



Southwestern REACTer



FEBRUARY 2018





**SOUTHWESTERN
REACT, Inc.**

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OFFICERS

President: Roger McCollough
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Vice-President: John Wright
SWR 042

Secretary: Jay Pistiolas
SWR 046

Treasurer: June McCollough
SWR 054

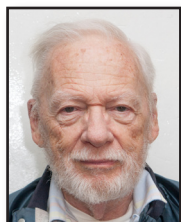
Director-At-Large:
Jim Patterson
SWR 151

SWR's mission is to prepare for communications during emergencies and disasters. This preparation is accomplished through working community events such as: The Lakeside Western Days, and North Park Toyland parades, the Midnight Madness Bicycle Ride and Fiesta Island Time Trials, the Silver Strand Half-Marathon, the San Diego International Triathlon and the Descanso Endurance Horse Ride

The Southwestern REACT General Meeting is held the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM at:
2650 Melbourne Drive
San Diego, CA

Reactive Team Net

The Team net is held on the first and fourth Thursdays of the month at 8:00 PM on the 449.440 Community based Repeater with a negative offset and a PL tone of 107.2 (Mt. Otay)



Strength Through Learning

By Roger McCollough, SWR 098, President

The Value of Others Experience

Every day we are exposed to the life and times of others.

Our day to day life is our opportunity to grow and learn. Failure to take advantage of this improvement option will stunt mental growth. This is clear to most, if not all of you.

Just such an opportunity this past week was the annual Quartzfest 2018, held during this last week (Jan 21-27) at Mile-post 99 on Hwy 95 south of Quartzsite. About this time, for the past 10+ years hams have gathered in the southern portion of the Quartzsite Festival, a gathering of 10,000 RVs covering the landscape. Quartzfest (the ham gathering) is one of many different groups that gather, with the purpose of sharing knowledge in many phases of amateur radio.

Examples of this sharing are some of the over 120 seminars held over the week:

- Winlink Express and ARDOP Update
- HF Intro Sessions 1-5
- Pneumatic Antenna Launchers
- Passing the Ham Test (by Gordon West) and several testing sessions
- Introduction to Raspberry Pi
- Communications Experiences in Puerto Rico
- Go Fly a Drone
- Resonant vs Non-resonant Antennas
- Several I.S.S. fly-overs and contacts

Non-amateur events also were presented that were also popular, such as:

- Prospecting Tips and Equipment
- Linux Programming

- A trail ride through areas of old campsites and mine and mountain area of interest (5-6 hours)
- Photography Classes with a contest. Focusing on Nature, People, Technical, Animals, and other.
- And, of course, Basket Weaving and a swap meet.

Of course there is plenty of time for gathering of old friends (and new ones), a dinner featuring "Hobo Stew", and for entertainment, some musical hams offering up a "Hootenanny" around the main campfire. But for the purpose of this article, I wish to stress that beyond the fun and opportunity to checkout things of interest, there is the opportunity to contact real experts to share their knowledge. And don't be shy about what you have for others. For next year (2019), the date should be Jan 20-26. Set your calendar now and look for the 2019 plan at www.quartzfest2019.org or Google Quartzfest later this year.

Or consider a trial view at a Quartzfest compact version at the Yuma Hamfest coming up Friday Feb. 16 and Saturday, Feb. 17. It offers a smaller list of similar list of seminars and activities including a fair sized swap meet. Check it out at www.yumahamfest.org/.

Our strength is in our desire to learn.

"Nuf said..."

Let's GIT 'ER DONE!!!

pres@southwesternreact.org ➤

American Red Cross Communication Team Report

By June McCollough, SWR 054

The ARCCT meeting was held on Jan 6, 2018. Discuss of the ARCCT at the Lilac Fire was reviewed. Feb and March meetings will be Boot Camp training for the communication team for American Red Cross.

