



THE TARA NEWS

Affiliate of the American Radio Relay League

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"Angel of the Seas": Post-Tsunami News Coverage Raises Ham Radio's Global Visibility

NEWINGTON, CT, Jan 4, 2005--News coverage about Amateur Radio's role in the tsunami relief effort have been widespread and positive. High-profile articles in the past few days have appeared in *The Washington Post* and the *Orlando Sentinel* in the US as well as in several South Asian news sources, including *The Times of India* and *The Hindu*. Other media, including *Agence France Presse*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *MSNBC*, also have run reports on the value of Amateur Radio in helping to open lines of communication cut off when the earthquake and tsunami struck Dec 26.

"Once again Amateur Radio operators have proven the value of the service by providing critical communications when other systems were disabled or overwhelmed," observed ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP. "The immediate, organized and heroic response of the ham community in the Indian Ocean rim not only alerted the world of the seriousness of the situation, but saved lives by allowing responding agencies to coordinate early efforts to minimize further casualties and damage."



Before the earthquake: "Angel of the Seas" Bharati Prasad, VU4RBI, operates a ham radio demonstration at the Science Center near Port Blair, Andaman Island, on December 22 to introduce Amateur Radio to local navy cadets.

Post-quake contact between Andaman and Nicobar islands is maintained by two groups of hams who participated in the DXpedition, who are relaying traffic to and from respective authorities and relief groups. [Henryk Kotowski, SM0JHF/VU3HKE, Photo--used by permission]

A *Sify News* [article](#) December 31 referred to Andaman and Nicobar Islands DXpedition team leader Bharathi Prasad, VU2RBI/VU4RBI, as "Angel of the Seas" for her team's efforts in the disaster's immediate. The VU4RBI/VU4NRO DXpedition team in Port Blair on Andaman Island immediately shifted into emergency communication mode. Re-establishing an emergency-powered station outside their hotel, Prasad and others diligently operated around the clock to pass health-and-welfare messages from panicked residents and visitors in Port Blair. At times they even had to dodge pieces of falling concrete to get the message through to the outside world.

"I did not expect a disaster like this," *Sify News* quoted the 46-year-old Prasad, a housewife and mother of two from New Delhi. "It is no longer a game, and now we must help." Although she has since returned to the Indian mainland, other Indian amateurs have traveled to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to carry on.

Pitts says Prasad's experience "is a true story that needs telling." Prasad was on the air from VU4RBI running DXpedition contacts when the earthquake struck.

"Tremors!" she reportedly shrieked into the microphone before abruptly leaving the air and her fifth-floor hotel room.

"Many government agencies' past relationships with hams were swept aside when the Amateur Radio operators came to their aid," Pitts said. As several news reports noted, it took some convincing on the part of the Amateur Radio community before the Indian government agreed to let the [National Institute of Amateur Radio](#)-sponsored team operate in the Andamans. After the earthquake and tsunami, *AFP* said, "a grateful Indian army" supported Prasad's team with equipment and batteries.

The Washington Post [article](#), "Wave of Destruction, Wave of Salvation," by correspondent Rama Lakshmi, told how Prasad reestablished contact with Indian mainland amateurs to let them--and the world--know what had happened and that the team members were all okay. "I immediately abandoned my expedition and told all radio operators [presumably those still trying to log VU4] to stop disturbing me," the *Post* account quotes her as saying. "I was only on emergency communication from then on." She subsequently offered her team's expertise to local government officials, some of whom didn't even know what ham radio was.

As a result, the *Post* reported, Prasad became so popular in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands that she was nicknamed the "Teresa of the Bay of Bengal," an oblique reference to the late Mother Teresa, a nun who devoted her life to aiding and comforting the poor of Calcutta.

