



Valley Ham News

The voice of the Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club, a California Non-Profit Corporation



This photo, taken by Bob, N6BOB, shows the final work being completed by an antenna crew at the QTH of Dr. Minh Bui, N6MB. Although you might not hear the doctor on the local repeaters, he is fast becoming an avid DX'er on the HF bands. See the article in this month's VHN from Ron, W6KJ on Minh's antenna.

In This Issue....

- Page 2..... "Odds & Ends" "VE Results" "New Members"
"Ham Radio Links"
- Page 3-4... "Reflections on the Elecraft K3 HF/6m Radio"
- Page 5..... "Future YSARC Events" "Ham Shack of the Month"
- Page 6..... "Minh Bui's Antennas" "Bike Around The Buttes"

YSARC THIS MONTH....

- March 5th - 1730hrs - "Aloha" Dinner at the 2 Bits
Cafe in Yuba City
- March 19th - 1600hrs - YSARC Board Meeting @ QTH
of Marsha, KI6CSN
- April 20th MS Walk 8am - Noon
Bike Around The Buttes - All Day

Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club

PO Box 1169
Yuba City, CA 95992

President

Lonnie Moore, KI6ZYY

Vice President

Mike Eby, KM6EBY

Secretary

Larry Witcher, KE6LAW

Treasurer

Clara Ansley, N6VRH

Board Members

Herb Puckett, W6HBU

Shari Goforth-Eby, K6AVW

Marsha Sylvester-Jose, KI6CSN

June McJunkin, N6JEY

Bob McClard, N6BOB

Repeater Trustee

Dave Gartner, WD6AXM

Monthly YSARC Activities

1st TUESDAY: Club Meeting

3rd TUESDAY: Board Meeting

4th TUESDAY: Newsletter Items

Due to the Editor (kb6yaf@arrl.net)

Every MONDAY Night: NET @ 1900hrs.
(146.085+ PL 127.3)

You can reach us at: ysarc@hotmail.com

ODDS & ENDS

The February board meeting that was scheduled to be held at Clara's house was "86'ed" at the last minute by Lonnie. Well, some didn't get the word and had traveled to Clara's before hearing of the change. Clara had also made a great dessert. The meeting was rescheduled to the 4th Tuesday at Bob McClard's home. Although it went over 2 hours, it appeared to be successful.

Did you know that the ARRL has an email forwarding program?? If you are a member of the ARRL (and I hope everyone is), you can sign up for their email forwarding program for FREE at www.arrl.org If you have heard people say that their email address is "KB6YAF@ARRL.NET" for example, (or your call sign @ arrl.net) that is what your 'forwarding email' is all about. You are given an email address that is your call sign @ ARRL.NET. The email is sent to the ARRL. They automatically forward that email to your regular email address, or the one you register with them. Why is this a great idea? Let's say you can't remember the person's actual email address, but you know they are or might be an ARRL member, just enter their call sign, then the "@" sign, then "arrl.net". Just think if EVERYONE did this, all you would have to remember is their ham radio call sign! Remember, the ARRL only "forwards" the email to you. They are not an email company like aol, yahoo, or gmail.

If you are looking for a super easy solder project, I just completed a 15watt Stereo Amplifier that I ordered from Parts Express at <http://www.parts-express.com/pe/showdetl.cfm?Partnumber=320-322> For a mere \$20, you can use this to add power to any speaker system in your ham shack / music room.

THE LATEST VE RESULTS

Three people took the ham radio license exams and passed:

Leonardo Campidonica - Technician Class

John Neal - Technician Class

Justin Montaneaux - Extra Class

de, LeRoy, KJ6DKM

NEW YSARC MEMBERS

The Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club wishes to welcome Justin "JJ" Montaneaux, KJ6ZVU, a newly upgraded Extra Class ham to our club. We hope JJ comes to the next meeting so we can meet him and shake his hand and welcome him to our club.

HAM RADIO LINKS

There are so many ham related websites on the internet. If I attempted to list even half of them, the VHN could have 50 pages or more to it!! So, I will only list a few. If you would like to suggest a ham related website for the VHN, please [email](mailto:) me and pass on the URL to it.

