Multnomah County ARES

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The Newsletter of the Multnomah County Amateur Radio Emergency Services

March, 2015

Meetings

Multnomah County ARES
Every 4th Thursday
7:00 P.M.
Portland Fire & Rescue CTR
4800 NE 122nd Avenue, Portland
http://www.multnomahares.org/

PARC Meeting
Every 4th Friday
7:30 P.M.
One Liberty Center
650 NE Holladay Street, Portland
http://www.w7lt.org/

HARC Meeting
Every 3rd Thursday
Mount Hood Comm. College
Room 1001
http://www.wb7qiw.org/

7' X 14 ' Continental Cargo trailer we purchased to become the ARES Communications trailer; (Article on Page 2 for progress)

Nets

Multnomah Co. ARES Net
Wednesdays at 7:00 P.M.
146.84 (no Tone)

District 1 ARES Net
Daily at 7:30 P.M.
147.320 (PL Tone 100.0)

Northwest Oregon Traffic
and Training Net
Daily 6:05 P.M.
145.27, 145.43, 145.47,146.84,
443.150 & 442.275
(All have a PL tone of 107.2)

Upcoming Events

Mar. 26, 7:00 P.M.: General Meeting. Hands on Winlink stations.

Apr. 11-12: Communications Academy. Two days of training and information on various aspects of emergency communications. http://www.commacademy.org

Apr. 18: MS Walk. Volunteers needed. Contact Brian:

ke7qpv@arrl.net

Apr. 25: Spring SET QuakeEx1. Volunteers needed. Contact Brian ke7qpv@arrl.net

May 16: Deployment Tour. Tour of selected served agency operations center and mobile comms units.

Jun. 5-7: SEA-PAC Ham Fest at Seaside, OR. See http://seapac.org for details.

From the EC Desk

We are once again getting ready to kick into high gear! The spring is always a busy time, as we combine training, exercises, drills, and public service events into a jam packed schedule.

Please keep in mind that the most important event upcoming is the Spring Simulated Emergency Test. This is an Oregon-wide activation, and it's important that we get our served agencies staffed for this event. In addition, the MS Walk will be the weekend before the SET, which is always popular as well. Please think ahead to which of the following events you might like to participate in, and be aware we'll be recruiting simultaneously for the bulk of these:

4-18-15   MS Walk Event (route support and monitoring)

4-25-15   Oregon Section Spring SET (Exercise for all served agencies)

5-2-15   PBEM NET SAR Exercise (ARES to provide a few personnel for net control support)

5-16/15 Deployment Tour - In depth training on PBEM trailer and County ECC station

6-13-15 BEECN Exercise (ARES to provide tech support and net control)

Trailer Project

Work has started, on the ARES Comms Trailer. Will, KG7LPW is the lead construction guru. Interior walls are being taken down and insulation added. The exit ports for coax have been installed. Al, AC1AC has started on installing the interior lights and the exterior lighting is done. We hope to have the trailer functional (but not done!) for the April 18th MS Walk. If you are interested in helping with the construction, you can contact the trailer crew at Trailer@multnomahares.org.

Al, AC1AC working on trailer lights

Trailer showing exterior lighting and ports that have been installed

Training News

We have had a wonderful bunch of new members eager to learn and get certified. We have added seven new ARROs in the past month. We have a total of 47 ARES/RACES Radio Operators (ARROs) now, 15 Net Control and Field Operators (NCFOs), and 12 HF Operators. Pretty awesome, I'd say! Congratulations and thank you to all who have put in the time and effort to get these certifications!

There will be a Net Control workshop on April 16, an ARRO Basics workshop on May 7 and a Traffic Handling and Comm Log workshop on May 21, all at our usual ARES meeting place. Contact me eliza.pride@gmail.com if you wish to attend any of these workshops.

Membership News

Welcome to our newest members, Cele, KI6TUK and Monty, KG2RS. Dylan, W7KEF and Matthew, KG7RIA have completed their certification and have joined the PBEM Team, Carrie, KG7NZP and Doug, KG7MJJ have joined the Lewis and Clark Team, and Judy, KE7JTN and Bob, KG7JKQ have joined the Rover Team. Way to go guys and gals!

More Ways to Stay in Touch

NET net Mondays 7:30 P.M. 146.94 MHz

PSK Digital net Fridays 8:00 P.M. 3.579 Mhz+1500 cycles

Email Focus Groups:

newham@multnomahares.org
digital@multnomahares.org
Technical@multnomahares.org
Leadership@multnomahares.org
Trailer@multnomahares.org

Feature Article
By Bob, KG7JKQ

What's with our HAM Radio Phonetic Alphabet?

