NorWesCo's Wes Jones and Burnett County Emergency Management Director Bobbi Sichta. *Staff Photo by Jodi McLain.*

Volunteer watchdogs

•Amateur radio group makes progress possible in the face of danger.

By JODI McLAIN
Sentinel Reporter

SIREN—It's a little known fact that the National Weather Service relies on amateurs to do their work for them.

It's true. The Federal Communications Commission (the FCC) gives out licenses to certain radio frequencies only to a tightly linked group of amateur radio operators that provide vital services for our safety.

The operators are called RACES, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, and in this area the group is called NorWesCo. While NorWesCo does everything from open the county's emergency center to maintain radio towers, the group also makes sure somebody's watching our night skies.

In the event of suspicious weather, the Weather Service will call on the operators to emerge from bed at dreadful hours to peak at pesky clouds. One amateur operator manning the radio at the Weather Service office keeps in contact with the amateurs outdoors, and the result is often what you see on TV news emergency updates.

Volunteer watchdogs

"We're the eye for the National Weather Service," said the head of NorWesCo, Wes Jones. "We're all over the place. ... In many cases we operate out of their own homes."

It's called Sky Warn, and it's one of the training elements NorWesCo can provide for area residents. Many sleeping heads in the county and in surrounding counties are trained for the work and get called out sometimes twice a night. With the radios in their home, they don't have to go far to communicate back to Weather Service headquarters, but sometimes there's a gap where no trained eyes reside.

"If there's a gap, I'll send somebody out there," Jones said. The radio operators can tell the service what's happening. "They (the NWS) can not only see radar, they can also hear these reports coming in."

Burnett County Emergency Management Director Bobbi Sichta finds the service important.

"It's like those pictures you see of the crazed tornado watchers," she joked with Jones in her office. "It's essential. ... Without them we would be in bad shape."

Among the group's many other duties, weather watching is likely the most valuable service to the citizens of Burnett County.

"It's probably the most realistic thing we do," she said.

The need for a tower

National Weather Service warnings are broadcast on the weather radio channel. But that channel doesn't always come in clear in this area. The reason is the gap that exists in tower coverage. Look at the map on page 9. A wide area spanning from Burnett County to Sawyer County north and south isn't covered by a tower.

An already-existing State Patrol tower in Spooner only needs to be equipped with an "inexpensive" antennae to make coverage in this area a whole lot better. The Wisconsin state budget was supposed to provide for the money for it next year.

"It's dead at this point," Jones said.

The low population of this part of Wisconsin keeps the antennae off the top of Gov. Thompson's list.

"If we had that tower in Spooner, .. that means a lot of our citizens could get those Radio Shack $29, $39 radios and have the warnings in their own homes," Sichta said.

She's sent letters to state representatives and to other counties, asking for their support. Most counties are already covered by such a tower. "Our citizens need that same support."

According to Jones, the Spooner tower is "an ideal site."

'Tremendous' coverage helps with NorWesCo's work

"We're still waiting for our first emergency," Jones said of his organization's role in the county.

RACES was originally set up to work with government units for emergency purposes. In Burnett County, emergency scenarios are run from the emergency operations center, a lower-level room in the government center building that was recently created to deal with potential Y2K crises. The room will remain operational.

Norwesco/Page 9

Continued from 8

NorWesCo group members have agreed to be the county's communications outlet, should all other means of communication fail. All traditional emergency departments (the Sheriff's department, EMTs and fire departments) are issued their own FCC frequencies. But NorWesCo's are different.

"We have a very wide range of frequencies," Jones said. They use UHF, VHF and HF, and can "jump around" as they need to.

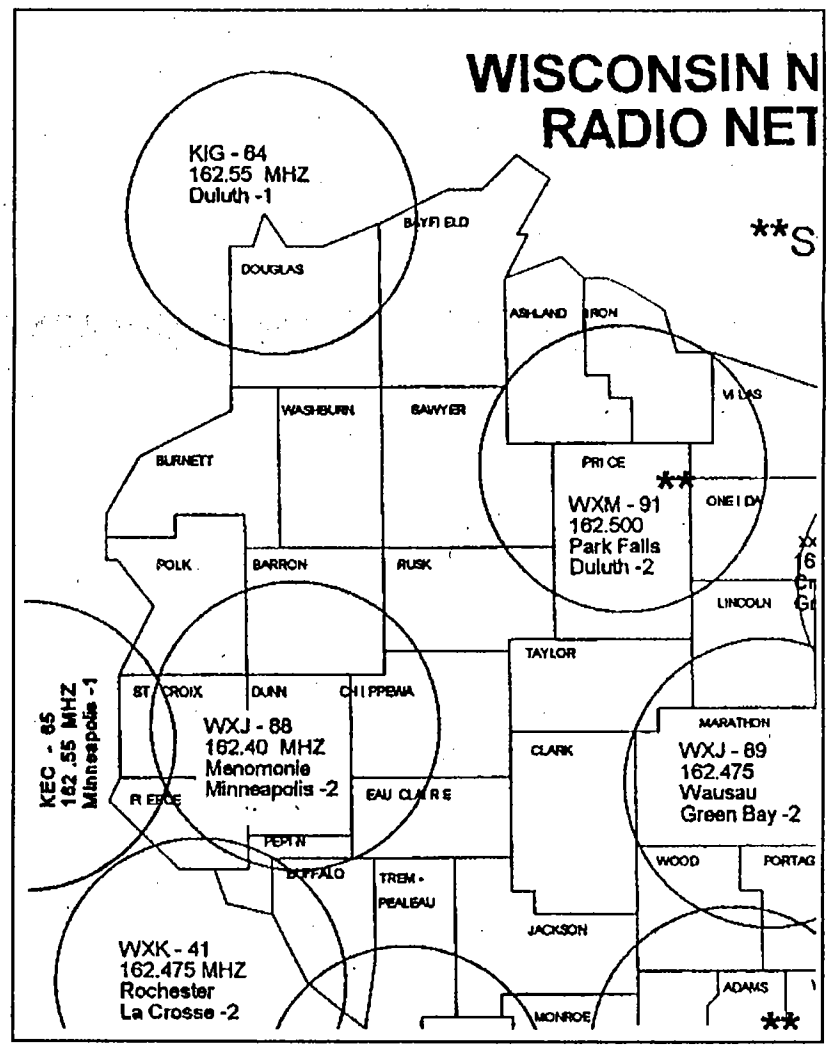
Their ability to help the county was immediately evident to Sichta when Jones approached her in 1993. At that time Sichta was acting as the emergency management director for both Washburn and Burnett Counties. He went to her in Shell Lake.

