



BIG RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OCTOBER 2004 NOVEMBER

ARES/RACES NOTES

TOM BEHLER: KB8TYJ, MECOSTA COUNTY EC/RO

If you have been listening to our repeaters or club nets in recent weeks, you already are aware that our local ARES/RACES group has been actively involved with a number of important drills and exercises. Although the following few paragraphs can't possibly present all of the details surrounding these efforts, it is hoped that they will give the reader at least some idea as to what was accomplished.

In late August and Late September, Gary Atteberry, George Rouman, Matthew Trombley and I took part in two emergency preparedness and response exercises conducted by the Mecosta County Office of Emergency Management. The first exercise, in late August, consisted of a "table-top" session, where we, and officials from other major county agencies were given the opportunity to openly discuss how they might respond to a hypothetical terrorist incident in the county. The hypothetical terrorist incident involved a simulated explosion at the County services building which released an unknown hazardous substance into the surrounding environment, quickly followed by notification of a possible incendiary device being placed in the County Courthouse Building. The potential role of local ARES/RACES operators in this hypothetical scenario was addressed as various failures in normal communication systems were imagined. In late August, the above-noted series of simulations was repeated in a "real time" context, with an actual "functional exercise", which was conducted at the County's Emergency Operations Center in the basement of the County Sheriff's Department. This time, the aforementioned local ARES/RACES operators were asked to initiate an FM simplex net for tactical communications. Communications failures once again were simulated, and a number of messages were passed on this established simplex net between our operators, and the various other active players in the unfolding exercise scenario.

From all accounts that I have received, our participation was appreciated, and our potential role as auxiliary communicators became quite clear to those in attendance. As a result, it is expected that we will be participating in a "full scale" exercise which will build on the terrorism scenario and its various aspects sometime within the next year or so.

While we were participating in the above-noted county-sponsored exercises, members of our local ARES/RACES team were also hard at work preparing for our upcoming SET exercise. As you may recall, the ARRL asks that all local ARES/RACES groups conduct a "Simulated emergency Test" (SET) once a year in order to test its emergency response capabilities, and as a means for setting goals for future developments in the local ARES/RACES program.

Work for this year's SET exercise actually began in June of 2004, with a meeting of those folks who were interested in helping plan this year's exercise. As we began to formulate the basic exercise scenario, it became readily apparent that the first order of business needed to center around testing available radios and/or antennas at important county facilities, such as the County EOC, the American Red Cross Building, and Meceola Central Dispatch. An emergency communications facility equipment evaluation sheet was created, and the available equipment at each facility was tested. My

thanks go out to George Rouman, Gary Atteberry, Bob Croaker, Walter Nalezty, and Matthew Trombley, who were extremely instrumental in conducting these tests.

With the completion of the facility tests, we then resumed our efforts to develop the scenario for the actual SET exercise. The exercise itself occurred on Saturday, October 2. The SET scenario involved a hypothetical series of tornado touchdowns throughout Mecosta County. One touchdown was at Mecosta County General Hospital, with some significant structural damage but no known injuries; the second was at the Metron Nursing Home Facility, with considerable facility damage and a number of minor injuries; and the third was at the Cran-Hill Ranch Youth Camp with extensive facility damage and a number of serious injuries.

As these events unfolded, our normal 2-meter skywarn net was moved to the 440 repeater, and an ARES/RACES net was initiated on the 2-meter repeater. Almost immediately after the establishment of the 2-meter ARES/RACES net, we received a number of reports of widespread telephone and power outages throughout Mecosta County. In addition, net control received a hypothetical message from Dan Dowdy (Mecosta County's EMD), stating that the County EOC was being activated, and that our presence at the EOC was needed. Dan also requested that amateur operators be dispatched to Meceola Central Dispatch, the Red Cross Building, and Mecosta County General Hospital so that "point to point" communications could be conducted not only with the County EOC, but between the other facilities as well.

Once all communication links were established, both the 2-meter repeater and FM simplex were used to pass a series of messages from the above-noted facilities to the EOC, to ensure that effective communications could be maintained under a variety of conditions. In addition, with the help of an HF liaison station, several formal NTS messages were passed from the County EOC to the State EOC in Lansing, and to Tom Vandermel, our District 6 Emergency Coordinator, in relation to various aspects of the exercise scenario.

