

# SHORT CIRCUITS

## Newsletter of the Kent County Amateur Radio Club

November 2024

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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

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### Happenings

November 2	Swap Meet at K3TKJ QTH, see below
November 12	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
November 14	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
November 20	DARC Dinner Meeting, Salisbury, No program. See <a href="http://qsl.net/darc">qsl.net/darc</a> for details
November 25	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
December 7	Rehoboth Marathon, more info coming
December 10	KCARC Christmas Gathering at the EOC
December 14	VE Testing, Wyoming Methodist Church, 09:00
January 9, 2025	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
January 14, 2025	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
January 25-26, 2025	Winter Field Day, more to come
January 27, 2025	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
February 11, 2025	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
February 13, 2025	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
February 24, 2025	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
March 11, 2025	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
March 13, 2025	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
March 31, 2025	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
April 8, 2025	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
April 10, 2025	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
April 28, 2025	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00
May 8, 2025	AUXCOMM Meeting, 19:00
May 13, 2025	Membership Meeting, Kent County EOC, 19:00
May 26, 2025	Emcomm Meeting, EOC, 19:00

### Hamfests

November 2	<b>Delmarva Swapmeet</b> Delmarva Amateur Radio Club QTH of Al Waller K3TKJ, 34087 Old Hickory Rd, Laurel, DE 19956 <b>Contact:</b> Jim Jester, KC3ITR at 443-356-5677 or Arthur Parks N3EAK at <a href="mailto:amparks6@gamial.com">amparks6@gamial.com</a> <b>Talk-in:</b> 146.82 (-) (156.7 PL) Admission Free
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April 19, 2025 **Delmarva Amateur Radio and Electronics Expo, ARRL Delaware State Convention**

**Sussex Amateur Radio Association**

Cheer Center, 20520 Sand Hill Rd., Georgetown, DE 19947

**Contact:** Jamie Ashton , W3UC, 7446 Parker St Pittsville, MD 21850

**Phone:** 410-202-7690 **Email:** [ashton@mchsi.com](mailto:ashton@mchsi.com) **Talk-In:** 147.090 156.7

More hamfests listed at [www.arrl.org/hamfests](http://www.arrl.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

Our club president, in the next column, talks about "mic fright". Consequently I found a piece of the very same topic, which I included in the Tid-Bit section. There were a couple more references to "what hams fear", and you'll probably (?) find them amusing. But the one concerning "mic fright" is very real, and I can add one more; participation fright! How many times are exercises, public service events, and just regular amateur activities short of "able bodied" hams for one of many excuses. There are many valid reasons that a person can't take part in a particular event, but not for all of them. Some events are annual and we know years in advance that they are going to happen, and save for an actual emergency, there's really no reason not to put a couple in your plans for that year.

Then comes the question; why should I participate? First is to support the club, or the group, and of course, amateur radio as a whole. It is written in the very first FCC regulation in Part 97. Second, to be prepared in case your skill and equipment are needed. Just look at North Carolina for proof there. And lastly, to build fellowship with other hams in our immediate area. The better you know people, the easier it is to obtain, and lend, assistance when needed.

So what do we do? Maybe plan to participate in our hobby? Winter field day is coming on January 25 – 26, 2025. It is also coming on January 24 – 25, 2026 and January 23 – 24, 2027. Summer field is June 28 – 29, 2026 and June 26 – 27, 2027. Save for some real reason not to attend, be there, operate, eat some of the great food, and have fellowship, and most of all, have fun!

Along those lines, a rumor has come down the creek that FEMA is requiring all participants in an exercise, or real emergency, to be ICS trained and qualified. What if you're not? Then FEMA could withhold funds of reimbursement to the county, or state, if it was found out the volunteers, or employees lack the required training. And how would they tell? Lack of certificates on file or someone asks the question, "what's this green light for?" might very well indicate the lack of ICS training.

So the solution is as winter is coming down on us and it isn't as much fun to be outside, sit down and do those FEMA online courses. And if you have time on your hands, DEMA has in person classes also. Bone up on that stuff and be prepared to tell someone what that green light means.

Take note that the date for the Delmarva Hamfest in Georgetown is now posted. This is now the only one in Delaware. Plan to support it and come down and have some fun and fellowship. Another event to put on your calendar.

## President's Column

Mike fright is a very real thing. Sometimes we are so afraid that we are going to get something wrong that we choose to do nothing. We hear some stations talk so fast that their call sign is a blur and wonder how we will ever keep up. The answer is acknowledging we make mistakes, give it a shot and go on. Think about when you learned to speak. Did you use complete sentences? Did you get things wrong? Did you stop trying to communicate? Practice gives comfort in what you are doing. The Space Shuttle pilots practiced simulator landings over 700 times before doing the real thing. Like the Nike slogan – Just Do It! Everyone is welcome to participate in the weekly club net on Wednesday at 7pm on the 91 repeater. No pressure, no grades.

