



The REACTer

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March-April, 2003

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From the President by Charles A. "Chuck" Thompson

Sometimes a Great Notion...Isn't

Several years ago, an enterprising *REACT*er obtained for *REACT* International a business-band radio license, WPRT970. This was intended to be an umbrella license, making available to US Teams and councils some common frequencies. It was a good idea.

However, it isn't to be. First, it was discovered that the license would have to be modified because the original authority didn't allow the type of service desired. Several folks worked to redesign the license, and ultimately it was referred to the Communications Committee. The Committee Chairman's recommendation was that there were inherent problems in trying to supervise widespread use of the frequency, and that the project should be abandoned. One of the factors considered was that there were already Teams using these frequencies without permission.

At the Annual Meeting of the Board, this recommendation was considered and approved. WPRT970 will be retained as it is, limited solely to use by *REACT* International. This means that should a major event, such as 9/11, occur again, these frequencies will be available under RI's control.

The Communications Committee recommended that individual Teams and Councils obtain their own licenses on these frequencies, thus making interoperability easily available. Each Team and council would, of course, then be responsible for their own proper operation under FCC regulations.

Finally, the Board has directed that we make available guidance on how Teams and councils can apply for their own licenses. We

will endeavor to have this available as soon as possible.

The *REACT* store has just received the new *REACT* baseball-type caps that were approved by delegates at last year's Convention.. They are all-black, American made, five-panel hats, and have the *REACT* patch sewn on the front. They come in two versions: solid and mesh back. These caps will go with any uniform combination, and will be stocked by the *REACT* store from now on. Price is \$7.00 each, plus applicable shipping costs.

I am pleased to announce two appointments. Wayne Barringer (Calif.) has been added as co-Chair of the Awards and Recognition Committee. Wayne previously acted as Webmaster for the *REACT* International Website and was active with Crest *REACT*. Nathan "Nat" Maryn (Md.) has accepted appointment as Voluntary Agencies Liaison, to work with the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (NVOAD), and others. Nat is a longtime *REACT*er, and previously served as a Field Director for *REACT* International.

My personal thanks to former Executive Vice President Dick Cooper (N.J.), who resigned from that office at the recent Board Meeting. Dick did a great job, and was instrumental in revitalizing *REACT*'s committees. Dick agreed to stay on as Director for Region 2, and was again chosen by the Board to be its Vice Chairman. Well done, Dick.

Terrorists, Disasters, and Common Sense

by William M. Riley, N3SNU
President, Prince Georges Co. (Md.) REACT



I've been annoyed lately by the sniggering of our local news anchors as they pass on the government's advice to the public about ways to prepare for a terrorist attack. Rather than discuss the whole range of possibilities, reporters are picking and choosing unrelated precautions so they can have things to make fun of. By the time these bits and pieces are further filtered by selective hearing on the part of unthinking people, the discussion degenerates to something like this:

What's all this about sealing my house up with plastic and duct tape? Don't I have to go outside in the toxic cloud to do that? After I get my house sealed airtight, won't I suffocate by the time I've been in there 3 days? How do I keep from freezing if I have to turn off my furnace for that long?

Trouble is, the plastic and duct tape is only for some scenarios, while the three-day supply of water is for another. Unfortunately, people are so busy making fun of things they don't understand, they're ignoring things they should have been doing long before any terrorism scare.

As I write this, I'm visiting my wife's family in New York over the President's Day March-April, 2003

weekend. We're having a blizzard. The sewer down the street is getting blocked up by record cold. The house has oil heat, but if the electricity goes off, no one knows how to bypass the thermostat and get the burner to fire. The kitchen stove is gas, but it has an electric ignition. There are no matches in the house to light the burners if the electricity is off. There's no bottled water in the house. What's wrong with this picture?

Duct tape and plastic was suggested for one scenario, in which a toxic cloud was released and there was no time to evacuate. This is a long-anticipated scenario in hazardous materials response. It is not limited to terrorism. In my HAZMAT training in the 1980s, we were still using the Coast Guard's *CHRIS* manuals, which have now been supplanted by faster computerized programs. In those days, it typically took longer to calculate the extent of a toxic cloud's spread, than it did for the cloud to dissipate. The best strategy in most cases was "shelter in place." Stay indoors, close the windows, turn off ventilation, and wait for the "all clear" signal.

There's very little difference between a train derailment with a chlorine leak, or a terrorist

attack with some other chemical or biological agent. Once the cloud dissipates or settles, the only remaining concern is whether or not some residue on surfaces remains hazardous. The hazard could be a contact toxin, a biological agent, or radioactive debris. In most cases, the house would not have to remain sealed for more than a few hours, but it might not be safe to venture outside for a period of days. If your house is modern and tightly sealed for energy conservation purposes, you probably don't need duct tape and plastic. Even if you do, what's the big deal? Don't you already have duct tape on hand? If you don't, I suggest you spend some time watching *The Red Green Show*, a Canadian comedy on PBS or BBC America. Duct tape is the handyman's secret weapon, and you should have at least as much duct tape on hand as toilet paper. Meanwhile, you have a box of 30 gallon trash bags in the cabinet under the kitchen sink, don't you? A large trash bag will cover most windows. If you have less trash bags left than you have

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EchoLink: Connecting Radios, Computers, and People Worldwide

by Lee W. Besing, N5NTG
Secretary, REACT International
President, Texas State REACT Council

EchoLink is software that allows Amateur Radio stations to communicate with one another over the Internet, using voice-over-IP (VoIP) technology. The program allows worldwide connections to be made between radio stations, between computers and stations, or between computers. According to EchoLink's Web site, as of the first of February, there are more than 55,000 registered users in 120 countries worldwide!

I recently installed the free software from Echolink.org (www.echolink.org) that enables Amateur Radio operators to link to ham repeaters all over the world via their computer Internet connection. You must register the software with your amateur call sign; non-amateurs will not be registered. It takes an hour or longer for confirmation of your call sign the first time, but after that you get connected and download the server list immediately. As I'm typing this message, there are 1,113 stations on the system, with 78 percent of them available to take callers.

The San Antonio Emergency Management Agency is

already planning to use this service during emergency operations by linking stations around south Texas via the Echolink as long as Internet service is not disrupted where the link or repeater is located.

The Texas State REACT Council is planning to use this service to allow council officers to communicate with one another in "conference mode," which means we can all hear the other stations talk. The Texas Council had experimented years ago with using ICQ or MIRC for board conferences, but many felt the typing speeds were too slow, or were uncomfortable in carrying on such a cumbersome conversation. Using Echolink we can simply speak into our

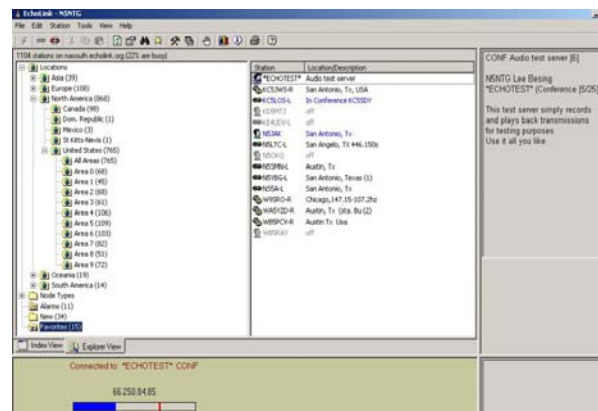
microphones and be heard by all the other stations at the same time. The one drawback is that each operator has to be a licensed ham operator, but all the Texas officers except one are already licensed.

There are four ways Echolink will connect you to other stations. You can connect PC-PC (station to station) over the Internet without any Amateur Radios being involved. You can connect from your PC to any other station listed as either a Link (-L after call sign) or a Repeater (-R after call sign) on the list unless they are marked as "busy" or have a restricted list of users allowed to access that station. If one of the Link or

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The EchoLink screen (shown connected to a test site) lists worldwide locations in the left window;; the middle window lists stations in a given area. The right panel lists participants during "conference mode."

(Photo by Lee Besing)



E-Comm:

REACT's Emergency Communications Training

Course Is Two Years Old!

by Tom Currie, N4AOF

Two years ago *REACT* began offering its EComm training and certification program, but until recently relatively few members had taken the course. Recently there has been a surge of participation, largely sparked by the interest of some Councils .

