



RAINBOW CANYONS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
CEDAR CITY, UTAH 84720

Issue 03

Club Web Site www.rcarc.info

March 2006



Saturday morning was not an April fools day joke, we really had a nice turn out to the Saturday morning breakfast. There were eleven of us at the breakfast. The lighting was not the best in the corner where we were sitting at, so the picture did not turn out where you can see every one very well. Starting at the back of the table Bill WA0YPL and on his left his wife Ninfa KB7UDW, My wife Shirleen KB7QXB, and next to her is where I was sitting Russ N7BO, Steve KA7DUS, Dick K7ZI, across the way is Susan, Dicks wife next to Susan is Dave WB7NLU, then next to Dave is Maryann Crum, her husband Brian W0NW, then finally Kal KB7FWR. We had a great time chatting and talking about all kind

of things, for example, I heard Dick talking to Dave About Ecom and Dave was sharing how he would like to get involved and have a radio station set up at the hospital a few times a year and practice emergency communications with other hospitals in the area, like Kanab and Dixie. Dave shared an article with us that is a good example on ham radio helping to assist in a disaster. See article on next page. There seem to be three different conversations going on at the same time. I had a tough time following them all. Seems like I even heard two of the ladies talking about nursing. And heard other topics from others. Lots of chat and a good time was had, you who did not show up missed out. Maybe next month you will be able to get out and have breakfast with us.

March Club Meeting

Meeting started out with business. First up on the agenda is to spotlight one ham each month in the newsletter. The members thought it was a good idea to share stories about our local hams. It might give those of us a chance to know one another a little better, or even those who don't even know us, a chance to learn about us. If you have a story you would like to share with the club members please feel free to write and send it in to the editor.

Second: fundraiser for the club. It is a very good idea to have some fundraisers for the club to grow and stay alive. We need to come upon with some ideas, so if you have any ideas please send them in or bring them to the next club meeting.



Third: our Field Day Chairman has asked for our support for Field Day. He has asked us to come up with some ideas for places you would like to see Field Day set up. Here are some of the places we have been in the past. Cedar City Park, Enoch Park, Three Peaks, Brian Head Peak, Webster's Flat, It has been suggested that Deer Valley, or pine mountain. If one of these are your favorite place please let Steve KB7BGS know.

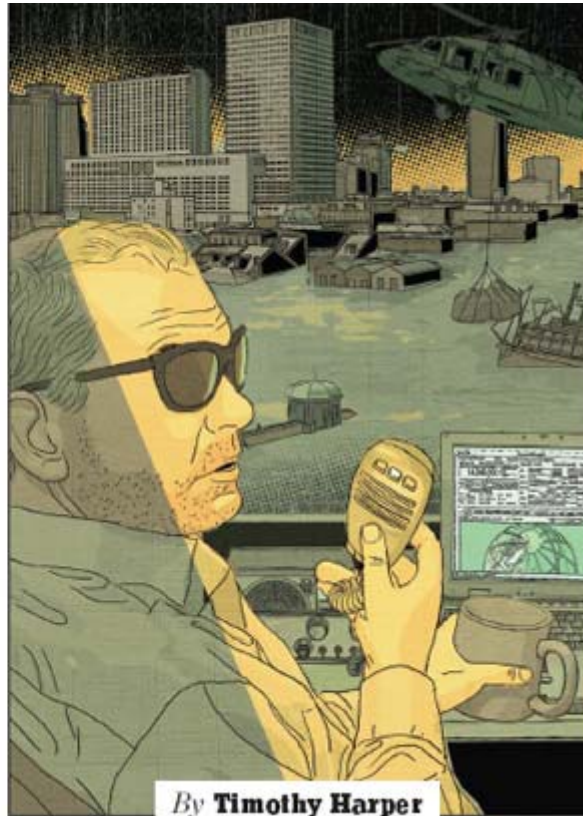
Last item of business was on a document that needed to be drafted to turn into the LEPC.

This document is to help them determine if the RCARC will be the ham radio provider in case of an emergency.



Frequency Flyers

Natural DISASTERS can bring out many *heroes*. Ham radio operators are usually *among* them.



IT WAS THE FOURTH NIGHT after Hurricane Katrina, and something like a thousand patients, doctors and staff were trapped at Medical Center Louisiana in downtown New Orleans, surrounded by floodwaters. Outside, reports were grim. People were drowning in their attics. Inside the hospital, there was no running water, no power, no phones and no Internet. Cell phones didn't work. Each day the authorities said evacuations were about to begin, but nothing happened.

