

Greetings from Rochester, County Kent, England! My job as an electromagnetic interference technician has taken me to the U.K. for a month to provide technical assistance (thus my absence at the January general meeting).

Last month I touched briefly on some goals I believe are important for BARA to focus on. This month, I'd like to discuss a topic of importance not just locally, but to hams the world over: emergency communications. The 2008 Budget was read and accepted after some When I mention that I'm an amateur radio discussion at the January General Meeting. operator, I oftentimes get the response, "Oh, do people still do that?" They must not be aware that hams are still occasionally in the news, most often when disaster strikes & amateur radio proves to be invaluable for providing critical communications links. Hurricane Katrina and 9-11 were notable examples.

More recently, parts of Oregon were hit by a major storm in December of 2007. When downed trees knocked out numerous phone lines in this region, where cell coverage was limited, amateur radio operators came to the rescue. Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski stated, "I'm going to tell you who the heroes were from the very beginning of this...the ham radio operators. These people just came in and actually provided a tremendous communication link to us." ARES District 1 spokesman Steve Sanders added, "You are amateur in name only."

Global climate change is projected to increase the risk of severe thunderstorms in the Northeast over the next few decades. If this projection is accurate, the importance of amateur radio in our region may well increase in the future. Indeed, over the past three years we've experienced violent weather twice, with significant floods ravaging our region. The situation did not result in communications outages, but in the face of the possibility of increasing weather-related disasters in our region in the future, we should be prepared to respond to the call for our unique capabilities.

To this end, I hope that the area hams will participate as fully as possible in the opportunities to train for emergency communication, such as the weekly Star net, the annual Field Day, and local events such as The Empire Games. The experience we receive may well be of critical importance to our region should weather-related disaster strike! — 73 - *DE allen lutins, KC2KLC*