Delaware - Lehigh Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

W3OK Corral NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2005

Meeting August 4th at the 911 center

The Prez Sez

by Bryan, AA3WM

If you were not at the July DLARC meeting, you missed a good one. We met in our new meeting location at the Northampton County 911 Center, and Paul N0KIA gave another great presentation—the fourth installment of Elmer 101. Meeting at the 911 center is great—it is a central location to many of our members, it is near the club's station, and there is plenty of parking. Speaking of parking, if you are of able body, why not take the parking spots that are a little further from the sidewalk and door, leaving the parking spots that are against the sidewalk for those members that might have a little more trouble walking. Also, there are only two "marked" handicap spaces, and I would ask that, even if you have handicap tags, you leave these two spots for any member or visitor that needs the extra room for getting out of their vehicle (such as with a wheel chair).

Up coming events in August, September, and October include the DLARC Picnic, the license preparation classes, the PA QSO Party, and the Emmaus Halloween Parade. That is quite a few events for two months, and I encourage you to think about and plan where you, as a DLARC member, might be able to participate in one or more of these events.

There is another set of "events" coming up in the next few months that I would like you start thinking about. At the October 6th club meeting, we will be holding elections for the DLARC officers and executive board members. This is an important event for the club, and I encourage all of you that can make it to come to the October meeting and cast your vote. Leading up to the election is something as important, if not more so. That is the nominations for club officers and executive board members. This nomination process starts in August with the forming of the nominating committee, and then continues to the September 1st meeting when nominations are finalized and closed. Please be thinking about who you would like to see on the board, and give your input to the nominating committee, which will be announced at the August 4th meeting. If you are interested in serving on the nominating committee, please contact me by August 2nd.

de Bryan, AA3WM

Treasurer's Report

by Dick, KA3MOU



Delaware-Lehigh Amateur Radio Club Inc. Income & Loss Statement

Balance 5/31/05	**$5,673.55**
INCOME	
Class Materials book sold	$107.00
Club Dues	25.00
Donation Income 50 –50	18.50
Donation Income Anonymous	6.00
Interest Checking	1.80
TOTAL INCOME	**$158.30**
EXPENSES	
Postage Bulk Fee 1 year	$150.00
Postage deposit bulk mailing	70.00
Telephone 5/15/05	17.80
Telephone 6/15/05	17.73
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$255.53**
Balance 6/30/05	**$5,576.32**

de Dick, KA3MOU, Treasurer of DLARC

DLARC General Meeting Minutes

(None submitted)

Ramblings On The PA Dutch MS-150 (part 1)

by Paul Ryan, N0KIA

Sixteen years ago, my wife and I returned to the Lehigh Valley from a peripatetic life governed by Uncle Sam. For many of those intervening 16 years I've been privileged to participate in the PA Dutch MS-150 as a member of the communications support team. I've bounced around in the back of an ambulance, driven a staff vehicle, manned a rest stop and served as a "roaming" support vehicle in years when there were more volunteers then vehicles! I thought I'd share some of my thoughts on the planning and procedures process from the view of the typical operator in the field, with a brief introduction on the event itself. It may get you primed to volunteer for next year!

THE EVENT

What is the PA Dutch MS-150? Good question. It's one of the 150 mile bike tours run by the Multiple Sclerosis society to raise money for their research. There are other MS-150 events in the area, so we are not unique, but we are alone in having the event run through the beautiful Pennsylvania Dutch countryside of southeastern PA. Hundreds of cyclists, serious and casual, converge on Saturday's starting point (in recent years it's been the velodrome in Trexlertown) to ride 25, 50, 75, 100, 125, 150, 175 or 200 miles over the weekend to benefit the society. The cyclists ride around one of the four courses - 25, 50, 75 and 100 miles - to arrive at the finish line Saturday afternoon at Kutztown State University. There, a hot shower, pizza, evening meal and lodging are available. The riders then ride the course in the reverse direction on Sunday arriving back at the velodrome Sunday afternoon. During their ride, sag wagons, ambulances, support vehicles and up to six rest stops are available for their use. As amateurs, we supply the immediate communication support for the vehicles and rest stops along the way. So, what does the event look like from our point of view? I'm glad you asked!

First off, let's say a word about net control. No, not that word! Let's say a nice word. I have to give credit to the great net controls who work this event each year. Theirs is a tiresome and often thankless job making CRITICAL decisions, attending to multiple communications streams while simultaneously dealing with impatient, error prone and sometimes uncooperative customers. They are usually set up somewhere on the Kutztown University campus with rigs listening to all the event frequencies. They also have landline and cell communication and work very closely with the MS event staff to accomplish the goal of a safe and incident free weekend. They are always calm and professional on the air. However, I suspect the tension in the net control office is often much greater than any of the operator's voices betrays. Yet they come back each year to do it again. It must be the reward felt for doing a fantastic job that brings them

back. We'll get to some guidelines for interacting with net control in the section on operation.

