

The Monitor



March 2006

Upcoming Events

- TSRC Meeting March 11, 2006, 9:00 am
DHMC Cafeteria, Hanover, NH
- TSRC Meeting April 8, 2006, 9:00 am
DHMC Cafeteria, Hanover, NH

March Guest Speaker

This month we welcome ARRL New England Division Director Tom Frenaye K1KI to our club meeting. Tom and I go back some years and have worked together as Vice Director and Director and when Tom was an ARRL VP.

He has a wealth of experience in Amateur Radio and with ARRL HQ as a former employee and later as Director. Bring your questions to the March meeting and talk to one of the 15 ARRL directors who make policy and decisions that affect the future of our great hobby!

Bill WB1BRE

Tom Frenaye K1KI

MA - Political Science

1975-76

Worked for a year in Antarctica as a radio operator for a company who provided base personnel to the National Science Foundation.
Operated as KC4AAC

1977-81

Worked for ARRL as the manager of the Contest Department

1981 to today

Worked in Information Technology - including PCs, networks, internet, security. Still do part-time consulting

Elected to ARRL Board in 1985, have served as Director and for a while as 3rd Vice President.

WB1BRE served some of the same years as Vice Director and Director

Currently serve as chairman of the Board's Administration and Finance Committee

Also, have been an ARRL Foundation Board member since 1986, president since 2002.

Serve on local town's Technology Committee and Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures.

Publish local electronic newsletter about town government and do videotaping of town meetings.

DXCC Honor Roll, 5BDXCC, 5BWAS

Very active contester and sometimes DXpeditioner (P44A, VK1KI, ZF2KI, J38DX, etc)

Will be a competitor at WRTC-2006 in Brazil

Message from the President

It certainly has been an eventful month for TSRC. At the March club meeting we held a special election for the recently-vacated office of President. I was duly nominated and elected, which left the vice presidency open. The membership nominated and elected Ken Tentarelli, AC1H, as vice president. Additionally David Haseman, KE1IW has informed me that he will not seek reelection in June. Even though the nominating committee has not yet been formed, please begin thinking about any and all offices for which you or someone you know would be well-suited. I feel very good about the group we have and while Dave will be missed I believe there is no shortage of qualified members to fill the position of Treasurer.

As part of the March meeting we also had a presentation on West Mountain Radio power management gear, including a demonstration of their RigRunner and PowerGate products. More details are available in the article Power Management in the Shack later in this newsletter.

Another big event this past month was the Lebanon Civil Air Patrol Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) that was held jointly with Grafton Fire Department/Fast Squad, Grafton K9 SAR and our own Southern Grafton County ARES group. ARES members from around the state also participated. See AA1KL's article later in this newsletter for more details.

And finally, don't forget that Tom Frenaye, K1KI, our ARRL New England Division Director will be our guest speaker at the upcoming meeting. We will also begin planning our Field Day 2006 activities so don't miss it!

73 de N8RPD

William Daugherty, TSRC President

Dues are due!

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in The Monitor are those of the individual authors and do not reflect the opinions or policies of The Twin State Radio Club, Inc.

Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX)

On Saturday, February 18th, the Southern Grafton Amateur Radio Emergency Service (SGARES) was able to successfully provide inter/multi agency communications for a Lebanon Civil Air Patrol (CAP) sponsored Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX). SGARES staffing was supplemented by many New Hampshire Amateur Radio Emergency Service (NHARES) members from all over New Hampshire. The agencies participating in the exercise were the Lebanon CAP, Grafton Fire Department, and Grafton K-9 Search and Rescue. The exercise was designed to test how the organizations would work together in searching for an overdue aircraft and its three passengers, focusing on a ground search. Three amateur radio operators served as the stranded passengers or "foxes". They were James Dean (N0JSR), Dean Sorenson (WB9MHI), and William Daugherty (N8RPD).

As many of you know, the CAP has vast experience in finding downed aircraft. What you may not know is that they did not have much experience in drilling with other agencies. The CAP has the ability to have aloft radio repeaters for their communications and area mountain top repeaters. They also have satellite, airborne, and Ground/Vehicle Direction Finding capabilities. SGARES was to provide back up communications for the exercise.

As it turned out, on the day of the exercise, their local repeater was not functioning and the weather prohibited the launching of aircraft. That meant that SGARES ended up providing almost the only communications for the exercise and the only interagency communications method (except the telephone). The primary method of communication was using the W1FN VHF FM voice repeater (we thank the club), supplemented by FRS radios and cross band repeaters to compensate for not having enough ARES members and poor RF conditions at CAP HQ and the Grafton FD.



As it turns out...the ground DFing was not effective and it took the K-9 dogs to "sniff out" Dean Sorenson, with his "broken leg". James and William moved around in the cold for many hours before showing up at the Grafton FD staging area with red cheeks and water dripping off of James's moustache! They had decided to "go for help", leaving Dean behind.

What was amazing is that the dogs sniffed out and located the beacon transmitter's antenna that the "foxes/passengers" had lost in

the woods! William had replaced the lost antenna with a 2m ham antenna so that the ELT would continue to function!

