



TMRA Amateur Radio Beacon

January 2011



The Prez Sez

I hope everyone who attended the TMRA Christmas party enjoyed themselves, and I want to thank Sandy, KD8HYS; Brenda, KB8IUP and Rita, WB8FBG, for organizing it, and to apologize if I've not mentioned anyone else who was involved in the preparation, and to thank everyone for sharing the always excellent foods. Unfortunately my wife and I did not attend as I was sick and not wishing to infect anyone, and also not helped by learning that day that my eldest brother was terminally ill (he died a few days later).

Steve, W8TER, and Reed, KD8HYY, have scheduled educational sessions on the TMRA equipment at the Challenger Center, emphasis on the Icom IC-910: due to availability limitations beyond our control, they have to be on Wednesdays, January, 12, 19, and 26 from 5:00pm to 8:00pm and so will clash with 2 TMRA meetings – contact Steve for more information.

Field Day results for 2010 were in the December issue of QST: TMRA operated 6A (total of 6 stations on emergency power) and had 574 contacts for 2,200 points – putting us 29th out of 38 in that Class. There were 16 participants in Class 7A, 13 in Class 8A, and 6 in Class 9A – which means that, if this trend carried on to FD 2011, and if we could get a few more stations on the air at FD – we'd have a lot less competition: I know, I can hear Steve, W8TER, (our FD Chairman) saying “not a competition !!!” – but basically it is as most (every ?) group involved strives the most points possible.

As some of our members may know, last year the upper leadership of the Ohio Section of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) issued a ruling that amateur radio operators could not be a member of more than one county ARES group, and that that one county should be the county of the ham's residence (unless the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) approved otherwise). This created a considerable amount of opposition and protests, for example from some of us in Lucas County and Wood County ARES where the county line cuts through metropolitan areas, and which has led to the ruling being rescinded.

Lastly, we offer condolences to our member Bernie, WD8C, on the death of his wife Ruth.

73, Brian.



The TMRA Christmas party featured Friends, Food, Fun and Carols.

TMRA Website Updates

For those of you who know me, I've been working on the TMRA website as well as some other things. This is my personal contribution to the local ham community. I've found that working on the physical aspects of the hobby, i.e. putting up towers, laying cable, playing with antennas, etc... just isn't my favorite thing to do. So when it comes to a TMRA work crew doing these things... you probably won't see me there. I've sat through the debates about the best type of tower, the best bolt size and material, proper grounding scenarios, and I've got to tell you, I'd rather be sleeping, hi hi. So instead, I try to help out with what I am good at. This happens to be the website, as well as other items more electronic than physical.

As such, I've been working on updates to the TMRA website...www.tmrahamradio.org if you've not checked it out lately, give it a look! The purpose of this article is to provide a summary of items that have been recently been updated. I've provided updates during TMRA meetings and nets and e-mails, but those have been bits and pieces when new items are done. What follows is a list of nearly all the items that have been added over the course of the last few months or so.

Earlier in the year I implemented a new calendar as well as a picture gallery. Let me tell you, I've added A LOT of pictures to this gallery. And surely there will be many more to come. Therein lies a problem. Maybe you've already seen the picture gallery... how do you check out just the newer pictures? Thankfully, the picture gallery software we use has just the feature for the job. If you check out the picture gallery, find the "Last uploads" link. It's near the top, between "Album list" and "Last comments". If you click on it, it will show you pictures in order of newest to oldest. By default it will likely show about 12 pictures per page. If you look underneath of the last picture (towards the bottom-right), you'll see a series of numbers... 1, 2, 3, 4, etc... click on those and you'll see more of the newest pictures.

Also of note regarding the picture gallery is that the software we use is capable of not only storing pictures, but documents, like PDFs. If you check out the main page of the picture gallery, scroll down towards the bottom, and there is a section specifically for documents... "Reference/Documents". If you click on "Reference Documents", it will bring up a list of additional sections. I've added quite a few. My intention here is to provide a place to store a great wealth of knowledge. This makes the TMRA picture gallery more than just a picture gallery. It also provides this document storage functionality that makes these PDFs fairly easy to categorize and find... providing you are aware of it's existence! Which is the entire point of this paragraph. There are currently a fairly large assortment of documents in there... stuff for newbies, band plans, emcomm stuff, etc... check it out!

