

September 2011



**Glenn Morrison, WB6RLC**

### Vice President's Message

Welcome to the September newsletter and a new season with the Desert Radio Amateur Radio Transmitting Society. I guess Peter is still on his way south from Beautiful British Columbia, so you get the opening paragraphs from the VP.

We have a jam packed year planned with a wide variety of topics from our guest speakers and some great activities. Up and coming speakers include a hard look at what you may need to survive if everything goes wrong. October will be the men from MARS, November is a power management talk.

December...maybe a potluck? Anyone interested? A winter camping trip? Later in the year Dennis W6DQ will return with 2 meter EME talk and our own Michael KA6PGN will do antennas. Technician classes start in October, and a General Class class is being planned for January. We might even squeeze in an Extra Class if there is enough interest.

Speaking of January, that's Hamfest 2012 month. A great time to buy, sell or trade Ham gear, see and talk with vendors about the latest stuff on the market and meet old friends. There is also a ham fest at Quartzite AZ, just over the border, the previous week. Drop by for the day, or for the more adventuresome, bring your RV and spend the week. I think Yuma AZ is the week after.

June of course is Field Day. In case you missed it, we all had a great time at the Angel View summer camp in Joshua Tree. Some brought RVs and some of us stayed in the bunk houses. Some even took advantage of the pool. We set up a rhomboid antenna and bent S meters all over the East Coast. We also had several members of the Morongo Valley ARC stop by to check out the operation. We are now planning events with them and doing some combined efforts with ARES. I think that it will be a repeat performance this year.

So stay tuned, don't move that dial. It will be a great year for the DRATS. 73 • Glenn WB6RL

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### September's Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker for our season opening meeting on September 20 will be Steve Jordon, KG6TBD, PhD Chapman University. Steve is active with the Coast Guard and CERT. He will



be presenting an “in your face” kind of talk about what may happen, as a worst case, when there is a major terrorist attack (say on our water supply or infrastructure) or major natural disasters.

We'd all like to think that when the worst happens, help is just around the corner. Most feel secure in the idea that if disaster strikes, the public infrastructure will quickly organize a massive rescue operation. After all, we pay taxes for police and fire departments, and state and federal agencies are trained to quickly react to major emergencies. Right?

Some experts are warning: Don't bet your life on first responders. Recent events in Haiti, New Orleans and even the oil platform blowout in the Gulf of Mexico have provided proof that deploying resources for a major disaster can be slow, despite the best efforts of the government. In fact, there may be times that the government is incapable of responding for an extended period of time.

Emergency preparedness is moving in a different direction, one that looks to self-sufficiency for days, or weeks after a major event. The idea is that survival will rely on a local effort from neighborhood groups, businesses and a multitude of volunteers, most of whom presently don't have the training or resources to deal with the disaster.

Lets face it. As a ham and a member of ARES or RACES, if you don't have the survival resources, you will not be of much service to your community.

Don't miss this meeting. It may make you a little uneasy, even frighten you a little at the possible prospects, in a worst case situation, but it is information you should at least be aware of and plan for.

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The AT&T Tech Channel has over 600 videos about the past, present and future of the world of technology.  
<http://techchannel.att.com/about.cfm>

The history of the electron, or vacuum tube, from the early 1900s to 1948  
[AT&T Archives \[Bottle of Magic\]](#)