I thank everyone for their help and great work...it proved once again...when all else fails, the hams can get through!

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service is a vital part of a communications network in an emergency. This has been shown time and time again. We continue to look for interested Amateur Radio Operators who want to contribute to their communities and make us all a bit safer! Please let me know if you have an interest in joining us. Also, please visit our new website at www.sgares.net (thanks to webmaster Mike, K1IH) and read a news article about the event at <http://cvspectator.com/main.asp?SectionID=2&SubSectionID=8&ArticleID=332>.

TNX and 73, Rex.

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Editor's Note:

These are all links to articles about the SAREX.

<http://www.lebanoncap.org/>

http://erockares.blogs.com/w1wqmorg/longwire_newsletter/March06LW.pdf

<http://cvspectator.com/main.asp?SectionID=2&SubSectionID=8&ArticleID=332>

DXCC Desk approves operations for DXCC credit

The ARRL DXCC Desk has approved these operations for DXCC credit: TS3A, Tunisia, March 24-28, 2005; T6X, Afghanistan, current operation effective March 8, 2005; TT8PK, Chad, December 27, 2005 through February 11, 2006; XW1A, XW1LLR5, XW1X and XW1M, Laos, current operation effective October 29, 2005; D2DX, Angola, current operation effective December 15, 2004 (a previous announcement accredited the D2DX operation effective December 15, 2005). For more information, visit the DXCC Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/>>. "DXCC Frequently Asked Questions" can answer most questions about the DXCC program. ARRL DX bulletins are available on the W1AW DX Bulletins page <<http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/dx/>>.



PWRgate and RIGrunner in N8RPD's shack.

Note the Astro Flight meter indicating charge status of the battery.

Power Management in the Shack

For years I have tried different methods of running 12 volts to and from the various power supplies, batteries and radio gear in my shack at home. After bare wire, Molex, banana plugs and a host of other connector types, I finally settled on the Anderson Powerpole connector some years ago when it became the de facto standard for EmComm work. But I still had to plug and unplug things manually all the time. This was especially tedious in a power outage. Also there was the inevitable time when power went out and my big battery had a low charge.

My first steps toward a brighter future consisted of purchasing a West Mountain Radio (WMR) RIGrunner power distribution panel. These well-made devices use Anderson Powerpoles for each fused connection. I started with a 5-port model then eventually moved into the 12-port version. This allowed me to keep all my 12v devices plugged in all the time, thereby avoiding all the plugging and unplugging. I normally have an HF rig, several VHF/UHF rigs, a 2m packet rig, a few 12v HT chargers, a couple of TNCs and a couple of RIGblasters plugged in all the time. This solved many problems. So for a while I just plugged a power supply and my backup battery directly into the RIGrunner along with all the 12v gear. This works but is dangerous if the battery is deeply discharged. Also when a/c power goes out the battery can back-feed the power supply. This can damage the power supply and will probably at least put an unnecessary load on the battery.

For the final improvement I broke down and bought a WMR PWRgate. This simple but elegant unit uses a current-limiting resistor and a couple of Shottky diodes to permit a battery to remain connected on one end, a power supply on the other end and the connection to load in the center. This keeps my large AGM battery fully charged, allows for seamless cutover to battery power in the event of a power outage and isolates the battery from the power supply when there's no a/c.

While speaking with an employee of WMR recently I told them how much we in the HAM community appreciate the niche their products fill. Less expensive products certainly do exist. Saratoga

and MFJ make power distribution devices and the Rascal competes with the RIGblaster. And of course there are those among us who can homebrew things that look as good and work as well as WMR gear. (N1RX can make your head spin with some of his projects!) But in the end the combination of form and function that WMR brings to the table is nearly irresistible.

RIGblaster, RIGrunner and PWRgate information can be found at www.WestMountainRadio.com.

William Daugherty
N8RPD

AMATEUR RADIO GETS FAVORABLE MENTIONS IN FEDERAL KATRINA REPORTS

Ham radio received positive mentions in post-Katrina reports from the US House of Representatives and the White House. References to the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) and the HF digital e-mail system Winlink 2000 appear in "A Failure of Initiative"--the final report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to investigate the preparation for and response to Hurricane Katrina (see <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2006/02/17/2/>).

"Like all levels of government," noted the 364-page report released February 15, "the National Communication System (NCS) "was not able to address all aspects of the damage to the communications infrastructure of the Gulf States."

MARS was cited for its role as part of the Shared Resources High Frequency Radio Program (SHARES), a federal emergency communication system. The report says that "within days" of Katrina's landfall, NCS called upon more than 430 SHARES stations across the US to, among other things, assist first responders conducting search-and-rescue missions by relaying information to government agencies, by relaying logistical and operational information among FEMA EOCs in Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana, and by handling health-and-welfare messages between volunteer agencies in Georgia and the American Red Cross national headquarters.

"Additionally, the NCS coordinated the frequencies used by the nearly 1000 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) volunteers across the nation who served in the Katrina stricken area providing communications for government agencies, the Red Cross and The Salvation Army," the report continued. "Emergency communications were conducted not only by voice, but also by high-speed data transmissions using state-of-the art digital communications software known as Winlink."

