



# The *KEY*

The Newsletter of the Contoocook Valley Radio Club

Volume 12, Number 1

February, 2000

## **Flea Market**

The last Sunday in March, the 26th, is the date for the annual CVRC Flea Market and VE Session. The event was a resounding success last year with every table being filled by a seller! The format will be much the same this year with a V.E. Session and refreshments available. Merrimack County ARES will be handling the talk-in duties.

Tim Firkowski, KB9DGB, and Jock Irvine, N1JI, are coordinating the event. Volunteers are needed! If you can help out, call email Tim at kb9dgb@conknet.com. To reserve a table contact Jock Irvine, N1JI, at 428-3476 x256 or n1ji@arrl.net.

## **Programs**

**February 8** Terry Gregg from Unitil will give a presentation titled "Don't Shock Yourself." Be sure not to miss this "electrifying" program!

**March 14** Watch for a postcard in the mail with details of the March program. Information will be posted on the club's Web page (<http://www.qsl.net/k1bke>) as well.

CVRC meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at the Hopkinton Town Library in Contoocook, NH. Members and nonmembers alike are welcomed. Talk-in is on the K1BKE 146.895-600 kHz (100 Hz PL) repeater.

*The KEY* is published every other month at the beginning of the even numbered months. The deadline for articles and submissions is the fourth Tuesday (coinciding with the usual business meeting schedule) of the preceding month.

## **Work begun to revise Amateur Radio examinations**

### **ARRL Bulletin 1 ARLB001**

The nation's Volunteer Examiner Coordinators, including the ARRL-VEC, now are under the gun to meet the April 15 implementation date of the FCC's recently announced Amateur Radio restructuring plan.

The FCC's momentous action on December 30, 1999, reduced the number of license classes to three and established 5 WPM as the sole Morse code examination element. More than half of those responding to an informal poll on the ARRL Web site indicate they plan to upgrade during 2000. Brisk demand for study materials suggests that many amateurs will be hitting the books in the coming weeks.

After April 15, 2000, the FCC will only issue Technician, General, and Amateur Extra class licenses. Novice and Advanced licensees will retain current operating privileges and may renew indefinitely. The FCC's new licensing scheme simplifies and shortens the upgrade path from the ground floor through Amateur Extra. There are fewer written examinations and total questions. Those wishing HF privileges also would need to pass the single 5 WPM code test.

The FCC has left it in the hands of VECs to determine the specific mix and makeup of written examination questions. Current Amateur Radio study materials remain valid at least until the new rules become effective in April.

ARRL-VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, says

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the NCVEC Question Pool Committee has been meeting by telephone and e-mail to get the updating process under way. Jahnke said the revised question pools will be out "well in advance" of April 15.

The ARRL Board of Directors is expected to review the FCC Report and Order and discuss its implications when it meets January 21-22 in Memphis.

Details of the restructuring plan and a list of frequently asked questions are available on the ARRL Web site, <http://www.arrl.org>.

## Receive The KEY via Email

Thanks to a software upgrade for N1JJ, *The KEY* is now available in electronic format via your email account on the Internet. What are the advantages to this format? You will receive it the same day it is completed (several days before the print version arrives in the mail), most of the photos will be in color, and depending on your printer, the quality will be as good or better than what you receive in the mail. Perhaps the biggest advantage is to the club, however. Sending *The KEY* via email costs us nothing, whereas the print version causes us to spend money for both copying and postage.

All you need to view this electronic format on your computer is Adobe® Acrobat® reader software. You can download a free PC or Mac version on the Internet (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>). If you would like to receive *The KEY* via email instead of the print version, send a message to Jock Irvine at [n1ji@arrl.net](mailto:n1ji@arrl.net) asking to be added to the electronic distribution list. The size of the file you will be sent is anywhere from 100K to around 1.5 Megabytes, depending on the number of photos, etc.

An archive of past issues is on the CVRC Web site at [www.qsl.net/k1bke](http://www.qsl.net/k1bke). The current issue, however, will only be available to club members who are on the distribution list.

## Merrimack County ARES Corner

**Tom, N1SKZ, Emergency  
Coordinator**

(Photos by Don Curtis, N1ZIH)



**Net: 20:00 Local Time, Mondays**  
**Frequency: 146.895 - (CVRC Repeater)**  
**Alternate: 147.570 Simplex**

**E-mail: N1SKZ@ARRL.NET**  
**Phone: 464-4095 (evenings)**

Well it appears we all made it through Y2K. No mass panic, no utilities going dark and no ATMs spitting out cash (darn). So what was it? Well from my perspective it gave us all, individuals, governments and public and private agencies a wake-up call that the technology we all depend on to work and play is subject to failure. It also gave us, as Hams, the opportunity to show how well prepared we can be no matter what the emergency. This is what was accomplished on Y2K.

On December 31st, 11 members of Merrimack County ARES staffed the American Red Cross in Concord, Concord Fire Department and worked

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from their homes ready to jump into action should primary communication systems fail. K1PDY, N1IIC and N1ZIH set-up at the Red Cross and established communications using HF, VHF (voice, packet and APRS) and UHF communications. N1PHV and N1SKZ set-up at Concord Fire and established voice and data links between Red Cross and NHOEM using VHF (voice, packet and APRS) and UHF. Working from their QTH, K1RAB and KB1EDP established voice and data links to both stations and was prepared to be our HF liaison to the State-wide ARES net should the need arise. Standing by, should additional resources be required, were N1GJF, N1KMY, K1CYJ and W1GIL.

At 2100 local time a net was called and remained active until 0100 on 1/1/2000. While no emergency traffic was handled our ability to work as a coordinated team and established redundant modes of communications between sites did not go without notice by the agencies we served. I would like to thank all the members who gave up their night to help Merrimack County ARES make a difference. The professionalism that all showed both on the air and off went a long way in establishing ARES as a resource that can be tapped by these groups. Thank you all for making a difference.

In the last installment of this column, I mentioned the strong possibility that the Red Cross, Concord Chapter, would be allocating funds for a station. That possibility is now a reality! The Red Cross has approved spending approximately \$1,400 for a VHF/UHF voice and data station to be housed at the Chapter House on North Main Street in Concord. The station will consist of a Kenwood TM-V7A dual-band transceiver, Kantronics KPC-3Plus



TNC, Diamond X-50 antenna and a high capacity gel cell battery/charger. The PC that will be used to run APRS and packet modes was donated by the daughter of N1VRT with N1KTP donating a 100MHZ-mother board/processor/video and LAN card. The system is now loaded up with the necessary software applications ready to be integrated with the rest of the station. WA3LDI of PIEXX in Hillsboro donated a Regency scanner that will be used to monitor various public service frequencies. The current equipment at the Red Cross, an Astron 35M power supply and VHF low band transceiver, used for Red Cross communications, will be moved to the same area as the Ham station. An application for a club call will be submitted to provide the Chapter with its own on-air identity. It is our hope that the station will be on the air in the March time frame.

It is important to realize that were it not for the continued support of ARES by the membership of the CVRC, this relationship with the Red Cross would not be possible. With members ready to help with such activities as Y2K, the NH Fire Wardens drill and the Monday evening net, I am confident ARES will have the support necessary to keep growing in 2000 and beyond. The invitation is out there for all reading this column to become involved with ARES by checking into the net and making your voice heard.

See you all on the net. 73, Tom

