ARES COMMUNICATOR

Information for Scott County Amateurs

November, 2008 | **Accurate, Reliable Emergency Communications** | *Volume 8, Number 11*

Lo-fer Listeners Wanted

WD2XSH, Wants to Hear from You

Fritz Raab, W1FR, coordinator for ARRL's 500 kHz Experimental Station, WD2XSH reports that fall has brought lower static and good propagation, making excellent conditions for the 500 kHz experimenters. The experimental license, issued in September 2006 has more than 20 active stations. Raab said that last year, a second US experimental license — WE2XGR, with five participants — joined the project, as well as experimenters in the UK, Germany, Sweden and the Czech Republic. These stations' operating modes include CW, QRSS, PSK-31 and others.

Contacts have been achieved at distances up to 1,234 miles, with signals received from all over North America, Alaska and Hawaii; trans-Atlantic reports are not uncommon. "The 500 kHz experimenters are experiencing excellent propagation conditions," Raab said. "The best time to listen is between sunset and sunrise." The operating frequencies are: WD2XSH — 505.2-510 kHz; WE2XGR — 505-515 kHz; UK — 501-504 kHz, and SM, DL, OK — 505.0-505.2 kHz.

Raab requests that listeners file reception reports at the experiment's Web site so that they become part of the station's data base <http://www.500kc.com/>. Additional information can be found at the experiment's Web site <http://www.arrl.org/qex/2007/07/raab.pdf>.

BREAK - OVER

Daylight Savings Time

"Fall Behind" one hour
Sunday November 2nd

The ARES COMMUNICATOR is published for the benefit of Amateur Radio Operators in Scott County and other interested individuals.

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Hospital Standards Include Amateur Radio

Hospitals today exist in a world of heightened expectations and rigorous standards. The Joint Commission is the organization that establishes standards of performance for Hospitals covering many areas and periodically monitors and rates hospitals on their compliance. Joint Commission certification is very important to health care organizations. Amateur radio may play a role in the emergency plans of hospitals that are certified by The Joint Commission. Hospital planning/standards documents developed for hospitals by The Joint Commission are available on line at: www.jointcommission.org/Standards/SII/sii_hap.htm.

The standard specifically dealing with communications is of interest to ARES members. The Joint Commission Standard EM.02.02.01 states: "The organization maintains reliable communications capabilities for the purpose of communicating response efforts to staff, patients, and external organizations. The organization establishes backup communications processes and technologies (for example, cell phones, landlines, bulletin boards, fax machines, satellite phones, Amateur Radio, text messages) to communicate essential information if primary communications systems

Hospital Standards *cont'd on page 2*

ARES Activities

Weekly Net Monday 7 PM 146.535 mhz (s)
Breakfast Saturday, November 8th

SELECTED TRAFFIC NETS

Designator	Freq.	Local Times	
MN Phone	3.860Mhz	Noon, 5:30pm	Daily
MN CW	3.605Mhz	6:30pm, 9:50pm	Daily
ARES			
Scott ARES	146.535 S	7:00pm	Monday
Carver ARES	147.165+	8:30pm	Sunday
Bloomington	147.090+	9:00pm	Sunday
Neighboring Nets			
North Dakota	3.937Mhz	6:30pm	Daily
South Dakota	3.870Mhz	6:00pm	Daily
Wisconsin	3.985Mhz	5:30pm	Daily

40M Band Attack Defeated

FCC Amends WE2XRH Experimental License

In response to the October 20 ARRL Petition for Modification or Cancellation of Experimental Authorization (Petition) concerning an experimental license issued to Digital Aurora Radio Technologies (DART) station WE2XRH, the FCC today issued an amended license that redefines one of the station's frequency ranges to eliminate conflict with the Amateur Radio Service. This revision addresses ARRL's concern that the original 7.10 to 7.60 MHz range would cause unacceptable interference to Amateur Radio operations in the 40 meter band. The amended license narrows the range to 7.30 to 7.60 MHz and gives as the reason for the change, "operation in the band 7.1-7.3 MHz will cause harmful interference to Amateur Radio Service licensees."

