

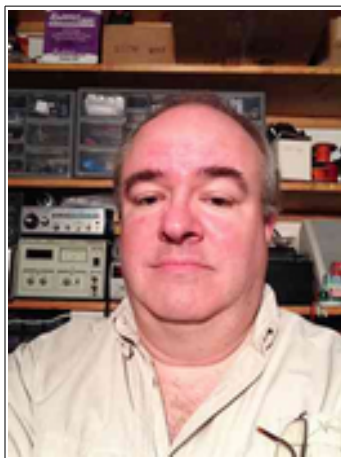
THE HAM ARUNDEL NEWS



Providing Fellowship and Community Service through Amateur Radio Since 1951

December 2015

38th Year of Publication



The Prez Sez...

Happy Holidays! I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving with family and friends. Now we're heading into the hectic run-up to Christmas and Hanukah. I braved the weekend crowds online – a lot less pushing and shoving! Speaking of which, if you'll be doing some shopping at Amazon, please consider using their Smile

program, which donates a small portion of your purchase price to a charitable organization of your choice. Might I suggest AARC? I think I might! Go to <http://smile.amazon.com>, and the first time you visit it will ask you to select a charity, after which it will remember that one until you change it (not that you would, of course). Almost everything is eligible and the prices are the same as without the donation program. It's not a tremendous amount, 0.5%, but every little bit helps!

Please don't let that discourage you from making a regular donation, should you choose to. Get that last donation in before the end of the year to claim it on your 2015 taxes! Yes, we just raised dues for the first time in quite a while, but as always, we do appreciate donations from members of any amount. You know it all goes straight to the club and not to the fat paychecks of the board (unlike a lot of charities out there...). I'm happy to tell you that the board once again will not be taking a salary increase! We'll be staying at the current level of \$0.00 for each director and officer. Talk about a bargain!

Speaking of the board, we held the annual election at the last meeting. Everyone on the current board offered to stay on for another year and nobody else volunteered to run, so the current directors and officers were voted in by acclamation. But be warned! Some of us will have put in a few years on the board now, and won't be running again next year. Please consider helping the club out by taking part in the management of AARC. 'Tis the season of giving, you know.

Don't forget the Holiday Party coming up on the 11th of December! It will be at 6:00 at Ford Hall, which is the building to your left when you enter DFRC. If you can show

up at 5:00 to help set up, it would be greatly appreciated. Please RSVP to Mark Bova, W2PAW, and let him know how many adults, children, and what type of dish you'll be bringing to share. The club provides the meats and drinks, we ask that you bring a side or dessert to share. If you will be bringing children 12 and under, please let Mark know as I've heard that Santa will be making a visit with a sack full of goodies. We need to let him know what to bring ASAP, and we don't want anyone left out, so please make sure to give us that information. As always, if you've paid your 2016 dues or pay at the party, you'll be eligible for FABULOUS PRIZES!

As it gets colder outside it will be a great time to huddle in the shack with a warm beverage and work some DX. If you're running an old tube rig, you can let it keep you warm as you chase that elusive contact or rare country. So warm up that boat anchor and feel the heat of a dozen filaments cooking up some RF. Take that, QRP guys! You're not going to keep warm with a couple of watts!

Again, let me wish you Happy Holidays and I hope to see you at the party.

Holiday Party

6:00 pm

(Set up at 5:00 pm)

DFRC Ford Hall

Fabulous Prizes are available

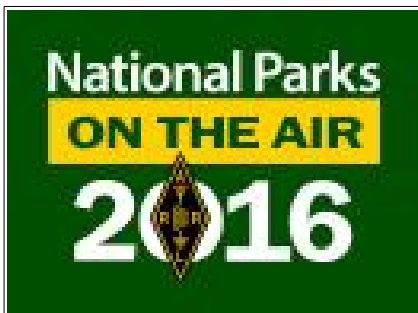
for those with paid up 2016 dues.

- **RSVP to Mark Bova, W2PAW, and let him know how many adults, children, and what type of dish you'll be bringing to share.**

100 Anniversary of the National Park Service

In 2016, the National Park Service ([NPS](#)) will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and radio amateurs will be able to help mark the occasion with the ARRL National Parks on the Air ([NPOTA](#)) event. The fun begins at 0000 UTC on January 1, 2016.

