



Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
1733 Gihon Rd. Parkersburg, WV 26101

AMERICAN RED CROSS RESPONDS TO ARRL CONCERNS REGARDING BACKGROUND CHECKS

At the ARRL ARES forum at the Dayton Hamvention, ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Dennis Dura, K2DCD, announced that the American Red Cross (ARC) has finally moved to resolve the issue of background checks for ARES volunteers.

In November 2007, ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, wrote to the American Red Cross (ARC) regarding concerns voiced by ARRL volunteers. In 2006, the Red Cross stated it would implement background checks that included, among other things, a credit check and a "mode of living" check for its staff and volunteers, including ARES volunteers providing services to the Red Cross during disasters. ARRL saw these portions of the background check as unneeded and inappropriate for ARES service.

In a letter dated May 8 of this year, Armond T. Mascelli, ARC Vice President for Disaster Response Services replied to President Harrison: "I can now report back to you that [these] actions have been completed and changes have been instituted which I trust resolves the concerns detailed in your letter. This effort took considerably more time and attention than originally envisioned, but I believe the results will now benefit our respective organizations.

"A new background consent form now [is] to be used by all Red Cross chapters for ARRL members and other partner organizations. The form and

related process is limited to the name and social security number verification of the individual, and a criminal background check. References and suggestions to other related investigative possibilities have been stricken."

Harrison said that "We are very pleased that the American Red Cross has addressed some of the issues that we raised regarding their background investigations and that we can move forward in a relationship that has existed for a long, long time. The American Red Cross and the ARRL have shared a productive relationship for many years which has been of benefit to both the organizations and to the public. We are glad that throughout the past months we have been able to negotiate the issues that we had and have finally come to a resolution."

With the background check issue apparently resolved, the ARRL will be working with the ARC in the negotiation and creation of a draft for a new "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) or similar document to replace the one which expired last year; Dura and Keith Robertory of the ARC will be leading the effort. When complete, the draft of the MOU will be presented to the leadership of both organizations for approval.

"While we believe that the Red Cross is implementing some changes that will address some of the concerns expressed to them by ARRL, at this point, it is work in process," said ARRL Chief Operating Officer Harold

Kramer, WJ1B. "There are many questions yet to be answered, but we believe that the Red Cross is progressing in good faith to complete the changes to their policy and their background check consent form, which was the primary concern expressed to the Red Cross by ARRL. There will be more clarifications and information in the near future. Please keep an eye on the ARRL Web site for updates as we know them. We are very much aware of your concerns and have conveyed them to the Red Cross. We expect the Red Cross to address these and other concerns on subject of their background check policy in the near future."

"The ARRL is very pleased that the American Red Cross has responded appropriately to our concerns about the background check issue," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ. "We believe it now will be possible to go forward to negotiate a statement of understanding between the two organizations. We look forward to renewing and expanding the relationship with the Red Cross."

Dura warns that when requesting a background check on the ARC Web site, volunteers from partner agencies, such as the ARRL or ARES, should select "I am an ARC partner" when asked "What is my Red Cross role?" Otherwise, he says, volunteers will see the background check form that asks for "everything."

HAMS CALLED TO ACTION IN AFTERMATH OF CHINA QUAKE

On Monday, May 12 at 0628 UTC, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake hit Sichuan, China. According to the Chinese Radio Sports Association <<http://www.crsa.org.cn/english.php>>, the Chinese IARU Member-Society, has designated the following frequencies for emergency services involved in the rescue: 14.270, 7.050 and 7.060 MHz. The ARRL encourages US amateurs to be aware of the emergency operations on those three frequencies.

The CRSA Web site reports the following:

"On the afternoon of May 12, 2008, Wenchuan Area of China's Sichuan province was struck by an earthquake. Communications in some of the surrounding areas are currently cut off, and communications in some other areas are experiencing network congestion because of drastically increased traffic.

"Chinese Radio Sports Association therefore calls on its members to take actions to ensure their amateur radio stations to operate properly, and to the extent possible stand by on often used short-wave frequencies. If any radio signal is heard from the disaster area, please do your best to understand what is most needed by people in that area and report it to the local government authority. If people in the surrounding areas need to pass messages to their loved ones over the radio, please help them to get

in touch and get the messages across as soon as possible.

