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# The *REACT*er

November – December 2005



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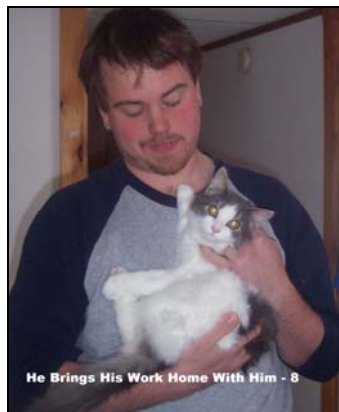
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# The REACTer

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Others from Penobscot REACT, Stephen Lagueux, KB1HBD



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Dick Cooper

**Here's hoping** that everyone had a pleasant holiday season and is looking forward to a happy and prosperous new year. I think that 2006 will be a good year for *REACT*. Let's face it; after 2005 things can only get better. I also think that there are many valuable lessons that everyone (including the RI Board) can learn from some of the things that happened in 2005. With our new *REACTer* editor and the experience of last year, let's plunge forward into a new year and get more involved with *REACT*.

When you read this article you should have already received the September/October issue of the *REACTer* and maybe the July/August issue as well. At the time that I am writing this article it appears that we are gaining on the publication "snafu" (I think that's what they call it in Texas). I would like to personally thank the members for their patience in this situation. Don Tarbet, our new editor, is doing a very good job in a difficult situation - hats off to Don.

I will repeat myself here when I state that registrations are due NOW. The members that register for 2006 are the members

that are dedicated to *REACT* and its principles. In the past few months I have heard from some Teams who say that even though they are affected by actions of the RI Board of Directors they feel that it is more important for them to be concerned with the relationships that their Teams have with local agencies such as emergency management (or another name in your area), Red Cross, Salvation Army, amateur radio groups and others. As a *REACT* Team officer and Life Member, I have to agree 100% with that thinking. Teams should be concerned about making an impact within their community through agency and organization support, monitoring or other methods. This will not only allow them to represent *REACT* but they can also use their accomplishments in advertising, public relations and membership recruitment. After all, nobody wants to belong to an organization that doesn't have any activities.

The Annual Meeting of the *REACT* International, Inc. Board of Directors will be held on March 3-4, 2006 at the RI office in Suitland, Maryland. All board meetings are open to the membership. Please advise Dora in the office if you plan

to attend. One of the orders of business at the Annual Meeting will be election of officers; in 2006 all officer positions are up for re-election. Officer positions are: president, executive vice president, secretary, treasurer and general counsel. If you have suggestions for nominees for any of these positions, please contact anyone on the board to discuss specific details about the office in question. In addition to officer positions, our dedicated membership can help RI by becoming part of a committee. Contact Ed Greany (Executive VP) or the RI office if you are interested.

My next thought has to do with growing *REACT*. We've seen many good ideas that have been given out in the past few months by various *REACT* members. Everyone seems to blame "poor communications in a communications organization" as the reason why nothing is done in *REACT*. I disagree. I believe that there are 3 basic reasons why ideas never get implemented: 1) Many members are not willing to compromise on their ideas; their ideas are always the best, 2) None of the members with the ideas have volunteered to spearhead a committee/group to assemble the ideas into

workable solutions for the membership, 3) It would be hard to organize a committee/group and have it be successful at brainstorming and developing growth ideas because there are so many diverse personalities in *REACT* that would interfere with the process. Now before you start saying !@#%&^\* and calling me bad names, carefully read this paragraph again and ask yourself whether my statements are true or not. I would like nothing better than to have someone change my mind by forming a committee or group of members that would assemble growth ideas into a workable format that can be used in the growth of *REACT*. This group would take the growth ideas and formulate them into a plan that can be implemented by all parts of *REACT* and any other groups that may be able to assist in the growth of *REACT*. I dare anyone to do that!

In 2006 there will be director election for regions 1, 4 and 7 in addition to the RI officers. In my travels over the past 6+ years as a member of the RI Board of Directors I have met many *REACT* members that are qualified to be leaders of *REACT* but for some reason haven't become involved yet. The trick is getting them involved.



## Life Membership

Did you know that *REACT* life membership is a great way to honor a member who has served your Team or Council with great dedication? Life membership applications can be downloaded at <<http://www.REACTintl.org/pubs/lifeapp.PDF>>, or you may request one from the RI office.

## About Your Subscription

All Regular, Junior, and Affiliate members in the U.S. and Canada automatically receive a subscription to *The REACTer*; the subscription price is included in the annual RI dues. All Life Members also automatically receive a subscription to *The REACTer* but may discontinue their subscription if they wish.

If for any reason you do not wish to receive *The REACTer*, let us know. Send a note or e-mail to RI headquarters. However, your dues will not be reduced.

Members outside of the U.S. and Canada may subscribe to *The REACTer* but the subscription fee (\$6 U.S.) is not included in their dues. To subscribe, send your name, full address, and payment to RI headquarters. Nonmembers may subscribe for \$7.50 per year.