The same is true for the Saturday ARES net at 9am on the 91 repeater. For those who want to move up a step, there is always a need for net control operators on both those nets. For those holding General license or better and have HF equipment, there is the Delaware Traffic Net (Mon-Sat) and the Delmarva Emergency Net (Sun) that meets at 2330Z on 3905KHz every day to pass traffic and hear how Jerry's (N3KRX) little blade of grass is doing. Your skills may be needed one day. Get out, be radio-active, and have fun doing it!

Jim KC3BTV  
KCARC President

## Vice-President's Column

I like to consider myself active in hobbies other than radio, two of them being photography and marching band. It's not often, but there's a lot of elements of these hobbies you can reflect on in other hobbies. One large aspect of the 'band mentality' is to always remember "One Band, One Sound". Your performance will only sound as good as your worst player, making it important to help everyone and teach them what they don't know. With that in mind, I'm applying that to radio.

This November, I am teaching a Technician Licensing Course to allow for anyone who wants to be a ham but doesn't know how. If you are looking for details on the class, please reach out. Also, as I step into the world of photography, another outstanding example steps out to me. As I line up my viewfinder and the shutter clicks, I think the photo is perfect. It's not until I look at the picture afterwards I notice, "the bird I was trying to photograph was blurry", or "that person could have taken a few steps back to be in frame". The idea is "nothing is ever perfect".

I think this applies to more of the hands-on aspect; for example, cutting a wire antenna or planning an event will never be perfect on the first try. I've always been told "The difference between sounding like a mediocre musician and a professional, isn't the number of mistakes you make, but how you react to them." Like I've said music isn't radio, but a lot can be spread across multiple aspects of hobbies.

73,  
Hunter Grier - W3CZ  
KCARC Vice-President 2024  
Office@huntergrier.com

## From the Section Manager's Shack

### The Emcomm Corner

Consider the lowly Torx® screwdriver. Torx (pronounced /tɔːrks/) is a trademark for a type of screw drive characterized by a 6-point star-shaped pattern, developed in 1967 by Camcar Textron. A popular generic

name for the drive is star, as in star screwdriver or star bits. A lot of equipment uses them in place of Phillips head screws. The Phillips head screw was developed and patented in 1933 to speed up manufacturing and has a nasty tendency to strip out easily. That slippage limited the torque that could be applied in either direction which can be both a blessing (in automated assembly) or a curse (in dis-assembly). The Torx screws can take much higher torque in installation and removal with the correct tool and works well with automated equipment. I do various little building and assembly projects and have never built anything using Torx screws but I have a set of Torx screwdrivers to work on things so equipped.

Winlink for Kent County ARES is a lot like the Torx screwdriver. In all likelihood we would only be using FM voice in our role as a shelter communicator and not use Winlink. Winlink has a much greater possibility of being used in the EOC to communicate with DEMA or outside agencies as an email agent. So why be familiar with it? In the event of a disaster, anyone could be assigned anywhere, in a shelter, at the EOC, or elsewhere in Delaware, or in a nearby state as a part of a mutual aid agreement. Winlink is just another tool in the toolbox like FLDIGI or CW. The more we know the more useful we are.

Jim KC3BTV  
Kent County EC

## **AUXCOMM News**

### **AUXCOMM Column November 2024**

What's in a name? A lot really, it indicates place, function, relation, etc. In an earlier column I wrote that the Sussex EOC was going to change from the Emergency Operations Center, to the Emergency Operations Complex, so it would still be the "EOC". Somehow in this life someone ordained that change would be inevitable. Change, evolution, maturation, who knows what it really might be. Well the building name is changing again, but the function(s) remain the same. It will now be the Sussex County Public Safety Complex. For those not familiar with all that's happened over the course of this last year, it's been a lot. The new complex of the Paramedic Section, 911 Response Center and the Emergency Operations Center was dedicated last October. In March of this year the beginning of the management change was starting. It was completed in July with Robbie Murray moving into his office as the new Director of Public Safety, with three deputies. One for Paramedics, one for 911 Response and one for Emergency Management. It was also during this past year that AUXCOMM and the revitalized county Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) program were merged under the same administrative organization in January, and are now under the new Deputy Director Public Safety - Emergency Management, Tim Cooper.

Since 2008 when the new "EOC" was opened, housing the 911 Center and a dedicated Emergency Operations section, as well as administrative and support areas, the Emergency Management operation has been based on the "EOC Model". That too is changing, and the new Emergency Management model for Sussex will now be the ICS Model. Today, the ICS is the required system for all response and recovery operations per FEMA directives and regulations. The Sussex AUXCOMM Group as it developed from 2018 on, uses the ICS for all its activations and exercises. With the ICS comes standard forms for just about anything you are going to do. Therefore it was interesting to note that there was not one ICS form that I saw used in the recent Delaware SET.

