



The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator



VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3

MARCH 2001

WISCONSIN SECTION EMERGENCY COORDINATOR, CHIEF RACES RADIO OFFICER AND EDITOR:

Stanley Kaplan, WB9RQR
105 Martin Drive
Port Washington, WI 53074-9654
(262) 284-9346
skaplan@mcw.edu

The WEC Newsletter is sent monthly to all American Radio Relay League Emergency Coordinators in the State of Wisconsin. It intended to provide a forum for ECs to share ideas concerning the organization and training of their respective groups, and as a source of news concerning ARES and RACES activities in the state.

Comments, suggestions and articles (finished or in rough form) are solicited from the readers.

This newsletter and other important documents are posted on the Wisconsin ARES/RACES web page at:

<http://www.execpc.com/~skaplan>

in PDF format, shortly after each issue is published.

Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter provided credit is given as follows: "Reprinted from The Wisconsin Emergency Coordinator Newsletter, WB9RQR, Editor".

ARRL Emergency Communications Course: The Second Wave

Again, this wave was filled within hours of the announcement that it was open. This time, however, WB9RQR was around and able to check repeatedly for an opening, and successfully registered. I have since completed the course, and can now tell you what it is all about and how it works.

Most important, it is excellent! Clearly, many ham volunteers put long hours into the design, and their efforts show. I am a professional educator with over 30 years of experience in teaching adults (mainly medical school), and can relate that I was very impressed with the overall quality of this learning package. The course has my unqualified recommendation. Yes, I learned a lot from it, too!

The course is divided into three units, each of which is subdivided into as many as 21 individual "lessons". To give you an idea, each lesson occupies up to three pages of small type when printed, with probably 1-1/2 pages as the norm. This seemed just about right for a group of related concepts, presented in a succinct "bite". A lesson consists of reading the material (I recommend printing it out, too). Then there are typically three multiple-choice questions covering the material, with a "check your response" button for each so you can tell if you answered them correctly. This part of the lesson might take typically 15 – 30 minutes to complete.

Next, you must click a button, which takes you to an activity associated with that lesson. For example, the activity associated with the lesson on the National Traffic System called for me to compose a message to the SM and to plug it into the NTS for delivery. I also was required to send a copy to my mentor, explained next.

Each student is assigned an experienced ham mentor who is actually your instructor beyond the printed study material. Mine was Lyle Meek, W6WF/5, who has been an EC and SEC in California, a Deputy Radio Officer and Chief Radio Officer for Texas, and is now an EC in Texas where he works for Drug Enforcement. Impressive credentials!

Back to the lessons, after finishing the associated activity, each student takes a lesson test – more multiple-choice questions. When those are completed satisfactorily, you can move on to the next lesson. When all lessons in one of the three sections are completed, there is a section test.

Finally, there is a final exam after all three sections are completed. The tests are not difficult, particularly if you have printed out the material so that you can re-read parts to confirm what you think is the correct answer. I am sure there will be some sort of certificate issued, though I have not received mine yet.

The topics are wide ranging, including as a random sampler: organization of ARES teams, RACES, NTS, digital communications, practice exercises, the Incident Command System, packet radio, Emergency Management, HF, net protocols and CW. Most importantly, each topic is focused directly on

emergency operations, which ties the whole course into a valuable package for learning.

There have been hundreds of requests for registration, which simply overloaded the initial student spots. To compensate, the planners have accelerated the schedule, with a new wave starting about every four weeks. Since each mentor is assigned only 15 students, the number of mentors has been an initial bottleneck in the process. However, as more hams take the course and add to the mentor pool, more classes can be offered. Keep an eye on the ARRL web site for openings. Go to <http://www.arrl.org>, click on educational, then click on certification/continuing education.

Ozaukee Gets New EC

In a scheduled, well-prepared switching of hats, Abe Galonski (KC1W) stepped down as EC for Ozaukee County on January 25th, and Jon Gilmore (KB9RHZ) took over. Abe and his wife Marie (KC1WYL) have been planning to move back to Maine for some time, to be closer to family. They have now finalized their plans and will be moving next summer. Accordingly, regular member Jon has taken the position. Jon's data:

Jon Gilmore KB9RHZ 414-358-2702
10223 W Vera Avenue
Milwaukee 53224 jong@execpc.com

Welcome, Jon! (We call him H-less, locally, to prevent confusion with a myriad of other Johns). ECs, mark your EC Rosters until a new edition comes out.

Words of Wisdom from W7SAR

[I have been a fan of Jerry Wellman (W7 "Search And Rescue" for a long time. Jerry writes the Search and Rescue column for the very fine publication, WorldRadio. Jerry has wide experience in emergency communications, and I read his column every month, word for word. Part of his column in the February 2001 issue of WorldRadio struck me as particularly valuable advice for ECs in our state. Here are the pertinent paragraphs, reprinted with permission of the publisher (for which we are grateful!). Consider this food for thought. Edited slightly.]

