

MERCURY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

MARA - NORTH AMERICA - NORTH EAST



NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My first comment for the newsletter is the fact that I miss the outstanding sound of Chic's voice. He was a great man to follow. As vice president under Chic's leadership life was easy because of his enthusiasm for MARA. He left us so quickly! We all miss him.

I have just had a powerful reminder of preparedness. Two of my sons drive truck for the Nestle Corporation. The recent storm of February 13th and 14th shut down route 78 which is a main artery part way across Pennsylvania. Our son Joel was caught in the highway shutdown. He had adequate food, water, and fuel and was able to survive quite comfortably. This was not the case with many other travelers and some truckers. The shutdown lasted for about 21 hours. So whatever our responsibility in life, we need to plan ahead for the "snowy day".

I'm excited about the recent activity in MARA. There's been a good upswing in active members, both on

the air and the e-mail reflector, and I hope we can keep it going.

My thanks to each of you, in trying to set up communications from our chapels. I'm aware there is no one single good answer. I will be following any progress in this area with great interest.

Many thanks to each of you for your efforts in support of MARA NE.

Barry, N2PCT

--- MARA NE ---

MORE WEATHER

March is another month of less than enjoyable weather. Give me sunshine with temperatures in the mid 70's!

--- MARA NE ---

POWER PREPAREDNESS

Now that you've gotten your rig and antenna operational – you have, haven't you? What about the rest? Do you know where your 72-Hour kit is? How's your food storage

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E-mail your comments, ideas, or submissions to marane@mara.net

Please send copies of any old newsletters you might have, for the archives.

Join us on the Saturday morning SSB net at 0730 Eastern time on 3.8725 MHz

coming? Do you keep the fuel in your car's gas tank topped up in case you have to evacuate?

Review your stake and ward or branch emergency preparedness plans. Don't know if your unit has one? – ask around, or check out the Dartmouth Nova Scotia stake plan at <http://www.mara.net/emgprep.pdf>

So, you bought a generator after the last major power outage. Have you tried it or is it still in the box? Have you figured out how you would

power all the devices that you need - 'on'?

If your generator is on the small side, such that you can only power a couple of devices at once (e.g. furnace and toaster but not refrigerator, furnace, and toaster) then you will have to go with a heavy extension cable, plugging and unplugging as needed. See figure 1.

If you've installed a transfer switch (or had it installed professionally) then you can power your household more normally. See figure 2.

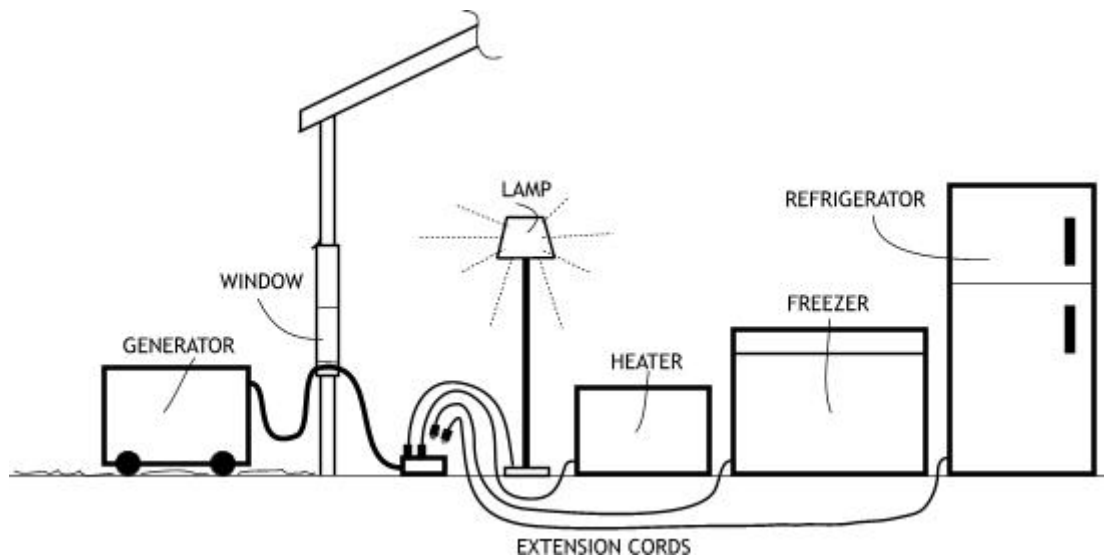


Fig. 1 Generator – plug-and-play method

Never run a generator in an enclosed space. The exhaust fumes can kill you! If you have it in your garage make sure you leave the overhead door open at least a foot or two for ventilation. To prevent theft, chain the generator to an eyebolt securely fastened to the building.

