



EMERGENCY COMMS EXERCISE May 6/10



About 20 radio amateurs responded to the call for help on May 6, the day set aside for a demonstration exercise to mark Emergency Preparedness Week in the Province. In all, five stations operated in the area, one in the luxurious comfort of Room #105, one for the more adventurous in the flapping tent behind Parksville City Hall, one at Bill VE7EVS's site, one at the home of VE7ONT Ken, and one mobile manned by Bob, VA7ZA.



Picture by Dave VA7QED

The primary purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate to the public and officials, our ability to communicate wirelessly when all else fails. ESS joined our little encampment in Goose Alley (thankfully absent goose artifacts) and managed to project an image of relaxed attentiveness to the public, with their handsome trailer, brochures, coffee and animated discussions. (we may all have to practise a sterner, a more anxious demeanour for the press- more appropriate for disasters).

A voice control net began precisely at 11:45hrs and called all and sundry to order and the digital assault began. Packets zapped back and forth through the afternoon air with great dispatch and accuracy and after an hour everyone knew everything.

Technically the systems worked well. Record keeping without printers was a challenge and small portable machines I think will be a real priority if we are to manage lots of messages. G and G boxes worked very well as did the antenna systems. The short HF hop to the mainland for Pactor III was accomplished with the newly minted NVIS by Frank Inc and the very tall V/UHF vertical atop our 30' tower did not miss a beat- byte?

It was encouraging to see Dave and Rudi, new to the fraternity, engaged in the intricacies of digital comms (wherein lies our future I suspect) and enjoying it. Perfect spot, Greg for the Honda 2000- I would have had it chattering away annoyingly in the field. The genset made the coffee (with Marg and Bev's help) and powered the station. All in all a great day- missed by thousands of the public who still can't get their priorities straight. We have good equipment, a great team, great camaraderie and great municipal support. All that's missing is a mission.



Picture by Dave VA7QED

73, Tony VE7AJN

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