

SHORT CIRCUITS

Newsletter of the Kent County Amateur Radio Club

October 2024

Officers			Repeaters
President	Jim Moore	KC3BTV	146.970 (-) 77hz pl Dover
Vice-President	Hunter Grier	W3CZ	146.910 (-) 77hz pl Camden
Secretary	Tim Reisinger	KC3OO	147.300 (+) 77 hz pl N3YMS
Treasurer	Tom Libertore	N3ARX	444.550 (+) 77hz pl Dover (down) 442.450 (+) 127.3 hz pl Harrington 449.775 (-) 114.8 hz pl N3IOC Felton

Happenings

October 5	MS Bike to the Bay (Delaware), more info below
October 8	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
October 10	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
October 12	Apple-Scrapple Festival, Bridgeville, more info below
October 23	DARC Meeting, Salisbury, see https://www.qsl.net/darc/ for details
October 26	Annual ARRL SET (Simulated Emergency, Details to be announced)
October 28	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
November 12	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
November 14	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
November 20	DARC Dinner Meeting, Salisbury, No program. See qsl.net/darc for details
November 25	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
December 7	Rehoboth Marathon, more info coming
December 14	VE Testing, Wyoming Methodist Church, 09:00
January 14, 2025	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
January 25-26, 2025	Winter Field Day, more to come

Hamfests

October 6	CARA Fest 2024 Columbia Amateur Radio Association Howard County Fairgrounds, 221 Fairgrounds Road, West Friendship, MD 21794 Contact: Andy Protigal , N3AWP, 6431 Skipton Drive Hanover, MD 21076 Phone: 410-218-3815 Email: n3awp@arrl.net Talk-In: 147.390 MHz (+) 156.7 Hz PL
October 20	RF Hill Amateur Radio Club Hamfest 2.0 RF Hill Amateur Radio Club Upper County Campus of the Bucks County Community College, 1 Hillendale Rd. (Use Blooming Glen Rd. entrance 40°22'57.2"N 75°16'26.3"W)), Perkasio, PA 18944 Contact: John Morrell , KB3EWV, RF Hill ARC P.O. Box 336 Perkasio, PA 18944-0336 Phone: 215-399-7685 Email: rfillarc@yahoo.com Talk-In: 145.31 MHz, 131.8 Hz
November 2	Delmarva Swapmeet Delmarva Amateur Radio Club QTH of Al Waller K3TKJ, 34087 Old Hickory Rd, Laurel, DE 19956 Contact: Jim Jester, KC3ITR at 443-356-5677 or Arthur Parks N3EAK at amparks6@gamil.com Talk-in: 146.82 (-) (156.7 PL) Admission Free

More hamfests listed at www.arri.org/hamfests. Check at the web site, or call the contact person, before going to any hamfest to make sure it has not been canceled, as many are and have been.

Editor's Comments

As I write this, hams in the southeast are just getting back on the air after Hurricane Helene. I remember something about Helene gaining strength in the Caribbean and maybe becoming a hurricane. Well, that went out the window as Helene came ashore as a Cat 4! But this Helene is not the first one, nor is it the strongest, as there have been two other Helene's that reached Category 4 (1958 and 1988), the first Helene coming the closest to Delaware as it approached Cape Hatteras and then turned and went into the ocean. Even though the 1958 Helene didn't hit Delaware directly, there was still quite a bit of damage, but nothing like this 2024 Helene has caused in the south.

In the Tid-Bit section there is a report of one ham's experience with this storm (Aftermath) and some observations he has made. Seems like infrastructure really took a hit, and I wait for the rah rah reports from cell phone companies, if any come. However, from the FEMA Daily Briefings, the agency had put assets where they could to restore service and provide assistance where needed.

In 1958 what we see in North Carolina could have been here. And it is still possible that could happen. Are we ready?

Talking about being ready, Apple-Scrapple Festival is coming up this month on October 12 and amateur radio volunteers are needed. This is a great opportunity to display amateur radio to the public, and unlike some venues, amateurs are readily appreciated, and told so. This is a chance to work under ICS protocols, see some neat older cars, see all sorts of crafts, and sample some fantastic food. What more could anyone ask? The amateur's task is simple, be visible, answer questions (answers can be had easily through net control), and report anything out of the ordinary, and most importantly, have fun. Contact information is below under "Club News".

Meanwhile my POTA adventures are progressing, as I just obtained "Worked All States POTA" this week, got my "Repeat Offender Certificate" (funny, since I was a police officer) and have surpassed 400 unique parks in 18 different countries. All on a Cobra Lite all band dipole with 90 watts and all on "slow" CW. There you go people, something the club could do as a group with the club call for morning and afternoon outings. Any mode can be used, CW, phone, digital, whatever the group wishes. Something to think about.

President's Column

One of the oft touted mantras of ham radio is "Listen, listen, listen." Of course you must listen on a frequency so make sure you are not transmitting over someone else. But if everyone only listens then nobody makes contacts. With the exception of traffic nets, I almost exclusively use digital HF operations, Olivia, Thor, PSK31, JS8Call, and of course FT8. Of the contacts I make, about 75% is answering a station that is replying to a CQ that I made. Maybe many people are just anxious to add Delaware to their contact list as sometimes I have multiple replies to a single CQ. If one band doesn't look promising I try another. Of course I don't make contacts every time but at least I am not listening to someone else listening for me. I typically answer someone's CQ when it is from a country or maidenhead square I have not contacted or if they are doing a POTA. In order to catch fish you have to throw the line in the water.

