2016, at 8:00 AM, in the Fountain Valley Police facility, 10200 Slater. The next events for Fountain Valley RACES include National Night Out on Tuesday, August 2nd, and Annual Campout in the Park on Wednesday, August 6-7.

Laguna Beach RACES (LBECT)
LBECT Chief Radio Officer John Kountz, WO1S, mentioned the Great Shakeout exercise scheduled for October 20, 2016, and asked if any Orange County agencies plan to participate. John suspects it would be an excellent opportunity to drill the local RACES units and get them talking to each other on simplex frequencies. John says LBECT has participated for several years and typically makes contacts with Placentia and Buena, albeit not with the cities’ RACES members.

Orange County Amateur Radio Club (OCARC)
The next OCARC general meeting will be on Friday, August 19, 2016, at 7:00 PM, at the American Red Cross (George M. Chitty Building), 600 Parkcenter Drive, in Santa Ana. Operating DX will be the program, with a panel of experts discussing DX techniques and giving tips.

Placentia RACES
The next Placentia RACES meeting is on Tuesday, August 9, 2016, in the administrative room of the City Hall, 401 E. Chapman Avenue.

Seal Beach/Los Alamitos RACES
The next scheduled event for Seal Beach/Los Alamitos RACES is National Night Out on Tuesday, August 2, 2016, in the Target parking lot.

Tri-Cities RACES
The City of San Juan Capistrano has purchased new communications gear for three locations to support Tri-Cities RACES in the City. Included is a complete radio communications center console and antennas that will house the radios needed for the Community Center EOC. New mesh radio gear on two bands was purchased for the Community Center EOC and Police Services building. Existing Krum Reservoir mesh gear was replaced with City-owned systems and enhancements for 3 GHz and data switches for system traffic handling. At the Community Center (backup EOC) are a PoDRunner radio cart, two Kenwood mobile radios, two dual-band antennas with coax, 2.4-GHz and 5-GHz Ubiquiti Nanostations, and a Ubiquiti VLAN switch. At the Police Services building (main EOC) are 2.4-GHz and 5-GHz Ubiquiti Nanostations and a Ubiquiti VLAN switch. At the Krum Reservoir site (replacing volunteer owned units) are 2.4-GHz and 5-GHz Ubiquiti Rocket Hi-Power Nodes, 2.4-GHz panel antenna, 5-GHz panel antenna, and Ubiquiti VLAN switch. The Dance Hall is now back to being the primary EOC.

Orange County SKYWARN
To correct a typo in July 2016 NetControl, the subaudible tone (“PL”) for the primary tactical Orange County SKYWARN repeater on 448.040 MHz (-) is 136.5 Hz. This repeater is used for Orange County SKYWARN’s Tuesday ham radio roll call at 7:30 PM.

Anaheim Amateur Radio Association (ARRA)
The next ARRA Club meeting is on Tuesday, August 23, 2016, at 7:00 PM, at the Anaheim Fire Training Center, 2400 E. Orangewood Avenue.
August 2016

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Upcoming Events:

- **August 1**: OCRACES Meeting, 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, Orange, 1930-2130 hours
- **August 15**: Cooperative T-Hunt on input of 2-meter repeater, 1920 hours
- **August 22**: Five-band ACS nets and Cal OES Nets at OC EOC
- **September 5**: Labor Day, no meeting, no net
- **September 12**: OCRACES Meeting, 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, Orange, 1930-2130 hours
- **October 1**: City/County RACES & MOU ACS Exercise, 0900-1100 hours
- **October 17**: City/County RACES & MOU Meeting, 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, Orange, 1930-2130 hours

**Mission Statement**

County of Orange RACES has made a commitment to provide all Public Safety departments in Orange County with the most efficient response possible to supplement emergency/disaster and routine Public Safety communications events and activities. We will provide the highest level of service using Amateur and Public Safety radio resources coupled with technology, teamwork, safety, and excellence. We will do so in an efficient, professional, and courteous manner, accepting accountability for all actions. We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership with the Public Safety community to professionally excel in the ability to provide emergency communications resources and services.

**County of Orange RACES Frequencies**

40 m: 7250 kHz SSB (City/County/MOU Net—Saturdays, 1000 hours)
10 m: 29.640 MHz output, 29.540 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL
6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL
2 m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 Hz PL
2 m: 146.595 MHz simplex
1.25 m: 223.760 MHz output, 222.160 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL
70 cm: 446.000 MHz simplex
70 cm: 449.100 MHz output, 444.100 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (private)
70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (private)
23 cm: 1287.650 MHz, 1287.675 MHz, 1287.700 MHz, 1287.725 MHz, 1287.750 MHz, and 1287.775 MHz outputs, –12 MHz inputs, 88.5 Hz PL
*Primary Net—Mondays, 1900 hours

**RACES Program Coordinator**
(Emergency Comm’s Manager)
Lee Kaser, KK6VIV
714-704-8080

**Chief Radio Officer (Captain)**
Ken Bourne, W6HK
714-997-0073

**Radio Officers (Lieutenants)**
Scott Byington, KC6MMF
Harvey Packard, KM6BV

**Assistant Radio Officers ( Sergeants)**
Jack Barth, AB6VC
Ernest Fierheller, KG6LXT
Bob McFadden, KK6CUS
Tom Tracey, KC6FIC

**County of Orange RACES**
OCSD/Communications & Technology
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E-mail: ocraces@comm.ocgov.com
Meet Your County of Orange RACES Members!

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W6HK

Scott Byington
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Harvey Packard
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Jack Barth
AB6VC

Ernest Fierheller
KG6LXT

Bob McFadden
KK6CUS

Tom Tracey
KC6FIC

Randy Benicky
N6PRL

Roger Berchtold
WB6HMW

David Corsiglia
WA6TRF

Jim Dorris
KC6RFC

Nancee Graff
N6ZRB

Ray Grimes
N8RG

Walter Kroy
KC6HAM

Martin La Rocque
N6NTH

Fran Needham
KJ6UJS

Kenan Reilly
KR6J

Tom Riley
K6TPR

Brad Russo
KB6GPM

Tony Scalpi
N2VAJ

Joe Selikov
KB6EID

Robert Stoffel
KD6DAQ

Ken Tucker
WF6F

Tom Wright
KJ6SPE

Lee Kaser
KK6VIV

“W6ACS ... Serving Orange County”