

RAINBOW CANYONS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

volume 8
October, 2009

Meeting recap

Club President, Russ Chaffee, N7BO, led a discussion on the up coming radio exercise requested by Iron County Health Department, to provide communication for a 5-county-wide inoculation drive.

HAM RADIO REQUESTED

In late August, Merlin Mackay, N7TCE, had received notice from the health department that the club would be called upon to provide radio contact between 4 of the 5 counties participating in what they called, the "Great Flu Shootout". Ham radio operators would be asked to provide communication between counties and a net control point, passing traffic and do so without the aid of AC power.

Future discussion focused upon who would man what "point of distribution" or POD. It was hoped that each county would provide their own resources and personnel. In actuality, RCARC, was called upon to man Beaver county as they had no one willing or able to provide portable HF gear to meet the needs of the agency. By exercise date each county, except Beaver, did man their own PODs.

Dick Parker, K7ZI, volunteered to provide portable gear for Iron county POD. As time drew near we learned that Beaver county would need outside assistance. Bill Rankin, K7BTE, volunteered his services, with Tony Schriver, KF7DLQ, assisting.

Merlin Mackay, N7TCE, provided timely updates as the original sketchy outline was filled in with facts. The exercise was a week away and we had no primary or backup frequencies finalized. A special thanks needs to be awarded him for his

dogging the powers-to-be for answers which the radio club personnel deemed important yet seemed of little concern to the health department. Through Email messages and VHF radio relay the word was passed along to those in need.

It was decided to use 80 meters as the primary frequency and 40 meters as backup with the '94 repeater linked into St George as alternate.

Saturday, September 26, was a beautiful early fall day and the day of the exercise. Dick Parker, K7ZI, showed up at 8:30 to find Ken Oliver, W7KBM, already set up with his portable station as backup at the Iron County POD. By 8:40 Dick was "operational" and ready to pass traffic as soon as Net Control came up on frequency. At about the same time, Bill and Tony were operational from Beaver POD with an acceptable signal. Net control was not heard until well after 9:00.

Merlin Mackay, N7TCE, and Jim Beal, KG6LFU, set up a 3rd HF station at the Iron County POD as a field test of Merlin's portable gear. Merlin suffered a minor setback as he was also learning how to operate his new Icom 706 and tripod mounted antenna but eventually was successful.

It was early in the exercise that we discovered our first problem: we could hear NCS but they could not hear **any** POD.

KB7BGS to the rescue!

Had it not been for Steve Judd, KB7BGS, monitoring the exercise from his home station, it would have been necessary to switch to VHF as our link into St George. As it was, Steve was only able to relay into St. George with the aid of 1200 watts—and they were having trouble hearing him! For the duration of the exercise, Steve relayed our hourly reports and conducted 40 meter tests to see if that frequency was any better. 40 meters was unusable so we slugged it out on 80.

The '94 VHF link was activated by Joe and Sylvia Clemments, N7SIY and KB7UMU, the area Red Cross representatives. They had a little trouble

with NCS accepting them as alternate communication personnel and were mistakenly told to “stay off the frequency”. What troubles we cause for ourselves in the heat of battle.

The vaccination drill for the Health Departments went well. By 12:45 Iron County had dispensed all available doses and were turning people away. Beaver and Kane county did likewise, running out of doses by the end of the exercise (1pm).

The number of doses dispensed per county were as follows: Iron, 290, Beaver, 169. Kane, a surprising 707 and Washington, as expected, the most at over 1800. They had about 400 doses left over.

All responsibilities for the exercise were met by the respective radio personnel. Some PODs became operational late in the exercise (Kane county about 10:30, NCS about 9:30).

The exercise also was a great learning experience with many lessons learned. I have yet to discover why my radio would only put out 10 watts into a system that the analyzer said was a 1.5:1 match. Whatever the reason, electrically, my radio did not like my antenna or feedline.

UP COMING CLUB ACTIVITY

October's club meeting theme will be Simple RF Detection (fox hunting) methods. We will also discuss the Flu Shootout exercise and lessons learned.

Later in the month will be a Fox Hunt held on a Saturday. Come to meeting so you can learn the techniques available with just a HT receiver. Other, more elaborate gear, will be shown and discussed.

Don't forget to purchase your safety vest and start saving money to pay for logos to be added.

October is also the beginning of fall HF radio activities. There is a full page of DX and contesting opportunities in the October issue of QST. See page 78 for details.

Of interest to technician class licensee's, the 10-10 International Ten Meter Sprint is scheduled for October 10th weekend. This should be fun for anyone licensed to operate on 10 meters. Think 10 meters is a dead band? Better think again during this and other 10 meter activities. Visit www.ten-ten.org for details.

IN CLOSING-

I took the opportunity to look at the latest ham radio roster of operators in the Cedar and surrounding area. I am wondering; where have all the new hams gone? I know at least half dozen that passed their test but we have never seen nor heard from, since. If you live near one and know they need help, please, become their mentor. You may know little about ham radio but you know more than they do. There is nothing wrong in admitting, “I don't know, but I will find out”.

I think we do the new “ham” a disservice by not following up after the test.

Think about when you passed the test, did anyone nudge you along or answer your questions or help you put up an antenna? Had it not been for my mentor (I didn't even know his name) I would not have been as active as I am today. I will be ever grateful he was assertive and got me started. Thanks, Bud (Burns) KA7HYD, for the helping hand.

Pass the assistance along.