The *REACT* program covers Amateur Radio, Citizens Band, the General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS), the Family Radio Service (FRS), and the brand new Multi-Use Radio Service (MURS) just created by the FCC as the course was being developed.

This program is intended for all radio operators who are interested in emergency and public service communications. Regardless of whether you are new to radio or an "Old Timer," this course will help sharpen your skills as an emergency radio operator.

The training program itself is free! You can download the training course manual from the *REACT* International web site at no cost. Just send a blank e-mail message to <IwantEComm@reactintl.org> to receive an automatic reply with information about downloading the program. If you do not have access to download the files from the Internet, you may order the manual either on disk or on paper for the cost of materials and mailing.

The *REACT* EComm program offers both training and certification. You can study the course materials to learn more about emergency communications.

Some people like to learn as much as they can, just for their own personal satisfaction. These people may not be interested in tests, grades, certificates, and all the other details of formal training programs. Others want to go a step further to prove their skills. We have tried to accommodate the needs and preferences of all members. If all you want is more knowledge, feel free to take all or

even just part of the training.

Testing for Certification is available to *REACT* members. The reason for this limitation is that we rely on the *REACT* Team and Council structure to provide support for individuals taking the course. The course may be of interest to other emergency communications organizations that use various radio services instead of or in addition to amateur radio; requests for the materials in such situations will be considered on a case by case basis. Individuals who want to take the *REACT* EComm course but who are not already *REACT* members are encouraged to join a local *REACT* Team or to consider the *REACT* Affiliate membership program.

If you want to go that next step to prove your new skills, we offer two options. You can complete an optional written test. The written test for the Certificate of Training consists of thirty multiple-choice questions with a passing score of 90 percent. This test is "open book" with no time limit. This is the testing option that has proven most popular. When you pass the test, we will send you a Certificate of Training showing that you successfully completed the *REACT* EComm Level I training program.

If you are one of the people who always wants to excel at everything you do, we offer a certification option. Certification requires that you complete a written test and provide documentation of actual hands-on experience in emergency communications. If you complete these requirements, you will receive a certificate and a wallet ID card showing you are registered as a Certified Emergency Communicator.

The written test for registration as a Certified Emergency Communicator consists of forty multiple-choice questions with a passing score of

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Convention 2003 Update!

by Lee W. Besing

The January-February *REACTer* contained a little bit about our plans to focus the 2003 *REACT* International Convention program primarily toward disaster response and training issues. Some of the information this month may be a review but most of it is new, including the proposed agenda items.

Please note that the RI Web site will always contain the latest, most up to date version of the proposed agenda, schedule, and other Convention information. Visit <www.reactintl.org> and follow the link on the left side to "conventions." Scroll down on that page to "2003 Convention Info" and you will be able to bookmark that page for direct access later on.

Guest Speakers

We have continued to line up qualified speakers to talk on issues affecting every *REACT* Team, plus some training that you simply won't get by staying at home! Topics to be covered at the convention include...

- Salvation Army SATERN
- American Red Cross
- Medical Helicopter Landing
- Web Site Design Workshop
- Writing Emergency Plans
- Emergency Management Agency
- Membership Development
- Amber Alert Plan
- Public Relations
- EchoLink Communications
- Amateur VE Test Session
- ARRL/ARES - pending
- Civil Air Patrol - pending
- Homeland Security -pending

What you learn at this Convention is limited only by the questions you think to ask. If you don't ask the right question, you may not get the right answer!

Affordable Hotel Rooms

This is a family-oriented event, so bring the entire family, even if they aren't registered *REACT* members. The hotel room costs

the same for one person or four persons (\$72 plus 12 percent tax), so pack them in! Most rooms have either a single king-sized bed or two double beds.

Drawings will be held for three **free room nights** from those who register as "early birds" before June 1, so don't delay! The hotel will keep our block of rooms reserved until June 20; after that you may not get a room at any price. There is another group staying at the hotel and they may fill up all other rooms. If there is any chance that you might come, contact the hotel to make a reservation toll free at (877) 424-0888. You can always cancel if your plans don't work out later.

Junior Reporters

Bring the younger members with you! Junior Members (any registered attendees aged 8-17) can sign up to become an "Official Junior Reporter." Official Junior Reporters will be expected to snoop around during the day's events looking for photo ops and interesting news to put in the nightly "Porthole Newsletter" delivered to your room before morning each day. Applications are now being accepted on a first come, first served basis. Limited Junior Reporter positions will be



available.

We are trying to get a couple of digital cameras donated for use by the Junior Reporters, and we plan to give the cameras away in a drawing among the Junior Reporters. We hope to have a journalism instructor available to brief the prospective reporters on Monday morning and give them some lessons on proper photo taking, how to write a story, etc. Adult supervision will be provided.

Other special activities will be planned for this age group depending upon participation and the Juniors' interest.

Take a Riverboat Dinner Cruise on the Ohio

Plan now to take a leisurely two hour dinner and cruise on the Chattanooga Star Paddlewheel riverboat up the Ohio River. Depending upon participation, cost could be as low as \$15-\$18 per person to cover both the dinner and the cruise! (Cost of cruise not included in basic registration fee.)

The bottom level of the Riverboat is air-conditioned and handicapped accessible. All of the food/beverage service is located on that level, as are accessible restrooms. The upper level is open to the weather, does have a second set of restrooms, but is accessible only by stairs from the first level.

We're still checking on the possible menus for this cruise, but we have confirmed that the ship will be available for our use during the week of our event.

Special Displays and Attractions

Don't forget to check out the Aztar Casino Riverboat docked at the nearby Evansville riverfront March-April, 2003



area. It's something to entertain the adults during your spare time (not that we plan to leave you that much spare time in our schedule).

Emergency Management

The Evansville Vanderburgh County Emergency Management Agency will be displaying its MEOC (Mobile Emergency Operations Center) during the convention. The MEOC is a 53' mobile command and control facility that is owned and operated by this agency. The MEOC can provide communications support for any disaster or emergency.



Do You Know How To Land an Evacuation Chopper?

Do you know how to correctly prepare a landing zone for one of the medical emergency evacuation choppers that respond to the scene of major emergencies or traffic accidents?

We have arranged for a special guest appearance by the St. Mary's Life Flight chopper on Wednesday morning to demonstrate how to prepare a landing zone at the scene of an emergency to evacuate patients. If the chopper isn't available due to being out on an emergency call, we will still have an indoor presentation by one of their representatives.

Do You Know What an LST Is? Visit the LST 325 in Evansville!

The Landing Ship, Tank (LST) was an ocean-going ship with unique design features that allowed it to beach itself, unload cargo, then retract itself. The ship had a flat bottom that helped to facilitate beach landings, but provided a rough ride for her crew and passengers. The ship was also designed with several void spaces on her lowermost deck that could be flooded while at sea to provide extra ballast, then evacuated to allow the ship to ride higher and sail onto the beach.



This ship will be docked at the Evansville river front for a couple of weeks, departing near the end of our convention. We have contacted the local sponsors in hopes to get a guest speaker and/or to arrange a tour. Evansville was the home of a shipyard that constructed these ships during World War II.

Breakfast with the Board

Tired of hearing comments about never seeing your Board of Directors during the Convention because they are up in those "bored meetings" all week? You do remember that all of those meetings are open to members, don't you? But still, it can be hard to choose between an interesting seminar and a board meeting at times. Previous boards were criticized for

Continued on the next page

holding their meetings before the convention, thereby creating the appearance of “avoiding member oversight,” so the current board moved the meetings to be during the Convention and made all meetings open to the members. Now the board gets accused of hiding out in the board room instead of mingling with the Convention attendees.

So this year we are changing the schedule back to putting some board meetings on the weekend before the Convention. This will enable the board members and officers to attend the Convention, for which they paid registration fees out of their own pockets.

We also have scheduled a “Breakfast with the Board” meal on Wednesday morning. This will be a “dutch treat” breakfast buffet at the usual hotel price of \$6.95 plus tax.

Getting There

Evansville is easily reached by air or by car. Centrally located among several major airport hubs, the city is served by most major airlines, including American, American Connection (formerly TWA), Delta, Northwest and US Airways. We have provided links from the *REACT* Convention Web site to help you find out more details about this airport or the servicing airlines.

