

# Contra Costa Communication Club Communicator

December 2021

Repeater ID: WA6KQB 145.110, 224.300, 44.275 PL 82.5 Simplex 146.505

Packet "Node" CC4CC 145.05 Packet "Mail Box"

WA6KQB – 1 Home Page: <http://www.wa6kqb.org>

Club Address: CCCC Inc, PO Box 20661, El Sobrante, Ca. 94820-0661

## CCCC's Club Mtg

January 9, 2022

Sunday at 10:00 am

On Zoom

A Non-Profit Club Dedicated to Service

### CCCC President

Hello everyone!

This has been quite a year and quite a couple of years now since we have been able to hold a meeting except through Zoom. I am thankful for our Zoom meetings.

It has been a quiet year while this pandemic has been going on. I'd like to thank each of you who have been able to join us during our monthly Zoom meetings. In my opinion, we are a strong group, and we can conform to whatever it takes to be an active member in our club. Thank you all for joining us!

I hope all of you had a nice Christmas and have a very good New Year! Please continue to join us at our monthly Zoom meetings. It's always good to see familiar faces and new faces too.

Happy New Year to all of you!

**Burgie Jones, KE6MSF**

**CCCC President**

## **CCCC Membership Report**

**December 14,2021**

We had no new members this month. We lost Larry Doyle who moved out of state.

So far, eleven members have paid their dues for 2022. Please send your dues and any changes to your phone, address, call sign, or license class.

Regular working members' dues are \$30.00. Retired members pay \$20.00 and family members with a paid regular or retired member also pay \$20.00. Lifetime membership is \$300.00.

Send dues to:

CCCC Inc.  
P.O. Box 20661  
El Sobrante, Ca 94820-0661

**Audrey Nieman, W6BBQ**  
**CCCC Membership Chairman**

**CCCC Treasurer's Report:**

**December 14, 2021:**

**Checking Account:**

Balance Forward:	\$4977.84
Donations:	None
Dues:	220.00
Returned Hotspot:	120.00
New balance:	\$5297.84

**Savings Account:**

New Balance:	\$631.72
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Thank you for supporting the Club!

**Audrey Nieman, W6BBQ**  
**CCCC Treasurer**

## **CCCC Minutes**

### **December 2021**

**Present:** Jan Kuhl, Burgie Jones, Gary Savelli, Mathison Ott, Roger Nelums, Joe Mangiantini, Michael Nicholson, Xia Horowitz, Howdy Goudey, Alvin Todd, Wing Lok, and Audrey Nieman.

**Call to Order:** President Burgie called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

**Minutes:** The members approved the minutes as printed in the **Communicator**. Secretary Jan reported on the Trivia Games for November. There were twenty participants throughout the month and there was only one question no one answered correctly.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Audrey reported that eleven members have paid their 2022 dues so far. She encouraged everyone to get their dues in as soon as possible.

**Technical Committee:** Roger reported that there is a bad connection that sometimes causes noise. A bad weld may be the problem since the committee tightened all the connections. Howdy and Mathison installed a faster link for Roger to connect to the repeater. Rob, a member of the Marin club and Doug Slusher also diagnosed the repeater problems. The committee is considering installing another antenna and feedline if the problems persist so that Roger could remotely switch antennas if needed.

The property owner has installed a new fence around the repeater site.

**Nomination Committee:** The Nomination Committee requested any nominations to the Board from the membership, but they received none. They polled all the Board members who agreed to serve another year. The membership approved a unanimous ballot to continue the existing Board members in their current positions for 2022.

**Nets Reports:** Alvin has put together a new Simplex Net for Saturday mornings, following the three CCCC Nets at 9:00 am. It is open to Richmond CERT members and to anyone who can tune to 147.450 MHz

Alvin will be sending an email invitation for a Holiday Zoom meeting on Sunday evening on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December at 7:00 pm.

President Burgie adjourned the meeting at 10:30 am.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Audrey Nieman W6BBQ  
Substituting for Jan Kuhl AC5RB**

## **December Featured CCCC Member:**

Karen Fenton asked Xia Horowitz to submit an article as to how and why she became interested in Ham radios. Chris Harwood is currently Elmering Xia, and is just as impressed as Karen is, of Xia' tenacity of obtaining her Ham license. Here is Xia's article on her endeavor for emergency communications.

### **How to Get a Ham License in COVID Times**

Why did I get interested in ham radio? Well, it's a little bit of a story.

