

11-10-92

SPECS HISTORY

SOUTHERN PENINSULA EMERGENCY COMM. SERVICE

by W6ASH, WALT READ, LOS ALTOS.

The acronym, "SPECS", came into use in 1959. During a board meeting ~~at WEA~~ of the Palo Alto C.D. Communication group at Walt's home. He suggested ~~it~~ ^{SPECS} and it was adopted unanimously. The group had had a disagreement with the Palo Alto C.D. people at that time. A new city Hall was planned and provision for amateur operation was not included, hence the name change.

Up until 1959 the group had been meeting in the old City hall at the corner of Middlefield and the Embarcadero. They had three ~~operating~~ operating booths in the basement and antennas on the roof. The PARRA Club regularly met there until the dispute when they moved to Menlo Park. They still meet there.

The original group of about twelve hams who preceded SPECS joined together in a club project to build two meter, low power transceivers, crystal controlled. W6DU, ex W6TWD, was one of the leaders and NCS of the gang. Eric is not active in SPECS but became well-known worldwide for ~~in~~ his DX work.

There were only about six active members in 1957 when W6ASH joined them. None of the six are active in SPECS at present. However, W6UCE, Hank, was in the earlier group and rejoined ~~the~~ SPECS at a later time. He is still an active member of SPECS. A net directory put out by ARRL in 1961 includes SPECS.

In 1957 almost all members were using Gonseth Communicators or Clegg Twenty Towers. They were crystal controlled, five watt, six volt units on two meters. Andy Forness, K6BBF, was appointed E.C. for Palo Alto in 1960. W6ASH was his assistant and submitted monthly reports for him. We usually participated in the annual ARRL SET and had simulated tests with Palo Alto Red Cross.

In the 60s and 70s there were few local emergencies. However, in January 1963 Palo Alto had a flood. El Camino and Highway 101 were under water and homes in the flatlands were under water. ~~The~~ SPECS covered all points and a Red Cross Shelter.

When KGBBF, the EC, passed away in 1965
W6ASH assumed the EC appointment for
Palo Alto, Mt View, Los Altos and Sunnyvale.
W6NIL, Jim, and W6EXT were ^{active} then
and still are. In fact Jim is EC for Palo Alto
and does a great job. The SET report for
1969 includes these two as participants. Paul
is trying to get Los Altos hills going as ^{AEC} A.E.C..

In the sixties we could get on two
meters and call "CQ". They didn't always
answer on your frequency so you would
tune the band. As I recall, there was only
one repeater active on 145.8 MHz on Griggly
Peak, ^{in 1960} Many new members were ~~recruited~~
by inviting them to join us at 8PM on 146 MHz
AM, on Monday night.

Growth of SPECS was rather slow but
by 1979 there were 130 on the roster
with about 80 check-ins on Monday night.
Since then those still active in SPECS are as follows:
W6NIL, W6LDW, W6ROM, W8PPA/N611U, W6VAQ
N6ATD, W6BAX, K6DXL, W6FRF, W6HHN, W6JHJ
K6MA, K6OG, W6PVM, AA6PZ, W6TJX, W6TVO
W6UCE, W6VZZ, K16W, K6YT & W6BYZI/W66W

I hope I haven't left anyone out. During those years SPECS participated in every disaster in the area, and also supported C.P. and March of Dimes Walkathons. They always covered the Red Cross and assisted in various parades and celebrations. Many members joined the California Dept. of Forestry and have become V.I.P.s. (Volunteers in Prevention).

SPECS has participated in every MEDEX since 1975. WabN1L has managed the Palo Alto ~~Forestry~~ Tennis matches since 1980. W6PVM still runs the Palo Alto parade of lights after ten years. The EMARC, FARS, and PAARA Clubs were great supporters.

OF SPECS

By 1979 AM was being phased out by FM. Repeaters were all over the bay area. The Northern Amateur Relay Council, (NARC), was in control.

SPECS was able to obtain a sanction for 145.27 MHz from NARC. Oct. 27, 1979. W6ASH made a repeater using a Tempo 5L as a receiver and a Yaesu 227 as a transmitter back to back in a Metal Box. He operated from his home with one antenna atop

his 100 foot high pine tree and the other at its base. It worked fairly well for about six months.

In ¹⁹⁷⁹~~1980~~ the SPECS Repeater Board was ~~formed~~ formed. Ted Harris, W8RPA/N611U, was chairman with the following members: W6TJX as engineer, W6ROM, W6VAQ, W6LIT, K6RTU, K6W, W6OML and W6ASH. Each of them donated \$1000 more to the repeater fund.

A temporary repeater was installed on the roof of El Camino Hospital on April 19th, 1980. The members made donations as they joined and receipts from the Foothill Flea Market ~~has~~ have made SPECS financially stable with no dues.

In March 1983 SPECS had 200 members. By 1992 membership is about 400. Control operators assigned should monitor for emergencies and report. However, there are only a few who do this regularly. They should be given special recognition. They are 5

KB6FEC, Bob, W6VZZ, Edgy, W6VUL, Rick
and W6BAX, ~~WALTER~~ For several years KB6BA,
Oliver, has been SPECS engineer and has been in-
strumental in putting much of the
~~several~~ sophisticated equipment into
the repeater. In April 1986 SPECS
acquired a sanction to use 224.36 MHz
as a secondary repeater. It is linked to
the 145.27 MHz on El Camino Hospital. SPECS
also operates a repeater on 440.8 MHz. Both
of these require a 100 Hz tone input.

From 1966 until November 1981 W6ASH
acted as ^{DEC}EC₁ and NCS for the four cities.
However, ~~at~~ SPECS had become so large that
it was no longer a one-man undertaking.
As D.E.C., W6ASH appointed Jim, W6NIL, E.C. for
Palo Alto; ~~W6BAX~~ ^{W6LIF} as
E.C. for Los Altos, W6RCM as
E.C. for Mountain View, W8RPA/^{as}W6VUL E.C. for Stanford
and W6BAX as E.C. for Sunnyvale. W6NIL
and W6BAX are still going strong with great
organizations.

Disasters have been frequent during
the past decade and SPECS was there.
Some of ^{THOSE DISASTERS} ~~these~~ follow:

- 1977 Marble Cone Fire (U.S.F.S)
- 1980 Fire below Mt. Hamilton (CDF)
- 1981 Pesticide Spraying
- 1982 Santa Cruz - Pescadero Flood (P.A. Red Cross)
- 1983 Coalinga Earthquake (West. Div. Hq. RED CROSS)
- 1984 Support for OLYMPIC SOCCER GAMES (P.A. RED CROSS)
- 1985 MEXICO EARTHQUAKE (P.A. RED CROSS)
- 1986 LOS ALTOS FIRE (PA RED CROSS)
LEXINGTON FIRE (C.D.F.)
- 1988 49 ER FIRE - GRASS VALLEY (CDF)
- 1989 LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE (VARIOUS RED CROSS)
- 1990 OAKLAND APT. FIRE (OAKLAND RED CROSS + P.A. RED CROSS)
- 1991 OAKLAND FIRESTORM (OAKLAND + P.A. RED CROSS)

SPECS still meets at 8 PM ~~on~~ Monday
on 145.27 MHz. Anyone interested in
joining should call Bob, NOARY, at
408-749-0501. Over a hundred
stations check into the net regularly.

As a longtime member and leader
for years I'm very proud of the
organization.

73, de Walt, W6ASH

7-10-92