

The Monitor

November 2007



Message from the President

With a short interval between the October and November meetings, we don't have much content for this month's newsletter, so I will be brief.

Nearfest was a great time for everyone I have spoken to. Kudos to those brave souls (soles?) who have picked up the baton and continued this excellent bi-annual New England tradition.

Last month's meeting program was given by Dick Green, WC1M, and it was amazing. Dick certainly has gone all-out with his station over the last dozen or so years and it has paid off. Thanks to him for sharing this with us.

This month's program will be given by Ken Downs, W1KRT, on QRP operation. Ken has devoted a lot of time and effort into the somewhat rare art of low-power operation. I'm looking forward to it.

See you at the meeting!

William Daugherty
KX1Y

New Hampshire ARES readies for 2007 Simulated Emergency Test

The following is an email sent recently by the SET coordinator

This email is also for the benefit of the VTARES SEC, VTRACES, the ARC, and the Maine ARES SEC hoping you may participate with us!

There has been a lot of interest for participating in an SET! Every NHARES group, MARS, NTS, and I am hoping VTARES and VTRACES.

This email is designed to get you all thinking, and

Upcoming Events

TSRC Meeting	November 10, 2007, 9:00 am EBA's, Hanover, NH
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TSRC Meeting	December 8, 2007, 9:00 am EBA's, Hanover, NH
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by planning, the SET will go more smoothly. It actually has very few goals that are challenging.

If you feel overwhelmed, read the summary first. But, please read the whole email carefully. HI HI.

It will be on Saturday Nov. 17 beginning at 0830L. It will end at 1300L or sooner, if you complete the tasks quickly!

At 0830L we will all begin working in our own areas to achieve the goals listed below, using the assumptions/conditions listed below.

WE WILL NOT USE ANY CALL UP TREES, JUST START HAVING FUN AND START COMMUNICATING AT 0830!

Start thinking about the problems and the solutions.

What we are practicing:

1. How do we request, and logistically, how do we guide an outside emcomm person to where he/she is needed?
2. How do we communicate with our neighbors to ask for help?
3. Where are our PODs located if there was all Hazards activation for the state?

Assumptions:

No phone or internet service, except for NH HSEM communicating with the EMDs and that is slow. The phones are flooded with calls!

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No state government leadership/support so no EOC/NH HSEM is available to the small communities. They are overwhelmed.

The emergency spans the entire State of NH.

Repeaters are generally busy with traffic and too busy to be used when simplex could be used instead.

Commercial power is intact, but may go down unexpectedly.

Every NH ARES area/group needs help from another group or area.

The State has initiated the All Hazards Plan. All of the Points of Distribution (PODS) are being brought into service throughout the State of NH.

There is no telephone communications between the local hospitals and the "PODS" and it is desperately needed, as they did not drill for the phones being flooded.

No hams from your area is available to staff your PODs.

All Red Team members will give priority to staffing their local group's needs. The ACO can ask any LAC to assign a member of the Red team to help him.

The SEC and his leadership team are intact, but they cannot be at NH HSEM.

Goals:

1.) Successfully request help from outside your area, and have deployed and in place TWO to THREE Amateur Radio Emcomm communicators with the appropriate equipment at your area's PODS. Those assigned were originally not part of your group. They need to have been assigned to you by an outside LAC.

These 2 - 3 hams must be part of another emcomm group. Start your search from the closest neighboring areas and then work your way out, if you need to.

The requested help must actually drive to and arrive at the PODS. So, I would need to get two to three emcomm capable hams from outside of SGARES (people not on my call up list) to drive to the PODS in my area. (I have three PODs in my area). They need to have arrived and to have successfully checked into the 2m local net and be ready to pass traffic. (From their car is fine) It would be more real if they actually

also had digital communications. How will you direct that person to the right place? Do you (the LAC) know where the PODS are? How often will you check up on them to make sure they are not lost or need more direction?

Before the imported person leaves, it must have been established that that person can provide the appropriate services. I.E. The LAC sending the person to another area has prepared the ham being sent with..... Who needs to talk with whom, where are these people located, what kind of traffic needs to be passed, what kind of equipment do each of the locations have, the duration of deployment, and the right equipment!!! It does no good to send a packet station if there is no other packet station to talk to. The LAC requesting the help would have already formulated the communications plan and then he begins putting together the resources. He needs to make sure that the resources he is getting sent in are the right ones. And, can that person/ham can provide and use the equipment?

The LAC requesting help must provide this information to the LAC that is sending the ham to the outside area and also that sending LAC decides who is best to send. This will require a surprising amount of coordination, esp. if you are getting requests from 3 or 4 areas. Keep in mind, in a real situation like this (if the PODS are activated) digital/winlink would be the method of choice enhanced by tactical messaging with voice. So, I would want at least voice and digital comm. between the all of the PODS, local hospitals, and if they are available, NH HSEM.