"Amateur radio stations in the disaster area and surrounding areas if in working conditions should be used unconditionally to assist the local earthquake disaster relief authorities, and subject to permission by the said authorities, to provide communications services to them. For emergency communications purposes, amateur radio stations may also be used to pass messages for local residents on a temporary basis until local telecommunications services resume. Amateur radio stations of all regions should give way to and stand by for emergency communications."

At 1757 UTC on Monday, May 12, Liu Hu, BG8AAS, of Chengdu, a town in the province of Sichuan, reported that a local UHF repeater survived the disaster. "It keeps functioning from the first minute and more than 200 local radio hams are now on that repeater. A group of hams from Chengdu has headed for Wenchuan, the center of the quake, trying to set up emergency communication services there," he said.

Michael Chen, BD5RV/4, said that Yue Shu, BA8AB, also from Chengdu, Sichuan, was reported to be active on the 40 meter emergency frequency on Monday. "Up to now, there has been no further information available from the center zone of the quake. There are a few radio amateurs there, but all of the communications have been cut out, including Amateur Radio," Chen said.

At 1858 UTC, Liu reported that the local UHF repeater in Chengdu "keeps busy running after the quake. It helps to direct social vehicles to transport the wounded from Dujiangyan, Beichuan and other regions. Another UHF repeater also started working in Mi- anyan, supported by generators, but they are going to face a shortage of gas." Chen said that damage in Chengdu remains in the lowest level, but the situation is "very very bad in the counties around. A few towns are said to be destroyed completely. More than 7000 died in the town of Beichuan. Casualties in several other towns are still unknown and not counted in the published numbers. It is a long and sad day."

At 0831 UTC on Tuesday, May 13, Chen said that a group of radio amateurs is now transmitting from Wenchuan, the center of quake: "Its signal is reported to be very weak. They tried to keep communication with BY8AA, the Sichuan Radio Orienteering Association in Chengdu, seeking for all resources needed. During a contact finished a few minutes ago, they were asking for raincoats, water, tents and outdoor living facilities." -- Information provided by Michael Ye, BD4AAQ, and Michael Chen, BD5RV/4

NEW NASA TOOL ALLOWS EXPLORATION OF IONOSPHERE

Last week at the Space Weather Workshop in Boulder, Colorado, NASA released a 4D live model of the Earth's ionosphere

<http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2008/30apr_4dionosphere.htm?List2125_89>. Without leaving home, anyone can fly through the layer of ionized gas that encircles Earth at the edge of space itself. All that is required is an Internet connection and a free copy of Google Earth <<http://earth.google.com/>>. NASA calls the ionosphere the "last wisp of Earth's atmosphere that astronauts leave behind when they enter space. The realm of the ionosphere stretches from 50 to 500 miles above Earth's surface where the atmosphere thins to near-vacuum and exposes itself to the fury of the sun. Solar ultraviolet radiation breaks apart molecules and atoms creating a globe-straddling haze of electrons and ions."

Using a Google Earth interface, users can fly above, around and through these regions getting a true 4D view of the situation. "The fourth dimension is time. This is a real-time system updated every 10 minutes," said W. Kent Tobiska, president of Space Environment Technologies and chief scientist of its Space Weather Division. The proper name of the system is CAPS, short for Communication Alert and Prediction System. Earth-orbiting satellites feed the system up-to-the-minute information on solar activity; the measurements are then converted to electron densities by physics-based computer codes. It is important to

note, Tobiska said on the NASA Web site, that CAPS reveals the ionosphere not only as it is now, but also as it is going to be the near future.

According to propagation specialist Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, this model "can provide Amateur Radio operators a broad view of what the ionosphere is doing 'now.' This broad view is due to the fact that the resolution in the color coding schemes only gives coarse estimates of the six parameters available." Luetzelschwab, former editor of "National Contest Journal" (NCJ) <<http://www.arrl.org/ncj/>>, writes a propagation column in NCJ and other publications.