“As ARRL just celebrated our own Centennial, and Amateur Radio is often enjoyed in the great outdoors, it seemed fitting to devise a program to help NPS celebrate their own 100th birthday,” said ARRL Media and Public



Relations Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. As he explained, NPOTA will run throughout 2016, with activity promoted and encouraged from each of the more than 430 official NPS administrative units and affiliated areas across the US. This includes all 59 National Parks as well as National Battlefields, Historic Sites, Memorials, Preserves, Reserves, Rivers, Seashores, National Scenic Trails, and other units.

The program will have two participation tracks — Chasers and Activators. Chasers will simply attempt to make contact with operators in as many of the NPS units as possible. Activators will attempt to activate as many of the units as possible. NPOTA participants may serve in both roles. Chaser and Activator totals will be tracked via an online [Leader Board](#) based on LoTW data, just as was done during the Centennial QSO Party. (Access the NPOTA Leader Board directly at <http://npota.arrl.org>.)

Modeled after the Mixed DXCC award, only one contact with any given NPS unit will be required, and no tally will be kept of NPS units based on bands or modes. NPOTA will be administered entirely through Logbook of The World (LoTW). No paper logs or QSLs will be accepted for NPOTA credit. Each NPS unit will be added to LoTW as a “location.”

Three award certificates will be available: Chaser Award and Activator Award certificates will be available to any radio amateur who has at least one confirmed contact with an NPS unit or who activates at least one unit, respectively. A station’s total number of confirmed or activated units will be printed on the certificate. The National Parks Honor Roll certificate will be available for any station that confirms contact with at least 75 percent of the 59 National Parks *activated* in 2016.

An Activator can earn additional recognition as a “Five-Star Activator.” While the Centennial QSO Party was an internal event for radio amateurs, National Parks on the Air is designed to be a public promotion of Amateur Radio’s capabilities. Various public relations bonuses and activities will be available to Activators, similar to the PR bonus points available to ARRL Field Day stations.

The success of the event and of the awards program rests on radio amateurs’ willingness to operate from NPS units.

“Portable operators, this event is for *you!*” Kutzko said. “Start thinking about how you would incorporate Amateur Radio into your visit to an NPS unit. Whether you’re camping in Yosemite, driving along the Blue Ridge Parkway, or set up in a corner of Andersonville Prison, you will definitely draw a pileup. As long as you are on the property of the NPS unit, you will qualify as being in the unit.”

Kutzko notes that depending on the size of a given operation, participants may need to secure a special-use permit. “This may take some time,” he said. “It’s possible the answer will be ‘no.’ Be mindful of the size and sensitivity of the NPS unit you want to activate, and be realistic about your plans.” NPOTA Activators will need to follow all NPS rules in whatever unit they activate.

In general, the more portable and compact your station is, and the more creative and adaptable your plans are, the greater your chances of success. While there is no formal partnership between NPS and ARRL for this event, the League has been in discussions with the NPS over the past year, and it is aware that increased Amateur Radio activity in their parks is likely during 2016.

“It is your responsibility to be on your best behavior and not interfere with other visitors at NPS units,” Kutzko advised. “Remember, every time you visit an NPS unit for this awards program, your conduct will not only impact the reputation of Amateur Radio throughout the NPS system, but will also directly impact the success of the next amateur who tries to activate that unit. Be nice, be courteous, and be flexible. Demonstrate Amateur Radio in the best light possible.”

The NPOTA will use the official [list](#) of NPS Administrative Units and Affiliated Areas as defined and maintained by NPS. [Complete details](#) on the National Parks on the Air event are available on the ARRL website.

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National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) Map Now Available

In cooperation with ARRL, [CQmaps](#) has introduced a 2016 National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) [map](#). The full-color map includes all NPOTA units, within the US, including Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Guam, Saipan, and American Samoa. All sites are clearly labeled and include the park name along with the ARRL park designator. Each 24 × 36 inch map is offered in either a laminated heavyweight paper or DuPont Tyvek.

The NPOTA laminated map is well suited for using a dry-erase marker to check off your progress in chasing the parks. The map is personalized with your Amateur Radio call sign.

The price is \$25, including US shipping. Add \$10 for international orders.