"He has the interest, we had the need," Sichta said. Jones became interested in radio after working for years as a wildlife biologist. He often used the equipment during refuge management projects.

"After I retired I decided to get into this a little bit — and now it's a lot," Jones said.

Initially, six people wanted to participate. They were trained and took "the hardest test I've ever taken," said Sichta, now an amateur radio operator.

What happens during an emergency is this: (Hypothetically; No awesome county emergencies have ever occurred) Someone alerts Sichta that there's been a tornado, or a massive fire or a flood. She contacts the radio group, which immediately opens the EOC. Then emergency workers would filter in. They would use traditional communications, the phone and the police radios, if possible. But if impossible due to storm activity or destruction, NorWesCo operators would go on the air ... and get the word out.



This map shows the gap in tower coverage for the Burnett County/ Washburn County area. NorWesCo wants a tower in Spooner. It's chances are threatened on the state budget.

Other necessary government agencies would know via radio if Burnett County needed National Guard relief, the Red Cross or police. If there was a forest fire, radio operators would send word to firefighters.

With towers spread across the state, radio operators can contact Madison officials, workers in Duluth, Hayward, over to Minnesota Interstate Highway 35 and down to New Richmond. The four towers doing their work in the area are at Penta Hill near Siren, Timberland, Crystal in Washburn County and at Lampson, north of Trego. Repeaters on each tower amplify the signals sent out by NorWesCo operators and sends them out again.

"We have tremendous coverage," Jones said of emergency operation. "We're in the process of combining three of those (repeaters), so they all function simultaneously," he said.

But if you're picturing radio operators sitting in cozy chairs, think again. NorWesCo workers also do something called "shadowing."

If sheriff's department officers or firefighters get tied up in an emergency, the operators can assist. By shadowing workers, the operators can act as extra hands, the radio carriers who call back to headquarters to coordinate transportation, communication and the bringing of extra supplies.

"I think it will save time," Jones said.

“We have tremendous coverage,” Jones said of emergency operation. “We’re in the process of combining three of those (repeaters), so they all function simultaneously.”

Professionals on volunteer time

The FCC grants amateur radio operators their licenses based on a condition: they can't earn money doing it. That means all NorWesCo's dedicated people are volunteers. They haven't only agreed to be there *whenever* Sichta needs them in the center, they not only get called out at un-godly hours of the night to check on tornada weather, but they also check the county's tower antennas, their batteries, and make sure routine paperwork is done.

Why?

"I'm crazy, I guess," Jones said.

But his insanity is something Sichta appreciates. She knew she had a challenge ahead of her — the work needed to be done, but with what money? Whose time?

NorWesCo came to the rescue.

"This is something that has really evolved since it started," Sichta said. She got her system up and running on very little money.

"These guys have really fulfilled a need," she said. "I can't say enough about them. They've filled gaps here I didn't know how to fill."

After reading this, hopefully you feel a little fulfilled too. In bad weather, in the face of danger we don't know is staring at us through the night sky, there's someone watching.

We ought to be thankful.

WAUPACA COUNTY POST MAY 2, 2002

Storm spotters prepare for tornado season

By ROBERT CLOUD
Post Editor

When the clouds are thick and ominous, most people head for cover.

But a handful of local volunteers can be seen parked out by open fields where they hope to spot the storms as they come into Waupaca County.

Local storm spotters spent last Thursday evening preparing for Wisconsin's approaching tornado season.

Members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) donated a ham radio to the Waupaca County Communications Center and received training from Richard Mamrosh with the National Weather Service in Green Bay.

Storm spotters are activated whenever severe weather is expected or already occurring. In Waupaca County, there are 15 certified weather spotters working with the National Weather Service and Waupaca County Emergency Management.

Mamrosh said Wisconsin is hit by approximately 20 tornadoes each year. Most occur in June and July, although two tornadoes were sighted in south-central Wisconsin in early April.

In 2001, the National Weather Service issued 130 severe weather warnings. The worst storm damage occurred during the June 11 winds, which reached speeds in excess of 75 mph, and during the June 18 tornado that hit Siren, Wis.

"Doppler radar pretty much assures that we can give at least a 10- to 15-minute warning if a tornado is going to hit in our area," Mamrosh said. "But it's impossible to see a tornado on the radar. What we can see is the rotation in the thunderstorm. Doppler radar indicates what might be happening, the spotters act as our eyes and tell us what is happening on the ground."

The Doppler radar bubble, located near the Green Bay airport, provides information that can be analyzed by staff at the National Weather Service. Information provided by spotters is key to recognizing whether or not a storm cell has developed into a tornado.

Thursday's presentation included extensive training in how to identify the type of storm clouds that are most likely to drop tornadoes.

The most severe storms come from "supercells," which have an intense, rotating updraft. These storm clouds have an anvil shape with a hard, crisp edge on the main storm-cloud tower, a rain-free base and a wall cloud following the tower. A pattern of striations on the wall cloud usually indicates that it is rotating.

Hail is also associated with tornado weather. If the hail is larger than a golf ball, that indicates the possibility of a tornado.

Mamrosh described the life cycle of a tornado. He said the funnel comes out of the wall cloud and becomes visible as it approaches the ground and begins picking up dust, debris or water from a lake or stream.

Just before a tornado dissipates, it becomes very slender and, like a loose garden hose spraying water, the tornado's path becomes erratic.