If traveling in a small commuter prop plan is not your style, plan to fly in via Atlanta, Cincinnati, Chicago, or Detroit, and drive the rest of the way. These routes use the larger jet service.

During a recent trip to Evansville, we spoke in person with the airport officials about their handling of handicapped

passengers. They demonstrated how they get a physically challenged passenger in and out of their aircraft in a safe and comfortable manner.

The hotel offers convenient free transportation to / from the airport, and we plan to have a local *REACT* member greeting each arrival, if we know in advance what your travel plans may be. Rental vehicles are available at the airport from rental agencies such as Avis, Budget, Hertz and National.

If you’re driving, Evansville is at the southern end of Indiana, on IH164, a spur off IH64, which runs from St. Louis to the west or Louisville, Ky., to the east. From Chicago to the north, take US41 (from Gary, Ind.); from Nashville to the south, take IH24 and the Pennyriple Parkway (a toll road) or US41.



Ready to Exercise?

In that same recent trip from San Antonio to Evansville on American Connection (via St. Louis), I observed that you should dress comfortably and probably be prepared to walk a considerable distance from the arriving concourse to the departing one. Some major hubs have powered walkways, others have trams or other shuttle

services within their concourses, but all end up leaving you a few hundred feet or more to walk in a short time span.

For example, all commuter flights from St. Louis to Evansville depart from a different concourse than the larger jets use. While optional wheelchair transportation is available from the local airport to help you get from one point to the other if needed, you need to carefully choose your carry-on luggage for weight and convenience of transport inside the airport. Most of the luggage carts were down at the baggage area, not up on the concourse inside the security zone.

Be sure to make advance arrangements with your airline if you require special help in boarding planes or getting from gate to gate within the airports. Have a couple of bucks available to rent a baggage cart, or better yet, scout around for someone who just unloaded their cart and offer to return it for them, using it yourself before returning and collecting the deposit (only \$0.25 or so).

New Airport Security Measures

Perhaps Director John Knott can provide more insight on this topic than I can, since he always seems to spend more time “making friends” with security than I do (at least on trips to board meetings), but I would still offer some suggestions to make your trip more pleasant. Remember that this topic is subject to change at the whim of the government.

Electronic Tickets

Bring a printout of your electronic ticket with you, plus photo ID to the ticket check-in or curbside

luggage area. They may ask to see the credit card you used to charge the ticket on (last four digits must match the ticket info), but I never have had them ask for it. Some airlines require printouts from their Web site rather than the e-mail confirmation. Check with your airline for details before flying.

If you can check your luggage at the curb when departing, do it. They will issue a boarding pass (which is now needed for passing security). Whether you do check-in at the curbside or at the ticket counter, be prepared to carry your check-in luggage a few more feet to the luggage security checkpoint before walking to the gate's security checkpoint. Stick around while they inspect your luggage because you won't want to lock your check-in luggage until after they have inspected and passed it.

Only those with boarding passes can go through security to the gate area, so say your good-byes at the curb. Don't wear shoes with excessive metal, such as boots with steel toes or shanks, or metal tipped heels. I prefer plain old walking/running shoes for comfort. I highly recommend that men should place all their loose change, keys, and other pocket stuff in a "zip-lock" style clear plastic bag. Don't bring any nail clippers, pocket knives, scissors or other items with sharp points with you through security. Put any of those in your checked luggage, but don't bring it in your pocket or carry-on luggage unless you want to lose it at security.

If you bring a laptop PC, be ready to take it out of the case and place it flat in one of the plastic cartons separately from the

case. They run it through the x-ray machine, but I have never had a problem with my laptop on any trip doing this.

No joking with security.

They are very serious about their job, and the one guy I saw trying to be funny got pulled aside for some serious checking of luggage, etc. Your mobile phone or pager will set off the alarm. It must be passed through with your plastic bag, computer, purse and other items.

I always like to step through the metal-detecting arch at an angle. Arms away from your body, one leg at a time, sort of like taking slow giant steps. This seems to reduce the metal density on your body left over by buckles, watches, jewelry, etc. If you don't beep, you are good to go! If you beep, they will ask you what metal is left on your clothing, and use the hand wand or other method to check further. Remember, "Silence is Golden."



Food Service?

You call that food? If your flight is less than four hours, don't expect to watch a movie or to be fed more than pretzels and drinks (soda, coffee, juice, etc.). Food is available inside all major airport hubs and you are now allowed to take food and drink through security and on board the plane to make your trip more pleasant. The

shorter commuter flights (less than one hour) typically do not serve drinks or snacks. If your connecting flight departs in less than an hour, don't waste much time inside the concourse because they start boarding flights 30-45 minutes before departure in some cases.

Luggage Limits

Check with your airline for current restrictions on check-in and carry-on luggage, especially if traveling from outside the US. Recent changes have dropped weight limits from 70 to 50 pounds for check-in luggage on many airlines, and 30-40 pounds for carry-on (with size limits). Personal computers in a carry-on bag are treated as personal items exempt from the limitation of two carry-on items per passenger.

Big Planes, Not So Big Planes

Most airlines provide great detail on their Web sites about what features each airplane offers, such as location or availability of power/port connections for laptop computers, or in-flight movies on the larger planes. The smaller commuter flights have zero overhead baggage storage areas, so you will have to leave those items at the bottom of the steps to those planes. The crew makes those items available as you deplane upon arrival.

If you are flying on one of the smaller prop commuter planes, or in the back few rows of one of those larger jets that mount their engines at the tail, you might want to consider bringing some protection for your ears. I'm not trying to scare you away, because personally I prefer to sit near the tail of the plane due to

ease of boarding first. You can buy cheap foam protectors, like those used at firing ranges or by hunters, at any sports shop. I've found this precaution also helps me with the altitude changes in air pressure as we go up and down to take off or land. Bringing a pack of chewing gum comes in handy if you are among those few who have a tendency to be bothered by air pressure changes. Simply chew a piece of gum during take-offs or landing to help your ears adjust to the different pressure.

To make flight arrangements, use destination airport code "EVV" for the Evansville Regional Airport. Most flights arrive in Evansville via St. Louis, Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Louisville or Atlanta.

The best airfare rates are usually found sixty to ninety days before your trip. You can sign up

for airfare updates from the various airlines' Web sites or many travel related Web sites, including < www.smarterliving.com > or < www.expedia.com > . I have found < www.orbitz.com > to be a good source of price comparison.

And last, but not least, don't forget to let the Convention staff know what flight you will be

on, so we can have a REACT member meet you at the airport upon arrival and walk you through all the other details.

Complete the form below and send it directly to the hotel, not to the Convention Committee. Complete the form on the next page and send it, with your payment, to the address shown.



HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

Please complete the form and mail or fax it directly to the hotel. Do not send this form to the Convention Committee.

**Executive Inn Evansville
600 Walnut Street
Evansville, IN 47708
812-424-8000 / toll-free 877-424-0888**

**REACT International Convention -- July 21-24, 2003
Registration deadline is June 18, 2003.**

Name _____ Telephone(____) _____

Address _____ Apt _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Postal Code _____ Country _____

Number of Rooms: _____ Prefer Smoking [] Non-smoking [] Need Handicap accessible []

Arrival Date _____ Estimated Arrival Time _____ (Check-in after 3 pm)

Departure Date _____ (Check-out time 12 noon) All rooms \$72, single or double

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ Exp Date _____ Type of Card _____

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE _____

REACT International, Inc.
Convention 2003

July 21-24 -- Evansville, Indiana

Please use this form for your Convention Registration; mail or fax it to the Convention Committee at the address below. "Early Bird" Registration ends June 1 -- don't delay!

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Address _____ Apt _____

City _____ State/Prov _____ Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____ @ _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Emergency Contact Phone No. (_____) _____ Alternate No. (_____) _____

Radio License/Call Sign: GMRS _____ Amateur _____

Other License: Type _____ Call Sign _____

Team Name _____ Team No. _____

Council Name _____

Check if you are Team Delegate [] Alternate [] Council Delegate [] Alternate []

Fees

Registration Fee (*before* June 1, '03) On-site \$70 Off-site \$80* _____

* "On-site" means that you are staying at the Convention hotel; "off-site" means you are staying elsewhere.