Be radio active!

Jim KC3BTV

From the Section Manager's Shack

Greetings from Sussex County

Fall has officially arrived, bringing with it the vibrant colors of changing leaves, cooler temperatures, and lighter traffic—a welcome shift for those of us in Delaware. However, for many others, this season has presented significant challenges. September is the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season, and Hurricane Helene, a powerful Category 4 storm with winds reaching 140 mph, has left a trail of devastation. The storm tore through Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas, spanning over 800 miles and claiming more than 90 lives. Approximately 2.5 million people remain without power, with widespread disruptions to internet and cell service. Helene's torrential rains—nearly three feet in some areas—turned roads into rivers and wiped entire towns off the map.

This catastrophic event highlights the critical importance of disaster preparedness, not just as individuals but as members of the Amateur Radio Service (ARS). While monitoring active repeaters in the affected regions, I've heard distressing accounts of citizens trapped in rising floodwaters, seeking refuge in upper levels of buildings, and running out of food and water while being cut off from essential resources. Emergency Operations Centers are working tirelessly to coordinate rescue efforts, manage resources, and relay health and welfare messages. This situation reinforces the need for continuous training to ensure that we are ready to respond when disaster strikes.

One ham radio operator relayed a message urging anyone “with a battery, wire, and radio” to assist, as ARS resources were stretched thin. Another operator, after listening to the Net Control Station for two days, asked how he could join the group. As an ARS member, it's likely that your neighbors and community would turn to you for help during such emergencies. Even if you're not a member of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), it's crucial to stay sharp and practice your radio skills. Now is the time to consider joining ARES and gaining the training and experience needed to assist when disaster strikes.

Section Manager Workshop at ARRL HQ.

As Section Manager I attend the Section Manager Workshop at the ARRL HQ in Newington, CT. The class provided insight into the workings of the league as well as Radiosport and Regulatory information, Education and Learning, Publication and Editorial, and several other topics. A tour of the ARRL's electronics testing facilities showed where all of the rigs in QST are tested. A tour of W1AW station allowed me to operate making about two dozen contacts before I had to close the station. ARRL member or not, ARRL HQ is a great stop if you are traveling nearby. On my trip I was able to activate 8 POTA parks!

The returning DELMARVA Fox Hunt was a great success!

The Sussex Amateur Radio Association (SARA) hosted for the first time in seven years the DELMARVA Fox Hunt. About 15 radio operators and guests met at Trap Pond State Park in Laurel. The day was being run by Eric, WG3J. The morning started with a beautiful weather and donuts at 9am. Upon setting up three POTA stations (20m SSB, 40m SSB, and 10m CW) which ran all day, the group had a quick class on how to participate in a Fox Hunt. Two hunts were completed before a great lunch of hot dogs, hamburgers and other picnic fare. A third hunt after lunch allowed plenty of opportunities for attendees to learn about Radio Direction Finding (RDF).

Last Reminder...Simulated Emergency Test – October 26

The Delaware Section will be participating in the Simulated Emergency Test on Saturday, October 26, 2024. The SET will start off with goals and objectives for the entire Delaware Section which will cover the first half. Then each county will run their own goal/objective specific drill for the second half. Contact your Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Emergency Coordinator (EC) on how to participate. The list Delaware Section Staff with contact information can be found at <https://www.arrl.org/Groups/view/delaware>.

ARRL Service Disruption Update - DXCC

LogBook of The World, LOTW, is back online and running at full capacity with no data loss. The DXCC online system is still not working however the ARRL HQ is accepting applications. Applicants can mail their application (online at <https://www.arrl.org/dxcc-forms>) with cards for processing. Once the DXCC System returns to service it will be several months before the applications are processed as a large volume of applications will need to be processed. Any questions can be directed to the ARRL Radiosport Department. Contact information can be found on arrl.org.

Upcoming Events & Contests

Delaware Section SET – October 26, 2024 ~0900-1300. The Delaware Section will be participating in the Simulated Emergency Test on Saturday, October 26, 2024. The SET will start off with goals and objectives for the entire Delaware Section which will cover the first half. Then each county will run their own goal/objective specific drill for the second half. Contact your Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Emergency Coordinator (EC) on how to participate. The list Delaware Section Staff with contact information can be found at <https://www.arrl.org/Groups/view/delaware>.

CQ World Wide SSB Contest – Worldwide contest. Visit www.cqww.com for rules and other messages. Visit contests.arrl.org or www.contestcalendar.com for details on these and upcoming contests.

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest & Upgrading Members

Join me in welcoming the latest additions to our vibrant community:

KC3CTQ: Jon Malenfant

KC3DPG: Thomas Weaver

KC3ZSK: Philip Ruff

KC3ZSL: Dylan Harding

KC3ZSM: Youngsluck Sheen

KC3ZSN: Khader Shaik

KC3ZSS: Charles Buchta

Let's Get Together!

Staying active in the amateur radio community is key to enhancing your skills and staying connected with fellow operators. Whether through participating in local events, joining contests, or taking part in online forums, there are many ways to keep learning and sharing knowledge. Engaging in regular communication, experimenting with new technology, or mentoring new operators can enrich your experience. Let's continue to support each other and enjoy all the opportunities amateur radio has to offer—keeping the spirit of discovery and collaboration alive! As always feel free to contact me about anything radio and hope to hear you on the air.