Members may order an extra subscription for a family member at a different address, a friend, a local library, or anyone else, at the same rate as members' subscriptions: \$4 per year in the U.S., \$5 in Canada, or \$6 anywhere else.

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## Has Your Team Renewed Yet?

Team renewals are due no later than January 31.

\*Reduced dues for family members (after the second member of the family).

\*Increased insurance fees to continue liability coverage.

\*Remember that all Teams must certify compliance with IRS rules (unless they have their own 501 (c) (3) exemption).

\*Check with your Team officers to make sure YOUR Team has renewed.



# PENOBSCOT *REACT*'S FIRST TWO YEARS

**Penobscot *REACT***, Team #6088, is a very new, very small team. We started with eight members and of this writing still have eight members. We are an out-growth of the Maine *REACT* Council which kept *REACT* alive in Maine for many inactive years and provided a framework to gear up with a new team with a minimum of confusion and hesitation. Council President Jim Koritzky became Penobscot *REACT* President as well. Currently other officers are: Vice president, Jason Tarbet, KB1LUL; Secretary-treasurer, Don Tarbet, KD1XU.

We stress training and preparedness and cooperation with other communications groups such as local ham organizations. As a small team, we can serve best by meeting specific needs in cooperation with ARES and ARRL – as well as doing our own projects. We work with ARES and the Pine State Amateur Radio Club of Bangor (PSARC) in training and public service events and do our own training at meetings. We support an annual bird walk for blind participants



Members of Penobscot *REACT* and ARES in 2004 SET.

L-R Jim Koritzky, *REACT* President, Zeke Leighton, N1KVJ, ARES, Glenn Prewitt, N1LX, ARES, Brandon Tarbet, KB1DRU, *REACT*, Marilyn Anderson, KB1KBW, ARES, Dennis Bosley, WA1URS, ARES, Jessica Campbell, *REACT*, John Anderson, KB1IHO, ARES EC, Pete Ness, KB1KMX, ARES, Carol Inman, KB1KDX, ARES, Gary Daigle, KB1GBD, ARES, Don Tarbet, KD1XU, both hats. Jason Tarbet, KB1LUL, *REACT*, took the picture.

at the Fields Pond Nature Center of Maine Audubon.

December 2005 completes the first two years of our operation. I hope the list of our activities will grow with the years.

## 2004

- January 10: Organizational meeting, Penobscot *REACT*.
- January 22 the Maine Emergency Management Agency sponsored a test of some aspects of emergency preparedness. The newly formed Penobscot *REACT* team used the opportunity to test its capabilities.
- March 1: Penobscot *REACT* members participated in an Incident Command System training session put on by the Pine Tree Red Cross.
- March 24: Penobscot *REACT* participated with Penobscot County

ARES in presenting a program on emergency communication to the northern Maine section of Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

- April 18: Penobscot *REACT* participated with PSARC and Penobscot ARES in supporting the Bangor MS walk which had well over 500 participants and raised over \$80,000 for MS. Participating groups also accomplished specific training and liaison goals at this event.
- June 12: *REACT* members participated with PSARC and ARES members in an antenna raising project at the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Red Cross in Bangor.
- October 5: Secretary Don Tarbet, KD1XU, was appointed Assistant Section Manager, primarily for northern and eastern Maine, for ARRL.
- October 23: National Simulated Emergency Test (SET) with Penobscot County ARES and volunteer and official organizations. Hurricane landfall was the training scenario.

## 2005

- March 5, 2005: *REACT* members assist in a nature program for blind participants at the Fields Pond Nature

- Center of Maine Audubon in Holden.
- April 16: MS walk in Bangor. We had participation similar to that in 2004. At this one we also tested different modes of communication from distant locations to walk headquarters.
- May 14: Non-visual nature program at Fields Pond. Every year at Fields Pond blind birdwatcher Steve Coleman leads a walk for other blind nature enthusiasts. Steve and his group identify birds by the sounds they make, and their records are reported to ornithologists to help them learn about bird movements. This year Penobscot *REACT* provided communications for the event which is held in conjunction with other workshops on non-visual nature sponsored by NHEST, Inc and Maine Audubon.
- May 14: Bangor International Airport exercise in cooperation with Penobscot County ARES. We were spread thin that day.
- July 4: Cooperated with PSARC and ARES in providing communications for Bangor-Brewer Fourth of July Parade.
- September 17: Anti-terrorism drill with

communications groups and other official and volunteer organizations.

- November 11: Participated with PSARC and ARES in providing communications for Veterans Day Parade.
- December: Contributed package of toys to the ARRL/Salvation Army drive to provide Christmas presents for youngsters rendered homeless by the hurricanes.



Antenna Raising at the Red Cross  
L-R: Jason Tarbet, KB1LUL, REACT, Don Tarbet, KD1XU, PSARC, ARES, REACT, John Anderson, KB1IHO, ARES, PSARC, Gary Daigle KB1GBD, ARES, PSARC

## **REACT Mission Statement**

We will provide public service communications to individuals, organizations, and government agencies to save lives, prevent injuries, and give assistance wherever and whenever needed.

