

Amateur Radio Club

Why I am a Radio Guy

A year ago this past July my wife and I took the CERT training offered by the city of Beaumont. We absolutely were not ready for "The Big One." And the truth is the training scared me into getting prepared, even to the point that I went from house to house in our neighborhood and tried to encourage everyone to get more prepared. Then another neighbor took the CERT training and suggested that we hold a dessert night and have me show my PowerPoint presentation on "The Twelve Steps of Preparation," which turned out to be a great success (15 homes out of 19 showed up). It took my wife Grace and I about two months all told to put our emergency kits together.

I knew more was needed to really get prepared, so this led me to buy a ham radio and take the tests to get my radio license from the FCC. There are three level of tests: Technician, General, and Amateur Extra. The first two levels require answering 35 questions, and the highest level requires answering 50 questions. I bought the ARRL test question books for each level, and spent the next seven weeks studying like crazy to pass these exams.

The only level needed to become a ham radio operator licensee from the FCC is the Technician level, but I wanted to challenge my 72 year old brain, so I studied for all three levels and took all three tests on the same day. The local San Gorgonio Amateur Radio Club (SPARC) in Banning offers these tests three or four times a year at a cost of \$15 each. Being a retired high school math teacher of many years, I knew how to cram for an exam, and was able to pass all three exams on the same day.

There are four reasons I am glad to be a ham radio operator.

1. I now feel connected to the outside world in case of a big emergency.
2. I now feel connected to the communication network we have set up here inside our Four Seasons community.
3. I enjoy the camaraderie involved in being a part of the Emergency Preparedness Program here in Four Seasons.
4. I enjoy the weekly FRS and 2 meter nets we hold every Wednesday night at 5:45 pm (FRS) and 6:00 pm (2 meter).

Our meetings are on the Last Friday of the Month, 10 AM in the Lodge.
Ron Goodrich, K6IRG