



The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator



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**WISCONSIN
SECTION EMERGENCY COORDINATOR
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The WEC Newsletter is sent monthly to all American Radio Relay League Emergency Coordinators in the State of Wisconsin. It is 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://wi-aresraces.org>

in PDF format, shortly after each issue is published.

Deadlines: The newsletter is mailed on or about the 15th of the month preceding the date shown on the issue. Thus, the February issue is mailed on or about the 15th of January. Articles and notices must reach the editor no later than the 1st of January to be considered for the February issue.

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IMPORTANT: Emergency Response Information

By Don Michalski, W9IXG, SM

This is especially pertinent now that we are entering severe WX season. Remember that ECs are to notify the SEC and/or the SM just as soon as is practical when responding to any emergency. What information is needed? You should be in possession of the one-page information sheet called "Emergency Response Information", found as the second entry in Other Documents of Interest on the web site.

Go get a copy now, and keep it in your jump kit notebook! It contains contact numbers and addresses, as well as the specific information you need to submit.

Answers to Quick Quiz (page 4)

1. It was founded in 1938 as the Amateur Radio Emergency Corps, with Corps changed later to Service.
2. FEMA, in 1952, for Civil Defense purposes.
3. A (exclusively).

What's So Special About CW Nets? (And Other WI Net Pot Pourri)

By Dennis Rybicki, K9LGU, Wisconsin Section Traffic Manager

I'm glad you asked. There's growing popularity of the "original digital" mode, and some operators would like to know what the attraction is. All traffic nets are intended to facilitate the passing of radiograms into, out of, or within an area. All of our section nets are "directed," that is, they have a net control who calls the shots. Each mode, however, has its own method of operation and its own shortcuts to make it more efficient. It's those shortcuts that add a special charm to CW nets.

The best way to learn of the fun on CW is to listen to a net or two. The efficiency will be readily apparent. A lot is said in very few characters - although there may be a number of real characters on the nets. Here's what you might hear on a Wisconsin CW net.

Nets begin with a call-up and move right to the business of establishing liaisons, listing and handling traffic, and taking check-ins. The NCS will start like this. CQ WNN CQ WISCONSIN NOVICE NET PART OF ARRL NTS AND WNA LTD QND (this is a directed net.) QNZ (please zero beat the net control.) QNN (net control is) KB9ROB WNN DE KB9ROB QNI (check in.) K.

Some nets will begin by asking for liaison stations. QNA 9RN K means the NCS is standing by for the liaison to or from the Ninth Region Net. QNA SSB K

The Wisconsin EMERGENCY COORDINATOR means the NCS is listening for a representative of a sideband net.

For regular check-ins, a station will send a letter (any letter is okay; we all have our favorites.), and the NCS will respond by sending the same letter (which means "go ahead"). Then the station might check in as follows. KB9ROB DE WA9ZTY GE DEAN QRU (I have no traffic; anything for me?) K. If the station checking in has traffic, he'll list it like this. KB9ROB DE WA9ZTY GE DEAN QTC MILWAUKEE 2 MADISON 1 K. A station can tell the NCS he will handle some listed traffic like this: DE W9YCV GE DEAN QRU QSP MILW K. Then the NCS will get the traffic handlers together off frequency with a script like this.

NCS: ZTY (WA9ZTY?)
WA9ZTY: T (Yep)
NCS: YCV (W9YCV?)
W9YCV: T (Here I am)
NCS: U5 MKE 2 (QSY up 5 KHz and pass the two for Milwaukee.)
WA9ZTY: G (I'm going.)
W9YCV: G (I'm on my way.)

W9YCV, the receiving station, will move up about 5 KHz, pick the exact frequency, and call WA9ZTY. If both stations have full break-in (QSK), all the receiving station has to do is hit his key and the sender will repeat the last word and continue. When the traffic has been passed, both stations will listen a moment (in case someone else with traffic has been sent to join them) and then return to the net frequency and send their suffixes to let the NCS know they're back.