The staff thought they'd seen everything the disaster could bring. Then, in the middle of the night, a pregnant woman dragged herself out of the foul, dark water surrounding the center's Charity Hospital, having managed to swim several blocks from her home, where she had been trapped. She was in labor and the pain was intensifying. By flashlight, doctors quickly determined that she needed a Caesarean section. But with no running water, no electricity, and no way to clean her up or to sterilize instruments, surgery was out of the question. The doctors conferred, and then sent Tim Butcher, at that time Charity's emergency operations director, upstairs to a conference room where a 5-foot-3-inch, middle-aged jazz musician, known for his cigarette-rasped voice and salty language, was sleeping on an air mattress. "Richard, wake up," Butcher said. "We need you."

Richard Webb, who happens to be legally blind, is one of the nation's more than 660,000 licensed amateur radio operators. (They're nicknamed "hams" for reasons that are unclear.) As an amateur radio operator and a member of the Mobile Maritime Network, Webb regularly relays messages from small boats, occasionally participates in small-vessel rescue operations and helps with tracking hurricanes.

Pitching in and helping is a long tradition among hams, particularly in times of emergency. In fact, the Federal Communications Commission's regulatory charge to amateur radio operators urges

Webb became a rare source of light and calm in the darkness and confusion of a disaster scene.

them to enhance communication, "particularly with respect to providing emergency communications." Whether it's an earthquake or a forest fire, a blizzard or a hurricane, when usual communication systems go down, ham radio operators are up, ready to connect the scene of disaster with the outside world. As the series of recent emergencies and other natural disasters so amply illustrates, hams are often the sole means of communication from disaster sites. Within minutes of the first impact in the World Trade Center



attack on September 11, 2001—which put the radio and phone towers atop the building out of commission—ham radio operators set up an emergency network that authorities used to coordinate rescue operations.

When the phone lines are down and “wireless” takes on a whole new meaning, when cell phone and PDA networks fail and batteries go dead, when the lights go out, authorities fall back on this seemingly antiquated but always reliable form of communication. Amateur radio becomes quite literally a lifeline.

“Most communications systems are all going through some common chokepoint,” says Allen Pitts, media and public relations manager of the American Radio Relay League. Whether it’s a telephone switchboard, an Internet relay or a radio tower, “knock out that chokepoint, and the whole system fails,” he says.

Rather than relying on a network, each ham operator has a complete, self-contained transmitting and receiving station. “There is no chokepoint,” says Pitts. “They are like ants at a picnic. You can knock out some, many or even most of them, and they still get to the food. Each one is a mobile, independent unit working in cooperation for a common goal.”

Understandably, many government agencies and hospitals have enlisted amateur radio operators to be on call for emergencies. When the two hospitals making up New Orleans’ Medical Center—University and Charity hospitals—decided to set up their station two years ago, they looked around for volunteers to run it. Richard Webb and his wife, Kathleen Anderson, who is also a ham, raised their hands. They set up the station and tested it every week or so.

The night before Katrina hit, Webb pushed Anderson—she uses a wheelchair—to their van and she drove them to the hospital from their small home in suburban Slidell, Louisiana. Pretty much every other vehicle they encountered during that 30-mile trip was heading out of, not into, downtown New Orleans. At the hospital, this unlikely A-Team—a blind man and a woman in a wheelchair—set up their antennas and gasoline-fired generators, got on the air, tracked the approaching storm and rode it out.

Like much of New Orleans, the hospital suffered relatively little damage from Katrina directly. Then the levees broke. Soon the hospital was isolated, an island surrounded by water 10 feet deep in places. (And, yes, when the power went out, a hospital staffer did offer Webb a flashlight. “Thanks,” he said, “but I don’t need it.”)

Webb and Anderson kept communications going 20 hours a day, relaying messages to and from the state command center in Baton Rouge. They passed along the hospital staff’s requests for food, drinkable water, medicine, bedding, cleaning supplies and more. Authorities repeatedly told Webb that rescuers were coming to evacuate the hospital—later that day, in a few hours, the next day—but day after day, nobody showed up. Coast Guard boats delivered supplies, and took out a handful of patients who needed critical care, including babies in incubators.

Webb and Anderson listened in on the emergency networks and heard how other hams, including many who drove in from all over the country, were a vital part of numerous rescues. In hundreds of cases, people trapped by floodwaters in homes or on rooftops tried calling 911 on their cell phones. The calls wouldn’t go through. So they called relatives in other parts of the country, sometimes a

thousand miles away, and the relatives in turn dialed 911. Their local emergency dispatchers then would pass along messages to ham radio operators who contacted rescuers in New Orleans: There are three people trapped in an attic at this address . . . five on the roof of this building . . . 15 on an overpass at this intersection.

A word about all this relaying. While most of today’s sophisticated communications equipment uses horizon-to-horizon, line-of-sight radio frequencies, ham radio must rely on lower frequencies for long-distance transmission. “Low-frequency waves do an interesting thing,” says Pitts. “They ricochet. These waves bounce off the ionosphere, 60 miles over your head.” Depending on atmospheric conditions, some days you can communicate more clearly with another ham operator in Kenya than with your buddy across town. “By using different frequencies, directions and means, ham operators learn the art form of getting them to bounce where they want them to go,” Pitts says.

