

## PACIFICON CONVENTION WRAP-UP

by David Hackleman, K6VML

Per Ken Alker's request on the SBARC listserver, here is my account of Pacificon, October 15-17, 2021.

My trip to Europe had been cancelled due to COVID. Pacificon was coming up at about the same time that the trip would have been. I had never been to it and decided it would be a worthwhile alternative. Earlier in the week I made a reservation at the San Ramon Marriott, site of the convention, even though the special rate had expired. Turns out I got the room at about the same rate. This was the first time ever I reserved a room at a division convention!

I wanted to get the most out of it, so I arrived in good time Thursday for a three-night stay, after a pleasant drive mostly on I-5 from San Bernardino. The Pacificon website made clear that COVID protocols would be observed, and I was ready with my mask and proof of vaccination at check-in.



*The hotel restaurant Thursday night, looking toward the lobby.*



*Convention hall, Saturday morning.*

That night I had a Marriott Burger for dinner in the hotel restaurant. I took advantage of "Cash Only" buffet meals as often as possible thereafter, provided for convention goers, that were quite good. Friday featured an all-day antenna seminar, but I decided to relax and enjoy my room and wander the convention floor until the vendor exhibit hall opened at 3:00.

The vendors were much the same as I have seen in Southwestern Division conventions, which was fine with me. One was John Stanford, KF6I, of Island Amplifier. Turns out he is located in Placentia and repairs and refurbishes amplifiers. I had a Clipperton-L amplifier that needed service that he was very familiar with, so discovering John alone made Pacificon worthwhile for me. And it was only Friday.



*Vendor Exhibit Hall, Saturday.*

Elecraft and Buddipole were also there. Elecraft had three refurbished KX3's for sale. All were loaded with options, and one had the 2 meter module. I kept coming back to their booth to ask about them. I also stopped to look over the IC-705 QRP rig at the Icom booth, so the rep gave me a quick rundown on it. It was also nice to see Alex manning the Aventrade booth. He was a vendor at one of the Santa Barbara Hamfests years back.

The vendor exhibit closed at 6:00. After dinner I wandered the convention hall some more. Left at one booth in the hall was a basket full of vacuum tubes. And right on top was a 5U4GB made by Sylvania, which I recognized as the rectifier for my Hammarlund HQ-180. So I snatched it up. (I verified later that it was for the taking.) The special event station was up and running, and I thought I would take advantage of it to keep my sked with Leigh KM6JE in Santa Barbara. I waited only a short time for two

young guys to finish working the 80 meter station, an IC-7600. After a volunteer disinfected the station for me, I quickly made contact with Leigh and we had our usual Friday night QSO.

So I'm batting 1000 here! Saturday came, and though normally I make a point of attending the forums, I just wasn't into them this time. They were good, but I went to a couple for a few minutes and quickly got antsy and left. Once again I wandered the hall, and I hear Rod Fritz WB9KMO say something to me from behind. It was good to see him again and we had a good long eyeball QSO. I also spotted Dick Norton N6AA and detained him briefly about a section matter. I remarked that I saw Rod but no others from our division, whereupon he proceeded to rattled off a number of them in attendance whom I was unaware of.



After sauntering through the vendor exhibit hall once more, I went up to my second-floor room to take a break. It was there that I got to thinking, and decided I would treat myself and go buy the KX3 with the 2 meter module. Michelle at the Elecraft booth was familiar with me because I had already bought the AX1 QRP antenna there earlier, and the 40 meter extension. It turns out I unwittingly beat out another guy by mere seconds who wanted the same one! He settled for one without the 2 meter module. As Michelle told me, "Your timing was perfect!" Still batting 1000.

The day was still young. I spotted Dave Casler, KE0OG, at the outdoor lunch tables. He has a YouTube channel devoted to ham radio that I enjoy and I told him so. I met several other interesting hams at our lunches. Dave KM6QKI had served on a navy submarine and had stories to tell. I mentioned I planned to see the USS Hornet museum ship after the convention. Wouldn't you know, Randy K8TR at our table happened to work security for it and said not to miss the "Engine" and "Island" tours. Also enjoyed talking with KF6FIO and AC6MN who came for the day.



*The swap meet, Sunday morning.*

Sunday was the swap meet. It was big! Lots of interesting gear. I scored several items, including a dual fuel Coleman lantern for \$35, something I had been wanting. Works perfectly! It was time to pack up, and I found myself in the middle of a train of attendees rolling our suitcases out to our cars ahead of check-out time. Dave KM6QKI and I attended the ARRL Forum together, then it was time to head out.



*The ARRL Forum, Sunday afternoon. Dick Norton N6AA is on the far left.*

One attendee said the convention was almost cancelled due to COVID. Though turnout may have been less than usual under the circumstances, to me it appeared to be very well attended. Congratulations to the Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club, and to the San Ramon Marriott, for putting on a great event!