When the net's business is complete, the NCS sends: QNC (all net copy this.) QRU (we have no traffic listed.) QNX (you are excused from the net) QNF (the net is free.) 73 DE KB9ROB. It's over quickly, and the participants have the special feeling they've done something very efficiently, sharing their skills and enjoying a special camaraderie. It's great fun.

How Weather Nets Are Related To Traffic Handling 'Tis the season to think about severe weather preparedness. Handling weather-related messages during an alert is a special kind of traffic and needs special care. It's a good idea to practice with local ARES, RACES, or Skywarn groups well in advance of when services are needed. Plenty of good sites on the Internet can help. My favorite is www.sulcom.org/. The need for accuracy and efficiency is high on weather circuits and traffic handlers welcome the pressure.

What happens if there's a statewide emergency? In the event of a declared emergency, the Badger Emergency Net will go into session and all other nets will meet as usual. This should provide the statewide traffic routes necessary to supplement ARES/RACES activity throughout the state and will offer NTS liaison. Links to Wisconsin Emergency Management in

Madison and other crucial points can be provided through the regular nets. If an event is extended, net controls will probably have to change. That's why we need more volunteers to try their hand/microphone at NCS duty. It is recommended that net managers ask more stations to fill in occasionally and regular net controls might try simply handing over a net to another station with little warning as a training exercise.

What's the right way to include ARL Numbered radiograms in a text? Spell them out. ARL numbered messages are always spelled out. That means it is "ARL FORTY SIX," not "ARL 46" or "ARL FOUR SIX." You don't need an "X" after the ARL number.

Do we ever see priority traffic on our section nets? You bet. Recently, W9CBE handled a piece of priority traffic for Exeland (It 's in Sawyer County) concerning a family emergency. W9PSU picked it up and managed a delivery through the sheriff's department. It doesn't happen often, but it's part of the reason we do what we do.

2003 EC Conference

Yes, it is early to talk about it, but the date has been set. Mark **Saturday, 8 November** on your calendar. EC Dan Lenz, KB9IME, and his crew will be hosting the meeting this year, in **Winnebago County**. Details will follow as they develop. This will be an important meeting for a number of reasons, so be sure to reserve the date now.

Some Great Advantages

By Dan Miller, K3UFG, ARRL Emergency Communications Course Manager k3ufg@arrl.org

It is especially cost effective to join the ARRL if you wish to take one or more of the EmComm Courses under the current grant sponsorship. Indeed, the payback increases if you take two or all three courses. For the \$39 ARRL membership fee, you receive:

1. A \$30 discount on any ARRL online course.
2. Complete reimbursement of your \$45 registration fee for an online EmComm I, II or III course. This reimbursement applies each time you take one of the three courses, so long as the grant is active and your membership is current.
3. A \$10 printed EmComm course book, free as a premium for joining.
4. A year of ARRL membership benefits, including a subscription to an outstanding monthly magazine (QST)

All this for just under \$40! A bargain, indeed!

Field Day Cometh!

Always the 4th full weekend in June, that puts it at 28-29 June 2003. This year there is a new wrinkle. Paragraph 4 of the official rules defines a brand new class of station, Class F. The rules say:

- 4.8 (Class F) Emergency Operation Centers (EOC): An amateur radio station at an established EOC activated by a club or non-club group. Class F operation must take place at an established EOC site. Stations may utilize equipment and antennas temporarily or permanently installed at the EOC for the event. Entries will be reported according to number of transmitters in simultaneous operation.
- 4.8.1 For Field Day purposes, an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is defined as a facility established by:
 - a. a Federal, State, County, City or other Civil Government, agency or administrative entity; or
 - b. a Chapter of a national or international served agency (such as Red Cross or Salvation Army) with which your local group has an established operating agreement.
- 4.8.2 Planning of a Class F operation must take place in cooperation with the staff of the EOC being activated.
- 4.8.3 Class F stations are eligible for all bonus points under Field Day rule 7.3.
- 4.8.4 Other provisions not covered are the same as Class A.

