

W6OTX

W6ARA

PAARA NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 60, NUMBER 10, October 2010

K6OTA

K6YQT

PAARAgraphs



The Official Newsletter of the

Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

Celebrating 73 years as an *active* amateur radio club—*Since 1937*



CALENDAR



October 1, PAARA Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Menlo Park Rec Ctr
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

October 20, Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Palo Alto Red Cross
400 Mitchell Lane, Palo Alto

October 20, DEADLINE for PAARAgraphs submissions.

*Send items for November PAARAgraphs to
Robin Yee, KI6YTA@ARRL.net*

***A big THANK YOU to Joel, KD6W, for
putting together the September 2010
issue of PAARAgraphs!***

President's Corner

Greetings from Tokyo. I'm writing this while I am away in JA land and I'm still a bit jet lagged, so please excuse any typo^@*s. It has been very hot and very humid here, though you can feel just a little coolness in the air from time to time. It's an indicator that autumn is on the way. By the time you read this, we will probably be just past the equinox and that is a great time to get on HF, assuming the sun will cooperate.



If you missed the last PAARA general meeting, you missed a great talk by Paul, N6PSE, who told us about his DXpedition to Iraq as Y19PSE. I wasn't aware that this was Paul's first DXpedition and he was, in fact, the one who initiated the idea and was the organizer. What an adventure to take on as a first time participant! The stories he told of trying to get their equipment through customs were right out of Casa Blanca. His description of the Iraqi people, in particular the Kurds, was both wonderful and a bit saddening. I was sorry to hear that large parts of the country were still a war zone.

Things are looking up for the sun, and that means we might see improved propagation. As I write this, the sunspot number is 20 and the Solar Flux Index is

(Continued on page 105) Pres Corner



You won't want to miss our next meeting!

OCTOBER 1, 2010

Our program will be...

...another great video by James Brooks, 9V1YC:

**"VP8THU,
the 2002 Micro-Lite DXpedition to Southern Thule
in the South Sandwich Island Chain."**

This 45 minute production begins with the harrowing sea voyage to the southern-most island outside of the Antarctic Treaty Zone (yes, there are penguins), and goes on to describe the efforts of the team to make as many contacts as possible using only 100 watts and simple vertical antennas.

A fascinating look at a grand adventure!

**Welcome
New PAARA Member!**

AB7IM Nolan Bishop, San Jose

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

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.electronicshelfmarket.com/>

LIVERMORE SWAP MEET. Now in Robertson Park, Livermore, every first Sunday of the month. 7 am to 11:30 am. Free admission for buyers. For further info, see: www.larkswap.com or contact Ian Parker, W6TCP at swapmeet@livermoreark.org

PAARA Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association

Meets 1st Friday 7:00pm each month at Menlo Park Rec. 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, 650-325-8239

FARS Foothills Amateur Radio Society

Meets 4th Friday each month at 7:30pm
 contact: <http://www.fars.kfya.org/>

NCDXC Northern California DX Club

meets 2nd Friday 7:30pm each month,
 repeater for member info 147.360, Thursday 8:00PM
 contact: <http://nedxc.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 1st 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 3rd Thursday 7:30pm each month, San Carlos City Hall.
 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

SCCARA Santa Clara County Amateur Radio Association

Operates W6UU & W6UUR, repeater 146.985-pl
 Nets: 2m, 7:30pm Mon; 70cm, 442.425+ (pl 107.2) Thur.
 meets 2nd Mon each month @ 7:30 PM.
 contact: <http://www.qsl.net/secara/> 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. 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 ctess UHF: 147.39 (+600) 151.4 ctess 441.35 (+5.0 88.5) ctess
 223.96 (+1.6) 156.7 ctess 1286.20 (-12m) 100.0 ctess

Meetings are 3rd Wednesday of every month.
 contact: <http://wvara.org/>, Bill Ashby N6FFC, 408-267-3118, N6FFC@Juno.com, or N6FFC@ARRL.NET

American Red Cross, SANTA CLARA VALLEY CHAPTER
 contact: <http://santaclaravalley.redcross.org/> or Scott Hensley KB6UOO, (408) 967 7924
fshensley@Novell.com

(please send changes to PAARAgaphs editor: KI6YTA@arrl.net)

Please contact Rick Melrose to
 settle your 2010 membership dues so
 you can keep receiving your
 PAARAgaphs.

Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

PO Box 911 Menlo Park, CA 94026

Officers

President	Kristen McIntyre, K6WX	510-703-4942
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Appointed Positions

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Station Trustee K6OTA....		Ron Chester, W6AZ
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	bob@rgktechsales.com	
Badge Coordinator.....	Lynn Gentry, KG6JPV	
Historian.....	Christopher McIntyre, KG6SVI	
Raffle Coordinator.....	Jim Rice, K6AK	650-851-2274
Ticket Master	Kyle Rice, KG6MSK	
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at 81. The geomagnetic K index is at zero, meaning that things are relatively quiet. I'll bet that conditions are pretty good. Sadly, I've never gotten my JA ticket, so I cannot operate over here. Every time I think about getting it, I remember that whenever I'm here, I'm always so busy that there would never be time to operate. Still, I might do it at some point. In any case, this weekend I hope to get to Akihabara, the electronics district of Tokyo, where there are lots of Amateur Radio stores, and tune around to see what's on the air.

When I return, it won't be long until the California QSO Party starts on October 2 at 1600Z. I have plans to go with Rick, N6DQ, and Joanna, K6YRU up to Trinity County. Be sure to listen for Rick's call-sign up there. We should be on both SSB and CW. Rick has done all of the legwork to make this possible, so I want to say a big thanks to him. It's exciting for me to have a bit more time for such activities these days, though I certainly miss having Christopher, KG6SVI, around.

Speaking of KG6SVI, I got the cook's tour of UC Berkeley a couple of weeks ago. It was my first chance to visit campus since he started at school. We did quite a bit of walking and he showed me where all of his classes are. I haven't located the club station yet, but I have a contact, so I'll be looking for it. Saying goodbye again was very hard.

The PAARA website has been undergoing work behind the scenes to prepare for unveiling our new look and updated content. John, K6MM, has been working hard to get a prototype site up and running, and get the DNS records switched over to our new hosting service. He will be keeping the content up to date, and making sure that we have lots of information about what's going on with the club and our members. If you happen to see John at a meeting, please give him a big, big thanks for taking on this task with professionalism and gusto.

The PAARA sponsored ASVARO Electronics Flea Market is upon us now, and if you volunteered, you will probably have heard from me to help out by the time PAARAgraphs arrives. I am kicking off the preparations while I'm still in Asia, and we'll finish up when I return. The Flea Market is on Saturday, October 9th. See http://www.electronicshelfmarket.com/ for more details. Please come out and support the club either as a seller or as a buyer (or helper). We look forward to seeing you there.

Well, that's it for now from Tokyo. Don't forget that we have officer nominations coming up at the October meeting and elections at the December meeting.

BEST 73 DE K6WX/JA.

Board Meeting Minutes

7/2110

The Board Meeting was held at the Palo Alto Red Cross building, commencing at 7:40 PM on the 18th of August, 2010. Attending were Kristen McIntyre K6WX (Pres), Doug Teter KG6LWE (VP), Rick Melrose K6RDM (Sec, Database), Ron Chester W6AZ (Treas), Joel Wilhite KD6W (former Pres), Byron Beck KG6UOB (Dir), Rob Riley KI6INR (Dir), Larry Rebarchik N6CCH (Dir), Robin Yee KI6YTA (Editor), and Vic Black AB6SO (Membership). A quorum was present.

Secretary's Report: Rick K6RDM reports that the minutes of the 18th of August, Board meeting had been previously submitted and approved. One new member joined the club at the September 3rd meeting.

President's Report: Kristen K6WX remarked that she had just returned from overseas and was still trying to catch up on her traffic. For openers, the board discussed the improvements in the Club website which John Miller K6MM has instituted. We have been fortunate in that our printer still has the files of several years of PAARAgraphs which will be put on the website in due time. John is looking for more topical material and club members are reminded that their material would still be welcomed. And it is still the case that we are hoping to retrieve the archived PAARAgraphs issues from our crashed hard drive. In any case, the site is getting close to ready for its debut.