DXpedition visitor Charly Harpole, K4VUD, was the focus of an *Orlando Sentinel* [article](#) January 1. While not a participant in the DXpedition nor in the subsequent emergency operation from the Andamans, Harpole was instrumental in filing e-mail reports to the worldwide amateur community--many via [The Daily DX](#) newsletter. **Continued on Page 2**



More than a Club



We're a Family



Post Tsunami Communications Established Via Amateur Radio

The *Sentinel* story recounts Harpole's experiences when the earthquake first hit. It later tells how the DXpedition's emergency radio setup allowed a waiter at the hotel to let his mother in Hyderabad know he was okay. "He told us the mother was crying with joy," the paper quoted Harpole as saying.

Harpole left Andaman Islands for Thailand, where his wife and her family were, and from there, as HS0ZCW, he has been relaying disaster-related traffic throughout Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. He's also continued to file reports via e-mail.

"Many islands were washed completely over from one side to the other," the *Sentinel* quoted Harpole. "I've seen horrible, horrible destruction. It's shocking beyond the telling." *MSNBC* carried a five-minute live audio interview with Harpole on January 3.

A December 30 [article](#) in *The Hindu*, "Hams Lend a Helping Hand," quotes Gopal Madhavan, VU3GMN, who told the paper that ham radio operators "were the only link from the Andamans to the mainland for several hours after the disaster."

Gopal said the DXpedition team--and amateurs in India--were "getting calls from all over the world from people who are worried about friends and relatives." The article also noted that hams in Sri Lanka have been assisting in that country's devastated east coast, with help from Indian hams. "Hams worldwide are getting involved," The Hindu quotes Gopal. "Everybody's offering aid. Everybody wants to help."

In Sri Lanka, [Lanka Business Online](#) reported December 29 in an [article](#), "Sri Lanka Tsunami--Amateur Call," on Amateur Radio activities in that hard-hit nation, which also has been struggling with a civil war. Quoting Victor Goonetilleke, 4S7VK, president of the Radio Society of Sri Lanka ([RSSL](#)), the article noted how RSSL members Asantha Illesinghe, 4S7AK, Dimuthu Wickremesinghe, 4S7DZ and Kusal Epa, 4S7KE, operated a ham radio link between Hambantota and the prime minister's disaster management office and government offices in the stricken area.

The link was shut down after authorities managed to establish their own radio system. The article noted that a ham radio team was being sent to Tangalle to relay health-and-welfare traffic. "We can establish links," the article quotes Goonetilleke, "especially government offices do not have proper communications facilities.

In a message filed December 31 via *The Daily DX*, Harpole reflected similar observations. "Hams all over the affected area in multiple countries are stepping in and helping," he said. "It is a very gratifying international effort by hundreds of volunteer hams. I am proud of ham radio again today."

Letter from the Editor

Greetings & Happy New Year to All of Our TARA Members.

If you have noticed that the newsletter has become somewhat downsized lately, it is because your dear old Editor is just running out of Steam for the Time Being. It's not that I don't care, it's just that every so often, I run out of idea's as to what might interest our readers.

For a newsletter or any publication to be successful, it needs input from the readers as to what they find enjoyable. Even if the input is negative, at least we know that someone out there is reading it. Of course, it is easy month after month to put in jokes, recipes and other non related amateur articles but that is not what this forum was meant to be. This is an amateur radio newsletter and should be about the events and activities of the members of the Troy Amateur Radio Association.

I would love to do a profile each month on one or two of our members on how they got into the hobby and what they find interesting about amateur radio. Also, what facets of ham radio interest you whether it be HF, VHF/UHF, Packet, PSK,RTTY or any of the other modes available out there. Also, I would like to get the year that you got into the hobby, who got you interested, who was your elmer and who helped you along.

Another thing that would be great would be a picture of your Shack and your antenna systems. Can you just imagine. If each and every member did this for me, I would have enough article material to keep me busy for the next 5 years for a Member Spotlight Article.

Here is another thing that you could help me with. I would appreciate it if each member could send me their birthdays, their family member's birthdays and your wedding anniversary dates so that I could start a column on that, also.

If you have an amateur related hobby, such as radio controlled RC planes, boats or cars take pictures of them and do articles on them. If you take a boat trip or an RV Trip and you use Echolink or APRS, write an article on it. The ideas are endless. This is your newsletter and I would love to see more participation from you the readers.