Interesting? This means your ARES/RACES group could elect to have its own Field Day operation at your county EOC, provided the equipment is already there or can be brought in and set up. All you need is permission from your Emergency Manager or other official in charge of the EOC. Don't forget to tell your EM that this is a 24-hour operation, and hams will need access to come and go as shifts change, all night long.

Think about it. It would be good training, a very good test of the equipment, and fun. Further, if your Emergency Manager will authorize an Open House on Sunday, you could have members of the public observe the happenings. Since the EOC is located in a public building, it would then qualify for bonus points (100 in this category; see 7.3.3 of the rules for details). This would be excellent public relations for your ARES/RACES group as well as for Emergency Management.

To get a complete packet of Field Day rules and other FD operating aids, go to this page:

<http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/>

ARES/RACES Statistics

As of this writing (4May03), we have a total of 1,309 members in Wisconsin ARES/RACES. This number fluctuates as new hams are added or leave. It can drop quite a bit when an EC resigns without identifying a replacement, since no EC means an instant change to no ARES/RACES unit and no members in that county. Then it jumps back up when a new EC is appointed and begins recruiting members. I thought you might also be interested in the class of license distribution, as compared with all hams in the state and nation (state and national data is current as of 5Mar03).

Class	No.	%	WI %	US %
Ext	317	24	16	15
Adv	149	11	13	12
Gen	255	20	22	21
T&T+	583	45	45	47
Nov	5	<1	5	5

Wisconsin ARES/RACES follows the ham populations generally, both in the state and nation, with two exceptions. We have fewer novices, and significantly more Extra class licensees. Does the disproportionate number of Extras mean that those hams attracted to WI ARES/RACES tend to upgrade more? Or are those attracted to us older, with more experience, and more likely to have upgraded? Or is it that our membership tends to upgrade their licenses more than average? These are interesting questions, but with no readily available answers.

As is true both in our state and in the nation, the highest percentage of our members are Tech or Tech+ licensees, approaching half our membership. Our 1,309 ARES/RACES members represent about 12% of all hams in Wisconsin (10,726 total), and about 0.2% of all hams in the USA (684,100 total).

Another interesting breakdown is the geographic distribution of our members. There are nine districts, which you can view on the map on our website. Our membership distribution as follows:

District	No.	%
NW	94	7
NC	71	6
NE	35	3
WC	134	10
C	222	17
EC	239	19
SW	44	3
SC	232	18

The interesting thing here is that ARES/RACES strength in numbers does not always exactly follow population strength (though there is that tendency). If it did correlate perfectly, we would see an even greater concentration of members in our high population districts, and fewer in districts where few people live. Does that mean that the ECs and DEC's in low population areas are doing a better job at recruiting? Well, maybe!

By the way, when is the last time you had a recruitment drive in your county/district? Your SEC is still sending all new hams in your area a letter of welcome, with your name and phone number included so they can contact you to explore joining ARES/RACES. Do you have a list of all the hams in your county? Have you called or written them? We could certainly all use more members in our units. Please consider a drive in the near future.

Leadership Changes

We have a new EC in **Lafayette County**. **Arnold "Bunker" Alt, KD6SXA**, took the position effective 29 April. Ray Laverty, KB9AKM, had been covering both Lafayette and Iowa Counties, and now with Bunker in Lafayette, he can concentrate on his home county. Bunker can be welcomed at bunker@mhtc.net, and the rest of his data is in the new version of the EC Roster, already posted on the website. Send him an email! A big thanks you to Ray for covering Lafayette until now, and to Bunker for his willingness to take on the position.

Richard Dailey, Sr., W9IBL, has stepped down as **EC for Jefferson County** on the advise of his physician. **AEC Dennis Rybicke, K9LGU**, will be **Acting EC** until a replacement can be found. We thank Richard for his many years of service in the post, and wish him well in coping with his health problem. As you know, Denny Rybicke is our Section (state) Traffic Manager, with enough on his plate already, and we thank him for his willingness to take on this temporary additional load.

After many years of service, **James Ley, NX9F**, has resigned as **EC for Dunn County**. **Andrew Wagner, KB9TAC**, has been appointed as his replacement. Welcome Andrew at andy@wagnera.com. All his data is posted in the new EC Roster, already on the website. Welcome Andrew, to the Wisconsin ARES/RACES leadership crew!