ARCCT has a net every Tuesday night at 2000 hours (8:00 PM) on the ACS Frequency: 147.195; all amateur

radio operators are welcome to check-in.

The Regular meetings are held on the first Saturday of the month at 9:00 AM at 3950 Calle Fortunada, San Diego CA 92123. These are open meeting for anyone unless they are discussing confidential ARC business. ➤

Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS)

By June McCollough, SWR 054

The ACS meeting was held on Jan 8, 2018. Laura Curvey was introduced as the new OES volunteer liaison. The recognition of service will be done at the February meeting.

The Sheriff's Department Organizational Chart, showing the chain of command, was passed out.

There was a training moment; members brought their field programmable radio and were requested to program a certain simplex frequency with a PL tone and then to program it as a repeater frequency.

ACS has a net every Monday except First Monday or

County Holidays at 1930 hours. It starts on frequency 147.195 and then moves to 448.78, 52.600, and 223.800. If you would like to check it out, please feel free to check-in as visitor when requested at the end of the formal part of the Net.

ACS upcoming event(s) and training: No upcoming events or training scheduled.

The Regular meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 1830 hours (6:30 PM) at the Office of Emergency Services. ➤

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)

By John Wright, SWR042

The ARES meeting for January was held Saturday, January 13, 2018 at Scripps memorial hospital, La Jolla at 8:00 AM.

Among the topics discussed at the meeting was the recent censure of ARRL Southwestern Division Director Dick Norton, N6AA, for his alleged violation of the ARRL Board of Directors Code of Conduct. At the time of the censure, the code prohibited directors from discussing actions of the board that were not previously published.

Also discussed was the upcoming Board of Directors meeting and items that were proposed to be put before the board. Information was made available about a website giving an alternate view of the board's actions: www.myarrlvoice.org.

The next statewide hospital drill was discussed. This drill is taking place a month earlier than normal and will include a mass casualty scenario, possibly an earthquake. A communications blackout is also part of the scenario and could last 30 minutes or longer. Because the comms blackout and the fact the state is now adding

clinics and other non-hospital care facilities to the list of locations required to participate in these drills, there is an increasing demand for qualified ham radio operators to participate in this drill. If you are considering participating in ARES, now would be the time.

A number of new appointments were made at the meeting. They are as follows:

- Kevin Walsh, KK6FRK, Assistant Section Manager for Youth
- Gary Asbury, N6GLS, Valley Center Assistant Emergency Coordinator
- Roni Elsberry, W6PEM, Oceanside Emergency Coordinator
- Gary English, W5WYQ, Carlsbad Emergency Coordinator
- Art Hochberg, AE6O, Solana Beach Emergency Coordinator and CERT
- Bob Garvin, KK6YLW, Chula Vista Emergency Coordinator

- Curtis Price, K6IBP, Imperial Beach Emergency Coordinator

The most recent copy of the ARES Comm Plan reflecting the above changes has been disseminated. It is too long to include in an issue of the REACTER, so if anyone

would like a copy, contact the editor directly at editor@southwesternreact.org.

The meeting was followed by the Gateway Communicator Workshop. ➤

Building A Headset Switchbox For a VHF/UHF Radio

Article and Photos by John Wright, SWR 042

Last May I volunteered to be the off-site net control operator for the ARES hospital drill. It was an interesting experience and I definitely learned a few things.

One of the more important lessons I learned was that I didn't have enough hands to hold a microphone *and* accomplish everything I needed to, especially when it came to log keeping. And since evolution didn't see fit to grace me with a prehensile tail—as some of the lesser primates have—to hold the microphone, I felt I could use my intellect to come up with a solution.

What first came to mind was using a headset and footswitch as many amateurs do, myself included, on their HF rigs. The problem was adapting a headset to a VHF/UHF mobile radio. To the best of my knowledge, it wasn't commonly done.

