

# Camping Corner 2024



## SRH 2024 HOLIDAY PARTY GOLDEN VILLAGE PALMS CAMPOUT December 2 - 5, 2024

By Maureen Bush

It was time again to load up the RV and head to Hemet for our 2024 Year-End Christmas Gathering. There were 17 people in attendance, occupying 8 RVs and 2 cottages.



Members in RV sites included David & Kathryn Bassett, Ray & Maureen Bush, Pam & Bill Elliott, Tom & Carol Gleaton, Andy & Charity Gippetti, Margie Hoffman, Bill Penn, and Dan & Adrienne Sherwood. Jim & Linda Preston plus Roger Kepner enjoyed their comfy individual cottages. Sunday arrivals gathered in our activity room for a brief visit and enjoyed Kathryn's prepared appetizer. Some of the early arrivals took advantage of creating dinner plans to catch up with relatives, while others joined at Los Vaquero's Mexican Grill or in David's case, he chose to check out his luck at the nearby Soboba Casino.

Everyone was free to choose how to spend Monday as long as they were back for Happy Hour at the resort which provided wine tasting. The resort kept sending out text messages to us; Monday morning- coffee and donuts in the lobby, Wednesday- there were cookies and hot chocolate (of course, we couldn't resist as the goodies were next to our room). We decorated, played Rummikub and setup a 1000-piece puzzle waiting for Roger's arrival. Andy & Charity completed their hike at Simpson Park, which was more difficult than expected. The last two RV'ers arrived just in time to get settled and enjoy some food and wine before we settled down to have Andy set up Paul's year-end video "SRH 2024 Campouts", which we played multiple times throughout the week.

Andy woke us up Tuesday with morning announcements while Bill Elliott and Ray were out warming up their grills preparing for breakfast. Everyone brought items to share. After a relaxing breakfast, there was a brief board meeting followed by a club meeting and group photo. We took a short break then returned for Andy to give his Tech Talk on "AI 2025, the Good, the Bad, the Ugly". Andy showed how writing a few sentences could generate a photo. Everyone was intrigued by Andy's new personal drone with minimal setup time that followed him around the room! Some traveled to the Moreno Valley Mall to get some Christmas gifts from Victoria Secrets. Meanwhile, there was some serious puzzle and Rummikub strategies happening in our activity room.

Later in the day, we joined together for heavy appetizers and your drink of choice while we prepared for our gift exchange. Everyone interested in exchanging gifts were given one ticket. Margie and Maureen kept the exchange moving so we could get out to the campfire before it got too late. Ironically, they decided to let Pam select the next ticket and guess whose ticket it was?? You guessed it, Pam drew her own ticket. After enjoying the heckling, Pam quickly selected the quilt made by Carol Kepner (now she has two to help her reminisce about the times she shared with Carol). Thanks to all that participated in the exchange until all gifts were gone. Everyone was encouraged to donate to their favorite charities especially at this time of the year!

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Wednesday was our dress up evening, individual photos by the Christmas tree and a catered banquet dinner followed by the Installation of 2025 Officers (thanks Linda for installing the 2025 Board). Congratulations to our 2025 Board - Bill Elliott, President - Bill Penn, Vice-President and Dick Miller, Treasurer. Everyone took their turn throughout the day to join Roger as we all wanted to complete the puzzle this year. Mission Accomplished! Afterwards, all joined in to clean up our room as another group had the room reserved for Thursday.

As 3 individuals in our group prepared to depart Thursday morning a few met Margie's RV for a continental breakfast/campfire while others joined together for breakfast at Mia's Country Kitchen. Some took advantage of visiting local Hemet businesses throughout the day while others began preparing for a Friday departure. A small group of iPhone 16 pro users captured Andy for a tech talk before our final group dinner gathering at the local Steer n' Stein.

Radios contacts at 8 pm were used to keep in touch with other 75-meter SRH members that couldn't make the campout. We missed Paul and Sue Craft at this campout but they had to cancel due to medical reasons. Thanks to all of you that accepted additional responsibilities to make this campout a success! Hope to see many of you at Quartzfest 2025.





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## Brown's Town RV Park, Bishop, CA, June 10 – 14

By Paul & Sue Craft (N6EAB & N6EAA)



The Sam's Radio Hams returned to Brown's Town RV Park, in Bishop, for some springtime fun! This was the same location that we camped at almost exactly one year ago. The weather this time could be described as hot with some heavy wind mixed in. No rain, but we did have at least three errant golf balls that "rained" on us from the adjacent golf course. Luckily none of us were injured! There were some minor inconveniences with the park that some of us experienced (such as taking cold showers due to problems with the hot water boiler), but the green grounds, shade trees, and the views of the snow covered mountains made it worth it! This campout was hosted by Margie Hoffman and Ray & Maureen Bush.

There were 19 attendees for this campout: David & Kathryn Bassett, Ray & Maureen Bush, Paul & Sue Craft, Andy & Charity Gippetti, Margie Hoffman, Bill Miner, Dusty Oess, Bill Penn, Mark and Debbie Sall (visitors), Dan & Adrienne Sherwood, Paul & Becki Stewart (with granddaughter Emmi). We had a total of 8 rigs and 1 van. The Stewarts and Salls happened to be in the area, so they stopped by just for a short visit and did not camp with us.



Because Bishop is situated in the Owens Valley with the Sierra Nevada to the west and the White Mountains to the east, there were lots of fun outdoors excursions. Some of us took hikes: out of nearby South Lake; Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park; and the Bristlecone Pine Forest in the White Mountains. Others drove into Yosemite Valley to take in the awesome waterfalls. There were visits to Mono Lake and the visitor center there, Saddlebag Lake, and of course touring through June Lake Loop.