I lost phone and internet communication in the PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff's a couple of years ago. My local cell tower stopped working, so my neighborhood was effectively cut off from the outside world! Those shutoffs, plus the wildfires, made me start thinking more seriously about emergencies, and I got involved with a local neighborhood emergency planning group in late November in the middle of COVID times.

Karen, who mentors our little group in the easternmost part of Richmond, introduced the idea of FRS radios. These small walkie-talkies are good for communicating around the neighborhood, which could be useful in the event of an evacuation or to call for help for a neighbor. We bought a half dozen inexpensive FRS radios on Amazon and started practicing around the neighborhood successfully in February.

Karen also suggested I try listening for transmissions on FRS channels, 20, 21, and 22. She told me that they were "repeaters" (special receiving/transmitting towers) in Orinda, Moraga and Lafayette that could be heard on those channels, and I might be able to pick something up from beyond the neighborhood. Sure enough, I could hear intermittent Morse Code beeps on one of the channels! Karen also put me in touch with Chris, who lives only a mile or two away and he became my Elmer. I was able to contact him on FRS. (Hams who have a lot of knowledge and who enjoy helping newbies learn how to use radios are informally

known as “Elmer’s”, and they are great resources both for technical questions support and encouragement!)

Karen told us about GMRS radios, the next level up in radio communications. She said that we would be able to communicate over a longer range on GMRS and listen in on (but not transmit to) ham radio operators using GMRS. I filled out the online form, paid the fee, and got my GMRS license and call sign in July. Using a borrowed GMRS radio, suddenly, I could hear a bunch more conversations, including regularly scheduled “ham nets”, which are on-the-air gatherings of amateur radio operators. After listening to a few of the nets, I really wanted to be able to participate. But of course, you’re not allowed to do that with just a GMRS license.

So, I started looking online, googling “how to get your ham radio license”. Having listened to the ham nets and conversations, I figured licensing should be a simple thing. Surprise! There’s a lot of technical knowledge you must have, to pass the exam for even the most basic ham license, called a Technical Class license. “Well, I’m a smart person, I’ll just get a book! “I got a hold of a couple of books on ham radio and quickly realized that the information was too dry and dense for me to learn and retain just by reading. I could understand what I was reading, but it didn’t stick.

I thought about attending a class, but at the time, nothing was offered in person. I think due to COVID. I’ve never been a huge fan of online learning, but that was the only real option in the summer of 2021. Also, one thing I know is that if something is repeated enough, I’ll remember it. So, I looked for an online class that I could access on demand, whenever it was convenient for me, and watch or listen to lessons repeatedly, to drum the information into my head.

The one I chose was hamradioprep.com. Their fee, which includes lifetime unlimited access, is about \$50, for the Technician License class, they break the information into 10 lessons that vary in length from about 5 minutes to 20 minutes each. Each lesson is presented as a video clip, with a speaker and some illustrations. It’s followed by a written transcript of the lesson, and a quiz. I could listen to or read each lesson as many times as I wanted, whenever I wanted, and of course it was totally private.

It's possible to go through all 10 lessons in a day, but I knew that wasn't going to work for me, because I needed time to let it sink in, so I limited myself to one lesson a day. After I finished all 10 lessons, I went on the American Radio Relay League website, [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org), and took one of their free practice tests.

I passed that first practice test with 74%, which is the minimum passing score. That was encouraging...ish! I decided to keep studying but to go ahead and schedule a date for the test. The ARRL website has options for local test sites and an online test option. I scheduled a time to take the real exam in person a few weeks into the future. To make sure that I wouldn't mess up on the big day, I went through the hamradioprep.com lessons again several times in the meantime, until my ARRL practice tests started scoring in the 90's. I took a test every day to keep in practice and went back to the lessons when I needed to.

I took the test offered by the Mt. Diablo ham club in Lafayette and passed with no problem on August 20. That was 30 days from the date I started studying, though I spent a few months making the decision to go for it in the first place! I saw that there were some online classes that promise to teach you everything you know in a day – Ham crams! I'm not sure how that would have worked for my middle-aged brain. For me personally, slow, and steady over a few weeks made more sense.

Once I got my license, I was super nervous to make my first attempt to transmit on a net – my heart rate must've been through the roof! But I told everyone that this was my very first call, and they were very welcoming. Whew! I've joined in on a few different nets and have made the mostly virtual acquaintance of some really nice people.

I'm still just a beginner, a radio kindergartener in effect, but so far it's been very rewarding, and I feel a certain amount of additional security knowing that I have one more way to connect to the outside world.