"We are delighted that the FCC acted so promptly to correct this error and are pleased that the matter has been resolved," said ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ.

WE2XRH will be testing a proposed domestic broadcast service using a 20 kHz bandwidth digital emission at a transmitter output power of 100 kW and an ERP of 660 kW within a radius of 1500 kilometers of Delta Junction, Alaska. According to the amended license, the transmissions will take place in the frequency ranges 4.4 to 5.1 MHz, 7.3 to 7.6 MHz and 9.25 to 9.95 MHz.

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Hospital Standards - *cont'd from page 1*

fail." This particular standard lists fifteen Elements of Performance that are scored when evaluating a Hospital's Emergency Communications planning for Joint Commission certification.

Take some time to go to the Joint Commission website and read the Emergency Communications standard. Your usefulness as an amateur radio volunteer will be more valuable if you know the Hospital's objectives and can work in a manner to support the Hospital with their communications.

Hospital standards were first established by the American College of Surgeons in the early 1900's. In 1951 four medical organizations joined forces with the American College of Surgeons to form the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals as an independent, not-for-profit organization whose primary purpose is to provide voluntary accreditation. The JCAH began offering accreditation to hospitals in January 1953.

The role of the JCAH expanded in 1965 when Congress passed the Social Security Amendments which included the provision that hospitals accredited by JCAH are "deemed" to be in compliance with most of the Medicare Conditions of Participation for Hospitals and, thus, able to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The organization name changes to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in 1987 to reflect an expanded scope of activities. The JCAH developed a set of initiatives designed to place the primary emphasis of the accreditation process on actual organization performance. Today the organization is named The Joint Commission.

BREAK - OVER

November Events

2 DST Ends
4 Election Day
8 Savage EOC Tour
11 Veteran's Day
13 Full Moon
15-16 ARRL Nov Sweeps SSB
18 Leonids Meteor Shower
22-23 CQ WW DX CW Contest
27 Thanksgiving Day
30 Atlantic Hurricane Season Ends

Formal Traffic Review

The basic role of emergency communicators is to move information (traffic) accurately and rapidly between senders and receivers to resolve a situation. The traffic can be either formal (written in a specific format) or informal (usually verbal) messages. Both types of traffic have their place in emergency communication. Informal messages are best used for non-critical and simple messages, or messages that require immediate action, those are delivered directly from the author to the recipient. Formal messages are more appropriate when two or more people will handle them before reaching the recipient, or where the contents are critical or contain important details.

Let's review the formal written traffic process. Formal written traffic follows a standard message format so that everyone knows what to expect. This increases the speed and accuracy with which you can handle messages.

There are four basic parts to the message format; Preamble, Address, Text, and Signature. These main parts are identified in the sample message shown below.

The "Preamble," sometimes referred to as "the header," consists of administrative data such as the message number, originating station, message precedence (importance) and date/time of origination. The combination of the message number and the originating station serves as a unique message identifier, which can be traced if necessary.

The "Address" includes the name, street address or P.O. box, city, state, and ZIP of the recipient. The address should also include the telephone number with area code.

The "Text" of the message should be brief and to the point, limited to 25 words or less when possible. The text should be written in lines of five words (ten if using a keyboard) to make it easier and faster to count them for the "check."

The "Signature" can be a single name, a name and call sign, a name and a title, "Mom and Dad", and occasionally a return address and phone number – whatever is needed to ensure that the recipient can identify the sender and that a reply message can be sent.

ARES members should review the basics of formal message handling from time to time along with the phonetic alphabet. You just never know when a traffic handling exercise may break out on a training net.

BREAK - OVER

Prowords used when sending a message shown in italics.