October brought the Apple Scrapple Festival, with an even larger footprint in the town of Bridgeville than previously. A combined group of AUXCOMM and CERT Team members turned in over 200 hours of volunteer service time for the county. The plan for this year was using teams of two, putting AUXCOMM and CERT members together in a team which deployed a broader skill set with that unit. By all of the After Action Reports (AAR) everyone seemed to have enjoyed the event and the opportunity to practice their skills. The teams responded to the usual administrative, medical, and separated family calls. They

answered multiple questions from those attending, usually where are the porta-potties, ATM's and bus pickups. New this year were two golf cart teams tasked with moving people, responding to various situations, and sometimes being a delivery service. They were almost constantly busy.

Coming on Saturday, December 7th, is the Rehoboth Marathon. Again AUXCOMM and CERT will be there in support of the county's Mobile Command Unit (MCU), with "feet" and "bicycles" on the streets and trails of Rehoboth Beach and Cape Henlopen State Park. The AUXCOMM / CERT trailer will be deployed for this event as the Alternate Net Control location. This is a really great and fun event where you get a chance to be up close and personal in showing what the hobby of ham radio can do for the public good. Let Bill Saunders, N3ID, ([ws3eoc@gmail.com](mailto:ws3eoc@gmail.com)) know if you are interested in working this event. We can use operators with HT's on foot or on a bicycle. There's not many locations for a vehicle mobile, but if that's all you have, let Bill know and he'll find a place for you.

The bringing together of the AUXCOMM and CERT groups has resulted in an interesting phenomena; each group wants to learn what the other is doing. So we now have CERT people getting their ham license, and AUXCOMM members taking the Basic CERT course. Judi Carter, KC3ZZO, with a call sign only a day or so old, participated in the SET from the AUXCOMM / CERT Trailer. Judi is a CERT Team Leader from Pot Nets. She joins a growing number of hams in the growing CERT program. Most of the AUXCOMM Management Team have Basic CERT certificates, as well as a number of members. There are several distinct advantages with this cross training in providing a more robust public service when disaster strikes. Also, when each group has an understanding of what the other group is doing, working together becomes a much smoother operation.

The Sussex AUXCOMM Group will be starting a program to assist individuals interested in getting their ham license with several options for coaching and study; and then follow up mentoring as a new ham after they get their license. It will feature a range of help and support for prospective hams and newly licensed hams, getting them a good start in the hobby. An email to [ws3eoc@gmail.com](mailto:ws3eoc@gmail.com) with "new ham" in the subject line will get you more information.

## Club Happenings

### Nominations for Officers

Nominations for club officers were made at the last meeting and will remain open until November. The list currently is;

President	Paul Tuley	N3BUH
Vice-President	Danny Clay	N3WCB
Secretary	Tim Reisinger	KC3OO
	Jim Laws	K0UWO
Treasurer	Tom Libertore	N3ARX (Tom has since declined)
	John Snyder	AB3JS (John has agreed to run since Tom's decline)

As stated, nominations will remain open and anyone interested in running can contact any officer or myself, and you will be put on the list of candidates.

### Technician Class Coming

A Technician class is planned at the EOC on November 25 – 26 between the hours of 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM. The class is open to any interested candidate. The plan is to have the class and then give the exam at the end on day two. If interested, contact Hunter, W3CZ at [huntergrier0917@gmail.com](mailto:huntergrier0917@gmail.com). There will be no charge for the class, however there is a processing fee for the exam and, of course, the FCC fee for the license. If planning on taking the exam afterwards, you will need a FRN, information for obtaining a FRN can be found at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org) under "Getting Your License".

## **KCARC Christmas Gathering**

KCARC will be holding its annual holiday gathering in place of the regular meeting. Paul, KC3VTI, has volunteered to chair the coordination of the event and is asking people bringing dishes to the EOC to let him know what you are planning on bringing. He asks that your dish serve 8 to 10 people. If you are planning on attending and wish to bring your favorite dish, let Paul know either on the air, or text him at 302-494-4987 if you want your dish to be a surprise!

## **Sussex AUXCOMM to Offer Program for Prospective and New Hams**

Sussex AUXCOMM is starting a new program for prospective hams, for those investigating starting in the hobby, those starting to study for the exam, and following on with those who just got their license. With a lot of individual "one on one", "show and tell", and "hands on", the hope is that the new hams will have a good foundation and a fast start in the hobby. We have several experienced teachers that can tailor the learning experience to meet the needs of the individual students. There is the well- equipped AUXCOMM Room for demonstration and getting on the air. Yes, we even have those that will mentor budding CW aficionados, new ham or old. For anyone interested, or knows of a prospective ham, send an email to ws3eoc@gmail.com with "New Ham" in the subject line, and appropriate contact information; it will be followed up.

