

The **WIRELESS** **DISPATCH**

The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Emergency Amateur Radio Club

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FREE

EARC president looks forward to exciting 2004

The President's Corner

Kevin Bogan
AH6QO



Happy New Year! As we launch the new year, let's take a look at what we accomplished last year.

We had a number of fine presentations at the GM meetings: IRLP by Carter Davis (KH6FV), APRS and APRS messaging by Rick Ching (KH7O), Antennas and Feedlines by Eran Agmon (WH6R), State Civil Defense Tour and Homeland Security discussion by Clem Jung (KH7HO), Novel Techniques in Emergency Communications by Ron Hashiro (AH6RH), Using a VOM and workshop by Jim Yuen (WH6GS), VHF Digital Communications demo by David Cabatu (AH7E) and Ryan Yamashiro (NH7FE), Anderson Powerpoles and soldering by various members, Dayton Hamvention discussion by Russell Houlton (WH7O) and Ron Hashiro (AH6RH), and a Pre-Field Day Get-Together. We have also overcome many difficulties

with the repeaters thanks to Jim Connell (KH6JKG) and Todd Kawamoto (KH7UK) who are not only our tech guys, but VP and Treasurer/Club Callsign Trustee, respectively. The club presented scholarship awards at the State Engineering and Science Fair, again. David Cabatu (AH7E) updated the website with a new look and feel that still retains the unique flavor of the old website. However, our greatest achievement has been in maintaining a continuity of the who and what the EARC is by keeping on board many of the members and officers who retain a deep and broad knowledge of the issues and functions of the club. To all of the presenters, officers, and members of the Board of Directors, please give them your thanks.

We hope to have many more presentations this year. Please suggest topics and attend the meetings. This is your club, and we need you! With the New Year comes the time to renew your membership. Please take a moment to fill out the application form and send it in or bring it to the next meeting on January 22, 2004. I'll bring the pizza and some surprise, and you can bring whatever you like to share. See you there!

Inside this issue of the Wireless Dispatch . . .



EARC members doubled as SkyWarn operators on an IRLP system during a Hurricane Jimena watch in August 2003. See more about their efforts on Page 6.



Ralph Toyama is a busy guy. Find out more about this committed volunteer (and overall nice guy) in the second installation of the EARC Member Profile on Page 3!

McCurdy uses emergency activation skills during 2003 power grid crisis

by Connie McCurdy

I was watching "The Guns of Navarone." Gregory Peck and David Niven were waiting for the guns to blow up. Suddenly, the TV goes dead. Okay, a power outage. I am in Monroe, Michigan staying with a friend. I asked her son to check the circuit breaker box. Nothing had tripped. I turned the battery powered radio on, nothing. I checked the mobile phone, nothing. Then I tried to use my cell phone, dead. Now I am concerned. We are approximately 3 miles away from the Fermi Nuclear Power Plant.

At this point, I get my Ham radio and call into the repeater, but again nothing. I try the other repeater and still nothing. Then I start to scan the frequencies. I hear two hams discussing a power outage starting from New York to Michigan and possibly Texas. I went to the neighbors on both sides

and alerted them as to what was happening. I am very concerned at this point. Living on an island, I am accustomed to power outages and being without water. However, when everything goes out, which I have only experienced in a hurricane, I am concerned.

Fortunately several months earlier I had sent the Information Handbook for Emergency Preparedness to Denise, my friend. I suggested that she and her family (which consists of about 50 family members) to have a three day emergency pack in their car. I had also suggested GMRS radios since they were not licensed for Ham radio. Also, generators if possible. They had also agreed upon a general meeting place if something went wrong. The other side of the county from the nuclear power plant.

I had Jeff (Denise's son) grab the emergency supplies and extra bottles of water. I had already set up my Icom Handheld T7H with a magmount antenna attached to a cookie sheet, my handheld Radio Shack TV, a Grundig Short Wave radio and two GMRS radios (we had decided on a frequency months before). The radio and TV stations were coming back on air but no one was exactly sure of the blackout situation.

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The WIRELESS DISPATCH

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Editor Crissy T. Kawamoto, KH7CHI

Asst. Editor Todd Kawamoto, KH7UK

Questions and comments regarding the WD, as well as submissions or corrections, may be sent to the editor via e-mail at teriyaki@mac.com, or via the EARC, P.O. Box 30315, Honolulu, HI 96820-0315.

