



Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
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Army MARS Seeks Partnership with ARRL, ARES

Representatives of the US Army Military Auxiliary Radio Service (MARS) met with ARRL staff at League Headquarters October 2 to discuss ways the two organizations might collaborate in emergency response activities. Army MARS Region 1 Director Bob Mims, WA1OEZ, headed the delegation. Mims, who is also manager of the Army MARS National Net, said most of the discussion centered on how ARRL Headquarters and the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) could interact with MARS during its national-level test of backup communications set for early November, and going forward.

"For the exercise the ARRL Headquarters expressed interest in activating their MARS station at W1AW -- AAN1ARL," Mims said. Discussions are still underway regarding the role AAN1ARL and ARES would play in the November exercise. Army MARS has invited Air Force and Navy-Marine Corps MARS to take part in the joint national communication exercise that will measure the auxiliary force's capabilities, should normal communication systems be disrupted throughout North America. MARS/ARRL get together at W1AW (L-R): Ken Bailey,

K1FUG; Sean Kutzko, KX9X; Mike Corey, KI1U; Jon Perelstein, WB2RYV; Joe Carcia, NJ1Q; Bob Mims, WA1OEZ, and Matt Hackman, KB1FUP

Joining Mims were MARS Southern New England Emergency Operations Officer John Weinland, N1ATB, and MARS members Jon Perelstein, WB2RYV, and Matt Hackman, KB1FUP. The MARS contingent met with ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, KI1U, ARRL Emergency Preparedness Assistant Ken Bailey, K1FUG, and W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q.

Mims relayed to Army MARS Headquarters at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, Corey's suggestion that local ARES nets could provide assistance during the November exercise by generating and relaying messages. Army MARS says the exercise is aimed at demonstrating conventional traffic-handling abilities. The test will run November 3-5, and a joint Army/Air Force/Navy-Marine Corps team responsible to the US Department of Defense for homeland security will monitor the 48 hour exercise.

Army MARS Program Manager Paul English, WD8DBY, says that while Army MARS is the lead service in the exercise, it is looking forward to participation from the other MARS services as well as from the Canadian Forces Affiliate Radio System (CFARS).

"In order to properly evaluate our ability to provide this coverage," English explained, "there will be a series of messages sent from DOD and the Army MARS Headquarters, Network Enterprise Technology Command (NETCOM), to MARS members requesting various pieces of information such as weather observation reports from airports around the country, requesting local news items of interest from areas around the country, and also requesting information on the status of utilities around the area."

The exercise would culminate a year-long series of escalating preparations by Army MARS for responding to complex emergencies -- a natural disaster or terrorist attack -- that might crash or compromise the Internet, telephone, and national news and media networks across the US.

ARRL has asked the MARS contingent to provide points of contact at least within each of the FEMA regions or possibly a couple of different contacts in the various MARS groups.

Subsequent to the meeting at League Headquarters, ARRL Southwestern Division Vice Director Marty Woll, N6VI, paid a visit on October 8 to Army MARS Headquarters in Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Woll says he enjoyed an extended conversation with Army MARS Chief of Operations David McGinnis, K7UXO.

"David was very complimentary of the radio amateurs who work at the station," Woll said, "and he expressed great interest in opportunities for MARS and ARRL to work more closely together."

ARRL Southwestern Division Vice Director Marty Woll, N6VI, chats with W1AW during a visit to US Army MARS Headquarters at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Woll points out that the MARS HQ station can handle nearly a dozen simultaneous HF links, "and we employed one of them to hold an impromptu 18 MHz contact with W1AW," he added. He arranged the contact via more conventional means -- the telephone -- adding that he and W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, enjoyed a brief conversation on the air as the staff looked on. Woll said McGinnis expressed interest in possibly arranging such contacts on a periodic basis and said he'd like to better acquaint the amateur community with the role and functions of Army MARS.

McGinnis recounted that he and Woll discussed conducting regular checks with W1AW, using both

Amateur Radio and MARS circuits, and quarterly drills on both circuits. Woll, who's also an ARES assistant District Emergency Coordinator, was in Arizona to speak to the Co-chise Amateur Radio Association (CARA).