Reprinted with permission ARRL News 11/18/2015



Manhattan Project Sites Now Eligible for National Parks On The Air Event

The US departments of Energy (DOE) and the Interior have signed an agreement making the three sites of the [Manhattan Project](#) a National Historical Site — and the 409th official unit of the National Park Service. The Manhattan Project was the name given to the secret World War II [effort](#) to develop the first atomic weapon. The agreement makes the new NPS unit eligible for the ARRL 2016 National Parks on the Air ([NPOTA](#)) event, celebrating the centennial of the National Park Service. The National Parks Conservation Association [reported](#) the agreement on November 10. The three sites comprising the Manhattan Project National Historical Park now will be added — with a caveat — to the list of eligible NPOTA sites. They are in Hanford, Washington; Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

“A visit to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park will be different from a visit to many other national parks,” the National Park Service has pointed out. “Many of the properties included in the park are located in areas that are still part of the active DOE mission. Because of safety and security issues some facilities may not be immediately open to the public, and others may only be visited on organized bus tours. The National Park Service and the Department of Energy are working together to safely expand access to the facilities included in the park.”

As a result, the new unit will be flagged as “extremely sensitive” on the NPOTA list, which is the official [list](#) of NPS Administrative Units and Affiliated Areas as defined and maintained by NPS.

NPOTA will run throughout 2016, with activity promoted and encouraged from each of the official NPS administrative units and affiliated areas across the US. This includes all National Parks as well as many National Battlefields, Historic Sites, Memorials, Preserves, Reserves, Rivers, Seashores, National Scenic Trails, and other units.

The NPOTA program will have two participation tracks — Chasers and Activators. Chasers will simply attempt to make contact with operators in as many of the NPS units as possible. Activators will attempt to activate as many of the units as possible. NPOTA participants may serve in both roles. Only one contact with any given NPS unit will be required, and no tally will be kept of NPS units based on bands or modes. NPOTA will be administered entirely through Logbook of The World (LoTW). Award certificates will be available.

[Complete details](#) on National Parks on the Air are available on the ARRL website.

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MDC Section FIELD DAY RESULTS

The monsoon certainly challenged us, but we did pretty well. The stories are still being told about the 2015 Monsoon on Field Day.

From Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore - Swanton to Cambridge, Leitersburg to Lexington Park and Rising Sun to Roosevelt Island in DC – the MDC Section Hams braved very stormy conditions to show their grit in

the face of a Monsoon weekend.

The 2015 Field Day results are in and congratulations to our 45 participating MDC Field Day stations that submitted logs.



Congratulations to the W3AO Team, Potomac Valley Radio Club and Columbia ARA, for having the top ARRL & Atlantic Division score.

The MDC Section participants certainly racked up a boat-load of points in 2015. The total combined MDC 'Score' was almost 124,000 and a combined MDC QSO's of 28,914. Here is the breakdown:

- 126 registered Ham Stations
- 22 Club Stations
- 10 Emergency Power Stations
- 2 EOC Stations
- 6 Home Stations
- 1 Mobile
- 4 Portable
- 10 GOTA stations

I wish to thank the 595 participating MDC Hams, and their support staff for your fortitude on Field Day. A special thanks to our Non-Hams (spouses, family, friends and companions) and the MDC Field Services Staff for supporting the 2015 ARRL Field Day.

Also a special thanks to our Atlantic Division Director, Tom Abernethy, W3TOM for traveling to MDC Section and hanging-out with our Field Day participants.

You may view the entire database or search our MDC section at:

www.arrl.org/news/arrl-field-day-2015-results-now-available.

ARRL Field Day 2015 Results Now Available:

Results of ARRL [Field Day](#) 2015 now are available. These include the [searchable scores database](#), the [soapbox](#) link, and the [QST results article](#) (PDF). A total of 2720 stations submitted entries for the June 27-28 event.

While propagation was on the sorry side for Field Day 2015, the number of contacts for this year's event rose slightly over 2014 — a modest 1.1 percent — and the number of CW contacts account for all of that increase; phone and digital contact numbers dipped slightly in 2015. Nearly 1.3 million contacts were logged during FD 2015.

The number of logs received appears to be an all-time ARRL Field Day record. This year saw 35,369 participants, down slightly from 2014.

A total of 1247 entries claimed the broad classification of “A” (which includes generator, commercial, and alternate/battery powered entries). Joining that core group operating in temporary setups were an additional 315 Class B entries (one or two-person entries). This indicates that 58 percent of all Field Day 2015 participants in some way took to the field.

Reprinted with permission MDC Section Nws Nov 13, 2015

Soapbox entry from ARRL 2015 ARRL Field Day

Well this was the second year that I ventured into the wilds of my backyard for a 100% emergency powered field day.