73,

Steven Keller

Delaware Section Manager

Email: kc3dso@gmail.com

Cell: 240.515.0620

Office: 302.604.7470

The Emcomm Corner

August-September is normally the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season and it looks like we have probably dodged a bullet again this year. Unfortunately, when we are impacted very infrequently, it is very easy to lose the edge needed for emergency operations.

Thanks to those who participated in the Family Emergency Preparedness Day and to Paul Tuley, N3BUH, who coordinated things in my absence. It is never a bad idea to have an emergency “bug out”

kit should you suddenly have to evacuate your home. Thankfully we are not faced with the possibility of wildfires forcing us out with fifteen minutes warning. The time to prepare is before the crisis hits.

We now have HF/VHF winlink digital capability in the EOC Radio Room, and in Go Kit #1 and #2 as well as VHF digital capability in the Communications Trailer. Our primary ARES responsibility is to provide whatever backup communications assistance needed by DPS and the more tools we have in our toolbox, the better we can serve.

Jim KC3BTV
Kent County Emergency Coordinator

AUXCOMM News

WHO IS IN CHARGE?

A fair question, I believe, and if we're talking EMCOMM, an easy one to answer. Per the many FEMA directives, all response and recovery operations in the US are to be managed under the tenets of the Incident Command System (ICS). With its "single line of authority" concept, who is in charge is the individual at the top of the chart! For Sussex County, that would be our new Director of Public Safety, Robbie Murray. Under him is Deputy Director EM, Tim Cooper. AUXCOMM falls under Tim's direction. For me as the Auxiliary Communication Leader (ACL) for AUXCOMM, I couldn't be happier! (the use of 'familiar names' is deliberate, that is how they wish to be addressed).

If you've been following the happenings across the country, the great flagship for ARES, the State of Florida, in one administrative move, mandated AUXCOMM as the auxiliary communication protocol for all EOC's in the state. To their credit, they also provided multiple opportunities for volunteers to take the FEMA developed AUXCOMM course. Many states have now adopted and developed the AUXCOMM program to support their response plans, with more every year. Why, because it gives them control over who is in their facility, and how things are done. Very few hams in Delaware have taken the course. Jerry Palmer, N3KRX and I took it the last time it was offered in Delaware, with most of the rest of the class from out of state. It is an intense three days, and thorough in covering auxiliary EMCOMM for EOC's. It also stresses the application of ICS to EMCOMM volunteers.

You cannot have effective effort if the direction for that effort is fractured and split. We've all seen the bickering and petty arguments that seem to be more frequent in the amateur radio community. There also seems to be "turf wars" breaking out. This will not do the image of amateur radio any good at all. Those of you in HOA's want concessions? What are you doing to show the management and other members of your community you deserve them? Are you using your license and skills to serve your community at large? What is the image the general public has, if any, of "Hams"? Have you recently participated in a public service event where the public gets to see you "helping and serving"? There are opportunities that will put you out there and visible. How do you expect to be considered competent in your skills, if you're not out there practicing them? And, it might also help if you availed yourself of training opportunities that are offered every so often, and unfortunately not very well attended. You might find them helpful.

I have heard complaints that membership in local ham clubs is stagnant or declining. Think about the bickering and backstabbing that goes on in your group, might that have an effect? Are you welcoming to all, regardless of their views and personalities? Is there honest dialogue with differing viewpoints? There is a strength in diversity! You would do well to embrace it. If someone new, or an old-timer, comes into your meeting, are you welcoming to him/her? There's your increase in membership and income from dues!

Public service events are some of the best training opportunities; provide some of the best positive public exposure; and a great place to put a good face on amateur radio. Why aren't you out there participating? "I don't want to be out there all day", "it's boring at times", "you can't chit-chat with the

other hams”; are some of the lame excuses that I’ve heard over the years. There’s some validity in the comments, but that’s the nature of public service in an event running safely and well. On the other side of the question, when was the last time you actually had to operate in a full scale, the “brown stuff has hit the fan” disaster scenario? Do you really know what it’s like to have to operate around the clock for days? Since there hasn’t been a ‘real’ disaster (not that I’m wishing for one) in Sussex County since the “Double Blizzards” of 2010, therefore most of you have no idea what can happen. That little scenario required ‘round the clock’ operation for over five days by hams, and in most of the rural area of the county there was no power and a lot of landline phones were out of service. Now fast forward fourteen years, consider the county’s growth, and what will it be like if Mother Nature decides to bless us again with her bounty of white stuff? Did you see on the news the effect of Hurricane remnants in North Carolina and Tennessee? It happened real fast for them!

The Sussex AUXCOMM Group is operating in two large public service events before the end of 2024. The Apple Scrapple Festival the 12th of this month, and the Rehoboth Marathon on December 7th. Here’s your chance to get some of that ‘real world’ public service experience. Elsewhere in the newsletter is an announcement from Bill Saunders N3ID for Apple Scrapple; consider doing it. You will probably learn something, and might even have fun!

Later, 73
John Ferguson K3PFW
Auxiliary Comm. Leader
Sussex County (DE) EOC

Club Happenings

October is Election Nomination Month

That’s right boys and girls, it’s that time already! The club will be taking nominations for offices in the Kent County Amateur Radio Club. Nominations will be open and will remain open until the November meeting at which time elections will be held, new officers are installed in December, as outlined in Section 1 of the By-Laws. If you’re interested in running for office, or know someone who is, be sure to make the October meeting and nominate them for office. Candidates will be listed in the November issue of the newsletter.