Recently I updated the home page of the site as well. Previously, the main links were actually in the TMRA logo itself. However, as time went on I had to add more links underneath the logo. Well recently I changed that. I took the navigation links out of the logo and instead put them underneath it. If you check out the home page, under the logo you'll see an entire "NAV" section for navigation links. These links will send you to nearly any part of the TMRA website you want. I've tried to make it orderly. The first line of links lists the major parts of the website... the calendar, a link to the mailing list, the picture gallery, etc... The second line, "Club Info" provides links to specific TMRA club information. The third line, "Events", provides links to TMRA events. The last line, "Resources", provides links to just that... resources which the TMRA website provides... more on that in a moment.

In addition, I've also modified the home page to now display the club repeater frequencies. After browsing other club sites, this bit of information is posted pretty prominently on most of their sites. And why not? The club repeater is it's pride and joy. So now our site sports the same. This way, those unfamiliar with the area or the club who find us on the Internet will very quickly be able to figure out our repeater frequencies and hopefully start up a QSO while in the area.

I've also added a new section to the home page of our website for "Meetings / Events / Nets". This provides a quick, but descriptive, list of what it is that TMRA members do. We have our physical club meetings, our physical events, as well as our on-air nets. All right there on the home page... so when someone asks "What does TMRA actually DO?" it's all right there. If you think of something I've missed, please let me know!!!

As always, the latest education news will be there. Since the classes recently finished, this area is currently vacant. And, as always, the list of the TMRA Beacon newsletters for the current year are on the home page as well, in the "Newsletter" section near the bottom. I also plan on adding new functionality to the home page to alert web site visitors to important information. For example, last year we had a general meeting canceled due to a snow emergency. If this, or something like this, happens again, I'll be able to update the home page of the web site to indicate this information.

Earlier I mentioned TMRA website resources. If you look at the "NAV" section of the links at the top of the home page, you'll see three links. I've been busy recently upgrading these to make them more helpful:

- "Links": I recently spent a great deal of time and have re-organized our web site's Links page. I've you've not checked out the Links page recently, please consider doing so. Near the top of the page I've added a table of contents of sorts, the "SKIP TO:" section. Here you can see that the page has been organized into categories. The first section is the list of clubs. Along with a link to each clubs website (if applicable), I've also added the clubs repeater information. This has all been recently updated! I've also added an

"ARES/EMComm" section. Here you can quickly find links to ARES/NTS/Skywarn information. I've also started a new section for "Area Hams". If you have a personal ham web page, feel free to send me the link, and I'll get it added for ya! The final section is the "Vendors" section. I've split this into two major sub-sections: "Software" and "Hardware". I've further broken down the hardware section into multiple sub-sections. Previously we just had a big pile of links. I've tried to add some organization to make this list more helpful. I've added more links, but there are surely more to come. Many of us know how fast the web has grown... we've watched it. And it shows no signs of stopping. If you have a link you believe is worth adding, please let me know! I'm sure I've missed a lot. And if you see any inaccurate or outdated information on this page, by all means let me know!

- "Downloads": This page has NOT been updated in a while, except that it's now called "Downloads" whereas it was previously called "Digi Class" or something to that effect. This is a small area where we've provided links to certain things for downloading. One of my future goals is expand this page. However, some of it overlaps with the Links and/or Picture Gallery (for documentation). I'll let you know when this page gets updated and more functionality added.

- "On-Air Aids". This is a wholly new section of the web-site. I've noticed a lot of cool stuff out there on the web related to ham radio. This page contains a few of those items. This page is intended to provide useful information for when you're actually, you know, ON THE AIR. Currently there are three items here: A UTC clock, for those like me who suck at UTC time conversion; A VHF propagation map (very cool, based on live APRS data); and a Maximum Usable Frequency (MUF) map - for HF propagation. Very neat and helpful stuff. There will certainly be more items added to this page in the near future. If you can think of items that you use on a routine basis that may be useful to others, please let me know!!!