Now, let's look at our role as field communicators in the MS-150. As amateurs, what is our first task? To VOLUNTEER! Let one of the event organizers know you're ready, willing and able to help on one or both of the event days. If you decide to work both days you get the option to bunk over at the University and eat dinner and breakfast at the dining hall. Plus, volunteering for both days makes it easier for the event planners to assign positions. It also helps with continuity for teams assigned to sag wagons, ambulances and other rolling stock. You'll develop a relationship with Saturday's crew that will make Sunday's work a lot easier. If the event planning team gets your name early, it helps them fill their manning rosters and rest easier as the event draws close. So, consider both days if you can possibly work them in, but if one's all you have free, then volunteer for that one.

Okay, you volunteered, now what should you do? When we look at the MS-150 event from the perspective of the field radio operator, we can break the job into three main areas. They are preparation, setup and operation. Let's look at each step in a little more detail.

PREPARATION

Preparation is by far the longest phase of the three and takes place in the months, weeks and, for some tasks, hours before the event. First, we need to consider what we'll need to communicate successfully in the event. You know -- a list of equipment to assemble before the morning of the event. We can probably break this into a few categories, such as radio equipment, repair equipment and personal items. The first essential is a radio, either HT or mobile rig, with appropriate power cables. It will also need a microphone, antenna and a source of power. An external speaker or speaker mike is not essential, but often helpful. You also need to give some thought to how it will be positioned. You also want to consider a possible clip arrangement for your microphone. Maybe a kluge clip with a small clamp will do. If you're assigned to a rest stop, do you have a place to operate from or will you be in the car. If you want to operate "up close and personal" with the MS staff, then you'll need to monitor your HT closely for calls from net control. At some sites, like Hoppes Farm and Start/Finish, the noise level is a factor. You may need to pack a set of earphones/ear buds to get over the local QRM.

If you're assigned a vehicle, do you have a plan for mounting your HT/mobile and all the paraphernalia without interfering with the driver? Will it be secure while doing warp speed over bumpy secondary roads? You may want to consider a small piece of fiberboard with anti-slip matting applied to the top. A few C-clamps to hold it to a seat or rail, and you'll have a stable operating position. Or hold it in your lap, but then don't tighten the C-clamps! Do you have a power cord extension in case you have to set up away from the immediate power source? Will you need a sealed lead-acid (SLA) battery if a 12 V source isn't available in your assigned vehicle? Will it power your rig for 20 hours at 2-4% duty cycle (T/R)? Can the rig produce 5 watts output (minimum needed for reliable communications, more is better) for 60 to 90 seconds without blowing the fuse? Is the antenna matched to the rig? These are just the first questions you should ask. Your individual situation may dictate further questions, such as "Do I have a mounting scheme in mind that is portable and workable for my assignment?", "Can this setup be operational in less than 30 minutes?" or "Will I have all the parts available on event morning or am I waiting to buy that last connector to make it all work?"

Along with the radio, the antenna is another area that needs consideration. If you're assigned to a permanent location, such as a rest stop, you'll probably use the antenna mounted to your car. If you want to roam about the site with an HT, but maintain good communications with net control, then one-way cross banding is a useful option. Run UHF to your cross band capable rig in the car and have the rig transmit to the repeater. Then, have your HT listen to the repeater output directly. I've used this scheme successfully at Hoppes farm using an ICOM 2720 in the car and walking around the site with a VX-1 on 100 mW. It will hit the repeater full quieting on low power from the 2720 with a 5/8 wave mag mount on the roof. If you're going to use it, then practice setting up cross banding before the day of the event. Nothing like fumbling through the radio manual and

furiously spinning dials to instill confidence in your MS staff members!

If you're assigned as a staff vehicle, and you're using your own car, then no problem. The setup you use every day will work just fine. However, if you're going to be a passenger in a staff vehicle, then all the above considerations come into play. How will you setup, what is your power source (most likely a cigarette lighter, but the staff may already have their cell phone plugged in), where can you mount a speaker, where will the antenna mount? Had a staff car one year that was a convertible. Can't use a roof mounted mag mount there! So, give some consideration to the possible places you may be assigned and plan ahead.

