

The Monitor

September 2006



Upcoming Events

TSRC Meeting	September 9, 2006, 9:00 am EBA's, Hanover, NH
VHF Contest	September 9-10, 2006
Reach The Beach Relay	September 15-16, 2006
Hosstraders	October 6-7, 2006 Hopkinton, NH
TSRC Meeting	October 14, 2006, 9:00 am EBA's, Hanover, NH

Message from the President

With the end of summer I usually start thinking about getting ready for the winter months. Homebrew projects that I have waiting, propagation changes, spending more time inside with the radios: all these things are still a few months away but it's a good time to start preparing. I'm particularly excited this year since I no longer have to negotiate a construction zone to get to my shack!

Fall also means the annual ARES Simulated Emergency Test (SET). This year's event is slated for November 4, 2006. Those members involved or interested in emergency communications should contact local emergency coordinators for area details.

A significant club change is that we now have a full-time Echolink node on our repeater system. It is accessible via AA1KL-R on Echolink and can be activated over the air to connect to other repeaters in the Echolink system. Aside from the ability to hear from our more remote members (Where's Charlie??) we also can link to the K1JY system for truly statewide communication. This winter I will be working on an IRLP node that can also be connected for repeater-to-repeater linking. I will be writing a lengthier article on these topics in the coming months. Many thanks go out to Rex, AA1KL for his tireless work in this project, as well as the myriad other tasks he undertakes on behalf of area HAMs. (Got Winlink?)

Finally, don't forget the meeting next Saturday. We will be enjoying a presentation on Radio Direction Finding (RDF or DF) by David McGaw, N1HAC as well as some additional show-and-tell by other members with DF gear. After the meeting we are scheduled to do some field work to demonstrate the techniques and equipment presented at the meeting. I am looking forward to it.

See you at the club meeting!

73 de N8RPD
William Daugherty, TSRC President

CHAD wrap-up

Thanks to Doug, W1KUA; Alan, N1YMQ; and Rex, AA1KL for giving the TSRC a presence at the recent CHAD half marathon. They were joined on the net by Chris, N1CCL and Steve, KB1LVE of the Green Mountain bike whose EMTs provided roving medical support. Communication coordination was good as the bike patrollers also carried tactical radios that could put them in contact the Hanover Fire Department rescue personnel who were located at a medical tent at the finish area where I operated as net control.

Fortunately communications didn't get stressed as there were no injuries or serious incidents. The other good news is that the nearly 700 runners raised over \$100,000 for Children's Hospital. And oh yes, rain clouds that filled the sky during the morning scattered during the afternoon to give the runners ideal fair and cool running conditions.

I was struck by two observations: First, the organizers of the event did an excellent job of planning and execution -- outstanding considering this was the first CHAD half marathon. Clearly they had previous experience with other similar events, perhaps the Prouty. My second observation is that half marathons are much less punishing and more humane for the runners than full marathons. I've volunteered at Boston marathon for several years and there even the top runners are totally drained by the end of the race. In contrast, the CHAD top finishers hardly showed any strain.

Should TSRC support this event in the future? The argument against our support is simple: the Green Mountain bike patrol provides robust medical support and has viable communications, so supplemental communication by TSRC isn't 'needed.' On the other hand, the event could be an opportunity for TSRC. The finish line is in the middle of Hanover green with hundreds of Upper Valley people cheering the runners, listening to bands, eating foods, being happy, etc. What a great place for TSRC to get some publicity. Here's one half baked idea: Suppose we installed an APRS unit on the motor scooter that precedes the leading runners. We could then display the race leader positions on a giant plasma screen at the finish line. If we had TSRC members at all water stations along the course we could relay numbers, and therefore names, of the leaders for real time display as the race proceeds. It's something to think about.

Ken Tentarelli AC1H

Disclaimer

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Join the Hunt

Fox Hunting is the September TSRC meeting topic. The meeting itself will include a presentation by Dave McGaw, N1HAC, then Dave will lead us on a field trip where we will can try some of the techniques. For those who don't know, Fox Hunting is the term often used for radio direction finding. As practiced in ham radio circles one person, the fox, transmits periodically from a secret location while everyone else attempts to locate the fox by using direction finding techniques. Nearly any radio, even an HT, can be used for fox hunting. The key to success is to have a highly directional antenna and these are what Dave will describe and show at the meeting.