73,

Ken Davis - KB2K7U

AMATEUR RADIO

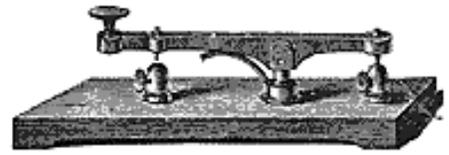
THE PHANTOM OPERATOR

In 1975 a strange signal was received by Ham radio Operators all over the world. It was sent via CW but no one could make any sense out of it. It was perhaps a foreign language. The signal continued to show up and baffled many Ham Operators. The strange thing was that the signal was always precisely at 1510.

The Operator, by now was called The Phantom. And only on Thursdays did the Phantom strike. The location in question was about 75 miles East of Sumas, Washington. It was hard to get a bearing because the Phantom was on the air only about 15-30 seconds.

Years passed by and the Phantom did his job. Yes, folks, 1510 on Thursday. Then in 2003 and the Phantom still going strong, Boy Scouts found a lone Cabin in the Cascade wilderness. To their amazement they found inside the Cabin the left over remains of a diseased Radio Operator. There was not much left of the poor soul. Rodents and other wild animals had carried most of it away.

The Scouts also discovered an array of wires strong out all over the place. They found about 50 Deep cycle Marine Batteries, Solar panels, Wind Energizers etc. All used to charge the batteries that were alive and still doing their job, even after 28 years. The Old Ham who ran the place was wise enough to use sealed batteries. The Scouts discovered in the Cabin the remains of a right skeleton hand that was resting on an old Telegraph key.



The radio covered with years of dust and moss covered was still running. Suddenly without warning the hand started to vibrate. It was Thursday 1510 hours!

Strange rhythmic sounds came from the old Key. After 20 seconds it stopped. Upon investigation they found out that on the other side of the mountain a Rock quarry Company blasting the mountainside precisely at 1510 on Thursday. The shockwaves were what made the hand vibrate!

We then knew that we had found the Phantom. The only other items to identify the poor dedicated Ham was a call sign hardly readable due to moisture damage and mice that had chewed on the wooden sign that was nailed to the wall of the Cabin. We could see the first letter, a "W". The second was harder, could be a 1 or a 7, but the rest was gone.

Who knows who he was and why he was there is any bodies guess. We sent the hand, the key, and what was left of the call sign to the Smithsonian Institute, but due to the high cost in operating our Government the display promised is still on hold.

All this good news from my desk to yours and it shows that one can still be on the air after becoming a SK!
73 de KB7LYM

Editor's Note: I would like to Thank Roy Warner N2OWC & Bert Bruins N2FPJ for locating this great story on E-ham

From the CQ Newsroom...

In light of the ongoing disaster in Southern Asia, CQ magazine is urging all amateurs -- and particularly those participating in its 60th anniversary on-air activity -- to be particularly aware of, and avoid interfering with, disaster-related communications on the HF bands. Emergency nets have been reported operating on various frequencies and modes in the 40-meter, 20-meter and 15-meter bands, including on some of the most popular DX calling frequencies, such as 14.195 and 21.295 MHz.

"First of all, if you can use your radio to be of assistance, do that and forget about our anniversary or whatever else you were planning to do on the air," says CQ Editor Rich Moseson, W2VU. "Secondly, if you are not in a position to provide direct help -- as most of us are not -- be very careful not to interfere with disaster related nets and similar communications."

"It's always good practice to listen before transmitting, and that's never been more important than it is right now," Moseson continued. "If someone tells you you're near or on top of an emergency net, don't argue. Move. And remember, our event lasts for 60 days so there is no rush to get on and make contacts right away."

Moseson added that as the magnitude of the disaster in South Asia became apparent, CQ management had discussed postponing or cancelling the CQ/60 event, but determined that with just hours to go before its start time, there would be no practical way to reach everyone planning to participate. In addition, it was felt that having more stations on the air would create more opportunities for people in the affected areas to make contact with the outside world even if they are not in an organized net.