Registration Fee (*after* June 1) On-site \$95 Off-site \$105 _____

Junior REACT Registration Fee (no discounts) \$55 _____

Optional items:

Convention Shirt (circle size needed) S M L XL XXL XXXL \$20 _____

Extra Convention photo \$10 _____

Extra Banquet Ticket (for guests not registered for the Convention) \$25 _____

Life Member Luncheon \$6.95 _____

Amateur Radio Breakfast \$6.95 _____

Total Due (Please pay with your registration, US\$ only) _____

**Make checks payable to: Convention 2003
PO Box 3226, Evansville, IN 47731**

Picking Up the Pieces:

The Aftermath of Tragedy

by Charles D. Land, KCSNKK

Editor's Note: Charles Land lives in San Antonio and works in Austin; he is a member of three REACT Teams, and he is an active ham radio operator. Although none of the REACT Teams in Texas were officially involved in the recovery of debris from the shuttle Columbia disaster, ARES members in Texas were called out, and Charlie was one of the volunteers. This is his account.

I spent the weekend of February 8 assisting with Columbia debris recovery. Friday evening I drove to San Augustine, Tex., about three hundred miles northeast of San Antonio, arriving there about 11:00 pm. Saturday I and several other volunteers gathered at 6:30 am at the

command center in San Augustine. Teams of about eight searchers were assembled, with one person trained on the GPS, and a communications person. Each team is assigned a piece of real estate to cover and goes out for the day.

The piney woods of East Texas vary from relatively open pine forest to dense brush and briars. We were lucky in being assigned to an area with only moderate underbrush. We left for the field about 9:00 am and returned about 4:00 pm.

The GPS devices used are Trimbles - a brand specifically designed for this kind of use. They allow the user to log the GPS coordinates and to record the type of debris found into one

of a number of pre-programmed categories. They are then downloaded directly into computers for compilation. Some of them have backpacks with the antenna that looks like a bathroom plunger.

Each time a piece of debris is found, it must be entered into the GPS data base, it must be assigned a number and photographed in place before it is bagged and removed. The teams are trained to avoid the exploding bolts and hazardous substances (which are rare).

Most of the big pieces have already been found, so most teams now are just bringing in small stuff, but all teams are finding debris. Our team turned in fifteen pieces. The largest was a piece of structural steel about two feet long and weighing a few pounds. One end had holes where bolts had been ripped out. The other end was just a burnt end. We also found a couple pieces of upholstery type material, a drawstring and canvas top to a storage bag, a computer processor chip, and a cable and connector assembly that looked like it had been wadded up and thrown in a fire.

Another team found a ladies watch that had stopped at 9:06.

We turned in our finds at a fire station that was the





processing center. Our pieces were inspected outside for hazardous risks before they were taken inside. Once inside, NASA people looked over the parts and tried to improve on our descriptions where they could. We met one of the astronauts who was helping to identify the pieces.

We were given special instructions regarding handling of any human remains. Luckily, I guess, we didn't find any. The officer with us has been on teams that found some. I was told that a lot of effort had been made earlier in the week with search dogs, because this was a time-sensitive priority. Coyotes are plentiful in this area, and the locals suspect that no more human remains are likely to be found.

The search activity level in San Augustine was significantly lower this weekend than was originally expected. The hundred or so National Guard toops that had been assigned to this area were redeployed to another area.

Finding as much of the debris as possible is necessary for two reasons. In addition to reconstructing the cause of the

failure, there are some parts that are highly classified; NASA is especially concerned to find them. We still had around hundred searchers in this area. The hams had a repeater in the area that had excellent coverage, and we could use handheld radios from most search areas. We had about fifteen hams assigned on Saturday; on Sunday, there were fewer searchers.

The Salvation Army provided breakfast tacos and coffee each day. Food appeared from everywhere, some of it home cooked. We were provided bag lunches to take to the woods. After a few hours of dragging through the brush, it is amazing how good a ham and cheese sandwich can taste. My lunch included some homemade brownies. We heard that the Red Cross was in Hemphill, but saw no sign of them in San Augustine.

Bob, W5ZX, is the ARES co-ordinator for this operation. He is assisted by Alan, (whose call sign I've lost). Both were pleasant and professional, and constantly expressed gratitude

for our help. The ham net was used to track and monitor status of the search groups on Saturday. Cell phones were used a lot, but it took several attempts to get calls through. Digital cell phones don't work in this area, but analog phones work when the overload clears. On Sunday, the ham net was used more extensively to get messages to people in the field. Many search teams had local police, fire or EMS people with them with local radios.

Efforts were made to find a place for volunteers to sleep. We were taken to a vacant house Saturday night - heat, a hot bath, and carpeted floor were our comforts. Friday night I shared a hotel room with Nick, W5ETS, another ham from San Antonio, as no one knew where we were to go for lodging. Early e-mails had said that hams should turn in their mileage to the net control. However, Bob and folks at Net control in San Augustine knew nothing about this.

Other conclusions - this is a huge operation. We saw several hundred in San Augustine, and this was only one of several search centers. We saw people from at least a dozen government agencies, lots of Dept. of Public Safety officers, and fire, police and EMS people from many communities. Nacogdoches has cancelled a festival that was scheduled for February so that they can continue to accommodate the thousands of out-of-town volunteers. The search team that I escorted was from Deer Park. We were fascinated at all of the special vehicles, trailers and equipment that were on site.

Continued on page 14

Illinois Council Returns to Wheaton Ham Fest

by Archie L. Hawley,
President, Illinois REACT Council

For the second year in a row, Illinois REACT members worked the Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs (WCRA) Ham Fest. WCRA Ham Fest is known as the "Super Bowl Ham Fest," not just because it's held on Super Bowl Sunday, but because it always draws a crowd.

Our location could not have been better. We were in the middle of all the madness and



Bonnie Cramer and Bobbie Cox of Whiteside Co. (Ill.) REACT are ready to answer questions. (Photo by Archie Hawley)

people couldn't help running into our table.

Our main focus was building awareness of REACT, but of course we also hoped to bring in new members as well. We also set up our first fundraiser, selling calendars. Bobbie Cox, Vice President-North, says we "had a few bites."

All in all, a successful day!

Picking Up the Pieces

Continued from page 13

There is a lot of "hurry up and wait." Amateur operations are a support operation, and thus must adapt to the needs and procedures of the FEMA and law enforcement leadership. The number of amateurs needed was hard to predict, and the number who showed up was equally hard to predict. There were times when there was not enough for them to do. Everyone I saw was completely understanding of this and had extraordinarily good attitudes.

A huge number of the amateurs had KD5 calls. The need was for folks in good physical shape, and much of the effort would not have happened of it weren't for the younger, newer hams.

We had originally been told to bring digital cameras, GPSs, and dual-band radios. By

the time I arrived, cameras were banned, only the Trimble GPSs were being used, and all radio usage was VHF (although it was helpful to have a second VHF channel capability at times). The paranoia over cameras appeared to be overblown. NASA and FEMA absolutely don't want pictures of debris in civilian hands, but I did see some group pictures being taken.

It would have been a huge help to have e-mail at the command post and a more formalized broadcast network to get information out to potential volunteers on a more timely basis. Putting things in perspective, the job of getting information out was above average for an event of this size. As always, it is possible to see opportunities for improvements.

We heard rumors that operations should wrap up in a few days. If we find ten percent of the smaller pieces, it will be a miracle. Beer cans and Styrofoam are easy to find. Shuttle parts,

most of which were dark to start with or were darkened by re-entry, blend in. The big pieces were easy, but I was amazed that folks found some of the little bits that they did.

It was an honor to be a part of this effort. Many years of training and preparation paid off. Amateurs arrived with all manner of equipment, from spare repeaters, base stations, power supplies, etc. Like myself, we didn't now precisely what to be prepared for and came somewhat overprepared.

There was a lot of talk about the concept of "ready kits" and that there was no way to have a single kit that was properly equipped for this operation, and that a couple hours of thought and packing were required. This is so typical of amateurs - to be prepared for the unexpected.

It was even more of an honor to be a part of such a professional and civic minded amateur radio community.

