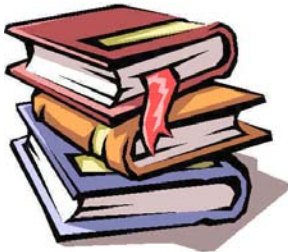


MERCURY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION

MARA - NORTH AMERICA - NORTH EAST



September 2007 Newsletter

You may be too old to be heading back to school this month, but you should never be too old to learn new stuff about radio - or any other subject. Consider it a wasted day if you don't learn *at least one thing* new!

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V.P.'S MESSAGE

Since I have no idea what the President's message is supposed to be about, and you all have seen fit to elect me Vice President; here goes.

Any organization with the expectation of advancing a viewpoint or activity must needs have guiding principals and statements giving inspiration and direction toward a common goal. Our association constitution describes this as "...to secure for ourselves the pleasures and benefits of an association of persons commonly interested in Amateur Radio and in providing emergency communications services to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints..." As members of the Church, we are all aware of the great stewardship which has been entrusted to us; "a watchman upon the tower" (D+C 101:53). We are probably the only priesthood

holders who actually get to use towers in our watchful duties.

In our association, we must always remember our place and our purpose. Some of us may, in the past, present, or future, serve or have served in church positions related to emergency communications. But our association is also based on the fellowship and camaraderie as amateur radio operators; enjoying the hobby and recreational liberation of communicating with others in our community and around the world. We enjoy each other and support each other in advancing our knowledge and skills to be prepared to be available for the Church or the community as the need arises. We are communicators. When we are serving the Church or another agency during an emergency, we are the pipe, not the reservoir. We are a knowledge resource to leaders in the church and community, and a help to others entering or growing in the amateur brotherhood.

Learn well thy part, and be faithful in service. We can only suppose what our purpose may be in the years to come; but we are preparing, and promise to be ready for whatever is to come.

73
Bruce, N3IA

CHAPEL CHALLENGE

Stan, N3HS, was the first to send in details on his operations from the Seneca MD Stake Center.



Notice the rakish antenna angle on N3HS's van

Here is my report on our communications exercise as I saw it from my end. I was somewhat disappointed with the participation. Maybe folks were getting ready for Field Day. It did show me things that are useful to know for our stake as follows:

1. Two Meters will not cut it without rather good antennas at this distance from the BCS.

2. HF communications worked well. Not surprising as AM type modes work better than FM in lower signal-to-noise environments.

Stan, N3HS

Date: 23 June 2007

Exercise: Two communications exercises were performed on June 23, 2007 to test the capability to communicate between Church facilities such as Church buildings (chapels/stake centers) and the Washington DC Bishops Storehouse. 80 Meter operations were conducted at 7:30 AM local Eastern time and 2 Meter operations at 8:00 AM.

Location: Seneca MD Stake Center, 18900 Kingsview Rd., Germantown, MD 20874

Radio: Yaesu FT-857D

Bands/Frequencies: 2 Meters 147.420 MHz FM 50 Watts
80 Meters 3872.5 KHz LSB 100 Watts

Antennas: 2 Meters dual band 2/440 mobile roof top antenna
80 Meters Ham Stick antenna mid level mounted on rear of van

Results – 80 M Good communications were obtained between the Stake Center and the storehouse as well as with other stations in the Eastern US and Canada. Seven stations participated.

Results – 2 M Unable to communicate with the storehouse. By moving to the peak of the hill on Clopper Road, we did acknowledge each other, but were otherwise unable to communicate.

Stations: N3HS, Stan Staten, Germantown, MD (Net Control)
N2PCT, Barry Smith, Phillipsburg, NJ
WB4FLM, Charles Bruington, Rocky Mount, VA
N3LXG, Ralph Miller, Bear Lake, PA
KB8TBF, Robert Wells, Friendly, WV
VA2PHI, Philippe Groux, Beloeil, QC
NE3Z, Dan Goodson, DC BCS

The following was received from Dan, NE3Z.

On July 1st at 9:00 pm (Eastern) we conducted an emergency communications test of the church in the Washington DC area. Several operators from area stakes participated in this monthly exercise to sharpen communications skills, verify equipment condition and reliability, and investigate new communications paths from their homes, church locations, and places of elevated terrain.

The Emergency Response Communications (ERC) net gave us new insights as we learned that we have the capability to communicate directly from the Wash DC storehouse to the Seneca stake.

No repeaters were used in this exercise. At least three operators were using emergency power sources.

Additional check-ins were by short wave using NVIS (near vertical incidence skywave) for those who have the equipment and license to operate in that frequency range.