The antenna mounting problem is an ongoing challenge. Al, W3CE, has put together a vacu-gripper mount that I saw successfully employed on two sag busses this year. Simple but quick setup, and an effective way to get the antenna high and outside the bus without having to crawl up on the roof. Might be room here for an article on how to put one together. Anyway, ask Al for a demo. I tried building one for my 5/8 L but it needed more ground than the small metal plate could provide. Maybe two mounted like dipoles? I just need more time to experiment!

Okay, we have the rig and odd bits considered, now what about power. I've been assigned to ambulances more often as not. There, setup is easy, since there's usually a med-tech station with room to set a mobile rig. The cab has a metal roof, so no problem with the antenna. Now, where to tap the power? If you're lucky, there will be a 12 V socket mounted near the station. The problem is, when the main vehicle power is turned OFF, the socket goes dead. So I carry a 7 AH SLA battery with Anderson Power Poles attached to the unit. It's a quick switch when we pull into a rest area for an extended deployment and the main vehicle power is cut off. The battery will power the mobile rig during our stopovers with plenty of reserve for the required occasional transmit to net control. For an HT setup, the 7 AH unit is all you need for a full weekend of operation even if you have to operate without a 12 V vehicle source. If you don't have a SLA available and plan on using an HT without a 12 V adapter, you should pack a charger to top off your HT during the night. You really don't want the HT to quit on Sunday at 9:30 just as you enter the 100 mile course. Not a good way to score points with net control.

"Anderson Power Poles, what's that?", you ask. Well now, there's something to consider on your rigs whether you ride in the MS-150 or not. They are little red and black, non-polarized, high-current plugs that have made my life a lot easier. I've made up adapters for all my rigs, crafted extension cords of various lengths, fused adapters, cigarette lighter adapters, etc. No matter what the situation, I can usually plug and go in a few seconds. They're cheap when you consider the time you save in setup. About 80 cents a set, one set to an adapter or two sets to an extension. Use the national ARES standard when you decide on your plug configuration and you're "good to go" nationwide on deployment. I know, pie in the sky thinking, but why not standardize, just in case.

Along with the main radio items, you should plan for a small repair/spares kit to take with you on the ride. I use a two sided, plastic box from Harbor Freight with fuses, extra connectors, adapters, wire, small VOM with leads, rubber bands, clips, multi-tip screwdriver, sockets and other goodies. Although you probably won't need them during the event, you may want to pack a soldering iron and solder, wrenches and other "extra" gear in your car in case it's needed during setup. You might carry a spare mag mount antenna, coax, HT and other items to the deployment site in case you break something, or someone else needs a hand.

Looking good! We have our radio setup planned, so let's turn to the planning for our personal needs. If you're staying over, then you'll need a change of clothes, toilet kit, special meds, and sleeping gear. The university makes available two meals at the dining hall and a double room with bunk beds. They also provide towels, wash cloth, sheets and a pillow case, but no pillow. These were previously free, but this year they were asking $15 for the set. I talked my way into getting them free this year as well, but you may want to pack your own next year, just in case. Don't forget a small pillow, unless you like sleeping with a pillow case stuffed with your funky laundry. There is a pool at Kutztown University, so you may want to pack a suit. I've never had enough

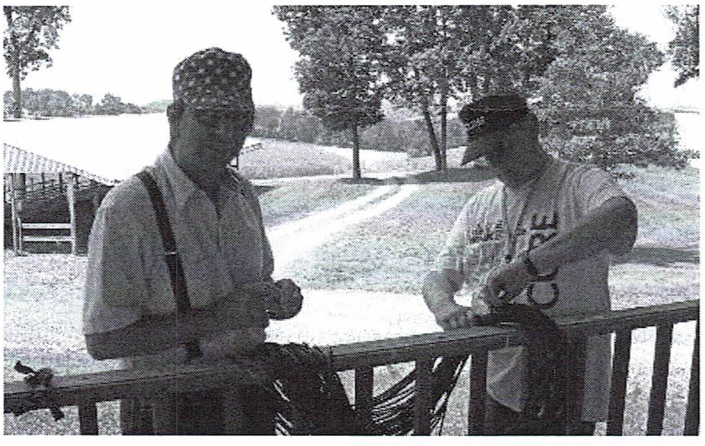
energy left on Saturday evening to take advantage of the opportunity. Your mileage may vary.

