

## Greetings from the Coordinator's Desk

Its been a busy summer trying to keep up with work on the database, processing renewals as well as the ongoing activity with new coordination's here in Wisconsin and our neighboring states.

I want to start out by thanking those that have taken the time to work with me either by completing the renewal forms with the requested information, or by taking the time to work with me on filling in the missing information. For those with auxiliary links, I realize this can be a time consuming process, however in two cases we did find something in use that our records did not show, and several instances of something that was abandoned years ago that was still in our records. Again, my thanks.

### Repeater Directory & Renewals

I'm sure many of you have first turned to this quarter's repeater directory and are now scanning the newsletter for an explanation of the three groups of repeater listings.

After some thought, consideration and discussion the directory has been broken into sections this quarter to better show those that are current, one year behind, and those so old that they won't be included in next year's ARRL repeater directory unless they act now.

As a reminder to the status field shown on the far right side of the directory listing:

- <- Indicates your status is not current effective 9/1/2000
- E Indicates that no ERP (effective radiated power) information is on file
- H Indicates that no HAAT (height above average terrain) information is on file
- L Indicates that Latitude/Longitude information for your station does not contain precision to the nearest arc second

I have looked at each paper file folder to make certain there wasn't anything newer in the file than was shown in the database that I received from Dan this past winter when I accepted this position. I'm very pleased to say that I did not find anything to contradict the update dates shown.

For those in the last directory grouping, you may have already received a letter from me, or can expect one in the next month or so, showing the latest information that we have for you on file and asking one last time for an update.

Renewals take priority so if you don't receive a letter, are part of this last group, and don't renew, your listing will not appear in the 2001 ARRL repeater directory, and you will be de-coordinated.

I absolutely, positively do not want to de-coordinate an active system, but without some written form of verification of the systems existence I will be simply left with no alternative.

I do appreciate everyone's patience as I work my way through each of the renewals and hope that those that have worked with me, found me to be willing to do what I can to help you fill in any missing information. Many times I work from a street address, or location description and landmarks to improve our location information. As I've mentioned in the last 2 newsletters, I am automatically computing the HAAT (Height above average terrain) information. There is no need for you to invest time and money into maps to try to figure this out by hand.

W.A.R.'s role is that of coordination, and we do that through collective cooperation not only with the system trustees within Wisconsin, but also in cooperation with the adjacent states coordinators. If your system drops off our list, it drops off all the adjacent states lists as well.

For those that may not have received the latest Illinois Repeater Association's newsletter, their headline this time was "20 Repeaters Decoordinated", and goes on to include a list of an additional 37 repeaters that de-coordination is pending on due to the lack of a response in over 2 years.

As I am finally caught up with the wave of renewals, my next focus is attempting to directly contact each system trustee that has not renewed in several years to see what their intentions are and if there is anything I can do to help with the renewal process.

Based on the past several years correspondence that I have read between system trustee's and the former frequency coordinators, its clear that you, like myself, want a stream lined renewal process.

For those tired of hearing us ask for this information...I'm done...

### **Newsletter Mailing List**

It was brought to my attention by a system trustee that he had never received a newsletter since he had coordinated his system in 1997. Needless to say he was a bit disgruntled that we continue to harp on our yearly renewals, but then at the same time have a hole in our system that causes some individuals not to receive update forms in the mail.

In reviewing his situation, I saw that when he was coordinated that there was not only no mention in his coordination letter than he should respond to us within 6 months to indicate when the system was placed on the air, but there was also no mention of the inclusion of an additional step to place himself on the newsletter mailing list.

I do see that in coordination's granted in 1998 and beyond that Dan did mention the inclusion of an update form to be placed on the mailing list so the oversight seems to have been corrected somewhere between 1997 and 1998.

The database that I maintain has previously never contained contact information and the newsletter mailing list is separately maintained by the WAR secretary.

My new database is rapidly growing, and part of that is contact information. A quick cross check of the mailing list for this quarters newsletter compared to the trustee callsigns within my database turned up about 60 entries that did not appear on the newsletter mailing list. In some of those cases, I recognized that a club callsign was on the list and the appropriate individual system trustee was on the mailing list. Mark Heimmermann has worked to crosscheck those entries which I flagged to make sure nobody is being inadvertently left off the list.

Again, thanks for your continued patience as we continue to address your concerns. I welcome all input. We can only correct those problems we are made aware of.