Message from the Editor

Hi! It's nice to "see" you again. You know, you might see the WD in your mailbox more often if you, Joe Q. EARC-Member, would submit an article once in a while. (Hint, hint!) It's not that difficult, really! The average article length is a half-page, single-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman. Not a writer? Not a problem! In case you haven't noticed, we at the Wireless Dispatch love pictures. Action shots are preferred over posed photos, but we'll take what we can get. No matter what you submit, your name will be attached to it, so you'll get the recognition you deserve for being a great helper.

Don't forget to come to our general membership meetings, too, so we can all meet you in person! Most of all, please have a safe and happy 2004.

73,

EARC Member Profile: Ralph Toyama, NH6PY

by Crissy Terawaki Kawamoto

“These days, I don’t have that much time for other hobbies,” says Ralph.

You know Ralph – he’s the one that’s always late to EARC meetings because he’s been working late on various university committees and as the systems and circulation librarian at the Leeward Community College library. Or even if you don’t attend our monthly meetings, you’ve seen him at OCDA or hitting the streets during any assortment of events, from the Honolulu City Lights parade to the marathon. Ralph Toyama (NH6PY) is a member of the EARC, ARRL, RACES and ARES. He’s a very busy guy.

Busy and knowledgeable, Ralph has been a ham operator since his college days (he got his license “mainly to prove to himself that he could”), but he’s been an electronics junkie since his pre-teen years. In fact, during his teens, he was awarded an AM transmitter kit for being at the head of his summer class at Electronics Institute in Honolulu. Later on, Ralph’s interest in pursuing a career in emergency medicine led him to become a volunteer with the OCDA, for which he bought a CB radio, and that, of course, eventually led to him becoming the ham we know today. Sort of.

“I sought the license for the intellectual challenge, without any intention of getting on the air,” Ralph admitted. But then, while scanning one night, he came across the EARC nightly net and decided that he wanted to be a part of all that. It was 1988 then, and after what he deemed as “an interminable wait,” Ralph finally received his license and Icom HT, just in time for him to volunteer at his first public service event, the Aloha Week Parade.

“My favorite part about being a ham is that in exchange for having to earn our licenses, we have such wide latitude in our operations and the equipment we use,” Ralph said. “We’re encouraged to develop



Ralph Toyama (inset, and far right) can be seen at many a community event, providing much-needed communications, like at the 2000 Great Aloha Run.

Inset provided by Ralph Toyama; large photo by Adrian DiTucci

our knowledge and skills, and that makes us flexible and resourceful. We have the freedom to experiment, and we can be of great service to others.”

In addition to being a radio enthusiast early in life, Ralph was a *very* early computer communications person. He started dialing in to PC bulletin board systems in 1990 – with a 1200-baud modem – and began using the Internet while pursuing a Master’s degree in Library and Information Studies at UH in 1991, before the World Wide Web even became a reality. This experience with networking is helpful in his job at the LCC library, where his responsibilities range from troubleshooting, to educating patrons on the use of various research methods and tools, to managing library resources, in addition to serving on several university-wide committees and being an active member of the Hawaii Library Association.

Yes, Ralph Toyama definitely has his hands full – even more reason that the emergency communications community, including the EARC, is extremely fortunate to have this tech geek and all-around nice guy on hand!

Blackout (continued from Page 2)

People were not sure if it was terrorist related. Also, there were concerns about the security of the power plants. I monitored the local frequencies, still no local repeaters. (Two days later I was told the repeaters were backed up by diesel powered generators but they never kicked in.)

Fortunately, I had filled up my car with gas the very same day. As my friends pulled into the driveway, I suggested we pack up and leave to the family meeting place. I monitored the ham radio along the way. We got to the meeting place and there were about 40 family members there. All had their 72 hour packs, had grabbed extra food, water, batteries, etc. I set up a shack and checked in with an emergency net that was set up on Simplex. Denise's brother had purchased a 5,500 watt generator a few months earlier. We got it up and running, enabling the family to fix dinner, monitor the TV and radio.

As far as I am concerned, my ham radio was my most valuable possession. Hams were reporting all news and always clearly stating whether it was factual or possibilities. My main concern was that we were safe and together and away from danger.

Denise's brother happened to be working at the Fermi plant when the blackout occurred. He was picked to go into the hot room and shut it

down. The plant did not shut down automatically.

