



Sticky Notes

GECO Newsletter
Vol.8, No. 3, May 2023



www.neighborhoodlink.com/GECO

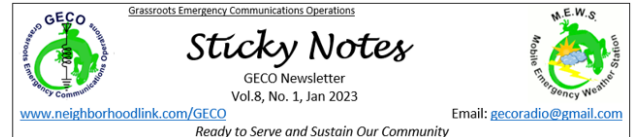
Email: gecoradio@gmail.com

Ready to Serve and Sustain Our Community

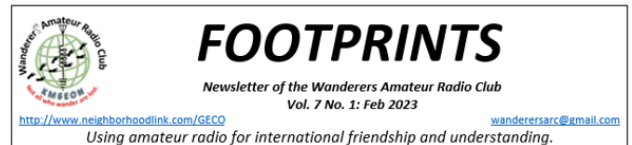
Change is in the Air

In the interest of effective time management, The GECO Sticky Notes and Wanderers Footprints Newsletters will be combined into one issue. We are still working on the details regarding the masthead and how to track the volume and numbering of the issues. The general arrangement will be for GECO *Sticky Notes* to handle more general topics about EmComm and EmPrep. The Wanderers ARC *Footprints* will deal with local/club-level topics. The new dual-format newsletter will roll out sometime in the summer of 2023

The draft dual masthead should enable tracking the respective newsletter issues (vol/no) would be less confusing than starting a new sequence for the combined newsletter. But this is in discussion as we go to press. 🦎



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Enhancing Accidental EmComm Operators

We received notices from various readers around the world about licensing exams taking place. In anticipation of newly licensed potential EmComm operators, we wanted to take some time to provide them with ways to add value to their amateur operator's license.

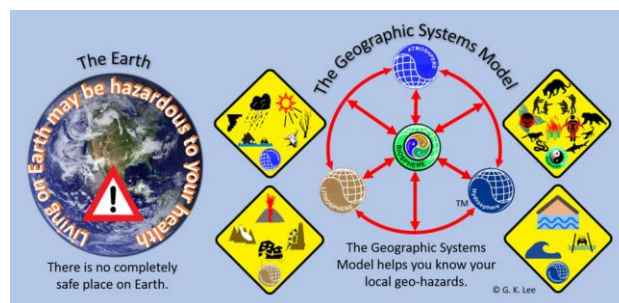
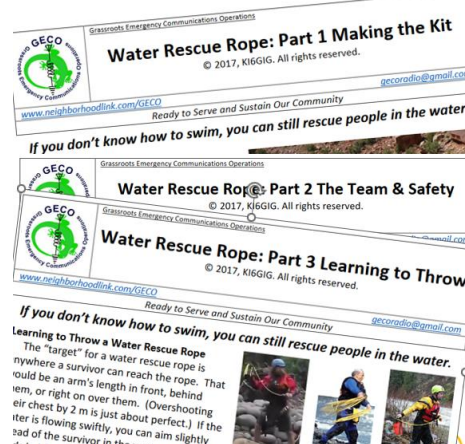
- 1) [Get on the Map](#). It helps increase their presence and existence in the world of amateur radio if they get on some websites to announce their presence. Use the hyperlink to see various places to list their callsign. Listing an email address is optional, but if they are a member of ARRL, they can use the ARRL email forwarding service with [their callsign @ARRL.NET] as an email address to give to others while protecting their email. They cannot send emails from the ARRL address, but having an ARRL.NET email address can help filter/screen their incoming emails and provides a layer of protection for their email account.
- 2) Learn Weather Observing ([MEWS](#)): The Mobile Emergency Weather Station (MEWS) is not an alternative or competitor to SKYWARN. MEWS was specifically developed to train EmComm operators in rural and remote areas to collect and report relevant