<http://www.arrl.org/Groups/view/sacramento-valley> - The ARRL Sacramento Valley Section News

<http://www.ysarc.org> - The Official website of the Yuba Sutter Amateur Radio Club

<http://www.elecraft.com/> - The Elecraft Radio Company

http://walkcan.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR?pg=entry&fr_id=19755 - The MS Walk in Yuba City, CA

<http://www.bikearoundthebuttes.com/> - Bike Around The Buttes in Sutter, CA

REFLECTION ON THE ELECRAFT K₃ HF/6 TRANSCEIVER - by Ron Murdock, W6KJ

In my first official act as Section Manager I took W6RFF, Jettie Hill, to a Mother Lode DX Contest Club meeting in Jackson, CA. It was there, in August 2007, I first laid eyes on the Elecraft K3.

Each year at Pacificon, you could see the latest Elecraft creation. The rigs were available as kits, expandable kits. They are pricey, if you compare them to the kits of old (Heathkits, or Allied Radio kits, or some others.)

So, when the Elecraft representative put the prototype on a table at the side of the room, most people went over to hear his introduction. Actually, when the announcement was made to the group, there was momentary silence, then excited whispers. That was interesting. I went over to look, and heard that the price for the bare bones 10 watt radio was going to be in the \$1400 range. I listened to the rep talk about his creation and went back to our table. But I guess the seed was planted.

At Pacificon that year, I talked at length to the Elecraft people. But I had a good radio and was more interested in some of the features than I was in getting in line to buy one. They were selling the K2, a very good radio which is still available and that one did not spark my interest. The features just did not seem to be worth the price.

I've already written about the six month wait for the Flex 3000, and all about that radio (which is still fun and still on the bench.) So it was the Flex with which I was concerned until...

Dayton. A couple of years ago I was at the Hamvention walking through the exhibit area when out of the corner of my eye I saw the KX3 prototype. Not a K3, which was familiar to me by now, but the pound of butter size KX3. I watched with amazement the introduction of this new product. It was to be available in a few months. (All such announcements should be taken with a grain of salt, as engineering is never as complete as it will be and availability is a year or so away.) I put my name on the list for a KX3.

Now I started paying attention to the specifications on the Elecraft products. I reread the reviews in QST and CQ when they became available. I also listened to friends around the country when they said what they were using at Field Day. More and more it was a K2 or K3. Because I respected the experience of these operators, their claims about both radios got my attention.

On November 9, 2011 Jo Anne and I attended a meeting in Redding. It did not get out until after 9 PM and we stayed over night. While driving home on the 10th I decided to ditch the KX3 and get instead a K3/10. I ordered it before noon on the 10th and the kit arrived at 4 PM on the 11th. I spent Friday building the fine little K3/10 transceiver.

It went together like it is supposed to. I began to appreciate design. Things are placed where they are supposed to be, where they are easy to access if access is ever needed. It is just a beautiful way to build a radio. If you ever have built a radio from a kit, you can be sure this one will impress you. The level of sophistication is very high, and the receiver alone is worth the price. There is no soldering, just a screwdriver and a small wrench are the required tools.

As it comes in the box, the case is in pieces. There are many little static proof bags. One of the tools you should have is a static proof mat and a wrist strap to connect yourself to the grounding point. Too much stray voltage on your person during construction of the radio and you might fry some little thing that is very hard to isolate after the smoke test. My radio took 10 hours to build. I had one bad part, so I let Elecraft know via e-mail and the replacement was at my front door on Tuesday.

REFLECTION ON THE ELECRAFT K₃ HF/6 TRANSCEIVER - Continued

Elecraft's address is Aptos, CA. But in truth, the factory is in Watsonville. UPS is quick, so the wait is not much. I built a vanilla 10 watt radio and over the year and a half I have had it, added the 100 watt amplifier, the antenna tuner, four accessory filters, a voice keyer, high stability oscillator for a 10 watt internal 2 meter transverter, and the IF output accessory. My radio looks like the one in the brochure that you can download from the Elecraft website. What it lacks is the second receiver, which at this point I don't expect to buy.

