



The Wisconsin ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator



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**WISCONSIN
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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.

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

EOC Phone Numbers Added to the Roster

Take a look at the latest EC Roster. Under Barron County, EC Greg Hammerel (W9GDH) has something new listed by his phone numbers. Also there are his Emergency Operations Center (**EOC**) numbers.

Gregg suggested this, and it is a great idea. The rationale is simple. If there is an area-wide emergency and a number of ARES/RACES units are activated, there may be a need for mutual aid or other communication between units. The quickest way for ECs to communicate in such instances, assuming phone lines are operable, is to call the EOC or Radio Room where a neighboring county EC or Net Control Operator is working. Using the phone for this purpose also lightens the load of any nets that are in progress.

So, we will publish those numbers promptly in our roster (a secure document, available at our website only with an EC password). However, ECs must provide the numbers.

Simply send Stan an email listing EOC (Emergency Operations Center, ECC (Emergency Communications Center, RR (Radio Room) or other designation that you use and a list of one or more telephone numbers. Be sure to include the Area Code as well. Thanks, Greg, for the suggestion!

Laments of an EC

[Editor's Note: This is a message from an EC in Wisconsin to their Mentor in the EmComm I course. The Mentor is also one of the leadership officials in WI ARES/RACES. No, it was not your SEC. Stan]

THE EC: Hi: Just wanted to thank you for your support and understanding through the EmComm I course. I learned quite a bit.

Now if I could only have the people in my ARES/RACES group take it to see that there is more to public service than just communicating.

Tonight was our group's meeting. One of the older members told us that he understood the role of the ARES/RACES group was just to provide communications in time of need, and that FCC rules should be our only guidance.

If I am not mistaken, the FCC and ARES/RACES are two different things. Yes, I know we need to follow the FCC rules and regulations. But ARES/RACES can do many other things to help in emergencies, other than just talking into a microphone. If asked by Emergency Management, we should help out at shelters (other than just communication over a radio), vehicular traffic control (if we have been properly trained), and so on.

My question to you is how in the world do I get these people to understand this concept, as well as to train and participate in nets and come to the meetings?

Tonight we went over how to look up chemicals in the Emergency Response guidebook for hazardous materials. That didn't go well with the older guy. He said that if he saw that stuff he would get the heck out of there. Another member asked him what he would do if he could help by routing traffic away from the danger zone. He replied that he simply would not be in the area to do so."

If an emergency occurred here, I would not have trained people to respond, because they simply don't want to participate in nets or come to a meeting. My only recourse would be sending smoke signals over to neighboring counties to ask for their help!

Please give me any kind of training ideas or suggestions on how to deal with these people. I want to be a good EC and not just a pretty face with a title.

THE MENTOR: Hi: The FCC is a regulatory agency that makes and enforces the rules that govern us. They say that we need to have licenses, that these are good for only so long and that we can only operate on certain frequencies. Part 97 of their Rules state as the first principle under Basis and Purposes the following: "Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary non-commercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications".

On the other hand, the ARRL is a private group of Amateur Radio operators interested in communications and public service. It acts as a focal point for all Amateur Radio operators and establishes the policies and procedures they operate under while implementing this basic principle. As is stated in the Public Service Communications Manual published by the ARRL: "Every emergency net is bound to be, to some extent, a traffic net, and every traffic net should be prepared to take on various forms of emergency-related communications duties."

The ARRL recently was designated to assist the Department of Homeland Security in the performance of its duties by providing communications for them in times of emergencies. That includes ALL emergencies or needs, not just those that are weather related. ARES/RACES organizations are not social clubs. They are a group of persons who have offered their services, and their time to be trained, so that they can provide a service to their community in its time of need. Their reward is derived from their activities and its benefits to the community.

Training is required so that ARES/RACES members may communicate with each other effectively and with other ARES/RACES Groups. ARES/RACES training is based upon NETS, and participation of members in them. This is where they learn how to relay the information rapidly and accurately. Yes, the training is sometimes boring, but the skills learned in a "boring" net could save a life someday.

Your only crime is that you want to have an effective group that can respond to any hazard, and that you want it now. Of course, that will never come to pass. You need to get the group to crawl before they can walk, and to walk before they can run. Establish a small group (perhaps only two or three) to meet with you and help prepare training goals for the next six months. Prepare a realistic training

schedule at first. Do not go into HazMat or traffic control or other advanced topics at first; rather, stick with the basics.