If you have a gas powered generator don't forget that gasoline does not last long in storage. Rotate it through your vehicle once a month. There are additives that you can use to extend the useful fuel life but long term storage is still not recommended. When not using your generator drain the fuel and run the

unit dry. Leaving old gasoline in your generator tank is a guarantee that you'll be in the dark when you least want it!

You can find more information on choosing and installing a generator, safety tips, and other stuff by looking at <http://ne.mara.net/generator/gen.pdf>

For further information on gasoline storage see http://www.chevron.com/products/prods/erv/fuels/bulletin/longterm_gasoline/

--- MARANE ---

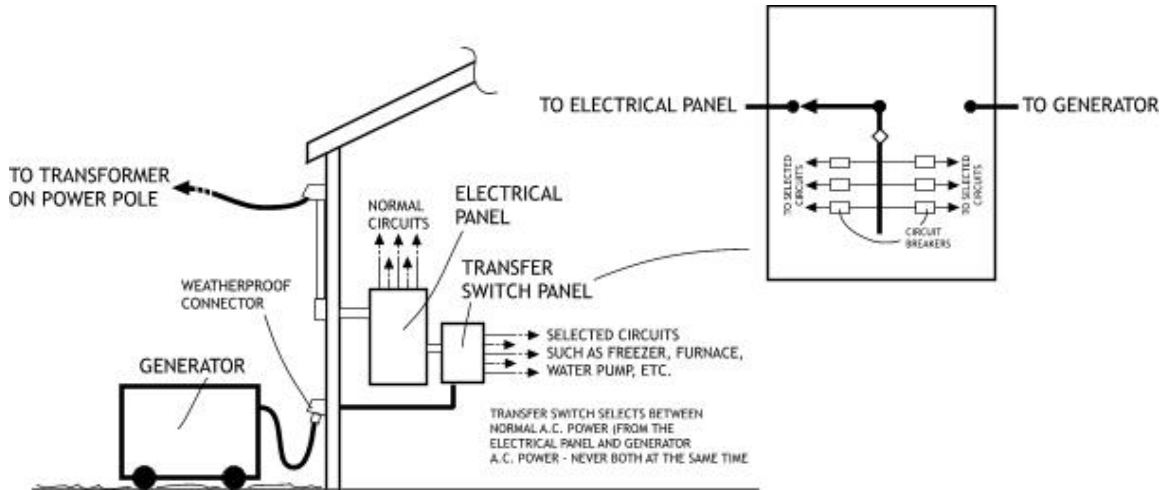


Fig. 2 Generator – transfer switch

A SECOND 72-HOUR KIT

What about a 72-hour radio kit? It could include your handheld and charger and spare battery packs. If your radio has a removable pack for alkalines, make sure you have enough extra batteries.

The short flexible antenna that comes with your handheld is better

than a dummy load - but not by much! Give some consideration to a ¼ wave whip with connector to fit your handheld or to a simple J-pole antenna made from 300 ohm twin lead with coax that you can elevate by throwing a line over a tree limb.

See figure 3 for the dimensions of a simple J-pole

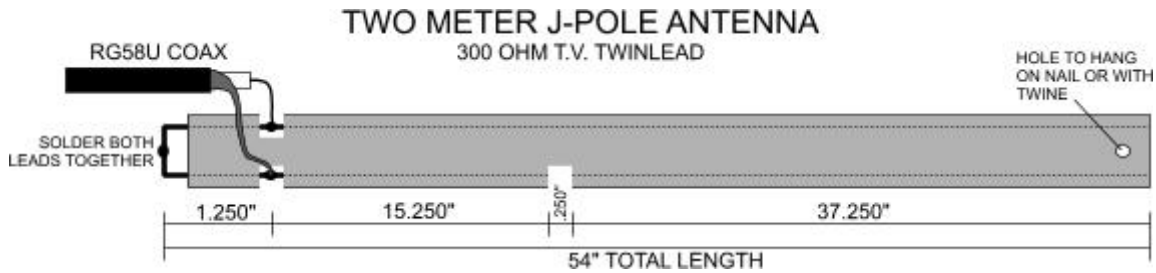


Fig. 3 Flexible easy-to-build antenna for 2 Meters

Directions to build the above J-pole are shown on WH2T's website at <http://www.bloomington.in.us/~wh2t/Jpole.htm>

Another site with directions for another portable antenna with more gain can be found at <http://home.comcast.net/~buck0/Field2m.htm>

If you have to go to a location with existing HF equipment, there is likely an antenna in place. If you are taking your own gear to another place such as a chapel or shelter, make up a dipole well in advance, with lightweight insulators and a 50-ft. length of RG58U coax with a PL-259 connector. Have another section (50 to 100-ft.) of RG58U with PL-259's on both ends and a female to female barrel connector (Amphenol p/n 83-1J) to join to the two coax sections together. Pack some small diameter rope in your kit to hang it up in the air. A slingshot and weights might be a good idea too.

