

I would like to start off this evening by reminding us of our stated goals. They are to pass traffic, conduct a training atmosphere, to be ready to serve in times of disaster or emergency and to have fun. These are not in any particular order.

I have a question for each of you to consider.

When the real thing happens and we are called on to serve, will you have the proper tools and training to accomplish the task? Will you be prepared?

I believe that your participation in this net is an indication of your commitment to being properly trained, but have you listened in on the ARES/RACES nets on Sunday morning? This is an excellent source of information and experience. Have you signed up for any of the EMMCOM or NIMS courses? The reality is that unless you have this training, you may not be able to serve, no matter how well you are equipped. The Incident Management System is a part of so many of our served agencies now, how can we ignore it? The truth is we can not.

How about CPR training? Are you certified? When was your last refresher course? Many communities offer CPR training through the local hospitals or emergency groups, or possibly the fire department. If you are not trained, please find a way to get this training. I realize we are suppose to be there as communicators, but, you should remember that in our current roll, we also communicate. How would you feel if you could have saved someone's life, but couldn't, because you did not know how? Since many accidents happen close to home, what if it was your loved one? Knowing CPR will not hurt any of us.

We never know who will be directly affected by any event. That is where the amateur service can really shine. There are amateur operators spread out all over the world as I'm sure you all know. This concept allows us to be as widespread or focused as we need. This is just one of the values we provide to our served agency. What I am afraid of though is that we are not keeping up with the technologies our served agencies will require. Do you have the equipment and knowledge to operate using satellites or HF Modems? Are you familiar with AMTOR and PACTOR modes? If my memory serves me, a recent ship rescue was attributed to a Pactor III amateur station who then notified the Coast Guard.

This is KE5SPP and the Arkansas Section Traffic Emergency Net

I recently read about a product called WSPR. WSPR is the name of a computer program and it is pronounced "whisper", which stands for "Weak Signal Propagation Reporter"; it uses transmitting and receiving functions for a digital soundcard mode. Its principal design goal was to achieve a reliable copy at very low signal levels. In practice it works well at signal-to-noise ratios down to -27 dB. If you would like to learn more about this mode, information can be found at the Princeton Physics library on line.

Many of us are at least familiar with radio teletype, packet, high frequency modems and fax systems, the hardware is as low as \$50 and may cost as much as \$1100 for the top shelf equipment, but have you also considered slow or fast scan television? Imagine if you are in an emergency situation and a procedure was required without a doctor present. It might be possible to set up a television link to walk and talk someone through an emergency procedure.

Now I am going to make some waves that some may not appreciate but, one of our first methods of communication was morse code. There are quite a few debates on the pros and cons of removing it from testing. That is not what this is about though. My question is, Is it still a valid, useful form of communications? I would say yes. When we think of solutions for one of our served agencies, we can not leave tools out of our toolkit. You never know when it will come in handy. Many repeaters ID with morse code, so if you don't know code how will you make the best use of the repeaters? For all the new operators out there that did not have to pass a code test, myself included, I challenge you to learn to at least receive it. There are many programs out there that will help you. A quick visit to most ham sites on the internet and you should be in business. Once you get your legs, listen in on the CW net. It can be fun if you let it.

The lesson tonight is roughly this. If you will plan for problems, they cease to be problems and become merely a part of the plan. My advice to new hams is to adopt a couple of Elmers, then LISTEN to them. Their experience can make a difference.

Folks there are many different methods available to us that will enable our roll as communicators and help us be an asset to our served agencies. If we are not familiar with them, we are not helping our agency to the degree we can. With a stuck in our ways attitude, we are risking our value to our served agencies and our communities. I heard it said once that if all you have in your toolkit is a hammer then every problem becomes a nail. Please be prepared across the board with your technical skills, your equipment and your attitude. With these things in place we will be able to accomplish our goals.

This is KE5SPP with the Arkansas Section Traffic Emergency net. I will ask for another round of check-ins then I will ask for your comments.