Following the meeting we will adjourn to Centerra Park where we will try our hand at fox hunting. Centerra Park has ample parking and a variety of terrain so we can see the effects of buildings, trees, etc. . Several club members have their own fox hunting equipment. Please bring your equipment so we can try as many different types of gear as possible. This field portion of the program will be a demonstration not an actual fox hunt so join us even if you don't have your own fox hunting setup.

In the past the TSRC held regularly scheduled foxhunts throughout the Upper Valley. Those who participated claim it was great fun. Perhaps it's time to revive foxhunting in the UV.

Ken AC1H

CROP WALK PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT-- TSRC

Over the past few years, the Twin State Radio Club has supported the annual Crop Walk fund raiser sponsored by the church in Post Mill, VT. We have done this as one of our public service projects and also have used the event as a training session on net operations.

The walk begins and ends at the Post Mills Congregational Church on Rte 244 in Post Mills, VT. The route goes around Lake Fairlee with road surfaces ranging from good tarmac to typical Vermont gravel. The walk is about 6 miles in length with flat to gently sloping conditions. The church provides two check points on the route with water, etc for the walkers. Route marking is usually handled by the church.

Our role has been to provide a safe walking experience for the walkers and to maintain communications along the route and back to the church. We also help with any unexpected logistics problems and have transported walkers back to the start/finish. There usually is a registered nurse involved and we make sure she has comm support when in her vehicle. Generally, they have 20-30 walkers, but there can be more depending on weather, etc.

This year's walk will take place on Sunday, October 8 with the walk start at 1:00 PM from the church. We have found that we should plan to arrive at the church about noon, so as to coordinate with the walk leaders and to establish our communications system. As in past years, Dot KA1LDS has volunteered to be net control at the church. We will plan to operate on 146.58 Simplex as the primary frequency with 145.33, PL 100 as backup and talkin.

I plan to be one of the mobile units and we will need two other mobiles for general traffic monitoring and for checking the walkers condition during the afternoon. Usually the walk is over sometime between 5 and 6 PM. The church also serves a great lunch for all the walkers and workers as well!

I have gotten some indications that a couple of people want to support the effort with bicycle/mobile and we welcome bikes and/or walkers with H/Ts who want to support the effort. If you would prefer to be located at one of the check points for the duration, we can do that too!

While 2M voice will be the primary communications mode, we may also be doing some APRS testing on this walk. After talking with William, it looks like we can have a laptop with appropriate software and map at net control and probably 2-3 mobile/portable APRS units operating. Since we are never more than 3 miles apart at any point and the terrain is flat, this resembles some search and rescue scenarios and can be a useful training tool. More on APRS later-- and I will keep everyone posted if there are any schedule, frequency or other changes.

Please let me know if you can help on this effort and your preference- mobile, check point, bike or walker communicator.

Bill Burden WB1BRE

We have had many questions about Crop Walk over the years-- mostly, "what does CROP stand for?", so I pulled some basic facts off their web site:

What does CROP stand for?

When CROP began in 1947 (under the wing of Church World Service, which was founded in 1946), the name was an acronym for the Christian Rural Overseas Program; its primary mission was to help Midwest farm families to share their grain with hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia. Reflective of a program that for several decades has been both urban and rural, today CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty and identifies interfaith hunger education and fundraising events sponsored by Church World Service and organized by 21 CWS/CROP regional offices across the U.S.

In some CWS/CROP regions, CROP has come to mean Communities Reaching Out to People.

Where do CROP Walk funds go?

CROP Walks help to support the overall ministry of Church World Service, especially the grassroots, hunger-fighting development efforts of partner agencies in some 80 countries. CROP Walks help to provide tools of hope that empower people to meet their own needs. From seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and micro-enterprise loans, the key is people working together to identify their own development priorities, their strengths and their needs -- something CWS has learned through some 60 years of working in partnership around the world.

In addition, each local CROP Hunger Walk can choose to return up to 25 percent of the funds it raises to local hunger-fighting programs.

How do CROP Hunger Walks help out here at home?

This year CROP Walks will share nearly \$4 million with food banks, pantries, community gardens, and other local efforts nationwide. This support is made possible when local CROP Walks choose our unique option of returning up to 25 percent of what their CROP Walk raises to hunger-fighting programs in their own community.

