

## Fountain of Youth Campout, February 21-26, 2024 - Niland, CA

By Paul Craft N6EAB

The Sam's Radio Hams returned to the Fountain of Youth (FOY) RV Resort for another excellent campout. This campout was hosted by Margie Hoffman (thank you Margie!). The FOY is located in Niland, CA, near the East shore of the Salton Sea. Every evening brought gorgeous sunsets, with the sea and mountains in the background, and palm trees in the foreground. Just like last year, the weather was warm and sunny, allowing us to wear shorts, short sleeves, and sandals. This place was just as we left it, with the warm healing mineral waters and lots of friendly people doing fun activities in the sun. The "no-see-ums" were especially happy to see us (evidently SRHams is their favorite flavor)!



Depending on how you count (and not counting pets) we had 21 attendees. The attendees were: Margie Hoffman (host), Ray & Maureen Bush, Paul & Sue Craft, Bill & Pam Elliott, Andy & Charity Gippetti, Tom & Carol Gleaton, Jim Koski, Bill Penn, Dan & Adrienne Sherwood, and Chuck & Cindy Taylor. Larry & Linda Johnston visited us - it turns out they were already there since they like to hang out at the FOY for extended periods this time of year. Don & Barbara Schleuse drove up to the FOY for a short day visit.



We played amateur radio a lot during this campout. There were 7 rigs with HF capabilities! All were able to participate on the nightly net (which is held M-F, at 8PM, on 3,918.5 KHz). Since the bulk of the participants during net at this time were at the FOY, the signal strengths seeming to all were pretty good! Roger Kepner, located at his home in Orange, reported to the net that Dan Sherwood had the best signal of all the FOY stations. (It turns out Dan had a secret to his antenna setup, which will not be revealed here, so ask him at the next campout!)

Andy and Paul attempted a Parks On The Air (POTA) activation at the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge. With eight other SRHams members standing around watching, and a few other on-lookers, Andy and Paul failed spectacularly as their auto-tuner box just sat there making "clicking" sounds - never tuning their antenna. Andy and Paul immediately realized that they should have tested their setup back at camp. But just in case this thought did not enter their minds, Ray was quick to state "you should have checked your setup back at camp". And just in case Andy and Paul did not hear this wise advice, Ray was gracious to repeat his words again and again! The next day, Andy and Paul discovered the problem with their setup, which also will not be revealed here.

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As usual, the SRHams ate and drank well during their happy hours and pot-lucks ("yum, yum, yum, yum").

Paul, Sue, Andy, Charity, and Jim did an awesome 5 mile loop hike at "Ladder Canyon". This hike was in, and around, some deep slot canyons that are formed by continual flash flooding. The best time to hike these canyons is during non-flash flood conditions! In order to climb the "dry" waterfalls, somebody had placed extension ladders (like you would find at Home Depot) to make it possible. There were approximately nine locations with ladders. Some ladders were safely positioned, but some were definitely "sketchy". While all had fun and "survived", Paul will not do this hike again and thinks it is hazardous and does not recommend it to anyone over 18 years!



Some of us ventured to "Slab City". (Slab City is an unincorporated, off-grid, alternative lifestyle community, named from the concrete slabs that remained after a World War II Marine Corps training camp was torn down. Slab City is known for attracting people who want to live outside mainstream society. Ref Wikipedia.) Chuck and Cindy visited Slab City for the first time, and shared their "mixed emotions" during happy hour. Always open to new adventure, Jim visited Slab City to attend an "open mic" evening event. He had a good time!

Others of us ventured to Bombay Beach for lunch at the "Ski-In Bar and Grill" for burgers and fries.

One day, Jim took Sue and Bill on a Jeep ride to the abandoned "Eagle Mountain Railroad Trestle Bridge". This bridge was owned by the Kaiser Steel Corporation. The railroad served the iron mines in and around Eagle Mountain, near California's Salton Sea. It was built around 1947.

There were many other activities to do throughout the days, including soaking in the hot tubs, playing Rummikub, "chasing" POTA contacts, riding eBikes, flying drones, checking out the FOY art show, shopping at the FOY farmer's market, and getting ice cream cones at the FOY café.

Perhaps the highlight of the campout, was the "Eagles Ronstadt Experience" concert at the FOY Hays Hall. This tribute band played all the best hits of both the Eagles and Linda Ronstadt. It was hands-down awesome! Apparently this concert was anticipated to be so good that it was a sold-out event! This concert ran for two hours with no breaks. The sound-level was perfect. The atmosphere was "youthful". Even though most of the audience were seniors, the dance floor was full for the entire concert! There was even a happy "youngster" on the floor dancing in his wheelchair! Thanks Margie for setting this up!



