May 2008

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The Next OCRACES Meeting is

May 5, 2008
1930 Hours
840 N. Eckhoff St., Suite 104, Orange

Featured Speaker: Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ, on NIMS IS-200

Orange County Sheriff's Department Communications Division

County of Orange RACES

NetControl

Newsletter of the County of Orange Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

Captain's Corner
by Ken Bourne, W6HK, Chief Radio Officer

Alerts to Clog Cell Sites?

The Federal Communications Commission on April 9, 2008, adopted a First Report and Order that will support the ability of the nation's wireless carriers to transmit timely and accurate alerts, warnings, and critical information to the cell phones and other mobile devices of consumers during disasters or other emergencies. Will this clog cell sites during emergencies? We already expected cell sites to be overloaded during a major emergency, making RACES, ACS, and other amateur radio emergency communications a vital resource under such conditions. But now with the FCC's latest action that would generate a huge amount of text messaging to all cell phones during an emergency, could the potential failure of cellular systems be even more likely?

In compliance with the Warning, Alert, and Response Network Act (WARN Act), the FCC's April 9th Order adopts relevant technical requirements based on the recommendations of the Commercial Mobile Service Alert Advisory Committee (CMSAAC) for the transmission of such emergency messages to the public.

The FCC points out that, during emergencies, Americans increasingly rely on wireless telecommunications services and devices to receive critical, time-sensitive information anywhere, anytime. Once fully implemented, the Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS) will help ensure that Americans who subscribe to participating wireless services receive emergency alerts when there is a disaster or emergency that may impact their lives or well-being.

Wireless carriers that choose to participate in the CMAS will transmit text-based alerts to their subscribers. As technology evolves, the CMAS may eventually include audio and video services to transmit emergency alerts to the public. To ensure that people with disabilities who subscribe to wireless services receive these emergency alerts, the FCC adopted rules that will require wireless carriers who participate in the CMAS to transmit messages with both vibration cadence and audio attention signals.

Consumers can expect to receive three types of messages via their cell phones and other mobile devices from participating wireless carriers, including:

<u>Presidential Alerts</u>—national emergency-related alerts delivered to the American public that would preempt any other pending alerts;

<u>Imminent Threat Alerts</u>—alerts with information on emergencies that may pose an imminent risk to people's

Captain's Corner *Continued from page 1*

lives or well-being; and

Child Abduction Emergency/AMBER Alerts—alerts related to missing or endangered children due to an abduction or runaway situation.

Under the CMAS, subscribers to wireless services with roaming agreements will receive timely alerts, provided the subscriber's mobile device is configured for, and technically capable of, receiving such emergency alerts from the network they are roaming on.

Participating wireless carriers will be required to comply with the rules adopted in the Order within 10 months from the date of announcement that a Federal agency has been designated to collect and transmit the alerts to the wireless carriers.

T-Mobile, Verizon, Sprint Nextel, and AT&T all stated that they would be likely to opt into the alert system.

Can You Imagine the Overload?

When I received a notice of the FCC's action, I posted the following statement on the Yahoo Groups RACES list: "Can you imagine how emergency text messaging from an agency to all cell subscribers will overload all participating cell systems during a major disaster? This places even greater emphasis on RACES and ACS units to be prepared for handling emergency communications, when all cell sites become overloaded with such text messages and the follow-up calls that subscribers try to make after receiving those messages."

There were several responses to my post, echoing my concern about cell-system overload and the need for RACES and ACS units to be prepared. However, one responder, Ryan Kelzenberg, N0YFE, said this is "not going to be a problem since text messages are done on data channels as space is available and are a lower priority than cell setup and completion data. It's a neat idea, though it will mean some more reorganization in the EAS (Emergency Alert System) and how to interface the multiple systems so that messages can pass between the NWS weather radios, EAS, and the cell phone emergency messages."

I'm not sure if Ryan is fully correct about his "as space is available" and "lower priority" comments, especially if a high priority is assigned to such text messaging because of a major terrorist attack or earthquake or other disaster exceeding the Katrina hurricane, which completely overloaded cellular systems in Louisiana and Mississippi. Text messaging on top of the other cellular traffic would only exacerbate the situation.