Certificate Maker

By Don Michalski, W9IXG, SM

To all ECs: I will give you permission, individually, to make AEC Certificates using the ARRL site. This is a

nice service for you and your units. The only stipulation is that you do not abuse the privilege by making any other types available on the site. **Use it ONLY to make AEC Certificates.** When you are ready to take advantage of this tool, email me at **w9ixg@arrl.org**, and I will provide you with instructions.

Special Supplement Article

Enclosed with this newsletter is an article your editor considered important enough to be seen by all, but there was not room in this issue. Rather than hold it for the July issue, it was decided to include it as a supplement.

Dave Armbrust, AE4MR (ae4mr@arrl.org) wrote the article, **DO WE STILL NEED NTS**. Dave is Section Manager for West Central Florida (one of the states that has several sections within it). Dave wrote it at the request of his Section Traffic Manager, who wanted an article regarding the recent ARRL Volunteer Resources Committee recommendation that ARES and the National Traffic System work more cooperatively. He shared it on the Internet with other Section Managers, and our SM Don Michalski sent a copy to your editor. We subsequently obtained permission from Dave to reprint it for all of you.

It is well written, cogent, and speaks to several important current issues in ham radio. It does not only apply to the NTS. Rather, the message in it applies to ARES/RACES as well. Take a look. Read it, and either reprint it locally for your units or, perhaps, read it at a meeting. When this issue of the newsletter is posted on our website, Dave's article will be part of it, so it will be available to you whenever you want it.

Quick Quiz

- When did ARES start?
 - 1938
 - 1952
 - 1966
 - 1968
 - 1970
- Who started RACES?
 - ARES
 - ARRL
 - FCC
 - FEMA
 - QCWA
- Who can activate an ARES unit?
 - Emergency Coordinator
 - Emergency Manager
 - Fire Chief
 - Sheriff
 - Any of the above (Answers are on page 1)

Have a safe, fun FIELD DAY!

Special supplement article to the June 2003 Wisconsin Emergency Coordinator Newsletter:

DO WE STILL NEED NTS?

By Dave Armbrust, AE4MR, Section Manager, West Central Florida Section

In today's world of electronic E-mail and high speed Internet it is only natural for the question "Do we still need NTS?" to come up. After all the National Traffic System or NTS was begun in 1949 long before even computers and the information age was born. Before we can really answer the modern question "Do we still need NTS?" we first must ask another much older question. "What is the purpose of NTS?"

If you are a regular check-in to any of today's traffic nets you may believe that the primary purpose of NTS is to remind amateurs when their license is about to expire or to congratulate amateurs when they upgrade! These forms of routine traffic do help to keep us in practice but they are not the primary purpose of National Traffic System.

So what is the purpose of NTS? Simply stated the primary purpose of the National Traffic System it is to handle emergency traffic when conventional communications fail. When a portion of our great nation gets cut off from the rest of the world due to a man made or natural disaster we often find there is no other form of communications available from the affected area. Both the telephone network and the Internet are designed for ordinary loads and they cannot handle the extraordinary loads that occur during a disaster. Even the high tech radio systems used by modern law enforcement departments today and the intriguing systems planned for tomorrow are not designed to handle the extraordinary loads that a major disaster can put on these critical systems. Furthermore most of these high tech radio systems are proprietary in nature and have very limited mutual aid capabilities. Often one county's emergency vehicles cannot talk to vehicles from another county or agency. In these situations ARES/NTS can get the message through when all other means have failed or are incompatible.

The ARRL Volunteer Resources Committee (VRC) was directed by the ARRL board to perform an in-depth study of the League's programs related to emergency communications and non-emergency public service communications, and to report recom-

mendations for modernizing, streamlining, and increasing the effectiveness of these programs. Several inter-related themes have emerged as a result of the study. One conclusion reached by the VRC is as follows. "Although ARES and NTS are structurally separate in Section field organizations, these two volunteer programs must work more cooperatively, functioning as part of one coherent emergency communications program at the Section level."