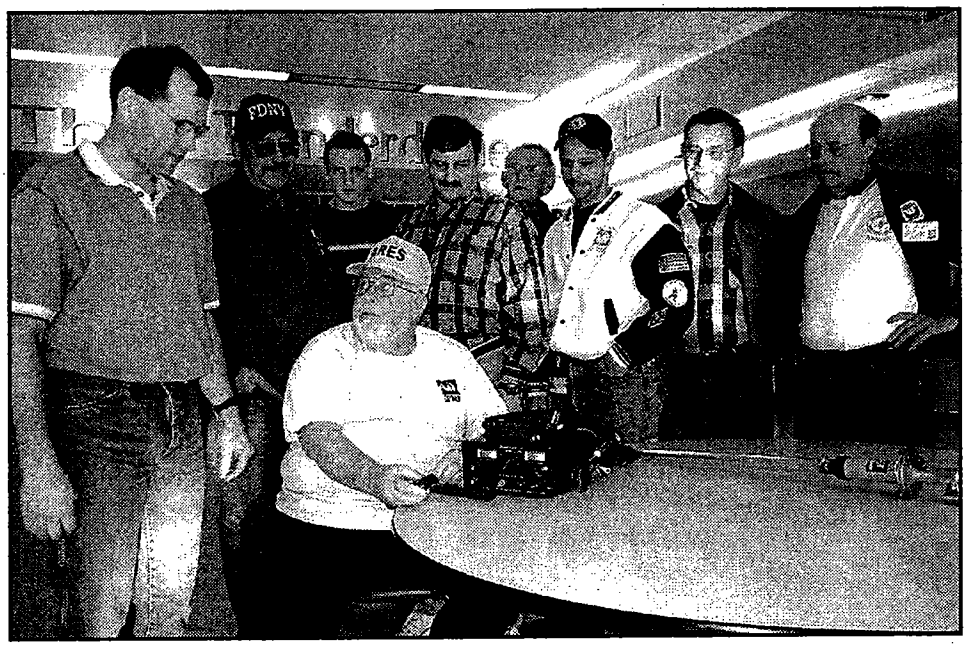
"That's why a tornado will bounce around and hit some houses, while missing others right next door," Mamrosh said.

Mamrosh also explained the safest way for spotters to watch a storm as it approaches. He told the storm spotters that they should try to be to the south of the storm because they are out of the way and their view is less likely to be obscured by the rain.

During a severe storm, a car is the safest place to be because it can protect the occupants from large hail stones and from lightning strikes.

"If you find yourself directly in the path of a tornado, it's best to get out of the car and into a ditch," Mamrosh said.

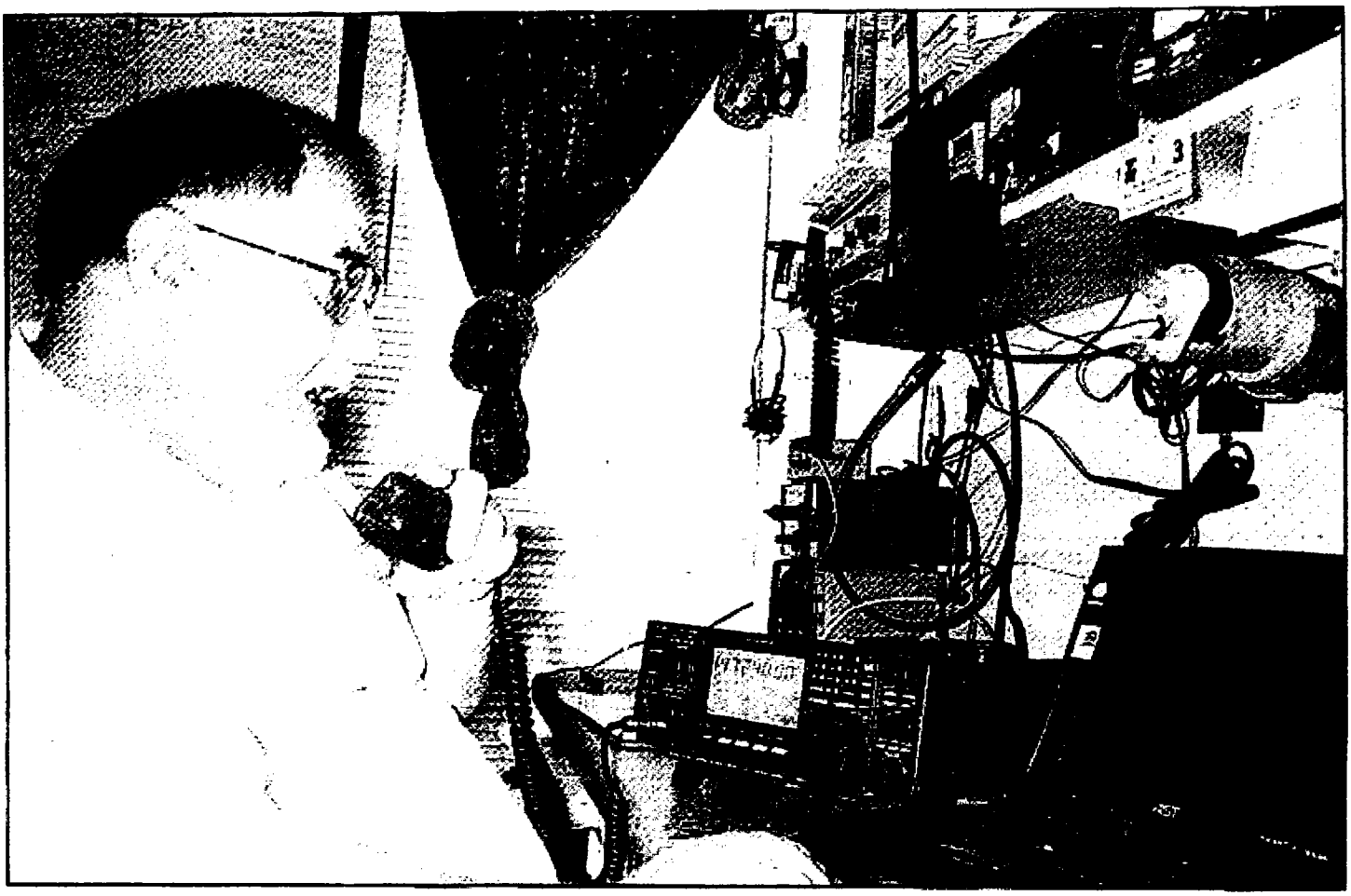
Mamrosh discouraged what he called "storm chasing," those who follow storms, hoping to see a tornado. He noted that storm chasers in Kansas and Oklahoma have caused traffic jams and accidents while fleeing a tornado.



COMMUNICATIONS

Members of Waupaca County ARES donated a dual-band ham radio and power supply to the county's communications center in order to assist with storm spotting and emergency management. Shown, from left, are Andrew Carlin, the county emergency management director, Derek Faehling, Larry Faehling, Sgt. Gary Heschke of the Waupaca County Sheriff's Department-Communications, Tom Meronek, Curtis Weed, Kurt Bruehl, Dave Chroninger. Dan Williams is seated.

[From the Waupaca County Post, Vol. 159, No. 32, Thursday, 6 September 2001, page 1]



Post Photo by R. Cloud

ON THE AIR
Ham operator Dan Williams will be on hand with other members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service team during Trucker's Pride on the weekend of Sept. 14-16. ARES will be monitoring the parade and providing weather updates and ground communications during the event.