**Summary of the Minutes of
The Annual Meeting
of the Board of Directors of
REACT International, Inc.,
Held at Suitland, Maryland, February 7-9, 2003**

Directors Present:

Dick Cooper (N.J.), Vice Chairman & Region 2
Larry Fry (Wisc.), Region 5
Bob Kaster (Okla.), Region 7
Robert Leef (Calif.), Region 8 (arrived 10:52 a.m.)
Charles A. "Chuck" Thompson (Tex.), President,
ex officio

Directors Absent:

Vacant, Region 1
John Knott (Fla.), Region 3
Jack Murrell (Ind.), Region 4
Frank Jennings (Wash.), Chairman & Region 6
D. Kenny Jagdeosingh (Trinidad & Tobago), Region 9

Officers Present:

Charles A. "Chuck" Thompson,
President
Dick Cooper, Executive Vice President
Lee Besing (Tex.), Secretary/Treasurer
Norman Kaplan (Md.), Assistant
Treasurer (Saturday only)

Officers Absent:

None

Others Present:

Dora Wilbanks, Office Manager
Fred Lanshe (Penn.)

Meeting called to order by Vice-Chairman Cooper at 9:15 a.m., Friday, February 7, 2003, Chairman Jennings having been called away by a family emergency. The Chair expressed appreciation to those in attendance.

1. Establishment of Quorum; Agenda. The Secretary announced there were four of nine Directors present, and there was not a quorum. The Chair recessed the meeting until Director Leef arrived (delayed by the snow storm). The President distributed copies of the agenda. Mr. Leef arrived at 10:52 a.m., and the Secretary advised that there was a quorum, five Directors now being present.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting. There being no corrections to minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board held at Des Moines in July, the minutes were approved as distributed.

3. Officer Reports.a. *Secretary.* No report.b. *Executive Vice President.* Some committee chairs are still vacant. Written reports

from committees distributed. c. *Treasurer.* The books reflect that the corporation is in the black by approximately \$7,000. The accountants' audit report will be reviewed later.

d. *President.* Will be made on each agenda item, as appropriate.

4. Reports of Board Committees. None

5. Corporate Committee Reports.

a. *William Riley (Md.), Communications.* WPRT970 license status. Recommends that use of license be limited to REACT International, Inc., use and that Teams and councils obtain their own licenses if desired. Extensive discussion held on potential need, use or abuse of license by Teams, and RI ability to monitor use and ability to maintain management, control, and accountability to prevent license violations. Discussion held on need to coordinate licensed repeaters, availability of clear frequencies in different areas.

Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Kaster, that WPRT970 license be limited to authorized use by REACT International, Inc., and that teams and councils be encouraged to apply for their own commercial licenses including the same frequencies (464.500/469.500MHz, 464.550/469.550MHz, 151.625MHz). Notices will be made in REACTer and on Website. Matt Anderson (Louisiana) has offered to provide guidance in obtaining licenses. Unanimous. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Leef, to approve the Communications Committee report. Unanimous.

b. *Christopher Myers (Fla.), Emergency Response Committee.* Written report read. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Fry, to accept report and request that the committee expand its activities to plan for REACT participation in areas where emergencies are infrequent. Unanimous.

c. *Ed Greany (Calif.), Membership Development & Retention Committee.* Written report read. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Kaster, to accept report. Unanimous. Life member statistics report was reviewed. There are 225 Life Members in Teams, 169 members detached (not in Teams), 101 deceased, 62 dropped (resigned or lost), and 6 removed for cause (none recently).

d. *Tom Currie (Ky.), Training & Development Committee.* Written report read. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Fry, to accept report. Unanimous. Mr. Thompson asked the Board to support increased publicity to promote the REACT Emergency Communications Course. Consensus to support.

e. *Paul Oby (Minn.), Convention Committee.* Written report read. Discussion on potential bidders for future conventions and on holding conventions on bi-annual basis. Mr. Fry asked if

the Board would still have a summer meeting if there were no convention (not required). Discussion about need to publicize the conventions and increase attendance. Subject tabled. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Fry, to accept report. Unanimous.

f. *Linda Faulkner (Ont.), Junior REACT*. Written report read. Committee asked about obtaining a patch flash to go under the standard *REACT* patch, and asked for a report detailing number of Junior *REACT* members registered, identity of Teams with one or more Junior members. Office will provide. Motion Mr. Fry, second Mr. Thompson, to accept the report. Unanimous.

g. *Johnny Stowers (Calif.), Computer Services*. Written report read. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Fry, to accept report. Unanimous.

h. *Awards & Recognition*. No report.

i. *Johnny Stowers, Bylaws & Policies*. Written report read. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Fry, to accept report. Unanimous.

j. *Stuart DeLuca, Publications Review*. Written report read. Mr. Leef noted that the new bumper stickers would not fit in a standard envelope and had not been promoted in *the REACTer*. Board asked that an advertising rate schedule be published. *The REACTer* came in under budget for 2002 primarily because of reduced copies being printed and mailed. Motion Mr. Leef, second Mr. Thompson, to accept report. Unanimous.

6. Review of Committee Structure and Operation.

The current mission statements of each committee, written by Executive Vice President, were reviewed and approved.

7. Consideration of Current

Committee Chairmen and Performance.

(Personnel matters, discussed in closed session.)

8. Proposed Bylaws Changes. Mr. Thompson asked the Board to approve several changes to the Bylaws, subject to final approval of exact wording prior to publication in *the REACTer*.

a. *To change term of office for President to two years (Section 6.2)*. Board discussed learning curve, etc. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Kaster, to amend Bylaws to establish a two-year term of office for the President. Unanimous.

b. *Change title of "Vice President" to "Executive Vice President" (Sections 6.1, 6.6)*. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Fry, to amend Bylaws to change the title of "Vice President" to "Executive Vice President." Unanimous.

c. *Establish the authority of Board to create additional vice president positions for specified purposes (to rank by date of appointment for authority purposes) (Section 6.3)*. Minor wording change needed to clarify existing intent of Bylaws. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Leef, to amend Bylaws to permit Board to create additional vice president positions as recommended. Unanimous.

d. *Clarify establishment of committees, and who appoints committee chairs*. The President proposed to divide Article VII into two articles, one for committees of the Board and one for corporate committees. Details will include provision that President appoints chairs of corporate committees. Currently, the Executive Vice President is responsible for supervising corporate committees, as a duty assigned by the Board, and this will not be included

as a Bylaws change. Corporate committee chairs will appoint committee members, subject to review and approval by the President. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Leef, to amend the Bylaws to take these actions. Motion passed.

9. Awards. Discussion on awards to be presented during the 2003 Convention.

Mr. Thompson asked that the Board make recommendations before the convention, and especially to consider leaders during the September 11, 2001, aftermath.

10. Financial Review. Mr. Thompson presented the accountants' report on their annual audit, completed as of December 31, 2002. Report showed about \$7500 net gain in assets compared with 2002 starting balances. There were no significant discrepancies reported. Several recommendations will be reviewed.

11. Insurance. CIMA's Commercial Liability Insurance quote is around \$22,000, up 14% over last year's premium. Coverage and Exclusion summary letter is the same as used in previous years. There have been no claims against this policy for at least four years. Mr. Leef mentioned a potential claim by Las Vegas *REACT* for a stolen repeater. The President noted that the policy covers only liability to third parties, not insurance for team property. It is a standing office policy that the President is to be informed of insurance claims filed. Motion Mr. Fry, second Mr. Thompson, to accept the proposed 2003 liability policy. Mr. Thompson reported that he still had serious problems with the coverage afforded with the fidelity bond coverage offered by CIMA, because of its wording. The Board asked for clarification from the insurer before approving this insurance.

12. Consideration of Web Site. The Board discussed the offer of a member to take over a portion of the RI Web site, but with conditions. Matter referred to Computer Services Committee.

Meeting recessed at 6:20 p.m., reconvened at 9:20 a.m., on Saturday, February 8. Quorum present. No changes in directors present. Norman Kaplan and Dora Wilbanks now in the office.

13. Office Procedures Manual. Ms. Wilbanks has continued to update contents as she develops new procedures.

14. Five-year planning committee. Committee was established in 2001. Mr. Cooper was original chairperson. Mr. Fry pointed out that two years have passed. Mr. Thompson reported that overall membership has stabilized and *REACT* International is solvent. Teams are on the average larger, as smaller Teams drop out. He stated that this committee has not been active but should be activated.

