

MERCURY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

MARA - NORTH AMERICA - NORTH EAST



FEBRUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER

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

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VIEW FROM THE TOP

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW

One of the things that truly fascinate me about amateur radio is that there is always something new to learn or do. And more often than not it is another ham that tells me something, or sends me something, which provides the impetus to try that something new. Yesterday was no exception. Tim (WA3BVD) who works for the same company I do, forwarded an email about the International Space Station. The message quoted below was, in good ham tradition, sent to him by another ham.

“A report from 9W2QC from Malaysia indicates the crossband repeater on ISS is currently active. It should stay operational until the unit must be shut down for the undocking operations of the

Progress 27 on Feb 4. Frequencies are 437.800 MHz uplink and 145.800 MHz downlink. Keep in mind the extreme Doppler on the uplink and it is highly recommended that you operate full duplex to see if you are making it through or interfering with another station unknowingly.”

So last night, off I went to see what I could do with this information. I have Ham Radio Deluxe which I can use to identify when the space based radios are in range for me, but have no other satellite specific equipment. I set up my YAESU 857D for split operation and was able to hear contacts being made from all over eastern North America. It appears I still have some learning to do in order to send to these space radios. But it kept me up into this morning to hear and attempt to make a call on the second, closer, pass.

That really is a big part of what amateur radio is to me; the community sharing ideas and information to make the hobby more enjoyable for all.

I hope you all have your calendars marked for the annual meeting this year in Cherry Hill, New Jersey in May. Watch the newsletter for details and a list of side activities available in the New Jersey/Eastern PA region. I am looking forward to seeing you again and meeting many of you of which I have not yet had the pleasure in person.

N3IA

REPORT

A VISIT TO THE STOREHOUSE ... By Bruce Wortmann, N3IA

Just after Thanksgiving last year, my wife and I took one of our trips to Utah to visit our son Adam, who, with his wife Ale,

had just presented us with a new grandson. This was to be an extraordinary trip, both for the things not done, and the things done. Our trips are customarily one week long and packed with activities from arrival to departure. There are the requisite visits to the Family History Library for genealogy work, my wife Cheri being the expert in such matters, and I wanted to watch the trains. However this trip brought some differences. It was the first since getting my Ham license, and so this time I brought my YAESU VX-6R to use on the trip. We were also staying for more than two weeks.

We were there to help with the new baby and had therefore not scheduled any activities. I had a former home teaching companion to catch up with and hoped to obtain a meeting with church emergency communications leadership. Dan Goodson (NE3Z) the ECS for the Washington D.C. storehouse had given me a contact there: Doug Reneer, who is the head of church emergency communications. I had several conversations with Doug, and though he was unable to meet with me, offered to have his assistant Ed Cole (KB7EC) give me a tour of the facilities. I had my choice of the showcase radio room on the upper floor of the Church Office Building on North Temple,

[I've visited the station in the Church Office Building, gone up on the roof to look at the antennas, and been invited to "climb to the top of the little penthouse to get a better view", but I declined (my palms were already sweating from being that high!) saying that the view was fine right from where I was already standing. – Editor]

or the working radio room in West Jordan. I selected the latter (no pun intended) as I was more interested in operation than show. I planned for a touring day to include the [Ogden Railroad Museum](#), the storehouse radio facilities, and the only ham store I could find in the valley.

As an aside, I should take a moment to give a brief explanation of the storehouse system. The primary storehouse is the Bishops' Central Storehouse (BCS) in West Jordan Utah. A BCS is a storehouse which

supplies other storehouses. The BCS in West Jordan also acts as a distribution point for humanitarian aid. There are only two BCS's east of the Mississippi River; they are Indianapolis IN, and outside Atlanta GA. Our storehouse in Washington D.C. is a major storehouse but not a BCS.

I made my way to an industrial area of West Jordan, to a warehouse not far from Redwood Road. The storehouse takes up a whole block, and more. I was impressed that they not only had their own truck scale for weighing commodities as they arrived, but had an impressive farm of beam, wire, and whip antennae on the roof. I met Ed at an east entry and we proceeded into the warehouse. There seemed to be endless rows of palletized supplies, each marked by type as Medical, Cleaning, Sanitary, etc. They somewhat reminded me of [the gravestones at Arlington](#), neatly positioned and spaced. We made our way across the storehouse for quite a distance, arriving at a non-descript door. Opening the door, Ed and I entered the room you see pictured below. There were four Tentec HF stations, the far one with a linear amplifier. Each has a rotor control for its own beam antenna. At the far desk are the VHF/UHF station and the satellite phone. On the far wall is an antenna patch panel for connecting the various antennae to the radio stations. This is the room which is really hopping during emergency operations.

The adjoining room is larger and is set up with a pair of cubicle style workspaces at one end, a large meeting table, and the remainder as an instruction/lecture area. This provides an area away from the radio chatter to work out schedules, logistics, and general planning. There we sat and discussed the storehouse system and emergency communications, much of which I have discussed on our Saturday morning net.

We discussed the place of MARA and the relationship with church ERC/ECS

which was a topic of concern at our last MARA-NE annual meeting. Ed indicated that there is no friction or contention between ERC and MARA as long as the understanding remains that church ERC is a calling and church operated system, and the MARA chapters are clubs of a social nature outside the church's "chain of command", whose members may have the common interest in emergency communications (EMCOMM) and the church, and may exchange information related to EMCOMM as it relates to the church. Since the purpose of my visit was instructional as the Philadelphia Stake ECS, we then discussed the importance of having Stake and Ward communications plans that are published as part of the unit emergency plan. We discussed ARES/RACES as it relates to LDS EMCOMM. The key point from this was the importance of having the relationship with these organizations, primarily ARES where they are operated separately, and clearly identifying that as a church ECS, my primary responsibility in an emergency would be to the church organization and secondarily to ARES/RACES to support their operations. We also talked about having 4 or 5 hazard scenarios applicable to our specific region of the country for the purposes of preparedness and practice drills.

