

The ARES E-Letter



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==> DOCKET OF DISASTER

A spate of natural disasters and resulting ARES responses have been reported by ARRL recently. Here is a digest:

Colorado Storms and Flooding

More than five dozen ARES volunteers have deployed in and around flood-stricken counties of Colorado, providing critical communication for Red Cross shelters and state and local emergency operation centers.

Recent heavy rains have caused veritable mountainside tsunamis that

have caused rivers and streams to overflow their banks, ravaged roads

and property and displaced an undetermined number of residents. At

least three people are known to have died. ARRL Colorado Section

Manager Jack Ciaccia, WM0G, says that with power cut off to affected

communities and many cell telephone towers along the Big Thompson River

toppled by the flooding, ham radio is providing medical and health-and-welfare traffic between evacuation centers and the EOCs. The

complete story, updated as of September 14, can be found here <http://www.arrl.org/news/amateur-radio-provides-critical-communication-in-colorado-flooding-response>.

Morgan Incident Fire, California

The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES <http://www.arrl.org/ares-races-faq>) went on standby alert, and the

Red Cross and the Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN [<http://www.saturn.org/>](http://www.saturn.org/)) were called out in the wake of the so-called Morgan Incident Fire [\(<http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents_details_info?incident_id=908>](http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents_details_info?incident_id=908)), in chaparral southeast of Clayton, California. The blaze, on the eastern flank of the north peak of Mount Diablo, put at least four Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club (MDARC [<http://www.mdarc.org/>](http://www.mdarc.org/)) repeaters off the air September 8. More here [\(<http://www.arrl.org/news/satern-red-cross-volunteers-activate-for-morgan-incident-fire>](http://www.arrl.org/news/satern-red-cross-volunteers-activate-for-morgan-incident-fire)).

Hurricane Watch Net Activates for Hurricane Ingrid

Hurricane Watch Net (HWN [<http://www.hwn.org/>](http://www.hwn.org/)) manager Bobby Graves, KB5HAV, announced that the net planned to activate Sunday, September 15, at 1500 UTC on 14.325 MHz in response to the approach of Hurricane Ingrid, only the second hurricane of the 2013 season. More information here [\(<http://www.arrl.org/news/hurricane-watch-net-to-activate-for-hurricane-ingrid>](http://www.arrl.org/news/hurricane-watch-net-to-activate-for-hurricane-ingrid)).

ARES/RACES Stands Down After Rim Fire at Yosemite

Amateur Radio volunteers supporting the Red Cross and local government in the wake of the gigantic Rim Fire, in and near California's Yosemite National Park and the Stanislaus National Forest, have stood

down after
16 days on duty. The initial callout on August 19 responded to
a
request to assist the Red Cross in setting up an evacuation
center in
Groveland, California. More information here
<<http://www.arrl.org/news/ares-races-volunteers-conclude-rim-fire-activation>>.

(All sources are ARRL).

==> MAJOR CONFERENCE IN MICHIGAN INVOLVES PLANNING FOR AMATEUR
RADIO

John J. McDonough, WB8RCR, Michigan's Emergency Management
Coordinator,
RACES Officer, and ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator filed a
report on
a major state planning meeting that had wide ranging
implications for
Amateur Radio.

The conference was sponsored by the state's emergency
management
agency, which is the Michigan State Police. The Emergency
Management
and Homeland Security Division of the Michigan State Police
(EMHSD)
hosted the conference at the Great Wolf Lodge in Traverse
City, August
21 and 22. There were representatives from ARES, RACES, MARS,
SATERN
and CAP from each District, as well as county emergency
management
coordinators and the State Police District Coordinator.

The conference was kicked off with a keynote speech by Tony
Katarsky,

the Assistant Division Commander of EMHSD, who pointed out how the involvement of Amateur Radio has become more important as the reliance on technology grows. Katarsky said he recognizes the fragility of the state's infrastructure, particularly in the face of growing cyber threats. Conference organizer and State EOC engineer Don Bouffard reviewed how we might coordinate and work together on this point in the future. Forums followed giving county emergency managers and volunteer radio operators the opportunity to share their perceptions and potential opportunities on this theme.