Proposals to Club Operations

At the September meeting four proposals were outlined by Paul, N3BUH. You may have seen them on the club reflector and a couple responses to them. If not, there’s another reason to subscribe to the club reflector (get up with N3ARX to do that). There are some good points and bad points to each proposal. Listen to each at the October meeting and decide for yourself. Keep an open mind!

October is Apple-Scrapple Month

The town of Bridgeville, DE will host the annual Apple Scrapple Festival on Saturday, October 12th. This town-wide event draws thousands of visitors to enjoy the rides, exhibitions, concerts, and food. Sussex County AUXCOMM will be supporting the Mobile Command Unit, providing amateur radio operators to cover specific key locations throughout the event in addition to observing the crowd and reporting any incident requiring emergency response. We also interface with the public providing them with critical information like where the restrooms are located, and, maybe, where they parked their car!

This is where you come in. We need several dozen operators to fully cover this event. Positions are available for full or half day operation. A VHF/UHF handheld radio is all that is needed, though a spare battery and surveillance or speaker mic are recommended. In addition to applying your ham radio skills and helping serve the public, you also get to explore and enjoy all of the food and fun the festival offers.

Please consider giving up all or part of the day to provide a meaningful service to the community. In past years some of our teams were instrumental in reuniting families that had become separated from their young ones, providing much needed information on what is where, aiding in timely EMS response, and providing valuable information to our public safety partners. Volunteers will operate in pairs. First timers need not worry about knowing where to go or what to expect as you will be teamed with an experienced operator.

Information about the festival is available from the organizer's website <https://www.applescrapple.com/>. Thank you to those few who have already asked to be involved. To get on the roster and receive further details as we get closer, please respond to this email, or email ws3eoc@gmail.com with 2024 Apple in the subject line. Indicate whether you are available for morning, afternoon, or full-day shifts. Thanks, & 73!

Bill, N3ID

Annual SET

The annual ARRL sponsored Simulated Emergency test (SET) is scheduled to take place on Saturday, October 26. details have not been disclosed as of yet and will probably be forthcoming either at the October meeting, or by email. The method has not been disclosed either. If interested in participating, contact Jim, KC3BTV, for more information.

Winter Field Day Is Coming

There was a meeting held by our two chairmen for winter Field Day recently, and a report of the meeting will be presented at the October meeting. As of now, the event will be held on the property of Dover Downs in a parking area on the East of Route One. The place is fairly isolated and we will be able to set up antennas and equipment the day before the event.

Come to the meeting and hear current ideas, that probably will change some as the dates come closer. This promises to be a fun event where people can exercise their HF and VHF legs, and maybe some other bands too.

Attention All Amateur Radio Operators

The ARRL Delaware Section Staff will be holding an "Ask The Staff" staff meeting via Zoom on Monday, October 7, 2024. The meeting will start at 1900 hours for Staff Only. At the conclusion of the brief staff only meeting, about 1930 hours, I will open the Zoom to all in the waiting room to join. The Zoom link is below and ensure you change your display name to your first name and callsign if licensed. This meeting is open to all to join, regardless of membership in any club or group. ARRL Delaware Section Staff Members will be online to answer any questions, comments or concerns about the Delaware Section. Brief updates will be provided on section goal and objectives, current initiatives, recent events and allow each staff member to make comments.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85630668651?pwd=Lpxc3CYmbEZxh2aR8751S79VEJLaXM.1>

This meeting may be recorded. By participating you consent to being recorded.

Please change your display name to your First Name, Call Sign (or organization) and Location, e.g. Steven KC3DSO.

Please stay muted until ready to speak. Your space bar works like a PTT for unmuting

You may ask questions in chat; Please precede any questions with a Q:

Any questions contact me below.

Steven Keller KC3DSO

kc3dso@gmail.com C- 240.515.0620 O- 302.604.7470

Useless facts of the Month

There is a town called Jackpot in Nevada. (Too bad you don't get one for being there!!!)

OMG was added to dictionaries in 2011, but its first known use was in 1917. (I was not around then!!)

Snails can sleep for up to three years. (Wonder how you tell if they are, and if they snore??!!)

At room temperature, the average air molecule travels at the speed of a rifle bullet. (Quick little suckers!!)

The first public zoo in the United States was opened in Philadelphia in 1874. (And now the whole place is a zoo!!!)

Someone on Earth reports seeing a UFO every three minutes. (They got to lay off that stuff!!!!)

The Sahara Desert stretches farther than the distance from California to New York. (A long walk!!!)

The Anglo-Zanzibar War only lasted a whopping 38 minutes, and holds the record of being the shortest war in recorded history. The war began in 1896 when Sultan Khalid bin Bargash of Zanzibar seized power following the suspicious death of his uncle. The British, deeming Khalid too independent, issued an ultimatum to Khalid demanding that he order his forces to stand down and leave the palace. When Khalid refused, British warships opened fire on the Sultan's palace, quickly overwhelming his defenses. Khalid fled, resulting in a swift British victory.

Sir Isaac Newton was a physicist and mathematician who developed the principles of modern physics, including the three laws of motion, and is credited as one of the great minds of the 17th century Scientific Revolution. Sir Isaac Newton introduced the three laws of motion in 1687 in his book entitled *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, which has been called the most influential book on physics. Newton's three laws of motion describe the relationship between a body and the forces acting upon it, and its motion in response to those forces.

