



Veterans For Peace Chapter 11
Corrie-Mizo Chapter
846 Front Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Press Release

“Serving the Community”

10/21/08

On Sunday, October 19, 2008, the community of Santa Cruz received a very generous gift. Gordon West presented a long-range High Frequency transceiver with desk microphone to Maurice Ricketts for the Santa Cruz County Veterans Memorial Building HAM Radio station. Mr. West is a renowned HAM radio school instructor who visited Santa Cruz especially to present this transceiver and mic to Mr. Ricketts. Mr. West, aka WB6NOA, along with his wife, Suzy, were the honored guests of Santa Cruz Vets at the upstairs HAM “shack.”

Maurice Ricketts, aka N6GOW, has been operating the radio station for over 23 years, during which time he has provided vital communications for the Santa Cruz area. A veteran of World War II, Maurice was on the air immediately following the Loma Prieta Earthquake, in 1989, providing information to emergency services when phone service was interrupted. As in time of war, so in times of need, veterans continue to serve their community.

Robert Spencer, KI6TKH, a member of VFP Corrie-Mizo Chapter 11, is also a licensed HAM operator. Robert is working with other HAM operators in Santa Cruz to provide continuity to the Veterans Memorial Building Ham Shack operations, as Maurice begins to turn over the mic, to the next wave of volunteers. Robert hosted a reception for Mr. West, on Sunday, and is actively soliciting funds from the veteran and civilian population in the area, to upgrade the equipment in the Ham Shack. Robert says that the Red Cross has designated the Veterans Memorial Building as a Civil Defense asset, and that there is a likelihood that it would be of value as a command post in the event of a natural or biological/pandemic disaster. He is actively recruiting area veterans to get their HAM licenses, so they can provide assistance at the radio station in an emergency.

Jeff Watson, KG6YPS, helped Gordon "Gordo" West hook up the new transceiver, on Sunday. Jeff explained how a high frequency transceiver, like the one Gordo donated, enables the operator to transmit out of a disaster area and relay information to emergency services, such a medivac or rescue agencies. Much thanks to Jeff, who is helping Maurice determine a list of equipment needed to upgrade the HAM Shack, including better wiring out to the antennae, and filters to avoid causing interference to neighboring communication systems.

Kent Brown, Amateur Extra "AB6KB" was also on hand to lend his expertise. Kent donated a deep cycle marine battery to the Ham Shack, so the station could stay on line through power disruptions. Kent and his wife Jane are part of the Santa Cruz County Equine Evacuation Team, <http://www.equineevac.org/>, and they have helped coordinate horse evacuations during the devastating fires in Santa Cruz County, this year, (HAM operators directed drivers of horse trailers to pick up horses threatened by the fires).

Cap Pennell, KE6AFE, District Emergency Coordinator of the Santa Cruz Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), was on hand, Sunday, as Gordo and crew brought the new radio on line, and instructed Maurice and the rest of the operators in its use. Cap has

helped train new HAM operators in Santa Cruz, and is eager to support the radio station, at the Vets Hall. Cap explained that it is now easier than ever to get a HAM license, since there is no longer any requirement to learn Morse Code and folks can practice the license exam online (radioexam.org).

Jerry Inman, AE61, who is also a member of Santa Cruz ARES, came to offer his assistance too. Jerry is another HAM operator who works to insure that there is a network of communications that provides a safety net to the entire country, and potentially the entire planet.

Veterans For Peace Corrie-Mizo Chapter 11 continues to work with other local veterans organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars "Bill Motto" Post 5888, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 52, and American Legion Post 64, to support the HAM Shack. Other Operators who have taken turns keeping the station on the air are: Donald AE6RF, "JV" K6HJU, Shawn KA6RFZ, Cody KG6YPK, Dona KI6DAR, Ed KI6DAS, John KI6EAB, Reed N1WC, Greg N6CK, Pat W6DRX, Martin W6LHI, Paul WA6ONN, Carrol KG6YPH, and John KI6IFA.

The volunteers who assembled this Sunday gave happily of their time and energy, knowing their efforts are of significant importance each day.

Perhaps the connections between them and the rest of us are the lifelines by which we all keep each other afloat. Keeping the lines of communication open, and free.

Daniel Young, VFP Corrie Mizo Chapter 11



Left to right, Bob Spencer, Jeff Watson, Maurice "Rick" Ricketts (back to camera), Gordon West adjusting settings on new transceiver, Kent Brown configuring connections, and Jerry Inman all crowd into Room 21, the HAM Shack at the Santa Cruz County Veterans Memorial Building.



Maurice Ricketts tries out the new high frequency transceiver, donated by Gordon West, (standing in dark polo shirt). Christmas came early, this year!



Maurice, Cap, and Jerry hope Gordo gets done in time to talk to Richard Garriot, onboard the International Space Station



HAM Operators get a tour of Gordon's traveling radio station(s). Gordon is a member of the California Rescue Communications Net <http://soara.org/emergency.htm>.



Kent Brown and Maurice strike a pose.



A CH-47 transports body bags, in RVN. Lest we forget the sacrifice of others.



Ruben Gomez, Founder of VFP Corrie-Mizo Chapter 11