



HARDY HISTORICALS

... Lin Hardy

CPRA CHAPTER OF APCO CHARTER #13

While history can be found wherever we travel, some areas stand out as exceptionally fruitful sources of historical data. When the gold rush turned westward, few realized the richness that would result from their efforts. We often hear of Disneyland, Hollywood, Knotts Berry Farm, San Diego Zoo, The Rose Bowl, and San Clemente, but equally as famous as these sites is CPRA — Southern California's APCO Chapter. I have a special spot in my memories for this charming area of sunshine and scenery as the first National APCO Conference I attended was hosted by CPRA in San Diego in '74.

The California Police Radio Association (CPRA) was begun in 1935, serving Police departments south of the east-and-west line through Fresno, with all departments represented. As no membership dues were charged, there was 100% membership from all Police Radio licensees within the area. Due to the enormous size of California, the Northern California Police Communications Officers (NCPCOA) took responsibility for those departments north of the boundary line.

After several members of CPRA began attending NCPCOA Chapter meetings from 1941 to 1945, interest was generated in forming an APCO Chapter in CPRA. Lt. Robert Amsbury of Whittier contacted National APCO Secretary Ero Erickson in early 1945 requesting information on Chapter formation. A meeting was held in Glendale and steps were taken to begin CPRA Chapter under the direction of W.E. Whiteman, H.B. Calbert and Robert L. Amsbury, and they received their Charter as the 13th Chapter from National Pres. Frank Walker, making APCO Chapters a Coast-to-Coast chain.

NCPCOA and CPRA concerned with many mutual interests, began holding joint meetings twice a year. This year, under the banner of the Western States Regional, these two chapters joined other Western States aboard the Queen Mary, and from all reports, a superb time was had by all.

From the early days of the Chapter, CPRA was concerned about other areas of public safety and recommended that areas of fire and others be included in APCO's ranks. Today, this is a reality. In the beginning, it was apparent to members of CPRA and NCPCOA that a great deal of mutual cooperation would be needed to resolve problems of frequency congestion and interference, channel allocations, standardization of 10 signals, and operating procedures.

Frequency review came into play during the March 11 and 12, 1946, meeting of the steering committee of Panel Thirteen Radio Technical Planning Board held in Chicago. This Board was formed at the conclusion of WWII when Frank Walker, Donald Leonard (Detroit PD), and Dan Noble became alarmed upon discovery that the 12 panels created by the FCC did not even consider radio for emergency service, even though WWII proved the importance of radio in field communications. (Perhaps many of you remember Ducky Dengler's article covering this.) The committee undertook a study of the 30-40 mc band to resolve chaotic conditions at the time and an examination of the FCC block plan assignment, which APCO and the Panel objected to on behalf of the 200 police radio departments. This issue again became the major topic of business during the 12th Annual National APCO Conference in Buffalo in October 1946. During this conference, CPRA President Bill Whiting placed his bid to host the 1947 National APCO Conference in Los Angeles.

During the April 26 and 27, 1946, joint California Chapters meeting attended by 150 people, Bill Whiting and NCPCOA President J. Don Hossack again discussed action on frequency allocations and the need for action to curb interference.

A demonstration of Ultra High Frequency communications from mobile units was presented by manufacturers, under the direction of LAPD Radio Technician Foreman Fred Crowder with favorable results.

CPRA went "big time" on August 25-28, 1947, playing host for the 13th Annual National APCO Conference held in Los Angeles at the Police Training Academy. From the photos published in the September 1947 BULLETIN, the multitude of attendees participated actively in discussions supporting the FCC allocations plan and saw vendor exhibits by 30 manufacturers. The social activities drew raves and President Ray Goernier saw his term conclude with an appearance on the coast-to-coast broadcast show, "Tom Breneman's Breakfast in Hollywood," attended by the Conference group.

By 1949, CPRA recognized the need for a name change to reflect more accurately support of FCC's Part 10 Public Safety Radio Services inclusion of Police, Fire, Forestry Conservation, Highway Maintenance, and Special Emergency Radio services, and the name Associated Public Safety Communications Officers, Inc., was heard.



To show that they cared 21 years ago, all seven members of the Federal Communications Commission attended a land mobile radio briefing in Los Angeles. At the table, from the left, are Commissioners Bob Lee, Fred Ford, Bob Bartley, Bill Henry, Ken Cox, Rosel Hyde, and Lee Loevinger.

Over the years, CPRA has actively fought the "frequency war" and shown great concern with FCC matters. In 1956, for example, the FCC had split the channels in the 152-162 MHz band (Docket 11523) into fourths. Assurance was given to users of this frequency that frequencies gained would stay in the present service. While this was all well and good, Docket 11990 followed proposing no additional channels for the Police and Fire licensees! Upon this notice, Max Elliott began a campaign to get more channels, and as is the case today, FCC said that documentation of need was required. It is now almost 30 years later, and history is repeating in the 800 MHz frequency band.

To completely compile the activity of CPRA and the FCC would take far more space than this column allows, but for those interested, the information is available through CPRA. While they have battled with the FCC, CPRA members also have a good working relationship with the FCC, as witnessed by the attendance in October, 1963, when all seven FCC Commissioners and members of CPRA met at the Orange County Communications Center to discuss matters of mutual interest — a very historic meeting.

CPRA once again spread the hospitality to National APCO for the San Diego Conference held at the Town & County Complex, under the able direction of Eddie Simon (with lots of help from his "pint-sized", energetic spouse, Judy), and his hard-working committee members. Who can ever forget Eddie as "matador extraordinaire" charging the "raging bull" during the Manapco poolside Fiesta, the beautiful Town & Country Complex and Convention Center, or the trip to Tijuana to barter for sombreros and leather goods and to sample the Mexican cuisine. Of course, while these sidelines were a bonus, the main event was outstanding business sessions and exhibits.

CPRA members can boast loudly of their many achievements and progressive undertakings, such as the CAD/MDT installation in Los Angeles — one of the forerunners in the field. To list those of CPRA who have advanced into National Offices would fill a page and the Chapter can be proud of their "sons," including their transplanted incoming Chapter President, Bakersfield Police Department's Stan Harter, who finally managed to catch the boat over from Hawaii.

Next year will see members of National APCO once again heading west to San Diego for the windup of our 50th Year Anniversary. The '85 National Conference is being arranged by Paul Salter and his committee members, and from all early indications they are out to beat the '74 Conference.

I extend to Bob Brooking my deepest thanks for supplying me with the information to compile this history.

That is all for this month. Cheers.