Tidbit of Information of the Month Department

Heroic Efforts by Dover Police Communications Operators Save Lives in European Waters

September 12, 2024 Dover Police Department

On August 27, 2024, at approximately 3:36 PM, the Dover Police Department received a call from an individual in Albania, reporting that their brother's boat was sinking in the English Channel off the coast of Dover, England. The caller had conducted an internet search for the "Dover Police Department" and the first search result on the screen proved to be the Dover, Delaware Police Department. The family member thought they were calling Dover, England but was connected with our agency here in the United States.

Recognizing the risks associated with trying to refer the frantic emergency caller, Communications Operator MacKenzie Atkinson kept them on the line and began collecting critical information. The caller provided the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of this vessel and C/O Atkinson used the skills obtained from her training through "Priority Dispatch" and her newly acquired certification from the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch and followed the protocols for a vessel in distress. While C/O Atkinson kept working with the caller on the phone, C/O Connor Logan began making international notifications in an effort to rescue this sinking vessel. Within just four minutes, he established contact with the following domestic and international agencies:

- The Kent County 911/Division of Emergency Communications
 - Delaware River and Bay Authority Section of the U.S. Coast Guard
 - U.S. Coast Guard District 5
 - The French Coast Guard
 - His Majesty's Coast Guard of England
 - Dover, England Police Stations
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency's Coordination Center

Just 15 minutes and 48 seconds after the initial call, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency confirmed they were on their way to rescue the vessel. While all of this was going on, the remaining two dispatchers, C/O Patricia Mazzola and C/O Briana Dozier ensured that all local calls were handled and the citizens of Dover still received emergency services without any delays. On September 5th, 2024, while conducting a follow-up on the incident, we received confirmation that the vessel and all persons on board were safely returned to the Port of Dover, England as part of this rescue effort. As a result, Emergency Communications Manager Matthew Carey has nominated the group for a Dover PD Distinguished Unit Commendation.

Message from Chief Johnson

"When folks hear me say that 'I work with great people', they usually infer that I'm talking about sworn police officers. But let me just set the record straight that I mean everybody when I say that. The Dover Police Department has extraordinary civilian contributors to our public safety mission. Our Communications Operators are great examples of that and never get enough credit for being first responders. In this case, their ability to coordinate an international rescue effort while maintaining the safety of our local community is a testament to their exceptional skill and commitment. I will, of course, be approving the commendation submitted by the ECM and have informed Mayor Christiansen of this extraordinary success."

Thanks to the Dover Delaware Police website

AFTERMATH...

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024 THOMAS WITHERSPOON

Good Morning, Friends,

As some of you may know, my area of western North Carolina (Swannanoa) was hit hard by record-setting flooding and high winds from the remnants of Hurricane Helene. We live in a rural, somewhat remote part of Buncombe County, and while we were prepared for power outages, downed trees, and general disruptions, what we actually experienced was nothing short of catastrophic. Even though we expected a devastating storm, I don't think anyone was fully prepared for what unfolded.

From about midnight until midday on Friday—especially between 1:00 AM and 10:00 AM—we endured tropical-storm-force winds and relentless rain after nearly 24 hours of heavy rainfall from a prior weather system. During this time, we listened to tree after tree uprooting and crashing down around our home. Since we're surrounded by forest, we were understandably concerned about trees hitting the house. At 6:00 AM, two trees did hit the house, just before the strongest wind gusts occurred between 7:00-9:00 AM. Thankfully, the damage was limited—both trees struck a corner of the house, but no limbs penetrated the roof or ceiling (I believe our metal roof helped prevent that). They did damage two of our PV panels. Unfortunately, the trees did hit our Subaru, crushing the front of the car. RIP Ella Sue. We were extremely fortunate that no more trees hit the house. At our altitude, I'm certain the wind gusts exceeded 75 mph.

When it was safe to go outside, we discovered that at least a dozen large, old-growth trees had fallen across our driveway. Clearing them all will take days. We lost so many hardwoods that it now looks like our house has been relocated to a different spot. The road leading to our house is also blocked by

downed trees and power lines. A portion of the road in the valley, which follows a creek (as many roads do in western NC), is likely washed out. It may be days before we can check. As bad as all of this was for us, we feel incredibly lucky. If you've seen the news, you'll know that many people in our area lost their homes and businesses entirely. Tragically, there's also been loss of life.

The only reason I can post this update is because we have solar panels and battery backup. The system wasn't designed for what may be two or more weeks without power, but by conserving energy, we're able to live comfortably and help our neighbors. We also recently switched to a satellite-based internet service (a new option from HughesNet), which is why we still have internet access. Mobile phone systems in the region are completely down, and almost no one has service—including local TV reporters. A large portion of the population here is without internet, according to reports. Even the 911 system is largely inaccessible. Residents are being urged to text 911 in emergencies, but in many areas, even that's not possible.

Ham Radio to the Rescue

I've heard it all my life: when all else fails, ham radio still works. And let me tell you, it's true. Throughout the storm, our normally quiet repeater systems were buzzing with activity. The traffic became very organized, with hourly nets helping pass messages to family and friends, sharing detailed on-the-ground reports, and identifying areas where help was needed. Even though our emergency services are overwhelmed, we're able to connect with them via amateur radio networks like ARES. Right now, being a ham feels like a superpower. For many people, it's the only form of communication that still works.

Grateful Despite It All

The big takeaway from all of this is gratitude. We are safe. Our family is so fortunate to have made it through this storm, which broke almost every weather-related record for the region. Literally. We haven't been able to contact many friends due to the widespread internet outages, but those we've reached are safe, and for that, we are incredibly grateful. Thanks to the advance warning from meteorologists, we were able to prepare, and the number of fatalities has been remarkably low. Had this storm hit 50 years ago, it would have been a different story altogether. We know we'll get through this. Our community is strong, and we have friends who can help, just as we'll help them.