Message follows

Preamble

Address

Break

Text

Break

Signature

Break, OVER

THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE

RADIOGRAM

VIA AMATEUR RADIO

NUMBER	PRECEDENCE	HX	STATION OF ORIGIN	CHECK	PLACE OF ORIGIN	TIME FILED	DATE
1	R	G	K4IWW	12	CARY NC		DEC 20

TO
JOHN Q PUBLIC
1234 MAPLE AVE
ANYTOWN NC 27000

THIS RADIO MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED AT
AMATEUR STATION _____ PHONE _____
NAME _____
STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY AND STATE _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER 919 555 1234

ARRIVE	7PM	DEC	24	X
LOOKING	FORWARD	TO	SEEING	YOU
X	LOVE			

BETTY M PUBLIC

REC'D FROM DATE TIME | SENT TO DATE TIME

73 From NE Oregon

Jerry Boyd, N7WR
WorldRadio, October 2008

The very first articles I authored on the subject of Amateur Radio Emcomm were over 30 years ago. They discussed ways in which, Amateur Radio operators could better achieve acceptance by government agencies which might need their assistance when their own communications systems failed or were inadequate. I have been writing this quarterly column in WR for a few years now and this is my last scheduled column for 2008.

After much introspection I have decided to make this my final "Emcomm and You" column. With *WorldRadio's* kind support I may, from time to time, author special columns on subjects of interest. However, nothing on a regular basis will be forthcoming. I'd like to explain the reason why. I could say that work around the ranch, or my professional responsibilities preclude the time needed to write this column. But that would not be the truth. The truth is that given the direction Emcomm seems to be headed, with support from the largest provider of Emcomm operators in heading there, I no longer think my comments and observations make a great deal of difference or are that well received. As I have noted in past columns, it seems to me that much of the Emcomm community (thank goodness not all of it) has lost sight of its primary mission of serving the public. Too many in our midst seem to focus on being first responders on the same level as police, fire and medical. For too many, by their own admission, providing Amateur Radio based communications in an emergency is almost frowned upon. The real "buzz" seems to come from directing traffic, wearing some sort of uniform, or using public safety radios rather than Ham gear. Given the recent trend of some amateur groups having claimed to save, the day when, in fact, their contributions in some incidents have been minimal if any at all, "spin" seems to equal actual performance in terms of importance. Call me old school if you wish, but I think the current focus is misdirected and that such spin is dishonest and misleading and therefore wrong,

I have always considered myself to be, and have been considered by others, a person with a positive outlook. When I find myself becoming more and more critical of what I see occurring in the Emcomm arena and more prone to find fault than praise I think it's time to bow out. Plus, while in my professional life I am not known for backing away from difficult issues, I am not one to stay in a battle which offers little hope of being won. Given the fact that the largest "supplier" of Emcomm volunteers seems hell bent on "new and innovative," whether new and innovative is necessary or actually is effective, it is clear to me this is not a battle which can or will be won anytime soon. The focus on affiliation with public safety often to the exclusion of serving private citizens also leads me to believe that the end is near for the sort of Emcomm that is really needed and appropriate.

A quarter century ago I was one of the first and strongest advocates for Emcomm-public safety cooperation. However, as stated in this column in the past, that was at a time when public safety radio systems were far more elementary and far less reliable than most are today. The ARRL, and many Emcomm leaders, know in their heart of hearts that public safety communications systems have become target hardened and redundant. Assistance to those agencies for essential communications is becoming increasingly unnecessary. So to stay in the fray they offer such "value added" (their words, not mine) things as Winlink 2K and other means of providing over-the-air email capability. These are promised in the hopes of keeping the affiliation active even, when the "served agency" figures out that Emcomm isn't all that necessary anymore. There are two problems with that approach. One, we are promising capabilities that we do not have the needed equipment, staffing and standardized training to provide on any sort of a large scale basis. Two, we are simply stalling the inevitable.

John Johnston, W3BE, in his August "Rules & Regs" column in *WorldRadio,* made a very valid point regarding Amateur Radio assistance to government. Referring to a question about Amateur Radio support for the National Weather Service John correctly noted that NWS is simply another federal agency eligible for its own radio spectrum that is taking advantage of the Amateur Radio service. That is something to think about.

In my home state of Oregon some months back there was a weather-related emergency on the coast. There truly were communications issues. Amateur Radio did play a role in the response. Some enterprising amateurs took advantage of the situation and convinced the Governor to allocate $250,000 to establish an Amateur Radio-based digital communications system in each of the counties in the state. The "selling point" was that "when all else fails" each county's EOC could communicate to the state EOC using Winlink. My county elected not to participate and it is my understanding that several other counties may not as well. Why?