Volunteers `ham' it up during emergencies

By Robert Cloud, Post Editor

When the Trucker's Pride parades wind their way through the area on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14 and 15, Dan Williams will follow the parade and know its exact location every minute. Without leaving his station-at the Baymont Inn & Suites.

A member of Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES), Williams will be tracking the parade on his computer. A transceiver, located in the truck of the grand marshal and queen, will be sending Williams a position signal.

Besides tracking the parade, members of ARES will be providing on-the-grounds communications for Trucker's Pride, updates from the National Weather Service in Green Bay, and demonstrating the equipment in their Remote Operating Center during the show.

"Working at events like Trucker's Pride or the triathlon gives us an opportunity to work together as a team and teaches us how to function better in case of a disaster," Williams said.

Williams is the Waupaca County ARES emergency coordinator. If the weather turns ugly, Williams works with SkyWarn to monitor storm fronts and sight possible tornadoes. If disaster strikes, his ham radio may be the only way to communicate outside of a stricken area.

"When the June storm hit, the devastation out here was extreme," said Williams, who lives south of Waupaca County near Saxeville. "We lost power for 4 1/2 days."

With batteries and generators, Williams was able to operate his radio equipment and maintain contact with emergency officials in Waushara and Outagamie counties. He worked with the weather service and the Red Cross, providing information about the extent of the storm damage.

According to Stanley Kaplan, the chief radio operator for Wisconsin Emergency Management's radio communications, there are 11,000 ham radio operators in the state. About 1,300 of the hams participate in ARES.

Kaplan noted that cell phones and telephone lines may be brought down during a disaster, and even public radio systems may not be operational if a transmitter site or antenna system is knocked out of service.

"When other channels are down, amateur radio can provide the only possible link until normal channels are restored," Kaplan said. "Their ability to get a message through under bad conditions is much higher than with any other service."

To become a member of ARES, Williams first had to become a licensed amateur radio operator. The licenses are issued by the Federal Communications Commission. To obtain a license, a ham must first pass a test.

"There are only 35 questions on the written exam," Williams said. From his bookshelf, he pulls a manual filled with dense technical data and legal information regarding radio communications. "But you don't know the questions in advance, so you better know everything in this book." A retired truck owner and operator, Williams obtained his amateur 'radio license in 1999.

"I wanted to be a ham, since I was 16. But I drove a semi and was gone about three weeks. a month;" Williams said.

"Then my grand-nephew told me he was interested in ham radio, but didn't have the 10 bucks to buy the tech book needed to pass the test. I about broke my arm getting him that book. He took the exam and passed it. Then he told 'me, "'Now, you have to take the test."'

Williams said he spends at least one hour a day on his radio. Nearly every morning at 8 a.m. he talks with Lloyd Lear, a 92-year-old man living in King, along with several other hams.

Williams places a call to one of his many ham radio friends, Dan Lintz in Oshkosh.

Lintz has been. a ham since 1990. Previously, he was an operator for the Military Affiliated Radio System during Desert Storm.

Lintz is also an ARES coordinator.

"The June 11 storm wiped out communications. Cell phones failed, phones failed. We were providing real-time weather reports in Winnebago County, and communications for Red Cross and the Salvation Army," Lintz said.

Then Williams places a call to Kathleen Zietlow of Neenah. She has been a ham since 1995.

"Just throw your call sign out and you can meet some nice friends over the radio," Zietlow said, who spends up to 45 minutes a day, on her radio in, the morning, while her husband operates it in the evening.

"I talk to Lloyd in the morning and my husband and father-in-law talk every night. We've talked to people as far away as Illinois," Zietlow said. "The other morning I found out there's a ham just a mile away from me."

While Williams takes a great deal of pleasure in his hobby, he also takes pride in his volunteer efforts as a member of ARES.

Williams noted that during the recent triathlon in Waupaca, one of the ARES operators stationed at a checkpoint along the event's route spotted an accident. A cyclist fell from his bike. and injured his hand.

Martha Schmeichel, who was at the checkpoint, called the accident in to Williams, who relayed the message to another ARES member stationed at the medical-aid tent. Emergency medical personnel were able to respond to the accident minutes after it happened.

"ARES is one of those things you can do to give back to the community," Williams said.

Several county agencies involved in hazmat exercise

Amateur Radio Emergency Services also set up

Twenty-one agencies and 101 people participated in a full-scale hazardous materials (hazmat) exercise from 10 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Thursday in Port Edwards near Vulcan Chemicals.

Steve Kreuser, Wood County Emergency Management director, said the exercise involved a simulated accident between a semi-tanker truck and a minibus, and included a chemical leak.

"Things went very well," Kreuser said. "There were a few problems. The Port Edwards police and fire departments threw in a couple of extra scenarios."

Ten people went through a simulated transport to Riverview Hospital, Kreuser said. The exercise began with a call to the Wood County Sheriff's Department dispatch center, which paged out the Port Edwards Fire Department.

After arriving on the scene, the fire department called for assistance from the Nekoosa Ambulance Service, which in turn asked for help from the Wisconsin Rapids and Higgins ambulance services.

The Amateur Radio Emergency Services volunteers set up at the staging area, the shelter, the American Red Cross office, Riverview Hospital, Vulcan Chemicals and at the incident command post. The level B hazmat team in Marshfield was contacted, but didn't have to respond.

A critique of the exercise will be conducted at 1:15 p.m. Thursday at the Port Edwards Fire Department.

Other agencies that participated in the exercise include Wood County Coroner's office, County Board Chairman Charles Gurtler, Wood County Communications, Salvation Army, Nekoosa Police Department, Lamers' Bus Lines and Wood County Rescue.

VERNESSA RICHARDSON / VRICHARDSON@JOURNALSENTINEL.COM

Gary Bagholz of Brown Deer participates in Fields Days of the Ozaukee Radio Club, a test of the ham radio operators' abilities to set up and operate in the field under emergency conditions such as power failures. The event was held at Lazy Days campground near West Bend. Bagholz has been a member for 10 years.

Ham radio users step in for safety

Field Day event tests ability to rally during community emergency

By JIM CRYNS
Special to the Journal Sentinel

Not everyone has a hobby that also saves lives, but that's what draws members of the Ozaukee Radio Club and hundreds of thousands of fellow radio operators around the world out for event like last weekend's Field Day.

Held at the Lazy Days campground near West Bend, members of the Ozaukee Radio Club honed their emergency preparedness and communications skills.

They hoisted antennas and sent out their call signs in hopes of reaching other operators doing the same.

