



The objectives of the Willits Amateur Radio Society are:

- to promote interest in fellowship and fun in Amateur Radio;
- to further the cooperation between Mendocino County Amateur Radio Operators;
- to provide emergency or public service communications when normal means of communications are disrupted;
- to advance the state of the Amateur Radio art through individual and collective research;
- to conduct programs and activities so as to increase the general interest and welfare of Amateur Radio in the community including classes and testing;
- to support lawful, responsible conduct by its members and the amateur fraternity in general.

WARS OFFICERS for 2008

PRESIDENT: Tim Hanna, WB9NJS
SECRETARY: John Lemmer, W6FQX
TREASURER: Dean Durbin, KE6COB
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The Willits Amateur Radio Society meets at 7:00 PM on the **fourth** Monday (not the last Monday) of each month except for December. The normal meeting location is the Brooktrails Fire Station on Birch Street in Brooktrails.

There is a weekly informal breakfast meeting held every Tuesday morning starting at 9 AM at Perko's Restaurant in Willits.

On the coast, there is also a weekly Koffee Klatch starting at 10:30 AM on Tuesdays at the Tradewinds Restaurant in Fort Bragg and a informal breakfast meeting held every Friday starting at 8:30 AM at Denny's Restaurant in Fort Bragg.

DUES ARE NOW PAST DUE

WARS membership dues for 2008 are now past due. If you have not renewed by the end of the month, you will be removed from the membership rolls and lose the benefits of belonging and we will miss you. Members can check the Members Directory behind the Members Only password protected page and check your membership status. Listings in red indicate that your renewal has not been received or processed. The password will change at the end of the month.

If you have not already done so, please send your check in the amount of \$15 or more to Post Office Box 73 in Willits. If you are a new member or if some of your personal information has changed (phone number, address, email address, etc.), please download a membership application from the JOIN US page on the WARS web site, fill it out, and include it with your check.

From the prez – February 2008

Where is my dial tone???

Many Willits residents had a rude awakening when they went to use their telephone in the first few days of February. Some of the problems began on the first, when Verizon digital cell service in the Willits area went down. This meant the loss of not only voice service, but text and messaging as well. Things only got worse as time went on. By Monday morning, many of the land lines were down. Although the Verizon problem had been mostly resolved, now the US Cellular service was unavailable. Several homes and businesses were totally cut off, with no cell, telephone, or internet service.

The land line outage was hit or miss, with some homes having a dial tone, while their immediate neighbors did not. Unfortunately, the outage "hit" some key locations in Willits, including the Little Lake Fire department, the police station, and Howard Memorial Hospital. Priority was given to returning service to these locations, but many other locations did not have service restored until the end of the week.

There are several lessons to be learned from this outage. First is that serious problems are not solved overnight. As in the event of natural disaster, it may take several days or even weeks before things return to normal in Willits. Secondly, key services in the area were maintained via back up means. The Mendocino County Sherriff's office took over dispatch duties, although Sherriff Allman's recommendation for residents to use their cell phones to contact law enforcement didn't help those with US Cellular service. Howard Hospital resorted to sending staff across US 101 to contact the on-call doctors working at Baechtel Creek Clinic.

This incident clearly highlights the fragility of our communications network, but what disturbs me the most is that to my knowledge, local amateurs were never contacted to help with the situation. Perhaps the agencies involved felt the situation was “under control”, but I think that use of amateur radio was never considered as an alternative. With the exception of Brooktrails CERT, which has an outstanding relationship with Brooktrails Fire, most agencies have had no contact with local amateurs. It is time to change that. Plans are being made to organize a “meet and greet” at Howard Memorial Hospital, Little Lake Clinic and Ukiah locations, where amateur stations have been recently installed or upgraded. The idea is to get local amateurs familiar with the equipment and facility staff, and vice versa. While plans for this event have not been finalized, when it does happen, local hams need to participate if the event is to be successful. When the invitation goes out, please say “yes” and help provide a face to amateur radio in our community.

This is only a small step, but an important first step. From here we need to build relationships with local government and agencies so next time communications go down, amateur radio comes to mind as part of the response.

Tim – WB9NJS

LAST MEETING

The last regular meeting was scheduled for January 28, 2008. Due to the imminent threat of snow, the meeting was cancelled. An email notice was sent out to all members early in the afternoon and the various repeaters were monitored in case there were any questions. The secretary actually went to the meeting location at about 6:50 and stayed until about 7:10 just in case anyone didn't get the message and came anyway. Nobody came! As it turned out, there was no snow prior to about midnight but overnight brought traffic snarling snow (4 to 6 inches in some places) that lasted until well into the next two days.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Willits Amateur Radio Society will be held on Monday, February 25 starting at 7 PM in the Brooktrails fire station. The program will be the postponed program originally scheduled for the January meeting.