McDonough gave a presentation reviewing the breadth of Amateur Radio and trained volunteers' capabilities for the benefit of emergency managers who were unaware of current technologies like NBEMS <<http://www.arrrl.org/nbems>>, packet and SSTV, or of the incredible range of frequencies (and RF propagation aspects) that amateurs are privileged to use in emergency and disaster response communications, and service to the public interest.

The conferees closed the first day with a presentation from the State's technology department on their interoperability initiatives, and discussed the state's evolving communication system, the Michigan Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS)

<<http://www.michigan.gov/mpscs>>), and how dependent the state is on it.

The next morning, an EMHSD District Coordinator outlined the role of his position in emergency management: In addition to managing the various county emergency management coordinators, the District Coordinators attend every EOC that is activated and provide “eyes and ears” for the Governor, who keeps close watch on any event in the state. “The current governor pays particular attention to any incident, and I have been privileged to participate in an exercise where the governor himself was an active player,” McDonough said.

Randy Williams, KD8MOK, from the Department of Technology, Management and Budget then gave a presentation on Michigan’s interoperability initiative and made a plea for amateurs to get involved with the initiative for better understanding of the needs of the state for communications support in the event of an infrastructure disruption.

The conferees broke up into groups by Districts to discuss how to move forward, and the opportunities posed by potential grant projects.

McDonough said that “Michigan is a diverse state, and each District is quite different, but more attention was paid to improvement, simply sitting down and talking about issues raised in the “just do

it”
category.

McDonough concluded “As we closed, each District reported back to the entire group, and it was clear that every District’s discussions were very productive. The State Police indicated that they would like to see this conference become an annual event, and I think everyone was pleased with the progress made over two short days.” [John J. McDonough, WB8RCR, is Emergency Management Coordinator; RACES Officer, State of Michigan; ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator and Section Traffic Manager; and ARRL Emergency Communications Advisory Committee Representative, Great Lakes Division]

==> FIREBALL 2013: TENNESSEE EMA EXERCISE

Dubbed Fireball 2013, this exercise was planned for September 12-14, at press time. Sponsored by the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA <<http://www.tnema.org/>>), the purpose of the exercise is to provide a forum for participants to practice passing messages and conduct simultaneous nets with all three MARS branches and Amateur Radio for emergency response to a large scale or catastrophic event. It includes passing messages between all of these services using both voice and data. Goals are to consider medical facility evacuation needs

and present possible solutions; consider shelter and evacuation needs and opportunities; provide practice and training in field deployment; and identify logistical challenges and opportunities and suggest solutions – all for the benefit of local, and state EOCs. Consideration of additional communications needs and support for existing systems was also to be a priority.

The scenario involves the drought conditions in Tennessee and the consequent threat of wildfire, which are seen as “cascading events.”

Responders will be tested on their ability to support evacuations of more than 5000 citizens, with MARS and Amateur Radio used for communications functions. – from a report forwarded by Steve Waterman, K4CJX, Nashville, Tennessee (Waterman is Winlink 2000 network administrator).

==> FLORIDA AMATEURS SUPPORT KIWANIS MIDNIGHT RUN PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT

Dunedin, FL, July 15, 2013- Amateur Radio operators from Pinellas County, Florida, ACS/ARES, Eastlake CERT, and the Tampa Amateur Radio Club manned critical communications posts along the Kiwanis Midnight Run race route to ensure the safety of the participants during the event held on July 3-4, 2013. In all, 22 hams manned 13 positions that evening including shadowing Dunedin EMS personnel. There were

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separate events, a 1-mile run with 199 participants, a 5K run with 1261 participants, and the 10K run with 570 participants, a total of 2030 runners.

During the 4-hour event, hams assisted in alerting EMS teams of two runners in need. One runner had fallen and the other was experiencing breathing problems. Both runners had to be transported by ambulance to the hospital.

“Not only does an event like this provide a means to test our emergency communication preparedness, it also provides a great service to a worthy cause. Providing communications and EMS support for the runners helps to keep them safe but also helps us in the long run to insure we are ready when called upon in a large scale emergency event,” said David Moore, KK4DLX.