## **ARRL VEC Going Digital**

If you are an ARRL member, you may have noticed in the July issue of QST that the ARRL VEC will be going digital starting in 2025. One of the things the ARRL has added is Hamstudy.org, which is a website that provides students a one-stop website that provides study aids, question pools, and practice tests.

I'm still waiting for a response from ARRL to see if we can keep our VE testing the way it has always been here in Kent County. As the VEC gets back to me, I will have more information.

## **Special Event Station**

The Yavapai Amateur Radio Club (YARC) of Prescott, AZ, is planning to operate a special event station November 17, 2024, in celebration of the NRA's 153rd birthday. The special event station will operate from Gunsite Academy's 2,000-acre campus in Paulden, AZ, north of Prescott. The special event call sign will be K7GST.

Operations will be conducted on the following frequencies: 7.250, 14.250, 21.335 and 28.340 MHz. Mike, K7DD, has volunteered to come up from the Valley to operate CW. He plans on operating on various bands in the X.040 to X.055 MHz range. The hours of operation will be from 1500 to 2400 UTC.

All amateur stations, especially those operated by NRA members and Gunsite alumni, are urged to participate. A special certificate will be awarded to those stations making contact during the event. To receive a PDF certificate that you can print yourself, go to the website by clicking the link below. On that website click the link to request a certificate and fill out the request form: <http://w4gkf.com/k7gst>

NOTE: We do not issue mode- or band-specific certificates. We will issue one certificate regardless of number of contacts.

For more information, contact  
John Broughton, WB9VGJ  
nrabirthday@w7yrc.org  
Cell: 928-830-5997

## **Delaware Traffic Net to Change Time**

Those of you that check into the Delaware Traffic Net at 6:30 on 3.905 will need to shift your time on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5:30 (all times local) as Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday at 0200 hours, or at 2:00 AM (for you non-military types). The Delmarva Emergency Net also will change to the same time.

## **Morse Runner Community Edition New Release**

The Morse Runner Community Edition project recently released version 1.85. The new release includes support for the ARRL November Sweepstakes, as well as other contest-specific improvements and bug fixes. Morse Runner is a fun tool that can help improve your CW contesting skills by simulating real contests with contest logging software like N1MM Logger+ and DXLog.

For more information, see <https://github.com/w7sst/MorseRunner/releases/tag/v1.85>

## **Useless Facts of the Month**

October 24, 1861

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

The first transcontinental telegraph message was sent from California to President Abraham Lincoln in Washington, DC on October 24, 1861. (About the width of the Sahara!)

A bolt of lightning is six times hotter than the sun. (Marshmallows anyone?)

The man who first gave names to hurricanes was an Australian weather forecaster named C. Wragge in the early 1900s. (He must not have liked women)

In 1934, A.W. Leo, Tom Yates, and Ralph Harrison crafted the first Hawaiian Punch recipe. Their goal was to create a tropical-flavored syrup to complement their line of ice cream toppings, marketed under the brand Pacific Citrus Products Company. Originally known as "Leo's Hawaiian Punch," the product quickly gained popularity, reaching local restaurants, soda fountains, and ice cream manufacturers. A few years later, "Leo's" was dropped, leaving the name we know today. The main ingredients for the original recipe were sourced directly from the Hawaiian Islands, inspiring the iconic name.

In the town of Blue Earth, Minnesota, a towering 55-foot fiberglass statue of the Jolly Green Giant rises above the landscape, honoring the beloved advertising icon. Erected in 1978, this larger-than-life figure symbolizes the region's rich agricultural heritage, rooted in the origins of the Green Giant brand. The brand's history traces back to the local canning industry, which became known for processing sweet corn and peas. Over the decades, the statue has grown into a beloved roadside attraction, drawing more than 10,000 visitors each year. (Wonder if they give away peas?)

With an incredible average annual rainfall of 467 inches, the small town of Mawsynram, India holds the title of the wettest place on Earth. During the height of the monsoon season, from June to August, the town is drenched with an astonishing 3,000 millimeters of rain. The town's extraordinary rainfall is primarily due to its close proximity to the Bay of Bengal, where moisture-laden monsoon winds gather and sweep across the landscape. As these moisture-laden winds rise over the Khasi Hills, they cool and release torrential rain.