MARS is a US Department of Defense-sponsored program with Army, Navy, and Air Force branches. The program consists of Amateur Radio operators who are interested backing up the US Department of Defense's communication requirements when normal channels are disrupted in disasters or emergencies.



QSL via Bureau? Check First!

Fred Laun, K3ZO, who manages the NCDXA/ARRL Third Call Area Incoming QSL Bureau, advises operators who routinely send cards "via the bureau" to first check the DX station's QRZ.com or personal websites first to find out if the DX station replies to cards sent via the bureau.

"Each month our bureau receives hundreds of cards for rare DX stations and DXpeditions who...state

that they will not answer bureau cards," he says. "We recognize that one reason people use the bureau is that they don't have to check QRZ.com or another online lookup service before sending off the card."



Fred Laun, K3ZO

Laun says his bureau spends many hours each month redirecting such cards to QSL managers or to the station's own bureau, "and even after our efforts," he adds, "almost all of these cards will not be answered anyway."

The bottom line: "If an operator says he/she will not answer bureau cards, he/she in all likelihood means it," Laun says. "That means that there is no cheap way to get around the [DX station's QSLing] instructions. He further notes that some operators have informed the bureau that they don't want to get bureau QSL cards. His bureau sends most of those unwanted cards to Tom Roscoe, K8CX, for use on his Ham Gallery website, while it provides others to schools for classroom use. Thanks to The Daily-DX



National Silent Key Archive Includes Unique Call Sign Lookup

Mike Carroll, N4MC, who operated the "Vanity HQ" website for 14 years before taking it dark earlier this year, says the National Silent Key Archive of Amateur Radio Operators that he founded remains up and running. "The only thing that was carried over from Vanity HQ would be the unique call lookup," Carroll told ARRL. On the "Tools" menu, click on "Research Hams" to enter a name or a call sign.



The National Silent Key Archive provides an opportunity to add Silent Keys (all submissions are reviewed prior to incorporation into the Archive) and for friends and family of radio amateurs who have passed on to create memorial pages that may include photographs and text. Carroll points out that the National Silent Key Archive has been up and running for 2 years or so and functioned separately from Vanity HQ, which, he reiterated, he has no plans to resurrect. According to the site, "The purpose of the National Silent Key Archive is to collect and preserve photographs, life event narratives, and data artifacts of deceased Amateur Radio operators, and to make the Archive's digital library available to anyone wishing to view its contents online."

The National Silent Key Archive is a wiki, which means anyone can contribute contents or to add a member to The Archive, and without first obtaining a login ID or password." All content submitted is reviewed by the Archive and edited, if necessary, before being added to its digital library. Each day the site features Silent Keys from a different call district. -- Thanks to Dick, N6AA

ARRL Audio News Wants You!

ARRL Audio News returns to the League website Friday, September 20, and producer and newscaster Sean Kutzko, KX9X, has invited ARRL members to become a part of the weekly news report by submitting "station identifications" in MP3 format. "They need to follow this script exactly: 'I'm ARRL Member <your name and call sign> of <your location>, and you're listening to ARRL Audio News.'" Audio should be as clear and distinct as possible. "IDs that are clear and well-recorded will be considered for use in ARRL Audio News," he adds.



Sean Kutzko, KX9X, will host ARRL Audio News each week. [ARRL photo]

Kutzko, who is ARRL Public and Media Relations Manager, holds a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Illinois at Springfield, where he focused on mass media. He worked at several National Public Radio affiliates in the Midwest for nearly 15 years as an on-air host, production manager and operations manager. Kutzko has been a radio amateur since age 14 and remains active as an HF and VHF contester and DXer. Most recently he's embraced backpack QRP operating while hiking and camping. He's been on the ARRL Headquarters staff since October 2007, serving initially as Contest Branch manager.

Kutzko says the webcast will be available by 5 PM ET every Friday.