The Kiwanis Morton Plant Mease Midnight Run <http://www.kiwanismidnightrun.com/> is held annually on the evening of July 3 and the morning of July 4. The previous 33 Midnight Run events have raised more than \$640,000 for the Kiwanis clubs of Dunedin and Top of the Bay community service activities. The Pinellas County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is proud to serve the Pinellas County

Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) and meets on the third Thursday of the month at the Pinellas County EOC. – Kevin Poorman, KV4CT, ARRL Public Information Officer, Assistant EC

==> FIELD DAY 2013: VIRGIN ISLANDS EMA DIRECTOR LAUDS AMATEUR RADIO

Fred Kleber, NP2X/K9VV, President of the St. Croix ARC and ARRL US Virgin Islands Section Manager, relayed this quote from the USVI Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) director, on the occasion of Field Day 2013 there:

“As an emergency management agency, building a strong relationship with the ham radio operator community is critical,” said Elton Lewis, VITEMA Director. “They can come through in catastrophic events where even our best communications infrastructure may not survive. This was very evident in Hurricane Hugo when our communications capabilities were wiped out. VITEMA continues to work and train side by side with VI amateur radio clubs and, in fact, they are imbedded in our organization. I encourage everyone to take a moment to see the public demonstrations and to learn more about amateur radio.”

VITEMA was also kind enough to greatly enhance the operation by allowing the Field Day group to use their emcomm van, Kleber noted.

==> TRANS-PACIFIC EXERCISE: "GREAT SHOWING"

Fort Huachuca, Arizona – Everything about Pacific Endeavor-13
<http://www.c-at.com/Radio-Interoperability/Pacific-Endeavor-2013-USPACOM.pdf?gclid=C0yc47bizbkCFUVk7Aod_DIAdg>

(see background in last month's issue

<<http://www.arrl.org/ares-el?issue=2013-08-21#toc04>>) was simulated

except for one big surprise: Electric power actually failed in "Pacifica," the simulated disaster-battered Asian nation that a small

band of amateurs around the globe were seeking to assist. It happened

right at the start of the globe-spanning exercise organized by the U.S.

Defense Department Sunday night into morning (August 25-26).

At 9N1AA in Nepal, the real "Pacifica," Dr. Sanjeeb Panday and fellow

operators kept going on battery power with only 25 watts output. But a

stroke of the other kind of luck provided a low-power digital link to

an amateur in Afghanistan. He had joined Army MARS only days before the exercise.

Although the operation only lasted under three hours, months had gone

into preparing PE-13. The Pentagon and U.S. Pacific Command set it up

as a test of amateur emergency support in Asia after Japan's tsunami

catastrophe, using procedures of the International Amateur Radio Union.

MARS, military stations and amateurs all collaborated on this exercise.

“We had stations monitoring in the continental US, Hawaii, Japan, Germany, and Afghanistan,” reported Paul English, Army MARS program officer. “There was only intermittent reception in Germany and the US on PSK31, but we had a solid connection between Nepal and Afghanistan. Approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes into the exercise, power was restored in Nepal and we did have marginal voice communications from Nepal to Afghanistan and Germany.

“We were able to submit a number of spot info reports to the Pacific Command and responded to a number of information requests in a timely manner,” English said. “This was a great showing by all.”

A star of the show was PSK31, the very basic digital mode that travels well on low power, even in the otherwise grim propagation conditions during PE-13. “When power was restored in Nepal,” English said, “we did make limited voice contacts with Afghanistan. Germany and Hawaii could hear but not talk to Nepal. Propagation for voice only lasted a few minutes.”

A preliminary account had a total of 60 stations logged at MARS headquarters at Fort Huachuca and the station in Germany of MARS region director Daniel Wolff. Participants, including MARS stations in the

U.S., and Japan, used their amateur call signs.

One unique feature of PE-13 was use of the Defense Department's open bulletin board for civil emergencies, APAN (All Partners Access Network <<https://community.apan.org/default.aspx>>). Army MARS Operations Chief David McGinnis coordinated information flow via APAN to the DoD and U.S. Pacific Command. Stations avoided public alarm from use of usual emergency language by using terms from the game of cricket instead.

"There are many lessons learned from this exercise and I hope for a great learning process for all participants," English commented.

