



Mercer Island Radio Operators



MIRO Newsletter for March, 2023

News and Announcements

From the Chair:

I participated this morning, Feb 25th, in an hour-long Microsoft Teams call with about 25 hams across Washington State in a meeting led by Scott Dakers W7SGD, WA State Emergency Management Division Communication Logistics Director. This was the second meeting of “The Repeater-Study Group” and was primarily focused on Eastern Washington. The meeting helped drive home that in an Emergency, WA State EOC at Camp Murray needs to be aware of the status of ALL communications capabilities across the state. Internet, phone and Jurisdictional radio (fire, police, city, county etc.) systems status is quickly ascertained. The ham radio repeaters are not necessarily associated with such organizations and are not necessarily monitored, yet they can become the most valuable of the communication assets in time of emergency and complete outage of phone, internet and other radio systems. The underlying reliability quality is that hams are able to service their own equipment where most other equipment requires capable, not necessarily available, servicing personnel for repairs. This also means that the ham groups that own and operate this equipment become crucial to the recovery efforts.

This buttresses the MIRO 2023 Theme – What do hams do when an emergency occurs? – taking us beyond the initial reporting of neighborhood conditions into the continued two-way flow of information to those who can help bring services, equipment and food to the affected areas.

Carl Erickson K7CGE has completed the MIRO Radio Go-Kit. See page 4 bottom for description and information. Thank you, Carl, for pulling this valuable equipment together.
73, Woody K7EDH

Ham exams

Congratulations to Benson Wong KK7KPS for passing the Technician exam and to Tom Imrich K7VMO, Mike Post KJ7FIF and Rob Witmer W2RDW for getting their General License. Several more Technician candidates will be taking their exams soon.

February 9, 2023 net follow-up

Our February 9th net was run by Mike, KJ7FIF. Scribing service was provided by Nathan, KG7OXJ. We had 14 members, no visitors, 2 announcements and 8 Winlink check-ins. Thanks to the Winlinkers who checked in and the 7 who provided the new follow-up Winlink Check-in Report. This time three members used VARA HF. That means they reached out-of-area HF gateway stations simulating what would be necessary if we’ve lost all communication links and VHF/UHF gateways locally.

Running our monthly net is great practice for a “real world emergency.” We’re always looking for first-timers to take a turn “in the hot seat.” Currently all emergency net dates for July and beyond are open. Let Pat (pat@pathackett.com) know if you would like to be Net Control or assist as Scribe in the Radio Room at City Hall. These are important skills to have when we experience a big emergency.

February 16, 2023 General Meeting follow-up

This meeting theme was “What does a Mercer Island Ham do” when an emergency occurs? Thanks to Pat Hackett K7PTH and Bob Tykulsker KM6SO for their observations, Pat about CERT training and Bob about his Red Cross volunteer experiences at hurricane emergencies on-scene in Florida and Georgia. Bob’s message was that a ham volunteer has to be prepared to “do anything,” reacting to the needs of the moment. Pat’s message was that Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) provides training to be able to react to the needs of the community and to be ready to be dispatched as directed by the Emergency Operation Center (EOC.) See CERT description at the end of this Newsletter.

One key point is that after a serious earthquake, it is unlikely that any normal communications systems – particularly cell phone, internet and land-lines – will be usable. First responders will not be available. Our MIRO members will be those that can give an early picture of what has happened in their neighborhoods and what needs to be serviced.

Here are the steps when you feel the earthquake:

- A. Drop, Cover and Hold until the shaking subsides
- B. Check your home, family and possessions as best you can. You’re no good to anybody if you are worried about your things and relations.
- C. After you are satisfied, don your Go-Bag backpack, take your HandHeld, check in on the VHF Repeater frequency, take paper and pen, and walk as much of your neighborhood as you can. As soon as several MIRO members have checked in on the net, the most skilled participant should take charge, activate the net and start keeping track of the reports made by members. As soon as possible, one of the Net members should be directed to the City Hall radio room to start logging the information being sent by the ‘roving’ hams so that when the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is manned, the various city services – police, fire, utilities, parks & rec. etc. – have information about the problems that have been reported. Ideally, enough reports will have been aggregated so that there is a reasonable picture of what has happened. When the Incident Director decides it’s time to bring in volunteers, an Emergency Response call will be activated; and volunteers will aggregate at the City Hall to be directed as appropriate. Even though MIRO members have a special skill that is crucial at the beginning of the event for reporting the snap shot of Island condition, they are also Volunteers and can be used in a variety of ways.