To make a long story very short, the exercise was a complete success. We all got some real training in handling various point-to-point tactical messages. A few of us got some much-needed practice in handling and passing NTS messages from our area to Lansing. We even managed to break in two new net controls—Jodi (KC8ZRR), who took over the skywarn net when it was shifted to the 440 repeater, and Lillian (KC8OMJ), who stood in as 2-meter ARES/RACES net control when I was temporarily unavailable.

Space considerations do not allow me to present more details here, but if anyone should want a copy of our entire SET scenario for 2004, please let me know, and I'll e-mail it to you or give you a printed copy. My thanks go to everyone who participated in both the SET, and in our earlier county exercises. Without you, our ARES/RACES program would not be where it is today. As always, if you have any questions on any ARES/RACES-related items, please contact me as your EC/RO for Mecosta County, or Gary Atteberry as your Osceola County EC/RO.

INTRUDERS INFILTRATE THE HAM BANDS FROM THE ARRL MICHIGAN SECTION NEWS SUMMARY

Band intruders continue to frustrate many of us as strange users show up on the low end of ten meters, while still others have shown up on the two meter band. You are urged to be alert to these usurpers of our frequencies, make recordings, take notes as to freq, time, date and any vehicle identification, such as license tag or trailer number. By no means should anyone ever attempt to take direct action, but simply collect the data and report it to our Official Observer Coordinator Don Sefcik N8NJE. The FCC is taking action against these individuals, and the careful collection of the complete details is vital to the successful pursuit of these scofflaws. If you are interested in participating with the Official Observer Corps, please let Don know. Our Michigan Section OO Corps consists of many serious volunteers, each having passed an exam to qualify, and we all applaud their efforts for the time and effort spent to keep our bands clean.

CLUB AMENDMENTS TABLED

At the October club meeting two separate amendments were proposed concerning identical portions of the Club Bylaws. (See the September/October issue of the club Newsletter) Club President Don Macconnel, WA4FRJ, after a period of discussion, concerning Robert's Rules of Order, decided to table the motions until a later date so that he could thoroughly review procedures before any other action is taken.

THOM DURFEE PRESENTS PROGRAM ON QSL CARDS

A fine program on the use of QSL cards in amateur radio was presented at the October meeting. Thom, WI8W had asked club members to bring in their favorite or rare cards to the club meeting to exhibit. Those were spread around the tables in front of the members present and everyone took a card and stuck a pin in a world map pointing out the card's location; most impressive! After a discussion of the history procedures of using and mailing cards, Thom passed out copies of the ARRL QSL Bureau Procedures and has posted it on the club web site in the Members Only Section. That was followed by an informative question and answer period. Outstanding presentation, Thom!

PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS

President Don Macconnel, WA4FRJ has presented the results of his survey conducted at the September meeting. The questionnaire's purpose was to determine what subjects members would enjoy most as club programs at future meetings. From the topics offered, he listed, in order of importance, those choices receiving the most responses in the survey. As Don pointed out, it is interesting that the first, second and third choices are all a part of the present push to set up a Fox Hunt in the future. Under discussion are plans for a construction day to build simple antennas that will serve to locate the fox with a reasonable degree of success. In addition, a fox hunt impinges on the fourth choice in that locating sources of signals can certainly be necessary at times. Don expects that we can find expertise from our own club members and from outside sources to bring other interesting programs to the club in the near future. Keep watching for development in the near future. Also, if you have other ideas or if you are willing to present a program contact Don soon.

1. Antennas types build, design erect
2. Fox Hunts
3. Build Ham related things
4. Emergency service communications
5. DX
6. Testing Rigs
- 7 APRS
- 8 Digital
9. QRP
- 10 Upgrade or obtain License
- 11 General Electronics
12. Fund Raising
13. Troubleshooting
14. Other GPS

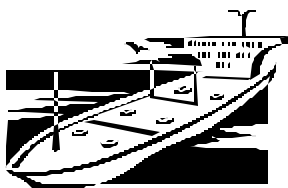
DON'T FORGET THE MICHIGAN STATE HAM CONVENTION AND SWAP ON THE 5TH AND 6TH OF NOVEMBER. CONVENTION BANQUET ON FRIDAY. SESSIONS AND SWAP ON SATURDAY. FOR DETAILS CHECK IT OUT IN THE OCTOBER QST ON PAGE 93.

