

# K7EAR

## November 2006

**EAARS open repeaters. PL is 141.3 unless noted otherwise**

**Helio** 146.860 and 440.700 EAARS Network, 146.900/ autopatch NOT working, 447.825 w/ closed remote PL 100.0 or 141.3. Packet 145.010 **MT. Lemmon** 147.160 EAARS Network

**Pinal Peak** 145.41 EAARS Network **Jacks Peak, NM** 145.21 EAARS Network

**GMRS Repeater on Helio** 462.625 PL 123.0

**Website** [HTTP://WWW.EAARS.COM](http://www.eaars.com)

### Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday November 14th. It was changed from the 21st because of Thanksgiving week.

### ARRL President Airs Concerns about Required Red Cross Background Checks

NEWINGTON, CT, Oct 25, 2006 -- ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, is urging Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and other ham radio volunteers to tread cautiously when submitting information for background checks the American Red Cross (ARC) now requires. The ARC, with which the ARRL has a Statement of Understanding (SoU), this summer notified local chapters that volunteers and staff members must submit to criminal background checks by October 31. Harrison says the requirement extends to ARES volunteers who support Red Cross disaster relief efforts. In a statement "The Red Cross is requiring volunteers to grant permission for more than just a criminal background check," Harrison asserted. "They are also requiring permission to draw a consumer and/or investigative consumer report on the volunteer." Harrison said that could also include a credit check and a mode-of-living check.

"The Red Cross has stated that they will not use credit reports," he noted. "Requiring that volunteers authorize the procurement of a credit report is inconsistent with this assurance." The on-line application allows applicants to request a copy of any consumer report resulting from its background investigation.

The ARC has contracted with MyBackgroundCheck.com LLC (MBC) in Anderson, California, to handle the on-line background checks. Prospective volunteers visit a secure Web site click on the ARC logo and submit name, address, Social Security number (or other acceptable government ID), telephone number, and date of birth. Driver's license information, e-mail address and mother's maiden name are optional.

## 2006 Officers

President Lon Whitmer K7LON  
Vice President Quentin Kavanaugh N7QK  
Secretary/ Treasurer Larry Griggs W7MCO  
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Newsletter Editor Dave Wells WB7ONJ

## Email Addresses

Email all Officers at once  
Newsletter Editor

## Club Address

EAARS  
P.O. Box 398  
Solomon, AZ 85551

## Nets

EAARS Net; Sunday Night 7 PM general check ins  
Smart Net; Monday evening 7:30 to 8:30 Technical discussion  
Weather; Net Daily 5:30 AM collect local weather information  
To get your own email at EAARS.com contact Larry, W7MCO

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In the course of the application process, prospective volunteers must agree to let MBC obtain a wide range of personal information bearing not just on criminal background and creditworthiness but, MBC says, "character, general reputation [and] personal characteristics." MBC advises, "The nature and scope of this disclosure and authorization is all-encompassing

Some ARES leaders already have expressed concern to the ARRL about the Red Cross policy. One District Emergency Coordinator called the requirement "particularly abhorrent" and "a horrendous invasion of privacy." The Red Cross says the new policy is aimed at safeguarding clients, volunteers and employees alike.

"Unfortunately, in this day and age it is critical that the American Red Cross and other agencies, employers and organizations perform due diligence in researching the people who will represent them," the Red Cross said in a statement supplied to ARRL. "We hope volunteers, who have provided blood, sweat and tears in helping fulfill the mission of the American Red Cross, will understand the importance of performing this due diligence."

ARRL Field and Educational Services Manager Dave Patton, NN1N -- whose department supports and oversees the ARRL Field Organization -- is among those who believes the Red Cross stands to lose a fair number of volunteers because of the requirement -- and not necessarily just ARES volunteers.

"ARES members who are providing communications for ARC are working for ARC," Patton maintained, "and, as such, will follow their guidelines." He added that whatever position the ARRL might adopt, the decision to go along with the new Red Cross policy is up to individual volunteers.

The ARC apparently has not disseminated policy specifics at the national level. The only reliable information on what the background checks will entail is that on the MBC site. The sometimes-conflicting information ARRL obtained was distributed at the ARC chapter level. One such memorandum -- supplied to ARRL by a third party -- indicates that a check will focus on an individual's criminal history over the previous seven years (in most states), al-

though MBC's disclaimer doesn't indicate any limit. Some prospective volunteers have worried that "youthful indiscretions" may rule out their suitability as Red Cross volunteers. The check also will verify that an individual's name matches his or her Social Security number. The same memo assures that access to the information gathered "is limited to only those with a need to know and is kept in a secure location."

Despite the information MBC provides on the application site, another chapter-level memorandum assures that the Red Cross "is not interested in checking your personal credit/financial records nor will it review any personal/professional reference checks."

### **Who Represents Whom?**

Several ARES leaders have expressed the belief that they and their volunteers represent ARES when supporting communication for ARC as a served agency. "Our issue is not the background checking, but the fact ARC considers ARES members ARC volunteers," one ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator said.

The *SoU* between the League and the ARC is ambiguous on the subject, however. While the document says "each organization retains its own identity in providing service," it further stipulates that ARES volunteers "in such cases when the operators are required to carry American Red Cross identification" must register as American Red Cross volunteers.

Radio amateurs who volunteered in the wake of Hurricane Katrina last year were badged in via the Montgomery, Alabama, staging area as ARC volunteers. The same applied to those who turned out to assist following the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, and that practice upset some ARES volunteers.