We will strive to establish a monitoring network of trained volunteer citizen-based communicators using any and all available means to deliver the message.

## **Emergency Communications Training**

The Level I *REACT* Emergency Communications training manual is available online for members to download free of charge. This program is similar to that offered by ARRL to its members, but has been expanded to include additional materials regarding other radio services (including GMRS, CB, FRS, and MURS, in addition to Amateur Radio) due to the wide variety of radio services often used by *REACT* Teams.

The *REACT* EComm program is available only to *REACT* members. See the EComm Flyer at <<http://www.reactintl.org/committees/EComm%20Flyer.pdf>> for more information about the Emergency Communications Training and Certification Program. *REACT* Members should send e-mail to <[IWantEComm@REACTintl.org](mailto:IWantEComm@REACTintl.org)> for information about downloading the manual online.

\*\*\*

If you have more training ideas and want to volunteer to help the training and development committee, contact Tom Currie, the committee chairman, at <[training@REACTintl.org](mailto:training@REACTintl.org)>.

## **CALENDAR 2005 – 2006**

- January 16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (US)
- January 31: **Team Renewals and Monitoring Reports Due** at *REACT* International
- February 6: Deadline for March-April *REACTer*
- February 20: President's Day (US)
- March 3-4: Annual *REACT* Board Meeting in Suitland, Md.
- March 15: Deadline to File for Director
- April 8: Deadline for May-June *REACTer*.

### **Got a story?**

*Even just an idea for a story?*  
<[editor@reactintl.org](mailto:editor@reactintl.org)>

# CERT: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

By Don Tarbet

**Blind people** are generally considered as an 'at risk' population in times of disaster. As we have seen, though, this may not always be so. While most of us are so vision-dependent that we have trouble conceiving of using our radios without sight, a whole legion of blind and visually impaired people carry on volunteer communication service as well as a wide variety of other activities from birdwatching to hiking to – yes – wood splitting – even hunting. In a recent book on blindness and outdoorsmanship, three of the contributors turned out to be ham radio operators. On the Internet we can find a very active group of blind hams exchanging information to benefit each other and the rest of us. I have gained far more than I have contributed by following the discussions of this group.

Queried by Kathy Knight, emergency coordinator with Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, I developed a list of activities that could be carried out by blind CERT volunteers. In the process I consulted Tom Behler, KB8TYJ, Emergency Coordinator and RACES officer for Mecosta County in Michigan and Jerry Berrier,

WB3BBP, who is experienced in traffic handling for Navy MARS (Military Affiliate Radio Service).

The possibilities turned out to be wide-ranging. Even FEMA on its CERT page encourages people with disabilities to get involved. My advisors concluded that blind people could, at a minimum, provide the following services for a CERT team. I have divided the tasks into two phases, preparation and disaster response. On this I believe we are limited more by our imagination than by the abilities of the blind.

## **Preparation phase:**

- Organize training sessions and meetings
- Produce newsletter
- Plan activities
- Organize events and exercises
- Manage website
- Manage contacts database and act as directory assistance person

## **Disaster Response Phase:**

- Alert team(s) via telephone tree or radio
- Serve as team public information officer
- Operate radio, using Amateur or served agency radio systems
- Keep records with laptop and extra batteries
- Act as resource coordinator, organizing the assignments of disaster relief volunteers, allocation of supplies, and other emergency resource deployment
- Comfort victims
- Perform some medical tasks, such as team cpr, etc (if appropriately certified).

- Act as dispatcher, directing the flow of personnel, vehicles, and supplies.
- Animal care.

For the most part, normal CERT training could serve as a basis, though varying degrees of supplementary individual training and group interaction training would be necessary. Regular drills are essential as they are for any emergency-oriented volunteers, and constant evaluation of progress would, of course, be a must.

Training would have to focus on the tactile and auditory and could make use of much of the technology that already exists. As an example, many of the tasks could be performed with a laptop computer with Internet access and a text-to-speech engine. A scanner and scan-to-speech software would also be of great use. So some of the training would simply be in computer literacy. Some of this training is already relatively widely available.

What this all boils down to is that there is a whole population (perhaps 500,000 in North America) who could be tapped to make a real impact on preparedness and self-protection among blind populations and serve the greater community in ways that may not have been considered before. And that would be just the beginning in bringing other at-risk populations into CERT and other community service.

---



## Monitoring FRS CH. 1 During The Gift Giving Season

By Robert McGuane,  
KB1BXQ, Wellesley, Mass.

**During the gift giving season,** and in the time that follows, emergency 2-way operators should not only monitor FRS/GMRS shared Channel (CH.) 1 (frequency: 462.5625 MHz) for emergency and assistance purposes, they should also monitor the channel for proper use as the FRS National Calling Channel.

As we know, FRS/GMRS radios are typically given as gifts to persons of all ages. Usually, the radio comes from the store with a default channel setting of CH. 1, subcode 1. Therefore, CH. 1 is quite apt to be used, inadvertently and incorrectly, for prolonged radio contacts for purposes other than contacting another radio station or obtaining emergency aid or travel assistance.