**Xia**  
**K2XIA**



## **My method: How to get your ham radio license**

1. Borrow or purchase a GMRS radio
2. Listen to the ham radio nets as often as possible (see <http://www.ebarc.org.html> for a list of local nets). Get familiar with how ham radio operators communicate, their terminology and their etiquette
3. Choose a class or a book to study the basics of ham radio. (I used [www.hamradioprep.com](http://www.hamradioprep.com), which charges a fee, but there are other classes and books available, some free)
4. Study, study, study and keep listening to those nets
5. Take free practice tests at <http://www.arrl.org/exam-practice>
6. Find a license exam location and date at <http://www.arrl.org/find-an-amateur-radio-license-exam-session>, and schedule your test
7. Take a practice test every day until the day of your test.

**Article submitted by:**

**Xia Horowitz**

**K2XIA**

## **Holiday Zoom Meeting:**

This year, on Sunday evening, December 19<sup>th</sup>, at 7 pm, I hosted a Holiday Zoom meeting, as an alternative to our annual CCCC Christmas party.

There were: Audrey Nieman, Jan Kuhl, Diane Richwine, Carrie Joy, Xia Horowitz, (she attended while in New York city), David Swanson, Mathison Ott, and me.

I led off with my introduction, related what was going on with my family during the holidays, and what plans we might have for the coming new year. To which, everyone had an opportunity to do as well.

Time limits weren't set in stone, and everyone got to visit with each other. We never had to mute anyone, and it was quite enjoyable. The whole meeting lasted maybe a little more than an hour.

Hopefully we will be able to see each other in person for our annual CCCC Christmas party in 2022.

Happy New Year!

**Alvin, KK6UQX,  
CCCC Editor**

**CCCC Editor**

Hello Members,

Christmas, like Thanksgiving and Halloween, are my favorite holidays. Not for the presents, gifts, food or even candy, but for the underlining of family time, friends, sharing, and being a good neighbor.

The same can be done with a membership with Contra Costa Communication Club, or any ham radio club. Ham radios communications are always practicing with Emergency communications as well as local club nets, as a way of developing and maintaining those skills. Also, a membership with a ham radio club, the Elmer's, experienced hams, will always be the example for the "newbies". They are a constant reference for protocols and troubleshooting. And if you ever need anything, they not only give you equipment, but they'll also plan and help install whatever it is you need.

This month Xia, K2XIA, is the featured article on her process to obtain emergency radio communications. She began by seeking out emergency communications due power shutoffs in her neighborhood. Xia was able to connect with Karen, KK6ZPM, who was doing communications outreach. And Karen set Xia up with Chris Harwood, AA6AT, to Elmer her, and now Xia has become an Elmer.

Hoping everyone is safe and happy.

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

**Alvin, KK6UQX,**

**CCCC Editor**

**Print This Page For reference**

**Contra Costa Communication Club Inc – Daily and Weekly Nets**

<b>Days</b>	<b>Net Controller</b>		<b>Repeater/net Name/Time</b>
Monday	Audrey	W6BBQ	145.110 MHz – Over the Hill Net
Tuesday	Jan	AC5RB	
Wednesday	Roger	KE6SZG	7:10 am
Thursday	Gary	KG6RGA	
Friday	Alvin	KK6UQX	
Weekly - Tuesday By Arrangement	Dj Confirmation by Dj	KJ6DJ	444.275 MHz – Digital Net – 7:30 pm FI-Digi Net By Arrangement
Weekly - Tuesday	Net Control Rotates		224.300 MHz – Open Net – 7:30 pm
Weekly - Thursday	Members Rotates		145.110 MHz – West Contra Costa County Emcomm Net – 6:45 pm
Weekly – Thursday	1 <sup>st</sup> week: Audrey	W6BBQ	145.110 MHz – Club Net
	2 <sup>nd</sup> week: Audrey	W6BBQ	7:30 pm
	3 <sup>rd</sup> week: Jan	AC5RB	
	4 <sup>th</sup> week: Jeff	KJ6RHF	
	5 <sup>th</sup> week: Dj	KJ6DJ	
Saturday	Alvin	KK6UQX	0900 - 145.110 MHz Bay Shores Emcomm Net 0915 - 224.300 MHz 220 Net 0930 – 444.275 MHz 440 Open Net

**CCCC Website:** <http://wa6kqb.org>

Club officers for 2022  
President: Burgie Jones, KE6MSF (2022)  
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V. Pres: Wing Lok, K6YDE (2022)  
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Secretary: Jan Kuhl, AC5RB (2022)  
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## Committee Chairs

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