Southwestern REACTer

APRIL 2026

Southwestern REACT SAN DIEGO C-475

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Southwestern REACT, Inc. is an affiliate of REACT International

OFFICERS

President: Roger McCollough SWR 098

Vice-President: John Wright SWR 042

Secretary: Mike Bailey, SWR 092

Treasurer: June McCollough SWR 054

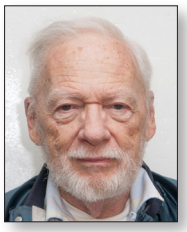
Director-At-Large: Larry Bierma, SWR 084

SWR's mission is to prepare for communications during emergencies and disasters. This preparation is accomplished though 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 board meeting is held the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM at the Alvarado Road Denny's Restaurant. Any member is welcome to attend. Contact us for the address.

The Southwestern REACT General Meeting is held the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM on the Zoom application. Contact us for the meeting link.

REACT Team Net
See the website for net information.



I'm No Prophet But…

Roger McCollough, SWR Ø98, President

A.I.: Then and Now and +++? Who Would Have Known?

Prologue:

Back on May of 2023 my article dealt with the newest thing on the Internet; the creation capabilities of the new wonder Artificial Intelligence or AI. My text was a fictional chat with AI. to create my next article for the Reactor. I used some of its response and the rest was what I thought it might respond. AI was very crude but was discovered by students to create school-work.

On the following July, I wrote about AI use by asking for a useful article for you. Its answer seemed more as a manifesto of disrespect for us (Carbon-based Infestation) society in general. I disconnected from that site (I thought), but it must have read my article and was not pleased but offered the following without promoting AI. Originally I asked for an article to catch the interest of the Team, its activities, value to the community and emergency response. This is it's immediately with a 8 point alternative textbook answer [see July, 2023 Reactor for details].

OH HOW TIMES H AVE CHANGED!!! Almost anything that can connect directly or indirectly to the internet can reach some sort of AI Portal and chat away; but NOT on your amateur radio. Why do I say that? I heard a conversation recently of several Hams suggesting that very option, so let's see the problem.

AI vs the Amateur Radio Service. Rules vs Practical Policies and Use

There are Limits? Of Course!

The first and most major hurdle is AI is not licensed to operate/talk on the air in this service. The conversation began with the suggestion that If a ham requests a signal check, AI would respond. Okay so far BUT any response would have to be a pre-formatted response, created from actual measurement equipment. In other words, it not making use of AI, simply the voice announcer similar to that found in various repeater controllers. AI could not think an answer as this may violate allowable transmissions.

Then it was suggested making it so you could chat with AI on the air. Well the answer above should prevent that, PLUS once such a chat started, you might as well consider the repeater as "A Permanent Busy", similar to the stuff you can hear on some LA area repeaters. Remember that everything hinges on if, somehow, the AI station has an amateur license. You are not allowed to communicate with unlicensed stations.

Opportunities? You Judge,

Someday these hurdles may be overcome, but let's no rush into it without understanding that once the door is open, bad thing can also crawl in.

How Would We Make it so?

It took two years to get to this point, so maybe in two years I'll have a better answer. Stay tuned.

Future Live General Meetings. June 18, 2026 Please Mark your calendar.

"Nuf said…"

let's GIT' ER DONE!!!

Events 2026

Event	Date	Status	Coordinator
~~Fiesta Island Time Trials~~	~~02/15/26 Sun~~	~~Completed~~	~~MIKE, 092~~
~~Touch-A-Truck~~	~~03/01/26 Sun~~	~~Completed~~	~~PER, 053~~
~~Fiesta Island Time Trials~~	~~03/29/26 Sun~~	~~Completed~~	~~JOHN, 042~~
Campagnolo San Diego Gran Fondo	04/19/26 Sun	Approved	MIKE, 092
Lakeside Western Days Parade	04/25/26 Sat	Approved	TBA
Giro De San Diego	06/06/26 Sat	Approved	MIKE, 092
San Diego International Triathlon	06/28/26 Sun	Approved	TBA
San Diego Triathlon Classic	09/12/26 Sat	Approved	PER, 053
Fiesta Island Time Trials	09/27/26 Sun	Approved	TBA
Silver Strand Half Marathon	11/08/26 Sun	Approved	PER, 053
Fiesta Island Time Trials	11/15/26 Sun	Approved	TBA