The radio I wanted to adapt was the Yaesu FTM-100DR System Fusion® mobile I use as my 2 meter/70 cm base station radio. I muddled over how to do this for some time, always coming up with ideas that required skills I just didn't have and were less than satisfactory. Then it dawned on me!

Who's the leader in headsets for amateur radio? Why Bob Heil of Heil Sound, of course. <https://heilsound.com/> Heil makes all kinds of adapters designed to connect their headsets and PTT switches to all varieties of ham radios. There is a nifty

little search page that will take right to the adapter(s) you will need for your particular radio.

<https://heilsound.com/heil-amateur-radio/support/adapter-selector/>

Using this feature, I found that to adapt my FTM-100DR, I needed a Heil AD-100 to go from the 6 pin RJ11 modular microphone plug on the radio to a standard Yaesu 8 pin mi-

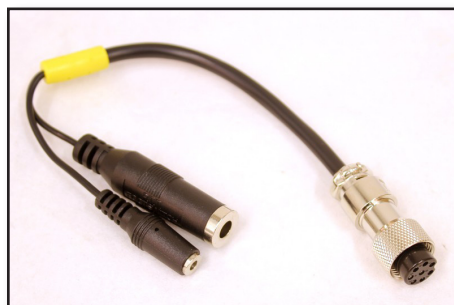


The Heil Pro Micro single sided headset.



The AD-100 adapter from Heil Sound.

crophone connector and also a Heil AD-1-Y Yaesu 8 pin to microphone and footswitch connectors. (The headset earphone connects directly into the audio output jack on the



Heil Sound AD-1-Y adapter.

back of the radio.) I decided on the Heil Pro Micro single sided-headset for a number of reasons. I would have one ear uncovered so I could monitor the secondary frequency during a drill and if I chose to use

the setup in a vehicle, the headset would be legal under California law.

In September, I attended the HAMCON event in Torrance, CA and purchased the headset and both adapters at the convention. When I returned home, I immediately connected everything up to the FTM-100DR and tried it out. It worked perfectly, but I ran into a minor issue. I wanted to be able to have the regular microphone and speaker available for times when I was not conducting a net and came to the conclusion that plugging and unplugging all the various elements involved was too inconvenient and time consuming. I needed a way of switching back and forth easily.

My feeble brain finally realized that half the work was already done for me. The Yaesu mobile radios all use a 6 pin RJ-11 modular connector for their microphones. Since the RJ series connectors are widely used in computer applications, it was a simple matter to find a two-position data switch with the appropriate



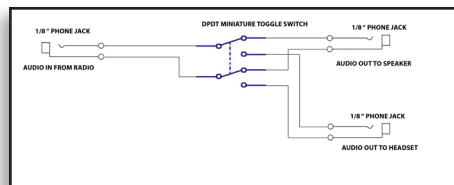
Front and rear views of the data switchbox as received.

RJ-11 connectors on it. Yay, Amazon!

The purchased switchbox handled all the PTT and microphone audio functions between the stock Yaesu hand mic and the Heil headset, but there was no provision for switching the radio's audio from the external speaker I use and the earphone of the headset. I had to add those functions to the box.

I drilled four additional holes in the switchbox, two on the front and two on the rear. I installed a miniature DPDT toggle switch in one front hole and 1/8 inch phone jacks in the other

three holes. I then wired it according to the following schematic:



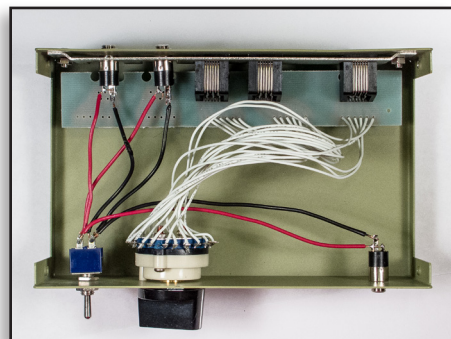
The switch is mounted on the front of the box as is the jack giving audio output to the headset. The audio in and audio out to the speaker jacks are on the rear of the box. The last



The front and rear of the finished switchbox.

step was to label the switch and the jacks.

