



# MARC Beacon

Volume 9, Issue 9

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2020

## President's Message

Hello Morongo Basin HAM Radio Operators! August is gone and the weather will start to cool off a bit. We had some hot days in August. Just a reminder that all regular monthly meetings are canceled until further notice.

Roger KF6BIG, Larry WA6FSJ, and I are experimenting with AllStar nodes that allow HAM radio operators to connect to other stations through the internet. Just like the one that Todd KD6DIQ has had connect for the past few years. If you are interested in talking about nodes, then please join us on the Cawfee Tawk net from 10am to 11am on the Morongo Basin Linked Repeater System.

John Stevens KI6FKP has been at the Palm Springs Desert Regional Hospital since 17 August recovering from multiple broken ribs and a punctured lung. John's wife, Germaine Cook, post updates about his progress on Facebook.

I have been learning about, and playing with, the ATTiny84 IC chip and WS2812 addressable LEDs/NeoPixels. The ATTiny is a small computer on a chip and NeoPixels are mini Red, Green, Blue (RGB) lights on a strip. Contact me for more information. What electronic projects are you working on?

Our home garden is doing well. We have harvested some lettuce, spinach, broccoli, mini tomatoes, squash, and a honeydew melon. Hopefully, we will get a butternut squash, and an ear of corn this month. Yes, you can grow things in the desert, if you can keep the critters from eating it.

Please schedule time to check in on the 7 PM Tuesday net and if you can, please join us on the Cawfee Tawk net every morning at 10 AM.

Take care of yourself and enjoy each day. If you're not having fun, then you're doing something wrong.

This is WO4ROB, Rob from Joshua Tree.

**Rob Cloutier**  
**WO4ROB**

Joshua tree  
Club President  
(760)401-6666

[rob\\_cloutier@hotmail.com](mailto:rob_cloutier@hotmail.com)



### Linked Repeaters

#### **Yucca Valley, W6BA**

146.790 MHz (- shift = 146.190 MHz) 136.5 Hz PL/CTCSS

#### **Twentynine Palms, W6BA**

147.060 MHz (+ shift = 147.660 MHz) 136.5 Hz PL/CTCSS

#### **Landers, WB6CDF**

447.580 MHz (- shift = 442.580 MHz) 173.8 Hz PL/CTCSS

### Nets

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)  
Mon @ 1915  
Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club (MARC)  
Tue @ 1900

### Social Media,

**Club web page:** <http://www.w6ba.net>

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/MorongoBasinAmateurRadioClub>

### Club Meeting

**(Cancelled Until Further Notice)**

**Every 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 PM. At  
the church of the Nazarene in Yucca Valley at  
56248 Buena Vista Dr**



# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter



**TOM MEDLIN W5KUB WEEKLY WEBCAST 100% HAM RELATED. TUESDAY NIGHTS AT 8PM**  
<http://tmedlin.com/> OR <http://w5kub.com>



**HAMNATION IS A WEEKLY HAM RADIO RELATED TV SHOW WITH FAMOUS HOSTS SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW LIKE, GORDON WEST, BOB HEIL AND OTHERS. WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT 6PM**  
<https://twit.tv/shows/ham-nation>



The weather station on Paxton Hill at the W6BA repeater site is working great. It will show accurate wind speed and direction measurements for the top of the mountain .

<https://www.wunderground.com/personal-weather-station/dashboard?ID=KCAYUCCA57>

Glenn N6GIW

I also have A weather station by the high school in Yucca Valley N6GKB. Showing the temps and wind speeds in the center of Town.

[https://www.wunderground.com/dashboard/pws/KCAYUCCA35?cm\\_ven=localwx\\_pwsdash](https://www.wunderground.com/dashboard/pws/KCAYUCCA35?cm_ven=localwx_pwsdash)

Keith N6GKB



**We are having an informal DAILY net, that started Monday March 30<sup>th</sup>. Join us with your own cup!**

For right now it's called the "**CAWFEE TAWK**" net at 10:00 am till 11:00. It's just a way for any and all hams to check in, say good morning and see what everyone is up to. With all the things going on in this world we would just like to stay connected and be sure our local community of hams are ok. A little meet and greet with your coffee and donuts in the morning is a great start.

More like ice coffee now that it has warmed up!