REMINDER: Once you sign up for an event, the Coordinator is depending on you. The Coordinator is also the SOLE contact point for anything regarding the event, particularly attendance. If, for some reason, it turns out you are unable to work the event, contact the Coordinator as soon as possible — contact information will be in the Event Briefing Form sent out prior to the event — and let them know you are unable to attend.

After Action Report, Fiesta Island Time Trials, March 29, 2026

John Wright, SWR 042

Event Position:
Coordinator and Net Control

Observations:
- Some operators were unprepared.
- Two personnel that committed to the event didn't show up and didn't call.

Notable Occurrences:
New signage has been added indicating pedestrians on the island during the event are to stay off the roadway. (See image below.)

However, this warning did not prevent a physical assault on one of the FITT volunteers by an irate pedestrian. To the best of my knowledge, a police report has been filed, but the perpetrator was gone by the time of the report. The victim was treated and released by the on-scene ambulance personnel.

During the event there was a report of an adrift jet ski in the area of the North 1 position. Police were notified and they in turn referred it to the City Lifeguards. It was later learned that the jet ski had been beached on Fiesta Island at the beginning of the event and likely floated away on the rising tide. The final outcome of the incident is unknown.

What Didn't Work:
Operations for this event were conducted on 446.500 simplex. Some interference from other signals was experienced but was at a lower level than was easily understood.

Work-Arounds, Solutions:
At least one operator was able to squelch out the above interference, but it seemed to be by location. I was unable to remove the interference with the squelch.

One operator had accidentally activated the WIRES function on his Yaesu mobile, but through assistance from another operator was able to deactivate the function easily.

What Worked Well:
Net Control was established at the Youth Camp entrance which is the highest point on the island accessible by

vehicle. This location, coupled with a half-wave antenna on the roof of the vehicle greatly facilitated simplex communications throughout the island. All stations were easily heard, both from their vehicles and on handheld radios.

Note: Pre-event testing indicated that good simplex communications were also found on 145.555MHz, our usual 2 meter simplex frequency. It is recommended that the use of a cross-band repeater for this event be discontinued.

Suggestions for Next Time:

In view of the altercation between an irate pedestrian and a member of the FITT Team, I am reluctant to expose Southwestern REACT personnel to the potential of another similar incident occurring in the future. The San Diego Bicycle Club and the FITT organizers need to come to an agreement with the City of San Diego regarding pedestrians on the island during the FITT events.

Despite the routine cautions about having their radios pre-programmed before the event, several operators were still programming radios during the pre-event briefing.

Some of the difficulties were not of their making, however. According to the Southern California Repeater and Remote Base Association (SCRRBA) the local Coordinating organization for the 70cm Amateur Radio Band, 446.500MHz and 446.520MHz (also in our Comm Plan) are designated for simplex use with no digital. The National band plan for 70cm indicates the segment 445.000 — 447.000 is shared between auxiliary and control links, repeaters and simplex, with simplex being a local option. Our use of the two frequencies is legitimate within the SCRRBA band plan for SoCal. Because the National Band Plan indicates repeater use is permitted, radios such as Yaesu, will automatically append an offset and direction to these frequencies during hand programming. Operators are cautioned to ensure an offset is not entered when programming these frequencies for simplex. The Southwestern REACT Communications Plan has been amended with this caution.

Older Yaesu radios are equipped with Wide-coverage Internet Repeater Enhancement System (WIRES,) This is a defunct internet linking system that really never caught on and isn't to be confused with WIRES-X, the Yaesu digital linking system.