A word about tech support. Both Elecraft and Flex have great tech support. Flex has an e-mail version that is superb. When I call Elecraft I can talk to someone who knows the radio and what constructors face in putting one together. They are patient and enthusiastic. I don't call until I have all the information ready to discuss, then they stay on the line with me, usually on their nickle, and we go step by step through the fix it process. There have only been two, but each was a happy experience.

The K3 has the best receiver I have ever used. It is just amazing to know that there is some powerful station just up frequency but you don't hear him. Each week I prove this to myself, and when using any other radio, I have come to marvel at the brick wall selectivity of the K3.

Independently, the ARRL lab and the Sherwood Engineering folks have placed the K3 receiver at the top of the heap, and the rigs below it are some pretty high priced radios. I actually operate it like I used to operate the Collins KWM2-A when I was on Guam and Okinawa running all those phone patches. The receiver is very hot. One does not need to run the RF gain full tilt. Turn it back to reduce or lose the noise and just enjoy the received signal.

It will copy Morse, RTTY, and PSK 31 without connection to a computer. You can transmit the PSK or RTTY with the CW key. The built in (optional) antenna tuner is among the best I've used. The transmitted audio is first rate. I get nice reports every time I use it.

Pricey, yes. By the time you have filled up the box, you are nearly at \$4500. And it can go higher. If you get the 500 watt amplifier, there is another \$2000. There is an external tuner, very small, but very nice, and it is pricey too. The Elecraft concept is to let the builder start with a basic radio and go with just that, and then when one is ready, expand the capabilities with another option. The P3 panoramic display is a good example. It gives the K3 owner a whole new dimension in operating convenience. The current K3 line appears to be complete now, but who knows.

When I asked about the K4, I was told by the K3 designer that no K4 was on the way, that they had just doubled their warehouse space to enable the company to fill orders coming in from all over the world. This rig is a winner.

DE..... Ron, W6KJ

FUTURE “YSARC” EVENTS

YSARC will be holding a “Ham Fest” on Saturday, June 1, 2013 at the American Legion Hall in Linda, CA

YSARC is helping with communications for the **Yuba Sutter MS Walk** to be held on Saturday, April 20, 2013 which starts at Sam Brannon Park in Yuba City. (POC is Lonnie, KI6ZYY)

YSARC has been asked to provide communications for the 28th Annual **“Bike Around The Buttes”** also held on April 20, 2013. (POC is Russell, KB6YAF. If you worked this event last year, you can keep your same position if desired.)

The March YSARC Dinner Meeting's Theme is “Aloha Tuesday” Please wear your ‘loudest’ Hawaiian type shirts/clothes.

In May, YSARC is looking to hold a BBQ/Picnic. Ideas for a good location can be submitted to any officer or board member.

YSARC’S “HAM SHACK OF THE MONTH”

This month's YSARC “Ham Shack Of The Month” photo was submitted by none other than Ron Murdock, W6KJ. Ron is not only one of YSARC's long standing members, but he also serves as the ARRL Sacramento Valley Section Manager. If you haven't taken the time to chat with Ron about his legendary ham radio adventures, you are missing out. Ron once taught a ham radio class at Yuba Community College back in the middle 1980's. Your editor took the class which resulted in my first Novice Class license. Ron was one of my 'Elmers' into ham radio. Since then, it has been an important part of my life. Thank you Ron for all you have done for me and ham radio. Your ham shack has always been a marvel to see and ever evolving into the 'latest and greatest'. Here is the question of the month: What was Ron's call sign before he acquired “W6KJ” ????