Does everyone know where the other NHARES groups and out of state groups will be listening and having their nets??? Does the person you are sending out know what frequencies and repeaters the place they are heading to would be using?? This is important for them to know, before they leave your repeater coverage.

Did the LAC sending the ham confirm all of this with the LAC that has requested help?

2.) Each area's LAC will have established two way messaging capability with at least TWO (but prefer all) of their neighboring area's LACs.

E.G. I would have sent and received a message

with the Central, Capital, Sullivan, VTARES and VT RACES LACs. East Coos with West Coos, Mt. Washington Valley, and Maine's LACs. You know where the NHARES groups will be listening, right? Get the idea?

I will be providing a map on the SGARES or NHARES website to help you define who you need to talk with. You need to have established the path and sent and received a message, even if it is just a brief tactical message or a formatted message. When there is no LAC, like VT or ME, just establishing comm. with someone from that group is sufficient. The attempt to communicate will continue until 1300 or until you think it cannot be done in the allotted time. Those that need to communicate with other states can and should try and do some preparation, by having arranged to have someone to talk with and knowing what freq. they would be on in an emergency.

3.) Each area will establish a directed Net on their primary repeater that will be up for the duration of the event.

The local LAC decides when to close it.

4.) Each area will establish at least one station monitoring and passing traffic on their simplex frequency.

It is best if it is in a good high location and it needs to also have access to their primary repeater.

It is best if there are two operators at that site, one for repeater traffic to that sight, and another for managing the simplex traffic.

5.) Maximize simplex traffic, such as when guiding the person(s) into your area or talking with another LAC.

6.) Each area will have HF communications for a NHARES HF net. Starting at 0830

The ACO will decide when to close this net and assign an NCS.

7.) Each area will have access to the K1JY linked system.

The ACO will decide when to close this net and assign an NCS.

Those areas without constant K1JY coverage would want to begin to figure out how to try and get your part of the state linked for the SET, and what frequencies to use!

8.) Our ACO must have established communications with the VTARES SEC, the Maine ARES SEC, MARS and the NTS.

In an all Hazards event, it would be unlikely that the local EMDs/or PODs would communicate with any of these groups directly, but if help from outside is needed for ARES, it would be the ACO who would request it. Also, I as an EC, could only guess as to how we would communicate with MARS and NTS, as I have never done it. So, the ACO for the SET (the SEC or his designate) will want to do some research on how to accomplish this goal ahead of time. I think that Winlink will do the trick, if you have an active winlink address. Tom, think about what path you might use. And, then you can educate those of us that are not sure, during the drill. It would be best for you to communicate to all of the LACs on how to send messages through their MARS and NTS in case we needed to. Just as might happen for real.

9.) For the state wide nets, K1JY and HF, the ACO will designate a net control operator after assessing the situation and who is on.

To summarize, we will be starting all of the usual nets, guiding 2-3 hams to a place they are not familiar with, and figuring out/learning how to communicate with our neighbors if we are given no guidance. (such as would happen initially in a true disaster with little ramp up time).

I will be providing some details with a map and who outside of NHARES will come and play with us. We will work on the debrief and reporting to the ARRL later. I will copy this to all that I have communicated with to send around.

73 and Have Fun!

Rex G. Carr, M.D., AA1KL
NHARES EC Southern Grafton
VTARES AEC Windsor County
rexgcarr@wildblue.net
aa1kl@arrl.net

Dancing on the Moose

Dave, WA1ZCN

William asked me to write a few words about what it's like working 300' up the Moose Mt. NHPTV tower. As broadcast towers go, it's a small to medium sized stick, but the challenges are similar to much larger towers.

When I was a younger man, I spent a lot of time working on big towers, some as high as 1000'. A few had elevators, but most had interior ladders. I'd climb down for lunch if we were working below 500', but if it had a ladder and we were any higher, I'd have it sent up, carry it with me, or go without. A pre-climb trip to the outhouse was critical, but there were a few times that I had to warn everyone to stay upwind of the tower!

Working on the Moose Mt. tower twice last month wasn't quite so dramatic. It was one, pretty much all-day trip up in both cases. I'm not in as great shape as I was 20 years ago, so coming down for lunch wasn't an option – even from 300'. However, on the second work day, the wind kept blowing the hauling line into the tower while we were rigging it, requiring several trips halfway down to untangle and re-heave the line. By the end of the day I was pretty exhausted.

What made this job really different from the past is that we couldn't swing our 6' sidearm in so we could reach the antenna. This is because the cellular folks have added a few more cables to their rack in the last few years. Now, we need to use a bosun's chair to get out there. It wasn't the first time I'd used this method, but probably only the third or fourth time. The last time I used one was at 950', in a 30 knot wind! But then, I was in my twenties.

