

NEWS

## Amateur Radio Club Hosts Open House

On Saturday amateur radio enthusiasts educated area residents on communication via short-wave radio

By Leah M. Kosin December 13, 2010

The Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club hosted an open house at the Herndon Caboose on Saturday to teach visitors how short-wave radio communication could help during a disaster.

Member Bill McCourt said amateur or "ham" radio has been around for a century and has grown into a worldwide community of licensed operators using the airwaves to communicate with others in a variety of ways.

Some of their activities include talking to others around the world without the Internet, exploring wireless technology, talking with astronauts on board the International Space Station and helping government agencies, disaster relief organizations and local communities when needed.

Most recently, McCourt said ham radio was used during the Presidential Inauguration in 2009. A station was also set up at the Red Cross Center, in Sterling, as a result of Hurricane Isabel, the costliest and deadliest hurricane of the 2003 Atlantic hurricane season.

"We definitely get the opportunity to go out and serve the public," McCourt said.

The radio club also does communications during the Herndon Bicycle race, Herndon Festival and foot race. A field day is also held, in June, to demonstrate how they would perform in an emergency, he said.

On Saturday, an all-band transceiver was on display allowing visitors to communicate with other ham operators in the local area.

According to the American Radio Relay League, there are over 700,000 ham radio operators in the United States and three million worldwide.

"Ham radio has kind of fallen by the wayside as far as an enthusiast kind of thing because people are so exposed to Internet, cell phones and all of that," McCourt said. "The radio, albeit itself, has lost its mystique and its excitement. But we really enjoy talking to people across the world with very little equipment and it's really fun to make contacts and friends in other countries."

Member Kevin Stuart said he has been with the club since 1996. He said he enjoys experimenting with the equipment, which is how new advances in radio come about.

"A lot of the stuff you do today came out of amateur radio, such as e-mail," Stuart said. "A lot of people think amateur radio is dying. But popularity is starting to pick back up."

Both Stuart and McCourt said amateur radio is a great hobby to have. There is something for everyone including sending Morse codes and restoring old equipment.

Most importantly, it gives you a chance to provide the broadest and most powerful wireless communications to any private citizen, anywhere in the world.

For more information, or to find a local club, visit [www.arrrl.org](http://www.arrrl.org). To learn more about the Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club visit [www.qsl.net/sterling](http://www.qsl.net/sterling).



PHOTOS (4)



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### COMMENTS (2)



**Bob Bruhns**

12:59pm on Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Don't ever underestimate Amateur Radio. When the storms come and the lights go out, when the wind blows the towers down, radio amateurs will hang a wire in the bushes and make sparks with an automotive coil if necessary, to get communications through. Always ready when all else fails, this is one of the most valuable and little-known emergency services that exist.



**Leslie Perales**

1:31pm on Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Definitely makes you glad this group of enthusiasts is here!



Member Kevin Stuart listens to an all band transceiver, which was on display, to the public, on Saturday. Credit [Leah M. Kosin](#)



The Sterling Amateur Radio Club hosted an open house inside the old Caboose, located on Lynn Street, Saturday. Credit [Leah M. Kosin](#)



An all band transceiver allows the ability to communicate with other ham operators around the world.  
Credit [Leah M. Kosin](#)



The all band transceiver has recently been used as a backup during the 2009 Presidential Inauguration as well as a way to communicate during Hurricane Isabel in 2003. Credit [Leah M. Kosin](#)