15. Proposed Public Service Announcement. No progress has been accomplished since the initial presentation at the 2002 Convention. Mr. Kaster is following up, but original volunteer may be unable to continue and it may be necessary to look elsewhere to complete the project. Project was to produce a several short 29-second audio-video commercials.

16. Purchase of "Volunteer Communications" flash (patch). Mr. Thompson presented quotes from RI's current patch provider on a two-line flash. Mr. Leef presented a design proposal based on the oval 40th anniversary logo without inclusive dates, simply saying "Since 1962," suggesting would make a good back patch but did not request

action. Discussion held on colors for the volunteer flash. Mr. Leef had asked for a lime green background instead of white. Mr. Besing and Mr. Thompson supported the traditional colors, but Mr. Cooper said the visibility factor and attraction to the younger crowd of the lime background. Motion Mr. Kaster, second Mr. Fry, to order 200 flashes with black letters, black border, and lime green background and 500 with black letters, orange border, and white background. Unanimous.

Discussion held on obtaining a "Junior" flash. There are currently about 100 Junior members. Motion Mr. Thompson, second, Mr. Fry to order 200 "Junior" flash patches with traditional background and colors. Unanimous.

17. Price of new standard REACT Cap. Motion Mr. Fry, second Mr. Kaster, to sell both solid and mesh styles of cap for \$7.00 each, plus shipping. Unanimous.

18. Civil Air Patrol MOU status. Mr. Leef reported a lack of progress in contacting anyone responsive at the national level. Mr. Kaplan offered to look into DC area "Pentagon level" command contacts for the Civil Air Patrol. Mr. Cooper stated he might have a list of contacts at USAF. Mr. Lanshe said he would pass along his list of contacts. Mr. Leef will continue to pursue this .

19. Report of President's Ad Hoc Committee on Disaster Response Procedures. Mr. Kaster submitted the current draft of proposed procedures. During discussion, Mr. Kaplan reported on his attendance at related meetings in DC area dealing with federal officials and his understanding of how they perceived RI's role in emergency communications in coordinating REACT volun-

teers. He discussed RI support and agreements with Red Cross, Salvation Army, and ARRL, and said RI will be expected to be involved with these agencies plus perceived communications abilities with CB, GMRS, FRS, etc., and that RI should be ready to respond to any large call for help similar to the World Trade Center disaster. Mr. Kaster acknowledged that Tom Currie (Ky.) had provided much input to the current version.

20. 2003 International Convention. Mr. Besing presented the proposed convention agenda. It was the consensus that the proposed length of the convention was one day too long. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Kaster, to hold a full day of Board meetings on Monday, July 21, start the convention with opening session on Tuesday at 1 p.m., and end the convention with the banquet Thursday night. Unanimous. Mr. Besing presented a list of current ribbons on hand. Discussion held on stocking ribbons at RI for reimbursable use by convention hosts (and also by Councils). Motion Mr. Leef, second Mr. Fry to purchase and stock a reasonable amount (1000 ribbons) at an estimated cost of \$160 plus freight. Unanimous.

21. Election of Directors in Regions 1, 4, and 7. Deadline for submission was published in *the REACTer* was February 15, for Regions 2 (error), 4, and 7. Ballots must be mailed to Teams and returned by a deadline in July. Because of the erroneous region listing and lack of publicity, Mr. Thompson had directed the office staff to send a clarifying letter to Teams in Regions 1, 4, and 7 with a copy of the nomination form. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr.

Kaster, to change the nomination deadline date to March 15, 2003. Unanimous. Policy 5.2 specifies publication of notice of upcoming election in January, deadline of March 15 for nominations, ballots to be mailed to Teams by April 15, and voting to be completed prior to the convention. For the past several years, ballots have been counted by RI's accountants and reported at the convention, and this was approved for 2003.

22. Consideration of "Midland 1" proposal. Midland's marketing department sent e-mail to Board and office about new program. After much discussion, motion Mr. Leef, second Mr. Fry, to send a response letter to Midland thanking the two Midland executives for having become REACT Affiliates and for sharing the details of their program, and advising them of RI's opinion about the viability of monitoring channel 1 on CB, GMRS, and FRS, and our wish to work together in the future. The letter should encourage Midland to advertise in *the REACTer* and to become a corporate supporter as suggested in their initial contact. Unanimous. Mr. Leef will draft the response and send to the President for approval and sending.

23. Miscellaneous Items. a. Mr. Leef passed out copy of new PopComm advertisement focusing on Homeland Security issues.

b. Discussion held about a group in Mexico using REACT name and logo. Lengthy e-mail contact has been made between Mr. Leef and this group, but with the language barrier being a slight issue. So far, they have not registered and paid RI dues. Mr. Leef asked that the Membership Development and Retention Committee

ask the Puerto Rico Council to help convert the group in Mexico to a registered Team. {Secretary's note. Two days later, e-mail was received by Mr. Leef which could result in resolving this issue in a satisfactory manner – LWB}

c. Mr. Leef asked about the status of "Monitoring Report Form." Mr. Kaplan has been entering returned forms into a database in the RI office. Mr. Leef said that Teams returned only 4% of those sent out. The form is included when the member cards are mailed back to the Teams.

d. Mr. Besing asked about the REACT display at the Natural History Museum of the Smithsonian. Mr. Leef will visit there on Monday. Mr. Besing asked for photos of the display if possible.

24. Review of MOU's with American Red Cross and Salvation Army. Mr. Thompson stated that we had waited for ARRL to finish their MOU rewrite with the Red Cross. He said a major topic of discussion would be the use of uniforms and related issues by REACT Teams. Mr. Besing has been in contact with Major Pat McPherson of Salvation Army' SATERN Program, who stated that he would not have a problem with REACT members wearing their uniforms while helping SATERN, providing acceptable Salvation Army ID was worn. Mr. Thompson will pursue MOU reviews.

25. Election of officers of the Board. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Fry, to re-elect Mr. Jennings as Chairman of the Board for a one-year term. Unanimous. Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Kaster, to re-elect Mr. Cooper as Vice-Chairman for a one-year term. Unanimous.

26. Election of President. Motion Mr. Fry, second Mr. Kaster, to re-elect Mr.

Thompson as President for a one-year term. Discussion of Bylaws amendment extending term to two years. It was Mr. Thompson's opinion that

this did not take effect until the next election. Unanimous.

27. Election of officers. Mr. Thompson recommended Mr. Leef to be Executive Vice President, Mr. Besing to be Secretary, and Mr. Kaplan to be Treasurer. Motion Mr. Kaster, second Mr. Fry, to accept the President's recommendations. Unanimous. Mr. Cooper stated that he had resigned as Executive Vice President effective with the end of this meeting, but would stay on as Director for the remainder of his term.

28. Consideration of Director Vacancy. Mr. Lanshe announced that he would run for Region 1 in the upcoming election. He asked that he be reappointed to this position for the remainder of the term (through July convention). Motion Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Kaster, to appoint Mr. Lanshe to the remaining term for the position of Director of Region 1. Discussion held about Mr. Lanshe's health problems which contributed to his previous absences and removal. Mr. Lanshe said that, while he is still recovering, he has recovered enough to resume the duties of Director. It was noted that despite a search, a replacement Director for Region 1 had not been identified. Unanimous. (Mr. Lanshe was included in all votes from this point on.)

29. Dues. Mr. Besing asked that the Board consider restructuring the membership dues for 2004. He noted that ARRL charges \$39 for the first member and \$5 per family member. Mr. Thompson asked that this be

placed on the agenda for the summer meeting.

30. Review of Policies. Mr. Thompson distributed the final version of reworked policies for confirmation and approval. Mr. Kaster asked about a policy covering the current policy of allowing charter members of newly chartered teams to receive both the remainder of the current year and the following year for the cost of one year's membership dues. Mr. Thompson stated that this had been a temporary policy, but that it should be incorporated into a permanent policy statement. Mr. Cooper distributed several proposed policies dealing with subject of official spokesperson, duties of committee chairpersons and liaisons, and duties of Executive Vice President. Discussion held about Directors or officers attending REACT functions outside their normal region or duties, and the need to advise the President before taking such actions. Final policies will be printed for distribution and included on the website. Moved and seconded that the policies presented be approved. Unanimous.

