

W9JOZ

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The President's Corner

Well it was another good turn out for the Starke Amateur Radio Club this month. We are still picking up new club members so we must be doing something right. Activity on the bands seems to be pretty good considering the conditions of them. Sun spots are hit and miss but the powers of be say it will get better, time will tell. Personally I have been getting back into CW, checking into a few nets. Some time I have a good fist and sometime I don't make sense but I keep hanging in there. Everyone said I will get better the more I use it. Most hams have been understanding and know I am an old newbie and they QRS for me (one of the biggest problem with CW is it doesn't have spell check (Hi Hi). It still amazes me on all of the things we can do with Ham Radio. Our club members have been interested in Olivia (digital), Satellites, Packet, EmComm, and Dxing. There are many other aspects of the hobby we haven't even covered yet but I am sure we will.

CU at the meeting

73

Tony, W9AL

Meeting March 18th

Agenda is field day and the challenge. Old business and then of course new business will be discussed as always.

Are you ready for Field Day? See page four a way to prepare. Working a contest is good practice for Field Day since FD is really a contest.

Also May 2 is the Indiana QSO Party. We will discuss more of that at an upcoming meeting.

Warmer is on the way the Redwing Blackbird was reported seen in the area. They only come back

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President Speaks/ Meeting Reminder/
- 2 Training and Preparation
- 3 Training ... continued
- 4 ARRL SSB Contest



Training and Preparation

Training and Preparation are two very important aspects of any serious organizational group and most especially of Amateur Radio Emergency Communicators.

What exactly does this mean to you and your group?

Well it could mean many things. Operations in a rural environment are quite different from an urban environment and yet there are certain benchmarks as the saying goes that are inherent to both. Let's start with 'Formal Directed Nets'.

Formal Directed Nets begin and end with an NCS directing communications on a specific frequency and between all involved and recognized participating stations. Transmissions are short sweet and to the point. If longer transmissions are necessary or multiple messages need to be handled at one time, the NCS may opt to send several stations off frequency to handle their own individual business and then return to the net frequency to again be available. (This is one reason to be aware of what frequencies are useful in your county both from a repeater and a simplex standpoint and who can hear whom based on knowledge of propagation in your area.) In this sense then a good NCS is much like a 'Dispatcher or Traffic Cop' in that they direct and maintain control over a group and a frequency. Anyone can and should attempt to be an NCS at least once. The experience will give you a newfound respect for what other NCS's go through in the course of a shift at the mike. Not all who try the NCS position will or are destined to be good NCS material.

Know your radio or the radio that you will be using.

Periodic activation of the EOC's or use of your 'Go-Kit' will allow you to keep in touch with whether or not you have issues with the radio and how to utilize some of the features inside it. Periodic testing of the use of CTCSS codes (sometimes called PL Tones) on simplex could allow you to mitigate or lessen the interference that might be on a given frequency at a given time. On newer radios there are now DCS codes also. This allows us to have many different 'Users' on the same frequency and each only hearing what is intended for them. This however does not stop the fact that the frequency can only support one conversation between two or more stations at a time.

Understand what it means to be SAFE.

In most cases you will be assigned a location that has been deemed safe by a safety officer of some sort. Does this mean that that location will continue to be safe? No, so it is important that you learn to be aware of your surroundings from an 'all of your senses' standpoint. Does something catch the corner of your eyes that does not look right? Ask someone to investigate it that has the authority to do so and make a determination. Still not sure if it's safe, ask to be repositioned to somewhere you feel safer. Use your nose to smell, your body to feel. Smelling 'Rotten Eggs' can or cannot signal something that may be dangerous for or to you. Ask for training in HazMAT or Personal Safety at a later time. The life you save just might be your own.

Not Computer literate or comfortable?

Ask for training and assistance in learning computer skills. In this age of technology the use of computers is more prevalent than ever. Ask in advance of an actual event for help and training in the use of computers for record keeping and Packet operations. Don't arrive at a scene and find that you need these skills and do not have them after accepting the assignment. You have just as much of a responsibility as the 'Staging Manager or Logistics Director' to be aware of the skills needed for a specific position and whether you have those skills or not. Ask questions in advance!

Know Basic 'First AID and CPR techniques'!

You may never need them and in fact one of the things that everyone is first taught when they take these courses is that once you begin giving care to someone you have an obligation to continue until one of two things occurs.

1. Someone else arrives and relieves you. Or,
2. You get so tired that your own safety is in question from continued service

There have been many articles in the news of late of people collapsing in various situations and others coming to their aid. This has allowed many of these people to survive the episode that beseeched them. Whether this is from a Heart Attack or a Diabetic episode is not important other than the fact that either of these conditions can be life threatening. Ask for training in First Aid and CPR!

These are but a few of many things that all of us should be thinking about besides the use of and talking on our radios when we decide to enlist our services in Emergency Communications. EC's think about and talk with your people and served agencies to see if they can make these and other types of training available. You may never need these skills but you'll be glad you had them if they save yours or someone else's life down the road and make your job easier in the long run.

Tony - W9AL



Remember our goal is score high so no county around here can come close to beating us again this year. Be prepared, work the bands, and score the points.

Watch field Day here we comeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

ARRL DX Phone Contest Brings DX in Full Force to HF Bands

Source: www.arrl.org

With the [2009 ARRL International DX CW Contest](#) now history, the first full weekend in March brings the next round of competition: [The 2009 ARRL DX Phone Contest](#). Like its CW predecessor, this event focuses on DX station working all US states and Canadian provinces, while US and Canadian amateurs try to work as many DX countries as possible over the 48 hour contest period.

"While the origins of the ARRL DX Contest go back to 1929, the first Phone weekend wasn't until 1937," said ARRL Contest Branch Manager Sean Kutzko, KX9X. "AM was the voice mode used at that time. The rules may have changed since the event was held back in the 1930s, but the premise remains the same: How many contacts with stations in far-away locales can you make?"

Just as in the CW contest a couple of weeks ago, US and Canadian stations send a signal report and their state or province, while DX stations send a signal report and their transmit power. Remember that for this contest, Alaska and Hawaii are considered DX stations -- this means stations in KH6 and KL7 focus their efforts on working Stateside and Canada.

How can you participate? Kutzko said you're only limited by your imagination and willingness to get on the air: "Even though we are at the bottom of the 11-year solar cycle, there will be plenty of chances to work DX, even for stations running 100 W and a dipole or vertical antenna. If you live in an area where antenna restrictions exist, take your contest effort on the road! Operate from your car, set up a portable antenna in a park or campground or see if a friend's station is available. If you have a station and won't be using it, consider opening your doors to members of your club to try their hand at working some DX. If you make 100 QSOs, you're eligible to purchase a commemorative pin for your efforts."

The ARRL International DX Phone Contest runs from 0000 UTC Saturday, March 7 to 2359 UTC Sunday, March 8. Complete rules and forms are available [online](#). Why let all this DX pass you by? Get on the air and have some fun!

Until month

73

John

W3ML