The ARRL-ARC *SoU* subsequently states, however, that volunteers assisting the ARC with disaster relief communication support "shall be at all times considered ARRL volunteers," but then goes on to say that ARRL and ARES volunteers "may, under conditions and terms established by American Red Cross from time to time, also serve as American Red Cross volunteers for a mutually agreed upon task or function." The *SoU* does not address the issue of background checks, however. The *SoU* comes up for review in 2007.

### **Arbitrary?**

ARRL Public Service Team Leader Steve Ewald, WV1X, says ARES leaders can assign volunteers who don't want to submit to the ARC criminal background check to ARES duties "away from the action" that don't involve direct interaction with the ARC. "We certainly understand the risks that are involved in having background checks done -- such as potential identity theft," Ewald told one worried SEC. "Those volunteers who do go through the background check will, indeed, enter at their own risk in this regard."

One ARES DEC suggested the ARC policy "is just way too arbitrary." As he put it, "The unfortunate thing is that if a member decides not to submit to this check, then that will hamper our ability to serve the Red Cross in an emergency."

### **Info is Secure, ARC Says**

The Red Cross says it's gone to great lengths to ensure prospective volunteers are not giving out their Social Security numbers to anyone other than the contractor, and then only through a secure, encrypted Web site. "No additional information is needed," the Red Cross said, nor are the overall results of the background check shared with the ARC.

"The only information provided is that a person has successfully completed the background check with no adverse information, or that a person has potentially adverse information and that additional research is required," the ARC told ARRL. "When additional research is required the contracted company will notify the prospective volunteer and will address the issue with no Red Cross intervention."

Contact the Red Cross (toll-free 800-507-3960) with any questions regarding the background check program.

**Simple solution, refuse the check and let the Red Cross create their own radio network on their own frequencies!**

### **ARRL Asks FCC to Upgrade 60-Meter Allocation, Privileges**

NEWINGTON, CT, Oct 23, 2006 -- The ARRL is asking the FCC to expand 60-meter operating privileges and substitute a new channel for one that's often occupied by a federal government user. The League filed a *Petition for Rule Making (PRM)* October 11. The FCC has not yet assigned a rule making (RM) number to the petition nor invited public comments. The ARRL Executive Committee okayed filing the *PRM* when it met October 7.

"These minor rule changes will substantially increase the flexibility in the use of the channels in the 5250-5450 kHz band and will as well facilitate Amateur Radio emergency communications in this important segment of the HF spectrum," the ARRL said in its petition. "Amateurs have proven, through interference-free operation on these channels, that compatible sharing of the channels is possible."

Specifically, the League wants the FCC to authorize radio amateurs of General and higher class to run 100 W effective radiated power (ERP) instead of the 50 W it now permits and to allow Morse code and narrow-band digital modes, including PSK31 and PACTOR 3. It also asks the Commission to replace the 5368.0 kHz center-frequency channel with 5358.5 kHz, so amateurs can avoid federal government digital traffic on the current channel. The channel change stemmed from comments the ARRL received during a 2005 member survey. Operation on 60 meters would remain on a secondary basis, and radio amateurs would still have to avoid interfering with incumbent federal government and other services.

When the ARRL first petitioned the FCC for a 150 kHz-wide 60-meter band, the primary objection to granting the allocation came not from the Commission -- which initially proposed granting the allocation -- but from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration ([NTIA](#)), which administers federal spectrum. The five channels, upper sideband only, 50 W ERP and maximum 2.8 kHz bandwidth radio amateurs got represented a compromise worked out between the two federal agencies.

The NTIA is far more favorably disposed to the ARRL's latest request, however. A letter to ARRL earlier this year from Karl B. Nebbia, deputy associate administrator in the NTIA's Office of Spectrum Management said the Interdepartment Radio Advisory Committee (IRAC) had considered the League's requests and "would look favorably" on the channel change, use of additional modes and power increase proposals. Nebbia said the IRAC could not support a request for a 50 kHz-wide domestic secondary allocation, however.

The League expressed its gratitude to the NTIA "for its willingness to accommodate the needs of the Amateur Ser-

vice for additional flexibility in the use of the channels allocated for its use on a secondary basis." The petition further expressed the hope that the FCC eventually may consider allocating a domestic amateur band in the vicinity of the existing 60-meter channels

The League says Amateur Radio access to 60 meters over the past three years "has been successful without qualification," with no known instances of interference to federal users from radio amateurs. Nebbia's letter cautioned that digital users "must take care to limit the length of their transmissions" so federal agencies could readily reclaim a 60-meter channel in an emergency. NTIA said it would support the power hike "on the presupposition" that amateurs would continue to use voice-operated transmit (VOX) on USB phone. The ARRL's proposed Part 97 rule changes specifically accommodate these concerns.

## **Only 33 days until the next Arizona Hamfest**

Superstition Hamfest - December 2nd  
Hosted by Superstition Amateur Radio Club  
Mesa Community College - Dobson & Hiway 60

## **EAARS Dues**

Remember, Dues expire on December 31st and are \$24.00 a year.

## **Last Meeting**

Our Virden picnic meeting went off quite well. Several attending walked away with prizes. The steaks and burgers were consumed with smiling faces.

## **Newsletter Editor**

Just to let you know, I've been scarce the last couple weeks and it looks like I'll continue to be for the next couple weeks. My regular customer has broken down and I'm running mostly From Los Angeles to Miami, AZ

## **Arizona Traffic and Emergency Net**

Net frequency 3.992 **NEW TIME** 18:30 MST Every evening