



# SPARKS



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Puget Amateur Radio Society

May 2001

## May program - WWARA

Pete Policani, K7PP, and Marty Hadfield, WB7AFV, are scheduled to appear this month to enlighten us on the Western WA Amateur Relay Association (WWARA). This is the group that coordinates repeaters on our side of the Cascades, assigning frequencies, power levels, radiation patterns, etc. to minimize interference between repeaters in western WA and adjoining areas. The Association consists mainly of repeater owners, although there are no restrictions on membership. PARS became a member organization in March.

A lot of you were probably unaware of this group's existence, or maybe you've seen them mentioned in the ARRL Repeater Directory, but didn't know who they were or what they had to do with repeaters. I was in this latter category until I got involved in renewing the frequency coordination for our 443.2 machine. The WWARA recognizes that they've got a bit of a PR problem, so they were good enough to offer to explain the inner workings of the Association to us.

Pete is well known among local hams for his K7PP repeater system, which stretches from Vancouver to Portland and now links to Hawaii and Germany. Pete is a WWARA director and chairman of the 2-meter committee. Marty is the group's technical chairman, who has access to a commercial software program for predicting a repeater's coverage. I've asked him to model PARS' repeater for this presentation.

As the group tasked with doling out a limited resource, namely repeater frequencies, the WWARA members have to make some tough

decisions as to which would-be repeater owners are deserving of the privilege. Conflicts and ill feelings are frequent, both within and without the Association. The WWARA Board is certainly not of the same mind on all issues. You can get a sense of what they have to deal with by skimming through their "virtual board meeting" site at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wwara/messages>, and of course by attending this month's meeting. - de N7UK

## Officer elections this month

With another club year almost behind us, it's time to elect officers for 2001-2002. The following members have agreed to be nominees:

**President:** Mark Whitaker, KD7KUN  
**Vice-president:** Lisa Marker, K7LAM  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Kirk Bellar, N7UK

PARS will accept additional nominations until the vote at the general meeting on May 17. Members may nominate themselves or someone else. Let me know if you'd like to nominate somebody, or if you want to know what responsibilities each position entails.

We're also looking for a former officer to act as a board member next year. This is your opportunity to shape the club's future. - de N7UK

## Field Day

This is yet another reminder to mark your calendar for June 23-24 for our PARS Field Day outing in Downtown Park. This promises to be our biggest Field Day effort ever!

*Next general meeting* - Thursday, May 17 at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE in Bellevue. Pete Policani and Marty Hadfield will present a program on the WWARA (see article above). And be sure to join us at 5:30 PM for dinner at Coco's, 14804 NE 24th St. in Redmond. Visitors are always welcome at the meetings and at Coco's.

*Next board meeting* - At the home of Al Staples, N7VOF, 409 - 109th Ave. SE in Bellevue, Thursday, June 7 at 7:00 PM. All PARS members are welcome.

## When Disaster Strikes, Who to Call?

If there is something I learned a couple of decades ago, you can never be too prepared or trained for an emergency. I've been a Red Cross instructor and worked within the Cowlitz County Sheriffs Department (I was working with both during a little incident that occurred back in 1980 that you may have heard of...Mt. St. Helens). It is with this perspective that I determined that I should go to the Communications Academy in April.

Jerry Wellman came in all the way from Salt Lake City to give this keynote presentation and has more qualifications for giving such a presentation than I can remember (what I do recall is that he was an Eagle Scout, an EMT and currently a Lt. Colonel in the Civil Air Patrol). Jerry did a great job of setting the tone for the Academy and, at least for me, helped instill a desire to learn how to truly hone my skills as a communications volunteer. After the keynote address everyone departed for their first seminar of the day (each time block had three different seminars scheduled).

My first stop was "Volcanic Threats in Washington State." This class was instructed by Carolyn Driedger, a hydrologist with USGS, and dealt primarily with Mt. Rainier, but also discussed other volcanos in the area.

The next class that I attended dealt with the WA State RACES Plan and Emergency Worker Registration, taught by Allan Josue (Telecommunications Planner with the State Emergency Management Division). This was of particular importance to me as I did not have any knowledge of what this entailed. If you're interested in learning more about the WA State Emergency Services take a look at their website at [www.wa.gov/wsem/](http://www.wa.gov/wsem/).

To round out the first day (and adding a little more to my paranoia) was Ferruccio Crocetti, from the Department of Emergency Management, talking about "Floods, Fires and Pestilence." Ferruccio has the unenviable job of planning ahead for all the nasty, natural disasters that may befall the state of Washington.