On our last night, Jim treated us to a slide show at his campsite. He shared pictures of a trip he and Linda took to England and France, including riding a barge and renting an RV. Thanks Jim!

**Check out the campout photos [here](#).**

## Quartzsite, AZ, January 22-26, 2024 (4 nights)

By Paul Craft N6EAB

The Sam's Radio Hams held their annual, and arguably favorite, campout at Quartzsite, Arizona. The scheduled duration was 4 nights, but some stayed shorter and some stayed longer. We had other members and guests that visited the group just for the day. Thank you to Margie Hoffman and David & Kathryn Bassett for hosting this fun campout!

The location was next to the popular Quartzfest event ([quartzfest.org](http://quartzfest.org)) in the Road Runner BLM camping area. When our group arrived, we were surprised to see other people camping in our usual area – complete with elaborate antenna setups. We did our best to respect our neighbor's "first come, first served rights", but as our members arrived and our circle grew, it was a challenge to not encroach on our neighbor's antennas and to not block their egress!



We had a whopping 37 attendees. The attendees were: Margie Hoffman (host), David & Kathryn Bassett (co-hosts), Ray & Maureen Bush, Paul & Sue Craft, Bill & Pam Elliott, Andy Gippetti, Tom & Carol Gleaton, Peter & Jane Griffith, Tom & Dede Hermon (new members), Steve & Barbara Hofbauer (new members), Jim & Linda Koski, Dusty Oess, Rick & Austa Rogers, Don & Barbara Schleuse, Paul & Becki Stewart, and Eric Tofsrud (new member); and guests: Kay Archer, Rod & Marianne Bunn, Ed & Bonnie Knot, Mark & Debbi Sall, and John & Penny Shepherd.

The weather was mixed, with some days cold, other days warmish, then some windy, and one day it rained pretty well! So in other words – typical Quartzsite weather! Anticipating that we would get rain, and that the washes would turn to rivers, the Crafts brought some toy remote-controlled boats. When the washes indeed started to flow, Paul announced "come play boats"! Besides Paul and Sue, there were only two other takers – Andy and Eric. We raced the boats several times down the "river", and got some good photos and videos!



During our general meeting, several recognitions were given. First, we had six new members: Steve & Barbara Hofbauer, Eric & Glenda Tofsrud, and Tom & Dede Hermon. Then, recognition was given to Barbara Schleuse as the "Wahdinger Queen" – complete with a crown and "diamond-studded" badge. The past presidents in attendance were recognized, while holding the updated past-president engraved plaque, and finally, Margie and the Bassett's were recognized for hosting the Quartzsite 2024 campout.





Our campers enjoyed a wide range of activities in camp, each day beginning with announcements by Andy on our campout frequency. Activities included playing Rummikub, e-bike riding, e-unicycle riding (one of Eric's hobbies, believe it or not!), drone flying, and campfires. As usual, we also enjoyed our eats and drinks, with continental and potluck breakfasts, nightly appetizers and happy hours, and of course our beloved wahdingers! New to this campout, Peter projected movies on a screen attached to the side of his RV. Many of us watched movies ("The Long, Long Trailer", "Six Days, Seven Nights", "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"), and various videos of past SRH campouts. On one day we had a musical performance, led by Rod, that included "Stand by your Ham" and other favorites. We also had several "tech-talks" by: Andy (online security and drones); Rick (Parks On The Air 'POTA' antenna setup); and Ed (Digital Mobile Radio 'DMR'). Bill Elliott fired-up his newly installed antenna and radio setup (equipment from Roger Kepner's RV that has found a new home!) and several of us successfully participated on the SRHams nightly net on 75 meters. On Monday night, several of us were able to log onto the virtual Zoom campfire and report back to members that were not able to attend the campout.

Our campers also enjoyed activities away from camp. Of course there was the Big Tent RV show that is always fun to walk through – and if you don't want to spend a lot of money, who can resist at least buying a Thrifty ice cream cone! There was lots of stuff at the Tyson Wells Sell-A-Rama that was also worth a look-see for many. Then, a small group put on their hiking shoes and climbed up "Q Mountain". Finally, on one fun afternoon, Rick took several of us to the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge (near Blythe) for a POTA activation.

Last, but not least (and to some the most important!), was the excellent Quartzfest festivities. Quartzfest draws way more hams and campers than our club, and is the reason why our campout occurs at the same place and time every year. Many of us participated in the numerous events that Quartzfest has to offer (talks and presentations, a jeep ride, and a special event station to name a few). The icing on the cake, this year our very own Margie won the grand prize at the Saturday drawing – an ICOM IC-705 HF/50/144/430 MHz all mode portable transceiver! Congratulations Margie!

Check out all the campout photos [here!](#)