Of course, I won't be activating any parks or summits for a while. I've canceled my trip to the W4 SOTA campout next weekend. But as long as we have power and the internet, I'll continue to post guest contributions and field reports from the QRPer.com community. I also plan to post some updates as we recover.

I've already received so many kind messages from readers—thank you! My time to reply is limited, as I'll be spending the next several days clearing trees and helping neighbors. But I appreciate your thoughts and concern. If, for some reason, things go quiet here on the website, it's just because we've lost our internet connection. If you're a POTA or SOTA activator, don't be too surprised if you hear me hunting you! I may take a break with one of my portable radios. All of my wire antennas at home are down, but field activators like us are used to setting up HF stations anywhere, so it'll be a breeze here.

I hope you don't mind this interruption in the usual programming here on QRPer. I wanted to share this detailed update in response to the many messages I've received.

Thank you again for your supportive and encouraging messages!
Best & 72,
Thomas (K4SWL)

Thanks to the QRPer.com

CERT(Community Emergency Response Teams)

What is a Community Emergency Response Teams, affectionately known by the acronym CERT? It is a FEMA sponsored program that trains volunteers in a community, to respond to emergencies in their communities. The training includes basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. CERTs can provide that initial and critical support, before the first responders arrive, to help victims, and organize volunteers at the disaster site. CERTs can also help with non-emergency projects to improve community resilience to disaster.

It is being re-established in Sussex County, and growing at a surprising pace, under the direction of the management at the Sussex EOC, with help from the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA). The then emergency Operations Director, Joe Thomas in January of this year, appointed John Ferguson, K3PFW, and Auxiliary Communications Leader (ACL) for the EOC, who directs the AUXCOMM Program, as the County CERT Coordinator. There are now three active CERT teams in County. The team in Ocean View is sponsored by the Ocean View Police Department, The Angola Bay and Estate communities have the ABE CERT Team, and the newest Team is the Belle Terre Team in Lewes. The three teams account for nearly 90 active CERT members.

The training offered locally in Sussex by certified instructors is free, as well as a basic CERT Pack presented as part of the training. There have been 32 students trained since January. The next class will tentatively be scheduled early next year. Combining CERT and AUXCOMM is sort of a natural and several of the students have been active participants in the AUXCOMM program. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a discussion of Public Service in the AUXCOMM Column. Combining these two elements of communication and basic emergency response is definitely a 'value added' product, and something that should be considered by anyone interested in using their ham radio skills in public service. Remember, serving your community in time of need is one of the reasons you have your license privileges.

Coming in the New Year will be a renewed approach and a more robust program by DEMA to promote and support CERT Training. The Statewide CERT Council is meeting in November to consider and approve the new plan. CERT Training is something you might want to add to your New Year's Resolution list. For more information send an inquiry to sussexcountyde.cert@gmail.com

FBI Thwarts Major Infrastructure Hacking Scheme by China

James Morley III

The FBI announced Wednesday it disrupted a major operation by Chinese hackers designed to infiltrate crucial infrastructure in the U.S. and overseas. According to an advisory released by the U.S. and its "Five Eyes" allies (an English-speaking alliance that includes Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Great Britain), the FBI used a court order to seize control of a network containing hundreds of thousands of hacked internet routers and other devices Chinese government-linked operatives were using to inflict damage on the U.S. and its allies. "It is just one round in a much longer fight," FBI Director Christopher Wray said in a speech at the Aspen Cyber Summit in Washington, D.C., according to CNN. "The Chinese government is going to continue to target your organizations and our critical infrastructure."

The large web of hacked devices, known as a botnet, enabled the Chinese hackers to conduct targeted cyberattacks on U.S. companies and government agencies. Integrity Technology Group is a Chinese-based company that has controlled and managed a botnet active since mid-2021, according to the FBI advisory.

The FBI reported the botnet consisted of more than 260,000 devices across six continents, noting, "while devices aged beyond their end-of-life dates are known to be more vulnerable to intrusion, many of the compromised devices in the Integrity Tech controlled botnet are likely still supported by the respective vendors."

A breakdown of the vulnerable devices showed that almost 50% of those compromised came from the U.S. with 126,000 devices. The hackers used various known vulnerability exploits to compromise devices, including those from vendors such as Zyxel, Fortinet, and QNAP, among others, as noted by CyberSecurityNews.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington called the U.S. report "groundless" and countered by accusing the U.S. government of conducting their own cyberattacks against China, according to CNN.

In January, Wray told the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party that "China's hackers are positioning on American infrastructure in preparation to wreak havoc and cause real-world harm to American citizens and communities, if or when China decides the time has come to strike."

The Cyber National Mission Force and National Security Agency assisted with the FBI advisory.

Thanks to Newsmax

Md. Police Encrypt Radio Transmissions Amid Transparency Concerns

City and county police agencies across Maryland are moving to encrypted radio systems to protect witness and victim privacy, as well as officer safety. But some say the switch affects community trust. September 13, 2024 Luke Parker, Capital Gazette

(TNS) — Anne Arundel County Police will move to encrypt radio transmissions starting in October, a change they say will protect officers and the privacy of witnesses and victims. But the shift is drawing criticism from community members and transparency advocates who say it builds distrust. Because the Annapolis Police Department and the Anne Arundel County Sheriff's Office share the county's radio towers, the public will not be able to hear dispatches from Anne Arundel's three primary police forces. "Citizens, a community, have a vested interest in the police operations," said Jon Conner, a Shady Side resident opposed to the move. "Sanitized reports that are fifteen minutes, hours to days old, do not have the truth value of real-time communications," he added.