To alleviate any confusion, ham is not an acronym. The theories of origin of the term are almost as numerous as the 700,000 operators nationwide.

Much like a boxer, when ham operators aren't in the "ring," they are busy training — and that's the reason for the Field Day.

Ham operators have become skilled in sending vitally needed information to facilities such as the National Weather Service during severe weather incidents.

They've been trained to communicate with police, firefighters and other first responders who do not use ham radio conventions during their normal work day.

"It is a hobby in the sense that all radio amateurs are strictly hobbyists since they can't charge for their service," says Stan Kaplan, the Wisconsin section emergency coordinator.

"It's also a vital service whenever there is an emergency. Throughout modern history, whenever there has been any kind of a disaster, it's always the ham operators that are first with communications in a particular area."

Ham radio operators work for the Wisconsin Emergency Management, Kaplan said.

"We supply emergency information to governmental infrastructure. It's purely voluntary, we cannot be paid as that would be against federal law. Society at large doesn't even know about us. The guy on the street wouldn't have any idea."

Kaplan says since Sept. 11, he's witnessed an attempt to incorporate volunteers into public safety. "We're seeing a rapid transition now," Kaplan said, "more acceptability of hams. "That's because police, fire departments, EMS, realize that in big disasters, they can't do it by themselves, there's just not enough equipment or manpower."

Leon Rediske is the vice president of the Ozaukee Radio Club and obtained his ham license almost 50 years ago.

"Once a month we have training for all sorts of potential accidents," Rediske said. "We train for gas leaks, hazardous materials, we train on rescue boats."

Rediske says some ham operators are trained as weather spotters.

"In the field, they will look for heavy rain, winds, funnel clouds," Rediske said. "They will report that information to a ham operator who works with the National Weather Service in Sullivan."

The ubiquitous web of radio security goes beyond dry land.

Jon Gilmore is the emergency coordinator for the Ozaukee Amateur Radio Emergency Service.

"When you call the Coast Guard, guess who responds," Gilmore asks? "A bunch of us hams that are out there on the rescue boats. A lot of the captains and crews on Coast Guard ships are ham operators. There are ham operators everywhere."

Gilmore says his emergency service has agreements with the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

"If there is a disaster, we'll be there. All the communications surrounding 9-11 were hams," Gilmore said. "All other forms of communication were out."

"If the communications goes down at St. Mary's Hospital in Ozaukee County, we've been trained to go in," Gilmore said. "We have an antenna there. We have direct communications with the Flight For Life. We can communicate with any emergency service."

"It varies how law enforcement perceives us," Kaplan said. "In Ozaukee County, they view us as an arm of emergency management. We are attached permanently to emergency management by common consent. We've had a good working relationship."

Kaplan says the ham radio operators aren't making the decisions at disaster sites, it's the law enforcement, or the shelter manager that dictates procedures.

"Hams are mostly conduits of information," Kaplan said.

RADIO DAYS

Ham radio club is on front lines in an emergency

By Don Kreger
News Graphic Correspondent

When the World Trade Center collapsed on 9/11, the public safety radio towers on the building were destroyed as well.

As a result, amateur radio operators (called hams) were placed with most of the commanders on the scene so that messages could be exchanged between the police, fire and other emergency workers.

Hams also handled the "health and welfare" messages that flooded in from anxious relatives, friends and colleagues of those who worked in the building.

Here in Ozaukee, there is a diverse and well-organized structure in place for emergencies where hams are able to cross-connect with groups not normally part of the public safety system.

These include the Red Cross, Salvation Army and emergency shelters that have been set up in locations such as churches and schools. Hams are prepared to direct traffic, close off unsafe roads, report downed wires, flooded streets and other dangerous areas.

Members of the Ozaukee Radio Club (ORC) have been trained to re-establish vital communication links during the loss of commercial electrical power, floods, fire, tornadoes, motorist accidents, chemical spills and other events.

"About four years ago," recalls ORC member Dave Barrow, "a rain cloud sat on Port Washington and the flooding was pretty bad. We were busy issuing sandbags, checking roads and answering phones in emergency management."

"Phone systems can crash with overuse in emergency situations," he adds, "but there's no such thing as an overload in amateur radio."

Barrow also noted that the ORC has some equipment stored at the Columbia St. Mary's Hospital Ozaukee campus. "If their communications should go out," he said, "we can come in and talk with other hospitals to get supplies or additional medical personnel. Some antennas are permanently installed and we can bring in more if needed."

The ORC was founded in 1939 and has a current membership of more than 100, primarily from the Grafton-Cedarburg-Mequon area. The club includes working people, retirees, students and a few teenagers, whom Barrow characterizes as "really a spark, a lot of fun."

The group meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Grafton Senior Center. It has a program that could cover anything concerned with any facet of communication.

There are three classes of ham licenses, the most popular of which is the technician class. This requires applicants to pass an exam of 35 multiple-choice questions.

The requirement of some degree of expertise in Morse code for hams has been diminished and voice communication is now the norm.

"Most of us learn just enough of it to get through the exam," Barrow said, "and then we start learning what it's all about. We have classes at least once a year to teach people what they need to know in order to get a license."

In addition to regular monthly meetings, the ORC is very much involved in community activities. It provides communications for such non-profit events as the Grafton Christmas Parade, Port Washington Fish Days and the Veterans Fish Outing.

The club also offers a $1,000 annual scholarship to a high school senior or college student who is a licensed amateur and resides in Wisconsin.

"Right now," Barrow said, "we're working with the teachers at Grafton's John Long Middle School and NASA to schedule a conversation with the astronauts on a spring, 2004 space shuttle mission. Most of the astronauts are licensed as amateur radio operators."

The basic equipment for a ham consists of a transmitter, receiver, antenna and power source. Equipment can be purchased at an electronics or amateur electrical supply store as well as on the Internet.

"You can buy a new handy talkie for under $100," Barrow said, "and that is essentially all you need to communicate. I had my handy talkie clipped to the sun visor of my car, one wire running to the cigarette lighter for power and the other wire running out the window to the magnetic antenna on the roof."

"There are some people who like to work with less than five watts of power," he continued, "and depending on the atmosphere, they can talk to Japan, England or South America."