Here is the recording, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZDFtHcLga8>, that I made during the call. Yes, I was a little late starting the recording and missed the introduction.

January 2022 Activity Report

Pat reports that 22 members, driving 85 miles, gave 104.3 hours in support of 3 public service events and 8 meetings, drills and exercises.

Upcoming MIRO Activities

Emergency Practice Net, Thursday, March 9, 7:00 PM. NCS: Bob Tykulsker KM6SO Scribe: Mike Post KJ7FIF

The net will start on the VHF MIRO repeater frequency of 147.160 MHz + offset, with a CTCSS tone of 146.2 Hz for business and check-ins. It will then shift to the UHF repeater on frequency 440.150 MHz + offset with a CTCSS tone of 103.5 Hz for a roll call of the participants on the UHF repeater. In the event of a repeater failure, first try the other repeater; if that has failed, shift to the Mercer Island Simplex 147.440.

No radio? Out of range of our repeaters? Use your cell phone or computer with Echolink, station W7MIR-R, for the VHF portion of the net. Go to <https://www.echolink.org/> for the app and information.

Participants get credit for submitting an ICS-309 log of the significant activity (check-ins, messages, simplex transmissions heard, etc.) after the net: by Winlink to W7MIR, KM6SO, K7EDH and/or by email to whowse@me.com. Links to download the ICS309 log form in pdf: <https://miro.cmivolunteers.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ICS-Form-309-fillable-1.pdf> and word: <https://miro.cmivolunteers.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ICS-309-Word-document.docx> Also, you receive credit for a General/Winlink Check-In message and the MIRO Check-In v2.0.0 **before the net** to N7MMO, KM6SO and K7EDH. The Winlink exercise for this month is sending an exercise Did You Feel It (DYFI) Winlink earthquake reporting message. More details in the Mark Feuerstein N7MMO Winlink Instruction message that will arrive the week of the net.

MIRO General Meeting, Thursday, March 16th, 7:00 PM

We plan to meet at the Fire Station, open at 6:30 PM for socializing, and starting the meeting promptly at 7 PM. This meeting features Joe Bryant, Mercer Island High School Broadcast Teacher and sponsor. He will be reporting on the Broadcast Program and, most importantly, how the station will be used for Emergency Broadcasts to Mercer Island in the event of a serious emergency that eliminates other normal broadcast capabilities. He most likely will be a Zoom participant.

The MIRO Zoom link will be activated at 6:40 PM so early arrivals can chat on the zoom. The meeting, as usual, starts promptly at 7 PM. Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8656593928?pwd=TIIERIUybDICT2E1Sm1nVUUpaK0JZZz09>

Meeting ID: 865 659 3928 Passcode: MIRO

MIRO Working Meeting, Tuesday, March 28, 7:00 PM

This is a meeting of the leadership group of MIRO which includes:

Woody Howse K7EDH Chair, Pat Hackett K7PTH Vice Chair for Training and Recruitment, Bob Tykulsker KM6SO Chair Emeritus, Mike Sedgwick K7PI Digital Sysop and Radio Officer, Vadim Volk N7PIX Repeater Officer, Grete Porteous K7GHP MIRO Foundation Chair and Website Maintenance, Conner Webster KG7SAW CEMNET Coordinator, Mike Post KJ7FIF MIRO Meeting Planning Lead, Mark Feuerstein N7MMO WINLINK training, Carl Erickson K7CGE Radio Go Kit, John Banbury AG7N, Toni Okada W7TDO and Harlan Feinstein W7HIZ members-at-large.