Thus, if questionable use of CH. 1 is observed, 2-way radio

operators, equipped with FCC certified 14-channel FRS radios, or licensed to operate GMRS radios, should consider making the following, short, 2-way radio related announcement on CH. 1, Subcode 1.

(N.B. Be sure to follow good radio procedure; monitor for a break in the use of the channel; then announce:)

“This is (call sign) monitoring FRS National Calling Channel One.”

(Pause to monitor for another break in the use of the channel and to hear any calls to your station. Then announce:)

“FRS radios with default channel settings of Channel One should be tuned to a channel of choice, such as one of the channels 8 thru 14.”

Obviously, the 2-way radio operator, making the announcement, should not try to coerce the other radio stations to leave the channel. Simply making new radio users aware of the purpose of FRS CH. 1 is providing a valuable public service. Some stations using the channel may have a few questions, so as a further service to the public, be prepared to answer questions about FRS

National Calling Channel One, and consider referring them to *REACT* International as one of the organizations which supports this use of FRS CH. 1.

(Authors Note 1: Since FRS operation is license-free, FRS radio operators using FCC certified 14-channel FRS radios to operate on FRS/GMRS channels 1-7, are not required to give station identification. However, station identification is considered to be good radio procedure, and an accepted protocol for constructing a systematic call sign is to use the prefix, K, followed by personal initials, and the U.S. residential zip code, attached as a suffix.)

(Author's Note 2: Be aware also, that CH. 20 (462.6750 MHz), the GMRS emergency channel on 22-channel FRS/GMRS radios, is quite often mistaken as being simply another channel for routine use. In these cases, a 2-way radio announcement may also be given regarding the use of GMRS Emergency Channel 20.)

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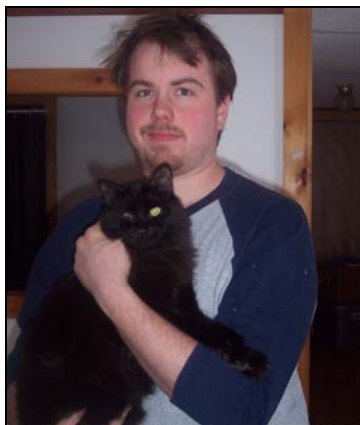
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# He Brings His Work Home With Him

By Don Tarbet



**Penobscot REACT** Vice-President Jason Tarbet, KB1LUL, brings his work home with him. As Network/Telecom Administrator and Adoption Counselor for Bangor Humane Society, Jason meets all the critters nobody wants. Cairo, above, has only one eye, but it's a warm, kindly eye. Nubbie, on the cover, is missing a leg. Adobe at right just lacks good sense. Jason brings home the injured cats and the abused dogs, to know a warmth and belonging they have never experienced.

At work Jason's duties are varied. He administers the computers and phone system, designs and updates the program used in house to process the animals, takes care of the animals (feeding, medication, bathing, etc), cleans the kennels, counsels people who wish to adopt on which animal would be best for their home –

and more. His educational background is in computer technology and his training in animal care has come from self-teaching and desire to help out with hands on training coming from work here and care of his own pets at home.

As a *REACT* volunteer, Tarbet has gone through the various training sessions offered at team meetings as well as taking part in public service and preparedness events and exercises. He tested various communications means from Pine Tree Red Cross's primary shelter at the 2004 SET. During the 2005MS walk he joined other *REACT* members in a two meter simplex coverage test, and he monitored activity from work during the May 2005 FAA-mandated Bangor International Airport exercise.

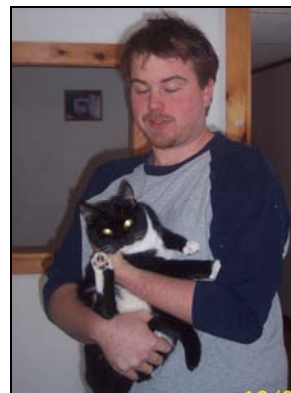
Jason has been volunteering his time to the community for a dozen years. As a teenager he worked with the Central Penobscot Youth Baseball League. At college his fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega (APO), was active in public service, and he has worked extensively for Manna Food Kitchens of Bangor in several capacities. Some of APO's numerous service projects include Adopt-A-Highway (cleaning a several mile stretch of highway of discarded refuse), Food Run (dispensing the left-over food from the University of Maine's Dining Facilities to local shelters), Late Night Local (a van running Friday and Saturday nights to help students get safely back from places where

they might have been drinking, thereby preventing drunk driving) as well as a host of other projects.

Jason is scheduled to undergo CERT training in animal care and is developing an emergency communication plan for Bangor Humane Society. He plans to expand his basic CERT training into other areas of emergency preparedness and has begun work on REACT's emergency communications course.

If you have questions about caring for abandoned animals, adopting a pet, or just how you can help out, contact your local Humane Society; or you can contact Jason at:

<jason@bangorhumane.org> or <adoption@bangorhumane.org>.



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## Sparks Flew!


By Barbara Jennison

Sparks fly between a rancher and a REACT female dispatcher as they battle grassfires consuming his land south of San Angelo, Texas. Based on actual events and composites of people and equipment, a love story ignites.