31. Credit Card Machine Lease. Mr. Thompson advised that the credit card machine lease was expiring in a few days and asked Mr. Besing to forward to Mr. Kaplan a merchant account plan that involves virtual terminals rather than hardware.

32. Office/Director Expenses. Mr. Thompson requested that, for the first time in five years, each Director and officer be allocated a sum actually available for reimbursing authorized expenses, and suggested \$400. Funds are already covered in the proposed 2003 budget. Previous budgets have included up to \$1000 per

director (nothing for officers), but an identical amount was budgeted for "donations" back to REACT International, as it was expected that Directors would cover their own expenses. Mr. Besing asked Mr. Kaplan to create subaccounts in the accounting program to track expenditures and donations by individual directors or officers under this item.

33. Announcement. Mr. Leef announced that he planned to resign as Region 8 Director as soon as a replacement Director can be located.

34 Goals. Mr. Leef asked what goals or issues the Board wanted the RI officers to focus on. Mr. Kaplan stated that the disaster response plan was a key issue. Growth of REACT, especially in states without a current presence, should be a major goal for Directors as well. Mr. Kaster suggested filling all vacant committee chairs. Mr. Fry suggested finding a more affordable insurance policy. Mr. Besing suggested increasing registration of Junior members and restructuring dues to attract more family members as registered members.

35. 2003 Budget. The 2003 budget was distributed and discussed. It was noted that the REACTer budget was lower than requested. Mr. Kaplan stated that this amount was actually higher than actual 2002 expenses. It was pointed out that any advertising income would be applied to the REACTer's budget. Discussion held about how some items were categorized in the budget. Motion Mr. Fry, second Mr. Kaster, to approve the budget as presented. Unanimous.

36. Advertising Rates. Mr. Leef said that he resumed advertising with the July/August 2002 REACTer but has not received a bill for his

advertising. He had planned to submit the ad for six issues, but his size ad is not among the standard sizes on the rate card. He asked the President to resolve this issue so that he could pay his bill for advertising in the REACTer.

37. Signature Cards. Mr. Besing reminded that signature cards would need to be updated for the new officer structure. On motion by Mr. Thompson, second Mr. Kaster, and unanimous approval, the meeting was recessed as of 6:30 p.m., February 9, 2003, and unless further business arises, adjourned *sine die* as of 12 noon, Sunday, February 9, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee W. Besing, Secretary

(President Charles A. Thompson prepared this summary from the full minutes submitted by the Secretary. The complete minutes are available electronically by sending e-mail to <secretary@REACTintl.org> or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope with \$0.83 U.S. postage (for U.S. delivery) to REACT International, Inc., 5210 Auth Road, Suite 403, Suitland, MD 20746-4330.)

***In the next
REACTer...***

****Last-minute
Convention
news!***

****Profiles of
Regional Director
Candidates in
Regions 1, 4,
& 7!***

****New Awards &
Recognition Rules!***

The REACTer

REACTivities Team, Council & Region News

REACT International Board of Directors

Frank Jennings, Region 6 Director and Chairman of the Board, had to leave the night before the Annual Board Meeting began, due to a family medical emergency in another state, leaving his hotel room unoccupied but already paid for, since the hotel required guaranteed reservations. All of the other arriving directors and officers had made other arrangements and we could not get a refund for the room.

Several other directors and I were standing in the hotel lobby discussing the situation when a family from New Jersey came in. They had not planned to stop overnight and had no reservations, but the weather was rapidly deteriorating and they were anxious about continuing to drive. We were expecting, and did receive, six to eight inches of snow overnight and travel was already becoming hazardous on the highways.

After learning of their situation, we offered the empty room to the family for their use overnight. We told them about REACT and suggested this was simply an extension of our road side Safety Break program normally held on holiday weekends in some states.

The next morning we watched TV news reports show March-April, 2003



RI President Chuck Thompson's car, parked outside his hotel room, the morning after arriving in Suitland for the Annual Board of Directors meeting. (Photo by Lee W. Besing)

ing numerous accidents with vehicles that had slid off the highway between the hotel's location and the direction of travel the family would have taken if they had not stopped for the night. By late morning, roads were opened and safe for travel and the family resumed their trip after all five family members thanked the directors numerous times.

-Lee W. Besing

Mountain REACT Crestline, Calif.

The newly-formed Mountain REACT Team 6060 decided to show their appreciation to the Crest Forest Fire District's Station 25, where the Team meets monthly. After passing the hat among members, the Team bought more than a dozen teddy bears to be carried on each of the Station's ambulances. In times of distress, a cuddly teddy bear is the best "medicine" to bring a smile to the face of a frightened child!

-Harold Cole

Region 8 (Ariz., Calif., Nev., Utah)

It's been a year of changes in Region 8 – some for the better, some not. The good news is the formation of six new Teams: one each in Central California and Nevada, and four in Southern California. The bad news is that four Teams in our region ceased to exist. Those Teams accounted for 24 members, but the loss was more than offset by twice as many members in the six new Teams.

-Bob Leef

Minnesota REACT

On Saturday, January 11, Tom Lehto, Gerald Merrill and Norman Johnson of Southern Minnesota Albert Lea REACT, Dan McNulty of Dakota County REACT, Paul Munns and Paul Oby of Ramsey Co REACT, and many ARES members attended a program at the St. Paul Red Cross headquarters. The subject of the meeting was the 800MHz trunked radio system that all public safety and public works departments in Minnesota will be changing over to within the next two years at a cost well into the millions of dollars. The goal is to provide en-

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REACTivities Team, Council & Region News

Continued from page 19

hanced communications for each user as well as between the agencies when needed. For example, a State Trooper in the southern part of the state will be able to talk to another officer, EMS unit, or firefighter in the northern part of the state with very little interference. One interesting feature of the new system is that a Dispatcher can turn a radio on or off by remote control; if one is missing, the finder won't be able to even listen to it.

Roger Lawrence, chairman of the Metropolitan Radio Board's Technical Operations Committee and Radio Communications Manager for Hennepin County, was the main speaker.

Following this program, several Hams spoke about a state-wide Packet radio system they are developing for Amateurs to use in case of an emergency. This will take the place of one that was almost abandoned for lack of use a few years ago.

-Paul Oby

New Teams

REACT Civilian Patrol, No. 6066
NorthShore REACT, No. 6067
Great Lakes REACT, No. 6068
San Gabriel Valley Area REACT, No. 6069
Yuma Co. REACT, No. 6071
REACT NWSC, No. 6075
Manatee REACT, No. 6076
Saddleback REACT, No. 6077

Comal Co. (Tex.) REACT

At Comal County REACT's December meeting it was announced with great sorrow that the older of the Team's two search dogs, Sassy, had succumbed to cancer in November after serving south central Texas for seven years of searching for missing children, lost Alzheimer's patients, fleeing felons, jail escapees, and cadavers. Comal County REACT is well-known for providing a trained search dog team whenever called by law enforcement or the Heidi Search Center of San Antonio.

The Team began a search for a qualified new puppy to be trained as a bloodhound to help the remaining dog, Katie, with the mission of finding missing children or other persons. Before long, Mandy, the newest member of the Comal County REACT bloodhound team was donated by a concerned couple who wanted to help.

Mandy looks innocent enough, as if she has nothing in her head but play, but she will undergo a year of intensive training before she is ready to join Katie on the trail. Katie has been searching for six years, both live and cadaver, and will do all of the Team's searches until Mandy is ready for action.

-Lee W. Besing



Mandy, the newest member of Comal Co. (Tex.) REACT. (Photo by Lee Besing.)

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Silent Mics

(Please note: We depend on the Teams to provide information about their members. Too often, we learn only that a person has died – sometimes when the Team marks their renewal registrations with “Deceased.” Please let us know when one of your members has become a Silent Mic.)

Gerald Jarvis, Coshocton Co. (Ohio) *REACT*, former president of Ohio State *REACT* Council, in May, 2002.

Randy Daniels, Champaign Co. (Ohio), former state coordinator of Ohio State *REACT* Council, in June, 2002.

Michael E. Payne, Sr., St. Thomas (Ont.) *REACT*, Sept. 26, 2002. Members of St. Thomas and Don Valley *REACT* Teams served as honour guard for the Mass of Resurrection, and a leaf was to be placed in Pinafore Park in Michael’s honour.