The biggest flaw in the WIRES system on the older analog Yaesu radios was the ease with which it can be activated, utilizing the push of a single button on the face of the radio. Even though the system has been shut down, it can still be activated on the older radios, such as the popular FT-60R, by accidentally hitting the button. When this happens, the radio transmits a loud audible beep at the start of a transmission and cuts off the first couple of words of the transmission.

There are programming steps that can be taken to eliminate this beep, even if the system is activated accidently. Instructions to do this are published in this issue of the REACTER.

The situation with event no-shows will be discussed at the next board meeting.

Images courtesy Willie Sakai, ©Jade Coast Photography.

Disabling Yaesu Wires On Analog Radios

Ridding Yourself Of The Annoying Beep Once And For All

The Yaesu WIRES (Wide-coverage Internet Repeater Enhancement System) proprietary Internet Connection feature operates by transmitting a short (~ 0.1 second) DTMF (Dual Tone Multi Frequency) tone burst each time the Push-to-Talk button is pressed. (This feature is not to be confused with the Yaesu digital WIRES-X system.)

This feature causes problems if turned on accidently. It sends a DTMF Tone when the PTT is keyed, thus blanking out the 1st second or two of your transmission and can confuse the controller of your local repeater, obscure the content of your traffic to net control and very definitely annoy the other operator on the frequency.

In most of the Yaesu manuals this is listed as the Internet Connection Feature.

The WIRES function is turned ON or OFF by:

- FT-60 handheld: Momentary press the 0 key.
- FT-8800 or 8900 mobile radio: Momentary press the left VOL knob.

The WIRES function can be disabled so that it cannot accidentally be turned on using the following steps:

FT-60 – See manual page 49:

1. Press the F/M key then immediately press the 0 key to enter the menu mode.
2. Rotate the Dial knob to menu 23 – **INT MR**.
3. Press the F/M key then rotate the Dial knob to select a memory (d1 through d9) that is empty, i.e. it contains •••••• (six dots) = no tone.
4. Press the F/M key to store the setting.
5. Rotate the Dial knob to menu 21 – **I NET**.
6. Press the F/M key then rotate the Dial knob to select **INT.MEM**.
7. Press the F/M key to store the setting.
8. Press the PTT button to exit the menu mode.

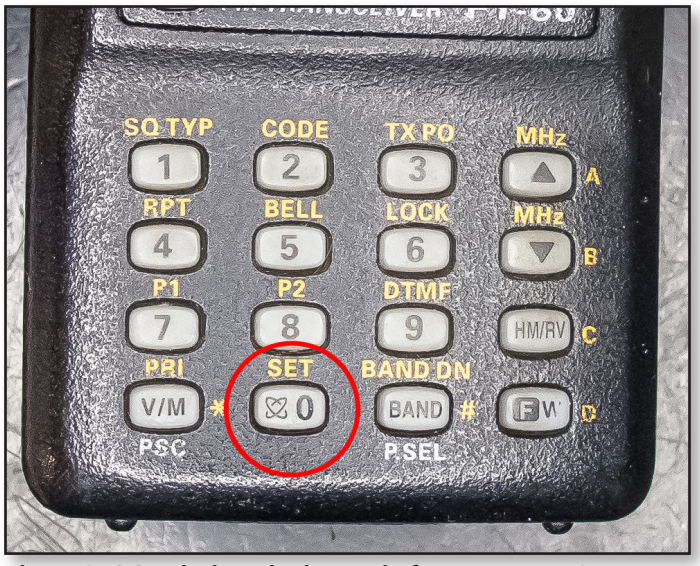
To re-enable the WIRES mode, select **INT.COD** in menu 21.