The novel is dedicated to individuals who volunteer during times of disaster, especially to the late Hon. Jerry Jennison.

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 Fundraiser/bulk pricing available



Barbara autographs book at Texas State REACT Council meeting

# Emergency Communications: Amateur & Cellular Text Messaging

By Robert McGuane,  
KB1BXQ, Wellesley, Mass.

**With all** the attention Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is receiving in amateur radio emergency communications, text messaging, a feature of some amateur radio handie talkies (HTs) and cellular handsets, may be being overlooked. This is unfortunate; 1) because text messaging can be a useful application for Morse code/CW traditional abbreviations and acronyms, and 2) because Internet text messaging is not only inexpensive but it can also function when telephone voice communications do not, due to local circuit overload conditions.

By way of reference to amateur radio, some Icom handie-talkies (HTs), such as the representative IC-T22A, have a radio text messaging feature. The text message feature works in conjunction with a pager function. The pager can be useful in verifying the identity of a transmitting, portable station. The Text messaging feature, itself, may provide relative secrecy, for short messages. A drawback to the message feature is that it requires a higher duty cycle for operation

and may be more desirable for purposeful use at short intervals in the field.

When inputting messages manually into the IC-T22A, a variation of the telephone dial code is used. The telephone dial code may be viewed on the dial or keypad of most telephones and involves the association of 3-letter or 4-letter groups with the numbers 2 thru 9 of the telephone dial or keypad.

The telephone dial code may be easily memorized by pronouncing the letter groups as words:

- 2 AbiC
- 3. DEF
- 4. GHI
- 5. JacKaL
- 6. MiNO
- 7. PiQRiS
- 8. TUV
- 9. WiXYZ

Most emergency 2-way radio operators seem to have a cell phone; although a surprising number of operators are not acquainted with the inexpensive text messaging feature despite its potential important applications to emergency communications. Those hold-outs that don't have a portable phone should have at least an "emergency" cell. Consumer Reports (CR), in a review of cell phone products, recommended prepaid phones for this purpose. One example of an inexpensive prepaid cell phone service is Virgin Mobile, using phones made by Kyocera, e.g. the K9. (The fol-

lowing specifics are derived from the manual for the Kyocera K9 model.)

A cell phone text message is essentially an e-mail that is highly abbreviated. The usual e-mail address format is used.. In the case of Virgin Mobile, the "user name" is the cell phone number. The domain is the abbreviation, "vmobl," and the extension is "com." Thus a cell phone e-mail address format is <cellnumber @ vmobl.com>. There is no subject line in the cell e-mail text message. The total number of characters, including e-mail addresses, must be no greater than 160, in the case of the Kyocera K9, supported by Virgin Mobile. The text messaging system operates through the use of a logical, micro-processor driven software menu, similar to those used by amateur radio HTs and handheld, advanced scientific calculators.

Memorization of the telephone dial code, and occasional practice using commonly understood abbreviations, such as those used in Morse code/CW, can make cell phone text messaging a reasonably efficient process that could have rewards in the way of reduced expenses and increased capability for public service and emergency communications.

*"If you're relying on the claims of the manufacturers, you'll probably be very disappointed," writes the Travel Insider.*

*<<http://www.thetravelinsider.info/2003/0815.htm>> gives detailed results of tests of ranges of equipment for popular radio services.*



## Editor's Corner

By Don Tarbet

**So take a deep breath.** The *REACTers* will be coming fast and furious until we get caught up and back on a normal schedule. We hope that task will be accomplished with the March-April 2006 issue. Thanks to all those who have jumped in with articles, produced with the editor looking over their shoulders and making 'hurry up' types of clucking noises. Keep sending. We are looking for articles from the membership, not only articles of technical interest such as those by Robert McGuane in this issue, but personal touches and profiles like the one on Penobscot *REACT* VP Jason Tarbet, also in this issue. And, of course, we want to hear what your Team is doing.

In this issue we turn from natural disasters (except for a report on Katrina activity – p. 14) to man-made emergencies (train derailment/hazmat p. 16). Consider the statement made by the Ohio EMA official, that any location with a railroad or highway is vulnerable to this type of event.

To prepare for any emergency, we need to hone our communications skills; we need to establish relations with served agencies; we need to work with other volunteer agencies, such as VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) and ARRL; we need to keep our jump kits refreshed and ready; we need to keep our batteries charged and ready; and we need to go through the *REACT* Emergency Communications Course or its equivalent.

And, of course, we need to keep our skills practiced and ready through the medium of public service events. There are thousands of events that go on every year in every part of the world that could use our aide in providing communications. There are walks and bike races for MS, Alzheimers, Diabetes, and so on. There are parades; Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Veteran's Day. There are emergency exercises. Work with local ARES groups on the annual SET. The FAA mandates regular emergency exercises at International Airports (p 5 and see next issue) – look

into the possibility of helping out there. And Homeland Security and cooperating agencies, both public and private, hold exercises in combating both natural and man-caused disasters.