In the near-future I will also be adding e-mail aliases to the website. What's that mean? Well, check out the "Officers" page. Right now, this page lists the officers, trustees, and committee heads. However, all the e-mail addresses are those of the individual people. Over time these positions change. So instead of having to remember to e-mail Ron about something secretarial related, or Brenda about something financial, I'll be creating e-mail aliases along the lines of "secretary@tmrahamradio.org" and "treasurer@tmrahamradio.org". That way, you don't have to remember to e-mail "Ron" or "Brenda" specifically, you can use these e-mail aliases and that e-mail will go to the appropriate person. Again, this is something I'll be adding in the near future, it has not been done yet. When it has been done, these e-mail addresses will be posted on the Officers page and likely I send out a note to the TMRA e-mail reflector/list.

Are YOU on the TMRA e-mail reflector/list? Are you SURE? Just because you received an e-mail with this newsletter (or a link to it), that might not be the same e-mail list that is the "TMRA e-mail reflector/mailling list". If you received an e-mail alerting you to this newsletter, you're on the TMRA "newsletter" e-mail list. I know, I know, it's complicated. But there is an easy way to find out if you're on the TMRA e-mail reflector/mailling list. Go to the home page of the website and click on the "Mailing List" link. Type in your e-mail address and a password (make one up, but make sure you can remember it!) and hit "subscribe". If you're already on the list, you'll receive a notice stating such. If you weren't already subscribed... well, now you are! What IS the TMRA e-mail reflector/mailling list? This is a low usage e-mail list where you can ask questions of other hams or put out notices. Found a neat trick or tip? Send an e-mail to "tmra@mailman.qth.net". That e-mail will get sent out to everyone on the TMRA e-mail reflector/mailling list. Notice that 10M is open? Send an e-mail and let everyone know. Score a CW QSO with South Africa? Brag about it!

Please note that these web site upgrades are a work in progress. You might notice that the home page has the new links at the top but the others do not. That's because I haven't done the other pages yet. But I will, and likewise there will be more to come!

If you notice any inaccuracies on the site, if you have something to add, or you just want to provide feedback, please feel free to do so!!! Drop me an e-mail... KJOEYT@ARRL.NET. The TMRA website is available to help YOU. And YOU can make it even better by providing feedback. I greatly appreciate anything you have to add or even just suggestions. It is by listening to you that I know where to go with the site!

The TMRA website: www.tmrahamradio.org

73,
Joe, KJOEYT

The TMRA Amateur Radio Beacon is published monthly by the Toledo Mobile Radio Association. #225
Editors: Brenda, KB8IUP, and Chuck, KB8FXJ.
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A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER - By Richard Webb, NF5B

(This is rather lengthy...but it is well stated, and reinforces the EQ PHILOSOPHY. Therefore we are publishing it in its entirety. – EQ Editor)

We are becoming a culture of appliance operators. As our world becomes more complex, we can't possibly expect to know and understand all the underlying processes that support life as we're accustomed to living it. We've all heard the standard lamentations of technical professionals and other hams about it. I've commented on it in this space regularly. As we go forward in our endeavors to revitalize NTS, I've stumbled head on into something which should be perfectly obvious, but hasn't been. Maybe I'm a little dense, but if so, many of us are.

There is still a need for reliable long-haul services to handle emergency traffic of various types. Many in the professional emergency communications world do not emphasize this need, as they're accustomed to thinking in terms of infrastructure available nearby, even if it isn't available to the emergency services dispatcher and other agencies in the stricken area. After all, that tornado may take out all infrastructure in the county seat, but the next county over has the full range of tools available.