Ham-Pilot Safe after Transatlantic Cluster Balloon Attempt Fails

Friday the 13th came early for cluster balloonist and radio amateur Jonathan

Trappe, KJ4GQV, of Raleigh, North Carolina. Trappe's attempt to cross the Atlantic in a cluster balloon ended when he "Landed safe, at an alternate location," as he put it in a Facebook post. That "alternate location" was in Newfoundland, where he remained for the night.



Trappe crossing the Alps in his cluster balloon.

His lighter-than-air craft hoisted aloft by some 365 individual and colorful helium balloons took off September 12 at 1200 UTC from a ball field in Caribou, Maine. Trappe carried Amateur Radio beacons on 14.0956 MHz (110 baud RTTY) and 144.390 MHz APRS.

According to a report in the September 13 edition of Maine's Bangor Daily News, Trappe went down about a mile from the coast and about 5 miles from the nearest road. Trappe had spent 2 years preparing for what he hoped would be an epic journey.

"Hmmm, this doesn't look like France," is how Trappe put it on his Facebook page, moments before announcing that he was on the ground.

A real-time track of NGØX on 14.0956 showed Trappe as still airborne at about 7 PM on September 13, although the site does not indicate the time zone. An APRS track -- only good within 150 miles or so of land -- ends over the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

After lifting off September 12 and with things still going well, Trappe posted this optimistic status report to Facebook: "In the quiet sky, above the great Gulf of St. Lawrence, traveling over 50 MPH -- in my little yellow rowboat, at 18,000 feet."

KLUB MINUTES

June 10, 2013

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at the Western Sizzlin Restaurant for the June meeting. Introductions were made by 30 members and guests.

The meeting was opened at 7 PM by president Connie Hamilton N8IO. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report was given by the treasurer, Jane McGuffey N8MOW.

The 50/50 drawing of \$16.50 was won by Darrell Fouse W8DLF.

Unfinished Business: Earl KB8HRG reported on the 146.970 repeater. The hard line coax is on the tower but not connected yet. Jim K8BOT reported the committee looked at a building for \$400 but will continue the project after field day. The site will be mowed after field day also.

Jerry KA8NJW reported that field day will be about the same as last year. Dan WV8X, Al KE8UN and Curt K8UC will bring radios, Earl KB8HRG will bring antennas. Jane N8MOW will have material celebrating West Virginia's 150th birthday. We will have a table with ham radio related material. John KD8TZI has a diesel generator and will get with Blaine WA8IOE on it. Blaine gave the food list that the club will furnish and Jane will get the drinks and ice. The members will bring desserts, salads or vegetables. The call sign to be used for field day will be N8NBL.

There was no new business.

Dan WV8X gave a report on the Dayton Hamvention. He said attendance was a little more than last year and there was some rain one day. He bought an oscilloscope. Connie N8IO said VE testing was done all days of the hamvention.

The WV QSO party will be this weekend. Jerry KA8NJW has an assortment of cables to give away. Any leftovers will be trashed.

Jim K8BOT moved and Harold N8KO seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

July 8, 2013

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at the Western Sizzlin Restaurant for the July meeting. Introductions were made by 30 members and guests.

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by president Connie Hamilton N8IO.

The 50/50 drawing of \$22.50 was won by Connie. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected. The treasurer's report was given by Jane N8MOW.

Unfinished business: Blaine WA8IOE reported on field day that John's KD8TZI generator used only half as much fuel as the club generator but was noisy. If it is used next year it will need to be relocated. Earl KB8HRG cooked on the other firepit. Blaine will reserve a shelter for next year. Jerry KA8NJW thanked everyone who participated. There is a need for more CW operators next year.

Earl KB8HRG reported on the 146.970 repeater. No mowing is needed at the present time. The coax still needs to be connected.

New business: John Pitner W8IDW was appointed as new trustee for the N8NBL FCC license and also as administrator for the QRZ.com listing.

Jerry KA8NJW moved and Jane N8MOW seconded to hold the annual picnic at McDonough Park. The motion carried.