All these give us the opportunity to serve and to hone our skills while we are doing so. And when you've done these things, don't be shy about reporting your accomplishments. I hope everybody has sent in Team renewals and monitoring reports – or is in the process of doing so. And send in reports of your activities to the *REACTer*. <editor@reactintl.org> reaches me.

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# WHATEVER IT TAKES

By Don Tarbet

**Emergency Communicators** have to be task-oriented. That is, we need to do whatever it takes to get the job done. That concept applies directly to the radio bands we use in our efforts. There has been some controversy surrounding Family Radio Service (FRS), but as Bob Leef (*REACT*er Nov. – Dec. 2003) points out, these low power units have definite uses. See also p. 7 this issue on monitoring FRS Channel 1. And they *are* low power. The manufacturers claim that the ½ watt radios have a range of two miles, but in our experience, ½ mile is more realistic over any terrain other than mountaintop to mountaintop with nothing in between.

CB radios, on the other hand, have a much greater range which, for our purposes, we might refer to as intermediate. General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS), with full 50 watts and/or repeaters available has yet a greater range, but most of the readily available units put out two watts which puts the range between that of FRS and CB. The FCC website gives ranges as; FRS < 1, CB 1-5 and GMRS 5 – 25 mi. VHF and UHF ham radio extends the range greatly with systems such as the KQ1L statewide repeater system in Maine on two meters. With Internet connections or satellite, the range is worldwide, but these en-

hancements may be unreliable in times of emergency. And, of course, HF is worldwide. During the height of the sunspot cycle, I worked the world on 10 meters at 5 watts on SSB – all with a salvage-wire groundplane antenna hung in a tree.

Penobscot *REACT* has done some experimentation on ranges and uses of the various radio units available to us. In cooperation with Penobscot County ARES we have found that FRS is mainly useful for keeping nearby units in contact with each other. During the 2004 National Simulated Emergency Test (SET) we used FRS (channels 8 and up) to go between ARES net control in the basement of the Red Cross and *REACT* control in a rover unit, headquartered in the Red Cross parking lot. By using this band, we avoid tying up longer-range bands.

The primary Bangor Red Cross shelter is at a school. This school is in a location from which neither CB, nor two meter simplex will reach the Red Cross headquarters. However, from some locations in the shelter area, CB can be relayed through the home station of Penobscot *REACT* President Jim Koritzky. We are still working on firming this link. The secondary shelter, a church, is easily reachable from Koritzky's station on CB. It is also easily reachable on two meter simplex from Red Cross headquarters.

The Penobscot County ARES emergency communication

trailer is equipped with UHF, VHF, and HF ham gear and CB and FRS units, so intercommunication is easily achieved. As this trailer is being used as a guide by surrounding emergency communications groups, there is reason to believe that we will be able to interface easily with all groups in this part of Maine.

Each radio service has its own uses. FRS is useful for short-range communications within large buildings or between nearby units. Test first. GMRS with its varied capabilities can be used for close work or, if equipment is available, for longer distances. CB works for longer distances and is very useful in communicating with truckers bringing in emergency supplies. Ham gear should be used for wider range networks and for communications in and out of a disaster area.

Getting the job done is the one and only goal. Cooperate with other communications groups; use all available radios, each according to their capabilities. Avoid tying up long range channels with short range communications. Test ahead of time.

A good reference on the use of portable radios, developed by Virginia RACES can be found at:

<[http://www.dcradio.org/VACORP S2-WayFundRev15Oct02.pdf](http://www.dcradio.org/VACORP%20WayFundRev15Oct02.pdf)>

A version modified for use by visually impaired volunteers is found at:

<<http://www.mainemarketplace.com/react/portrad.doc>>.

# From Headquarters

By Norman Kaplan

**Questions and comments**, in no particular order, that have occurred at *REACT* Headquarters:

The team renewals went out on October 21, 2005. If your team has not received their renewal packet, please contact *REACT* Headquarters at (301) 316-2900 or <react@reactintl.org>. We have received renewals from 30 teams by the end of December.

To paraphrase House Speaker Thomas “Tip” O’Neill, Jr., “All emergency response is local.” To which I add, “except when it is not.” *REACT* International, Inc. (RI) believes that the best group to handle an emergency or disaster is the group that is already in place and has the face time with local authorities. The Department of Homeland Security has issued a directive that all emergency responders to a National Disaster must have IS 100, An Introduction to Incident Command System, and IS 700, An Introduction to the National Incident Management System, to be credentialed at a Federal Disaster Site by September 30, 2005. This is an extension from April 30. When you have taken the course, please send RI a copy of your certificate. This means that any help that RI can send must

have their paperwork in place before their name can be forwarded for credentials.

When the new identity cards are sent to teams, an “Annual Monitoring Report” form is also sent. This form tracks what *REACT* has done in the past year. In order to properly report our activities to many of the various states that request the information, RI needs the information from the teams. After the form was designed, a request for the actual dates of activities was sent to RI. This is a request for the team Communications Officers to include a calendar of your events along with the Monitoring Report. Red Cross, Salvation Army and ARRL are among those organizations that collect and inform the public on what they do. RI cannot do the same because the teams have not forwarded the information so we can collate and distribute.