For instance, have the members bring their HTs or mobiles (the latter will need power supplies) to a meeting and then have them do a net. Pick simplex frequencies you do not normally use – perhaps simplex frequencies used by a neighboring county. The idea here is to not only practice nets, but also to have your operators learn to use their equipment by changing frequencies to something they don't normally use. Another idea would be to write a batch of messages that might be sent and received in a shelter situation. When you have the messages prepared, set up a net at a meeting with your operators located in different rooms in the building. Have them pass and receive the traffic. Make some of the traffic time-sensitive and only provide the message a few seconds before it must to be sent. In this way, get the group familiar with working in nets, sending and receiving messages accurately and swiftly, and also used to their own equipment. As they get more proficient, make the situation harder (if you are using a repeater, turn it off in the middle of a drill and see how they solve the problem). Leave HazMat and similar advanced subjects until later. When they are ready for such topics, have a guest trainer come in and conduct the session.

Give it a try, and don't get discouraged! As time goes on, others will hear of the neat training activities and will want to be a part of them.

Working with Hospitals

By April Moell, WA6OPS, www.HDSCS.org

*[Editor's Note: WA6OPS is widely noted as the nationwide leader in hospital-ham relationships. She is the author of the book **Amateur Radio: A Communications Resource for Hospital Emergencies** that we distributed to all ARES/RACES ECs in Wisconsin who requested one. Don Michalski (W9IXG, our SM) recently wrote to April for another supply of the books to be used for a special meeting, and she replied with some excellent comments, which she allowed us to reprint here. Stan]*

Hi Don

Hope your meeting goes well. It would be fun to help answer questions. I always like doing that. Just remember the issue is NOT equipment. Amateur Radio support is a people resource. What is needed are clear activation plans and a group of trained and educated hams that are prepared to be portable and flexible.

Hams should minimize doing their portion of hospital exercises without hospital participation, though sometimes this is necessary. Conversely, they need to train with the hospitals. Even more important, hams should avoid setting up prior to the start of the hospital drill. Often, hams included in a hospital drill go and set up an hour prior to the start, so when the

The Wisconsin EMERGENCY COORDINATOR drill begins, all the hams are in place. In real emergencies, that does not happen. Such activities can give them and the hospitals an unrealistic idea of when and how the ham support will play out.

The hams also need to be willing to drill whenever the hospitals drill. Often, I have heard hams whining about attending hospital drill-planning meetings or doing actual drills on weekdays. Well, my gosh! The ARRL SW Division Convention just ended and there were plenty of hams there that took the Friday off before and the Monday off after the convention. Another example is Field Day. Lots of hams take off on the Friday before to get ready and many take Monday after off to recuperate. Why should they complain about a hospital drill that does not occur on a weekend? If hams whine about hospital drills or meetings on a weekday, hospitals will not really believe Amateur Radio is a credible, reliable resource. I am quite convinced that one of the reasons Hospital Disaster Support Communications System here in California has been so well accepted and USED is the fact that: 1. We are present at the major drill planning meetings with hospitals, regardless of day or time of scheduling. 2. We participate in actual drills, regardless of day or time of scheduling. The hospitals believe we will be there and we have been.

Ok, enough of my soap box routine. Good luck!

What Happens To Nets When Conditions Are Lousy?

by Dennis Rybicke, K9LGU, STM

Bad conditions give us an excellent proving ground to test our skills and equipment. The use of relays, precise sending, accurate receiving, and savvy net controls will help us fight even the worst aurora, the noisiest atmospherics, and even the extra-long skip if we can get help from our neighbors. If conditions are bad, and you don't hear a net on frequency, don't hesitate to ask. Perhaps we're just missing a net control. Maybe you're in just the right spot to act a liaison. Sideband doesn't cut it? Try CW.

The nets will continue to meet on schedule despite the band conditions and your participation might make an even bigger difference. It's a challenge, but we are up to it.

Computers

I have received a few more from Ozaukee County and the Medical College of Wisconsin. All are refurbished, with a brand-new copy of Windows 98, Second Edition, and all are in top shape. All have CD-ROM drives and most have sound cards, too. The slowest are 200 MHz Pentiums, and the fastest

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400 MHz. All come with a keyboard, mouse (until I run out) and power cord. As always, first come, first served. Get on my desktop computer list ASAP, if you can use one or more. That list is now empty, since all orders have been filled (though my laptop list is overflowing, and I have not received any in quite awhile). As always, I will release machines to ECs only, so query your ops, let me know, and be prepared to be the distributor in your group. Use them for any ARES/RACES emergency communications use, including training on packet or PSK 31, or any other digital mode. Or use them for logging in an EOC or in an ARES/RACES ham's home, or whatever. So long as they are used for emergency communications or training, I am happy, and so are the donors. We have saved them from the landfill, and they are doing good work. To get on the list, just email me a note. Stan

EC Conference

Our last chance to remind you!

WHEN AND WHERE: Saturday, 8Nov, 10:00 a.m. sharp to 3:00 p.m., in Oshkosh.

DIRECTIONS: Come to the Oshkosh area on Highway 41. On the north end of town, take the Highway 45 exit south. When you reach County Y, turn left (east) and follow County Y until you reach the J.P. Coughlin Building, the meeting site. It should be easy to spot. If you cross railroad tracks you have gone a block or so too far - turn around and go back. Talk-in is on 147.240 + 107.2 PL repeater.