"Propagation was challenging throughout the exercise. We had real-world challenges just as one would expect in a natural disaster." 9N1AA had the last word: Dr. Panday messaged his relay station just over 1,000 miles west along the Himalayas, "I am very thankful to you. You did a great job." – Bill Sexton, N1IN, Army MARS

==> FEMA: 10TH ANNUAL NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

On September 4, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate, KK4INZ, kicked off the 10th annual National Preparedness Month (NPM), joining local New York City Emergency Management officials and New York City Citizen Corps Council, at the

Children's Museum in Staten Island to talk about the importance of family and community emergency preparedness.

"Each September, we commit to focusing our collective efforts on raising our level of readiness to be prepared for any potential hazard with National Preparedness Month," said Fugate. "It is a time for us to promote individual and community preparedness. Events like the one today in New York serve as a reminder for all Americans to be prepared in order to successfully respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters."

NPM is led by FEMA's Ready Campaign in partnership with Citizen Corps and the Ad Council, and is a nationwide effort encouraging individuals, families, businesses and communities to work together and take action to prepare for emergencies.

In June 2003, ARRL became an official affiliate program of Citizen Corps <<http://www.citizencorps.gov/>>. The Statement of Affiliation made ARRL an affiliate under the four charter Citizen Corps programs—Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, Community Emergency Response Teams and Medical Reserve Corps.

NPM is an opportunity for ARES and other radio amateurs to disseminate emergency preparedness information and host sponsor activities

across

the country to help Americans understand what it truly means to be

ready, and that they should be cognizant of neighborhood CERT and

Amateur Radio operators for potential communications with the outside

world in a disaster or emergency.

==> GOT WATER?

Has the water run dry in your emergency supply kit

<<http://links.govdelivery.com:80/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbgLuZ2lkPTIwMTMwODE0LjIxOTg5NzQxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDEzMDEzMDg5MTk4OTc0MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3MjIyMjIzJmVtYWlsaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZ1c2VyaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZmbD0mZXh0cmE9TXVsdGl2YXJpYXRlSWQ9JiYm&&&100&&&http://www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit>>?

If so, it's time to fill 'er up! One of the most essential components

of a disaster-ready kit is water. A well maintained kit prepares you

before disaster strikes.

After an emergency, clean drinking water may not be available if your

usual water source is cut off or contaminated. When replenishing your

supply remember that individual needs may vary depending on health,

age, diet and climate. As a general rule, store one gallon of water per

person per day to last for at least three days.

There are several options for building your water supply. The safest

and most reliable choice is to buy commercially bottled water and open

it only when you need to use it. Store the containers in a cool, dark place

<http://links.govdelivery.com:80/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbgLuZ2lkPTIwMTMwODE0LjIxOTg5NzQxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDEzMDEzMDg5NC4yMTk4OTc0MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3MjIyMjIzJmVtYWlsaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZ1c2VyaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZmbD0mZXh0cmE9TXVsdGl2YXJpYXRlSWQ9JiYm&&101&&http://www.ready.gov/kit-storage-locations>

and note the expiration date.

If you choose to prepare your own containers of water, purchase food

grade water storage containers from a surplus or camping supply store

or two-liter plastic soda bottles – not bottles that contained milk or

fruit juice. Keep in mind these containers must first be properly

cleaned

<http://links.govdelivery.com:80/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbgLuZ2lkPTIwMTMwODE0LjIxOTg5NzQxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDEzMDEzMDg5NC4yMTk4OTc0MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3MjIyMjIzJmVtYWlsaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZ1c2VyaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZmbD0mZXh0cmE9TXVsdGl2YXJpYXRlSWQ9JiYm&&102&&http://www.ready.gov/water>!

To learn more about maintaining your kit, click here

<http://links.govdelivery.com:80/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTEmbWFpbgLuZ2lkPTIwMTMwODE0LjIxOTg5NzQxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJELUJVTC0yMDEzMDEzMDg5NC4yMTk4OTc0MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE3MjIyMjIzJmVtYWlsaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZ1c2VyaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZmbD0mZXh0cmE9TXVsdGl2YXJpYXRlSWQ9JiYm&&103&&http://www.ready.gov/maintaining-your-kit>.