These Vehicle magnets are still available from Rob, WO4ROB. They 12" long. I believe they are \$10 each. Contact him with your order.



# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

## The COVID-19 pandemic has affected licensing numbers as well as testing protocols.

ARRL VEC Manager Maria Somma, AB1FM, reports that through the end of July, overall FCC license activity was down by 15% compared to the same period last year. New amateur licenses are down by 12% so far in 2020, with 15,849 new licensees compared to 17,947 in 2019. "Upgraded licenses are down by a staggering 23% -- 6,501 versus 4,984," Somma said. "The year-end prediction of 7,500 upgrades is much lower than in previous years, which have averaged around 9,500."

## Emergency Communications Training Track and Large Scale Exercise Planned for Orlando Hamcation®/ARRL National Convention in February

A panel of emergency communications subject matter experts recruited and led by Gordon Gibby, KX4Z, will present lectures, demonstrations and many hands-on workshops, along with a large scale exercise on Sunday, for ARES and other emergency communicators - both rank-and-file operators and leadership officials -- in conjunction with the Orlando HamCation®, the host of the 2021 ARRL National Convention in Orlando, Florida, February 11-14. The convention theme, "reDiscover Radio," is a rallying call for radio amateurs committed to developing knowledge and skills in radio technology and radio communications.

The emergency communications training tracks and a National Convention luncheon will kick off on Thursday, February 11, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Orlando at SeaWorld. ARRL will announce a complete program and presenters later this summer, and will open registration in the fall. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, February 12-14, HamCation will host the rest of the convention at the Central Florida Fairgrounds and Expo Park in Orlando -- an 87-acre lakefront fairgrounds, where the HSEEP-compliant emergency communications exercise will be conducted. [2021 ARRL National Convention](#) and [Orlando HamCation](#)

## New Smartphone App Can Identify Unknown Data Modes

An incredible number of digital-mode radio signals occupy the spectrum, and it's not always possible to identify the particular mode of operation. CW, PSK31, and FT8 are pretty easy, but how about

CIS405, STANAG, or CHIP64? A new smartphone app can simplify things. [SignalID](#) can recognize about 20 signal modes (more may be on the way), in just 5 seconds of recording time. The app is open source and free.



CIS405, STANAG, or CHIP64? A new smartphone app can simplify things. [SignalID](#) can recognize about 20 signal modes (more may be on the way), in just 5 seconds of recording time. The app is open source and free.

Using it is simple. Once the frequency and bandwidth have been set, the user places the cell phone's microphone near the receiver's speaker, presses the large button, and waits for 5 seconds. The quieter the external environment is, the fewer errors.

"The algorithm is based on frequency, [so incorrect tuning] will result in an erroneous detection. The recording is limited to 5 seconds, for practical reasons. Mode recognition may require several attempts, the developer, Tortillum, said, and upgrades are already in the works. "The easiest way to try [it] is RTTY or STANAG," the developer added.

The very few comments so far from users suggest some further work may be needed, but they praised the concept. The developer invites additional [comments](#).

The application, which includes a complete list, could prove a valuable tool in determining the types of emissions that may stray into amateur radio bands. A [demonstration video](#) is available. -- Thanks to Southgate Amateur Radio News via Stephen Walters, G7Vfy



# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

## Amateur Radio Stood Ready for Isaias Throughout Storm's East Coast Visit

In a hurricane season now predicted to be worse than originally thought, Hurricane/Tropical Storm Isaias was an opportunity for amateur radio volunteers along the US eastern seaboard to exercise their preparedness. The Hurricane Watch Net (HWN) initiated two sessions, totaling more than 50 hours to track Isaias as it approached landfall.



In Southern Florida, Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) John Wells, W4CMH, said Indian River County Amateur Radio Emergency Service had operators at three shelters, and a few clients housed overnight on August 1. St. Lucie County went to Level 1 (full activation) on August 1, but no shelters were opened, and no ARES members were deployed. "St. Lucie County ARES was operational from a remote location, although they were prepared to staff the radio room at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)," Wells said.

Northern Florida ARES was never called up, but members did monitor the situation. "We are still early in the season, and I hope it will be a quiet year, but time will only tell," said Northern Florida SEC Karl Martin, K4HBN.

