



Photo B. Members of the San Luis Obispo Emergency Communications Council are recognized by that county's Board of Supervisors for their many contributions to the area's emergency preparedness programs.

Many of the club's 40-plus members also participate in the San Luis Obispo County Emergency Communications Council (SLOECC), which is ready to respond to a natural or man-made emergency, and that's important in this earthquake-prone area that's also home to a coastal nuclear power generation facility. In fact, a few Estero members work at that power plant. In the unlikely event of an emergency at the plant, a system of sirens has been placed around the region and SLOECC / Estero members participate in monitoring the periodic siren tests to ensure all are functioning as intended. Hopefully, earplugs are distributed as part of that drill.

Having met some of these folks when they were recognized by the SLO County Board of Supervisors for their service to the county last May (*Photo B*), I was invited to attend some of their gatherings if I happened to be in the area, which is some 150 miles from my SoCal home. As a good (and thrifty) reporter, I combined a weekend visit to Morro Bay with the Monday morning breakfast gathering at the Hungry Fisherman Restaurant at seven, which is within shouting distance of the city's shoreline. (*Of course, I had to arrive in Morro Bay a bit early, like the previous Saturday, in order to get the proper geographic orientation. It was a delightful weekend -JR*).

As no one expected me, I just dropped in at the cozy restaurant and introduced myself. I was warmly welcomed by Estero Club President Bill Bailey, AE6EQ; Tom Tendin, WB9VXY, who is the current president of the SLOECC, and a host of others that included Bill, KA9A; Greg, N6LUG; Neil, KG6AYI; John, KK6JRA; Max, WD6Z; Tim, W6NS; David, KK6HGN; and my apologies go to several other folks whose calls I could not record because of distance in the restaurant and the comings and goings of several members during the gathering.

There was no agenda, rather, the conversation was light and informal, with a wide range of topics, including backgrounds and professions. To say the least, they were quite diverse — from university professor to engineers and private sector jobs of all descriptions. Their common interests were, of course, ham radio and the key roles it plays in their community. Beyond that, however, I came away with a sense that the Estero club is more than just the sum of its parts. There is a camaraderie that runs several layers deep. It seemed as though each member was aware of the capabilities found in others and that — as a team — they were able to reach members and non-members in several different pursuits, ranging from VE sessions to technical expertise, social gatherings, technical workshops, and the like. For an illustration of the club's scope, visit its website and click on the "calendar" tab.

Club Cloning

Are there more clubs like Estero out there? I sure hope so. For nearly 30 years, I've had the pleasure to come into contact with clubs large and small in several different states. The more successful groups seek to build and maintain a vitality that generates interesting programs, education for newcomers, frequent and substantive meetings, "hands-on" building events where simple devices are constructed and show participants that they need not be intimidated by projects, T-hunts, VE sessions, exposure to new digital modes, and plain old ordinary summer picnics that provide fun, good food, and conversation for spouses and family members.

Should your travels take you on a journey along California's coastline, be sure to drop in at The Hungry Fisherman in Morro Bay at 7 a.m. any Monday and enjoy the good company of a club that generates a lot Magic In The Sky.