If I were planning to support a community disaster operation, one of the first things I'd do is plot all the known fixed stations and list the known capabilities. I'd then work with these operators in particular to ensure connectivity among each fixed station. This connectivity would include a packet link and a discrete simplex frequency so these stations could coordinate actions among themselves. I would envision each fixed station as a potential "mini-hub" for its area. It could become an immediate "on scene

command" if needed or a prime relay for events happening nearby.

I live near a rocket motor plant. There are several railroad tracks nearby as well as some chemical manufacturing and other potential hazard sites. I also have a great simplex view of the Salt Lake Valley. So here's a planning scenario for my "mini-hub". My station could be immediately used for communications involving a hazardous material spill or a rail spill in my quadrant of the valley --- with the caveat that if it's threatening to me or my family, we're out of there!

Would I become a "command" center? No! I would be a resource for immediate communications needs and support for the established response agencies and could use my home radio resources to complement a volunteer response. What about my simplex view of the valley? Let's say a major hospital across the valley experiences an evacuation emergency or an event that might cause many injured to be taken to the facility. With a simplex view of the area, a variety of relay possibilities come to mind as well as packet data collection, relay from other EOCs, etc.

In a test, I discovered that I could, from my home station, copy simplex transmissions better from two portables on various floors of a building (many miles across the valley) than either could copy each other inside the building. I believe it was the distance and my ability to point a beam at the side of the building rather than to try to hear a signal blocked by the floors of the building. So my location may be an advantage to, for example, a search team in a collapsed building by having reception of better quality than an on-scene station.

As an aside, I often hear Sheriff's SAR teams from Salt Lake and surrounding counties better than they hear each other or their field command post. These folks are often in mountain and canyon terrain and the signal is heard better across the valley than it is at the scene. Once in awhile I'll relay for them and it has worked well, having a distant simplex vantage point.

My point this month is to plan with all the resources you have available. I would also encourage your group's members to establish and use fixed stations as part of your emergency preparation and planning. I believe it is a strong selling point that Amateur Radio can point to our home stations as resources for emergency events.

[There you have Jerry's interesting approach. I bet there are many locations that would support emergency communications as Jerry suggests, yet we are not planning for it simply because we did not think of it. One benefit he did not mention is that it is a way to bring some hams into emergency communications who are not willing or able to get out into the field, but who could provide a valuable fixed station for relaying messages. Such stations could

*act much like repeaters added to your network, in transferring messages between stations who are otherwise unable to communicate. Think about it. See if there isn't some way you could apply this idea in **your** jurisdiction.*

Vilas Vacancy

The Vilas County EC position opened up in January with the resignation of Tom Kinney, KE9UE. Tom had been EC for many years and wanted relief from the position. We are soliciting names for a replacement. Know of any dynamic hams in the area that might want to take the position? Any neighboring ECs want to pick up a nearby county? That goes for the rest of the state, too. Here is a list of all counties that are currently vacant:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Barron | 8. Menomonie |
| 2. Buffalo | 9. Oconto |
| 3. Chippewa | 10. Pepin |
| 4. Florence | 11. Rusk |
| 5. Iron | 12. Vernon |
| 6. Langlade | 13. Vilas |
| 7. Lincoln | |

What say, folks? All it takes is an email or snailmail note to your SEC to get the wheels turning. Or call me (collect) at 262-284-9346 some evening to talk about it.

Training Aid – ECs, Note

Our Section Manager Don Michalski (W9IXG) purchased an ARRL videotape, then passed it on to me for loan to ECs. This tape would make an excellent training aid for an ARES group monthly meeting. There are five separate "shows" on the tape, and all apply to emergency communications. The five segments together occupy just under 1½ hours of viewing, perfect for an ARES/RACES evening meeting. Here is my review:

1. When Disaster Strikes (10 minutes). This is a 1996 update of the next topic (At Any Moment). It is mainly a narrative, bringing packet, APRS, ATV and other newer techniques, to supplement those shown in At Any Moment.
2. At Any Moment (14 minutes). This 1983 production is still a very fine demonstration of the importance of ham communications as a supplement during emergencies. Covers ARES, RACES and the National Traffic System. Features the Red Flag Patrol, organized to cope with fires in California, the Happy Fliers – ham pilots organized to help with aviation emergencies, and others.
3. Field Day Fever (25 minutes). Although you might expect just a hyped up sketch of FD, this excellent program is almost a philosophical, sometimes tongue-in-cheek look at our most famous ham activity. Most important, it does

consistently show the emergency preparedness aspect of our annual foray into the field.