The purpose is to ensure that our programs are working and all members of that group are kept up-to-speed on upcoming events. Any member of MIRO is welcome to attend, and all ideas are appreciated. This meeting will be conducted on Zoom. The Zoom channel will be opened at 6:45 PM. The meeting will start promptly at 7 PM.

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8656593928?pwd=TIIERIUybDICT2E1Sm1nVUUpaK0JZZz09>

Meeting ID: 865 659 3928 Passcode: MIRO

WINLINK CORNER – Mark Feuerstein N7MMO:

Where Resiliency and Proficiency Meet

Welcome to Winlink Corner. If you did not receive January's introductory email and are interested in becoming an active "Winlinker", or need Winlink help, please let me know – mark.g.feuerstein@comcast.net.

February's MIRO Winlink Check-In summary: Eight members checked in via Winlink, two using Telnet, the rest using RF. Two members used battery power. Most of the RF participants used VARA FM or VARA HF. One member used a handheld radio and was portable. The most distant RMS Gateway station used to check in was over 600 miles, reached with about 5 watts.

What's in the data? This month's gem was the 600-mile contact on low power reinforcing the idea that simple equipment and low power can make effective use of Winlink.

This month's Winlink tidbit comes from Carl, K7CGE. There's a new application enabling iPhone users to send and receive Winlink messages. It is called RadioMail. Despite the 15 dollar price tag (one time purchase, not a subscription), I bought it in December for just one of the app's features: location aware Winlink RMS Gateway station lists, both VARA and Packet capable, arranged by proximity to the user's location. Best of all, the station list, including frequency (FM and HF) and distance information, is available offline. If you open the app and allow it to access your location, the station list is populated. You can then turn off location services, put your phone in airplane mode, or lose internet and cellular access, and the Winlink station list, with a very basic map, remains available. Using the iPhone to connect to a handheld radio is possible but not trivial, and on the "to do" list.

Finally, the March Winlink exercise will be the first of two "Did You Feel It" DYFI reporting exercises this year.

73, Mark, N7MMO

FOLLOW-UP ON DISCUSSION ABOUT BALLOONS BEING SHOT DOWN

<https://aviationweek.com/defense-space/aircraft-propulsion/hobby-clubs-missing-balloon-feared-shot-down-usaf>

MIRO Radio Go Kit – Carl Erickson K7CGE

Our first MIRO go kit is ready for deployment! Here are some specifics of the kit and its capabilities. Thank you Carl Erickson K7CGE

What is it? 3 backpacks containing all the gear you need to operate a mobile station.

1. *"Core" backpack (20 lbs):* [Icom IC-706MKIIG](#), "DIY" VHF J-Pole antenna, [TennTenna EFHW 40/20/15/10m antenna](#), [MFJ-902 Antenna Tuner](#), [Signalink](#), [Windows Laptop](#)

2. "DC Power" backpack (26 lbs): Two 20 Amp LiFeP04 batteries, RigRunner PowerPole distribution block, TopSolar 100W solar panels, Genasun GV-10 solar charge controller
3. "AC Power" backpack (11 lbs): ICOM 25A power supply, Victron battery charger, Belker 90w ES100 Universal Laptop and Car Charger, Laptop Power Supply.

Dispersed throughout the backpacks are all the cables, antenna wires, computer peripherals, and paperwork (Radio Manual, Setup Instructions, Backpack Inventory, Net control procedures, MIRO Emergency contacts, Puget Sound's Repeater guide, etc).

As you can tell, this is not an ultra-light backpacking QRP setup. All together the gear weighs 57 pounds. However, you can pick and choose what you need for various applications to keep the weight down. Most of the weight comes from the batteries (12 lbs), solar panel and charger (9 lbs), radio (5.5 lbs), and Astron power supply (4.5 lbs).

This kit was put together primarily from gear donated to MIRO. A few odds and ends were purchased through the help of the city (Thanks Jennifer!) and our MIRO budget.