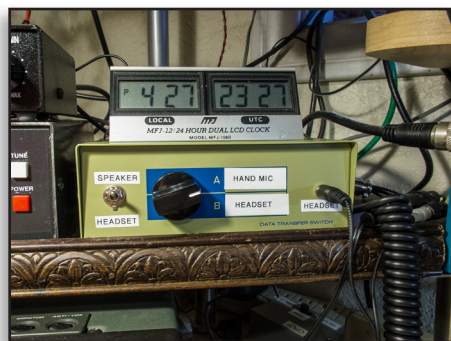
Lastly, I purchased another foot switch to use with the box as moving



Interior wiring. The red and black wiring was added.

the one connected to my HF radio was also inconvenient.

When the next hospital drill rolled around in November, I put the box to good use. It was very handy being able to operate with my hands free, yet able to switch back to normal operation by throwing two switches.



The switchbox installed on the operating desk.

This worked so well, I built a second one to use with my Go-Kits. ➤

Event

Campagnolo San Diego Granfondo
Encinitas Half Marathon
Lakeside Western Days Parade
Descanso Endurance Horse Ride
San Diego International Triathlon
Giro di San Diego
Silver Strand Half Marathon

Upcoming Events

Date

04/28/2018 (Sun)
03/04/2018 (Sun)
TBA
05/19-20/2018 (Sat-Sun)
06/24/2018 (Sun)
10/21/2018 (Sun)
11/11/2018 (Sun)

Cover Photo

"Throwback Thursday!"

The cover photograph shows a Southwestern REACT team member atop a tower at the San Diego Bayfair

unlimited hydroplane races in 2006. Photographer unknown.

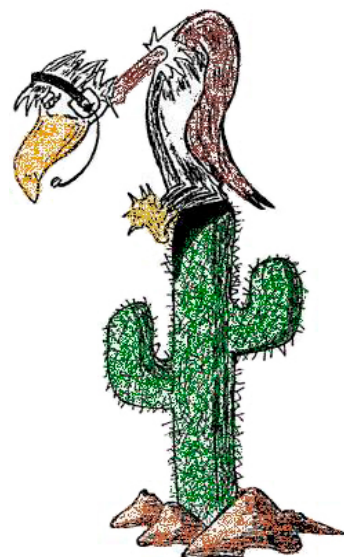
2018 Southwestern Division Convention

Yuma Hamfest

Yuma, Arizona

Feb. 16 & 17, 2018

Yuma County Fairgrounds
2520 East 32nd Street, Yuma, Arizona



www.yumahamfest.org

Check the Website for Additional Information

Gates Open for Camping Thursday, 2 pm Vendor Setup Friday, 7 am - Noon	Event Hours Friday, Noon - 5 pm Saturday, 8 am - 5 pm	Hamfest Dinner & Grand Prize Drawing Saturday Night 6:00 - 8:00 pm
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**Vendors & Exhibitors
Consignment Sales
License Testing
Hourly Door Prizes
On-site RV Camping
Hamfest Dinner
ARRL Speakers
Transmitter Hunt
\$5.00 Admission**

**Tailgating (Swap Meet)
Full Seminar Schedule
DXCC Card Checking
\$25,000 in Grand Prizes
Emergency Preparedness
Admission Prizes
Hospitality Area
Near Space Balloon Launch
Antenna Clinic & T-hunt**

W1AW /7 Special Event Station

Hamfest Talk-In Frequency: 146.780 (–) PL 103.5 Hz

Email Contact: ***info@yumahamfest.org***



We are proud to have the Amateur Radio
Council of Arizona (ARCA) as a sponsor of
our event.

The Yuma Hamfest is an American Radio
Relay League (ARRL) sanctioned event.



Presented by the Yuma Amateur Radio Hamfest Organization