"This is an exciting development," said NASA solar physicist Lika Guhathakurta on the NASA Web site. "The ionosphere is important to pilots, ham radio operators, earth scientists and even soldiers.

Using this new 4D tool, they can monitor and study the ionosphere as if they're actually inside it." Guhathakurta made his comments on the NASA Web site.

NASA understands that "[h]am radio operators know the ionosphere well. They can communicate over the horizon by bouncing their signals off of the ionosphere -- or communicate not at all when a solar flare blasts the ionosphere with X-rays and triggers a radio blackout." As radio amateurs, we use -- and depend on -- the ionosphere to make contacts.

Tobiska agrees: "For ham radio operators, this is a great application because it enables them to figure out what frequencies that are going to be available for communicating with any part of the world they want to communicate with at that moment in time. So ham radio operators who are in South Carolina want to talk to someone in Europe or Africa, they can know exactly what frequencies to turn to on their dial." Luetzelschwab said he personally believes that "The importance of this new product is the fact that this is likely the first physical model of the ionosphere available to the widespread Amateur Radio community. This is in contrast to the model in our current propagation predictions -- such as VOACAP, W6ELProp and the like -- that is based on years of measured ionospheric data correlated to a proxy for the true solar ionizing radiation (the proxies being sunspots and 10.7 cm solar flux)."

NASA explained that it appears that this new physical model takes satellite measurements of solar radiation at extreme ultraviolet (EUV) wavelengths (the true ionizing radiation) and inputs this data, along with a geomagnetic field activity index, into a model of the atmosphere to determine electron densities. Luetzelschwab said "Yes, it only offers a broad view now -- but I think it is a sign of things to come."

More information on this tool for radio amateurs can be found on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/05/06/10081/>>.

PARK Minutes

March 10, 2008

There were 26 members and guests present at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the March meeting of the PARK club.

President Blaine Auville WA8IOE called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. The 50/50 drawing of \$13.50 was won by Dick N8CSR.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report was given of a balance of \$2764.38.

Jep K8BOT reported that the old controller is to be sent back for repairs again as the problem was not fixed.

The Charleston hamfest is this Saturday March 15 at the National Guard armory.

The Washington Bottom community building has been reserved for the Christmas party.

Jerry KA8NJW will again chair the field day committee.

Blaine WA8IOE purchased eight 4 foot fiberglass poles for \$15 at the Orlando hamfest and will make them available for field day. The tent is stored in Dave N8NWV's garage and John KD8EDK has the generator in good working order. Blaine WA8IOE will try to reserve the shelter at Fort Boreman Park.

Blaine WA8IOE reported both repeaters are working good.

Jerry KA8NJW has finally retired the Wilson.

Connie will have a hip replacement on March 26 at Marietta Memorial Hospital.

Jep suggested that a card be made to give when members-pay dues. Mark KR5N and Jerry KA8NJW will work on designing one.

A coordinator is needed for mowing details at the repeater site. There were no volunteers and it was tabled until the next meeting.

W8WEJ has QST and CQ magazines to give away, about 5 years worth.

Jep K8BOT moved and Matt KD8GWP seconded that we adjourn at 7:30 PM.

April 14, 2008

There were 20 members and guests present at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the April meeting of the PARK club.

President Blaine Auville WA8IOE called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The minutes of the March meeting were read and approved. There was no treasurer's report or 50/50 drawing due to the absence of the treasurer.

There was no action on the designing and issuing of membership cards.

Dave N8NWV will check the 146.970 repeater site tomorrow to see if it needs mowing yet.

The Charleston hamfest was well attended by local hams, with at least 14 there.

Upcoming hamfests are Athens on April 27 and Jackson County on May 4.

Connie N8IO had her hip surgery and is now taking therapy and has been heard on the Ohio SSB traffic net. Georgia sent a get well card.

Field day packets are available for download at the ARRL web site.

The net control roster has been handled well by Curt K8UC and Blaine WA8IOE will be net control tomorrow night.

Lydia White AA8UL has a co-worker, Lou Bogdan N3HEJ that has some HF radio equipment that he has offered to the club.