Finally, we discussed the use of radio nets. He encouraged regular nets on the Stake, Storehouse, and Level 1 (L1) Storehouse levels. We are doing a monthly L1 storehouse net out of Washington D.C. under Dan Goodson's direction, and our local storehouse net weekly for the Bridgeport NJ storehouse, a satellite of Washington D.C. The Wilmington DE Stake has a weekly net for their stake following our storehouse net.

We concluded our meeting, and I went off to spend money in the common way hams do; at the ham store. I came away with a clearer understanding of the church's commitment to emergency

communications, and the use of amateur radio as part of that planning. This is one of the questions I hear frequently from priesthood leaders. What is the church's commitment to amateur radio as a tool for emergency communications? In our mass communications world, there are and will continue to be some who have difficulty picturing a situation where none of that is

operating. It is our commitment to be prepared to provide communications as called upon, and if appropriate to your calling, instruct church leaders in all the phases and methods of communicating with their members, and to the leaders to whom they report.

- N3IA



The operating room at the Salt Lake City (West Jordan) Bishop's Central Storehouse

TECH STUFF

CORRESPONDANCE - JANUARY 2008 MOBILE INSTALLATION ARTICLE

Stan, N3HS, e-mailed the following concerning the editor's comment about fusing both the positive and negative lines in a mobile installation.

Dave,

Fusing the Ground wire is somewhat controversial. I do not do it because the last time I did, that fuse blew for reasons I don't recall and the radio power was now grounded to the car via the shield on the antenna. Unless there is a

convenient way to break that ground path (as well as the one on radio mounting in some installations) the fuse on the ground wire can be a problem.

73 Stan, N3HS

The editor's comment comes from the days when I used to install mobile radios for a living. At that time, the negative line was connected to the radio chassis and the coaxial shield was grounded to the vehicle at the case and at the antenna mount. Mobile rigs may be wired differently today (I don't have anything on hand to test) and the negative line may not be connected to the case, or the case may be mounted so it is not grounded (sitting on or in a plastic console). A lot of us use magnetic mounts for antennas to avoid drilling holes and with those, the coax braid will not make a DC connection to the vehicle body.

Whichever way you choose, I think Stan and I both agree that you should carefully read the manual that comes with your radio, and follow the manufacturer's recommendations so that you get the safest and best results from your installation.

Dave, VE1VQ

UPDATE: MAY 2007 NEWSLETTER

A url was included in the May 2007 issue to download the program *L_TUNER.EXE*. That url no longer works. The program may now be downloaded or run from http://ne.mara.net/software/l_tuner.exe.

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE 2008 ANNUAL MEETING AT THE CHERRY HILL CHAPEL IN CHERRY HILL NJ.

INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED ON THE WEB SITE AND WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON THE REFLECTOR AS WELL AS ON HERE.

SWAP SHOP

BUY – SELL – TRADE - GIVE AWAY

YOUR AD HERE – NO CHARGE!

TUNER – I AM LOOKING FOR A KW VERSION OF THE JOHNSON VIKING MATCHBOX, A TENTEC 238 or A PALSTAR AT1500CV, IN GOOD CONDITION. E-MAIL ve1vq@eastlink.ca. I CAN PICK UP AT THE ANNUAL MARA MEETING IN MAY. – VE1VQ

-----MARA NE-----

DI-DAH-DI-DAH-DIT

When we are teenagers we have this idea that we have all the time in the world and can do anything we want. As we grow older we forget about this feeling of immortality, or we hide the reality in the far recesses of our minds. But every now and then, something happens that make us realize that our time on this earth is short.

A member of my branch, and a good friend of many years, recently found out that he has to have a kidney transplant in the very near future. As part of the test procedures leading up to this event, it was discovered that he has a heart problem and will require open heart surgery at some point. He will have to have a dye test to determine if his heart is able to withstand the kidney operation or if the heart surgery has to come first. The doctor informed him that the dye test will most likely destroy his last partially working kidney. He says that he isn't worried, that there are enough in his family to do that for him.

I had an e-mail from Ted, N4TW, telling me that Tom Althoff, K2TA, a member of the Middletown, NY Ward, was killed in a motorcycle accident on October 16, 2007. Tom was 54 years old. You can read the

newspaper report at
<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071016/NEWS/710160351>

Now, mentioning these two instances is not an attempt to persuade you to panic and to try and pack twenty-six hours of good works into the twenty-four we have allotted. As Elder Dallin H. Oakes, in his 2007 October [Conference talk](#), said, "The number of good things we can do far exceeds the time available to accomplish them." His talk was about the good choices we have, how some are good, some are better, and some are best, and that it is our responsibility to choose the best.

Obviously amateur radio activities should not be considered to be the "best" of "good, better, best" if it means stealing time from your spouse or children. On the other hand it may be "best" if conditions require emergency communications. Use some of your time to become prepared, and then to maintain your skills and equipment.

Give your spouse and children an extra hug this Valentines Day, and tell them that of all the good choices you've made in your lifetime – they are the "very best".

Until next month,
VE1VQ

-----MARA NE-----

[ARE YOU ON THE MARA-NE E-MAIL REFLECTOR?](#)

It's not just for MARA members!

Anyone who is an LDS amateur radio operator can sign up!