LUNCH: This is your chance to network, one of the most valuable parts of any conference. Only 45 minutes for it this year. Choice of ham, turkey or beef sub, choice of cookie or brownie. Potato salad included. Cost: **\$7.91**. **Prepay** by sending it to Stan, snailmail address on the masthead of this newsletter. Enclose a note with your choice of sandwich and dessert. If you do not specify, turkey/cookie will be assumed. Don't forget to include your name and call, and the names and calls of anyone else in your party.

RESERVATIONS: Absolutely necessary, whether you order a lunch or not. We must know who is coming! Stan must **receive** your reservations and lunch funds by **Friday, 31 October**. That is only a few days away, so take care of it, pronto!

We have a full agenda, with two keynote speakers. Lawyer John Leekley, WB9SMM (SE WI DEC) will talk about liability and Workers Compensation issues for ARES/RACES hams. Ozaukee County Emergency Manager William Stolte (N9VBJ) will cover Emergency Management -ARES/RACES relationships in Wisconsin. There will be several other speakers, as well, and an important announcement concerning leadership changes. Get your reservations in now.

Racine County Tabletop Exercise

By John Rusfeldt, KA9RZL, Racine County AEC

[Editor's Note: John is past EC for Racine County. A police officer with a young family, John had to step down as EC, but continues as a very active AEC for Mike Melnik.]

On September 9, 2003 I had an opportunity to participate in a tabletop exercise involving multiple agencies within Racine County. What a learning experience and a great way to network with the agencies we serve.

I was always under the misconception that the Office of Emergency Management would make the request to ARES to provide communications support during an incident. I quickly learned that this might not always be the case. ARES is just one part of a large network of multiple agencies and organizations that come together to provide assistance during a disaster or potential disaster. Many of those agencies or organizations could, by themselves, utilize Amateur Radio to provide communications.

I will briefly explain the tabletop exercise that I participated in, what was discussed within my group and lessons I learned from this exercise.

The Scenario

The scenario was that Wisconsin is in a heat wave and has been for an extended period of time. Temperatures have been in the upper 80s with high humidity. WE Energies has notified the Office of Emergency Management in each county of a high probability of a power outage due to high power demands. At approximately 10 a.m., a large-scale power outage occurs that affects all of Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee Counties. The power outage also affects the northern counties of Illinois and part of Walworth County.

All the agencies were grouped into breakout sessions to discuss what actions they would need to take to prepare for this potential disaster. This tabletop consisted of Racine County and City government officials, public services within Racine County, hospitals and healthcare facilities, public utilities (WE Energies), public works departments, and volunteer organizations. ARES was grouped within the volunteer organizations that consisted of the Salvation Army, The Volunteer Center of Racine, and the American Red Cross.

Volunteer Organizations

Since I had not had any contact with the Salvation Army and the Volunteer Center of Racine, my first order of business was to introduce myself and let those organizations know what ARES was and what we can provide for them. Out of this breakout session, the Volunteer Center of Racine indicated that ARES was incorporated in their plan to provide communications. This was news to me, but exciting

all the same. Together as a group, we discussed what each organization would need to do to prepare for this situation.

With ARES, it was obvious that we needed generators to run radio equipment. Do they work? I couldn't answer that question. The only time our local clubs, who are the owners, use the generators is during Field Day. Another aspect of using the generators came from the American Red Cross. Since there is no power in Racine County, the gas pumps at the local gas stations were inoperable. So we would need to find a way to obtain gasoline from outside the affected area and transport it in.

Since this situation affected all of Racine County, the local 440 MHz repeater would provide reliable communications for the County, and possibly between some of the other affected counties. One problem is that the repeater does not have emergency power. So that left only the local 2-meter machine which certainly does not have the coverage like the 440 repeater. Something for the local club and ARES to work on.

General Session

After the breakout session, all of the groups gathered together for the general session to share their concerns, plan of action, and what resources they would need with everyone. Many of the groups indicated there could be a communications problem. It was unknown if the telephones would even work. The hospital and healthcare group (I did not have any contact with them during this exercise) indicated that they were going to utilize "Ham Radio" to provide communications for them within their facilities. Wow, I wasn't even there to offer the assistance or tell them ARES existed. Since it is apparent they know about ARES, I need to build a new relationship.

After the general session, the exercise continued with additional information. The power outage was a result of a terrorist act. Again, each group broke out to discuss how they would deal with the new information and what additional resources would be needed. For ARES, not much really changed with the new information. Other organizations/agencies indicated that they would need security.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, WITH
LESSONS LEARNED

EC CONFERENCE

Saturday, 8Nov

10:00 a.m. sharp to 3:00 p.m.

Oshkosh

Hosted by Winnebago County
ARES/RACES