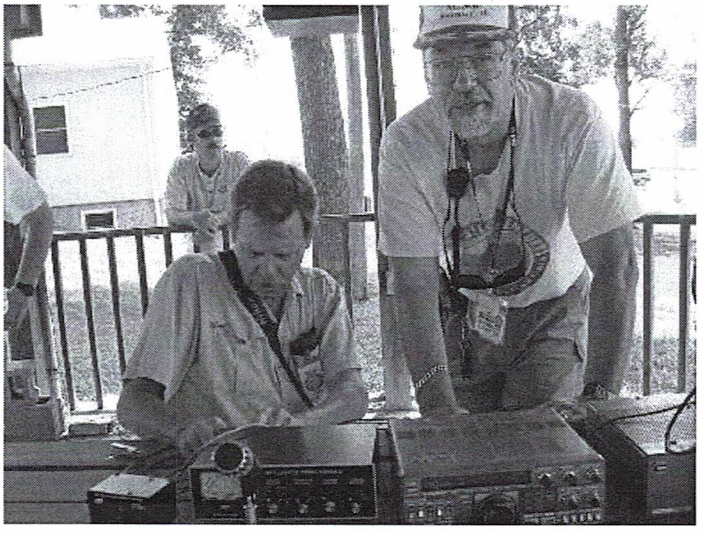
(continued next month)