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What can it do? Voice (HF, VHF, and UHF), Packet Winlink, VARA Winlink (HF and FM), VarAC Chat, FT8, APRS, and JS8-Call. The kit provides everything needed to operate in the field including keeping the batteries charged via the solar panels.

Who can borrow it? Any licensed MIRO member operating within their privileges. And please do borrow it! Doing so would really help us out to make sure the instructions are clear and easy to understand. Operating from this kit is a great way to test your skills on other radios, try out new capabilities, challenge yourself, and learn something new.

When can you borrow it? If you'd like to try it out or have questions (and we would greatly appreciate that!) please contact Carl K7CGE (k7cge.carl@gmail.com) to schedule. He also has an description sheet in word that discloses links for all the components listed and underlined.

All Aboard the CERT Train

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept is a major, growing concern in the quickly evolving arena of emergency management on a micro-versus-macro scale, and deserves the full attention of ARES -- and indeed any radio amateur -- as a top priority for the coming year.

CERT is the wave of the future -- the immediate future -- as limited resources for disaster response at all levels of government (local, state, and federal) are bumping up against the ever-increasing needs of the populace due to the elevating incidence and ferocity of natural and manmade disasters. The CERT concept is part of the answer to this dilemma: residents on a street or in an apartment complex will network and be trained to take care of themselves in the first critical post-disaster hours and possibly days when no outside help is available. Think of the CERT program as a kind of block party, only instead of socializing over hot dogs and hamburgers, neighbors get together to train and plan to look after each other when dealing with the effects of a disaster. When you really think about this concept, it has implications that are of a serious, life-and-death nature.

The CERT program is a FEMA program, part of its Citizen Corps and Ready campaigns, but had its origins in forward-thinking fire and EMS units in southern California decades ago. Neighbors are trained in conducting an initial assessment of their own homes and survival kits. They learn to reduce the immediate dangers presented by a disaster by turning off utilities, suppressing small fires, evacuating the area, and helping others. They learn to treat people in the immediate area. They learn to implement their own Incident Command System -- they establish a command post, staging area, and medical triage and treatment areas. They learn to collect damage information and develop a plan of operation based on life-saving priorities and available resources. And they learn to establish and maintain communications with responders and the outside world.

The radio amateur, especially an ARES-registered operator, is the ideal candidate for forming and leading a neighborhood Community Emergency Response Team. A critical part of the CERT's planning and operations is radio communications, and we as radio amateurs have the experience and credibility for this emergency support function out of the gate. Become a CERT leader! Every journey of recruiting a dozen homes on a street for a CERT begins with the first, perhaps your next-door neighbor. Talk to him or her "over the fence" and start planning and drafting your team. Read and use the FEMA publication [CERT User Guide](#). There are many resources to help you! You can start with [FEMA's Independent Study Course on CERT](#). A reader recently called my attention to a new library of disaster-related training with numerous videos, including several on *Neighborhood Preparedness and Response*. I haven't had a chance to review the materials yet, but I will. The library can be accessed at the [Just In Time Disaster Training](#) website. To obtain any of the highlighted information go to: https://community.fema.gov/PreparednessCommunity/s/cert-trainings?language=en_US

Conclusion: You are On Your Own! "Winging It is Not an Emergency Plan"

The government's promotional language often reads like this: "When a disaster or overwhelming event occurs and responders are not immediately available, CERTs can assist..." Let's examine what they're really saying in plain terms: When your house and family are in immediate danger in the first minutes and hours after a disaster, you are on your own. There will likely be no EMS, fire, police or any other agency responders to save you and your family and neighbors. Your survival is up to you alone, based on your preparations and the help from your immediate neighbors on your street.