Anne Arundel is not the only jurisdiction in Maryland to make this leap. According to RadioReference.com, an online radio frequency database, more than 15 police agencies across the state, from the municipal level to the county level, encrypt all of their operations. Other Maryland agencies, including the Comptroller's Office and the Maryland National Guard, also encrypt their transmissions, according to the website. That number continues to rise. On Tuesday, the Harford County Sheriff's Office said it had completed its transition to encrypted radio channels. Like Anne Arundel, Harford officials highlighted the need to protect personal information and said in crises, such as the Sept. 6 fatal shooting at Joppatowne High School, officers have "little time for channel switching. It is imperative that we find a solution that ensures both individual rights and investigative integrity are equally safeguarded," the Harford Sheriff's Office wrote in a statement.

Conner said he appreciated the need for police to communicate privately in rapidly developing situations, but noted Anne Arundel Police already have the ability to do so. According to RadioReference.com, the county police department currently encrypts transmissions involving investigative and special operations.

Maj. Herbert Hasenpusch, commander of the Anne Arundel Police Bureau of Special Operations and Criminal Investigations, said making a radio switch was not always practical and that encryption would ensure suspects were not tracking police operations in real time. "With this, our decision to go encrypted on all channels, specifically the main dispatch channels, we can now eliminate that decision-making. So we know that the only people that are going to hear us talking and listening to us talking are ... the people that should," Hasenpusch said.

Some Maryland agencies have been working with encryption for months. The Baltimore Police Dept, citing officer safety and the ability to communicate with other agencies, began encrypting its radio systems last year, though feeds are available after a 15-minute delay. At the time, Baltimore Police said the Justice Department had found their plan was “in alignment” with the transparency goals outlined in a 2017 consent decree addressing unconstitutional policing practices. With each move to encryption — including in **Wicomico** County, where a pro-police online outlet was given sole access to police transmissions — transparency and news media advocates have warned about information being concealed from the public.

In an online petition, Conner, who helps operate the Southern Anne Arundel News blotter, said publicly accessible radio transmissions and open airwaves not only keep people informed but help maintain trust between police and their communities. “Most people in a community are decent people, and will help you out if you’re in trouble,” Conner wrote on Change.org. “But if you block them out and they cant [sic] hear you... they will build a distrust with you.” Since November 2023, Conner’s petition to prevent encryption has collected 400 signatures.

As part of a 7-year process, Anne Arundel County has worked to migrate its radio communications to what is known as a Project 25 Standard. To make the change, Hasenpusch said Anne Arundel doubled its number of radio towers, increasing the technology’s strength and coverage area. Jack Martin, the county’s chief information officer, added that the new platform, also known as P25, will allow the police department to communicate with surrounding jurisdictions that have their encryption key, even if their radios are not made by the same manufacturer. In addition to protecting officers in the field, Anne Arundel police say the introduction of encrypted radio in October also will protect victims, witnesses, suspects and their families from identity theft. In their release Monday about the change, police said citizens may be at risk whenever officers have to transmit personal information about them, such as names, social security numbers, addresses and medical records.

According to a 2023 U.S. Department of Justice report, nearly 24 million Americans, or about 9% of the population aged 16 or older, were victims of identity theft in 2021, with losses totaling \$16.4 billion. “This encryption technology was not previously available, but now affords our agency the opportunity to protect the private information of our community members,” officials wrote Monday. “The Anne Arundel County Police Department remains committed to both providing information to the community and safeguarding private information that could compromise community members.”

Conner joined founder Justin Byrd at Southern Anne Arundel News nearly 10 years ago and said he keeps police and emergency radio feeds on constantly, sometimes waking up to report an incident if he feels there’s a need. During a phone call Wednesday, Conner said he has never heard police officers list someone’s social security number during a dispatch and that it would be irresponsible to do so. “Police hate accountability,” Conner said. “That’s why they’re doing this.”

Police officials said Thursday there has been a concerted effort for decades across the country to limit the exposure of sensitive information, like social security numbers. However, Martin said only a few pieces of data routinely relayed in a dispatch, like a name or address, would be enough to put someone at risk. Officers “doing their job ... could absolutely wreak havoc with someone’s personal life, their job, anything else with just those bits of information,” Martin said. “It’s the combination.”

Even with its new system and towers, police will experience some of the difficulties and limitations inherent with any kind of radio use, Martin said. Weak signals will sometimes happen, but Martin said the county has tested its systems across “the entire county landscape” — seeing how they perform in buildings, farmlands and wooded areas, as well as on the water. With those tests, Martin said the move to encryption will not affect the quality of a radio transmission. Anne Arundel Police also said changing to encrypted radio will not affect the department’s ability to notify the public of critical information in a

timely, responsible manner. In the time between a 911 call and officers arriving on a scene, details can be clarified or corrected as the response develops. Department spokesperson Justin Mulcahy said there are several examples of inaccurate information getting published directly from a radio transmission, such as when the Annapolis Mall was evacuated in December over false reports of gunfire. Mulcahy said while police often learn something is false “very quickly,” with the internet, “it’s too late.”