## Tidbit of Information of the Month Department

### NC residents are living in tents nearly a month after Hurricane Helene destroyed their homes

Grace Porto on October 24, 2024

CV NEWS FEED // Residents of Clyde, North Carolina, are living in tents and campers nearly a month after Hurricane Helene destroyed their homes. ABC 13 reports that residents like Annette Surret may be facing the winter in pop-up campers and tents donated by church volunteers, due to the slow turnaround of aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA.) Surret told ABC that the trailer she had lived in before the hurricane was swept away. She was evacuated before her home was destroyed. "The fire department — they were here yelling for people to get out. It was kind of horrifying," Surret told ABC 13.

She watched her trailer being swept away from a nearby parking lot, and she lost several pet cats in the storm. She said the trailer "wrapped around the tree. It snapped in half, and the rest of it went down the river and the roof is down in the bamboo patch." Surret continued, "I was devastated. I was screaming." She noted that two of her pet cats escaped to the roof of her trailer. "They heard me and they just started meowing," she said.

After Surret's community lost their homes, "It's almost like we were forgotten for several days," she said. "A nice military couple put a tent up for me." Now, Surret is living in a pop-up camper donated to her by Crabtree Baptist Church. "I am using a generator that one of the churches donated," she said. "I've been using propane heaters." Surret acknowledged she may have to spend the winter in the camper. "I hope not, but if I have to..." she said. She added that although FEMA is present, their accommodations take "a lot of red tape and a lot of time," according to ABC 13. Surret also told ABC that volunteers matter the most, and she is receiving the help she needs from community and church volunteers.

"They've been told it's going to be a while before even FEMA temporary housing is in place," said Amanda Fowler, pastor at Canton Wesleyan Church and member of the North Canton Volunteer Fire Department. The volunteers are currently building insulated sheds. "It has a way to run a generator cord through it so that you can have safe heating options and not worry about catching your tent on fire," Fowler explained. "There are families that have kids, and they're trying to survive at this point."

Thanks to The Loop on line

### Ham Radio Ops: Feel the Fear

Posted by Mark Haverstock, K8MSH on October 28, 2024 at 3:31 pm

What gives you the heebie-jeebies as a ham radio operator? With Halloween only a few days away, we're dedicating this post to some scary things that keep us up at night.

#### Mic Fright

Yes, there is a fear of microphones, and it's called microphonephobia. The symptoms include sweating, a dry mouth, a blank stare, and a squeaky voice. Some people think public speaking is scary, but hand them a microphone and it turns into a phobia. Why does this simple device inspire so much horror in so many?

One reason is simply not knowing what to say—or forgetting what to say. Imagine not being able to remember your call sign while calling CQ. Another is fear of doing something stupid, like saying "breaker, breaker" on a repeater.



Being judged by people is also a cause of mic fright. Perhaps when you forgot to turn off the roger beep on your Baofeng HT, someone called you a lid (poor or careless operator). Sometimes, it's easier just to refrain from speaking rather than feel like a fool on the air.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Own your microphonebia—face your fear head on. It's odd how some people who have no problem talking on a telephone suddenly freeze up with a microphone in their face.

Don't forget—the telephone has a microphone too.

### **Wouff-Hong**

No other object has stricken such terror in the heart of any amateur operator who ever called CQ. Of course, we're talking about the dreaded Wouff-Hong!

It looks rather innocent—two pieces of wood strapped together with wire. The piece shows no hint of craftsmanship at all. Perhaps it was a joke or a hastily built school project thrown together at the last minute. But in the early days of ham radio, it was known as an instrument of torture and discipline to maintain decency and order in the ham radio community.

Resembling a misshapen paddle (possibly used by a high school assistant principal), it became a symbol for the enforcement of law and order in amateur radio operations. It reminded the amateur radio community always to use best practices when on the air. Legend has it that it was also used as a stake to subdue an angry vampire who tuned up his radio over a popular net.

Only after his death was it revealed that the Wouff-Hong was the brainchild of Hiram Percy Maxim, founder and first president of the ARRL. It is said that he took the secret of its origin to his grave.

### **FOMO**

FOMO stands for Fear of Missing Out. It's the feeling of anxiety that you're missing out on something that could improve your radio signal and operating skills or give you bragging rights. Maybe seeing the "box 'o boards" at the Icom display during the 2024 Dayton Hamvention® sent your mind racing, imagining what an awesome radio it might be. Or are you convinced your 6400M is now obsolete with the 8400M flexing its new and improved features?

But wait, there's more. You saw the latest Sherwood ratings and your primary radio slid seven places down the list. You need that Yaesu FTdx-101D, along with a Power Genius XL amplifier upgrade. After all, the PGXL won't be on sale forever. You must have them, but is it worth the confrontation? Will your XYL blow a gasket when the credit card bill arrives? Will the transceiver be in short supply, complete with an eight-month waiting period (remember the K4D)? It's scary stuff for sure!