One of the most elemental demands in effective HAM radio communications is correct use of the phonetic alphabet. All new HAMs struggle a little memorizing what word goes with what letter in the English alphabet. However, it may be interesting to step back and remind ourselves about the history of this phonetic alphabet and some of its unique characteristics and uses.

So where did this phonetic alphabet we use come from? Called by its most formal name as the "International Radiotelephony Spelling Alphabet," it originally went into development by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in the early 1950's. That was in the context of that aviation organization's recommendation that the English language be used in all aeronautical radio communications. However, one of the problems with English was that virtually 1/3 of English letters, like B,C,D,E,G,P,T,V and Z, were virtually indistinguishable in low audio or scratchy communications. And, too, the ICAO would be recommending a phonetic alphabet that had to be pronounced and understood by a great number of non-native English speaking persons. After what was then described as hundreds of thousands of comprehension tests involving

31 nationalities, the ICAO formally adopted the alphabet we use in March of 1956. But HAM use was not immediate.

Given the work that went into it, the ICAO alphabet was slowly but surely adopted by a great many other organizations. Each time it took on names that associated it with these new organizations like NATO, FAA, various maritime organizations and the ITU (International Telecommunications Union). Indeed, the ITU, which governs all international radio communications, announced acceptance of the alphabet in its official publication Radio Regulations in 1959. Because of its relationship with the ITU, the phonetic alphabet was then officially a part of the protocols for communications generated by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). In the final analysis, within a few years of its overall promulgations by the ICAO, this system of phonetic alphabet nomenclature had become, and continues today, the most widely used phonetic spelling alphabet used in radio telecommunications.

The international origins and orientation of this particular ICAO phonetic alphabet has left it with some interesting peculiarities. How for example was it decided that the words would have no common theme, include one, two and three syllable words scattered at random and contain a diverse mix like the names of two foreign capitals (Lima and Quebec), two dance steps (tango and foxtrot), both men's and women's names and several words of more Hispanic than English origin

(Romeo and sierra). Incidentally, until 1956 the phonetic alphabet recommended by ICAO only used predominately the names of countries and cities around the world (think: Madagascar, Uppsala, Gallipoli, Yokohama or Xanthippe) With its new phonetic alphabet however, ICAO paid great attention to the chance the word would be understood in the context of other words as well as in lengthy text. It is reported, for example, that "football" was better understood in isolation but that "foxtrot" was more comprehensible in extended communications.

Also in recognition of its international origins and use, ICAO has suggested a pronunciation for many of the words in the alphabet that would not be recognized as Standard English today. Other adopting agencies have also adjusted and changed recommendations in pronunciation. Two words in the ICAO alphabet even have completely unique spelling so as to aid non-native English speakers to recognize how they might be pronounced (Alfa and Juliet). And the alphabet also recommends pronunciations to help native English speakers avoid producing sounds quite foreign to English. After listening to people curl their tongue deep to say the French sound "Que .." part of Quebec, I think the ITU may have done it right with recommending a pronunciation as "KEH-BECK"

Of course phonetic alphabets have a history in communications that go well before the ICAO (or its current permutations with ITU, FAA, NATO and IMU). When some of us were growing up as Boy Scouts in the '50s, we used one that was then standard for the US military. It started out: Able,

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Baker, Charlie, Dog, Easy, Fox, George …etc. Thankfully, a remnant of this phonetic alphabet still survives today. "Roger" was the word for "R" in those days and was the code abbreviation for "Received." It would be awkward to say "Romeo" to indicate 'Received" for many folks today. Check out http://usmilitary.about.com/od/theorderlyroom/a/alphabet.htm if you want to see all the different changes in phonetic spelling the US military has gone through over the years.

Finally, it can be noted that different localities often introduce changes into the ICAO phonetic alphabet for quite understandable reasons. For example, it is reported that "Delta" is variously replaced by "Data", "Dixie" or "David" at airports, like Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, that handle large numbers of flights by Delta Airlines. Sounds like a good idea to avoid confusion there.

Hope this helps everyone to appreciate a little more the work that went into developing the phonetic alphabet we use in HAM communication and maybe also to enjoy some if its unique characteristics.

Bob KG7JKQ (KEH-BECK)

This space is for you. Please submit a short article, your own Featured Member Profile Story, ads for items to sell or trade, or pictures of anything radio or ARES-related.

Email to:

newsletter@multnomahares.org
Thanks!