Amateur radio operators in much of the country have similar misconceptions. These misconceptions coupled with the ubiquity of cell phones and other communications devices have resulted in a de-emphasis of traditional radio skills training and preparedness among amateur radio operators. Just as the average homeowner might not understand all the intricacies of his climate control system or the plumbing, we use complex communications systems that many of us don't really understand. One can expect the manager of public safety dispatch services to not have a full understanding of the complex systems he relies on, but we amateur operators should know better. After all, we paved the way to many of those complex systems that public safety communication managers utilize. This should give us a higher level of understanding of these systems and the potential failure modes to which they're susceptible.

During a large-scale emergency such as a Hurricane Katrina or the potential quake on the New Madrid fault line that next county over isn't going to be any better situated than his neighbor. Amateur radio operators inside and outside of the disaster area need to be properly trained, both to utilize resources effectively and to be those resources when needed. Beyond that, we need to do a better job of education of those agencies and organizations we serve. We need to talk to them about why it's important to have that simple HF station available to them, the advantages in reliability. Yes, that may mean during the response to "the big one" that the relay handling their traffic to the state capital is 1200 miles away. But, if the relaying station is a competent operator, that's not a real problem. It's a small problem if that relay station is properly trained, that is.

We need to emphasize the type of training NTS can provide for another reason as well. For the most part, that ham with the shack on his belt is going to be superfluous, after all cell sites and internet by radio are going to do the bulk of the heavy lifting. But, when the cell sites go down he's going to be pressed into service handling a lot of tactical traffic. Then good radio skills are his best asset.

In those earlier days those emergency communication professionals were accustomed to thinking in terms of relay stations from afar, because they were using frequencies which exhibit sky wave propagation characteristics or good long-distance tropo openings even. Cell phones weren't in every pocket. Landlines often ran overhead instead of buried, so could be knocked out by ice or high winds. The technicians who maintained and installed their equipment had to demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of these principles as well, or he/she didn't get the required credentials to install and maintain such systems.

As both professionals and volunteers look at the emergency communications tool kit of today we have a tendency to overlook or ignore those tried and true techniques and assumptions from yesterday, because we have so many tools that do so much for us. We pick up the little device, push a couple buttons, and instantly we're in touch. Daughter may be across the continent at the university, but she's a button push away. Grandma carries an emergency cell phone in the car, and has the number for emergency roadside assistance programmed in it. Uncle Joe bought a new car last year that will take all the pain and worry out of summoning assistance, or even report its location if stolen.

Is it any wonder that we take all this for granted? It's there, like the air we breathe. Call the wife when leaving the office and find out what dinner plans are and if anything is needed from the supermarket on your way home. Tune in a soccer match from Australia as you kick back with a cold beer after dinner. It's all good, it's everywhere, and it's reliable...

Until it isn't! Even then we tend to think that the guy up the road in the next village still has internet, cellular, fax, the whole range of tools available. I can reach him from the VHF rig in my car, or maybe even from my chair with the handheld transceiver, because, after all, that repeater in the next county's on quite a sky hook, and it has a big coverage footprint. It's battery backed up!

If the tower is still standing, and the antenna system intact, you're in great shape! Lose that repeater with the big mouth and big ears due to no antenna, though, and it doesn't matter how big its battery bank is, or how much generator fuel is available. Not just does the guy down the road in the next village have all those tools you thought he had, but you don't even have reliable communications with him unless you've still got a vhf station with a good antenna system still intact. OR, you could easily string a wire between some surviving trees, fence posts and the like, and you've got communications with all sorts of places thanks to HF radio.

If we, as amateur radio operators and those who maintain and provide the emergency services communication infrastructure ignore this little fact of life, then it's doubly true for the average person. If the cell phone was on the charger at the desk, then in the car they're good. The laptop batteries are charged, and the network server in the den at home is on a UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply. At least for about twenty minutes! - Editor). It's everywhere, and it just works. How or why it works doesn't enter Joe or Jane Six pack's mind. Push a button, talk to sissy at college, push another button and microwave your frozen dinner.

Then disaster strikes. The all electric kitchen just sits there, that broadband connection is gone and magic Jack isn't so magic. If the cell sites in the surrounding counties are down then Mr. Six-pack can't even dial 911.