### **DOA**

High on the list of fears is a radio suddenly failing during a major contest. The display disappears, and the magic smoke (hidden in the electronic parts) fills the air. No amount of button pressing, nor a jolt from Frankenstein's electrodes, will bring it back to life. You could try to repair it, but you'll become immediately intimidated by the tiny surface mount devices crowded together on the circuit boards. You could look into having someone else fix it, but I'd be wary of the guy who'll take his payment in the form of pizza and beer. It's much safer to bite the bullet and send it to an authorized repair center.

But safety can be costly. Shipping and insurance costs alone are enough to make you sit up and take notice, and service fees could be \$90/hr. plus parts. Hopefully, the problem won't be a major one, and the bill won't be too scary.

Mark Haverstock, K8MSH

## **An Aging Volunteer Service - Is Amateur Radio Still Needed?**

David Setliff 10/09/2024 Source:UncoverDC

As the disaster unfolds in North Carolina, I am reminded of other significant events that have affected entire communities in one form or another. From hurricanes to wildfires, earthquakes, or any other major incident, one thing is getting less and less recognition these days, and that is the amateur radio service. Yeah, I get it. There is a perception that it's just a bunch of elderly gentlemen sitting around smoking cigarettes, drinking coffee, listening to the ether, and pounding some Morse code to some contact halfway around the world. Or maybe they are repeating CQ CQ CQ into a microphone and listening for a return call. They will spend a bunch of money on equipment, experiment with antennas and electronics, and even try to implement newer technology into what they do. Some might look at it and call all of this a hobby or even a waste of time, but it's not because all of this may be needed for more than just talking to Japan or Croatia for fun.

Make no mistake, though, that the perception of old guys huddled around the warm glow of radio tubes is probably closer to reality than you think. The reason for that is twofold. Those involved are aging quickly. The current average age of an amateur radio operator is 68 years old and getting older. There are, however, younger people who are exposed to the service; they are just not as interested. Please make no mistake: the service is losing members faster than we are gaining, and it's becoming a dying art form. As for outreach to the youth or younger members, the Boy Scouts of America still have a radio badge they can obtain. Sometimes, exposure might occur on Field Day every June in your local community park. Or it might happen at a POTA (Parks On the Air) activation. Here's a bit of trivia for you. Guglielmo Marconi built the first radio set and sent the first transmission 1 km away at the age of 20. We need more of that.

The second reason it's an aging service is that in today's society, we have become too comfortable with the technology we use and assume it will always be available. We look at our cell phones and see 2 or 4 bars everywhere. But those connect to towers and not each other. Some of those towers are in very remote areas, require a stable climate-controlled environment, and always require reliable power. Interestingly, some sites also house the first responders' radio services. However, as the Lahaina Hawaii fire and the Helene flooding in North Carolina have shown, no technology is infallible. Including the internet connection you are reading this article on. Without power, nothing works. But as I sit listening to Broadcastify along with over 700 others to N2GE 145.19MHz Mount Mitchell amateur radio repeater in North Carolina, I hear the coordination between operators posted at hospitals, fire stations, and police stations. All of it is in real-time. Some are staged at local airports, flying in helicopters to deliver radios and supplies or assisting in critical evacuations. It would not surprise me to discover that radio operators are embedded with search and rescue teams. Some of these communications include wellness check requests from people outside the affected area. This can free up valuable first responder resources even if their radio services work.

Who are these people? Well, they are experienced radio operators who volunteer their time and their own equipment to assist in emergencies such as this. In some cases, they belong to two volunteer emergency radio communications teams, ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) and RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service). What's the difference? ARES provides local, remote, or relay EMCOMMS (Emergency Communications) and coordination. Conversely, RACES works with local civil defense officials and government agencies such as FEMA or DHS. Between the 2, ARES has more flexibility.

You might ask yourself why amateur radio works when everything else doesn't. The reason for that is that amateur radio operators, by their very nature, are tinkerers and experimenters. They figure out how to maintain power and stretch that resource out for as long as possible. This might include different battery technologies, implementing solar panels, or more efficient antennas. Having a more efficient antenna uses less power to transmit. More power is not necessarily better in this instance, and it could

be bad to use the wrong antenna. Needless to say, we find a way to make it work in our hands, vehicles, and homes because adaptability to any situation is key. From HF (High Frequencies) to UHF (Ultra High Frequencies), operating for short and long distances, this is our specialty.