The check in list by stake is as follows:

2 Meters

Annandale VA	W4RIM	(home)
McLean VA	NE3Z	(storehouse)
	KI4VUS	(stake center)
	KI4RS	(mobile Arlington Chpl)
	KI4UGG	(home)
Mt. Vernon VA	KI4UGB	(handi talki)
Seneca MD	KA3OUD	
Suitland MD	N3DIX	(home)
	KB3FNV	(home)
	KB3GYX	(mobile high spot)
Woodbridge, VA	KI4VUQ	

75 Meters

Annandale VA	W4RIM	(home)
Apex NC	NC4VA	(home)
Dartmouth NS	VE1VQ	(home)
Roanoke VA	WB4FLM	(home)
Suitland MD	N3DIX	(home)
Winchester VA	AG4SO	(home)

We were quite pleased to see the ease with which we can communicate with the Arlington building. The McLean stake center was marginal (even with the much better antenna) but the operator was only using 5 watts. Next month we plan on using a mobile unit there with 50 watts. Hearing the Seneca stake so loud was also a pleasant surprise. They had one of the strongest signals of the evening.

On NVIS, we deployed a 75 meter 'hamstick' dipole about 30 miles from the storehouse. The antenna worked fine for receiving but I was unable to hear it when it was used for transmitting to the storehouse. This setup has worked for other people so we may try it again sometime. The same station then switched to a dipole and his signal was quite strong.

We'd like to welcome Michael Barton or the Woodbridge stake. Michael was able to check into the net and has already upgraded to General. Way to go Michael!!!

Next month we hope to receive check-ins from the Annapolis, Ashburn, Centreville, Fredericksburg, and Washington DC stakes.

I'd like to thank Mark MacDonald (KC4KFW) who tried at least 2 antenna types during this test but was unable to contact us from the Oakton stake.

Several operators were out of town for the holidays so we hope to see several more in August.

I ask you to find the best location in your stake (if propagation has been difficult) and see if you can reach us from that point. If you're already able to contact the storehouse, consider trying from the various church buildings in your stake. I'm in the process of creating a list of these for

our reference. It's a good idea just to know what it takes to hit us from these locations.

My hope is that we all figure out what it takes to go from ward to stake and stake to storehouse (building wise and leadership wise). That gives us all something to do in our free time!

If you need extra man power, just let me know and we'll work to get some help from the area to assist you.

This is what we have so far as being able to hit from the storehouse on 2 meters:

McLean VA
Stake Center
Arlington Chapel
Mt Vernon VA
King Street Chapel
Stake Center
Oakton VA
Stake Center
Suitland MD
Stake Center
Woodbridge VA
Dale City Building
Prince William Building

So therefore, I encourage you to find out the best location to hit the storehouse from your stake boundaries and then see which buildings you can hit us from, and then perhaps if you can hit us from your leaders homes (a great incentive for them to get licensed).

We tested in my home stake of McLean and found that we could hit both of the stake presidency councilors, 5 bishops, 2 chapels, and the stake R.S. president from our stake president's home. This far exceeded our expectations.

You may wish to employ your people and find out what works in your Stake.

Recruiting is going forward. We're still anxious to build up the Suitland ward roster so as to faithfully cover the storehouse station and to check into the North America net weekly.

Now, what about an emergency plan? Many of you have been asking what our activation plan is going to be.

Let's start with **2 meters**:

147.420 Mhz
147.465 Alternate

HF frequencies

75 Meters - 3.878 Mhz after sunset

40 Meters - 7.280 Mhz after sunrise

Let's plan on being on the air at the following times from the top of the hour until 10 past. If you're able to power up on other hours, even better! I think the following schedule is a good start.

8:00 AM
10:00 AM
12:00 PM
4:00 PM
8:00 PM

Keep in mind our current staffing levels at the storehouse. There may or may not be someone there to man the station. Hopefully this won't be a problem by the end of fall.

Please let me know your ideas and/or comments on the schedule and frequencies. The HF frequencies mirror the North American ERC net frequencies.

Our next net is scheduled for the night of August 5th. See you then!

73
Dan NE3Z

IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE...

FIELD STRENGTH METER CIRCUITS

A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE PIECE OF TEST EQUIPMENT

BUILD ONE FOR YOURSELF!

Another e-mail from Dan, NE3Z on the 3rd of August, 2007

Hello,

We're a little thin this weekend as far as net control operators are concerned. Our primary NCO is on vacation and I'm on call for work this Sunday evening. Let's try to do this anyway! I'll hope they don't call me out for a trip.

So, I'll we'll be calling the net at 9:00 pm on 2 meters 147.420 (simplex). Lets go for the max number of stakes and total number of operators checked in.

Remember, the primary mission is to check your stake into the storehouse. Soooo, if you haven't had much success at this, try to scope out the best place in your stake (highest usually best) and give her a shot.