With a century of learning and development behind us, we as amateur radio operators must be prepared to step in and fill this big gap when it opens. I would like to remind every radio amateur everywhere of that most important first couple paragraphs of FCC part 97. Right up front it tells us that the basis and purpose of the amateur radio service is to "provide a trained pool ... "

You get the idea. Notice it didn't say hobby, and that 97.1 says a "trained" pool of radio operators. Have another look at Part 97 of the FCC rules if you doubt me.

From here it looks like we've got a lot of work to do. I hope we're up to the challenge. If we're not, we lose, amateur radio loses, and our neighbors lose even more. They believe that amateur radio is a resource to step in when just this situation occurs, because that's what we tell them over and over again. This, colleagues, is a promise we make to them. We owe it to them, our neighbors and loved ones, to keep that promise. - Richard Webb, NF5B, Eads, Tennessee (EQ Editor comment: Richard is one who "walks the walk" and not just "talks the talk." Over the past few years Richard's name and stories have appeared in EM and EQ. During Katrina, Richard and his wife Kathleen, KCØHZU maintained an amateur emcomm station (the only link to the outside world) from LSU Medical Center in New Orleans for six days until they were evacuated from the flooded and darkened hospital. (Ref. QST Nov. 2005 page 46). Kathleen is wheelchair bound. Richard is blind.

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Submitted by:
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QST de W1AW
Special Bulletin 8 ARLX008
From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT December 7, 2010
To all radio amateurs

SB SPCL ARL ARLX008
ARLX008 NCVEC [Releases New General Class Question Pool](#)

The Question Pool Committee (QPC) of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) released the new General class (Element 3) question pool on Tuesday, December 7. This new question pool -- including graphics and diagrams -- will become effective for all General class examinations administered on or after July 1, 2011; it will remain valid until June 30, 2015. The current General question pool that became effective July 1, 2007 will expire June 30, 2011. The new General pool contains 457 questions, from which 35 are selected for an Element 3 examination. The current Technician class question pool that was effective July 1, 2010 is valid through June 30, 2014. The current Amateur Extra class pool that was effective July 1, 2008 is valid until June 30, 2012.

New Hams

The following are the most recent recipients of licensure from the FCC after attending the entry level class put on by the Toledo Mobile Radio Association.

Riley Jackson, KD8PCK; Ernest Ducey, KD8PCL; Tyeler Mazey, KD8PCM; Joseph Rutkowski, KD8PCN; Lauren Densic, KC8PCO; Leonard Vess, KD8PCP and Kathie Kleinfelt, KD8PCQ.

Welcome and congratulations to all.
Steve, W8TER

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 2011

THE TOLEDO MOBILE RADIO ASSOCIATION P.O. BOX 9673, TOLEDO, OH. 43697-9673
President, Brian, WD8MXR; Vice-President, Steve, W8TER; Secretary, Ron, N8RLH;
Treasurer, Brenda, KB8IUP; Public Information Officer, Steve, KC8TVW.
Board Members: Chris, KC8UFV; Steve, KC8TVW; Tom, KB8PAI; Rita, WB8FBG; Dan, KE8UE.
TMRA Home Page www.tmrahamradio.org Webmaster, Tom, KB8PAI.
TMRA W8HHF Repeaters; 147.270+, 224.140-, 442.850+ (TMRA 2 meter, 220, and 440 repeaters operate with a 103.5 "PL", or a touch-tone access code of 1-2-3) Please "ID" before using phone-patch.
(10 digit dialing, *up and #down)
TMRA W8HHF Packet BBS Frequencies 51.780, 145.690, 223.480, 441.060
The TMRA meets at 7:30 PM every second Wednesday in
The Electrical Industry Building, Lime City Rd. Rossford, Ohio.
The TMRA Q & A net meets every Sunday night at 7:30 PM, followed by the TMRA "Information & Swap 'N-Shop" net at 8:30 on the 147.270+ repeater. All amateurs are invited to check-in.