WE WERE HEARD AND APPRECIATED

Thom Durfee, WI8W has reported that we have received 65 QSL cards from the Labor Day Special Event at the Hemlock Park Arts and Crafts Fair. (See the September/October News Letter article) As a result, the club has nailed down a site at next year's event. Why not plan to join the operating team next summer to make that event even better!



**NEXT MONTHLY CLUB BREAKFAST:
8:30 A.M. SATURDAY OCTOBER 30 AT
THE BIG BOY RESTAURANT ON STATE
STREET (OLD US 131) IN BIG RAPIDS.
COME JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST AND A
GOOD TIME WITH CLUB MEMBERS AND FRIENDS!**



REMEMBERING THE EDMUND FITZGERALD SPECIAL EVENT

W8RIF

N8F Whitefish Point 2004, 8th year

HERE'S A NEAT SPECIAL MICHIGAN EVENT TO SUPPORT. (Ed.)

On the weekend of Nov. 4th thru Nov. 7th, 2004 the Stu Rockafellow Amateur Radio Society of Plymouth, Michigan will conduct a special event, "Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald". The "Fitz" went down with her crew on November 10th, 1975 in a fierce storm in Lake Superior a few miles off Whitefish Point. This is the 29th anniversary of that terrible loss.

We expect to start operations shortly after 1700 UTC Thursday Nov. 4 and continue until 1700 UTC Sunday Nov. 7. We plan on 2 stations at the Point and 2 stations at Paradise, Mi., 11 miles South of the Point. Primary target frequencies are 3860, 7260, 14260 and 21360 kHz. Secondary frequencies are 18160 and 28360 kHz. Most operating will be on SSB, Check the special event sections of the Nov. issues of QST, CQ and World Radio magazines.

We are looking forward to working you!

ARRL NOTES THAT NO NEWS IS, WELL, NO NEWS: CODE REQUIREMENT STILL EXISTS

There have been no changes to the Amateur Radio Part 97 rules nor any news to report regarding FCC action on proposals that address the number of license classes, the 5 WPM Morse code requirement (Element 1) to obtain a General or Extra license, or other amateur licensing qualifications or privileges.

The FCC continues to review the thousands of comments it received on 18 petitions for rule making--including a petition from the ARRL--that, in general, address various facets of license restructuring and the Morse code requirement.

Prompting most of these petitions were actions taken during World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03). The FCC first must issue a Notice of Proposed Rule Making and assign it a docket number, then invite comments on what it decides to propose, based on the petitions it has before it.

The ARRL estimates that the FCC is only about one-third of the way through its review of the petitions, however, and does not anticipate any final FCC action--in the form of a Report and Order--until sometime in 2006. The ARRL has posted answers to frequently asked questions on its own restructuring initiative on its Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring2/faq.html>>.

HAMS REMEMBER CHILDREN

ARRL FIELD AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Your help is needed!

Over the past weeks, we have all heard of the devastation in central Florida. Many hams actually heard it first hand through volunteer service or on the HF nets. While many areas of the country were affected to differing degrees, Florida was the worst. Thousands of families are without a place to live and will be homeless over the coming Holiday Season. For a child suddenly living out of a tent, or car, or someone else's home, the 2004 holiday season will be anything but jolly. But hams are coming to their rescue in a new way.

Between now and Thanksgiving, hams across the country are being asked to purchase a new child's toy and send it with a QSL card or 3x5 showing their callsign to: Ham Radio The United Way White Dove Project 50 Kindred Street - Suite 207 Stuart, FL 34994

"The storms and their aftermath have been especially traumatic for children. In addition to the frightening experience of going through the hurricanes, youngsters are coping with a great deal of stress felt within their families and at school," writes Carol Hodnett, a Director at the United Way site, who will be handling the distribution end of the program. "Because of the overall strain on our state, we have been looking outside the area for help in supporting the White Doves Holiday Project this year. We are so incredibly thankful to you and the American Radio Relay League for thinking of the children of our area in planning your toy drive."

