



The *KEY*

The Newsletter of the Contoocook Valley Radio Club

<http://www.qsl.net/k1bke>

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Election of Officers

Dale Clement, AF1T

The annual election takes place at the November meeting. The present officers feel that it is time for a change. Of course, we're always willing to assist the club, behind the scenes. Please consider serving a term. If you can't, then think of someone who is willing and able to do a good job in 2002. Nominations will be accepted at the October meeting.

Ground Zero – An A.R.E.S. Observation

John Marcel, K1FDD

On Thursday, September 20, while on a trip to New Jersey for a family matter. I was able to listen to the New York City RACES/ARES Emergency Net operating on the 147.000 Repeater in Manhattan. Other frequencies were put into service, but I only heard this repeater. Even more than a week after the tragic events of September 11th and being able to listen for only 2-3 hours, there was little down time on the repeater. I would like to share some observations (along w/ some research) I was able to make that defined the operations of the NYC ARES/RACES Emergency Net.

The NYC RACES/ARES Emergency Net (the Net) was the control of all communications conducted on the repeater (147.00). "All" traffic was routed to Net first. The primary user of the repeater was the New York Red Cross Headquarters in Brooklyn.

Net Control played a small, but vital role in the operation. Often Net Control simply answered and allowed operators to talk directly between each other. But at all times Net Control maintained just that, Net control. I was able to monitor the transfer of Net Control Operators. It was done by requesting permission from the current Net Control, and then advising what operator was now on duty. (I.e. This is WA2XXX, Net Control for the New York City RACES/ARES Emergency Net at xx:xx Hours Local). A few times, mul-

Programs

October 9 — 2-Meter "Fox Hunt" by K1MID near library, 6:30 -7:30 pm (weather permitting). Main Program: "Military Electronics" by N1PHV. Larry collects and restores military vehicles and communications equipment. He has plenty of interesting stories and "show-and-tell" items.

November 13 — Election of officers. Surprise program (To be announced).

December 11 — Annual Christmas supper and party.

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.

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multiple units would be calling, requiring Net Control to prioritize and determine who was to communicate; Then put the others “into the queue” for their turn in line.

National Traffic System (NTS) formatted messages were almost “Never” used. In all the traffic I heard, only one NTS formatted message was passed. It was a formal piece requesting something from the city and was labeled “Routine”. An additional piece of traffic was referred to. Net Control advised they’d take the message and create a NTS Formatted message to send along (again routine). But the original traffic wasn’t NTS. Most formal pieces of traffic were simply announced as “Text Messages” and announced as needed from Red Cross Headquarters. These messages included requests for shelter counts, communications needs, meal requests, etc. A somewhat humorous message requested that “Big Eaters” be labeled as two people to allow Red Cross officials to properly feed them. Periodically, Net Control would ask for any Emergency, Priority or Routine/Other traffic.

Tactical call signs used almost exclusively. Amateur call signs were usually used at the end of pieces of traffic. Some tactical call signs were easy to figure out. Others were not. My observation here is a mixture of fact and some speculation based on the traffic I heard. Net Control was simply called “Net”. Likewise, “Red Cross” was the NYRC Headquarters in Brooklyn. OEM-1, OEM-2, etc were units assigned to the NYC Office of Emergency Management. Numbers like “131” were associated with schools in NYC. Public Elementary and Middle (called Intermediate) schools in NYC are numbered and not named. So IS-131 is Intermediate School 131. PS-205 would be Public (Elementary) School 205. Many schools were being used as shelters and staffed with a ham along with a shelter manager from Red Cross. Another heard was “Comprehensive”. This appeared to be a shelter at a private company facility.

SC-1, SC-2, etc (Phonetically called Sierra Charlie) appeared to be Supplies and Procurement units. They were often advising they needed to get supplies (both rescue effort & personal) from one place to another. M.1, M.2, etc (pronounced M-dot-1) appeared to be Rescue Teams working at the site. When rain started to really move in, one of these units requested multiple ponchos from SC-2 & Red Cross for “Rescue Workers”. Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles (ERV’s) were easily distinguishable unless they left off the ERV on the call sign and just used their number. Often “ERV-1105” simply signed on as “1105”. And they were still easily distinguishable to Red Cross since they knew who it was (even if I didn’t). One exception to tactical call signs was a few times, area EC’s used their amateur call signs because they no tactical designation. However, when calling Net, they had to identify who they were and why they were on the repeater. “Chelsea” appeared to be the staging & supply area for various operations. From the beginning, the Chelsea Pier area of Manhattan was used for many types of staging.

“Ground Zero” is an official term being used by operators when on (or in vicinity) to the site of the World Trade Center. An interesting series of traffic from SC-2 to Red Cross advised they could not say where they were. However, they were located at “Kitchen-1”. Red Cross advised they knew where they were and would received their request. I couldn’t tell if SC-2 could not advise their location for security reasons, or because they just didn’t know where they were. This has been a problem for workers, just being disorientated by the buildings around them and the fact the best landmark is now the rubble they are searching.

In cases when mobiles were unavailable, HT’s were used at shelters & facilities around the city. However, after a little while, the powers that be of ARES/RACES determined that “ALL” shelters “MUST” have mobile radios with power supplies and mag-mount

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antennas. HT's (with or without amplifiers) must be replaced ASAP. Some traffic centered on operators finding the "Hot Spot" for antennas at the shelters. Shelters were asked to provide the number of cots, current "clients" (people staying there) and standing capacity. Usually, shelter managers determined this using the FDNY occupancy rating and factoring in cots, etc. To reduce traffic on the Net, shelter requests were switched from radio to landline, unless phones were unavailable.