Jay Miller, WA5WHN, points out that there could be a large time delay for delivering the text messages due to the messages backing up in the system. If that's the case, RACES and ACS units might be requested to pass those text messages, perhaps by Winlink, to agency personnel.

Even if Ryan is correct and the text messages themselves do not clog cellular systems, the voice traffic that they generate could be the "clogger." Jim Harrington, KB6JVF, stated that very well on the Yahoo RACES Group: He referred to this as the "bounce back effect" that could be crippling. As a result of thousands of text messages, tens of thousands of voice calls could be generated. "Take what happened in Minnesota," says Jim, "at the bridge collapse. So many generated calls caused the system to collapse." Jim says, "If a wide area is expected to be affected, the generated calls will overwhelm the system, like the people that kept pushing 'auto redial' at Katrina. If the system is over capacity, people panic and keep pushing redial, generating even more calls. Just look at the drop-call rate during rush time. As the person in Minnesota said to the person that wanted to know a more reliable system in an emergency, 'Get a ham license.'"

We Need to Enhance our EmComm Systems

As a result of the FCC's action and the pending failure of cellular systems due to overload, we need to enhance our emergency communications systems, including our FM voice repeaters, ATV and slow-scan TV, Winlink and packet, Echolink, APRS, etc. We need to check our simplex coverage, in the event of repeater failure. We need to check our 75-meter and 40-meter coverage in canyons and "hidden" beach areas, by means of NVIS (near vertical incident skywave) propagation. We need to practice our formal traffic-handling skills, to help alleviate traffic loads when cellular systems fail.

OCRACES Supports Baker to Vegas 2008
by Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP, OCRACES Radio Officer

Baker to Vegas 2008, the twenty-fourth running of the Challenge Cup, is now complete. OCRACES thanks Scott Byington, KC6MMF, Steve Sobodos, KN6UX, and Randy Benicky, N6PRL, for their assistance in completing the pre-race installations. Thanks also go to Scott Byington, the Pahrump Command Post Captain, who was assisted by Jack Barth, AB6VC.

We again supported seven teams with APRS this year, including the three Orange County Sherriff's Teams, two Orange County DA teams, the California Department of Insurance Fraud Investigation Unit, and the Arizona AG Team. We also were prepared to support any team that asked for assistance on a new (to OCRACES) set of linked UHF repeaters. Our thanks again go to Ken Bourne, W6HK, who arranged for access to these machines through, Zack Mullennix, KD6KOG, Chief Radio Officer, San Bernardino County Emergency Communications Service.

OCRACES Radio Officer Scott Byington, KC6MMF, checks follow-vehicle positions via APRS at Pahrump Command Post

Our Sheriff's Department teams have much to crow about: The Women's Team took first place in their division, beating the LASD Women's team to the finish line by more than four minutes. The Open Class team moved up from 19th overall in 2007 to 15th overall this year and 7th among the Open Class teams. The third team, in the Invitational Mixed Class, dropped a few spots from 188 in 2007 to 193 in 2008.

Next year, in what is sure to be a Banner Event, the Challenge Cup will celebrate it's 25th running on March 14 and 15, 2009. Please mark your calendars now and save this weekend.

Lastly, it should be noted that participants in Orange County ham radio communications to support the Baker to Vegas event are invited to attend the next monthly OCRACES meeting (Monday, May 5, 2008 at 1930 hours), during which we will have a "Lessons Learned" roundtable to discuss various aspects of ham radio support for this event, including what went well, what could have gone better, what we can improve upon for next year, and how all of these skills can be applied to our primary mission of providing disaster communications support to the cities and counties of Southern California.