The Club's sponsorship of the DeAnza Ham Flea Market for October 9th is imminent and final arrangements to cover the various functions are in the works. There are still some hats to be worn by any club members who would like to step forward to lend a hand.

The California QSO Party [CQP] is even nearer to hand, on the 2nd and 3rd of October. Club members will be operating portable to cover some of the less

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LIFE MEMBERSHIP
Awarded by Action of the PAARA Board
Wally Porter K6URO Dec 2008
Steve Stuntz, K6FS Dec 2007

(Board Meeting Minutes—Continued from page 105)

populated counties like Trinity as well as some like San Francisco that are often not well represented despite a healthy contingent of local hams.

Discussion turned to our end of the year meetings with upcoming club elections, the Dream-to-Reality Raffle and membership renewals and the logistics attendant to these. The slate of candidates for the December election will be announced at the upcoming October meeting and the floor opened up for nominations from the membership at both this and the November general meetings.

Vice President's Report: Doug KG6LWE reported that the topic for the October general meeting will be the VP8THU DXpedition to the South Sandwich Islands of Southern Thule, in the Antarctic. Apparently Captain Cook called it the worst place in the world so we can expect that the DXpedition faced some notable challenges.

Treasurer's Report: Ron W6AZ reported on membership renewal, raffle and Flea Market proceeds saying that these have been doing well and that the club's finances are in good order. Joel KD6W said that our annual PAARAFest will be this Saturday at his house on September 25th with the usual food & drink and auction for the benefit of the club's treasury.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Congratulations to the winners of the September 2010 Raffle!



- 1st Prize:** Pat Sullivan / W6ABA / Yaesu FT-1900R
- 2nd Prize:** Dan Curtis / N6WN / Solarlink FR500
- 3rd Prize:** Darryl Presley / KI6LDM / TWO West Mountain COMspkr
- 4th Prize:** Gerry Tucker / N6NV / Deltran Battery Tender Junior
- 5th Prize:** Byron Beck / KG6UOB / TWO FRS / GMRS Radios
- 6th Prize:** Bill Parsons / AF6AE / ARRL Repeater Directory / 2009-2010
- 7th Prize:** Carroll Kerns / KG6YPH / HRO Coffee Mug
- 8th Prize:** Gerry Tucker / N6NV / Icom Band Plan and Grid Square Map

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
of PAARA's exciting monthly raffles!

Tri-City VE Group Test Sessions

Where: Hurricane Electric
48233 Warm Springs Blvd
Fremont, CA

When: Thursday, October 21, 6:30 p.m.

For more information, contact
Rita, KI6SSQ@arrl.net, (510) 703-7090
or
Bernhard, AE6YN@arrl.net, (510) 364-0611
or visit
www.sbara.org.

PAARA had a remarkable year in 2009! If you aren't a member, please join PAARA now and experience fun 2010 events with the "friendliest club around."

K6AK Jim

PAARA Exemplary Service Award

Gerry Tucker, N6NV 2005
Rice Family 2006
Jim K6AK, Lisa KG6KQS, Kyle KG6MSK
Wally Porter, K6URO 2007
Vic Black, AB6SO 2008
??? - 2009



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PAARA “The Friendliest Club Around”

October 1st Raffle Prizes

FIRST PRIZE: Powerwerx 30 Amp Desktop Lightweight Switching Power Supply



- Weight: 3 Pounds / Overall Dimensions: 6.1x5x2.5 in
- Output Voltage: 13.85 VDC Fixed
- Output Amperage: 30 Intermittent, 25 Continuous
- Ripple Peak-to-Peak Max <100mVpp
- Quiet Internal Cooling Fan

SECOND PRIZE: Super Antennas MP1 Portable HF 7-450 MHz Antenna

- 3.5 - 4MHz with Optional Coil
- QRP to 200W Operation
- Adjust Slider to Frequency and Snug Down Band Lock Screw
- Portable / Easy to Set Up Operation
- Antenna Mount Included