AMATEUR RADIO AWARENESS DAY IS SEPTEMBER 16

September is US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Preparedness Month, and Saturday, September 16, is Amateur Radio Awareness Day. For the third straight year, the ARRL and Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) groups across the US will join a coalition of more than 200 national, regional, state and local organizations taking part in Preparedness Month activities. ARES is a partner with DHS through the Citizen Corps program. ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP, says local ARES groups and clubs will be making presentations to civic organizations, at schools and at regional fairs to showcase Amateur Radio.

"More than 4000 ARRL 'Hello' campaign <<http://www.hello-radio.org/>> brochures have gone out in the past few weeks alone to prepare for the month-long initiative," he said.

To highlight Amateur Radio Awareness Day, ARRL public information officers (PIOs) will promote the DHS's "30 Tips for Emergency Preparedness" <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/inter-app/editorial/editorial_0711.xml> to attract news media coverage. Some tips on promoting National Preparedness Month are on the ARRL public relations Web pages <<http://www.arrl.org/pio/contact/2006/08/SEPTEMBER>>.

ARRL Public Service Team Manager Steve Ewald, WV1X, notes that the underlying theme of National Preparedness Month is to encourage everyone to be aware of and prepare for emergencies all year long.

"Amateur Radio operators, led by ARRL Field Organization leaders across the country, are encouraged to consider this year's ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET) -- as well as all preparations and post-SET evaluations -- as a demonstration of your participation in National Preparedness Month," Ewald said. The target weekend for the 2006 SET is October 7-8 <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/setguide.html>>.

A major ham radio presentation during September will take place on the West Coast. ARRL Southwestern Division Director Dick Norton, N6AA, says Amateur Radio Expo 2006 <<http://lafair.b2v.org/>> will be held in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Fair. "They will staff the exhibit over four weekends," Norton said, noting that the fair annually attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors.

Amateur Radio Expo 2006 will get under way the weekend of September 9-10 and will feature a special event station plus interactive presentations to demonstrate the many facets of ham radio.

In a related vein, Pitts says he'd like to see a tighter relationship

between ARES organizations and the League's corps of volunteer PIOs.

"Too often something happens, and everyone grabs a radio. No one grabs a camera or laptop and gets the word of ARES actions out to the media until long after the story becomes stale," he observed. "We have wonderful stories to tell, but we are too busy to tell them when they are fresh."

Pitts said he and the ARRL Public Relations Committee are working on ways to better integrate public relations and emergency response actions at the local level.

Pitts says that according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), families should plan on being totally on their own for up to four days. "That's like being back in ancient times: no cell phone, no Internet, no 911," he said.

"BACKWARD SUNSPOTS" MAY HERALD START OF SOLAR CYCLE 24

The recent appearance on the sun of two so-called "backward sunspots" may mean solar Cycle 23 is drawing to a close and Cycle 24 now is under way or soon will be. At least that's the thinking of some scientists.

"We've been waiting for this," said Solar Physicist David Hathaway of the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, after the first backward spot showed up. "A backward sunspot is a sign that the next solar cycle is beginning."

The term "backward" refers to the sunspots' magnetic polarity. One such sunspot appeared briefly July 31, then disappeared, but its significance was that its magnetic polarity was just the opposite of current Cycle 23 spots.

Another more robust backward spot, Sunspot 905, appeared in late August -- although it subsequently began to dissipate -- and some sun gazers are saying Cycle 24 already has begun. ARRL propagation guru Tad Cook, K7RA, this week called it "the second sunspot of the new Solar Cycle 24."

"Eventually there will be more of the new reversed sunspots than old ones from Cycle 23, and that occurrence is one way to mark the beginning of the next sunspot cycle," he said. Radio conditions will not improve any time soon but over a period of several years of the course of the 11-year cycle, perhaps peaking around 2010.

TSRC E-mail Reflector

The TSRC reflector is a good place to get or give help. list equipment for sale, announce your results in the last contest, recruit volunteers for a public service event, and more!

Point your web browser to <http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/tsrc> Follow the instructions there and you will be able to do all of these!

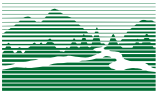
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Part 97 <http://www.arrl.org/field/regulations/news/part97/>

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



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