Field Day Pictures

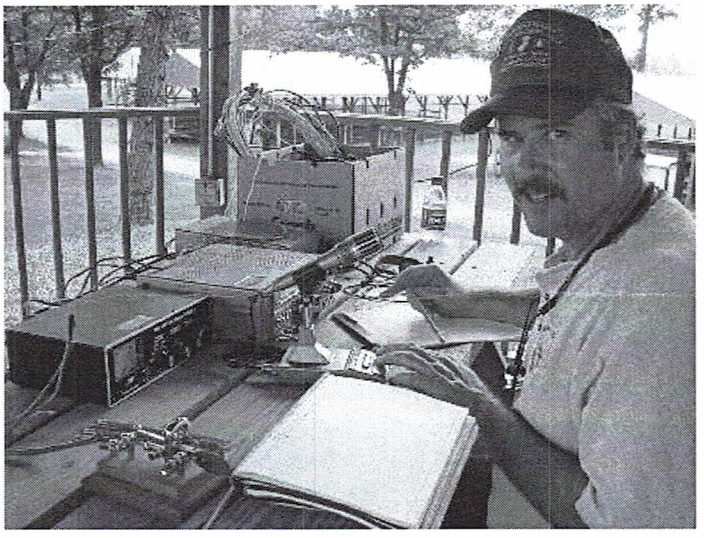
Photos by David Blankenship, N3EYT



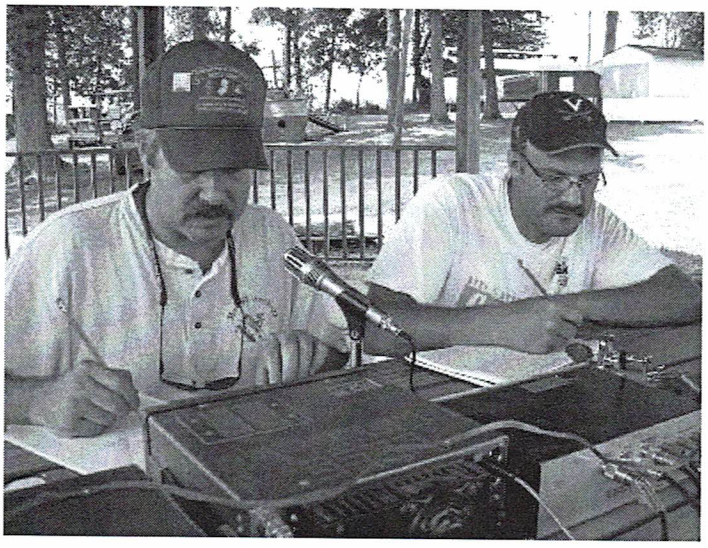


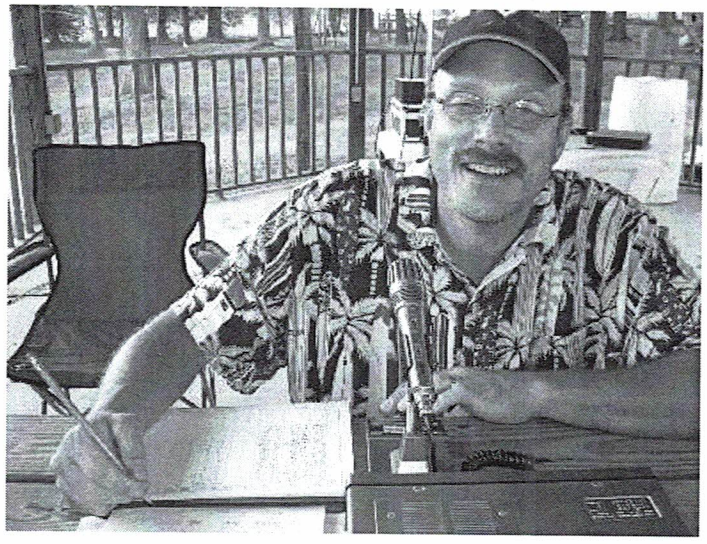




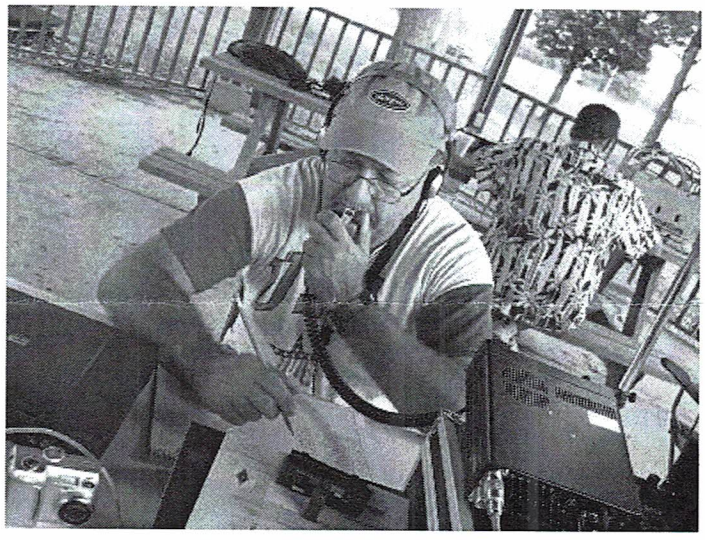




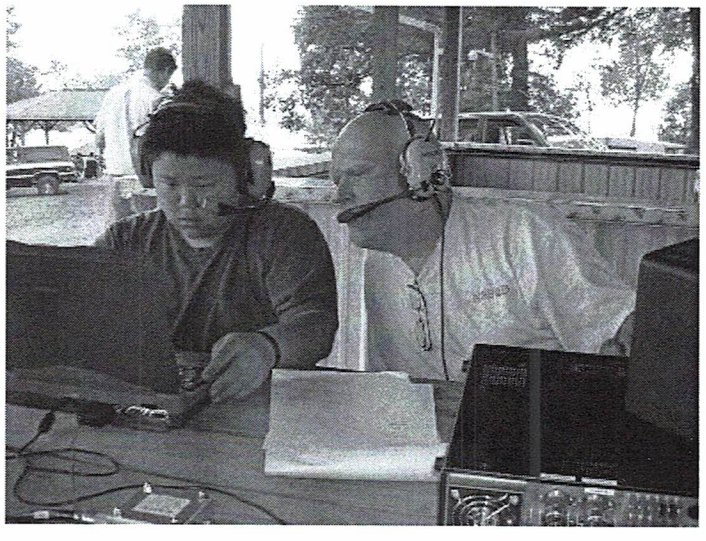












Moving Notice!

by Mitch Bloom, WA1LLD

Just want to pass along a note to the club that I've moved to Melbourne Florida.

There are many repeaters and a number of radio clubs down here. Once settled, I'll get more active and perhaps some of them may even have the link system so that I may 'pop-in' to the Lehigh Valley. And when I can get some antenna work done, I'll be back on the HF bands as well.

If any fellow ham is in the Melbourne area, feel free to call or stop by.

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de Mitch Bloom, WA1LLD

2005 AUGUST 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 ARES / RACES Net 7:00 pm TechNet 8:00 pm	4 Club Meeting 7:30 pm	5	6
7	8	9	10 ARES / RACES Net 7:00 pm	11 **Newsletter Deadline**	12	13
14	15	16	17 ARES / RACES Net 7:00 pm	18 Executive Committee Meeting	19	20
21	22	23	24 ARES / RACES Net 7:00 pm	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 ARES / RACES Net 7:00 pm TechNet 8:00 pm	Nominating committee selection this month!		

All Amateur Radio Operators are invited to Participate in the DLARC, RACES, and ARES nets: 51.76, 146.70, and 444.90 W3OK/RPT (pl 151.4) with an alternate of W3PYF/RPT 145.11 (pl 151.4)
W3OK trustee Chris Hornaman, NU3L
The Nets are held on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM

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== 2004-2005 ==

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CLUB MEETINGS

All regular meetings of the D.L.A.R.C. are held on the first Thursday of each month 7:30 PM at the Northampton County 911 Center.
TALK IN ON 146.70
Any comments or articles contributed to this newsletter should be addressed to kb3jxq@snycomp.com or Brad Snyder, Editor
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