There were also fun things to do in town, which included: visiting Laws Railroad Museum; seeing the town's "pet cemetery"; checking out the high school rodeo at the fairgrounds; playing the machines at the casino; touring the huge radio telescopes; shopping the antique/thrift stores; and attending a meeting of the Bishop Amateur Radio Club.

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## Rincon Country West RV Resort, Tucson, AZ, April 15 - 18, 2024

By Paul & Sue Craft (N6EAB & N6EAA)

The Sam's Radio Hams held another fun campout at a new and exciting location - Tucson, Arizona. This campout was recommended by SRH member Rick Rogers, who proposed this campout over a year ago (yes, we can plan that far in advance)" This campout was hosted by Paul & Sue Craft, and Rick & Austa Rogers. We stayed at the Rincon Country West (RCW) RV Resort, which is located in southern Tucson, right off Interstate 19 (easy access to everything"). This resort offers a significant discount to Passport America members. Due to our close proximity to the Arizona Air National Guard, operating at the Tucson International Airport, every evening brought our own private air show" Numerous F-16s and other types of aircraft roared right overhead, one right after the other. With each overflight, Paul would say "that's annoying"", while Rick would say "that's the sound of freedom""

The attendees for this campout were: Paul & Sue Craft, Rick & Austa Rogers, Margie Hoffman, Dan & Adrienne Sherwood, Kathryn & David Bassett, Bill & Pam Elliott, Andy & Charity Gippetti, Bill Penn, Jim & Linda Preston, and Dusty Oess. The attendee's accommodations were varied: 8 rigs, 1 park cabin, and 1 motel room.

We were also visited by several members of the local RCW Amateur Radio Club. The RCW Amateur Radio Club is located within the RV resort. Their president, Jim (AE7W), graciously gave the SRHams a tour of their club's ham radio shack, which is a dedicated room located in the resort's activity center. While small, their shack includes HF/VHF/UHF capabilities, repeater, and a modest antenna farm (directly above the shack on the roof). They hold weekly meetings and nets. You can check out the RCW Amateur Radio Club on Facebook.

Our campout had 5 rigs with HF capabilities, and most participated on the SRH nightly net (which is held M-F, at 8PM, on 3,918.5 KHz). Radio reception was a challenge, so some of us used the internet-based Software Defined Radio (SDR) receivers (checkout <http://websdr.org/>) as an aid to pull in those weak signals.

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

Paul, Sue, Austa, Dusty, Andy, Charity, Bill Elliott, and Bill Penn visited the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area in the Coronado National Forest. The recreation area operates a tram that takes visitors up and down the canyon for a fee. The tram crosses the Sabino Creek many times over rock bridges (built by the Civilian Conservation Corps), and provides earbud-audio interpretive-narration along the way. While most of us hopped off the tram at the top of the canyon, Bill Penn chose to ride the tram back down, taking in more information on the earbud narration. What's nice is that hikers can hop back on the tram at designated stops (which Dusty took advantage of halfway down). In addition to getting in some good exercise, in this unique Arizona desert canyon we saw lots of Saguaro cactus, a running stream, lizards, and lots of wildflowers"

On another day, everyone went to the nearby Pima Air & Space Museum. This museum is very large and impressive" It has on display nearly 400 aircraft that are spread over 80 acres. A large number of the museum's aircraft are displayed outside with the remainder located in six display hangars. There was a lot of walking involved to see all the displays. Most of us took advantage of a tram tour, which drove us around to see most of the outside aircraft. Some of us pooped out early and did not see everything. The Pima Air & Space is a must-see, and worth a repeat visit" Check them out at <https://pimaair.org/>.

The last organized event of this campout was the visit to the Titan Missile Museum (<https://titanmissilemuseum.org/>). We started with lunch in the parking lot, consisting of "grilled hot dogs, baked beans, fixings, and side dishes" Next, the SRHams connected to the missile site's 80 ft. tall discone antenna, and operated an ARRL Special Event Station (SES) for two hours. Operating this SES was the highlight of the campout, with the planning beginning last year when Rick first presented the idea to the club during the 2023 Fountain of Youth campout. Here are the stats:

- SES callsign/band/mode: K6SRH / 20M (14.315 MHz) / SSB • Duration: 2 hours
- Number of contacts: 43
- Number of states: 13
  
- Countries: USA & Canada
  
- Number of operators: 11 (10 SRH members + 1 local ham visitor)
  
- Operator diversity: 6 male, 5 female
- Contacts that were SRH members operating from their home: Jim (KT6W) and Ray (WA6PBZ)

After closing down the SES, the members quickly packed away the grill, tables, and radio equipment and scurried over to the visitor center to join the Titan Missile tour. The tour took us underground into the missile silo. The tour guide took us throughout the missile complex and we got to see a Titan missile up close. While in the launch control center, Dan (W6DAS) was selected to be the missile commander in a simulated launch – he even got to turn the launch key" Back on top, Rick (K7RCR) gave us a walking tour of the outside exhibits (Rick used to be a docent at the museum).

While Paul and Sue had to leave the campout early, the remaining group continued to have fun. Other places that were visited and things they did included: Saguaro National Park, Miniature Museum, dining excursions, Rummikub games, and e-Bike riding. There were many other activities available at the RV resort, including pool, spa, exercise classes, farmers market, etc. We might need to go back to take more advantage of what this resort has to offer"





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## 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!](#)