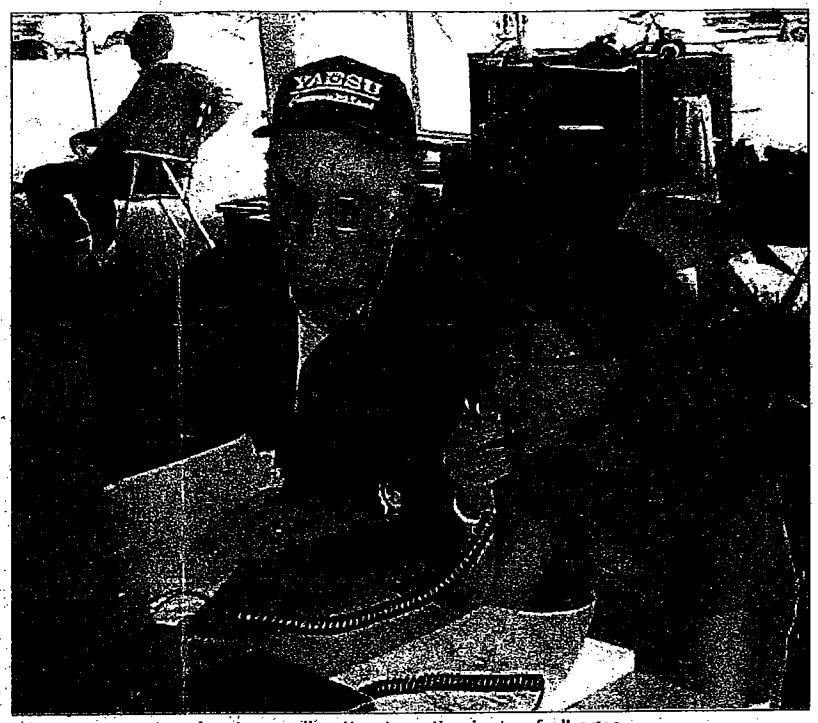
There are plenty of other amateurs to talk with. According to the American Radio Relay League, which is the national association for amateur radio, there are almost 700,000 hams in the United States and more than 2.5 million worldwide.

But to Dave Barrow, talking with the international community is not the best part of being a ham.

"I think it's the friendship as much as anything else," he said. "Getting together with a very diverse group of people whose common point is that they like to communicate. It's just a neat group of folks. And as you get to know them better, you find out more about their interests.

"It's a wonderful group of human beings," he continued, "and you get enjoyment from seeing them. There's so much you can learn from each person and they can learn from you too."

For more information, visit their Web site at www.qsl.net/



Amateur radio attracts enthusiasts of all ages.


One of the biggest events of the year for the Ozaukee Radio Club is Field Day, its emergency preparedness event, held in West Bend. Tents, antennas, radios and generators are set up on the grounds and the ham radio operators work on communication techniques.

Adams County Times & Friendship Reporter
Wednesday, October 27, 1999 Section A Page 14

Amateur Radio Group holds simulated emergency drill

On Saturday, Oct. 16, members of the Adams County ARRL (American Radio Relay League) ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) took part in a simulated emergency test (SET) with the cooperation of Mary Gruber, Emergency Management Coordinator, and David Ziarnik, System Engineer for Adams-Columbia Electric Co-op. The test was a simulation of a Y2K power outage as we go into the year 2000. ARES provides secondary communications in the time of a disaster or when needed.

Participants for this exercise were at the Adams County Memorial Hospital, A-C Electric Co-op, Adams Fire Department and at the high school. The Emergency Operations Center was located in the courthouse parking lot. Those taking part in the exercise were: Mary Gruber, David Ziarnik, Tom Davis - W9EIL, Arlene Cardo-KB9JRE, Kathy Sumiec-N9SYX, Frank Burg-N9YVM, Sue Selbo-N9XIX, Ed Wagner-WA9SZH, Marge Edwards-N9UDV, Jim Edwards-N9UOO, Art Kratz-N9TD and Bette Kratz-KF9ZU. An emergency communications trailer equipped with radio and related equipment was used as the EOC. Battery power was used to run the equipment. If an incident is of long duration, generators are also utilized.

Ziarnik advised that the A-C Electric Co-op does not anticipate any difficulties as we pass into the new year. The co-op will be fully staffed New Year's Eve into New Year's Day. This ARES group will provide communications if needed at the request of Emergency Management.

The SET is an annual ARRL activity, usually scheduled during the first weekend in October. The National Traffic System (message handling) plays an important role in this nationwide exercise to prepare for emergencies. The ARRL stresses the need to hold these sessions with emergency power.

Ed Wagner-WA9SZH is the Emergency Coordinator for ARRL ARES in Adams County. Any radio amateurs wishing to work with ARES may contact him at (608) 584-4858.

Earlier in October, members of this group participated in a foxhunt which is ham radio language for using direction finding antennas to locate a hidden transmitter.

Mary Gruber, Emergency Management Coordinator; David Ziarnik, System Engineer, Adams County Electric Co-op; Ed Wagner, Emergency Coordinator, Adams County ARRL ARES (l-r). —SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mock fire scheduled in Adams Co. Sept. 8

A Mock Fire, designed to help fire departments, Emergency Government and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to dress rehearse for a fire disaster, will start at 8 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Big Flats Fire Department/ Town Hall, 1104 County Highway C, Adams County.

Jim Barnier, Wis. Rapids, fire management officer for the DNR in Wis. Rapids, said that the exercise will help DNR units and local fire fighters improve their coordination on major forest fires.

The session will involve several area fire departments, Emergency Government, Adams County sheriff's officers, the Wisconsin State Patrol, DNR wardens, Volk Field ANG, Red Cross, Salvation Army and amateur radio operators.

Adams County Times & Friendship Reporter
Wednesday, November 11, 1998 Section A Page 8

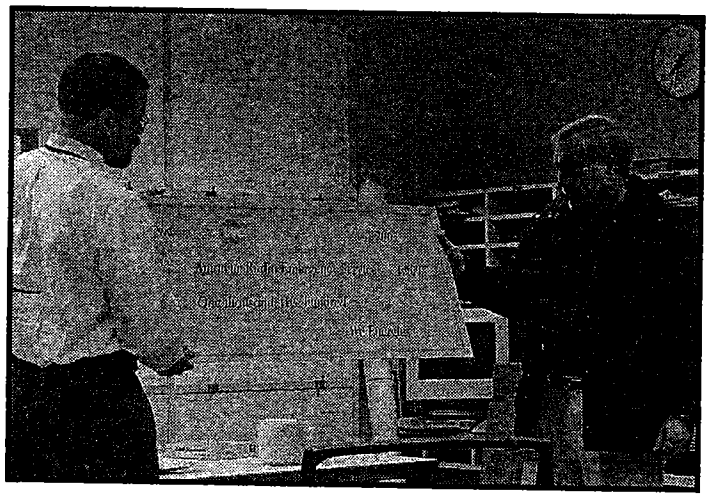
Radio amateurs to participate in simulated emergency

The ARRL (American Radio Relay League) Simulated Emergency Test is a nationwide exercise in emergency communications. Amateur Radio Operators from the Adams County ARRL ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) provided mutual assistance to Marquette County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) in cooperation with Marquette County Emergency Management and participated in a simulated emergency test on Saturday, October 31, 1998.