All of this sounds fine and sensible but what does it actually mean to those of us in the field?

Fortunately most areas have not suffered a major disaster in some time and many of our ranks have not ever handled a piece of priority or emergency traffic. Still we hear calls for it daily on every traffic net. Are our nets ready to swing into this emergency mode at a moments notice? Are you personally ready, trained and willing to answer the call for communicators on a moments notice when that call goes out? After all it is not a matter of if, but more of a matter of when and where our ranks will once again be needed. The first few hours are the most critical in most disasters and it will be during these first few hours when we will be needed the most. Still all of our skills and abilities are useless unless we can get them to where they are needed, when they are needed.

The vision that you can somehow save the world from your ham shack is not very realistic. You must be ready and willing to answer the call and relocate to where you are most needed. The best way for you to be ready for that call is by becoming actively involved with your county's ARES training programs and exercises. It will be through this ARES program that the request for our help will be first received. Your county ARRL Emergency Coordinator will be able to deploy you to a key location where your unique services are most needed. Do not wait until the call goes out to make yourself known. If you wait until after the disaster has occurred then it will most likely be too late to make the most effective use of your unique skill.

The VRC also states "Amateur Radio emergency communications volunteers must be more actively involved in a variety of training experiences throughout the year." One such training opportunity is the existing ARRL certification programs. It is recommended that all NTS stations earn at least Level I certification as soon as possible. While this certification does carry a \$45 fee for League members the fee will be cheerfully refunded upon successful completion of the course. This is an excellent program and is well worth your time.

While I cannot predict the nature of the next disaster that will strike I can safely predict that the nature of the emergency traffic we will handle will be nothing

like the routine traffic we see daily on our NTS nets. Our biggest need will most likely be to get a piece of traffic or information from one part of the State to another or even more likely from one part of the city to some other key location in the same city. We might be called upon to do unusual things as well, such as send an E-mail message or a fax. We may indeed find that what is most needed is to get some piece of information from some part of a disaster area that has lost Internet access to a location that still has Internet access. What is important is getting the message through, via the best means at our disposal. If that means making a telephone call, sending a fax or E-mail instead of via amateur radio what matters most is that you get it through as quickly and as accurately as you can. It matters little if you used amateur radio to do it, what matters is you got it done.

So do we still need NTS? That is a question that the ARRL VRC is looking very closely at today. Clearly we do need to look at modernizing some of our methods and embracing more of the digital modes and methods. Often you will hear an amateur stating the Internet is killing NTS and/or amateur radio. Nothing could be further from the truth. New technology is not a threat to amateur radio or NTS. Instead our reluctance to embrace this technology is the real threat in our changing world. We must carefully study and listen to the needs of the ARES served agencies and find new and innovative ways to adapt to the information needs of today's changing society. Even more important when these necessary changes are identified we must also be willing to adapt these changes. Each of us must be willing to either lead, follow or get out of the way.

The Internet has only made our society more reliant on the ability to quickly and accurately move information. When this digital information flow has been interrupted then the need for amateurs to pick up some of the slack becomes even more vital as we may be the only means still left.

In today's world where threats of WMD, terrorism and natural disasters dominate our evening news it becomes even more important that each of us be prepared to lend a hand in our own communities if needed. As an amateur radio operator you have a unique skill that only a very small percentage of our nation's population possesses.

I sincerely hope you never find yourself behind a microphone or a code key with a need to pass a piece of Emergency or Priority traffic. I do hope that you do prepare yourself for that day to the very best of your ability. Amateur radio will work, when all else fails, but only if we are prepared, trained and ready to do the unexpected. It is our license, skills, training

and professionalism more than our equipment that makes us so valuable to our nation.

In today's information age the need to pass information has never been greater. Today's need for amateur communications has never been larger in the history of our proud hobby. Still we can only meet this need with training, practice and innovation. Is this not what amateurs have always done best? The need is as real as it has ever been. It is time to dig out the pencils and notebooks and clear some space on our calendars. We've got some work to do.