THIRD PRIZE: Solarlink FR500 / Self- & Solar-Powered Radio

- Solar Power Built Into Handle
- Hand Crank Charges Internal Ni-MH Battery & Cell Phone Batteries
- NOAA Weather / All 7 Channels plus “Alert”

FOURTH PRIZE: Two FRS/GMRS Radios

FIFTH PRIZE: Power Pole Connectors / PP15-10 / 15A / 10 Pair

SIXTH PRIZE: Bongo Ties

SEVENTH PRIZE: Nine-LED Flashlight

Since February 2003, **188 Radios**, including THREE Elecraft K3s, a Yaesu FT-847, an Icom 706 MK IIG, a Yaesu FT-897D, and TWO Elecraft KX1s have gone to Fellow Hams.

Special Thanks to Bob, Howard, Jon, Mark, and everyone at HRO for their continued support!

de K6AK Jim

Update on Electric SmartMeters

Steve Stearns, K6OIK

The saga of PG&E's SmartMeters continues to unfold. You may recall, I previously wrote [*PAARAgaphs*, June and July 2010] on technical reasons why the power measurement method used by the new digital SmartMeters might need rethinking at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), [1]. Due to many complaints from PG&E customers, the CPUC hired a private consulting firm, Structure Consulting Group, in Houston, Texas, to independently review PG&E's SmartMeter roll out and the customer complaints that followed. The consultant's report was released on September 2, [2]. Soon thereafter, articles appeared in the public press which claimed that the report exonerated the accuracy of the new meters, [3, 4].

Not so fast! I read the Structure Consulting Group's report. The articles in the public press left out key details. First, Structure did not lab test the meters itself, but rather subcontracted out to a third party, Trimark Associates, in Folsom, California. Trimark lab tested a sample of 156 meters using an older ANSI test protocol C12.20-1998 that does not include tests with nonlinear loads. Essentially all meters of both types, digital and electromechanical, passed those tests – as would be expected. Six SmartMeters were subjected to environmental testing, but the maximum temperature was limited to a balmy 122 degrees F, roughly equivalent to summer daytime temperatures in the shade in Phoenix. This is nowhere near hot enough to simulate a meter operating in direct sunlight. In addition to laboratory tests, field tests were performed on 611 SmartMeters and 147 electromechanical meters. In some cases, two meters were compared simultaneously side-by-side, a comparison test long demanded by Dr. Bill Wattenburg, [5]. At 19 sites, Structure compared SmartMeters against an Elster digital meter. At another 18 sites, PG&E compared SmartMeters against electromechanical meters, with Structure observing. However, the loads were neither controlled nor documented. Thus any difference between electromechanical meter and SmartMeter on nonlinear loads was not captured. The main part of Structure's report is based on review of documents and information provided by PG&E and interviews with customers.

As Structure's report to the CPUC was nearing completion, a new wrinkle emerged. As reported in the San Jose Mercury News, some SmartMeters appear to have EMC problems, [6-13]. SmartMeters appear to cause interference to many different kinds of consumer electronics – everything from Part 15 wireless devices, such as cordless phones and baby monitors, to AM radios, HD television sets, fire alarms, and electric circuit protection devices. Many folks assumed that it is an RFI problem caused by interference from the Silver Spring Networks transceivers inside the SmartMeter, but the transceivers may not be the source of the problem. The interference could be coming instead from the measurement electronics. It could be a conducted emission on the residential wiring instead of a radiated emission from the meter into the house. Keep in mind that meters having sigma-delta A/D converters also have a high-frequency clock that operates at approximately 1 MHz plus harmonics. So it's conceivable that the measurement electronics is creating interference. The meters should be tested by an EMC lab to characterize their emissions and find the source of the interference. The Silver Spring Networks transceivers passed FCC certification tests, but the overall, integrated SmartMeter did not.