The next day I started out with a class taught by Randy Hansen of the Seattle Fire Department talking to us about

"Bioterrorism, Hazardous Materials and Weapons of Mass Destruction." If you take this class in the future, be prepared from some really eye opening information (Randy even had some examples of devices concocted "after work and a few beers" by himself and a few of his associates).

So, after all the "bad" news of what can happen I walked into a seminar entitled "Personal and Neighborhood Preparedness" taught by Dr. LuAnn Johnson, Manager of the Seattle Disaster Aid and Response Program. If you live in a community that is just starting up a community preparedness plan (or even if you have one in place), I would recommend going to [www.cityofseattle.net/emergency\\_mgt/gettingPrepared/gettingPrepared.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/emergency_mgt/gettingPrepared/gettingPrepared.htm) or contacting Dr. Johnson to learn more about Seattle's SDART program.

All of this now leads us into the Team Field Exercise. I would have to say that this was actually the highlight of the Academy and really provided some key issues that I think are important. But, let's look at the scenario put out before us; Godzirra (no, that isn't a typo) has arrived in Seattle and boy is he...well, um, hacked off. The city has responded with several fire and police units and the Governor has called out the National Guard. Of course, the fire and police trunking systems have bit the dust and the amateur operators are the main source for communications.

This training exercise pointed out one major thing right away...we needed more practice in how to provide communications!! Everyone there put in a great effort but most of us had never been in a situation that called for emergency communications nor were there many of us that had participated in disaster drills. It was painfully obvious to quite a few of us that there needs to be more training for the amateur radio operators in emergency communications.

My thanks to the many unsung heroes who spent countless hours working on getting this event scheduled and making it something that I will look forward to again next year!! The only thing missing from the seminar was you if you weren't there! Do think about attending next year, it will be worth your while. - 73, Mark KD7KUN

### PARS 2000 - 01 Club Officers:

President - Charles Beckmeier, KC7GMF 425-392-5846  
Vice Pres. - Al Staples, N7VOF 425-454-2882

Secretary - Kirk Bellar, N7UK 206-542-6742  
Treasurer - John Heflin, KD7E 425-828-3034

**The Puget Amateur Radio Society (PARS)** is an ARRL-affiliated club serving radio amateurs in the greater Seattle area. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month (except July, August, and December) at 7:00 PM at the Bellevue Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE. Visitors are always welcome.

**Annual dues** are \$15.00 for individual membership, \$22.50 for family (2 or more persons at the same address). PARS will prorate the dues of new members joining after Jan. 31. Call Kirk, N7UK, for a membership application.

**Visit our Web page** at <http://www.qsl.net/k7par>. This is always a work in progress, so check back often.

**Send articles, comments, want ads, Boeing announcements, etc.** for inclusion in this newsletter to Kirk Bellar, N7UK, 19353 Greenwood Ave. N, Shoreline WA 98133, fax to 425-867-2160, or e-mail to [n7uk@aol.com](mailto:n7uk@aol.com).

**Send all other club-related correspondence** to PARS, PO Box 32, Kirkland WA 98083-0032.

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## *“Semper Paratus”*

This article, from USCG Lt. Russ Read, N7HOV, appeared in the May 8 ARRL Letter: In the United States Coast Guard our motto is *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready) - a motto similar to that of the Boy Scouts of America. (Be Prepared). In the case of Amateur Radio Emergency Services, the motto *Semper Paratus* describes our mission.

I have been the Coast Guard's representative to King County, Washington, ARES for two years and have been active in the Pacific Northwest Area Committee's Communications Work group. I have managed to promote an excellent working relationship between the local ARES members and the USCG in preparation for a time such as this.

On February 28, 2001, at 10:55 AM, I had the opportunity to combine my love of Amateur Radio with my job as the Communications Officer for Marine Safety, Office Puget Sound. I was *Semper Paratus*.

After the world around me stopped moving, and all the furniture stopped flying around the room, I managed to extricate myself from my fifth-floor office and head immediately for my car, and more importantly my trusty 2-meter rig. We had just experienced a magnitude 6.8 earthquake!

Immediately following the earthquake, everyone - including USCG Vessel Traffic Service - had to evacuate the building until an inspector could determine that it was safe to reenter the building. The Vessel Traffic Service is a cooperative arrangement between the United States and Canadian Coast Guards to manage vessel traffic in the Straits of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound. In short, this is the Coast Guard's equivalent to air traffic control, making sure no ships run into each other or aground. Its mission is to prevent another Exxon Valdez from occurring, plot the course of some 2500 vessels in transit and assure the safety of passengers of the Washington State Ferry System.

As soon as we evacuated our building, the US part of the VTS was off line, and there was no way to tell our Canadian counterparts that we were out of operation. Cellular telephones and conventional telephone circuits all were overloaded within minutes. The immediate need was to perform a quick damage assessment of the port and to tell the Canadians that the US VTS would be down indefinitely.