## DESERT RATS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:**

Peter Reinzuch, VE7REZ  
pete.r@mac.com 760-318-0186

**Vice Pres:**

Glenn Morrison, WB6RLC  
Ticntoc@speakeasy.net 760-770-6434

**Treasurer:**

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**Secretary:**

Lisa Kordich, KJ6DZU  
kordich@earthlink.net 760-567-8728

**Directors:**

**Gary Boskovich, KD6QLT**

sboskovich@dc.rr.com 760-328-9662

Tom McLean, KJ6DZT

[kj6dzt@earthlink.net](mailto:kj6dzt@earthlink.net) 760-393-1799

Evan De Rouen, KI6WNF

evan@rouend.com 760-578-8101

**Trustee of Call:**

Henry Richter, W6VZA

henryrichter@earthlink.net 760-325-8196

**Webmaster:**

Evan De Rouen, KI6WNF

evan@rouend.com 760-578-8101

**Newsletter Editor:**

John McKee, WB6VKS

JohnWB6VKS@dc.rr.com 760-567-1492

**Website:**

<http://desertrats.am>

Monday Evening Net

Newsline • 6:30 pm

Regular • 7:00 pm

146.940 PL 107.2

ARES Digital • 7:30 pm

144.435 Simple





**Susie Boskovich KD6TVO**

### Tidbits

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of Norm Friedman, W6ORD. Norm passed away on August 5, 2011, just 2 days before his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday, following surgery in June. He was one of our instructors for our Ham Radio Classes as well as a VE on the W5YI Test Team. He was a member of the Desert RATS for a number of years. He was the softest spoken, easy mannered, caring and courteous individual and his ability to meet new people and make friends were just some of his many virtues. He will be greatly missed by the club and us personally. He was a great friend.

Norm was a retired Colonel from the U.S. Army Air Corps; 3<sup>rd</sup> Air division, 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb wing, 493<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H), 860<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron. He Flew B-24 and B-17 Bombers over Europe during World War II. His first mission on June 6, 1944 and his last mission on October 7, 1944 where he was wounded by a piece of flak smashed the bridge of his nose. He was stationed in New York, and retired in 1974.

He is survived by his wife, Rose, of 65 years and daughter Donna Friedman of Los Osos, Ca and son Sanford Friedman and wife Diane of West Hills, CA. Rose has been staying in West Hills since Norm's surgery.

Military Services were held at the Riverside National Cemetery on August 12, 2011.

We have approximately 11, students registered for the October Technician Ham classes at this time. Be sure to tell anyone that is interested to contact us by mid September. Also, we plan to host a General Ham Class after Hamfest. Stay tuned for more information.

We hope everyone has enjoyed the summer and look forward to seeing you at the first meeting on September 20, 2011 at 7:00 PM.

**Susie Boskovich, KD6TVO**

### HYPERLINKS

- [Desert RATS Website](#)
- [DRATS Calendar](#)
- [Riverside ARES](#)
- [Riverside RACES](#)
- [ARRL Website](#)
- [ARRL Newsletter](#)
- [DX Zone](#)
- [Ham Radio Links](#)
- [Orange County Radio Club](#)
- [Submit Articles to Newsletter](#)

## CALENDAR

**September 20, 2011**  
Desert RATS First meeting of the Season 7:00 PM  
Palm Springs City Yard Conference Room

**October 6, 8, & 15, 2011**  
Basic CERT Course Palm Springs Fire Department  
First night 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM  
Two Saturdays, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Contact Janet Vines-Mott at [janet.vines-mott@palmspringsca.gov](mailto:janet.vines-mott@palmspringsca.gov)  
For further information

**October 18, 2011**  
Desert RATS meeting 7:00 PM  
Palm Springs City Yard Conference Room  
Corky, MARS

**Oct 24-Nov 28, 2011**  
Technician Class Licensing  
Monday's for 6 weeks, 7:00-9:00 PM  
Palm Springs City Yard Conference Room

**November 15, 2011**  
Desert RATS meeting, 7:00 PM  
Palm Springs City Yard Conference Room

**December 3, 2011**  
Testing for all Classifications for Licensing  
Palm Springs City Yard Conference Room  
9:00 AM

**December 2011**  
No meeting due to the holidays.



## Lightning Strikes, Safety and Your Precious Radios • Glenn Morrison, WB6RLC

OK, it's about 2 in the morning, you are all snug in your bed, when KAA-BOOM, you are yanked out of your slumber by a huge clap of thunder. "Dang!" You scamper out of your warm bed and head off to your shack to pull all of the coax off of your radios. I hate that! And I've done it.

We don't get a lot of lightning here in the desert. We had a few storms this summer and that made me think about discussing a little about lightning protection. I guess there is no real thing as lightning protection. I mean, if you take a direct hit, you are done for. It can travel down the power mains or your transmission lines and start a house fire. The chances of that here are pretty slim. But close enough can cause some serious damage to some expensive equipment. A lightning bolt is, what, a million volts? The front end of your receiver is designed to pick up one half of a millionth of a volt, 0.5 micro volts. A close strike is what we can prepare for. And its not too expensive to get some reasonable protection.