### **Policies**

As coordinator I serve at the pleasure of the W.A.R. board and members. I must follow the various by-laws and policies set forth by those before me. I must also follow and moderate between our fellow coordination entities in adjacent states and abide by any pre-existing agreements that we may have in place with them. Several people have suggested changes that I, as an individual, agree with and have encouraged them to step forward and make their voice heard. To several frustrated people that have exchanged e-mail with me, I hope it has been of some comfort when I actually agree with your position.

A simple change that I will propose at the upcoming W.A.R. meeting is some sort of compromise in the yearly renewal process. It's a process that is predictably frustrating to well established systems that have been on the air for years and years essentially unchanged to be faced with an ever changing and

ever lengthening renewal form. I can also see a pattern with some individuals that after they are coordinated, do initially send in the renewal forms every year, but eventually it becomes every other year, then maybe every third year. It's not a healthy situation for either W.A.R. or the system owner to be in.

The basis of my proposal is that rather than sending out blank forms every year, that we pro-actively supply to the trustee, a renewal form listing the information as we currently have it on file. Changes, if any can be annotated, and with the application of a stamp to an envelope, the process can be completed.

Certainly the potential exists to never again receive updated information if system elements are changed or relocated, but I think that is offset by those simply tired of filling out forms every year.

I'd further suggest that for established systems, the renewals only be sent out once every other year, or every third year depending upon the date of original coordination.

As this quarters repeater directory clearly shows, better than half of our listed systems are already failing to comply with the by-laws as they are currently written. To me, the message is pretty clear. As a member of W.A.R. you have the right to change the by-laws.

## **Database**

One of my contributions to this job has been the construction of what now is getting to be a rather large program for the maintenance and daily interaction with all the information I must both maintain and utilize as part of performing this role.

By using more modern data storage methods and data analysis tools, the ability to drill down into the data and view it in ever more meaningful ways continues to be a big help.

For new proposed systems or moves, I've been able to simultaneously reduce the amount of time in front of the computer analyzing the information while increasing the meaningfulness of the information it gives me.

As I am processing renewals, any of the information supplied is finding its way into the database and in turn can be used for the basis of a much easier renewal process in the near future.

Besides just keying in the data, I'm also scanning every sheet of paper contained with the paper files. These images are stored in a related database and instantly available to me as part of your electronic record. Currently I've processed about 140 renewals and scanned about 3000 pages of documents associated with those systems.

One of the most recent additions I've made is the ability to take the data from a given proposal, which contains both co and adjacent channel system information, and automatically create a data file for a freeware propagation prediction tool written by Roger, VE2DBE. Roger was kind enough to provide me with the data structures for his data files such that I was able to automatically create a data file with location and other system engineering parameters from a combined database of not only systems in Wisconsin, but in the neighboring states as well.

This again has reduced the manual labor content involved in loading this data into such a program to take a look at a given proposal by using computer models that account for antenna height, power levels, antenna patterns, and accurate terrain information.

If you, or your club would like a custom computer generated model for your coverage area and or would like to explore "what if" scenarios such as changes in antenna height, gain, location, etc. Please feel free to contact me. I'm equally interested in getting feedback as to accuracy of the predictions.

## **Happenings across the state**

N9MEA's 52.83 system is now coordinated for Tomahawk.

KF9RU has a new coordination in Milwaukee on 442.475 and is under construction.

K9JAC has taken over trusteeship from W9KHO for the 443.150 system in Hubertus, and is upgrading the hardware.

As a reminder to those systems recently issued new coordination's, I still show W9ALS, KB9LUK, KB9QVB, N0GMJ, and KB9TYC as "Under Construction". I am aware of the status of W9LLB and W9UDU. As a reminder, please drop me a message by way of post card, phone call, or a trusted carrier pigeon when your system is operational.

The Waukesha 147.390 is proposed to move to Hales Corners and will likely receive coordination soon.

Luke, KB9UIZ, is a new student at the Milwaukee School of Engineering (M.S.O.E.) and is soon to be coordinated on 443.025 with a system to be linked via the internet to the Chicago area 443.025 system. He will operate the system from one of the residence hall dorms where internet bandwidth is plentiful.

With the go ahead from surrounding states, I coordinated N9NLU, Oak Creek, on 444.975 at his request. He soon discovered some strong signals booming in from Illinois on this frequency. While we knew of a coordinated repeater in Plato Center, IL on that frequency that was being used for packet, the use of that frequency in the Chicago area seems to have taken on a life of its own. A subsequent check of the TAPR web site shows numerous systems listed since 1994. So a new coordination is pending for 443.400.

That's all for now,

Dave / KA9FUR