Webb took one call from a teenager who had a brand-new license with no kind of emergency training. He was in a school building with a number of other people, and nobody knew they were there. Two babies needed formula, and an elderly man needed a respirator. Webb relayed the call, and the group was rescued.

Hamming It Up

The American Radio Relay League is the United States’ largest organization of amateur radio operators. Its Web site (www.arrl.org) is a good resource for those interested in this hobby and related volunteer opportunities.

As the week wore on—the storm hit on a Monday night—more and more people began stopping by Webb’s radio room, the only link to the outside world. When he could, he sent out word from hospital staffers and patients to their families: I’m at the hospital, I’m OK, I hope to be evacuated soon, I’ll call you when I can. Hams who received the messages in other parts of the country telephoned or e-mailed the families.

A number of people tried to pay Webb for sending out their messages. “Sorry, can’t take it,” he’d growl. “Not allowed. I’m strictly a volunteer.”

Sometimes during lulls between radio transmissions he pulled out his guitar. Small crowds gathered, welcoming the diversion. Webb became a rare source of light and calm in the darkness and confusion of a disaster scene.

The night the woman in labor swam to the hospital, Tim Butcher shook Richard Webb awake and told him that she needed a helicopter. “We have a two-hour window to get her out of here,” Butcher said. Otherwise the mother would probably die, and the baby might, too. Webb ran to his radio, broke in on the network, and tried to relay a message to anyone.

On this evening, the first ham that Webb could reach was a fellow member of the Mobile Maritime Network in Texas. The Texas ham contacted a Network member in Cleveland—who was also an auxiliary Coast Guard officer. The Cleveland ham contacted his superior officers, and within a short time the patient was being airlifted to another hospital, where she had a C-section. At last report both mother and baby were doing well.

Webb saved one life that night, Butcher says, maybe two. And no one knows how many other people at the hospital might have died if Webb and his radio had not been there. Butcher’s sure of one thing: “Richard is a real hero.”

President’s Page

I had an interesting conversation with a local ham who was inspired to become more involved with emergency communication because of recent events and past participation in an actual natural disaster event. His enthusiasm has inspired me to help inspire you to get more involved.

We never know when the “Big One” will strike and catch us with our pants down!

Last month, in this column, I threw out some questions about getting home and family prepared for an emergency. In the event of an actual call out, will you be able to leave home and family? Being prepared will give your family the peace of mind required to enable you to have peace of mind to serve others who are the victims of complacency.

By the show of hands, how many of you did something to prepare home and family to be better prepared? I thought so!

Isn’t it better to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem? We all have busy lives yet each of us has 60 minutes in each hour to use as we choose. You that regularly attend club meeting have seen examples of “72 hour kits” and “grab and go” radio kits. They may or may not be appealing to you as demonstrated. However, the example set by the presenter has merit and the idea of having “something” is better than having “nothing” when called upon for service.

Hurricane Katrina and Rita should have been a wake-up call for all of us who live on an active fault line!

May I suggest-

- A gym bag full of necessary items for handheld radio owners.
- A suitcase full of necessary items for mobile and H.F. radio owners.
- A backpack full of essentials for yourself.

What goes in each bag? Think about setting up a new radio station at home. Put all the items in the bag. Then, take it out of the bag, set up an actual station and make contacts using it. Add the items you discovered you forgot.

What goes in the 72-hour kit? Think about your home and the rooms in it. You have a kitchen for preparing and eating food. You have a bathroom for sanitation, bathing and medical needs. You have a bedroom for sleeping. A living room or den for relaxing and reading. Put all necessary items in the pack and live out of it, at home, for a weekend. Did you get cold or wet? How about the food, was it eatable? Did you run out of water after the 1st day? Where do you get good water during an emergency? Did the cloths fit, keep you warm, dry and reasonably comfortable? How about the bed, woke up stiff and didn’t sleep well? Maybe a nice air mattress or better yet, a thick form pad. A lot of thought needs to go into a 72-hour kit, more so than a grab and go kit.

My radio gear will consist of an all band, all mode H.F. mobile radio. I need a large bag for radio, cables, antenna, power supply and accessories. Since I will be carrying my 72-hour kit on my back I won't be able to carry my radio gear. I'm going to mount it on wheels! Actually, a hand truck that will allow me to pull it behind, easily slid it into a vehicle or whatever. You may want to reverse the order and mount your "house" on the cart and carry your gear. That is up to you.

Think about deployment. Choose those items you absolutely cannot live without and keep it to the bare minimum. Experiment! Something you think will work great may not work at all.