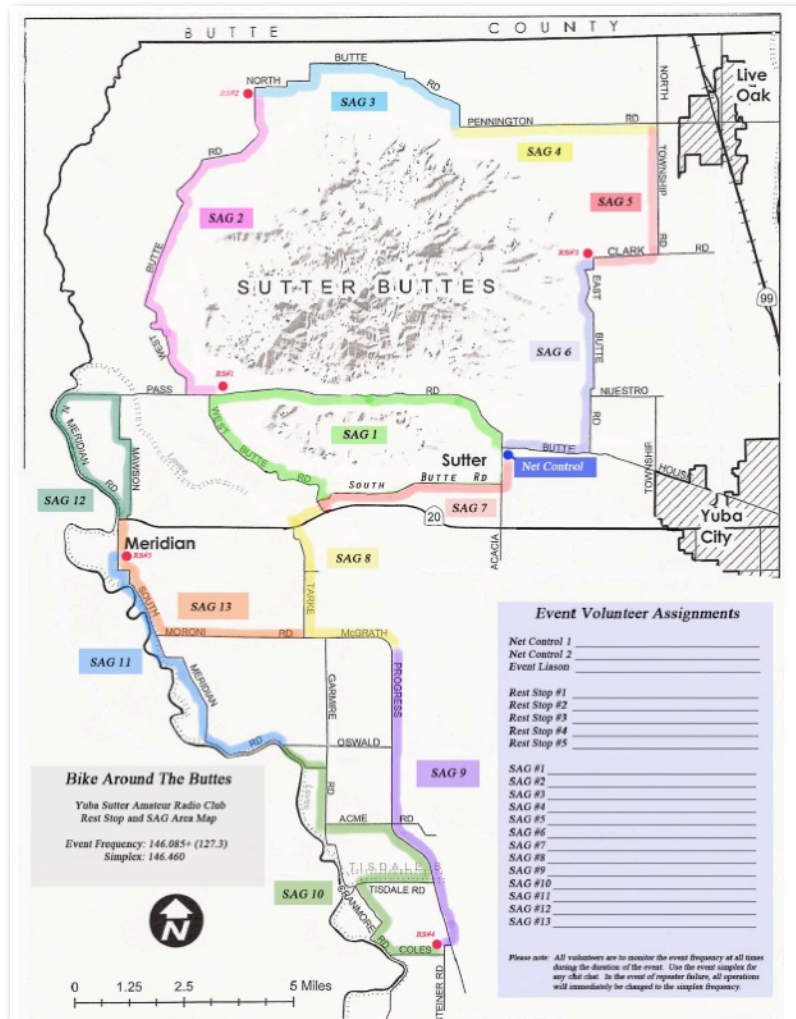
“BIGGER IS BETTER ???” DR. MINH BUI’S ANTENNA FARM, N6MB

At Dr. Minh Bui’s Radio Ranch southeast of beautiful downtown Yuba City, a huge new 80m, 2 element yagi has appeared in the old walnut orchard. N6MB started just about 3 years ago with a “Windom” running north and south. A dual band vhf/uhf vertical antenna topped the center support. Good start, but he was not finished. Next came a 50 foot crank up, tilt over tower. On top of that sits a Mosley Pro67B3 with coverage of 40 through 10 meters (two elements on 40M.) That was good enough to get Minh DXCC in less than a year. He has more than two thirds of the confirmations he needs for the DX challenge (1000 confirmations.) But of course, we now know, he isn’t done yet. I mentioned he needed a full wave loop antenna on 160m. So up it went. This is a horizontal loop, three of the supports by KC6MCI, and it allowed Minh to hear a lot of stations, work some of them on 80 and 160, but there was sometimes a lack of signal at the far end. Why not an 80m yagi? And so now there is an 80m, 2 element yagi up 70 feet on another tower. You can see it as you drive down Camanitos Road, between Barry Road and Stewart Road. Quite a sight, and he says it works well. Go get ‘em Minh!

If you haven’t looked at the photo essay on this latest project, check out:
<https://plus.google.com/photos/117866084268964713088/albums/5845801874689735729>

73, Ron, W6KJ

“BIKE AROUND THE BUTTES” - EMERGENCY & SAG SUPPORT BY THE YSARC



“Bike Around The Buttes”, an event to support local children with Diabetes is an event that has been supported with emergency communications and SAG support by the YSARC for over 20 years.

The event will run concurrently with the “MS Walk” which is also supported by YSARC on Saturday, April 20, 2013.

Russell, KB6YAF, is the POC for the BATB. There are some SAG positions open for volunteers this year. If you would like to volunteer, please send Russell an [email](mailto:) stating that you are interested in volunteering.

Visit www.ysarc.org for more information on the BATB. The info is listed under “Community Events” where you can download a copy of the map, and a description of the volunteer duties. This event starts at 0700 and lasts around 1630 hrs. If you can only work in the morning or afternoon, that’s OK, we can use your communication skills. It is recommended that you use a mobile radio with an external antenna, but an HT may work just fine.