HF check-ins will begin at 9:30 pm but this month it will have to be on 40 meters as the 80 meter antenna is still under construction. So, plan on 7.280 Mhz LSB +/- QRM.

Testing in Alexandria is this next Saturday Aug 11th. Please encourage those you're working with to make it if they can. I hope to see a few new operators from each of the area stakes this month. Remember, anything alive is usually growing ;) I have two books and CD sets for those preparing for their general class test. I'll sell 'em or loan them out. (brand new)

Storehouse update:

We've been busy placing mounts for a new HF wire antenna. This one will be a linear loaded Cobra Senior. The antenna's up and I'm just waiting for MFJ to send me the current balun I ordered.

We've updated the antenna tuner to a Palstar AT1KM. This has to be the best upgrade we've done in a long time. Hands down, the nicest tuner I've ever had the opportunity of using. The Ameritron AT-30 it replaces was a good unit too! I've never enjoyed a manual tuner so much.

We've made tuning charts covering 40, 20, 17, 15, 12, & 10 meters combined with the

settings for the Ameritron AL-30 linear. Using these charts really speeds up things!

I've had so much fun using my car rig (Yaesu FT-867D) as the exciter for the last several weeks that I'm almost not looking forward to the Jupiter's return ;) The Ten Tec's a good rig though.

A couple of weeks ago we had the pleasure of meeting with the area communications specialist in Denver. We had a nice few hours together looking at the DC facility and comparing notes with the Aurora (Denver) facility.

They have grain Silos up to about 120'!! Sure wish we had one of those! In one of his stakes I believe he said they have something like 150 operators just in that one stake. Several net control operators and so forth. Sounds like a good operation!

I hope to work all of you on the air this Sunday evening. If you don't hear me, consider it a great time to do some quality work within your own stake. Maybe call CQ a few times :)

73

Dan NE3Z

Editor's note – there were only a very few of us on for August 5th. Come on folks; blow the dust off those microphones.

August 31st update from Dan, NE3Z

We're hoping that Paul Brown (Annandale) and Thomas Isaacson (Suitland) have their antennas up by now.

As far as the storehouse station is concerned, things are working well. We have full band capability from 160 to 70 cm at the moment. The Cobra antenna suggested by Terry Thomas (McLean) has been a real hit so far. . .

We have two new operators in the Suitland Stake: Cori Countess KB3POI and Willie Williams KB3PQQ . . . Congratulations gentlemen! We look forward to hearing you soon on the air.

In the McLean Stake, Alan Schlank (W7TRI) has a very nice ICOM IC-271H (100W) 2 meter rig set up! We're looking forward to hearing that one!

There's a possibility that we may have a 70 cm repeater in the near future in the Kensington MD area for church use. . Stay posted.

The North American ERC net held on Tuesdays has been well attended by the DC storehouse. It's not unusual for our station to relay many others into the Utah net control.

Included is an updated Wash area ERC roster. Keep us updated as to any new operators in your stake. You'll notice that this one has phone numbers on it. After asking last month, no one objected to this so here's the whole enchilada. I hope it encourages more communications activity as you try point to point testing.

Let's see how many check ins we can get from each stake this month!!!

All the best!

Dan, NE3Z



Antenna connection on N3HS's van

DI-DAH-DI-DAH-DIT

As amateur radio operators, did we stop learning about radio stuff as soon as we passed the license exam?

Do we skip the technical articles in QST and CQ magazines, only reading the contest results pages to see if our name made the list? Do our eyes glaze over and our breathing slow down when our eyes fall on basic Ohm's Law or antenna resonance formulas by mistake?

Do we blame it on old age? Don't think we have to any more?

According to William Glasser, an American psychiatrist born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1925, we learn in the following manner –

10% of what we **READ**

20% of what we **HEAR**

30% of what we **SEE**

50% of what we **SEE** and **HEAR**

70% of what is **DISCUSSED** with **OTHERS**

80% of what is **EXPERIENCED PERSONALLY**

95% of what we **TEACH TO SOMEONE ELSE**

Take notice where the maximum amount of learning occurs.

If you are at all interested in teaching, check out your local community college and see if they need part time/evening instructors for something of which you have some knowledge or skills. Or see if your local club has a mentor program where you can help out.

Even if you don't want to teach anyone, look how much you can learn by experimenting on your own.

It really isn't that hard to learn something new. Try it, you might like it!

Until next month,

Dave, VE1VQ

ARE YOU ON THE MARA-NE E-MAIL REFLECTOR?

It's not just for MARA Northeast members!

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

<http://ne.mara.net/reflector.htm>



YOUR QSL CARD COULD BE UP IN LIGHTS!

How about scanning your QSL card and sending us a copy?