First is a good grounding system. It gives the lightning some place to go and may save your house and most likely your expensive radio gear. Sand is not a good ground. We need at least one good 8 foot ground rod installed just as everything enters the shack and its best if there is one at the base of your tower. We have a club member that has 3 rods (and no tower). He also runs his drip irrigation system over to the ground rod and has a dripper on it. I think that's a great idea, I did it at my shack after seeing his.

The next thing are ground wires. Every radio in your shack should be grounded to the ground rod. Use as heavy gauge of copper wire as you can afford. Some shacks use a heavy copper bus in the shack and everything in the shack is attached to that. A heavy braided cable is run out to the ground rod. Be inventive. A long battery cable would work, depending on how far you are from the radio or ground bus to the rod. Mine is only a few feet. A piece of 1 inch copper tubing, pounded flat would make a nice bus bar for inside. Drill holes for a #8 stainless steel screw. Attach the ground wires from each piece of gear to the screws. Both the copper tubing and the 8 foot ground rod are available at your local hardware store.

The last thing (almost) are lightning suppressors/arrestors. These little devices can be from the size of a roll of quarters to a few inches square. They have RF connectors on each end and go inline with the lead from the antenna. They have a provision to be attached or wired to the ground rod. A coax lead is then brought from the the arrestor to your radio. These help bleed off high static charges from lightning to ground. By the way, wind can also create enough static charge to damage the front end of your receiver. Lightning arrestors can eliminate that potential problem.

The last thing is surge protection. Back East where they have lots of lightning, many homes have them on the electrical mains as they enter the house. Some newer homes in the valley have them as well.

We may not need that. But a good strong lightning strike can send a strong surge down the electrical mains and damage your equipment. Even in the off position, electronics can be damaged by a power surge. Buy a good surge protector and plug all of your radios into that.

Most of this stuff is available locally, and is not very expensive. I think a ground rod is under \$10 as well as a power strip with surge protection. Lightning arrestors can be from \$15-100. Speaking of that, one last note. Make sure that the arrestor that you buy covers the frequencies you are using. Some only work to 30MHz, others to 500MHz. If you want one on your VHF/UHF radio, you need to make sure you purchase the right one.

You can obtain additional information from the National Lightning Safety Institute from their web site.

<http://www.lightningsafety.com/>

For even more information go to this web site.

<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>

Some sources of lightning arrestors:

[http://www.packetradio.com/catalog/index.php?main\\_page=index&cPath=8&zenid=2sr0b5njkmh4hp3s1gk0gpt4](http://www.packetradio.com/catalog/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=8&zenid=2sr0b5njkmh4hp3s1gk0gpt4)

<http://www.dxengineering.com/Sections.asp?ID=48&DeptID=19#Top>

<http://www.iceradioproducts.com/impulse1.html>

<http://www.hamradio.com/detail.cfm?pid=H0-008133>

<http://www.l-com.com/item.aspx?id=21474>

Or you can maybe find some at the D RATS up and coming Hamfest 2012 this January.

Catch you on the bands • 73 • Glenn WB6RLC

**“2” SUPER HAM GATHERINGS EVERY JANUARY IN THE DESERT SOUTHWEST THAT YOU WON’T WANT TO MISS!!!**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK OUR WEBSITE: [www.quartzfest.org](http://www.quartzfest.org)**

**Or....**

**EMAIL STEVE AND LINDA:**

**[Organizer@quartzfest.org](mailto:Organizer@quartzfest.org)**

**The Desert Radio Amateur Transmitting Society invite you to attend the 3rd annual \* \* \* Palm Springs HAMFEST!**



**Saturday, January 28  
9:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.**

**<http://www.desertrats.am>**

Bring your ham gear to sell, no fee charged for selling if you bring own table and chairs. Or bring it to the club table( commission to the club) ...we'll handle the sale.

An official  Sanctioned Event

**HAMFEST!**

Talk-in frequency:  
146.940- PL 107.2

WD6RAT Desert RATpeater  
Daily Nets Thursday thru Sat.  
8 A.M. - Noon - 6 P.M.



Email us for more info:  
Peter Reinzuch VE7REZ~President of 'the Desert RATS' Club [ve7rez@desertrats.am](mailto:ve7rez@desertrats.am)  
Riverside County ARES  
[riversidecountyares@gmail.com](mailto:riversidecountyares@gmail.com)  
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Check the website for directions and vendors!