This year I purchased a much larger, 100 watt solar charging panel + controller.



The kind of self contained system that folds into a suitcase type package for easy transport. I also used the smaller solar panel from last year. I also purchased a third 35AH SLA-Glass Mat Deep Cycle battery. I rotated the three batteries between the

large solar charger, small solar charger and the Icom 7000 rig used for field day.

This year I also added solar powered night lights called "Solar Puffs" and for night OPs I also had a 15 foot string of LEDs running off one of the 35AH SLA batteries that had been solar charged earlier in the day. PLENTY of night time lighting!

Just like last year, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Not only running the station, but enjoying the company of my wife, my son and friends that showed up and listened to the Field Day radio goings-on as we enjoyed the shade under the canopy.



My backyard antennas this year were:

- 40M dipole up ~22ft
- 20M dipole up ~18ft
- 10M "Ham-Stick" dipole up ~17ft on a very wobbly PVC mast

A couple of pictures follow and I am already making plans for additional solar emergency power for 2016's Field Day.

What a great, fun event!

-- W7JZE

Usec with permission ARRL Letter 09/13/2015

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Santa Needs an XYL

Don't tell Mrs. Claus, but Santa is looking for an YL/XYL to radio in during a Christmas event. **The Catholic Daughters of America** are hosting a charity event for kids from 9-11:30 on December 12th in Annapolis.

One of the organizers would like to have a willing XYL call in to Santa sometime around the middle of the event.

Kind of an interesting twist on the visit from St.Nick, may get some youngsters exposed to ham radio at an early age!

If you can help out, please contact George Coyle, WA3PKW, at gcoyle2@verizon.net

Fall 2015 Issue of Radio Waves is Now Available

The fall 2015 edition of [Radio Waves](#) now is available via the ARRL website. This issue includes such articles as "Using Sensors to Explore Terraforming," "STEM School and Academy ARC Builds Repeater," and "Community College's DIY Spirit Shines for ARISS Contact."

Published quarterly by ARRL Education Services, the fall 2015 edition also looks at how ham radio can help Boy Scouts to earn the Radio merit badge, news, ideas and support for instructors, ham radio instruction for people with disabilities, and the evolution of a licensing class.

Current and back issues of *Radio Waves* [are available](#) on the ARRL website. *Radio Waves* is available free as a PDF.

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Ham DTMF satellite is on the air for testing in Annapolis

Anyone can use this transponder from their DTMF radio. (don't need an APRS radio). Just enter your DTMF callsign and GRID into a DTMF memory (formatted per the web page below) and send it on the 144.33 uplink and listen for the voice response on 144.39 (amongst all the packet clutter too).

Not only does it convert the DTMF to a voice CQ, but it also sends back an APRS packet copy of the CQ on 144.39 into the global APRS system. If successful, you should see it in the ten minute Bulletin update:

<http://aprs.fi/info/a/QIKCOM-2>

So just program your DTMF memory once, and try it any time you drive by Annapolis (its on my building roof at USNA).

And not only can you send your grid, you can send any of the ARL radiograms both emergency and general, but any of a few dozen more typical messages just by entering the 2 digit message number in DTMF followed by your DTMF callsign....

See how on <http://aprs.org/qikcom-2.html>

We just delivered the flight unit to the launch integrator 18 Nov, and so now we can sit back and actually TEST the prototype on the air and see how it works under user load. It is only 4 Watts, so you probably have to be within a few miles or so. Something to entertain you while sitting in traffic. I have worked it from a high spot in Glen Burnie (bridge over Rt 10) about 12 miles away, but you have to have a good shot to Annapolis.

You only have to enter your grid and call into your DTMF memory once. Then, anytime you are mobile near the Severn bridges or near the Academy, just send out the DTMF memory and listen for the response.

If there are thunderstorms in the area, I should disconnect it... but will try to leave it on.

Bob Bruninga, WB4APR
USNA Satellite Lab

Revamped FCC Website Expected to Debut on December 10

The FCC has announced that its large-scale website redesign will be completed by December 10. The switch to the new site is set to begin on December 10 at 0100 UTC and will be completed about 4 hours later.

"While the transition to the revamped site is expected to be completed almost instantaneously, there will be an ongoing process following this transition that will continue to involve user feedback, fixes by the FCC's Information Technology team, and content updates by policy bureaus and offices," the FCC said in a November 24 Public Notice.