FT-8800 / FT-8900 – See manual page 50 or 48:

1. Press the SET key momentarily to enter the set mode.
2. Rotate the Main band Dial knob to select menu 15 – **DTMF W**.
3. Press the Main band Dial knob momentarily then rotate the Main band Dial knob to select a memory (d1 through d16) that is empty, i.e. it contains •••••• (six dots) = no tone.
4. Press the Main band Dial knob momentarily to store the setting.
5. Rotate the Main band Dial knob to select menu 17 – **INET**.
6. Press the Main band Dial knob momentarily then rotate the Main band Dial knob to select **INT.MEM**.
7. Press the Main band Dial knob for ½ second to store the setting and exit the menu mode.
8. Rotate the Main band Dial while pressing and holding the left **VOL** knob to select the same memory selected in step 3 above.

To re-enable the WIRES mode, select **INT.COD** in menu 17.

The WIRES Symbol on the front panel of a Yaesu FT-8900R.



The WIRES Symbol on the keypad of a Yaesu FT-60R

The WIRES Symbol as it appears on the screen of a Yaesu FT-60 handheld. This may appear differently on differet radios. Refer to the manual to be sure.

Need Help With Your Handheld Radio?

New hams (and those not-so-new-hams still at "what next?")

We've started a recurring Get On The Air (GOTA) workshop - a hands-on session to get you started using your new radio.

Our next session will be 11-Apr-2026, Saturday at 330pm in Tierrasanta

If you plan to make this session. please RSVP on the web form so we can be prepared with work books, elmers (mentors), etc.

The announcement with details is below.

If you don't have a radio yet, we have a few handhelds that you can sign out and use to practice at the workshop.

Even if you buy a different radio, the concepts will be transferrable (alas, probably not the specific "buttonology").

Hope to see you there!

Remember that we really need everyone to RSVP using the google form link below.

Ham Radio Hand's On Beginner Workshop "Communicator Gateway"

There will be a FREE workshop to help participants "Get

On The Air" (GOTA). Everyone is welcome regardless of club or organization affiliation! This two-hour workshop is intended for anyone getting started (or struggling) with a handheld transceiver "HT" radio.

This is a hands-on workshop, not a lecture. We will have small groups led by Elmers (instructors/mentors). The workshop starts with talking on a provided radio, then shifts to you using your radio. We discuss basics, such as how to turn on a radio and operate in simplex and repeater mode then proceed to manually programming and using a repeater channel. Along the way are numerous tips and hints.

Date: Saturday, 11 April, 2026 3:30pm sharp to about 5:30pm (Please plan to arrive 315p-320p so we can start promptly.)

Location: Tierrasanta Library, 4985 La Cuenta Dr, San Diego, CA 92124

We will meet near the front of the library (perhaps just inside the doors).

map: https://maps.apple.com/place?address=4985%20La%20Cuenta%20Dr,%20San%20Diego,%20CA%20%2092124

What to bring:

1. A handheld radio, if you have one (with a charged battery :-)). Elmers will have a few loaners available. We recommend a dual band 2m/70cm (VHF/UHF) handheld transceiver (HT).

2. The operating manual for your radio. Please bring the entire manual - either paper copy or on a tablet.

3. A pen or pencil, to make notes in your workshop guidebook.

4. A few paper clips or stickies to tab pages in your operating manual during the workshop.

4. NOTE: If your HT is the Baofeng UV-5R (or other Baofeng variant), please visit the MIKLOR DOT COM web site, print, and then bring to class copies of the document, "On the Fly Keyboard Programming."

If you plan to attend the workshop, please RSVP/register in advance so we know how many study guides to produce. The RSVP form is at

https://forms.gle/3Bka9ksnYqqqZfnE8

When you RSVP, please be sure to tell us which radio you will bring (MAKE AND MODEL), and include your call sign (if you have a call sign).

(We need to know the radios coming so that we can try to find the right Elmers for each model of radio and it's "unique" buttonology)

Thank you!

Heather KM6Z, J AF6GM

A new product is on the market that could be beneficial to all amateur radio operators.