Our insurance company has requested a count of our members who drive and maintain the minimum insurance required by their state. This is on the front page of the renewal form. RI does not want the names or the amount of insurance, just the number of team members.

Looking at the RI database, the average age of *REACT*ers is getting older. *REACT* needs to get younger members, Juniors and new *REACT*ers. In order to do this, RI is asking those teams that are growing new members and Juniors: what they are doing, how they are

advertising, and where they are looking. Please send RI any information and put together an article for the *REACT*er on what you are doing. You can send the article via e-mail, <editor@reactintl.org> or through *REACT* Headquarters.

Which brings up the last point. *REACT* members do an excellent job at providing services. Unfortunately, we as volunteers do not let any one else know the work we do. RI can not do publicity for *REACT* without any paper work being sent to RI on the work you do. Please send RI information on the events, calls, training and work with other organizations. Interesting end of action reports should be sent to the *REACT*er. All end of action reports can be sent to <react@reactintl.org>.



Veterans Day 2006  
Bangor,  
Maine



## News & Notes

**\*Ever wonder** just how much time and money is contributed by volunteers in times of disaster? Volunteer Florida generated the following numbers for Florida alone following the hurricane season of 2005:

- 112,646 volunteers worked 4.7 million hours
- 5.8 million meals were prepared and served by volunteers
- 7.9 million bottles of water and 256,988 bags of ice were donated and distributed
- 14,681 tarps were either provided or actually placed on homes by volunteers
- The value of donated goods = \$22.6 Million
- The value of volunteer time = \$83 Million

**The total contribution to date of goods and volunteers = \$105.6 Million**

**\*ARRL Reports – from the ARRL website, <<http://www.arrl.org>>:**

-The league is cautiously optimistic about the recent announcement of a commercial Broadband over Power Line (BPL) deployment by the largest electric power utility in Texas. This deployment will use only frequencies between 30 and 50 Mhz and should not interfere with volunteer communications efforts. This deployment is in stark contrast to an earlier experiment which caused massive interference until it was shut down due to complaints.

-“**Mission accomplished!**” was the word from Vice Director Henry Leggette and Joe Lowenthal on the Gulf Coast as they, along with other ARRL volunteers, completed unloading 5000 toys. Leggette, whose FCC callsign is WD4Q, and Lowenthal, WA4OVO, had gone to the Gulf Coast with the toys. Over \$9000 was also collected in the ARRL's second Toy Drive.”

-“**International Space Station crew sends holiday greetings from space** (Dec 24, 2005) – *‘What a wonderful place to spend Christmas!’* That was the word this week from Expedition 12

Commander Bill McArthur, KC5ACR, and his crewmate and Flight Engineer Valery Tokarev on the International Space Station. Wearing Santa hats, the astronaut and the cosmonaut extend Christmas and new year's greetings to everyone on Earth in a video clip available from NASA TV during which they take turns at the microphone. In it, McArthur says that this is his favorite time of year, and he regrets not being able to spend it with his family this year. ‘As we look down on the earth, especially during this time of year, it really strikes us how fortunate mankind is to live on such a wonderful, beautiful planet,’ McArthur goes on to say during the greeting, which runs about almost four minutes. ‘And also we realize we have great responsibilities as stewards of this planet.’ McArthur and Tokarev will return to Earth in April.”

**\*More BPL:** CQ Magazine maintains an online BPL primer at <<http://www.cq-vhf.com/BPL.html>>. See also the ARRL website at for regularly updated news and information.

**\*South East Louisiana REACT responds to Katrina:** According to a posting at: <<http://www.popularwireless.com/ubb/Forum4/HTML/000110.html>> “...Team member(s) manned RACES radios at the ham station at the State EOC in Baton Rouge for several days. They were often the only link to some parishes affected by the storm... Our REACT Team repeaters were used quite a bit during and after the storm. Our repeater in Sorrento, South of Baton Rouge, was linked to a repeater in New Orleans which survived the storm and stayed on the air throughout the emergency. It was a vital link between hams in the affected area and OEP personnel in Baton Rouge. The Repeater in Baton Rouge was linked via IRLP to stations in Texas and allowed the State to keep up with evacuee status there. Our Digipeaters were used by several hams equipped with APRS transmitters to keep track of personnel and equipment. All in all we had a good response, helping where and when we could, and our equipment was used to pass vital traffic.”

## Why REACT?

from a REACT Life Member

During the registration period every year as well as at other times during the year, some members may ask themselves the question, "Why should I be a *REACT* member." This question is often asked when something abnormal happens in their *REACT* life. Such abnormalities may be insurance non-renewal by the insurance carrier, delayed *REACT*ers, insurance charge increase, unpopular decision(s) made by the *REACT* board of directors or whenever something just doesn't go just perfectly. I guess that it's only natural that someone would wonder about the reasons for their membership in situations like this but I have to make the following comments.