The FCC said the new website has been designed to provide "better functionality, an improved design, and better searchability and navigability." Earlier this year the Commission's IT Department opened a beta-test version of the site, located at <https://prototype.fcc.gov/>, and has been gathering user comments at <https://prototype.fcc.gov/eform/submit/feedback>.

"Extensive user research revealed how the FCC could improve the website's information architecture to make content easier to find," the Public Notice said. The FCC said its new website has been designed to operate on tablet and mobile device browsers with the display optimization based upon the device.

The site utilizes a "toggle" navigation that allows visitors to browse either by "Category" or "Bureau and Office."

When the new site comes online, the familiar current FCC website will no longer be available. The FCC said web pages and files on transition.fcc.gov that have not already migrated to the new site will remain available, and existing bookmarks will be redirected to the appropriate content on the new site. While the Commission has already upgraded some of its interactive systems, including the Consumer Help Center, and is working toward improvements on similar systems, including the Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), these systems will not be directly impacted by the December 10 migration.

"This migration will impact the look and functionality of web pages that are coded in HTML and managed through a content management system, such as the homepage and individual bureau pages," the FCC Public Notice said. The FCC said the change to a new website design was, in part, driven by a need to start using a more modern, open-source content management system to upgrade the site's look and architecture, and to transition to a system that is compatible with the latest website innovations.

FCC Chief Information Officer David Bray has written blog posts about the website development process, and the beta site has been publically available and soliciting feedback since April. Two additional public outreach sessions will be held before the December 10 changeover to explain the new site and its functionality to interested stakeholders.

Used with permission ARRL Bulletin #35 Nov 25 2015

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Kids are Not the Future of Ham Radio

By Bob Witte, K0NR

You've heard it a million times: our kids are the future. That statement gets applied to almost everything, including amateur radio. How can you argue with an obvious fact like that?

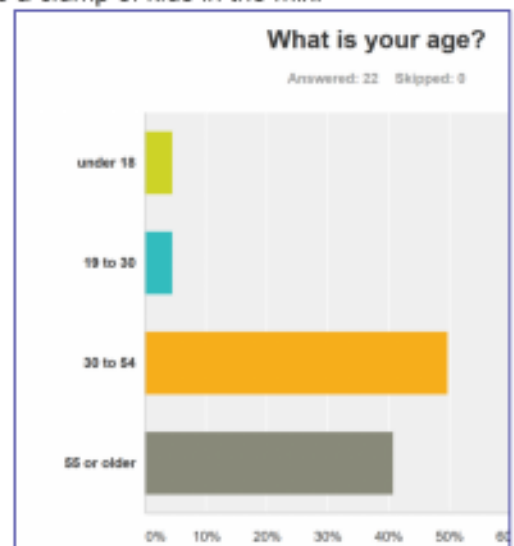
But I am starting to think it is incorrect.

We've had really good success on creating new hams of all ages in our Technician License Class (at the Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association). We've been doing this for a while now and I think I am seeing a pattern emerge. We've been able to attract middle schoolers to the class and help them get their ham radio license. I've talked to many of them on the air. They've helped out with public service events. They seem to have fun playing with radios.

Then this thing called high school happens. The high school phase in the US is filled with tons of stuff to do: studying, homework, AP classes, science competitions, sports, dating, movies, driving and after school jobs. Way too much stuff. Ham radio starts to take a backseat to these normal high school activities. Then we don't see the kids at the radio club meetings or chatting on the local repeater because they are busy doing other things. Have we lost them forever? Not sure.

High school is often followed by college which has its own set of challenges: a totally new environment, away from home, a new set of people, new studies, etc. There might be a ham radio club on campus but maybe not. If a kid is not off to college they are (hopefully) out doing something to establish themselves in this world. Eventually they emerge on the other side, get a job, get themselves established, sometimes with a spouse and maybe a kid or two. By this time they are 25 to 30 years old, depending on the individual.

I recently posted about the demographics of our students in the Tech License Class (<http://www.k0nr.com/wordpress/2015/10/where-are-the-new-technicians-coming-from/>). The chart below shows the age distribution of our students from our most recent class. Hmm, clearly most of our students are 30 or older. (Sorry, we have not collected age data with finer resolution.) This particular class is light on the under 18 crowd...sometimes we have a clump of kids in the mix.