73 from NE Oregon *cont'd on page 5*

73 from NE Oregon - *cont'd from page 4*

Because there already exist several federal radio systems which allow counties to communicate to the state via a variety of widely separated HF frequencies ... widespread enough to compensate for distance and propagation issues. Why use, that rather than the "free" Amateur Radio service?

In my county (small in population and very small in terms of active amateurs) if there is an incident major enough to disrupt "all means of communications between here and Salem" every amateur here will be, needed for duty far more important than passing message traffic to the state EOC. They will be needed to assist the public, which will likely have no communications at all. One of our professional public safety dispatchers can easily monitor the federal HF system in which we participate ("Operation Secure") and send/receive whatever essential traffic may need to be sent using that resource. Operation Secure, by the way, includes automated link establishment and has a digital capabilities. An Operation Secure HF radio in my county's EOC costs less than the amount the state wanted to allocate to us for Winlink equipment. It is more sophisticated and more reliable than Winlink via Ham Radio and does not require a rare resource (trained amateur Emcomm operator) to use it. It also does not create the interference problem Winlink does on the Ham bands.

Public safety telecommunications professionals are working as we speak to develop systems, in addition to Operation Secure, with even more capability than Winlink or Airmail. Yes, as is often the case, amateurs were first to the starting line with the technology, but public safety is not far behind. They already have the spectrum to run the same type of data, they can buy the same modems we can, and they can utilize the same or better software. And they will do all of those things. The result will be that their data will be run without the conflicts Winlink et all create on the Ham bands. And, while some government agencies have spent money buying gear for Hams to use, believe me they would and will rather spend it on equipment they own, that they control, and that operates on their frequencies. Once that begins to happen on any sort of broad scale (I predict within two years) the most innovative Ham technology with which we are now falsely promising the public safety community miracles will no longer be a carrot which attracts the cops and firefighters.

In my view a significant portion of the Emcomm community has created a house of cards not long from crashing down upon it. The crash will come when Emcomm promises made are not promises kept. The harmful effects of the crash will be felt within Amateur Radio for decades.

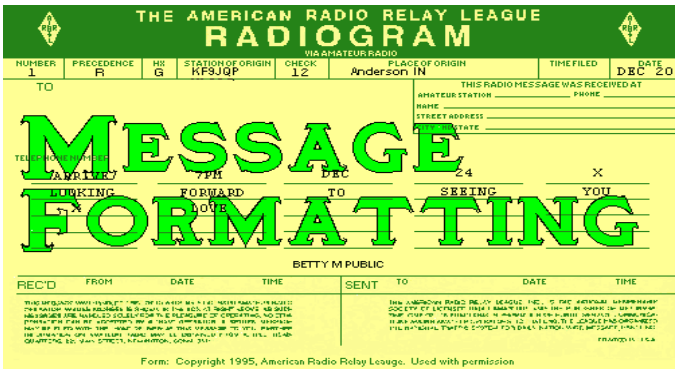
Do I have any closing suggestions for those who are serious about wanting to provide needed, meaningful Emcomm? Yes, I do. Let me conclude by listing some of them