Curt K8UC announced that Dencle Jenkins W8NKQ is now a silent key. He was not a club member.

Fred KB8CCP has about 5 years of Popular Communications magazine to give

away. Anyone interested should see him after the meeting.

Bill W8WHA has some Hallicrafters radios for sale.

Jep K8BOT, the official adjourner, was not present, so Jerry KA8NJW moved and Bill W8WHA seconded that we adjourn.

May 12, 2008

There were 25 members and guests present at Mary's Plane View Restaurant for the May meeting of the PARK club.

President Blaine Auville WA8IOE called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The 50/50 drawing of \$14.00 was won by Dan WV8X.

The minutes of the April meeting were read and approved. The treasurer, Ray KC8RUJ reported a balance of \$2754.71.

The 146.970 repeater site has been mowed. Those mowing were Dave N8NWV, Jep K8BOT and Ray N8TWV.

Connie N8IO called attention to 3 hams whose licenses either have or are about to expire.

The Dayton Hamvention will be this weekend and Connie N8IO will be the moderator of the Ohio SSB forum.

Curt K8UC reported that the phone patch has a hum.

Field day plans were discussed. The GOTA rules have changed this year. Jerry KA8NJW will download the field day rules. Georgia reported that members should bring either a salad or a vegetable to the field day picnic. Jerry KA8NJW will have a sign up sheet at the next meeting for the various operating stations and equipment.

K8BOT moved and Georgia seconded to adjourn at 7:30.

"THE DOCTOR IS IN" THE ARRL LETTER

This week, ARRL Letter readers are in luck! The ARRL's very own Doctor, author of the popular QST column "The Doctor Is IN," answers a question from his mailbag:

Question -- Mel, Snyder, K8MIW, of West Olive, Michigan, asks: I have a question about feeding a folded dipole, spaced about 5 inches between wires. What would be the difference between feeding it with the usual 300 ohm twin lead and using the popular 450 ohm window line as a feed line? I operate mostly on 75 meters. Years ago I used a folded dipole and found it to be an effective and wide band antenna. I have heavy duty window line on hand, but would have to buy the twin lead and the only line I can find is light duty line. Would the mismatch with the 450 ohm line cause any problems?

The Doctor answers -- The most significant difference would be the level of mismatch at the transmitter end. If you are using an antenna tuner, I doubt that you will notice any difference at all.

There will actually be slightly less loss with the 450 ohm (usually closer to 400 ohm in my experience) line. Let's see, if the antenna is about a quarter-wavelength high, the actual feed impedance will be closer to 200 ohms than to the free space value of 300 ohms. With 300 ohm line that results a 1.5:1 SWR at resonance, or 2:1 with 400 ohm line.

I would go ahead and use the window line. It should be less bothered by rain and will probably last longer. If your tuner has a problem at any frequency you operate at, try

changing the feed line length by 20 feet or so and see what happens -- you are likely to find a length that works across the band. Just don't roll up any excess. In my cellar shack, I usually put any excess window line between the overhead floor joists, away from other wires and secured with TV standoff insulators.

That should be a great antenna! You may even be able to tune it on other bands, if you have a wide range tuner -- especially 30 meters. On that band, the window line will make even more of an improvement.

FCC POSTS AMATEUR RADIO ENFORCEMENT CORRESPONDENCE

Special Counsel in the FCC Spectrum Enforcement Division Riley Hollingsworth sent a Warning Notice to Thomas A. Nichols, WA6BKR, of Fairfield, California -- a General class licensee - reminded Nichols that on February 28, 2008, the FCC notified him once before, "the Enforcement Bureau indicated that in September 2004 and on various dates since October 2007 you operated on frequencies assigned to Extra class licensees but prohibited to General class licensees."

According to the Warning Notice, Nichols replied to Hollingsworth's February letter, conceding "an instance in which you operated in the Extra Class portion of the band and gave numerous reasons and comments on the Morse code exam, Amateur Radio in general, the Extra Class Examination and other radio and kit building topics not

relevant to your out-of-band operation."