2023 MERCER ISLAND CERT TRAINING, 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM, EVERY MONDAY EVENING FROM MAY 1 – JUNE 26TH AT THE MERCER ISLAND CITY HALL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER, 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040. To sign up: Contact Amanda Keverkamp, email: emergencymanagement@mercerisland.gov. <https://www.mercerisland.gov/emergency-management/page/community-emergency-response-teams-cert>

73,

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MIRO ZOOM LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8656593928?pwd=TIIERIUybDICT2E1Sm1nVUUpaK0JZZz09>

Meeting ID: 865 659 3928 Passcode: MIRO

MIRO Current Schedule 2022-2023

(All MIRO meetings at 7 PM **SHARP** unless otherwise specified)

Mar 9	WHX Emergency Net Practice; NCS: Bob Tykulsker KM6SO, Scribe: Nathan Pang KJ7OXJ
Mar 16	MIRO General Meeting; Joe Bryant, Mercer Island HS Broadcast Instructor
Mar 28	Last Tuesday Working Meeting
Apr 13	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: Mike Sedgwick K7PI (from home)
Apr 20	WHX MIRO General Meeting; tbd
Apr 29	Fifth Saturday EOC-EOC; Woody Howse K7EDH
May 11	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: Jade Coppieters KQ7JMC, Scribe TBD
May 18	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
May 30	Last Tuesday Working Meeting
Jun 8	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: tbd
Jun 15	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
Jun 27	Last Tuesday Working Meeting
Jul 13	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: tbd
Jul 20	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
Jul 25	Last Tuesday Working Meeting
Jul 29	Fifth Saturday EOC-EOC; tbd
Aug 10	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: tbd
Aug 17	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
Aug 29	Last Tuesday Working Meeting
Sep 14	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: tbd
Sep 21	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
Sep 26	WHX Last Tuesday Working Meeting
Oct 12	WHX Emergency Net Practice; NCS: tbd
Oct 19	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
Oct 24	Alternate Last Tuesday to avoid Halloween
Nov 9	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: tbd
Nov 16	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
Nov 28	Last Tuesday Working Meeting
Dec 14	Emergency Net Practice; NCS: tbd
Dec 19	Alternate Last Tuesday to avoid 12.26 Boxing Day
Dec 21	MIRO General Meeting; tbd
WHX	Woody Howse out-of-town

Other Resources

Training Links

Below are some links for **ongoing**, third-party training and/or testing

- Not training, per se, but online ham testing when you are ready to upgrade your Technician or General License: <https://hamstudy.org/sessions>
- Online CERT training: <https://i.slcc.edu/emergency-prepare/docs/CERT/online-cert-course.pdf>
- FEMA IS-100C. Introduction to the Incident Command System. A requirement for being badged as a City Volunteer:
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.c>
- FEMA IS-700B. Introduction to the National Incident Management System. Another requirement to be badged:
<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.b>

Regional Radio Nets

What better way is there to improve our radio capability than by participating in available nets easily found in the [Mike & Key Amateur Radio Guide](#). Following are some of available opportunities. I highly recommend that our new hams actively participate.

- Daily: 0900; 146.960; - 103.5; PSRG Nine O'clock net
- Daily: 1200; 146.960; - 103.5; PSRG Nine O'clock net
- Daily: 2100; 146.960; - 103.5; PSRG Nine O'clock net
- SUN: 2000; 147.080; +110.9; King County ARES/RACES Net
- MON: 1900; 146.960; - 103.5; Seattle ACS
- WED: 1930; 146.820; - 103.5; Mike and Key Technical Net
- SAT: 2000; 146.550; SIMPLEX; See how well your signal is heard and who can hear you

RATPAC Videos

Great videos the Radio Amateur Training, Planning and Activities Committee:

- Published Format- <http://tiny.cc/ratpac-list>
- Menu Format- <http://tiny.cc/ratpac-ss>

Winlink Nets

Can't get enough Winlink practice from our monthly nets? Try any or all of the following:

- The "original" [Winlink Wednesday](#). Once a week, send a text message. Once a month, send a Winlink form. Option to check in via HF Winlink Peer-To-Peer.
- [Winlink Wednesday NTX](#). Once a week, check in with a Winlink form. Often has a question you need to answer.
- [ETO Winlink Thursday](#). A larger variety of exercises. Forms, attachments, shrinking images, shrinking spreadsheets, nation-wide HF Winlink Peer-To-Peer.