"The New York City-Long Island Section had a lot of downed trees and wires across the whole island," NYC-Long Island Section Manager



Jim Mezey, W2KFV, reported. "ARES was in standby mode for the Red Cross and other served agencies. Many clubs had information nets helping people to find needed supplies." Power was lost for a time in some areas.

"All is well for the most part in Southern New Jersey," Section Manager Tom Preiser, N2XW, reported. "We were inundated with power outages. We activated SKYWARN and made reports to NWS-Mount Holly. Many trees and tree limbs are down, and there was a great deal of activity on the repeaters."

Delaware SEC Dave Scott, KC3BEJ, reported nearly 5 inches of rain in the northern part of the state. "Areas of central Delaware -- around Dover Air Force Base and southern New Castle County -- got a good punch in the nose, with several confirmed tornadoes," he said. Several tractor trailer trucks tipped over on Route 1 in southern New Castle County and some 60,000 people statewide lost power. "There was no call for amateur radio assistance from any state, county, or municipal emergency management authorities," Scott said. "Most of our regular repeaters remained fully operational." An emergency frequency of 3.905 MHz allowed good communication with southern Delaware.



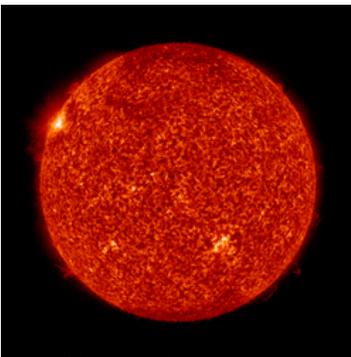
# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

## The K7RA Solar Update

Tad Cook, K7RA, Seattle, reports: Sunspots disappeared on 4 days of the past week, but then returned. The average daily sunspot number declined from 14.3 to 5.4, while average daily solar flux went from 73.8 to 71. Geomagnetic indicators remain quiet. Average daily planetary A index increased from 3.7 to 4.4.

Predicted solar flux is  
70 on August 20 - 26;  
71 on August 27; 72  
on August 28 - 29; 73  
on August 30 -  
September 5; 72 on  
September 6 - 9; 71  
on September 10 - 11;  
70 on September 12 -  
19; 71 on September  
20 - 23; 72 on September 24 - 25; 73 on  
September 26 - October 2, and 72 on October 3.



Predicted planetary A index is 16, 8, and 5 on August 20 - 22; 8 on August 23 - 25; 5 on August 26 - 28; 8, 16, and 8 on August 29 - 31; 5 on September 1 - 14; 10 on September 15 - 16; 5 on September 17 - 24; then 8, 16, and 8 on September 25 - 27, and 5 on September 28 - October 3.

Sunspot numbers for August 13 - 19 were 11, 0, 0, 0, 12, and 15, with a mean of 5.4. The 10.7-centimeter flux was 72.3, 70.8, 70.6, 70.9, 70.8, 71.3, and 70.5, with a mean of 71. Estimated planetary A indices were 4, 4, 3, 4, 3, 7, and 6, with a mean of 4.4. Middle latitude A index was 5, 3, 3, 5, 3, 7, and 9, with a mean of 5.

A comprehensive K7RA Solar Update is posted Fridays on the ARRL website. For more information concerning radio propagation, [visit](#) the ARRL Technical Information Service, [read](#) "What the Numbers Mean...", and [check out](#) K9LA's Propagation Page.

A propagation bulletin [archive](#) is available. For customizable propagation charts, visit the [VOACAP Online for Ham Radio](#) website.

[Share](#) your reports and observations.

## ARRL Podcasts Schedule

The latest episode of the *On the Air* podcast (Episode 8) features an interview with brothers Andy, KK4LWR, and Tony, KD8RTT, Milluzzi about the ARRL Collegiate Amateur Radio Initiative. The *On the Air* podcast is a monthly companion to *On the Air* magazine, ARRL's magazine for beginner-to-intermediate ham radio operators.



The latest episode of the *Eclectic Tech* podcast (Episode 14) deals with interference issues and features a chat with David Hodge, N6AN, about his work at Caltech with the radio astronomy team.

The *On the Air* and *Eclectic Tech* podcasts are sponsored by Icom. Both podcasts are available on iTunes (iOS) and Stitcher (Android), as well as on Blubrry -- [On the Air](#) | [Eclectic Tech](#).