“We know we have a duty to inform the public when there’s something concerning,” Mulcahy said. “But we also want to be mindful to protect the public from panic.”

In their statement Monday, the department said it was committed to transparency and will continue to post on Facebook, X and Instagram; send notifications through Alert Anne Arundel, an alert system available through the county; and publish daily news releases on significant incidents and department information.

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Thanks to Government Technology online

Ukraine War: Why the Russian Army is Still Using Morse Code More than a Century After Its Invention

Tony Ingesson , Assistant Professor in Political Science, Lund University May 15, 2024 11:34am EDT

Modern warfare is awash with cutting-edge technology – from AI to drones to hypersonic missiles – yet one technology that is more than a century old is still proving its worth: morse code. The staccato streams of tones that would be instantly recognizable to a railroad man from more than 150 years ago are still in use by the Russian military in the Ukraine war. Even today, many people would be able to identify the characteristic sound of Morse code, in particular, the widely known pattern three short, three long, three short (... - - - ...), forming the emergency signal SOS.

Today Morse code messages are being sent from Russian bombers to their control centers, or from ships of the Baltic Fleet to their shore-based headquarters. The shortwave bands used by amateur radio enthusiasts are similarly filled with the beeps known by enthusiasts as “dits” (.) and “dahs” (-), or as dots and dashes by the wider public. Even spies still tune in to the shortwave bands to listen to clandestine stations broadcasting Morse code.

Invented in the 1800s

Why then, is a technology created in the first half of the 1800s still in use today? First, Morse code was envisioned not by an engineer or technological wizard, but by a man who painted portraits for a living. Samuel Morse initially designed what we today would call a teleprinter, a device that receives and prints text on paper. Morse enlisted the help of the more mechanically inclined Alfred Vail, a machinist, to work out the details. It was the latter who created the dots and dashes to represent the code, and came up with the idea of using sound to convey information. Initially, the sound was merely intended to be used to test a connection. Before long, Morse and Vail realized that the concept of printing was impractical. By adding sound, however, they had stumbled upon a concept more brilliant and useful than they could imagine.

The sound of Morse code

The remarkable characteristic of Morse code is that in sound form, it forms a rhythm. Thus, it shares common ground with music. In fact, it has been noted that people with musical talent are able to start learning morse more quickly. By stimulating the innate human sense of rhythm, Morse code also

activates our sense of pattern recognition. This is a skill deeply embedded in our brains, and one that has great potential to decipher messages even if they are incomplete. An experienced morse code operator can fill in the blanks caused by interference, poor reception, noise or equipment malfunction. In a neurological sense, morse inhabits a very peculiar niche, likened to "reading with the ears" but where transmitting and receiving it resembles the act of speaking more than writing. The other remarkable aspect of Morse code is its technological simplicity. Anyone with basic technological skills can build their own transmitter using standard components. The signal generated by a morse transmitter is similarly minimalistic, using an extremely narrow bandwidth of only 100-150 hertz (standard voice communications use 2,500-3,000 hertz). This also means that receivers can use very narrow filters and thus remove much of the surrounding noise generated by various forms of interference. Since it is so effective, morse only needs a minimum of power to travel significant distances. Amateur radio enthusiasts demonstrated in 1956 that as little as 78 milliwatts can be enough power to transmit from Massachusetts to Denmark. This is less than a tenth of what a single LED light bulb uses. A standard coffee maker preparing most people's favorite morning brew uses more than a thousand times more power.

Morse code

This combination of technological simplicity and efficiency came in handy during the second world war, when resistance members and Allied commandos used their portable Morse transceivers to maintain contact with London from deep inside German-occupied territory. This was a very risky enterprise, since the Germans were constantly listening in on the airwaves. Morse code, while being unintelligible to the untrained ear, offers no security in and of itself. Today, even those without training can use software to decipher the contents of a message sent using Morse code. However, any message can be made secure by encrypting it before sending it, as proposed by Vail in 1845. In fact, one of the most secure forms of encryption, the one-time pad, requires nothing more than pen and paper. In essence, a one-time pad is a random string of characters, at least as long as the message that is going to be encrypted. The sender uses his or her pad to encrypt, while the recipient uses a copy of the same pad to decode the message (there should be only two copies, and each should be destroyed immediately after use). As long as a pad is never reused, it remains theoretically unbreakable even with the most modern technology (although, truly random sequences of characters are difficult to produce). While there are more efficient digital modes of communication today, nothing can rival the unsurpassed combination of simplicity and efficiency that has allowed Morse code to survive for more than 150 years.

Rag Chew Editor.....The article was taken from the internet and although not specifically amateur related, it truly explains the value and history of Morse code.

Thanks to the Rag Chew

Joke of the Month

Scary Coffin

Dan was walking home from a Halloween party at his friend's house, when he heard a thumping noise behind him. THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP.

When Dan turned around he saw it was a coffin behind him! Dan started walking quicker but the THUMPS were still right behind him. Soon Dan was running, and the coffin started running too. Now Dan was running faster than he had ever run in his life but the coffin was still right behind him!

"HELP!" Dan screamed! He ran into his house and tried to slam the door but the coffin caught the door and started following him up the steps THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP.

Dan ran into the bathroom and grabbed the first thing he saw, cough drops, and threw them at the coffin...and of course the coffin' stopped

Quote of the Month

“It is hard to imagine a more stupid, or more dangerous way of making decisions, then by putting those decisions in the hands of people who pay no price for being wrong.”

Thomas Sowell