The Martin County United Way in Stuart still has the facilities to manage a large toy Drive. They have agreed to serve as the collection point and also coordinate distribution to the surrounding counties whose agencies are no longer capable of managing such a project.

"Just let me know what you need," offered Steve Blary, N1XC, the ARES Emergency Coordinator for Stuart County, Florida. "This is a great idea and we're ready to help at this end."

Unwrapped toys for boys and girls of ages 1 to 14 will be gathered and shipped by amateur radio operators to the Stuart facility between now and Thanksgiving for distribution over the holidays. Non-hams are also encouraged to join in this effort to provide for the thousands of children suddenly homeless due to the series of hurricanes.

Those wishing to donate money instead of toys can send a check to: White Dove, c/o United Way of Martin County 50 Kindred Street, Suite 207, Stuart, FL 34994

Recent figures from FEMA and the Red Cross showed over 22,000 homes destroyed and over 40,000 severely damaged. Whole families who once had their own home or apartment are now living wherever they can, in vehicles, or tents, or sharing undamaged homes or shelters. It is not simply a shortage of affordable housing; it is a lack of ANY housing.

We are asking all hams to make the coming Holiday Season a little bit brighter for a child by participating in this toy drive. Purchase a new toy and ship it to the Ham Radio/United Way-White Dove address. Maybe it's not a new home to live in, but knowing that someone "out there" remembers you is a start for these children.

What kind of toy? The homeless children come in all ages, but we suggest thinking of age 1 to 14, both boys and girls. Should I wrap it? No, just put it in the box unwrapped. Why the QSL card? The cards will be collected and sent to the ARRL headquarters to track results. Can my non-ham friends join in? SURE! And if you give them your QSL cards to put in the boxes, your area will get the credit for their generosity. Can't I just give to something here locally? Of course you can. We're not saying "don't give" to any other place or cause. We are simply offering this option for hams to show the world that we remember the victims in disasters after the headlines are gone, and to do something good for children in real need.

Just how bad is it really? The following numbers are from FEMA and the Red Cross
County Destroyed homes Damaged homes Displaced People
Charlotte 5013 12006 24235 Escambia 5224
9385 23006 Desoto 3644 2671 13445 Brevard 2607 2498 9254 Polk 2064 2520 8310 St. Lucie 840
2538 5273 Palm Beach 366 1451 2510 Indian River 1830 1759 6232 Volusia 332 1124 2056 Orange

82 325 636 Santa Rosa 938 3026 6446 Lee 331 654 1513 Osceola 158 652 1355 Martin 301 1473
2283 Hardee 367 1052 2768.

You can help make the coming Holiday Season a little bit brighter for a child. Maybe it's not a new home to live in, but knowing that someone "out there" remembers you is a start for these children. Buy a toy (or three!) and send them with your QSL card today. From ARRL



NEXT CLUB MEETING: THURSDAY NOVEMBER 4TH. WE MEET AT 7:30 P.M. AT THE BIG RAPIDS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, 435 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE IN BIG RAPIDS. THE BOARD WILL MEET AT 6:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: A MOVIE ON FOX HUNTING AND DISCUSSION OF DIRECTION FINDING ANTENNAS AND A CLUB FOX HUNT TO COME.

Here is a typical ARES/RACES Go kit list or Jump Kit list. Be prepared to answer a call for help in times of emergencies. Why not start collecting some or all of these items so that you will have your own kit that you can latch-on to and join in if any emergency presents itself.

In the works is the possibility of a revised list to enhance what you see listed here. One such item might be the power pole connector that was the last club construction item. If used by all volunteers, any power source could be connected to any equipment. It would provide a universal system, a real plus when volunteers assemble emergency stations. Others might be developing APRS capability or digital stations to be set up in disaster areas.

If you do have a jump kit assembled and have items in it that would enhance the list, give your local EC a call. In Osceola County it's Gary Atteberry, WB8WIA and in Mecosta County, it's Tom Behler, KB8TYJ.

Incidentally, Our Treasurer Sue Behler, KC8IFP still has some club Power Pole kits available at reasonable cost from the club supplies. Just contact her at 231-592-9854.