Dr. Q (K8QS) and Tom (WA9TDD) show examples of ham shacks in history, from the hobby's early days to the present, fixed and mobile. The ham shack is cultural, not just technological, a "place" that tends to define the hobby, even a kind of "man cave." Is the ham shack disappearing in the age of mobile communication? Join the conversation.

<https://youtu.be/t4SVysToYxQ>



# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

## New Contest for Portable Stations to Debut

A new amateur radio contest for portable operators -- the Fox Mike Hotel Portable Operations Challenge ([POC](#)) -- will debut October 3 - 4. The event is aimed at leveling the competitive playing field between fixed stations and portable stations. [Scoring](#) for the POC, based upon a kilometers-per-watt metric, will be handicapped in favor of the portables. The contest is the brainchild of Frank Howell, K4FMH.



Sponsors include *National Contest Journal* ([NCJ](#)) -- an ARRL publication -- but the POC will not be an official *NCJ* or ARRL contest.

"*NCJ's* role is to encourage hams who don't contest to give it a try," *NCJ* Editor Dr. Scott Wright, K0MD, said. "It will encourage activity by operators who are limited by real estate and do not have a full-blown contest station. Events like this stimulate more interest in contesting, and this will have an international scope to give chances to snare some new DXCC entities."

The [contest rules](#) say scoring will be calculated using the distance between stations (Maidenhead grid squares) in kilometers divided by power output in watts. Fixed (QTH) stations will compete against portable (P) stations on 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters. Allowable modes include phone, CW, and digital.

The exchange is call sign, station class (P or Q), consecutive serial number, and four-character grid square.

Contact [Howell](#) for more information. Read [more](#).

## Technology and Technique Making Ham Radio Testing Possible During Pandemic

Amateur radio license testing continues during the pandemic, with a combination of remote Volunteer Examiner (VE) test sessions and careful in-person session planning. In Hawaii, VE Team leader and Section Manager Joe Speroni, AH0A, said he and his team passed the 100-candidate mark on August 10 for video-supervised remote test sessions. Speroni said the most recent session administered exams to 10 candidates simultaneously.



"Candidates from all Hawaiian Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and US military bases in Okinawa have had an opportunity to sit for licenses," he told the ARRL Volunteer Examiner Coordinator. "The high pass rate of 95% is most likely due to candidates having had time to prepare for the exam." Speroni also said his VEs' willingness to contribute their time has made the program a success and available to a wide geographical range.

"Zoom meeting video lends itself to handling three candidates per session, and each requires three VEs," Speroni explained. "The 1:1 ratio of candidates to VEs makes planning important. Fortunately, the team of 15 VEs has volunteers from Oahu, Maui, the Big Island, California, and the Pacific. Often, hams from Okinawa and Guam are helping to license and upgrade hams in Hawaii."



# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

## ARRL 2020 Simulated Emergency Test (SET) Scheduled for October 3 - 4 Weekend

The 2020 ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET) will take place October 3 - 4. The annual, nationwide exercise provides ARES volunteers the chance to test personal emergency-operating skills and communication readiness in a simulated emergency deployment. ARRL is asking participants to adhere to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local health department COVID-19 [guidelines](#) by staying home, maintaining safe distances when around people, and following recommended cleaning and disinfecting practices.

ARRL Field Organization leadership at the Section and local levels -- as well as many other volunteers who are active in public service and emergency communication -- are developing emergency scenarios with a variety of agencies and organizations they've partnered with in the past during real emergencies and disasters.

Given the ongoing pandemic, an in-person emergency exercise may not be possible this year, but volunteers are encouraged to adapt to the circumstances. Station and skills readiness are tenets of the Amateur Radio Service. Any time we spend on the air will contribute to developing and practicing our personal radio communication capability.

Volunteers with ARES, the National Traffic System (NTS), the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), SKYWARN™, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN), and other allied groups and public service-oriented amateur radio groups are among those eligible to participate in the SET to practice emergency operation plans, nets, and procedures.

ARRL has long-standing [relationships](#) with several national organizations including the American Red Cross, the National Weather Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Salvation Army, among others.

This year's SET can be a chance to reach out to these partners -- at a safe distance and/or via online meetings and teleconferences -- to establish or review plans and develop working relationships.