The bright orange static rope was double-fastened to the cellular antenna sidearm about 50 feet above ours. I tied a figure-8 knot into the rope just above our side arm, and clipped the bosun's chair to it. I wore my lineman's belt over the bosun's chair harness, and ran the positioning strap around the sidearm for added safety. In addition, I tied the tail end of the rope to the tower leg near our sidearm so I could pull myself back in if I drifted out of touch.

The only hairy part of this was that the seat of the chair was covered with nylon – very slippery! I had to be careful not to shift my weight too far forward or risk slipping off the chair. That's why the lineman's belt was worn over the harness! Coming off the seat would have been a major nuisance, but probably nothing more.

When you're working up high, especially as you get older, every move needs to be carefully thought out and executed. I don't have the strength to catch my full weight anymore, and I find myself more careful about being tied off while moving around. (This tower does not have the OSHA required climbing safety system, so it's all free climbing until you reach your work location.)

Muscle cramps are also a problem, given my less than stellar physical condition lately. N1HAC sent up some water on one occasion, but I still had to be careful. As lactic acid builds up in the muscles, cramps become more likely. One more than one occasion, I would feel one coming on and carefully shake it out. Most of the time though, being careful to make slow, gradual moves prevented cramps from occurring in the first place. During the climbs up and down took frequent breaks.

We need to think about the future. None of our experienced tower riggers are getting any younger. Perhaps we should start training some of the younger members! The alternative is really busting the budget by hiring pros. This isn't work that first-timers should attempt. A good knowledge of safe methods and knots is essential.

Finally, I want to again thank the ground crews that assisted on both days. These included N1UM, KX1Y, N1YMQ, N1HAC, N5EI, WB1BRE, and KB1MOV. I couldn't have done it without them. For them, it was short periods of hard hauling interspersed with far longer periods of waiting as I worked, nearly out of sight. Everything takes longer up there than it would on the ground, so the crew spent a lot of time lying on the ground looking upward, well away from the tower – just in case I dropped something. The one tool that was dropped on day two went into the woods and was later recovered. It's hard to avoid. Helmets protect only the top of your head, not your shoulders or back. Besides, anything heavy hitting your helmet square on is likely to do spinal damage. Best to stay well away – they did, and so lived to tell tall tales! (A wink and nod to N1UM.) □

Tower Hero

The Club's antenna up tower three hundred feet,
with loose joints, water, and nasty corrosion,
was replaced by Dave; that's no mean feat.

(Acrophobia might cause a mind's implosion.)
One weekend we worked to take it down,
getting there by road torn by much erosion.

Tests and repairs were made on the ground,
then came a new call to assist from below,
hoping that little wind would be found

and that rain would not a veto bestow.
We watched from grass his exploit,
up a beanstalk that quite reached to Virgo.

His moves must be quite strong and adroit;
a challenge to his stamina doing this ballet.
One can't reach the top with ploys from Detroit.

He climbs free, without rock climber's belay,
artist at what he does with no voodoo,
using pole climber's belt to hold for delay.

His hands and feet are made of glue,
climbing up and down to hoist emplace,
standing on round sidearms to make do.

It took five of us to haul the pole apace.
Along the sidearm to reach the worksite
by bosun's chair he moved over space.

Alone he must maneuver in the limelight.
capturing and fastening a cannon so loose
clamping and aligning all upright.

Now you and I have varied excuse;
age and weakness do so conspire
to stop our climb to faults reduce.

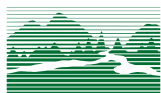
Much as we might to heights aspire,
his skill outshines all who might so wish.
We could not such strength begin to hire.

When down he came with fatigue and famish
I thought to thank him for what he'd done
But it was he to me gave thanks unselfish.
Really, I don't begin to envy the fun.

Dan H. Allen, N1UM 10/8/2007

CLUB OFFICERS

President: William Daugherty, KX1Y (603) 359-3745
william@will-do.com
VP: Ken Tentarelli, AC1H (603) 763-9296
Secretary: Dan Allen, N1UM natanddan@nhvt.net
Treasurer: Chuck Sherman N3WTO (802) 765-9630
chuck.sherman@dartmouth.org
Trustee: Dave Landry KA1CRP (603) 448-5788
daveka1crp@verizon.net
Editor: William Daugherty, KX1Y



Twin State Radio Club, Inc.
PO Box 5078
Hanover, NH 03755

ELECTRONIC ADDRESSES

*ARRL Website <http://www.arrl.org/>
*NH ARRL Home Page: <http://www.arrlnh.org/>
*Tom Frenaye K1KI-NE Div. Dir. k1ki@arrl.org
*R. Sterling Eanes, AK1K, NH SM ak1k@arrl.org
*Dale Drake, AA1QD, NH ACC aa1qd@arrl.net
Part 97 <http://www.arrl.org/field/regulations/news/part97/>

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Club email reflector:
TSRC@mailman.qth.net
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