Hollingsworth warned Nichols that "any additional out-of-band operation may lead to revocation of your license or a monetary forfeiture." Nicholls was also warned that his license would not be renewed or upgraded "until such matter is resolved."

Direct all questions concerning the Amateur Radio Service Enforcement Actions Web postings via e-mail only to Riley Hollingsworth <fccham@fcc.gov>; in the FCC Spectrum Enforcement Division.

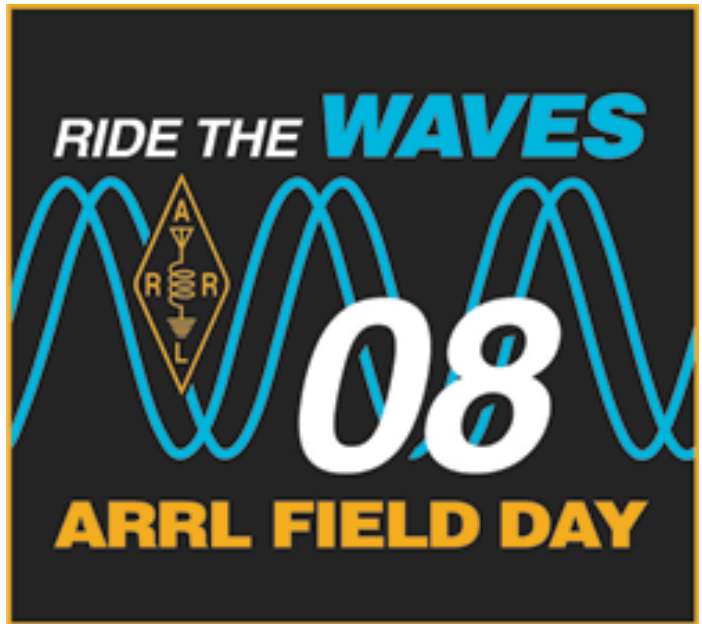
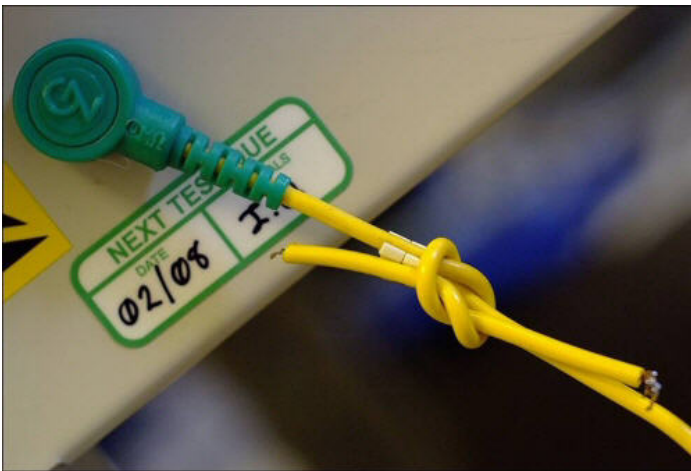
Chinese Olympic Special Event Stations Are On-the-Air:

Special Event stations for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games began operating May 18, running through Wednesday, September 17. Five special calls, representing the five rings of the Olympic flag, will be on the air: BT1OB, BT1OJ, BT1OH, BT1OY and BT1ON. The last letter of the call sign corresponds to the color of each of the rings of the Olympic flag -- Beibei (Blue), Jingjing (Black), Huanhuan (Red), Yingying (Yellow) and Nini (Green). Zheng Feng, BA4EG, will be the QSL manager for all stations. QSLs can be sent either direct or via the bureau and will begin to be answered in October. A Web site supporting the Special Event stations will include an on line log search, QSL card received and sent status, as well as other information <<http://www.bj2008ses.com.cn/>>; award criteria will soon be posted on the site. -- Thanks to "The Daily DX" for this information



Finally Here are a couple of pictures I found on the Internet at a site called Microwave Mortuary I thought they were interesting. KAQ8NJW

(Note to EFB - The first shows an electric service entrance cable, 200 amp, with a Vorison installer's drill bit sticking through it. There is smoke damage up the side of the house. Picture two shows a ground wire with a square knot for a splice.)



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