ARRL Field Organization leaders have the option of conducting local or Section-wide SETs on dates other than the October 3 - 4 focal-point weekend, but no later than the end of the calendar year. Contact your local ARRL Emergency Coordinator or Net Manager or ask your Section Manager. Additional [information about SET and the reporting forms](#) are available on the ARRL website. - ARRL

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## Training Videos Available from SEC-ARES

The SEC-ARES group on groups.io is now open to all radio amateurs involved or interested in amateur radio emergency/disaster communications, with a focus on ARES. [Join](#). The group has hosted a number of excellent presentations by subject matter experts on a diverse array of topics.

Here are a few samples:

[Did you feel it?](#) A new earthquake reporting system. Speaker Oliver Dully, K6OLI

[Winlink](#) -- Speaker Phil Sherrod, W4PHS

[Winlink Basic Operation Workshop WK1](#) -- Speaker Oliver Dully, K6OLI

[Winlink Advanced Operation Workshop](#) -- Speaker Oliver Dully, K6OLI

Check them out!

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# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

## FCC proposes new filing fee structure, new fees for ham radio

On Wednesday, the FCC released a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (NPRM) in MD Docket 20-270 which implements portions of the *Repack Airwaves Yielding Better Access for Users of Modern Services Act of 2018* (or RAY BAUM'S Act), which gives the FCC statutory authority to collect application fees. As a part of the Act, the FCC is required to switch from a fee structure mandated by Congress 20 years ago to a new cost-based system. This change will result in some fees being reduced and in some cases, such as the Amateur Radio Service, new fees are being added.

### Proposed new fees for Amateur Radio and reduction in GMRS fees

Section 8 of the RAY BAUM'S Act does not provide any kind of statutory exemption for filing fees in the Amateur Radio Service, which, historically has had no filing fees. Citing the costs involved in the automated processes, routine maintenance of the Commission's Universal Licensing System (ULS) and limited instances where staff needs to be involved in the application process, the FCC is proposing an across-the-board fee of \$50 for new and modified licenses in the personal radio services, which includes Amateur Radio and the General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS). For GMRS, this is a reduction of the current \$70 fee. The FCC also proposes these fees for license renewals and requests for vanity call signs, the latter which had its filing fee eliminated several years ago. The FCC is proposing to still not charge for administrative updates, such as mailing address changes on amateur or GMRS applications. Amateur Radio will remain exempt from annual regulatory fees under Section 9 of the RAY BAUM'S Act.

### Commenting on the changes

Once the NPRM is published in the *Federal Register*, filing deadlines for comments and reply comments will be established. Those dates will be announced by the FCC in a separate *Public Notice*. Comments will be accepted in the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System under proceeding 20-270.

A copy of the NPRM, which includes the proposed fee structures, can be found [here](#).

The RAY BAUM'S Act is part of Public Law 115-141 and can be found in [this PDF document](#) starting on page 734 (Division P). The relevant part of the law starts on Page 736, under Section 8.

*Written by: Michelle Bradley, KU3N ~ founder of REC Networks.*

Link to full article at REC Networks, which also discusses fee changes for commercial broadcast radio can be found at:

<https://recnet.com/node/3182>

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## ARRL VHF Contest is September 12-14, 2020

It is always the second full weekend of September.

**Object:** To work as many amateur stations in as many different 2 degrees X 1 degree grid squares as possible.

**Time:** Begins 1800 UTC Saturday and runs through 0259 UTC Monday

**Bands:** All authorized frequencies above 50 MHz.

For complete information about this contest go to:

<http://www.arrl.org/september-vhf>

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# MARC Beacon

The Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club Newsletter

## SEPTEMBER 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>KAFEE TAWK</b> <b>10AM DAILY</b> <b>CLUB</b> <b>REPEATER</b>		MARC Net 7:00 pm NCS GLENN		ARES Meeting 6:00 pm		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	ARES Net 7:15 pm	MARC Net 7:00 pm NCS KEITH				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	ARES Net 7:15 pm	MARC Net 7:00 pm NCS JOHN		NO MEETING		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	ARES Net 7:15 pm	MARC Net 7:00 pm NCS ROB				
27	28	29	30			
	ARES Net 7:15 pm	MARC Net 7:00 pm NCS FRED			STAY SAFE STAY HEALTHY STAY TOUCH	

30