Earl KB8HRG passed out literature on home remedies for bug control.

Jim K8BOT moved and Dave N8NWV seconded to adjourn at 7:31 PM.

August 12, 2013

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at the Western Sizzlin Restaurant for the August meeting. Introductions were made by 28 members and guests.

The meeting was opened at 7 PM by president Connie Hamilton N8IO. The 50/50 drawing of \$14.50 was won by Mike Leonhart WD8MIQ and was donated back to the club.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report was given by Jane N8MOW.

Unfinished business: There was no field day report. Blaine WA8IOE has reserved a shelter in McDonough Park for next month's picnic and the Enoch shelter at Fort Boreman Park for next year's field day.

Earl KB8HRG reported that the cable has been connected to the antenna at the 146.97 site and is working well. The storage building has not been placed there yet.

John W8IDW passed around prints of the 146.97 QRZ web listing that he has been working on as administrator. He also has been doing research as to what are the duties of trustee for the N8NBL FCC club license. He also wants to create an E-QSL account which is free or \$10 to upload a graphic. Earl KB8HRG moved and Jeff N8WQO seconded to open the \$10 account. Motion carried.

Blaine WA8IOE has reserved the Washington Bottom Community Building for our Christmas dinner for December 14.

New business: It was moved and seconded (unknown by whom) to accept Ned Raybould N8OIF into club membership. Motion carried.

Earl KB8HRG made an announcement that Kenny WA8LLM still has some openings for help at the half marathon on Saturday.

Jep K8BOT moved and Earl KB8HRG seconded to adjourn at 7:28 PM.

September 9, 2013

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at McDonough Park for the September annual picnic and business meeting. Introductions were made by 21 members and guests.

President Connie Hamilton N8IO opened the meeting at 7 PM. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved and the treasurer's report was given by treasurer Jane McGuffey N8MOW.

There was no unfinished business.

New Business: The owner of the 146.970 tower site will be installing a propane tank and generator soon so the mower storage building will not be installed until that job is completed. The owner has also abandoned a 440 antenna and feed line on the top of the tower which could be used by the club to place a 440 repeater with the call W8PAR, if the club so desires.

John W8IDW has been in contact with the Ohio coordinators for the 146.970 repeater. He has paid the \$5 yearly fee and completed the necessary paper work and now everything is in order. He is also gathering previous field day logs to reply to the e-ql cards.

Election of officers for the new year were conducted.

President: Earl KB8HRG nominated Jerry Wharton KA8NJW and Dave N8NWV nominated Connie Hamilton N8IO. Curt K8UC moved that nominations for president be closed.

3 Vice presidents: Jane N8MOW nominated Earl Hulce KB8HRG, Jim Palmer K8BOT and Dave Wright N8NWV.

Secretary: Jane N8MOW nominated Ray Bodie N8TWV

Treasurer: Earl KB8HRG nominated Jane McGuffey N8MOW.

There being no more nominations, Blaine WA8IOE moved and Mark KR5N seconded for all except president be elected by acclimation. Motion carried.

The president position was voted on by secret ballot. Jerry Wharton KA8NJW was elected.

Dave N8NWV moved and Jep K8BOT seconded to adjourn at 7:29 PM.

Thanks to Blaine WA8IOE for grilling the hamburgers and hotdogs.

The treasurer's books were audited by Jeannia Dooley N8JMD, John Pitner W8IDW and Ray Bodie N8TWV.

October 14, 2013

The Parkersburg Amateur Radio Klub met at the Western Sizzlin Restaurant for the October meeting. Introductions were made by 22 members and guests. The 50/50 drawing was won by Eloise Webb KB8EKO.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by president Jerry Wharton KA8NJW. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report was given by Jane McGuffey N8MOW.

Unfinished business: Earl KB8HRG reported on the 146.97 repeater site. Mowing needs to be done again soon. He has another repeater in his basement ready to swap out whenever the need arises. There has been no activity on the placement of the emergency generator. There was discussion on whether another 440 repeater was needed. A better use of the 440 antenna would be for a control link to the 2 meter repeater.