4. Disaster Drill: The Big One (12 minutes). This 1988 production may be old, but it is quite good, even in 2001. This is one of the best portrayals of a major exercise I have ever seen. It depicts a Full Scale Exercise in Portland, Oregon. Portland lies along a fault zone, and the drill scenario includes a major, devastating earthquake that seriously damages the entire city. Everyone is actually mobilized in this simulated disaster. It includes both chemical and fuel HazMat spills, field hospital operations, live ATV transmitted by Civil Air Patrol planes, disaster packet operations, and more. Excellent!
5. Last Voice from Kuwait (25 minutes). This 1991 narrative tells the story of Abdul Abbar Marafje, a Kuwaiti ham who continued to send messages to the outside world during the Iraqi occupation, at the risk of his life and the lives of his family. His messages were relayed through a ham in the Netherlands to a TV station in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and then via W9CD to reporter Charles Kuralt in Washington, who repeatedly broadcast them on national TV. Kuralt used the descriptor "messages smuggled out of Kuwait" to protect Marafje and other hams in the occupied country. Had it been discovered that ham radio was the medium for contact with the west, every ham in Kuwait would have been killed. Once, when Marafje's station was about to be inspected by occupying forces, he replaced his regular equipment with old, non-working boat anchors. The troops promptly confiscated the junkers. His working equipment was then brought out of hiding and he resumed communications with the outside world. While some messages transmitted by Marafje were Health and Welfare, many were of great strategic value to the operations of Desert Storm, which ended the occupation. Touted as a real hero, Marafje is on-camera for many of the documentary's shots. An amazing story which shows the value of hams and their equipment in the fabric of a modern day conflagration.

How can you get the tape? All you need do is to let me know (well ahead of time) the date you would like to show the tape. I will mail it so that it arrives a day or two before the showing, and you are expected to return it promptly via mail when it has been viewed. It is well worth viewing. Oh yes: be kind and rewind.

Terrific Training Resources

So you have a monthly meeting. Most months, you talk about HT coverage and local swapfests, then

head out for a beer. Well, that is great, but how about turning each meeting into a training session? Contrary to the old saying, you most certainly CAN teach an old dog new tricks. Training is fun, useful and interesting! Need help finding training ideas and materials? Piece of cake! There is more stuff out there than you can use in 10 years!

Look at N9UT's website, named the **Amateur Radio Education Alliance (AREA)**, at <http://www.area-ham.org>. It is a one-stop shopping site for ECs looking for almost ANY kind of training materials! Look at the main page, then click on Amateur Radio Reference Library. There is an amazing wealth of resources there. You will find everything from a sample ARES/RACES net preamble to training documents on the Incident Command System. According to N9UT, this is the "only known site with a major concentration of education and training materials for emergency/public services and regular Amateur Radio topics." **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) – found at <http://www.fema.gov/emi/crslist.htm>, with over 20 courses currently available. All are free, and can be taken on line or by downloading course materials and working off line. Alternatively, you can request materials be sent to you via snailmail. Just a few that might be of interest:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Hazardous Materials: A Citizen's Orientation
- An Orientation to Community Disaster Exercises
- Basic Incident Command System
- The Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management
- Emergency Response to Terrorism

The courses are workbook-style, with exams at the end. The multiple-choice questions force you to look up the correct answers if you don't remember a particular point from the readings. Thus the courses are guided readings, with exam questions emphasizing the important points. A painless way to learn, and you earn a certificate when you pass, which is not a difficult task.

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM, in Madison). WEM has training courses going on constantly, all over the state. While these are designed mainly for fire, police, EMTs and EM personnel, some are of interest to ARES/RACES hams. Contact your county Emergency Manager for a WEM calendar and course list. Alternatively, email our guy in Madison, Mack Brophy (N9NTB), WI Hamshack Manager at races@dma.state.wi.us and ask him to have a calendar/course list mailed to you. If you find a course you want to take, see if your county EM can get you in. Alternatively, talk to your SEC and I will see what I can do.

County Emergency Management. Do not overlook your county Emergency Manager (every county has

one) as a source of information and training! This person is a professional that may well have wide experience in emergency response. They are often ex-police, fire or EMT personnel with a deep understanding of what communications are needed in emergencies. Many like to teach and are willing to train ARES/RACES groups in one or another aspect of Emergency Management, including the interfacing of hams with EM. As hams, we should view them as the primary served agency, since their job under federal and state law is to manage resources during emergencies. And, you know what? We ARES/RACES hams are a resource!

ARRL. Do not forget our parent organization, and the course mentioned earlier in this issue. The ARRL is definitely entering a new phase with regard to continuing education, so keep an eye on their website (<http://www.arrl.org>) for new developments.