So, in an emergency, that neighbor with the view-crushing antenna the HOA has been fighting to remove just might save your bacon. You might knock on their door, buy them a coffee, and talk to them about what it is they do. Also, consider contacting your local clubs, even if it's to get a basic understanding of the different radio services available to the average person, whether that is FRS (Family Radio Service), GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service), or amateur radio. Knowing more about them and their capability will always be helpful in an emergency. I want to point out two things if you have made it this far. Even if you don't have an amateur radio license, you don't need one to listen. You also don't need one if it is a last resort of communication for you and your family in an emergency. You can use any radio on any service to ask for help. In addition, no matter what radio you get, you should be able to listen to NOAA radio for local weather information.

So, if you were to pick up a radio at Walmart or order one on Amazon right now, would you know which channel is the commonly used emergency channel or frequency? Do you know the NOAA frequencies for your immediate area? Do you know what the radio's limitations are? Please don't believe the packaging that says it can talk 20 or 30 miles; they can't. That would only be in perfect conditions with a direct line of sight. To summarize, learn about the service you are interested in and how it can work for you in an emergency. Please don't wait for the next disaster to be left in the dark without communication or information. Don't think you can rely on your neighbor in an emergency because they may have evacuated, been injured, or suffered worse. Nowadays, with information at our fingertips, many resources are available to learn about what radio services can do for you or even your family. With books, websites, and even YouTube channels dedicated to teaching people about amateur radio and GMRS services, it's all there for you, and in most cases, it's free.

Finally, to those providing communications to the affected areas right now in North Carolina, I've been listening. You guys are doing outstanding work with Net Control, resource coordination, information gathering, and disseminating that information to those who need it. I applaud you for being a shining example of what amateur radio is truly about --giving back to the community. I can only hope that if I am ever in that situation, our local radio operators can be as calm and organized as you.

For now, I will be signing off with this.

73 de Whiskey Zero Whiskey Foxtrot Mike and I will be clear of this frequency.

## **Staying Prepared For When Disaster Strikes**

by GUY J. SAGI posted on October 20, 2024

September was National Preparedness month, and Hurricane Helene issued a deadly reminder to keep survival supplies and equipment on hand when it made landfall in Florida on September 26. The death toll has already climbed to more than 200. Now that supplies are arriving, and responders are shifting focus to body recovery, that number will only grow. There's no telling how high it will climb in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina.

Hurricane Milton was next, billed as the storm of the century when it plowed ashore in an area of Florida where residents were still dealing with Helene's destruction. It's a one-two punch of historic proportions guaranteed to make the 2024 hurricane season a deadly chapter in weather history. For the record, no amount of preparation and supplies would have saved victims caught directly in the crosshairs of the walls of water, house-shattering winds and torrents of mud that arrived so far inland and along the coast. Those so-called "acts of God," although tragic, are thankfully a small portion of disasters that are only now coming into focus. For the other victims now struggling to survive in the ruins of what was once

their homes and neighborhoods, having the right supplies on hand and self-defense gear and training are already paying dividends. Don't think "It will never happen to me." Here are some key items to keep on hand, should the unthinkable come knocking on your door.

### **Defense**

You might survive the storm, but the real challenge often comes from two-legged predators. Whether it's looters, armed robbers or hungry packs of thieves after supplies, having a self-defense gun and knowing how to use it properly is key. None of this year's reported incidents are nearly as bad as Katrina's lessons. Shortly after it the Associated Press reported, "... Witness Justice, a Maryland-based non-profit that assists victims of violent crimes, claims to have received 156 reports of post-Katrina violent crimes; about a third of those involved sexual assaults."

Still, what happened in late September is frightening. In Pasco, Fla., one couple returned to their home after Hurricane Helene, only to discover people inside stealing items. At a time when calling 911 might be impossible and law enforcement has its hands full elsewhere, there's no doubt that confrontation was dangerous. In Tennessee, eight were arrested for looting. In Hudson, Fla., criminals drove through neighborhoods in the aftermath of Helene while scouting out homes evacuated before Milton. Empty streets with law enforcement resources stretched thin is the ideal climate for criminals. If you happen to be sheltering in place when they break in, out of gas during an attempted escape to safety or return in the middle of their heist, it could turn deadly, and help is probably not on the way.

### **Guns & Storage**

A major challenge is keeping firearms and ammunition dry and/or undamaged in a disaster. Gun safes are likely heavy and dense enough not to have vanished completely—or gone far—in flooding, but most safes are not completely waterproof. Most have holes to route electricity to dehumidifiers and lights, while others simply don't seal out moisture well. A few companies, however, have harnessed clever engineering principles to keep exterior water at bay for days, even weeks. The Cannon Safe Shield V2 Fireproof & Waterproof 48+6 Gun Safe, for example, is water resistant for up to 14 days in 24" of water. If wildfire is more of a concern, consider the experience of this Liberty Safe owner and the way it saved his firearms and valuables within. Consider, too, weather-sealed gun cases. They may float off in a flood, but if the roof comes unhinged, the contents inside remain dry, and the portability is an asset should a bug out become mandatory. Toss some desiccant in for good measure. If nothing else, keep a gun holstered on your side or nearby, even as the disaster is unfolding. Volumes have been written about survival rifles and handguns. Long guns are ideal when sheltering in place but not exactly nimble from the confines of an escape vehicle. Should you become the target of a carjacker or come into the crosshair of an armed robber while filling up the tank, a holstered handgun is a better choice.