The minimal Go Kit:

2 meter HT with spare battery and Magnet mount antenna or flexible twin lead antenna, any needed adapters and/or a 2 meter mobile with alternate power supply (other than car) and magnet mount antenna

Pen and Pencil

Notepad

ID'S (ARES, RACES, RED X, Drivers license or State ID)

Watch or Clock

ARPSC Freq List

County Map

NTS Message Forms 25

Copy of Amateur Radio License

Flash Light and Spare Batteries for Flash Light

Instruction Manual for Radio or copy

Lighter Socket Plug for Radio

Pocket Checklist for EC Personnel by QMN



NEXT MONTH: PREPARING YOUR HOME AND WHAT TO TAKE WHEN LEAVING ON AN EMERGENCY MISSION.

CROP WALK A SUCCESS

SUE BEHLER KC8IFP PIO

On Sunday, September 26th, a number of BRAARC club members continued the tradition of conducting a communications net for the Big Rapids Area Crop Walk. The purpose of the walk is to raise funds to combat the problem of hunger in our area. Tom Behler (KB8TYJ) acted as net control for the event. Jim Orlovski (N8PUG), assisted Tom at the Net Control Center and helped get



necessary information from the walk organizers as well as ham operators at various check-points along the route. A big thank you to Tom and Jim for keeping the operation running smoothly. An equally big thank you to all the ham operators who participated in the field. They were: Jerry Hemmye (KC8AW); Gary Atteberry (WB8WIA); George Rouman (W8OWN); Jerry Buskirk (KC8CII); Bill Stankey (N8MZZB); Don MacConnel (WA4FRJ); Sue Behler (KC8IFP); Matthew Trombley (KC8VJR); and Bob Croaker (WB8YPG) (Some shown at left) These hams were quite noticeable in their vehicles and emergency vests, and provided counts of the walkers for net control. They also

were available for possible emergency assistance to anyone who needed it.

In all, about 75 walkers participated in the event. The walkers covered all age groups, from small children to elderly adults; and even a pet dog was thrown in for good measure. Our group was complimented on our skill in handling the communications, and our presence was certainly appreciated by all those in attendance. Thanks to everyone for a job well done.



The walkers traveled in packs on a warm sunny day



Don, straining himself with hard work (?) while counting the walkers as they pass by.

Chris Fisher Attains Excellence For Creating A Medal

(Taken from the October 23, 2004 PIONEER)

Sue Behler KC8IFP PIO

Chris Fisher (KC8MRS), a club member and stepson of Fritz Pins (NI8E), graduated from Big Rapids High School in 2004. He is currently a Freshman at Western Michigan University majoring in computer science. Although art is not his "thing", he was challenged and inspired by his high school art teacher, James Malone Beach. During his senior year, Chris designed and created a medal which has been entered into the seventh annual FIDEM show taking place October 25-29 in Portugal. FIDEM is an international federation of people in 39 countries who try to encourage the creation of contemporary art medals. Each country in the Federation requests artists send in medals to be juried for entry into the FIDEM show. The countries then select the medals to fill their allowed number of medals from their nation to the world competition. This year, the US had a maximum of 60 entries. Seven of those 60 US medals on display were made in Big Rapids – 5 by Malone Beach, one by another student, and one by Chris Fisher.



Chris's medal is a flattened brass globe with the continents depicted on it. Four bronze semicircles are attached, with various words stamped on them. Imprintings include "SARS Epidemic," "Freedom", "Korea's Nuclear Weapons" and a quote by Albert Einstein, "Technological progress is like an axe in the hands of a pathological criminal." Chris said "I was just trying to think of something to do and I thought I could do something with the world and the problems going on."

Congratulations to Chris for a job well done. We'll be interested to hear how the competition turns out. His medal is automatically entered into a competition for the best medal created by an artist under 35 years of age. If won, the award includes a \$1000 prize. Good luck, Chris. We're proud of you.

EARLY NOTICE: GET READY TO WORK THE WEATHER BUREAUS. SKYWARN RECOGNITION DAY IS DECEMBER 4TH. (MORE NEXT MONTH)

INSIDE: REMEMBERING THE EDMUND FITZGERALD