The program will be our own George Burton, K7WWA, presenting information about the construction and operation of 2 meter repeater stations. This will be a PowerPoint presentation on the big screen with photographs and diagrams. There will be a hands-on exhibit of some of the specialized hardware and/or equipment required for repeater construction and operation.

TEST SESSIONS

To locate posted test sessions, go to <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/examsearch.phtml> and enter your ZIP code and mileage radius for which you are interested in traveling to.

To schedule a test session in the Willits area, please contact Jay Haegele, K6AFL, using the contact button on the WARS web site. If a group of 5 or more wish to be tested, Jay can arrange that.

NETS

A number of communities have been holding a weekly local net. Here is a listing of what is known at this time:

Albion	Monday	3:00 PM	147.570 Simplex
Brooktrails	Wednesday	7:15 PM	146.580 Simplex
Gualala/Point Arena	Tuesday	7:00 PM	147.825/146.610 Linked
Piercy/S. Humboldt Co.	Monday	7:00 PM	146.790/146.940 Linked
Redwood Valley	Wednesday	6:30 PM	146.490 Simplex
Ukiah	Wednesday	5:30 PM	146.490 Simplex
Willits	Wednesday	7:00 PM	146.460 Simplex

All stations within the range of the net control station are invited to check in either on a regular basis via roll call or as a visitor. Net control duties usually rotate among the regular participants. The use of simplex frequencies for local operations is being emphasized in order to reserve the repeater facilities for wider area communications in the event of a major disaster.

There is also a county-wide net at 7:30 PM on Wednesdays using the linked facilities of the 147.390 repeater on Laughlin Ridge, the 145.430 repeater on Cahto Peak near Laytonville, and the 145.470 repeater on Sanel Mountain near Hopland. The initial roll call for this net is for the net control operators of the various communities although there is usually an open call following the initial roll call. Net control duties for this net are rotated between the various communities participating.

Janie Tate, KI6CHA, has made a recording of a typical county-wide net session. If you would like to receive a copy (CD or email MP3 attachment) please contact Janie at her email address, Janie@SeaAngel.org.

All of these nets are organized under the auspices of the Mendocino County Amateur Radio Communications Service (McARCS), an association of amateur operators interested in preparing for communications in the aftermath of a disaster. There is a new web site for McARCS. Please check out www.mcarcs.org.

2008 CALENDER OF EVENTS

It is not too early to consider planning to attend some of the significant amateur radio events in 2008. Here is an advance look at some of the events. In some cases, the web site listed has not yet been updated but you can see what was planned in 2007.

If you know of some more interesting events, please communicate that to the editor of this newsletter.

<u>MONTH/DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>CONTACT or INFO</u>
May 3	VOMARC Hamfest, Sonoma	www.vomarc.org/
April 25-27	DX Convention, Fresno	www.dxconvention.org
May 16-18	Dayton Hamvention, OH	www.hamvention.org
May ??	Noyo River Campout	Open
May 31	Fresno Hamfest, Fresno	www.w6to.com/
June 7-8	SF Section Conv., Ferndale	www.humboldt-arc.org
June 6-8	VHF Contest from Walker Ridge	WB9NJS
June 28-29	Field Day	Open
July ?	WARS Picnic	Open
August 30	W6OMF Hamfest, Vacaville	www.grz.com/W6OMF
September 12-14	SW Div. Convention, Mesa, AZ	www.azhamcom.org
September 12-14	VHF Contest from Walker Ridge	WB9NJS

BUY, SELL, TRADE, OR GIVE AWAY

This space can be made available for your ham radio related equipment that you wish to transfer ownership to another. Please provide your ad as a Word or compatible format as an attachment to an email to the editor of this newsletter, w6fqx@comcast.net.

CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

If you have written an article relating in any way to ham radio and are looking for a publisher, please submit it to the editor of this newsletter. Just send it as an email attachment in a Word or compatible format. (I can open nearly all modern word processing programs but may have to edit some of them into a Word format.)

If you have run across a published article in another medium that you think should be published here, let me know. We may have to obtain permission to publish it but this is generally not a problem for ham radio related publications.

RADIOGRAMS

Do you know how to use a radiogram to send a message across amateur radio nets. The following section is from Emcomm monthly,

FORMATTING A RADIOGRAM TEXT - THE COUNTER PERSON

An EM basic studies training module - (updated from previous training modules)

The art of communicating via the written word has suffered immensely over the past several decades. Effective (and polite) letter writing has nearly become a lost skill in our high-speed culture of sound bytes, email blurbs, and ten-second TV commercials. The focus of our educational institutions is towards more technology, with less emphasis on the language arts.