### **Food And Water**

Ready.gov and the American Red Cross have an inventory of the items you should have on hand at home if disaster strikes. Both recommend one gallon of water/person/day. For bugout purposes, have a three-day supply and, if sheltering in place, it should be at least enough for two weeks. They don't mention one, but include a water filter or water purifying tablets. If things get desperate follow these tips from Clorox for boiling or disinfecting with unscented household bleach. A non-perishable food supply that will last the same number of days is also recommended. Keep in mind, however, if the power's out and everything's drenched, you need a means of heating and preparing meals. At home, use the backyard barbecue (if it survived) or camping and backpacking stoves. Keep matches in a waterproof container in your bug-out bag. Spares should be stored in several locations around the house. A fire starter is a great idea, but using one takes practice. During an emergency is not the ideal time to do so. Flashlights—not just one—and choose a model with a rating of at least IPX5 to ensure it can survive moderate exposure to water. The higher the rating the better. Have spare batteries for everything in your survival kit and a portable radio to stay up to date with conditions and locations where food, water and gas are available. Keep cash on hand. When the power and Internet are down you won't be using a credit card or ATM.

A first-aid kit is key, but do not forget required prescriptions and frequently used over-the-counter medications. A multi-tool and manual can opener need to be included. You'll also need a knife to cut cord, rope, food and kindling. Survival knives, like the Tekna Wilderness Edge Survival Knife, often come with emergency gear. A dust mask may come in handy, too. Don't forget a whistle and signal mirror. If the budget's tight, the reflective side of an old CD or DVD performs the latter duty admirably. Those flashes of light may seem outdated and useless, but consider the recent experience of former NASCAR driver Greg Biffle. He was flying supplies into remote areas with his personal helicopter after Hurricane Helene and only spotted one survivor because they used a mirror to signal.

### **Communication**

In those cases when there's advance warning, charge up your cell phone and spare battery pack. If cell towers go down, iPhone users can still punch text messages via satellite. An SOS system is similarly available on Android phones.

Consider two-way radios. It's a great way to keep in touch when all other communications systems fail. Handheld GMRS models are relatively inexpensive, and the best are repeater-capable, allowing a small walkie-talkie user to talk over long distances. They do, however, require an FCC license. At \$35 for 10 years, with no test, it's a bargain, especially when you consider one license covers the entire family.

From my home, safely 200 miles southeast in North Carolina, the man-made shortfalls that followed Helene became crystal clear. Donations of food, clothing, baby supplies and more poured in almost overnight from every small town within a day's drive—not the federal government. My county is still sending truckload after truckload, each filled with items purchased by neighbors, churches and businesses to help distant strangers. It's the generosity of non-government entities and private citizens who were the initial source of life-sustaining supplies. Widespread communication outages continue to plague the area, now shored up with the arrival of Starlink units. Prior to that, it was exclusively ham radio operators who rode to the rescue. The National Guard was summoned after a typical governmental delay. That was followed, later, by the Biden administration finally authorizing the response of 1,000 military personnel.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is now on site, accepting applications for aid, handing out supplies, offering hotel vouchers and \$750 to purchase medicine or food. Unfortunately, few grocery stores, hotels and pharmacies survived, and it's hard to get around if your vehicle is among those lost or the roads remain blocked. In addition, some victims requesting the vouchers and cash are being turned down by FEMA, according to this interview with two sheriffs on the scene. It's the donations from the concerned public keeping them alive until some semblance of a pre-apocalyptic life returns.

Thanks to the American Rifleman online

## **Joke of the Month**

### **Jokes to Make You Go Ohhh**

Did you hear about the first restaurant to open on the moon?  
It had great food, but no atmosphere.

Why don't scientists trust atoms?  
Because they make up everything!

Why should you never trust stairs?  
They're always up to something.

Why did the bullet end up losing his job?  
He got fired.

How do you measure a snake?  
In inches—they don't have feet.

Why is Peter Pan always flying?  
Because he Neverlands.

Why doesn't Dracula have any friends?  
Well, honestly, he's a real pain in the neck.

What gets wetter the more it dries?  
A towel.

As a scarecrow, people say I'm outstanding in my field.  
But hay, it's in my jeans.

Why did the cowboy get a wiener dog?  
He wanted to get along little doggie.

## **Quote of the Month**

"The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help"  
Ronald Reagan