Ham operators responded at 11:00 a.m. to the Fenners Lake boat landing on Elk Avenue for a simulated search of a missing child. Mobile communications equipment was brought in and an emergency operations command post was made operational. Search teams were formed, deployed and 90 minutes later, the simulated missing person was reported found. Adams County ARRL ARES provided personnel and an emergency communications trailer for this exercise.

This scenario offered Amateur Radio Operators and County Emergency Management an opportunity to work together and prepare for actual emergencies as well as provide a public demonstration to served agencies such as the Salvation Army, Civil Preparedness, etc., and through the news media the value to the public that Amateur Radio provides, particularly in an emergency.

Adams County ARRL ARES and Marquette County ARES work in a cooperative effort to provide preparedness training for their members and provide emergency communications when called upon by governmental agencies.

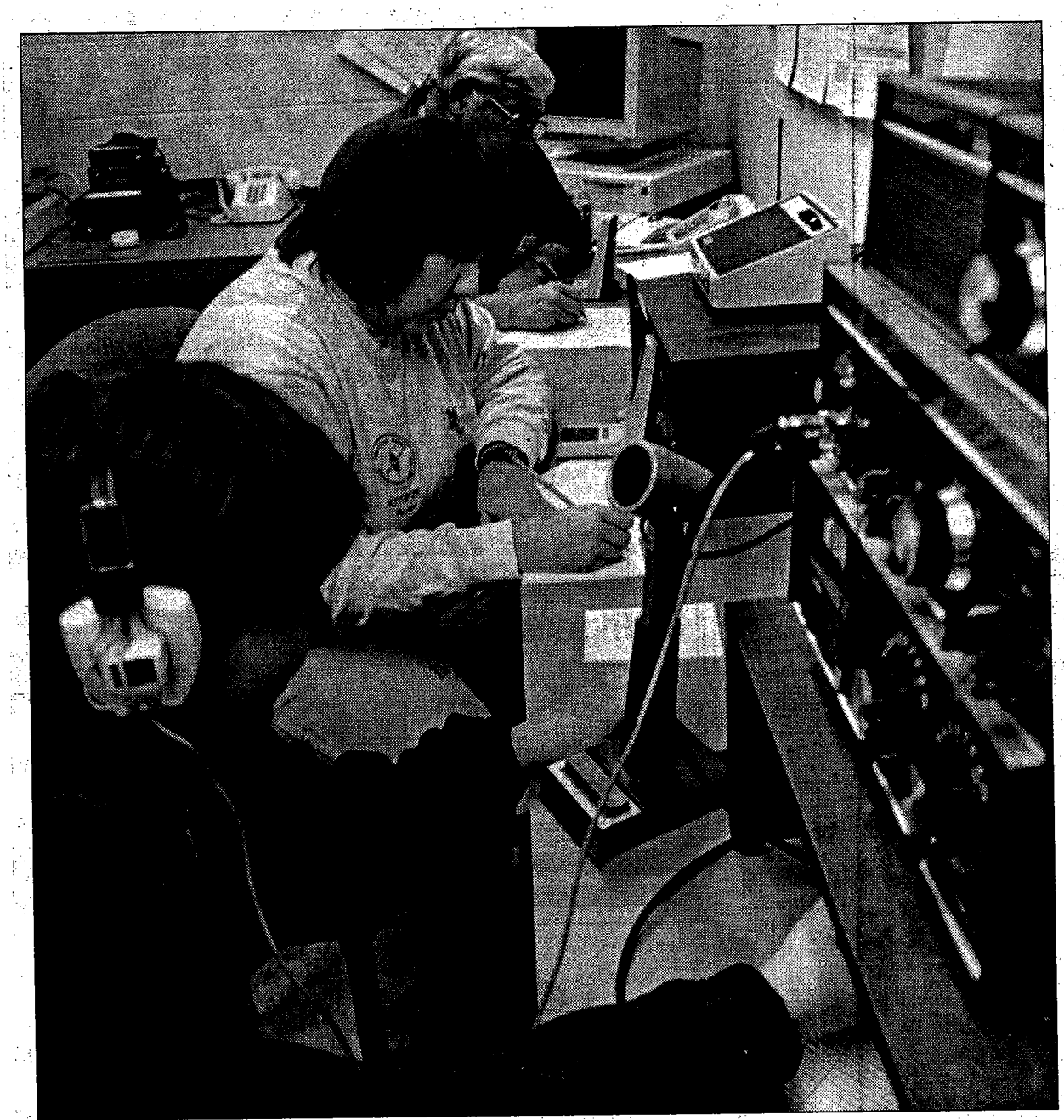


A Communications Check

On February 19, WE Energies presented a check for $1,500 to the Dodge County ARES/RACES. The presentation was part of a larger grant distribution to ARES groups in 17 Wisconsin Counties that WE Energies serves. The funding is to go towards ham radio equipment. From the left are Brian Dobberke of WE Energies and Dale Marks of the Rock River Radio Club in Dodge County. *Photo by Molly Soblewski*

WEM DIGEST
MAR/APR 2003

Photos by Vern Arendt



WHILE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT the county celebrated, members of the Ozaukee Amateur Radio Emergency Services, including Tabitha and Rosie Maybee and Gabe Chido, manned the county emergency operations center. They monitored events throughout the county, the nation and the world in case the much-feared year 2000 computer glitch caused problems.

Y2K Has Come and Gone!

By Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR,
ARRL Wisconsin Section
Emergency Coordinator

It turned out to be the largest single activation of ham radio operators in history, in not only Wisconsin, but also all across the USA and, indeed, all across the planet. Had there been major problems, Y2K could have been classified as a major emergency incident, but there were none. Therefore, we can most correctly view it as the largest ham emergency communications exercise in history. We are all glad it is now history!

At the state level, the exercise revealed a few weak spots. We had some problems with packet links across Wisconsin, and there was also the change in State Hamshack frequency, made necessary by QRN and QRM from stations in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, we managed, and typical ham ingenuity and flexibility prevailed. Had there been problems with telephone lines and electric power, we could have provided emergency communications for life safety and public welfare.