The report further noted, "In Mississippi, FEMA dispatched Amateur Radio operators to hospitals, evacuation centers, and county EOCs to send emergency messaging 24 hours per day. Cited were comments by Bay St Louis Mayor Eddie Favre that Amateur Radio volunteers "were especially helpful in maintaining situational awareness and relaying Red Cross messages to and from the Hancock County EOC."

According to the report, radio amateurs at airports in Texas and Louisiana “tracked evacuees and notified families of their whereabouts,” while the Red Cross “deployed Amateur Radio volunteers at its 250 shelters and feeding stations, principally in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.”

The Salvation Army, the report pointed out, operates its own system of Amateur Radio volunteers known as SATERN (Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network). “During the Hurricane Katrina response and recovery effort, SATERN joined forces with the SHARES program and received over 48,000 requests for emergency communications assistance utilizing federal frequencies made available via the SHARES program,” the report noted.

“A Failure of Initiative” asserted that the loss of power and the failure at various levels of government “to adequately prepare for the ensuing and inevitable loss of communications” hindered the hurricane response “by compromising situational awareness and command and control operations.”

“Despite the devastation left by Katrina, this needn’t have been the case,” the report stressed. “Catastrophic disasters may have some unpredictable consequences, but losing power and the dependent communications systems after a hurricane should not be one of them.”

The White House report, “The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned” <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned.pdf>> released February 22 also cast Amateur Radio in a favorable light—in its Appendix B, “What Went Right.”

“Amateur Radio Operators from both the Amateur Radio Emergency Service and the American Radio Relay League monitored distress calls and rerouted emergency requests for assistance throughout the US until messages were received by emergency response personnel,” the report said. “A distress call made from a cell phone on a rooftop in New Orleans to Baton Rouge was relayed, via ham radio, from Louisiana to Oregon, then Utah, and finally back to emergency personnel in Louisiana, who rescued the 15 stranded victims.”

The report also points out that Amateur Radio volunteers were on duty at the National Hurricane Center, the Hurricane Watch Net, Waterway Net, SKYWARN and the Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN).

The report’s Appendix B cites specific reports in the general news media about Amateur Radio activities following Hurricane Katrina and points to several news stories that appeared on the ARRL Web site.

“HELLO” CAMPAIGN TO PUT FRIENDLY, INVITING FACE ON AMATEUR RADIO

A new ARRL public relations campaign set to launch this April will cast Amateur Radio in the light of the 21st century and focus on its universal appeal, even in today’s already technology-rich society. At the same time, the “Hello” campaign will note the 100th anniversary

of what many historians consider the first voice radio broadcast in 1906 by Reginald Fessenden.

“It is quite simply the largest PR campaign that ham radio has ever attempted,” says ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP. Built around the word “Hello,” the coordinated campaign will set “a positive, upbeat tone that highlights the international capabilities of Amateur Radio,” he explained.

One aim of the “Hello” campaign will be to reframe Amateur Radio within a contemporary context. “ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, was correct in stating that the Main Street of today is not the same as the Main Street of yesteryear,” Pitts went on to say. “To reach out today, the very first requirement is that Amateur Radio operators be perceived as friendly and trustworthy. That’s a true public relations goal and the prime focus of the campaign.”

Pitts says it’s not helpful to lament the time in decades past when Amateur Radio grew pretty much on its own, without too much effort on the part of clubs and individuals. “Only our combined, effective action will do that today,” Pitts says. “This campaign will give hams the tools they need to reach out in their communities to non-hams and influence their perception of Amateur Radio.”

The national “Hello” campaign can bring curious people into contact with ham radio groups, but it will be up to local radio amateurs to make them truly welcome, Pitts maintains.

The “Hello” campaign is designed to gain momentum as the year progresses. Components will include the release of public service announcements for use by radio and TV broadcasters and a video for meetings, presentations and even broadcast. Other highlights will include a “Hello” campaign Web site and special operating events. The high point of the “Hello” campaign will come in December on the centennial of Fessenden’s first radio broadcast.

History recalls that the Canadian-born and educated Fessenden, using an early alternator, transmitted the first audio radio broadcast from his laboratory in Brant Rock, Massachusetts. Radio operators aboard ships at sea—tipped off in advance to be listening for something special—were astounded to hear Fessenden’s broadcast that included the scientist and inventor playing “O Holy Night” on the violin and reading a Bible passage.

The campaign will show that despite the Internet and other technologies, the possibility of being able to talk with everyday people around the world and sometimes in exotic locales—coupled with the surprise, art and uncertainty of DXing—remains a major attraction for Amateur Radio. The “Hello” campaign also will take advantage of likely FCC action this year to drop the Morse code requirement at least for General class applicants.

“We all say we want to make a change for the better for Amateur Radio and get others interested,” Pitts said. “This is the time, this is the chance. Stay tuned! More to come!”

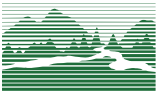
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Part 97 <http://www.arrl.org/field/regulations/news/part97/>

Don't forget to check the TSRC Home Page!
Make it your default start page!
<http://www.w1fn.org>



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