Field Day: June 28-29, 2008

Field Day will once again occur on the last full weekend in June, Saturday and Sunday, June 28-29, 2008. Leading our effort is Radio Officer Ralph Sbragia, W6CSP. The event will occur once again at Craig Regional Park in Fullerton, near the border with Brea. All members are requested to participate. This will be a great training exercise in setting up emergency communications in the field and becoming more familiar with our emergency communications response vehicle. Members and their families will also bring a variety of delicious food for "dinner in the park," which adds to the enjoyment of the event. City RACES members are welcome to participate with us. Additional information will be provided in the June issue of *NetControl*.

Rebuilding Together Orange County
by Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ, OCSD Emergency Communications Manager

Saturday, April 26, 2008, was the annual National Rebuilding Day for Rebuilding Together Orange County (RTOC). RACES members were there once again to provide the communications link between the job sites and RTOC's headquarters in Santa Ana.   Formerly known as "Christmas in April," the Rebuilding Together Orange County organization partnerships with the community to rebuild owner-occupied homes, shelters and nonprofit facilities for low-income residents. Services are provided particularly for the elderly and those with disabilities, so that they may live independently in warmth and safety. Rebuilding Together provides services throughout the year, but coordinates a national rebuilding day once a year. This is RTOC's largest event of the year and when communication support is needed the most. This year there were 14 job sites throughout Orange County. Eleven RACES personnel provided the communications link between these sites and Net Control located at the RTOC headquarters office in Santa

OCRACES Member Martin La Rocque, N6NTH (left), supports Team Leads Grace Hernandez and Pete Ramos at residence in Anaheim during Rebuilding Together Orange County

Ana. Some of the job sites didn't have a communications link as we didn't have enough personnel to assign a communicator for each site. In addition to the job sites, we provided a mobile communicator to accompany the RTOC Project Development and Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Bloom-Ramos.

This year's RTOC National Day event was another success as homes received much needed repairs and improvements. Our communicators were able to get quick answers for the volunteers at each site as issues came up throughout the day. At the end of the day, both RTOC Director Steve Carpenter and RTOC Project and Volunteer Coordinator Mary A. Bloom-Ramos expressed their sincere gratitude for the communications service RACES members provided their volunteers. I too want to thank the following RACES personnel who made it possible for us to provide this service:

From Anaheim RACES – Tom Baldwin, KA6ZKY; Austin Miller, KA6RVK

From Huntington Beach RACES – Jim Hansen, KG6ZDP; and Kevin Emery, KI6IJZ

From Laguna Beach RACES – Arlene Schwartz, KE6GFI

From OCRACES –Steve Sobodos, KN6UX; Martin La Rocque, N6NTH; Chuck Dolan, KG6UJC; Ken Bourne, W6HK; Tom Tracey, KC6FIC; and Jim Carter, WB6HAG

Next OCRACES Meeting: May 5th

The next OCRACES meeting is on Monday, May 5, 2008, at 7:30 PM, at 840 N. Eckhoff Street, Suite 104, in Orange. OCSD Emergency Communications Manager Marten Miller, KF6ZLQ, will give us training on passing the examination for FEMA's IS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents. ICS-200 is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the Incident Command Systems (ICS). ICS-200.provides training on and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS. Also at this meeting we will review our Baker to Vegas activities, and look for ways to improve our participation next year—the 25th anniversary of the event.

Watching The Web
Web Sites of Interest to RACES Personnel
by Ken Bourne, W6HK, OCRACES Chief Radio Officer

Query Tools
http://www.ae7q.com

AE7Q's Amateur Radio Database Query Tools

Thanks to State OES Southern Region ACS Officer Arnie Lewin, W7BIA, who mentioned this Web site at the last Southwest ACS meeting. Actually, he mentioned a sister Web site at http://ae7q.com (no www) that provides simplified Web pages that support handheld computers, PDAs, and Web-enabled phones.

The home page has a chart for obtaining amateur radio license and application database update histories according to FCC weekly and daily files, latest and next ULS (Universal Licensing System) queries, latest action date, and latest ULS. Another chart provides a 1x2 and 2x1 call-sign availability summary, by call-sign region. Links are provided to pending application statistics, USA license statistics, Canadian license statistics, repeater statistics, and D-Star repeater information. Another chart provides a pending application prediction summary.