Wait for a sale and get an inexpensive digital multi-meter. It might come in handy for checking

the voltage to your rig or determining if your coax is connected, shorted, or open.

Throw in a few twist-on wire connectors. They might come in useful if you don't have a soldering gun and your coax to antenna joint breaks.

Toss some electrical tape and a roll of the self-amalgamating tape (the stuff that sticks to itself) in your bag.

There is no end to the tools you could take with you but a lot can be replaced with one of the multi-tools made by Leatherman, Gerber, and others.

<http://www.leatherman.com/products/tools/default.asp>

http://www.gerberstore.com/index.php?page=catalog&category_id=multi

My favorite is the model #400 Compact Sport made by Gerber. It is small enough to carry on your belt without getting in the way, but still large enough to handle most jobs around the shack or house.



Fig. 4 – Multi-purpose tool by GERBER

The tools are contained on the inside of the handles making for rounded exterior (i.e. comfortable) edges. Priced around \$35.

And perhaps a LED flashlight would be a good thing. Not one that you can use to see a mile away but one with a reasonably wide beam for medium to close work. Buy one that uses standard AAA or AA batteries. Non-standard batteries are not as likely to be readily available in times of emergency. Prices range depending upon quality.



Fig. 5 – LED flash light made by COAST

Beg, borrow or buy an inexpensive back-pack to store it all in, and keep it somewhere where you can find it.

--- MARA NE ---

PRESIDENT'S BIOGRAPHY BARRY SMITH, N2PCT

I was born and raised in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. My childhood was generally a happy one. I fixed many worn out bicycles to get around the neighborhood in those days. I remember stuffing pages from a catalogue into bicycle tires to form a makeshift blowout patch. Poor? Well maybe in the eyes of some, but I did not know anything different as all of the area was the same.

I graduated from high school in 1965 and within a year I enlisted in the United States Coast Guard. For a country boy, that was a shock! After boot camp, I attended Engineman School in Groton, Connecticut. After that, my first (and only) duty station was the Coast Guard Cutter "Chilula" docked at Fort Macon, N.C., at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. I now realize that this assignment was one of the many times when the hand of the Lord guided my life.

This is a resort area and in November they "roll up the side walks" and board up everything. I was not one to carouse the low life establishments and severe boredom set in. I accepted an invitation go to an LDS church social. I liked the atmosphere and returned again and again. It was there that I met the wonderful young lady who would become my eternal companion. She is a fourth-generation member of the church.

The year 1968 was a life-altering year for me, with a wedding on March 1 and baptism on June 7. Five years later we were sealed in the Provo Temple. I've been active and busy in the church since my baptism.

I received an Honorable Discharge from the Coast Guard in 1970. Our little family, consisting of my wife, daughter, and myself, moved to north western New Jersey. I went to work as an auto and light truck technician in a Ford dealership in the little town of Washington, and after thirty-seven years I am still employed at the same place. Maybe one day I'll figure out how to fix 'em!

After thirty-nine years of marriage, we are the parents of four children, a daughter and three sons, and eight grandchildren.

One day at the shop, I brought in a customer's vehicle and noticed a "strange looking" communications unit under his dashboard. I inquired and that customer, Jack Warner, (WA2LDD) became my "Elmer". He recently became a "silent key" and is missed by many.

This sparked my interest in Amateur Radio, and in 1991 I earned my Technician class ticket. A year later I upgraded to General, and a year after that I moved up to Advanced Class. When I was practicing code for the General class ticket, my wife would see my body locking up with nervousness and pull me off "the key"!! I persevered and finally

passed the 13 wpm test. I have been active in our local radio club, R.A.C.E.S., and MARA since about 1994.

--- MARA NE ---

See you next month,

Dave
VE1VQ

**MARA NE SSB NET – 3.8725
MHz @ 0730 Eastern Time –
every Saturday morning**

**IN NEXT MONTH'S
NEWSLETTER...**

**The "Chapel Challenge"
Will you be ready...?**