I am so proud of Denise's family being ready and following instructions. I am very grateful for my training from Ham Radio, Civil Defense and American Red Cross. I was radio ready and able to make a contribution to the family and to the community.

We did return to our homes several hours later but the city was in some chaos. There were long lines at the gas stations for two days. A few stations ran out of gas. Stores were packed. I saw dozens of cars on the freeway abandoned because they ran out of gas. People were taking buckets and milk bottles to the gas stations to get gas. People were also helping one another by sharing gas too. Thousands of homes were without power and water. When the water became available, it had to be boiled. There was some price gouging on gasoline and water. However, the Governor of Michigan stated these people would be prosecuted. Also, Southeastern Michigan was declared a disaster area.

For the rest of the United States, the blackout may have seemed to be a minor inconvenience. In my mind, the worst part was the total loss of communication. But the last line of communication worked, the Ham Operators. Without my equipment, we would have been left in the dark not knowing. Not knowing is the worst part.



What's Ahead

for your EARC

January 22: General Membership Meeting

... at the American Red Cross building
Bring some food (we'll provide pizza) and join us for Anatomy of a Repeater!

February 26: General Membership Meeting

... at the American Red Cross building
Topic to be announced.

February 16: Great Aloha Run

Wayne Jones needs 15-20 radio operators to work the 20th annual Great Aloha Run! Radios will be provided, with amateur communication backup. For more information, or to volunteer, e-mail Wayne at <nh6k@arrl.net>.

Stay tuned to the nightly nets for details!

Membership Application Form

Time to renew your membership, or to become a new member? Here's the perfect opportunity to do either. Just fill out this form and turn it in, along with your annual dues (see form for amount due) at the next general membership meeting OR mail it in to us at the address shown at the bottom of the form.

Membership has its privileges! Here are just a few:

- ... free subscription to the Wireless Dispatch
- ... free EARC-sponsored test sessions for first-time hams and upgraders alike
- ... prize at the end of the year for the member that recruits the most new members
- ... an opportunity to do community service through club-sponsored events (i.e., the Great Aloha Run)
- ... a network of incredibly helpful, friendly, knowledgeable people who share your enthusiasm for amateur radio

And that's just the beginning. As a member, you'll have opportunities to present your ideas, as well. So fill out the form below, and get started!



NEW MEMBERS JOINING IN: JAN-MAR \$20.00, APR-JUN \$15.00, JUL-SEP \$10.00, OCT-DEC \$5.00.

Renewals: \$20.00 for the calendar year.

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Address Change (if this only, do not include payment)

CALL SIGN _____ LICENSE CLASS _____ LICENSE EXP DATE _____

NAME _____
Last, First MI

(Family: Name _____ Call _____ Name _____ Call _____)

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ - _____

HOME PHONE: (____) _____. WORK: (____) _____. PAGER: (____) _____.

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____ FAX: (____) _____.

- ➔ ☐ I am donating \$_____ (enclosed) to go to the ARRL fight against BPL.
- ☐ I would like to subscribe to the EARC e-mail listserv (no spam, just news!).
- ☐ I am willing to read the Wireless Dispatch online instead of receiving a paper copy (saves the club \$!).

If you wish to submit this form by mail, please remit it, as well as a check for the amount specified to the EARC to the following address:

Emergency Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 30315
Honolulu, HI 96820-0315

EARC members operate SkyWarn for hurricane watch

by Crissy Terawaki Kawamoto

In late August, as Hurricane Jimena approached the Hawaiian Islands, Ray Moody sent out a call for assistance, and the EARC responded.

Jack Tsujimura (KH6DQ) coordinated the manning of the SkyWarn station at the Central Pacific Hurricane Center on the UH Manoa campus, and Carter Davis (KH6FV) provided IRLP linking to local and national repeaters including the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Fla.

Six EARC members -- David Cabatu (AH7E), Tom Seale (KH6AAA), Tom (NH7OL) and Connie (NH7IE) McCurdy, and Todd (KH7UK) and Crissy (KH7CHI) Kawamoto -- alternated shifts overnight, running period nets and even communicating with the lone Big Island link over *e-mail* when that node experienced technical difficulties.

"It was a fine opportunity to participate as a volunteer and a superb learning experience," Tom Seale said. "Everyone deserves a note of thanks and congratulations for a job well done."



photo by Todd Kawamoto

Crissy Terawaki Kawamoto takes weather reports from stations on various IRLP nodes during the Hurricane Jimena SkyWarn activation August 31.



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