Don't forget to think about interfacing with other's equipment. You may be relieved from duty after a few hours but may need to remain in the area for another shift. The need for relaxation or down time is critical during stressful situations. Include a favorite book, activity or sport. Have on hand a supply of various adapters for antenna and coax. I was at a scout camp once and was shut down because of the need for a barrel connector. Two hams in camp and not a one between us! Include the Anderson "Power Pole" connectors on your power leads and other suitable cables.

Where do you go for more detail ideas? The Internet is my first choice. Type in key words, "72 hour kits" or "survival skills" or "outdoor camping ideas". No access to the Internet? The library has lots of books on the subject. Check out the Scout handbook or Scout Field book. Talk with experienced campers, backpackers, scoutmasters, etc.

Camping a "four letter" word in your vocabulary? Put all your needs in your car or camper (oops!) trailer or truck. I highly doubt a motel room will be available to you in an actual emergency.

Whatever it takes for you to become excited and involved is what I am asking you to do. In the case of the fellow I had the conversation with, don't let inspiration pass you by. One half hour TV show (that isn't worth watching anyway) devoted to preparing your family and yourself will pay big dividends in the future—when the Big One strikes.

Richard Parker, K7ZI

March Club meeting was again a success. Program was digital modes and demo.

The night started out with Don WA7GTU giving us a brief history lesson on the birth of the club. And in that history lesson, not only did we learn who the founding fathers of the club where. We also learned the history of the 146.940 repeater. You can view the history of the making of the club and also get the history of 146.940 Frisco peak repeater at; rcarc.info and click on the link, original web site and there you will see this info.



Second up was Bill WA0YPL. Bill talked on using your computer and a 811b wireless network card in the computer to communicate. Bill says that channel 1-6 on this network card is in the ham band.

Here is Bill showing us that you can take a dish receiving antenna, and with a little modification you can turn it into a transmitting and receiving antenna. Yes, you are seeing right, that really is a coffee can on the end of the dish.

Bill also presented us with a slide show on how you and use this in an emergency communication set up.

You can use this by linking other computers together via wireless. The modes you can use are voice, data, etc.

The software is already in your computer if you are running windows 2000 and up. It is called netmeeting. If you want info call Bill.



Last but not least, Ken W7KBM spoke to us on Echo Link and IRLP. Ken went over how to use both modes. First Ken handed out a sheet with the instructions so we could follow along, which was very helpful. After briefly going over Echo Link, Ken moved into I. R. L. P. Ken had his grab and go kit which included a two meter radio, and he had it set up so he could show us a live demo on the proper procedures to use the link. Now we all have a better understanding on how to use and how much fun it can be on both modes.

This Month's Club Meeting

Fox hunt training and Demo. You should be able to come up with some ideas on what it is all about. And you that know please bring your ideas and share. Meeting is at 7:30 P.M. April 11th at the Cedar City Visitors office on main street.



Happy Easter !!

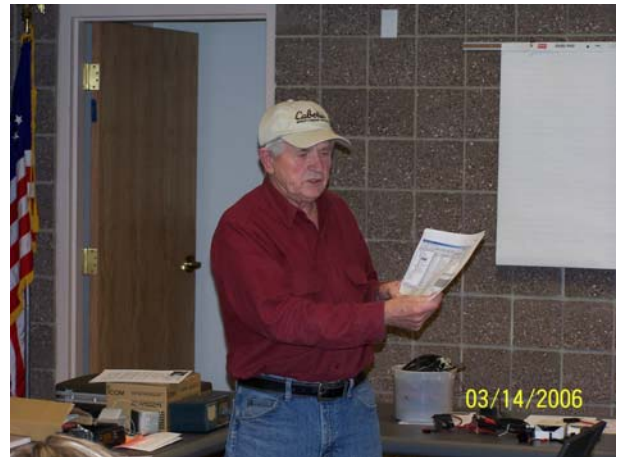
RCARC Finance report

Beginning balance	\$1686.96
Membership Deposit	\$150.00
Power poles	\$65.11
UP&L Check 438	- \$28.73
Power poles Check 439	- \$127.03
Ending Balance	\$1743.30

After Bill was done, we heard from our guest Steve Miner Manager/ Host from our local radio station.

Steve gave us some really good ideas on how to get the club's name and info out into the community.

One of the things that Steve had mentioned was that it would be a good idea to have a publicity chairman, that way all the information would be funneled through one individual. Just to mention a couple of examples, Around the town, provident living etc. And for community calendar we can email or even fax the event to the radio station and they would announce the activity.



REMINDERS

American Red Cross has CPR & First Aid Classes: April 25th & 27th CPR only. Course Fees 35.00 per person. Register by calling the Mountain Valley Chapter at 1-800-511-0447

Sky Warn Training: April 26th at no cost, meeting starts at 7:00 P.M. held in the Cedar City Library. If you would like to learn more, please show up.

Check out this bolt of lightning!