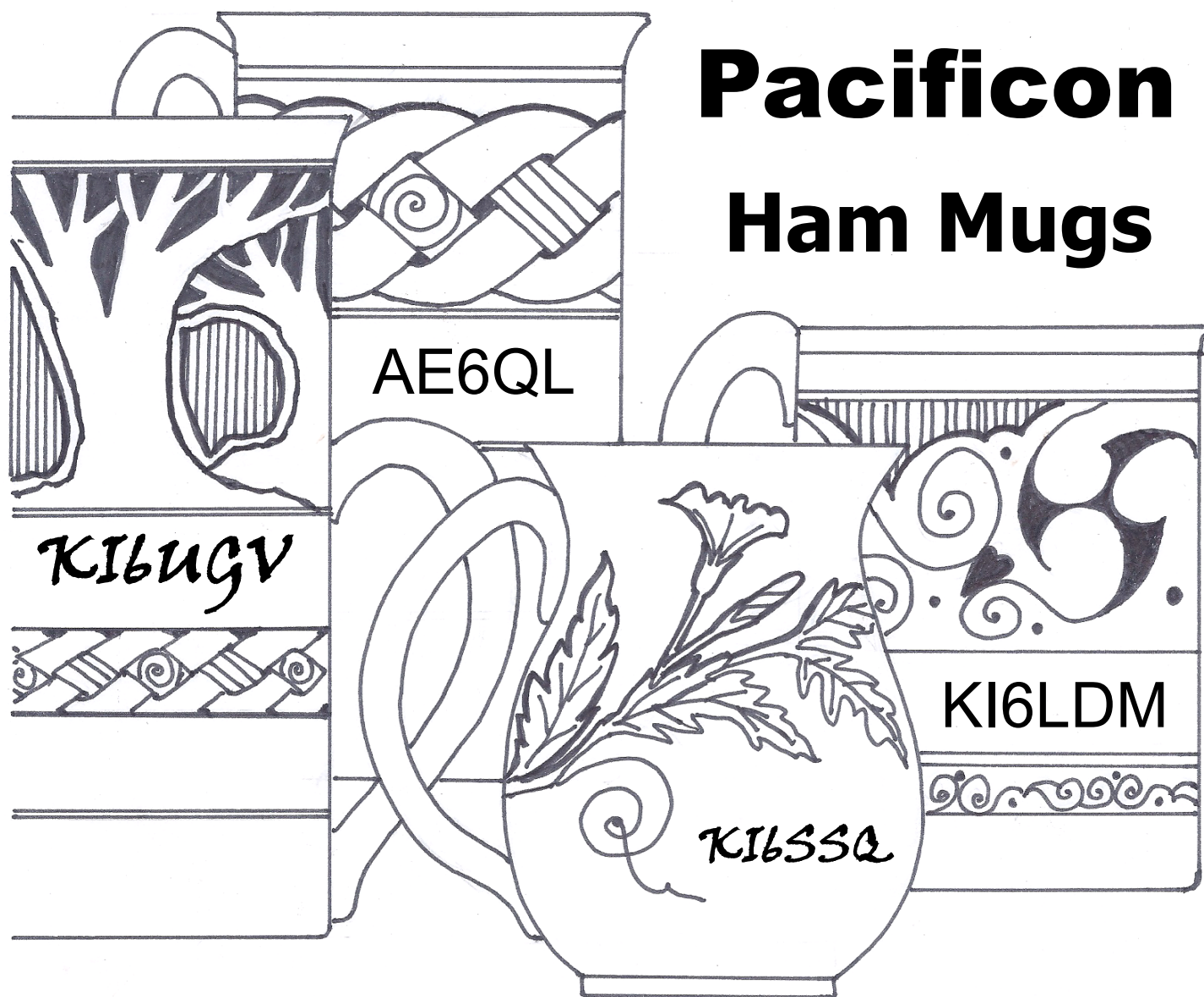
References:

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- Dennis Rockstroh, "Action Line: PG&E SmartMeters Make Home Appliances Go Snap, Crackle, Pop," *San Jose Mercury News*, Aug. 15, 2010. Available online at: http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_15743434
- Dennis Rockstroh, "Action Line: More on SmartMeter Interference," *San Jose Mercury News*, Aug. 19, 2010. Available online at: http://www.mercurynews.com/action-line/ci_15805966
- Dennis Rockstroh, "Action Line: Engineer Questions SmartMeters' Unintended Consequences," *San Jose Mercury News*, Aug. 21, 2010. Available online at: http://www.mercurynews.com/action-line/ci_15817075
- Dennis Rockstroh, "Readers: SmartMeters Interfere with Baby Monitors, Other Household Gadgets," *San Jose Mercury News*, Sept. 6, 2010. Available online at: http://www.mercurynews.com/action-line/ci_16007725
- Dennis Rockstroh, "Action Line: Reader Reports No Interference from SmartMeter," *San Jose Mercury News*, Sept. 8, 2010. Available online at: http://www.mercurynews.com/action-line/ci_15984627
- Dennis Rockstroh, "Action Line: Remodeler Finds SmartMeter Interference with Circuit Breakers," *San Jose Mercury News*, Sept. 12, 2010. Available online at: http://www.mercurynews.com/action-line/ci_16058380

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Lodema the Potter

Pacificon Ham Mugs



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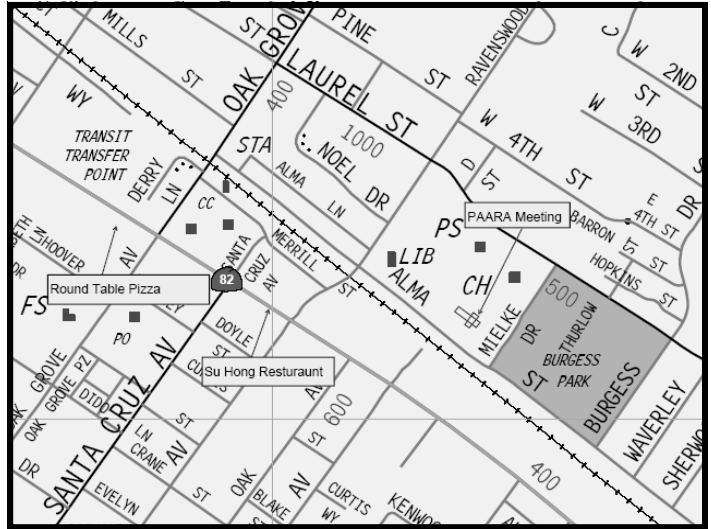
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Directions to PAARA meeting:
<http://paara.org/meetings/>

YOUR AD HERE
 See the next
 page for details

**The following badges are
 ready for pickup:**

**KG6GYG Art; KF6SRD Chuck;
 KG6QKN Franci; K6FEW Frank;
 K6TSR George; N6GYR George;
 KG6ZWQ Henri; N6JCY Joani;
 KG6QKQ Kali; K6FTF Mark; K4AZY Mike;
 KJ6GBC Tony; & K6VVK Vincent**

If you would like to
 order a badge, see
Lynn Gentry, KG6JPV.

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 st	Doug Teter - KG6LWE
2 nd	Robin Yee—KI6YTA
3 rd	Jack Pines - W1VSL
4 th	Marty Wayne - W6NEV
5 th	Mike Bray - N6MEB



Join us for pre-meeting eyeball
Eye Ball QSO
 gab & gobble

Food will be served at 6:00 sharp, so guests will be on time for the PAARA meeting. Those arriving late will be responsible for their own food order.

5:30 pm—at Su Hong Restaurant
1039 El Camino Real
Menlo Park

*across from Kepler's Book Store
 on El Camino Real
 Walking distance from Caltrain!*

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 Menlo Park Rec Center, 700 Alma Street, Menlo Park, CA.

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).

Make payment to the Palo Alto Amateur Radio Association, P.O. Box 911, Menlo Park, CA 94026-0911

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**DON'T
FORGET!**

**Amateur
Radio
Technology
Day**

October
23rd, 2010

8AM to
9PM

at the SLAC
National
Accelerator
Laboratory

Ilse Beck, E. A. , KI6IBM

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W6AZ



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Text: MSWORD, RTF, or TEXT

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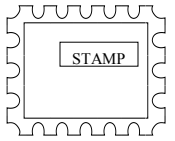
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