Information about water treatment is also available at RedCross.org

<http://links.govdelivery.com:80/track?type=click&enid=ZWFzPTE>

mbWFpbGluZ2lkPTIwMTMwODE0LjIxOTg5NzQxJm1lc3NhZ2VpZD1NREItUFJEL
UJVTC0yMDEzMDEgXNC4yMTk4OTc0MSZkYXRhYmFzZWlkPTEwMDEmc2VyaWFsPTE
3MjIyMjIzJmVtYWlsaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsLm9yZyZ1c2VyaWQ9azFjZUBhcnJsL
m9yZyZmbD0mZXh0cmE9TXVsdGl2YXJpYXRlSWQ9JiYm&&&104&&&http://cit
izencorps.gov/cc/goodbye.do?url=http://www.redcross.org/images
/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4440181_Food_and_Water-
English.revised_7-09.pdf>.

- FEMA

==> NEW TWITTER ADDRESS FOR ARRL ARES

Effective September 16 the Twitter address for ARRL ARES has changed.

The new address is www.twitter.com/arrl_ares

<http://www.twitter.com/arrl_ares>. This feed is for ARES, public

service communications, and other announcements of interest to ARES

members and those interested in public service communications. It is

managed from ARRL HQ by League staff.

==> K1CE FOR A FINAL

I wrote the following in this column in the June 2013 issue:
“I

recently loaded the software for RMS Express/WINMOR and managed to send

an e-mail message to myself via the Telnet mode, and have moved on to

adjusting the sound card and software for transmitting e-mail messages

over the air on the HF bands. WINMOR is a sound card mode that is a

less expensive alternative to the hard multi-mode data controllers

while admittedly sacrificing some efficiencies. The RMS Express/WINMOR

combo sees a lot of use in disaster response communications planning and operations.”

I wanted to follow up on my experience: After some initial failures in connecting to a Winlink hub to send my drafted Winlink e-mail message,

I bought a superb little piece of equipment – a Signalink USB <<http://www.tigertronics.com/slusbmain.htm>> digital interface that also

incorporates a high-quality sound card, on the basis of a recommendation I had read somewhere. The on-board sound card greatly

simplifies the processing of the signals back and forth between the

laptop computer and radio, in my case, an ICOM IC-7000. An inspired

part of the overall RMS Express/WINMOR suite is the incorporation of a

propagation utility, ITS HF (the ITS is the Institute for Telecommunications Sciences

<<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/office/ITS>> of the NTIA), for help in choosing the best hub based on best path for sending

your messages. It’s all a bit intimidating at first, but the thrill of

connecting to Bud Thompson’s, N0IA, system on forty meters here in

Florida and uploading my first Winlink messages was not to be denied.

It worked very well, efficiently sending my message to my own regular

e-mail account within seconds. The advantage of a global e-mail network

independent of local Internet infrastructure is without a doubt a huge

potential asset in major disaster response communications planning and operations.

Just a tip or two: To set up the Signalink unit for your specific radio and application, you need to open the case and push some jumper wires into some small sockets. As the original appliance operator, it made me nervous to have to perform this set-up procedure with my 60-year old eyes and hand/finger coordination, but I had no problem. Just take much time and concentration to do it right the first time: You don't want to bend those itchy-bitsy wires too much, or you could end up breaking them off in the sockets with no hope of retrieving the stubs. Just be careful, that's all.

And lastly, to run CW with the unit, the wires have to be reconfigured with different sockets. Don't bother futzing with it. Do what I do:

have another unit pre-configured for Morse code sending, and simply swap units as necessary. For CW sending, I use my tried and true

Rigblaster Plug and Play

http://www.westmountainradio.com/product_info.php?products_id=1000,
=pnp>,

another great little product: It plugs into your USB port and into the radio's key jack. It works like a champ. I use the CW Type software

with it.

I received a letter from a reader who was disheartened about my apparent lack of attention to the NBEMS suite, and in response, I downloaded the primary program files and will experiment with them as my next project. I'll report my experience here in a future issue.

There was a good two-page article on NBEMS in this month's QST – check it out. – K1CE

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