RVWARS & RACES Continue Work on Communications Shelter

Work Continues
On Com. Shelter
Bob, WB2DUW works
to clean out the Army
surplus commun-
ications shelter that
RACES and RVWARS
are rehabilitating. It
soon will be ready for
painting inside and
out. It eventually will
house 3 or 4 op-
erating positions.



Mike, N2JVE, working
on the exterior of the
communications
shelter. Soon it will
sport a fresh coat of
white paint and will be
labeled with the
RVWARS name and
RACES. The shelter will
be used for emergency
communications as
well as Field Day and
special event stations.

FRANKS FUNNIES

The Geek and The Frog

A guy is taking a walk and sees a frog on the side of the road. As he comes closer, the frog starts to talk. "Kiss me and I will turn into a princess," it says.

The guy picks the frog up and puts it in his pocket. The frog starts shouting, "Hey! Didn't you hear me? I'm a princess. Just kiss me and I will be yours."

The guy takes the frog out of his pocket, smiles at it, and puts it back. The frog is really frustrated. "I don't get it. Why won't you kiss me? I will turn into a beautiful princess and do anything you ask."

The guy says, "Look, I'm a computer geek. I don't have time for girlfriend, but a talking frog is cool!"

The Helicopter Ride

Morris and his wife Esther went to the State Fair Every year, and every year Morris would say, "Esther, I'd like to ride in that helicopter."

Esther always replied, "I know Morris, but that helicopter ride is 50 dollars and 50 dollars is 50 dollars."

One year Esther and Morris went to the Fair, and Morris said, "Esther, I'm 85 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance." Esther replied, "Morris that helicopter is 50 dollars and 50 dollars is 50 dollars."

The pilot over heard the couple and said, "Folks I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say a word I won't charge you! but if you say one word, it's 50 dollars."

Morris and Esther agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy maneuvers, but not a word was heard. He did his dare devil tricks over and over again, but still not a word.

When they landed, the pilot turned to Morris and said, "By Golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm Very Impressed!"

Morris replied, "Well, I was going to say something when Esther fell out, but 50 dollars is 50 dollars."

Echolink Tsunami Relief Net

Several hams on Echolink have coordinated the Tsunami Relief Net. This net has been link to stations in Thailand and Sri Lanka since the tsunami hit. The net has been receiving updates from VU2RIB and K4VUD from Bangkok and the Andaman Island's for the last seven days. Adam, KE7BZX is currently on the ground in Sri Lanka and has brought with him a echolink station. We are currently awaiting him to come online. Adam's primary mission is one of relief to the victims of the disaster area. The tsunami relief net team is compiled of hams from across the globe dedicating their time and station links to the efforts. Stations from all over the globe and have been running full 24 hour rotation since the disaster hit. -- With well over 100 links and repeaters standing by to pass updates and health and welfare traffic to their local area's. The Tsunami Relief NetTeam has also built a website for hams to go and sign up in a data base to volunteer for NCS, OPS and Traffic handling in there area. The link to the website is www.tsunamireliefnet.com. VU2RBI and other great hams in the effected area have been providing some great information and coordination of health and welfare traffic.

Those interested in volunteering can connect to the net through various conference server on echolink as many of the existing conference server's are involved in the net. The tsunami relief net team asks all stations to connect to the appropriate conference server for there country. IE Canada in Canada, USA in USA. The tsunami relief net team is still looking for volunteers and traffic handlers to continue the 24 hours duty cycle. Please visit the website and click on register there.

<http://www.tsunamireliefnet.com>

John Powell, KG4LMU

W1AW 2004/2005 Winter Operating Schedule

Morning Schedule:

Time Mode Days
 1400 UTC (9 AM EST) CWs Wed, Fri
 1400 UTC (9 AM EST) CWf Tue, Thu

Daily Visitor Operating Hours:
 1500 UTC to 1700 UTC - (10 AM to 12 PM EST)
 1800 UTC to 2045 UTC - (1 PM to 3:45 PM EST)

Station closed 1700 to 1800 UTC (12 PM to 1 PM EST)

Afternoon/Evening Schedule:

2100 UTC (4 PM EST) CWf Mon, Wed, Fri
 2100 " " CWs Tue, Thu
 2200 " (5 PM EST) CWb Daily
 2300 " (6 PM EST) RTTY Daily
 0000 " (7 PM EST) CWs Mon, Wed, Fri
 0000 " " CWf Tue, Thu
 0100 " (8 PM EST) CWb Daily
 0200 " (9 PM EST) RTTY Daily
 0245 " (9:45 PM EST) VOICE Daily
 0300 " (10 PM EST) CWf Mon, Wed, Fri
 0300 " " CWs Tue, Thu
 0400 " (11 PM EST) CWb Daily

Frequencies (MHz)

CW: 1.8175 3.5815 7.0475 14.0475 18.0975 21.0675 28.0675 147.555
 RTTY: - 3.625 7.095 14.095 18.1025 21.095 28.095 147.555
 VOICE: 1.855 3.990 7.290 14.290 18.160 21.390 28.590 147.555

Notes:

CWs = Morse Code practice (slow) = 5, 7.5, 10, 13 and 15 WPM
 CWf = Morse Code practice (fast) = 35, 30, 25, 20, 15, 13 and 10 WPM
 CWb = Morse Code Bulletins = 18 WPM
 CW frequencies include code practices, Qualifying Runs and CW bulletins
 RTTY = Teleprinter Bulletins = BAUDOT (45.45 baud) and AMTOR-FEC (100 Baud). ASCII (110 Baud) is sent only as time allows
 Code practice texts are from QST, and the source of each practice is given at the beginning of each practice and at the beginning of alternate speeds.

On Tuesdays and Fridays at 2330 UTC (6:30 PM EST), Keplerian Elements for active amateur satellites are sent on the regular teleprinter frequencies.

A DX bulletin replaces or is added to the regular bulletins between 0100 UTC (8 PM EST) Thursdays and 0100 UTC (8 PM EST) Fridays.

In a communications emergency, monitor W1AW for special bulletins as follows: Voice on the hour, Teleprinter at 15 minutes past the hour and CW on the half hour.

FCC licensed amateurs may operate the station from 1500 UTC to 1700 UTC (10 AM to 12 PM EST), and then from 1800 UTC to 2045 UTC (1 PM to 3:45 PM EST) Monday through Friday. Be sure to bring your current FCC amateur license or a photocopy.

The W1AW Operating Schedule may also be found on page 100 in the January 2005 issue of QST or on the web at <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw.html>.



Rensselaer County ARES/RACES Club Elects 2005 Slate of Officers

President : Kenneth T. Davis - KB2KFV

Vice President: Tom Stewart - KC2FCR

Secretary: Beth Whiting - KC2BSC

Treasurer: Ridgewood MacDonald – KB2HWL

Congratulations

&

Good Luck



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Vice President: Karen Smith, KB2UUC...273-6594
Secretary: Marilyn Davis, KB2JZI.....272-0112
Treasurer: Nick Demos, NW2D.....383-3983

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Randy Stein, KA2TJZ.....(04-06).....498-7838
David Fritts KC2IBF.....(04-05).....765-5147

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Asst Manager

William "Doc" Kelley, KC2JDW.....235-5063

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HF DX & Contest Manager - NY2U

(Just Temp for now!)

TARA VHF/UHF CONTESTING:

Contest Manager - Ray Ginter, N2ZQF

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Mac Smith, KB2SPM.....273-6594

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N2TY-BBS SYSOP:

Tim Roske, AA2WQ ...489-4346

ATVET(ALB/TROY)VE TEAM:

Gerry Murray, WA2IWW 482-8700

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THE TARA NEWS

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Visit us on the Internet

At <http://www.n2ty.org/>

Regular monthly Meeting

Tuesday, January 18, 2005

7:30 p.m.

**Green Island Municipal
Center**

Intersection of

George St. & Hudson Ave.

Green Island, New York

Ample Parking

Parking Lot on Hudson Ave.

Troy's Full Service Repeaters

145.170/R

449.225/R