95% of all EMCOMM traffic is third party. Yet most originating operators have trouble composing a message *text*, and the third party that is sending a message (whether they represent a “served agency” or are a member of the public), will certainly NOT be familiar with formatting a RADIOGRAM. They will provide an address and the essence of what it is they want to say. It is up to the **counter person** to compose the actual message text.

Composing a short, concise message, as in the TEXT of a RADIOGRAM, is a style of writing that emphasizes BREVITY. Clear, concise communications. Sadly, this ability is a dying art and a skill that is rarely taught. It is not difficult to learn if the person is literate at a basic high school level. It only takes a few minutes to think about, and properly compose a message TEXT, *before* getting the message approved (signed/initialed by the sender) and handing the RADIOGRAM to the operator on duty.

"The Counter Person" is the person at an emcomm traffic station who greets the person who has a message they need sent and who formats the message. Ideally, the counter person should not be the radio operator on duty. The counter person may be an off duty radio operator, but it is not necessary that he or she even be a licensed operator. (This will depend upon the volume of traffic being sent/received and the number of available skilled operators.)

1 - The text should be 25 words or less (including any “X” separators). The only punctuation used should be an end-of-sentence period expressed as an X and transmitted as “X-RAY”.

2 - The message should convey EXACTLY what the sender wants to say. No more -- no less.

3 - The message should be worded so that it CANNOT BE INTERPRETED IN ANY OTHER WAY. (This is a MUST!) If possible, have someone else review the message TEXT to ensure this.

4 - Leave out unnecessary words and phrases. MODIFIERS (adjectives {e.g. - very} and adverbs {e.g.- please} are usually not necessary.

5 - DOUBLE CHECK the PREAMBLE, the ADDRESS, and telephone number (if any), plus the SIGNATURE, for accuracy and completeness. If a reply is requested either within the text or in the handling instructions (HX), a return address and/or telephone number is added after the signature.

6 - It is a good practice to show the formatted message to the originator and have him/her initial it as being what they want sent.

7 - The message is then transmitted EXACTLY as formatted. Relay and receiving stations must NEVER change anything. If there is a question or problem along the way, the message should be "serviced" back to the originating station.

8- PRACTICE...may not make PERFECT, but it sure helps a lot! These skills can be practiced at home and you don't even need to be on the air.

From Emcomm monthly, November 2005

"Reproduced courtesy of **EMCOMM MONTHLY** and the **WRRL**"
www.emcomm.org and www.wrri.org.

Now how is the radiogram message transmitted? These days, usually by voice. The sender of the message must take care not to speak the words too quickly. A good practice is for the sender to actually write the words down on a piece of scratch paper while saying the words thus pacing the transmission.

Common words need not be spelled out unless the receiving station requests a repeat. Leave an occasional break for the receiving station to request a repeat.

If the text of the message contains single letters or numbers (figures), specify that before transmitting the single letters or numbers.

For more information, go the WARS web site (www.k6mhe.com/wars) , select Operating Aids, and select the Radiogram documents that have attached instructions.

Another good source of information is www.wrri.org and www.emcomm.org. In particular peruse the back issues of Emcomm Monthly posted on the emcomm.org web site.

An alternate source of information is www.mcarcs.org under the Documents tab.

FOR THOSE WHO TAKE LIFE TOO SERIOUSLY:

1. Save the whales. Collect the whole set.
2. A day without sunshine is like, night.
3. On the other hand, you have different fingers.
4. I just got lost in thought. It wasn't familiar territory.
5. 42.7 per cent of all statistics are made up on the spot.
6. 99 per cent of lawyers give the rest a bad name.
7. I feel like I'm diagonally parked in a parallel universe.
8. Honk if you love peace and quiet.
9. Remember, half the people you know are below average.
10. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
11. Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
12. The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
13. I drive way too fast to worry about cholesterol.
14. Support bacteria. They're the only culture some people have.
15. Monday is an awful way to spend 1/7 of your week.
16. A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
17. Change is inevitable, except from vending machines.
18. Get a new car for your spouse. It'll be a great trade!
19. Plan to be spontaneous tomorrow.
20. Always try to be modest, and be proud of it!
21. If you think nobody cares, try missing a couple of payments.
22. How many of you believe in psycho-kinesis? Raise my hand.
23. Ok, so what's the speed of dark?
24. How do you tell when you're out of invisible ink?
25. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
26. When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
27. Hard work pays off in the future. Laziness pays off now.
28. Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just do not have film.
29. If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?
30. How much deeper would the ocean be without sponges?
31. Eagles may soar, but weasels do not get sucked into jet engines.
32. What happens if you get scared half to death twice?
33. I used to have an open mind but my brains kept falling out.
34. I couldn't repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder.
35. Why do psychics have to ask you for your name?
36. Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what happened.
37. Just remember--if the world did not suck, we would all fall off.
38. Light travels faster than sound, which is why some people appear bright, until you hear them speak.