I have always felt that *REACT* does a poor job of convincing members why they should remain as *REACT* members. The same problem exists when current *REACT* members are trying to recruit new members into their Teams. Potential members may ask "Why should I belong to *REACT* rather than any other public service group?" In the following paragraphs I will attempt to give my answers to both questions.

*REACT* was started for one reason – to help people. This reason for *REACT*'s existence has not changed but the ways and means that *REACT* mem-

bers can help other people has changed dramatically. When *REACT* started, CB was virtually the only form of communication available to the general public. Today there is CB, GMRS, MURS, FRS, cellular phone, amateur and probably other forms of communication that Teams use in their work with the public. Yes, some of these forms of communication are limited by licensing requirements, range/distance limitations, additional costs, etc. but they remain as alternate forms of communications. Any of these can be used successfully and efficiently depending upon which form your Team and members decide to use. There are many ways in which your Team can help the local community including monitoring, participation with agencies like emergency management, ARC, etc., assisting local non-profit organizations in their fund raising efforts and others.

From *REACT*'s inception the organization's leaders of have strived to get *REACT* known with agencies on a national level. This is shown through Statements of Understanding with the Red Cross, Salvation Army and ARRL, membership in National VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) and participation with other national organizations such as NOAA Skywarn and other agencies too numerous to mention. *REACT*'s agreements, membership and participation in these national agencies helps local Teams because each of these agencies

has local branches that Teams can work with if they chose. When local Teams approach a local branch of a national agency, they should use the association of *REACT* and the national association in their discussions to indicate that the association with *REACT* isn't a new thing.

Through the years of *REACT*'s existence many organizations and agencies have come into contact with *REACT* and many have worked with *REACT* on various levels. Contrary to popular opinion, the name of *REACT* is well known in the emergency field even though some members may be able to find someone who says, "Who is *REACT*?" This only means that the local Team must work harder to make *REACT* known to the local agencies and others. I can tell you that this effort works because when my Team started in this area people either hadn't heard of *REACT* or *REACT* had a bad name. That isn't true today because we worked hard to prove these opinions were wrong. *REACT* has 'brand awareness' or 'name recognition' just like when we recognize the names of Coke, Pepsi, IBM or other major names that we all know about.

*REACT* members have easy and inexpensive availability to liability insurance coverage for nearly everything that a Team needs. Liability insurance coverage allows Team and members to work with many agencies that would otherwise require insurance coverage for

their volunteers. Teams also enjoy other protections from the liability insurance. Talk about a major 'speed bump' overcome by the *REACT* blanket insurance coverage – this is a big one. Even at \$12 per year per member it's a bargain.

There have been some important results that come from *REACT* committee work over the years. How about the EComm course that hasn't been used by nearly as many *REACT* members as it should. If you think that you know all there is to know about proper communications then you should take this course and find out how much more you can learn. There is always room for improvement in communications. I can't count the number of Public Relations ideas and offerings that have been developed over the years. Has your Team taken advantage of these in promoting your Team? Why not? How many of the various membership recruitment and retention ideas have you used successfully over the years?

I guess that I've made my point and that is that while maybe *REACT* International hasn't properly promoted the reasons for *REACT* membership, it can also be said that there are still *REACT* Teams and members that haven't used many of the things that are available to them. If you and/or your Team and members have used these things offered by *REACT* International, then I take my hat off to you. I haven't given all of the

advantages to belonging to *REACT* but I have tried to hit the high points. This article is meant to give you 'food for thought' and not necessarily be critical. Use what you will but please read this article closely. Of course if you haven't read the last 2 sentences then you probably haven't read any part of the article except the first paragraph.

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## REACT Helps Out At Ohio Train Derailment



On Wednesday, October 26, a tank car carrying about 25,000 gallons of acetone, a highly flammable chemical, was one of eight Lake Erie & Wheeling Railway cars to derail in Perry Township, Ohio. Volunteers from Flag City *REACT*, Chagrin Valley *REACT*, Great Lakes *REACT*, Medina *REACT*, Wayne Co. *REACT*, TRI-COUNTY *REACT* North, Massillon Stark County *REACT*, and Summit Co. *REACT* assisted Stark County and

Township officials and railroad personnel in coping with the event. Among other duties, *REACT*ers helped steer traffic away from affected areas. *REACT* members remained present until 'well into Saturday, October 29', according to Perry TWP Fire Chief Gary Justice.

Prompt action and good weather kept the event under control. Even when fire did break out on Saturday the 29th, it was quickly contained and did little or no damage.

A report by *The Independent* <[www.IndeOnline.com](http://www.IndeOnline.com)> quotes Stark County EMA director Tim Warstler as saying, "This isn't something special for Stark County. Any place in the country that has an interstate highway has the exact same issue."

Warstler, Justice, and Perry Police Chief Tim Escola, all wrote letters of thanks to *REACT* for their quick and efficient response. Warstler added, "*REACT* was able to meet a need that had to be filled and that would have severely tapped the resources of the local police and fire personnel.... We at EMA are happy to know that this resource is available when it is needed. It is also nice to know," he continued, "that not only can our county get assistance from Stark County *REACT* when they need it, but we can also call upon your resources across northeast Ohio and the entire state."

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