One page on the Web site provides detailed notes for applying for vanity call signs, and the processes taken by the FCC in granting the license. Links are provided to pages on the FCC Web site for call sign systems, call sign availability, ULS, request types, instructions for obtaining a vanity call sign, applying for a refund of the vanity license fee (if the application is rejected), etc. Another link is provided for silent-key call-sign harvesting.

The query tools main page enables querying of license, trustee, application history, and repeaters by call sign. It also shows vanity applications received from date or date reference, vanity application and license processing on date or date reference, ULS application processing calendar for a particular month, manual cancellations in the last 10;, 20, 30, 60, or 90 days, licensees with 5 to 9 or more license records, trustees with 4 to 9 or more club records, call signs with 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, or more competing applicants on one day, and licensees with 3, 5, 10, 25, 50, 0r 100 applications on one day (now prohibited) for a single call sign. Miscellaneous queries may be made by licensee ID, FCC registration number (FRN), ULS application file number, repeater frequency or entire band, ZIP-5 code (includes Census 2000 data), Google map data, and great circle path calculator, by call signs (uses ZIP code information).

Also provided is a message-board forum.

OCRACES to Exhibit Van at Red Cross Event

County of Orange RACES will exhibit its emergency communications response vehicle at the Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross communications training event on Saturday, May 31, 2008, from 0700 to 1600, at 601 N. Golden Circle Drive, in Santa Ana.. Radio Officer Scott Byington, KC6MMF, will team up with Bill Prats, K6ACJ, of ARC to give a Winlink demonstration. Other planned Red Cross demonstrations include HF NVIS antenna, UHF ATV, portable go kits, emergency vehicles and trailers, solar power, APRS with GPS, mapping, and geocaching, IRLP, Echolink, D-Star, portable PA system, crossband systems, battery power, emergency coax splicing, soldering PL-259s, DSP speakers, T-hunting, J-poles, etc. All OCRACES members are requested to attend this event, in class A or class B uniform.

ACS/RACES News from Around the County

Fullerton

OCRACES Radio Officer Scott Byington, KC6MMF, was the guest speaker at the April 16, 2008, meeting of the Fullerton Radio Club. He updated the members on Winlink technology and procedures..

Fullerton RACES Radio Officer Gene Thorpe, KB6CMO, reports that DonateLIFE at Cal State Fullerton went very well on April 26, 2008. OCRACES Members Martin La Rocque, N6NTH, and Tom Tracey, KC6FIC, participated. Tom did double duty by manning a spot on the route and, when all runners had passed, he got on his bike and followed them on the course.

Orange County

OCRACES is now sporting a new call sign—W6ACS, which emphasizes our expansion into the Auxiliary Communications Service, as defined by State OES. Thanks to Ken Mirabella, KM6YH, former W6ACS trustee, who transferred the license and call sign to OCSD/Communications for our use.

"ACS/RACES News" provides an opportunity to share information from all City & County ACS/RACES units and MOU organizations in Orange County.

Please send your news to:

w6hk@ ocraces.org

HB RACES Holds Recruitment Drive
by Peter Barbour, N6RAS, HB RACES Chief Radio Officer

In an effort to increase the number of Huntington Beach RACES communicators, Huntington Beach held a new-member recruitment drive in March. The process began with a direct mailing to approximately 1,100 FCC licensed amateur radio operators in Huntington Beach. A personal letter from Fire Chief Duane Olson introduced the RACES program and was accompanied with a current HB RACES promotional brochure. This direct-mail outreach was conducted in early February and invited hams to monitor our RACES weekly nets and attend an open house on March 5, 2008, in the city counsel chambers. The open-house event featured remarks by Huntington Beach Fire Operations Chief Eric Engberg and EOC Battalion Chief Mark Daggett, underscoring the powerful partnership between the Fire Department and the HB RACES program. Huntington Beach EOC Coordinator Glorria Morrison, KE6ATG, and RACES Chief Radio Officer Peter Barbour, N6RAS, also made presentations. They focused their PowerPoint discussions on the partnership that the city maintains in emergency preparedness and the RACES program. Typical emergency communications tasks such as mutual aid, a fire dispatch redundancy plan, and Amateur TV operations from our helicopter were dis-