It became obvious that many hams from many places are involved with the operation. Obviously, "2" call signs were prevalent as those from New York & New Jersey. In addition I heard many many "1" call signs (New England) as well as many "3's" (Mid-Atlantic) and even a couple "VE3's" (somewhere in Canada).

Amateur Radio has been involved with operations since tragedy struck America. Whether the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, or elsewhere, hams have been ready and deployed to assist in relief efforts. They've acted with professionalism and patriotism and can be proud of their contribution in the difficult time.

Review of the ARRL VHF QSO Party Dale Clement, AF1T

The Sept. 8-11, 2001 VHF Contest experienced some of the best propagation in years. Unusual tropospheric conditions extended signal distances well beyond normal, from 50 MHz up through microwaves. I made contacts from Nova Scotia to Ohio and into the Carolinas. K8GP on Spruce Knob, WV, was heard on 2-meter FM-simplex all weekend. I worked them on six bands, up through 1296 MHz. Lee, AA1YN, got on 432 MHz just in time, with his new transverter and rebuilt collinear array. This event should set several new scoring records.

Thoughts On My QSL'ing Experiences By Al Marin, K1CYJ

I was reading an article written recently by Ed Deikler, K2TE, about QSL's in his club newsletter, the Nashua Radio Club. He was recounting how he had just finished or someone he knew had finished organizing his QSL cards. He mentioned that the numbers of cards that had been accumulated could have easily been equivalent to an 8-foot stack of cards. How many card would that be? By knowing the number of cards per inch thick, then one could calculate approximately how many cards that stack had. And from that stack, various different sortings had to be done to accommodate the requirements for various certificate applications. Once the certificates had been received and mounted of the shack wall, that individual had acquired certain bragging rights.

Well anyway, the article got me to think of my own QSL'ing over the many years that I have been in ham radio. I must admit that contesting has not been a great force in my activity on the hams bands except for different time during the span of forty-four years. The QSL card held a certain mystique when I first became active as a Novice in the late 50's. I did acquire one of more economical printed KN1 cards and was faithful in responding or initiating the exchanges. It wasn't more than a year that I received my "Conditional." Being located way up in the Aroostook County Maine, on the Canadian border, that was the way to go. Well, I did get to know almost everyone in the "County" and had their card on my Ham Shack walls. Yes, those were the "AM" days and also ten meters was wide open for daily contacts with the Europeans and the west coast. The cards augmented in number so much so that I had to get a two drawer file card cabinet! The

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walls couldn't take it anymore. Besides, I lived in my parents' home and the space was very limited. By the way, I had to have another batch of cards printed with the dropped "N" from the same printer as before. Later we had a good deal through our utility company. The Northern Maine Public Service donated to any ham asking, a batch of cards with our calls and their Logo. These were greatly welcomed.

Ham radio took a back seat for many years. Through graduate school, a growing family, moving to Hillsboro, getting a career going in teaching biology all contributed to the decline of airtime. In the seventies I got back into it at the urging of K1BUR, Parker, who was a colleague of mine at Hawthorne College. He introduced me to the 4 PM'ers and the YLSSB system. Also during that time, the 3905 Century Club got me. Especially with the Century Club and the YLSSB system, many cards were exchanged, but through cost effective bureaus for both groups. And for the DX contacts, the ARRL bureau was utilized.

When my address was RFD2 – Box 100, I had a bunch of cards printed by a west coast ham who had a sideline printing business. When I received them, he had forgotten to print the data boxes and then I learned that he had become a "silent key." I have resorted to stick-on labels, computer generated templates and hand writing the QSO information. My physical location has not changed, but my mailing address changed two more times since the rural free delivery. Why not get new cards printed, you ask? Outside of doing some of the QSL cards for the K1BKE field day and NHQSO party contacts, QSL'ing has become a rare event from this station and I still have many cards left. Like someone has said, "Hams are cheap!" Let's say we are more economical or thrifty.

A new era has dawned on this issue of QSL's, e-QSLing!

Review of the 10 GHz Cumulative Contest Dale Clement, AF1T

This event differs from all others, and most closely resembles microwave contest popular in Europe. It takes place over four days and scoring depends on the distance in kilometers between two stations, calculated from their six-digit grid locators. Stations are encouraged to rove, and may be contacted more than once, provided that one has moved at least 16 KM.

10-GHz (3 cm.) radio waves are quasi-optical in nature, and most of us transmit 1 watt or less. We use small horn or dish antennas; a 24 inch dish must be aimed with 1 or 2 degree accuracy for weak signals. Generally, distances exceeding 300 KM are considered real DX. Random CQ's on 10-GHz are not very productive; we use a liaison radio at 144.260 MHz SSB to set up schedules.

All four days were nice this year. I spent Aug. 18 on Mt. Greylock, MA, and Aug. 19 roving with KB1DXD to Mt. Wachusett, MA, N1EUX's field in Mason, NH, my QTH, Mt. Kearsarge, and finally home again. A highlight was working Mark, K1MAP, as he drove west through NY on a 600 mile round trip. It was amazing to hear his little 100 mW transverter with horn antenna, held out his van window! Sept. 15-16 were spent from two locations on Martha's Vineyard. One was at the Gay Head Light-House, on a cliff 170 feet above the ocean. Al, NS1O, made a cw contact with W3RJW in PA at 401 KM, which was amazing considering the equipment used. It appears that Al has been bitten by the 10 GHz bug — he's already thinking about next year. The weather was grand. After the contest we went to the beach, where the water was much warmer than it ever gets in NH.

My grand total of 144 10 GHz contacts with 42 different stations was a personal best. I'm hoping to improve my system with a power upgrade to at least a few Watts.