Within minutes of the quake, Rick Hodges, KB7TBF, had the King County ARES damage assessment net up

and running. I joined the net 10 minutes after the 'quake. It quickly became apparent that the only way we could get a message to the Canadians was to pass official messages using Amateur Radio.

Fifteen minutes after the quake, using the Mike and Key Club's K7LED repeater, we sent our first Coast Guard message to the Canadian Coast Guard notifying them the VTS was down. Bob Knight, W7MZO, in Kirkland, Washington, was kind enough to relay the message to the Washington State Department of Emergency Management. Rick Hodges, KB7TBF, relayed the first message to the Canadian Coast Guard in Vancouver, British Columbia. Hodges sent a second message to all vessels preparing to tie up to piers in Seattle and Tacoma, saying that they should go to anchor until damage to the piers could be assessed.

Although the Coast Guard has systems in place to provide communications in emergencies, all of those systems were in the building we had evacuated! The Vessel Traffic Service was eventually relocated to the US Coast Guard Cutter *Midget*. Communication was restored on a limited capacity more than an hour after the earthquake. It was only then that the earlier messages were passed through "official" Coast Guard systems.

As both an Amateur Radio operator and as a Coast Guard Officer, I was gratified to know that information could be passed so efficiently via Amateur Radio. The Amateur Radio traffic system achieved in 15 minutes what it took the Coast Guard more than an hour to accomplish. When my Commanding Officer asked, "How did you do that?" it was with great pride that I was able to say I was "*Semper Paratus*". And I had used the resources of Amateur Radio in a real-life emergency event.

The USCG Marine Safety Office Puget Sound gives special thanks to Rick Hodges, KB7TBF, for running the damage assessment net for King County and for staying on the air long into the evening. Thanks also to Bob Knight, W7MZO, for passing the messages on to the Washington State EOC and to Thomas Warren, KD7CSO, for taking American Red Cross health-and-welfare messages for families of our "Coasties."

It also was comforting for friends and family to know that there were no injuries or deaths of Coast Guard personnel. As we say in the Coast Guard, Bravo Zulu for a job well done!

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## **Minutes of the PARS General Meeting, 19 April 2001**

The members met at the Bellevue Senior Center. 9 members attended, a quorum. 3 visitors also attended. President Beckmeier was absent.

The Treasurer conducted a ham trivia challenge, patterned after "Who Wants to be a Millionaire". Dick Schwanke won the challenge and received a \$20 gift certificate for the Cucina! Cucina! restaurants. Runner-up Al Staples received a Special Award of Ignominy (2 tin cans connected by a string).

Following a break, the Vice-President reconvened the members for the business meeting. The members approved, without additions or corrections, the March meeting minutes as published in the April issue of *Sparks*.

**Treasurer's report:** The Treasurer reported a positive balance in the club account. [*figures are available from the Treasurer - Ed.*]

**Trailer report:** John Brewer offered to donate a PC monitor to replace the one damaged in the trailer during the Feb. 28 earthquake. The Secretary thanked Jim Darby for repairing the door hasp on the trailer.

**Contest report:** The Secretary reported on the results of the CQ WW WPX Contest, and discussed the Washington Salmon Run to be held in September. He also advised the members that PARS wouldn't be participating in the RSGB IOTA contest in 2001, after last year's low contact rate.

**Hamfest:** The Secretary made an appeal for donations for next year's hamfest, and asked whether anyone had storage space available for the donated items. Doug Bell offered to donate some shelving to store the items.

**Field Day:** Jim Darby and Doug Bell discussed the possibility of having a separate planning meeting for all of the expected Field Day participants. The members discussed the advisability of parking all of the expected vehicles

on the grass.

**Publicity:** Chair Lisa Marker was absent. The Secretary promised that Lisa would have brochures and press releases ready for Field Day, and would be contacting local print and broadcast media in hopes of enticing some reporters to the scene.

**Old Business:** The Secretary praised Doug Bell for his efforts at compiling information on available repeater controllers. He was favoring a controller from NHRC, but wanted to continue to look at other models before making a motion to buy a specific controller.

**New Business:** The Secretary announced the names of members who had agreed to be nominated for officer positions for the 2001-2002 club year. There were no nominees for treasurer. The Treasurer solicited nominations among the members present; none were forthcoming.

The Treasurer moved that the club should buy a copy of the *TR Log* contest-logging program. The members voted and approved this motion. The Treasurer agreed to place the order for same.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50.

*Respectfully Submitted -  
Kirk Bellar N7UK, PARS Secretary*