For whatever reason, it seems that most people find themselves in a situation as an adult that causes them to say "I want to get my ham radio license." When asked why they want to get their ham license, the top response is always emergency/disaster communications, followed by backcountry communications, pursuing electronics as a hobby and learning about radio communications. I suspect that starting to be established in a community and having some disposable income also play a role.

My hypothesis is that the most effective way of growing a vibrant ham radio community is to target adults ages 25 to 40.

This age range is more equipped and ready to be ham radio operators and are still young enough that they will be around for a while. Of course, we still want to work with all age groups, including kids and retirees. We've all seen very young hams get the bug for ham radio early and carry it throughout their life. And we also see plenty of older folks get interested in the hobby as they approach or enter retirement. We don't want to miss out on either of those groups.

So that's my read on the situation. I've got some data to support my theory but I can't really prove it. What do you think? What are you seeing in your ham radio community?

Bob Witte, K0NR, blogs about amateur radio at K0NR.Com. You can find this post at <http://www.k0nr.com/wordpress/2015/11/kids-not-the-future/>. You can e-mail him at bob@k0nr.com. He is also on Twitter: @K0NR.

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Maintain a Strict Listening Watch

"We have two ears and one mouth and they are to be used in proportion." - *anonymous*. In the days where every ship of credibility carried a Morse code set, the radio operator was required to maintain radio silence on the international distress frequency of 500 KHz for a three minute interval, at 15 and 45 minutes of every hour. As radiotelephone came into being a 3 minute watch was maintained at 0 and 30 minutes. If the disaster your vessel encountered fit within the 30 minute schedule, your weak, plaintive CQD (later, SOS) had a good chance of being heard amidst all the commercial traffic and noise.

Today, satellite communications systems have forced these "antiquated" structures into retirement, but not entirely. A few years ago I enjoyed a tour of a huge container ship at Boston Harbor. After pleasantries with the Captain I asked for permission to meet his Radio Officer. "Our Engineer holds that title," he told me, "but in reality," with the Captain putting his hands on a piece of satellite gear, "this is our Radio Officer." Paying deference to the captain and the high tech gear, I then headed straight for the radio room - thankfully they still had one -- and was warmly greeted by a middle-aged man of professional bearing in full white uniform. There, in a large space, were three racks, each with a high powered HF transmitter. The wise officer revealed his best-kept secret to safety: "Should we be going down," he said, opening a small desk drawer, "I'm using this." A rather sturdy Morse hand key was

revealed, and there began an understanding between us. "The satellites don't talk back," he told me. "This does."

Quiet Periods, Listening Watches and Amateur Radio

He knew about the quiet periods and listening watches of old and the stories of lives lost and saved. He also knew that the necessity of maintaining a strict listening watch has not been lost to time and technology. In fact, it's a greater necessity than we may have considered in our own Amateur Radio service. The very first Amateur Radio public service event I was responsible to organize included this concept. "Let's keep an ear on the radio, so we might be less tied up with getting your attention and have more time to pass actual traffic." Time and experience reveals that other problems such as the limitations of newer digital modes are mitigated by the maintenance of the strict listening watch.

My local club, the [Police Amateur Radio Team](#) (PART) of Westford, Massachusetts, operates a 2-meter analog repeater that is a fantastic performer. It's reliable. It has a wide reach. It is well maintained. Still, there are instances where the combination of interference, distance from the repeater site, and operator technique combine adversely.



The [Boston Athletic Association Boston Marathon](#) communications system offers excellent fodder for study. With almost 300 communications volunteers and a few dozen unique repeaters and other radio-communication systems all pressed to the limit within a very short time span, anything and everything that can go

wrong generally does go wrong. I have, as a volunteer (this is my 15th year), listened in pain to dreadfully long attempts at getting a simple message between two units, which generally begin with several unanswered calls, adding to the mess. In 2015, in a leadership capacity, I targeted the only variables within our immediate control: the operator on both ends of the circuit. Maintaining a strict listening watch became a mantra, and it will continue as long as we hold a radio in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other.

At a public service event many of us clip our radio to the belt. Body fading, the same physical phenomena that aids us in Fox Hunting, attenuates what's coming in and of course what goes out. I now encourage my Net Control Operators (NCO) to request that field units "raise the radio over your head and try again" in the first instance where that unit is unreadable. This solves the input problem in almost all cases. With sufficient practice, it's hoped that awareness will spread, and the reminders be made obsolete.