Mervin C. Lee, Bay Area (Calif.) *REACT*, Dec. 20, 2002, former Team President for twelve years.

Roy Allen, Oklahoma Co. (Okla.) Emergency *REACT*, January, 2003, former Team President and first President of Oklahoma State *REACT* Council.

Herbert Joslyn, LM 405, Lakewood (Wash.) *REACT*, January, 2003. Team founder and Council co-founder.

Members may be honored with a contribution to the Memorial Fund, REACT International, or to your Team’s or Council’s memorial fund.

E-Comm

Continued from page 5

95 percent. This is a “closed book” test with a two hour time limit, monitored by a Team or Council officer. It’s a tough standard - meant to recognize those members who are genuine experts in the field of Emergency Communications. Certification also requires a statement signed by a Team or Council officer and an experience statement signed by a responsible official of a state or local emergency management agency or an emergency response organization attesting that the applicant has successfully performed communications for the agency or organization in an actual emergency or comparable simulated emergency conditions.

For information about the REACT EComm program, write to: Tom Currie Attention: REACT EComm Training 7001 Ethan Allen Way Valley Station KY 40272-1305 or e-mail: <Training@reactintl.org>

On the Web

Have you visited RI’s Web site lately? Here’s some of what you’ll find:

***New Publications!** *REACT Radio Systems* is a booklet-sized publication describing all of the varied radio systems used by *REACT* Teams for public safety, community events, and disaster relief operations.

Planning Safe Community Events is a handbook that covers everything from setting up parking areas for smooth traffic flow, to scheduling volunteers.

**Check them out at
www.reactintl.org**

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EchoLink

Continued from page 4

Repeater stations is nearby, you can turn on your base, mobile or handheld 2 meter or 440mhz Amateur Radio and simply talk to whoever is on that station.

Some stations allow their mobile operators to enter special access codes and node numbers in the same fashion as a phone patch to select a connection to a specific other station/node, but I would bet that unless you are personal friends of the station operator or member of that sponsoring club, you will probably have to wait for an Echolink connection to be made before you talk with someone from around the world.

In San Antonio, I know of two stations connecting to repeaters, one of which is run by a *REACT* member. NS5A-L is linked to the 147.34 repeater operated by the Radio Operators of South Texas (W5ROS) using

Dieter Belletz's (NS5A) home computer and station. KC5JWS-L is linked to the San Antonio EOC Repeater on 147.18 .

One drawback I have found with the EchoLink program, is that the station call signs are listed by their number in an "area" rather than by where they are physically located. We have some "2" call signs located physically here in San Antonio, but they show up on the list as still being in "Area 2." So you almost have to know the station's call sign before trying them.

If you connect to a individual station, you aren't actually broadcasting on the air and don't need to use call signs. But if you are on a "-L" Link or "-R" Repeater station, you need to use call signs for identification. When you connect, the software uses voice recognition to broadcast the node's identity on the air, followed by your call sign, so even if you don't say anything, they will still know you are there and who you are.

On page 4 is a screen snapshot that shows a list of zones or areas on the left side and a list of stations in the middle, with comments about the station you are connected with on the far right. For this test shot, I was connected to the test node, which you are supposed to use to test your microphone and speakers before going live. When connected, you see at the bottom in red letters the ID of the station you are connected to, and when transmitting or receiving you see a bar showing modulation. Also on the far right, when in "conference" mode, you will see a list of call signs and names when they log in, and the computer indicates who is speaking by placing a ">" in front of their call sign.

Echolink can be the great equalizer, allowing Technician class operators to talk around the world to other hams. It's one more good reason to get a Technician (no-code) license - - and the test for that license will be given at the 2003 *REACT* Convention in Evansville!

Calendar

- April 7** Deadline for submissions for May-June *REACTer*
- May 22** Victoria Day (Canada)
- May 31** Memorial Day (U.S.)
- June 2** Deadline for submissions for July-August *REACTer*
- July 1** Canada Day (Canada)
- July 21-24** *REACT* International Convention, Evansville, Indiana
- August 11** Deadline for submissions for September-October *REACTer*
- September 1** Labor Day (U.S.)
- October 6** Deadline for submissions for November-December *REACTer*
- October 9** Thanksgiving Day (Canada)
- November 27** Thanksgiving Day (U.S.)

Terrorists, Disasters, and Common Sense

Continued from page 3

windows, just add trash bags to your shopping list.

Supplies of food and water are intended for many long-term scenarios, including weather-related disasters. The most commonly overlooked or underestimated need is water. No one seems to have any concept of how much water will be needed for a family per day. Those who do have water on hand either waste money on expensive bottled water, or they store water in the refrigerator unnecessarily.

Close to the heart of any REACT member should be electrical power. If you don't have at least a battery backup power supply for your radio, you

haven't made any effort at all. A CB, GMRS, or QRP Amateur radio can run for hours on a deep-cycle marine battery. Smaller batteries made for emergency lighting "battle lanterns," or even computer UPS batteries, can be stockpiled for emergency use.

If you want a generator, don't skimp. Make sure you can keep essential things operating. Find out how much power you need to run your refrigerator, the blower on your furnace, and other loads you may not have thought of. Forget the home theater and video games.

Talk to an electrician. Find out how you can best handle the load transfer from the power company to the generator. Some power companies now sell a generator transfer switch or isolator. Our family farm used to have a generator in a shed, with a removable panel to connect the

power take-off shaft of a tractor to drive it, and a large transfer switch on the adjacent pole. This also ensured that we were not dependent on an engine that never got used and wouldn't work when needed.

Make sure the generator exhaust will not find its way back into your house. As a volunteer firefighter/EMT, I've responded to too many houses where the portable generator was in the attached garage, and the exhaust was circulating all through the HVAC ducts.

Bottom line: Ignore the sniggering news anchors, and think through the actual scenarios you might have to be prepared for. If you prepare for a natural disaster, you'll be prepared for most terrorist threats.

The author is President of Prince Georges County REACT in Maryland.

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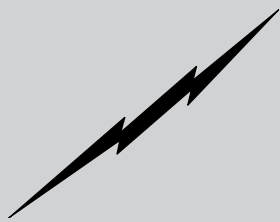


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Unsquelched

by *Stuart M. DeLuca,*
Editor

What If They Held an Election -- and Nobody Came?

When *REACT* began, the organization was governed by a “self-perpetuating” Board of Directors. The Board elected its own members; the membership had nothing to say in the matter.

Some people thought this was just fine, that volunteers didn’t need to be concerned about the operation of the organization. Other people – myself included – felt strongly that it was an undemocratic system, that those of us who devote our time, energy, and resources to *REACT* should have something to say about how it is governed.

After much discussion, in 1977 the Board agreed to let the members elect four of the nine Directors. Those four would be called “Field Directors” and would be chosen from among the entire membership, “at large.”

Over the following decade, the Field Directors gradually took over the governance of *REACT*. They could revise the charter and adopt new bylaws whenever they wished, they could remove a Director at any time without notice or cause, and they were answerable to no one. As the “outside Directors” died, retired, or just quit, the four elected Directors (eventually the number increased to seven) ran *REACT* pretty much as they wished. Anyone who opposed the ruling faction would simply be removed. Under this system, elec-

tions were largely irrelevant.

In 1998, after a series of debacles that nearly destroyed *REACT*, fundamental changes were made. Directors would be elected from nine Regions, so that there would at least be some possibility that Teams and members would know the people they were electing. Changes to the bylaws would have to be approved by the Teams. Finally, *REACT* would be governed in a reasonably democratic and responsive manner.

I recount all of this ancient history because I think it does matter how *REACT* is governed. Unfortunately, it appears that not many other people think so.

Amazingly, in the past four years, there has not been *one* contested election for Regional Director. In at least one election, there were no candidates at all. The Board has had to beg Directors to run for re-election, and has had to appoint people to fill the office when no one was elected.

As you read this, the deadline for nominations for this year’s elections in Regions 1, 4, and 7 has passed. At last report, there were candidates – one each – for all three positions.

Last year, fewer than half of the Teams in Regions 3, 6, and 9 bothered to vote. This year is likely to be no different in Regions 1, 4, and 7.

Maybe I’m the only one who thinks this isn’t good.

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