Interested hams attend evening presentation on RACES at Huntington Beach EOC

cussed. About 50 interested hams attended the evening presentation. The evening concluded with an informal tour of our EOC. The recently renovated EOC features modern computer-assisted emergency management systems, including a video display wall useful for presentation and status display and Amateur TV viewing. RACES communication resources (including ATV) were demonstrated for the assembled hams. HB RACES is processing about 20 applications for new members and is quite pleased with the results of this recent outreach. The key to this successful event was strong support from the city's Fire Department leadership and frequent communications to interested hams once they got in the door to learn about the HB RACES program.

May 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 *Monthly Meeting & Weekly Net*	6	7 *OCCCCC Advisory Council Meeting*	8	9	10 *RACES/ MOU Breakfast*
11 *Mother's Day*	12 *Weekly Net*	13	14	15	16	17 *Armed Forces Day*
18	19 *Weekly Net*	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 *Memorial Day Observed & Weekly Net*	27	28	29	30	31 *OC Red Cross Communications Boot Camp*

Upcoming Events:

- **May 5:** OCRACES Meeting, 1930, Eckhoff, IS-200
- **May 7:** Citizen Corps Advisory Council Meeting, 0830, VCOC
- **May 10:** ACS/RACES/ MOU Breakfast, 0800, Katella Grill
- **May 31:** OC Red Cross Communications Training Event
- **Jun 28-29:** Field Day, Craig Park, Fullerton
- **Jul. 27:** OCRACES at OC Fair Ham Radio Booth, 1700-2300

www.ocraces.org

Mission Statement

County of Orange RACES has made a commitment to provide all Public Safety departments in Orange County with the most efficient response possible to supplement emergency/disaster and routine Public Safety communications events and activities. We will provide the highest level of service using Amateur and Public Safety radio resources coupled with technology, teamwork, safety, and excellence. We will do so in an efficient, professional, and courteous manner, accepting accountability for all actions. We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership with the Public Safety community to professionally excel in the ability to provide emergency communications resources and services.

County of Orange RACES Frequencies

10 m: 29.640 MHz output, 29.540 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL
6 m: 52.620 MHz output, 52.120 MHz input, 103.5 Hz PL
2 m: 146.895 MHz output, 146.295 MHz input, 136.5 Hz PL*
2 m: 147.480 MHz simplex
1.25 m: 223.760 MHz output, 222.160 MHz input, 110.9 PL
70 cm: 446.000 MHz simplex
70 cm: 449.100 MHz output, 444.100 MHz input, 110.9 Hz PL (private)
70 cm: 449.180 MHz output, 444.180 MHz input, 107.2 Hz PL (private)
23 cm: 1282.025 MHz output, 1270.025 MHz input, 88.5 Hz PL

*Primary Net—Mondays, 1900 hours

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Assistant Radio Officers
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Questions or Comments?
Contact the *NetControl* Editor
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*"W6ACS ...
Serving
Orange County"*

Meet your County of Orange RACES Members!

Ken Bourne W6HK	Scott Byington KC6MMF	Harvey Packard KM6BV	Ralph Sbragia W6CSP	Joe Selikov KB6EID	Marten Miller KF6ZLQ	Robert Stoffel KD6DAQ
Jack Barth AB6VC	Jim Carter WB6HAG	Ernest Fierheller KG6LXT	Randy Benicky N6PRL	Bill Borg KG6PEX	Chuck Dolan KG6UJC	Nancee Graff N6ZRB / Ray Grimes N8RG
Walter Kroy KC6HAM	Martin La Rocque N6NTH	John Roberts W6JOR	Tony Sanchez AE6QT	Steve Sobodos KN6UX	Tom Stroud N6FDZ	Tom Tracey KC6FIC