1. Develop and maintain basic message handling skills. If you have access to state of the art technology use it, but be prepared to quickly go back to the tried and proven if new and better fails,
2. Remember that Part 97 does not mandate service to public safety. It does include service to the public.
3. Do not promise something you cannot deliver. Whether it is overextending your limited personnel and/or equipment or promising something that a technical failure, may preclude - both are among the deadly sins as far as public safety is concerned.
4. Anticipate needs but do not anticipate being needed. That is, plan for what you may be called upon to do but do not necessarily plan on being called. If you are called to assist do so promptly and efficiently. If not called, don't show up and even more don't complain about it later. 5.1f, as an Amateur Radio operator, you are content to accurately handle message traffic using Amateur Radio equipment on Amateur Radio frequencies to augment other communications systems, or provide a system where none exists, then you are an Emcomm operator. If that, becomes subordinate to such things as using public safety radio equipment, wearing an official uniform so you can direct traffic and give orders to people, and driving emergency vehicles then volunteer as something other than an Amateur Radio operator. Become a volunteer firefighter, become a reserve law enforcement officer, or become an EMT. Those are all honorable pursuits. It is easy to look important or look like a cop, or firefighter, under the guise of Amateur Radio Emcomm. It is not easy to be a real public safety first responder. Those professions require substantial training - much more training than it takes to pass a Ham license exam. But if that is what you desire to do, do the work required to be qualified and then do it for real. Better to BE than to be a wannabe.
6. If true Emcomm is your interest and you have not already done so, check out www.emcomm.org and become an active member of your ARES group.

Over the years I have been writing this column I have received a considerable amount of feedback from many readers. Most has been positive, some not. But to all who took the time to write with questions, comments and suggestions my sincere thanks. For those who continue to do Emcomm, and do it right and for the right reasons, my sincere appreciation and best wishes. God Bless. 73 de N7WR from NE Oregon

- *The author may be contacted via* n7wt@wrrl.org.

BREAK - OVER

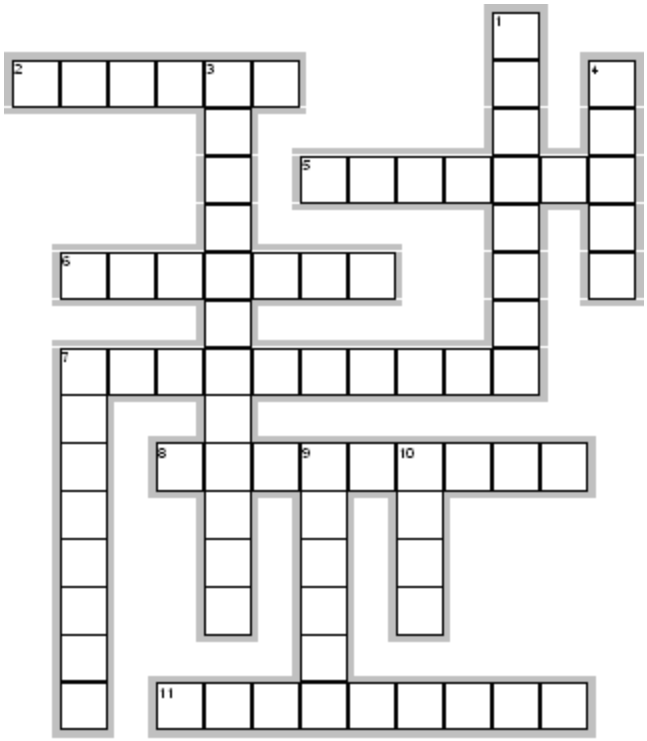


Across

2. Call sign of the first ham that put the message into written format.
5. Used for an inquiry as to the health of an individual in a disaster area
6. Includes the name, street or P.O. box, city, state, and ZIP of the recipient.
7. Tells everyone the relative urgency of a message.
8. Can be a single name, a name and call sign, a name and a title – whatever is needed to ensure that the recipient can identify the sender and that a reply message can be sent.
11. Includes official messages of welfare agencies requesting critical supplies or assistance during emergencies. The use of this precedence should generally be limited to traffic originated and signed by authorized agency officials.

Down

1. Referred to as "the header," consists of administrative data such as the message number, originating station, etc.
3. Optional field used at the discretion of the originating station.



4. The number of words in the text section only.
7. Important messages with a time limit; official messages or a notification of injury in a disaster area. Usually associated with official traffic to, from, or related to a disaster area.
9. Assigned by the station that first puts the message into written format.
10. Should be brief and to the point, limited to 25 words or less when possible.

7 yr Old Definitions Crossword Solution

Across

3. PLIGHT—a well-mannered individual.
6. COINSIDE—What you do when the winner temp drops.

Down

1. SANCTUARY much! The response by someone treated with plightness.
2. POLICE—The magic word used by plight individuals.
4. SCOLD—When the winner temp even lower.
5. WINNER—The season that comes after autumn.
7. SCHOOL— Usually said in winner about the temperature.

