

# WARC Newsletter

The Monthly Newsletter of the Wantagh Amateur Radio Club

October 2003

**Meeting Notice:** The next monthly meeting of the Wantagh Amateur Radio Club will be held at 8:00 P.M. on Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, at the Wantagh Public Library.

**Agenda:** "Rig-in-a-Box" Demonstration by Jeff Schneller, N2HPO, from the Salvation Army's SATERN Program. Also, nominations for Club Officers and Directors will be accepted from the floor.

## Minutes of the September 19<sup>th</sup> General Meeting

### WARC GENERAL MEETING MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 19, 2003

Vince KD2EP, president, opened meeting at 8:12 PM.

All Officers were present.

Minutes were accepted with the following correction: Sid K2LJH used 6-meter repeaters upstate. These repeaters have 4 times the coverage (area) than 2-meter repeaters.

Treasurer's Report: Chris KC2FBW reports our balance is \$381.71. ►

*Continued on page 2*

## ARRL's Logbook of the World (LoTW) System

### About Logbook –

ARRL's *Logbook of the World* (LoTW) system is a repository of log records submitted by users from around the world. When both participants in a QSO submit matching QSO records to LoTW, the result is a QSL that can be used for ARRL award credit.

To minimize the chance of fraudulent submissions to LoTW, all QSO records must be digitally signed using a digital certificate obtained from ARRL. Obtaining such a certificate requires verification of the licensee's identity either through mail verification (US) or inspection by ARRL of required documentation (non-US).

Software developed by ARRL can be used to convert a log file (in ADIF or Cabrillo file format) into a file of digitally signed QSO data, ready for submission to LoTW.

LoTW began operation on September 15, 2003. ►

*(LOGBOOK continues on next page.)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 General Meeting Minutes
- 1 ARRL's LoTW
- 3 SATERN
- 4 Re-print of an Article about MARS

**DX Report:**

Len KB2HK announced a change in how the league is handling QSL Cards. The cards will be handled via the Internet. Full details on the "Log book of the World " can be found in the current QST magazine. Len noted that he could still check QSL cards. The bands have been very spotty for DX, so you have to dig for it.

**Announcements:**

Greenberg Train Show at Hofstra this weekend.  
The Italian Festival is at Hofstra also this weekend.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

ELECTION OF OFFICERS is coming up. Vince KD2EP requested volunteers. Ralph WP4KO, Len KB2HK, and Sid K2LJH responded to form the committee.

Ralph WP4KO then conducted a brief question and answer period dealing with computer problems.

**Next month:**

Scheduled is RIG IN A BOX by Jeffery Schneller N2HPO, from the Salvation Army.

Report of the nominating committee:

Oct. 4 is the simulated emergency test for ARES members.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM for conversation and coffee

Respectfully submitted, Bill N2RRX, Secretary. ■

***Logbook of the World (Continued)***

**Download Software –**

**DO NOT** delete certificates when installing new versions of the software!

Last updated: September 26, 2003

New bug-fix release V1.08: Fixes a bug that kept *TQSLCert* from loading new configuration data.

**Windows**

*Note: It is not necessary to uninstall an older version before installing the current version of the TrustedQSL software.*

[tqsl-108.exe](#) V1.08 installer (95/98/Me/NT/2000/XP)

For Other Operating Systems – Go to the ARRL web page at <http://www.arrl.org/lotw/> ■

## **SATERN – SALVATION ARMY TEAM EMERGENCY RADIO NETWORK**

**SATERN (Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network) provides emergency communication support to the Salvation Army wherever needed. Situations in which SATERN members have found themselves include tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, fires, aircraft accidents, bombings, and earthquakes -- just to name the more expected types of emergencies. SATERN volunteers have also helped quell urban violence, reduce the chaos of a Christmas party for thousands of inner-city kids, feed street people during winter freezes, and direct parking-lot traffic at major events.**

**SATERN volunteers establish health-and-welfare nets, pass messages between field workers and their respective command posts, string up dipoles and operate from emergency generators. They also have been known to unload trucks of ice, deliver a motorized canteen to earthquake-ravished Kobe, check on the welfare of vulnerable elderly in a mega heat wave, and prepare sandwiches and hot coffee for firefighters battling an extra-alarm blaze in below-zero weather. In short, SATERN is not your ordinary radio club!**

**If you are an amateur radio operator and you want to help others when emergencies occur, and would like more information about the SATERN program, please go to the the SATERN web-site at <http://satern.org/> or write to Major Pat McPherson WW9E at [ww9e@aol.com](mailto:ww9e@aol.com). You may also contact the NY/NJ coordinator, Mr. Jeff Schneller, at [n2hpo@aol.com](mailto:n2hpo@aol.com) or call N2HPO on the 147.270 repeater (141.3 or 127.3 CTCSS). ■**

### **Editor's Note:**

The following article was written by Larry Van Horn, N5FPW, and published in the October 2003 edition of Monitoring Times Magazine, a monthly publication of Grove Enterprises. It is re-printed here, on the next page, in its entirety with the written permission of the author and the publisher.