Over 40 counties successfully checked into the State Hamshack directly, and many others checked into their Wisconsin Emergency Management Regional Office (as originally intended). The point is, the lines of amateur communication were clearly up and ready.

ARES/RACES did a good job! I am well aware of the countless hours of preplanning and antenna raising and rig checking and training and testing that went on in the state among amateurs. I sincerely thank the ARES/-RACES groups for that effort, and congratulate them on their performance.

However, it is not just the ARES/RACES hams that deserve thanks, for it was not just ARES/RACES members who were "on the ready." There were many, many more hams who are not ARES/RACES members and who do not normally engage in emergency communications that volunteered and were standing by to provide backup, if needed. What a show of ham spirit! What a wonderful group of people hams are!

Although we did not have to provide emergency communications for actual incidents during Y2K, our efforts to be ready to do so did were well recognized. Both public and governmental awareness of Amateur Radio was given a huge boost during this undertaking. Six of the eight "Whereas" paragraphs in the Governor's Proclamation (at left) speak directly to our role in emergency communications support. Many counties and municipalities are now including ham radio support in their emergency planning documents for the first time. We will most assuredly see positive reverberations from this new awareness of Amateur Radio in the future. ❑

Governor proclaims Amateur Radio Operator Recognition Day in Wisconsin

The State of Wisconsin

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, during times of national and state emergencies amateur radio operators continue to provide communication resources; and

WHEREAS, these communications resources are provided at no cost to the Wisconsin taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, there continues to be a need for amateur radio operators to provide emergency communication capabilities as a backup resource during state and national emergencies; and

WHEREAS, amateur radio organizations such as the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) and the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) are organized and trained to provide emergency communication support; and

WHEREAS, amateur radio operators throughout Wisconsin prepared for and supported the state during Y2K; and

WHEREAS, amateur radio clubs throughout the State of Wisconsin provide radio courses of instruction, encourage and assist with grade school and high school programs about amateur radio, and in the process, enhance student interest in science, geography, and physics, and thus provide the opportunity to become a licensed amateur radio operator; and

WHEREAS, amateur radio operators inform the world about Wisconsin's great circus heritage including the Circus World Museum, the Great Circus Train, and the Great Circus Parade; and

WHEREAS, amateur radio operators, participating in SKYWARN, provide trained and radio equipped severe weather spotters to assist the National Weather Service and the State of Wisconsin;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TOMMY G. THOMPSON, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, do hereby proclaim April 13, 2000 as

ATEUR RADIO OPERATOR RECOGNITION DAY

in the ate of Wiscon and I commend this observance to all citizens.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this fourteenth day of January in the year two thousand.

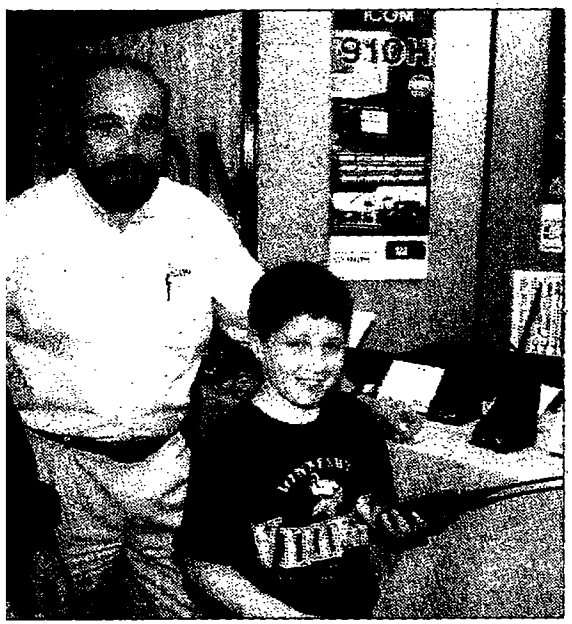
TOMMY G. THOMPSON

By the Gov or:

DOUGL LA FOLLETTE
Secreta f State

As the gubernatorial proclamation above says, April 13, 2000 is Amateur Radio Operator Awareness Day in Wisconsin. It mentions Y2K eve in particular. While at state DEM Headquarters in Madison, Governor Thompson talked one day on 40 meters with SEC Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR. Then, in late afternoon December 31, 1999, Bette Kratz, KF9ZU, found herself talking with the governor on the Baraboo 146.88 repeater. Thanks to the governor for recognizing the volunteer efforts of Wisconsin's radio amateurs. ❑

port group. We are also very thank- Without this sense of ... ... mentioned above, is ...



er), Icom Radio Corporation rep, talks about
c (left) and 9-year-old Jake Schmeling, who
first FCC Ham Radio Technical License.
Photos by George Kallenbach

Ozaukee Radio Club holds fund-r

By Renira Pachuta
News Graphic Staff

On Saturday, May 5, the Ozaukee Radio Club hosted a Computer/Radio Swapfest at Circle B Recreation Center as their traditional community event.

During the event, names were announced of people who had passed the FCC exams for new amateur radio licenses. The classes were taught by Professor Ed Rate. Perhaps the most surprising news was that Jake Schmeling, grandson of local businessman Ed Frac, had obtained his FCC Ham Radio Technical License. For the record, Jake is only 9 years old, so this was an outstanding achievement.

Information was also given out about the club's scholarship activities. Each year, the Radio Club sponsors a $1,000 scholarship that can be used toward the college education of a radio ham who best qualifies through the Foundation for Amateur Radio. Recently, the Radio Club received tax exempt status, making it very attractive for donors. Because of the new tax-exempt status, the scholarship fund has greatly increased. In a few years, it will be entirely self-supporting.

As a special courtesy, the club provides experienced communications operators to civic events such as Grafton's Christmas Parade, Saukville's Riverfest, Port Washington's Fish Day Parade and many others. The operators do their communications activities at no charge. They also provide storm spotters who report severe storms approaching our county's communities.

Icom Radio Corporation, which was the first—and indeed the only—major manufacturer to see the value that the Ozaukee Radio Club's Swapfest has on the community, used this local event to display its latest equipment. Ozaukee Radio Club is very happy that this relationship is ongoing, and thanks Icom for participating in the event. ■

Leon Rediske (left) is president of the Ozaukee Radio Club. Gene Szudrowitz was chair of the group's recent Computer/Radio Swapfest.

Ozaukee