The output problem - the ability to receive the repeater output in the field - is rarely that the (stronger) repeater transmission cannot be heard. It's simply that the operator is not focused, not listening for the call. The operator is chatting with friends, tired and glazed, or listening to other communications. One volunteer insisted that he bring along another radio so he might "listen in on public safety." "That's nice," I replied, "but it's not in our job

description." I feared that, while lost to more exciting radio banter, my volunteer would lose awareness - of our situation and responsibility -- so necessary to maintain. I was right. He was often difficult to reach and generally ineffective. Hopefully it was a lesson learned.

Sure, our work can sometimes involve simply waiting for that one call, and this can be boring. But think of how interesting we can make our listening watch when we form a picture in our mind of what's happening at the event overall, and what has happened in the past, to grasp that we perform a life or death function. 100% focus on our duty and assignment is critical to our "client" event officials being able to secure the public's safety as best they can, at the rest stop, intersection, or Red Cross facility to which we are assigned.

Maintaining that strict listening watch repeatedly overcomes the limitations inherent in our technical communications method, promotes situational awareness, improves our effectiveness to the teams we support, and in the end is a discipline that keeps us focused on the reason we're standing underneath that silly orange hat in the first place: to provide instant, reliable communications.

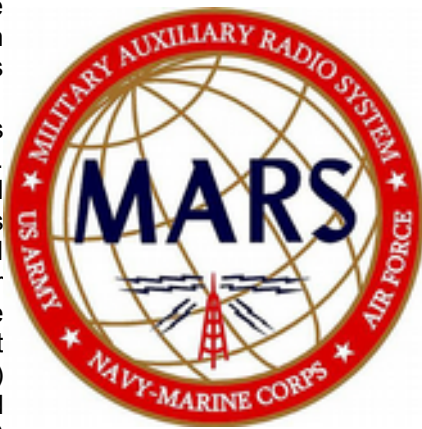
So maintain that strict listening watch. Your performance and overall satisfaction, and public safety at the next public service event will be all the better for it. -- *Mark Richards, K1MGY* [Richards serves as a member of the Boston Athletic Association Communications Committee, and is a frequent public service event volunteer and organizer. He is employed in the technical design and product development of hand-held environmental monitoring instrumentation]

Used with permission ARRL ARES E-Letter Nov 18, 2015.

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MARS-Amateur Radio Exercise an Overall Success

A 2 day Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) communications exercise in early November was an overall success, especially in terms of MARS-ARES cooperation. The November 8-10 exercise was built around the scenario of a simulated massive coronal mass ejection (CME) that disrupts conventional communication systems across the US. Following the simulated CME, MARS stations returned to the air and received requests for information from the supported Department of Defense (DoD) organizations and asking that MARS stations establish contact with Amateur Radio operators in as many of the 3142 US counties as possible. MARS operators were limited to using mainly HF NVIS bands as well as VHF and UHF repeaters. Communication between MARS and Amateur Radio operators were to be made directly, without relying on Internet-linking capabilities



orstore-and-forward messaging systems.

"Data analysis following the exercise shows that MARS members successfully contacted 816 counties across the US (26 percent)," US Army MARS Program Manager Paul English, WD8DBY, told ARRL. "Amateur Radio participants in this exercise included individuals, Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)-affiliated clubs, and the Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) as well as a few state, county, and city emergency operations centers."

English credited advance publicity given to the exercise by ARRL and others for MARS exercise planners having received 181 e-mail inquiries from individual, clubs, and emergency management personnel wanting to receive more information about the exercise and how they could participate. English said MARS received inquiries from 41 states and included more than 50 ARES groups.

"The purpose of these exercises is to reach beyond interoperability and focus on our ability to exchange usable and relevant information from the local level to the national level following a crisis event," English explained. "Only through the cooperation among MARS and the larger Amateur Radio community (individuals, ARES, RACES, SATERN, etc) can we hope to achieve that synergy."

English conveyed the appreciation of DoD MARS leadership to all who supported this exercise and said that MARS is looking forward to conducting these types of exercises more frequently with the Amateur Radio community.

During the exercise, the Commanding General of the Army's Network Enterprise Technology Command, Maj General Morrison, visited the Fort Huachuca HF Gateway station to receive a briefing on the exercise and presented a plaque celebrating MARS 90th Anniversary which occurred on 1 Nov 2015.

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