New business: There was discussion on having some kind of program after the business for any interested. Earl KB8HRG may come up with something for the next month. Jerry KA8NJW is open for topic suggestions for future meetings.

John W8IDW attended the WV Amateur Radio Council meeting during the Wood County hamfest. He reported they had a new slate of officers and several concerns, among them lack of participation and location.

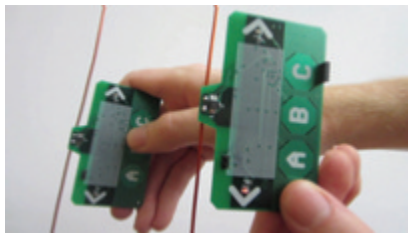
The annual Christmas party will be held the second Saturday in December at the Washington Bottom Community building. The club will furnish the meat, bread and drinks. Darlene W8PAN will do the table decorations. Volunteers are needed to do a program.

The club received papers showing Larry Deems N8TGI had been paying the coordination fee for the 146.97 repeater for the last several years. Jep K8BOT moved and Jeff N8WQO seconded to reimburse him \$25. The motion carried

Jep K8BOT moved and Dave N8NWV seconded to adjourn at 7:46 PM.

"Ambient Backscatter" Could Power Devices in the Future

University of Washington researchers believe we may be one step closer to an "Internet-of-things" reality. UW engineers have created a new wireless communication system that allows devices to interact with each other without relying on batteries or wires for power. Using something they call "ambient backscatter," these devices can interact with users and communicate with each other without using batteries. They exchange information by reflecting or absorbing existing radio signals. Two devices communicate by reflecting the existing signals to exchange information. The researchers built small, battery-free devices with antennas that can detect, harness and reflect a television signal, which then is picked up by other similar devices. The technology could enable a network of devices and sensors to communicate with no power source or human attention needed.



Using ambient backscatter, these devices can interact with users and communicate with each other without using batteries. They exchange information by reflecting or absorbing existing radio signals. [University of Washington photo]

"We can repurpose wireless signals that are already around us into both a source of power and a communication medium," said lead research-

er Shyam Gollakota, a UW assistant professor of computer science and engineering. "It's hopefully going to have applications in a number of areas including wearable computing, smart homes and self-sustaining sensor networks."

The researchers published their results at the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Data Communication August 2013 conference in Hong Kong. Their research received the conference's "Best Paper" award. "Our devices form a network out of thin air," said co-author Joshua Smith, a UW associate professor of computer science and engineering and of electrical engineering. "You can reflect these signals slightly to create a Morse code of communication between battery-free devices."

The original article and video are on the UW website. For more information, contact Gollakota and Smith at abc@cs.washington.edu. -- The University of Washington

Ham Nation

Ham Nation hosted by Bob Heil, along with various co-hosts and guests, covers the excitement and importance of ham radio - from tossing an antenna wire in a tree allowing you to talk to the world, to the importance of ham radio operators in time of disasters. Ham Nation premiered on May 24, 2011. The show currently airs live on Wednesday at 6:00pm PT/9:00pm ET with the on demand download available within 24hrs.



ARRL Centennial Convention Website Now Live!



The ARRL Centennial Convention website <www.arrl2014.org/> is now live! Online registration is coming soon. The League will celebrate 100 years of "Advancing the Art and Science of Radio" next year from Thursday, July 17, to Saturday, July 19, 2014. Most Centennial Convention activities will take place at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, where thousands of League members and friends are anticipated. Hartford was ARRL's birthplace.



The Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford will

be the hub of ARRL Centennial activity.

Online convention registration will become available in January. A two-day ticket is \$25 in advance, \$30 on-site (free of charge for attendees age 21 and younger). It includes Friday and Saturday Exhibit Hall admission and access to all forums and general sessions. Additional events include free bus trips all three days to ARRL Headquarters and W1AW.

Stay tuned for the ARRL National Centennial Convention program and registration, starting January 2014. We look forward to seeing you join us in celebrating 100 years!