Simplex?

There is a principle often used to aid in the explanation of complex or complicated concepts. The KISS principle, you know what the letters stand for – Keep It Simple Stupid or more politically correct, Keep It Sweet and Simple. The principle states that design simplicity should be a key goal and unnecessary complexity avoided. Simple plans are the most reliable.

"Plan for the worst and hope conditions are that good when the big one hits" is a second principle that guides our emergency communications activity.

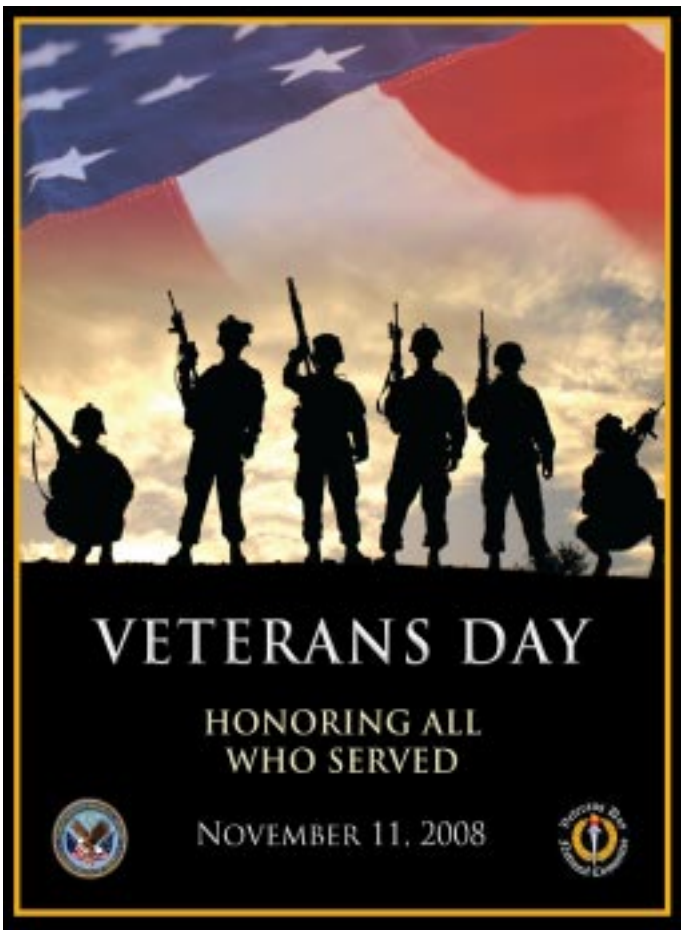
How do these apply to our ARES group? Our procedures are all designed to have a clear impact on accurate, reliable communications. We rely on basic procedures combined with practice to improve our skills. We know that when the fertilizer hits the ventilator, your performance is bassed on the amount of practice you have logged. Some people do not agree with the KISS principle in application, however they are not a part of the Scott ARES group.

One factor that is regularly debated is operating simplex for our training when repeaters are available. We are fortunate to have a number of excellent repeaters accessable within out area. Some repeaters have remote receive sites and sophisticated computer controllers. They are a pleasure to use. However, when planning for emergency comunications, the best assumption regarding a repeater is that it will not be available.

During an emergency the basic point-to-point commuications using simpex operation is the bedrock of simple reliable communications. Repeater operation is great if it is available. Too often the repeater is filled with rubber-neckers and untrained operators that bring serious emergency communications to a halt. In Scott ARES we rely on the KISS principle in our training – Keep It Simplex Stupid!

BREAK - OVER

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



ARES Breakfast
Saturday November 8th
7:30AM
Perkins Restaurant
Savage, MN

NECOS Schedule November 2008

27 Oct	KC0YHH Tony
3 Nov	N0PI Dan
10 Nov	W0NFE Bob
17 Nov	KB0FH Bob
24 Nov	KC0YHH Tony
1 Dec	N0PI Dan