Frank, N2RSO



# Closing Comments

*This page is open to thoughtful opinions on radio-related topics. Submissions should be about 800 words in length and may be mailed to Closing Comments, care of this magazine, or emailed to [editor@monitoringtimes.com](mailto:editor@monitoringtimes.com)*

## Can't Lead From Behind!

By Larry Van Horn, N5FPW  
Monitoring Times Assistant Editor

"The primary mission of MARS is to provide communications support for federal agencies in responding to emergency situations on an international, national, and local basis as an addition to normal military communications. The primary response to an emergency or disaster will be accomplished by local and/or state emergency or disaster officials, with communications support from MARS." Mission Statement of the Uniformed Services MARS Programs.

It has been one year since my *MT* colleague Fred Maia, W5YI, wrote in this column on the findings of a U.S. Army Inspector General's Investigation/Report of fraud, waste and abuse within the U.S. Army Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS), a DoD sponsored and taxpayer funded program. One of the more eye opening comments in that column involves the ability of Army MARS to conduct their primary mission.

"Another issue that the DAIG investigated is the accusation that MARS failed to support military, civil and/or disaster officials during declared emergencies with needed radio communications. Specifically mentioned is the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, when the city of New York experienced a massive communications failure.

"MARS has the capability of establishing communications in this type of environment, but without planning and training, this capability cannot be realized. Simply stated, no one knew that MARS was there."

"The potential for Army MARS to provide support in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 was phenomenal. Phone links from New York to Washington alone would have relayed critical information to the decision makers and would have helped make up for the loss of key communication links lost in the disaster. The MARS VHF capabilities could have assisted in clarifying the federal emergency response. Computer centers could have been linked via MARS HF links; and phone patches could have placed key individuals in contact with their organizations."

Although Army MARS established a radio net and remained on the air for several days the DAIG found that MARS were not prepared to handle needed communications and did very little in the way of emergency assistance "...except conduct radio checks."

Over the last year many radio hobbyists, current and former MARS members, and others have watched closely the on-the-air activities of all three DoD MARS programs. The purpose of conducting this monitoring surveillance was to see if the Army IG report had any effect in making the MARS programs more effective in the accomplishment of their primary mission.

To quote one member of the MARS program, "In the opinion of many of the individuals who monitored and watched the successes or failures of MARS during the past year, little has improved, and disaster after disaster, emergency after emergency, MARS has done little to show progress in corrective action to

maintain the readiness of MARS for its primary mission."

While a detailed discussion of events of the last year is not possible in this editorial column, the point made above can be illustrated dramatically with their response to just one single major event.

As I pen this, we are still discussing the aftermath of the largest power failure in the history of this country: the blackout in the Northeastern United States the second week of August. This emergency should have had MARS operators present and active in a major way. Critical military bases were affected; local, state and federal government communications by most accounts were marginal at best; and the extended nature and coverage of the event in the media should have had the MARS frequencies buzzing with activity.

So what was the response? From the reports we received here in Brasstown from monitors nationwide and from overseas there was no response. Not even a hint of activity on any of their national or major operating frequencies in the immediate aftermath of the power outage.

As one former MARS member puts it, "Despite listening and observing carefully, I have yet to find any significant emergency communications role assigned to MARS by any agency, at any level."

An effective organization is one that has good leadership at the top, and I believe most of the problems occurring within these MARS organizations stems from a lack of quality leadership. As one famous Civil War General pointed out, "You can't lead from behind."

In this age of increased homeland security and terrorism threats maybe the MARS services should take a page from the amateur radio's national organization here in the United States - the ARRL. Time and time again the amateur radio community has been very successful in providing emergency communications services to all levels of government. We see this manifested regularly on the ARRL website (<http://www.arrl.org>), and in articles and newsletters. This stems directly from the leadership at the ARRL and a cadre of trained and enthusiastic volunteers. But, with the three MARS programs, we see nothing of their accomplishments and the reason is simple: There are none.

As one MARS member recently noted in a private communication to me, "We volunteers collectively need to reevaluate our commitment to the organizations we volunteer with. Are we doing our job, are our commanders doing their job, and most importantly, are the systems working as designed and mandated by either the President, Congress or the Department of Defense? If not, then many of the items discussed in the October 2002 issue of *Monitoring Times* remain valid to this day regarding Army MARS."

The options seem clear: if the appropriate changes cannot take place internally, then commanders of higher authority must assume the responsibility for MARS. They should first reexamine the value of the program. If they decide its mission is still valid, they should ensure its effectiveness, including a complete reorganization if necessary. If they decide the program has outlived its mission, they should abolish it. Until that time, MARS appears to be a waste of taxpayer money.