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weather from within disaster zones to improve helicopter flight safety. In most cases, no weather stations exist. In some cases, weather stations in a disaster zone could be damaged or destroyed. The simple MEWS lessons enable EmComm operators to make systematic weather observations to report to emergency authorities who can relay them to aircraft involved in relief efforts. As a bonus, the MEWS lessons have a version adapted for use in rural elementary schools as STEM/STEAM lessons that help improve rural education. Another adaptation of the same lessons supports local farmers in the areas of rainwater harvesting and soil erosion management. MEWS helps increase the value of EmComm operators to their communities. A MEWS presentation and workshop were well received at the 2012 Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications ([2012 MyGAREC](#)) conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- 3) **Learn and Prepare Non-Radio EmComm Methods:** Every emergency is unique. Almost every emergency has unexpected incidents to challenge the best prepared EmComm operators. Power and communications are almost always the first items lost in a disaster. GECO urges EmComm operators to be prepared for the worst by learning and using non-radio signaling methods as a standard backup. Many of these can be taught as practical lessons in elementary schools related to STEM/STEAM methods. Use these links to access GECO lessons: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#). Some of these were included and well received at [HamFest India 2013](#), co-presented by Bassapa VU2NXM.
- 4) **Water Rescue:** Floods are a very common emergency/disaster worldwide. Many people living in flood-prone areas do not know how to swim. Desperate to save family and friends, many non-swimmers jump into the water and become victims. Learning, making, and practicing using water rescue ropes can be an added skill for EmComm operators to boost their value in the community and EmComm teams. These can be taught in schools using STEM/STEAM methods and as practical community service lessons with rescue ropes pre-positioned throughout the community to increase public safety.
5. [Know Your Local Hazards](#). Know your local hazards so you know how to prepare yourself (and your family) as well as your station for possible local disasters. Whether you are trained in EmComm or not, when a local incident happens, you may become an accidental EmComm operator to send out a call for help. Any amateur radio operator can improve their value to their community by making more people aware of local hazards so they can prepare. 🌿



Some FCC Reminders & News

RF Exposure Evaluations Are Required

The May 4, 2023, *ARRL Letter* reported the FCC now requires all amateur stations to conduct RF exposure evaluations to see if they qualify to be exempt. Previously, amateurs were given a blanket exemption. The evaluation is

quick and easy to do especially if you operate under 100 W PEP. The RF Safety evaluation must be done when setting up new stations or when you make any modifications to an existing station.

Resources

- [ARRL](#) announcement
- [QST article](#) explaining the FCC Exposure Rules
- [ARRL RF Exposure Calculator](#)
- [ARRL RF Safety](#) (excerpt from ARRL Handbook, 2023)

Increasing Reliance on the FCC ULS

US-licensed amateur radio operators will need to use the FCC Universal Licensing System (ULS) more and more as we move on through the 21st century. In 2022 the FCC made several announcements related to the ULS and fees. Among the items mentioned:

- Amateurs need to input their email addresses.
- New applicants must use the ULS to get an FRN BEFORE they take the licensing exam.
- Fees for new applications and renewals for existing license holders can be made online through the ULS.



As Jim, KG6TQT, the GERC Net Control operator has announced several times, everyone should go to the FCC ULS and be sure their current address is accurately recorded there. Your FCC amateur license must be current to be operating legally. Another concern is the renewal notification. If your renewal notice is returned as undeliverable to your address listed in the ULS, you may encounter difficulties renewing it and may lose your call sign.

Rather than re-invent the wheel about accessing the FCC ULS, use this [link](#) for a step-by-step guide. **Join ARRL:** When I got my license in 2006, Mark N7YLA urged me to join ARRL. I did so and have been a member ever since. Among the many benefits are using the member service staff to assist with address changes and updates to the FCC ULS and processing address changes for club call signs (which must be done through a club station call sign administrator (CSCSA).

The Possible End of AM Radio?

We don't claim to even superficially understand the [technical issues](#) related to the discussions about the possible end of AM broadcasting as we know it. We are willing to bet most of the general public is not fully informed about it either. From what little we know, it seems to fit the pattern of newer technology eclipsing the old, with the newer technology linked to financial gains for a few at the expense of society as a whole, and market segmentation/fragmentation to serve special interests. This fits the pattern with social media and deep data mining for targeted customized marketing but can also divide society for easier manipulation.



We get an uncomfortable feeling of a similar pattern being repeated as with the demise of US military HF radio in favor of digital satellite communications systems. Now, there is concern about the vulnerability of that system to disruption by natural causes (e.g., solar activity) as well as enemy countermeasures AND the fact no backup communications system exists. The reliance on high-tech digital communications also occurred in EmComm. Fugate, a former FEMA director stated to Congress

the existing digital EmComm system is thought to be so bullet-proof it has resulted in many emergency managers forgetting this system had some failures in the past, does sometimes fail today, and will have failures in the future. He warned officials not to discount or ignore the need to cultivate and maintain amateur radio volunteers as the primary backup EmComm system.

It is hard to bring clarity to this AM broadcast issue for several reasons: 1) no technology is perfect, all have pluses/minuses, advantages, and disadvantages. 2) No US president has used any of the previous emergency notifications systems (e.g., CONELRAD, 1951-1963; EBS, 1963-1997; or the current EAS, 1997 to date) to notify the people of a national emergency, not even the 9/11 event in NYC. The 24/7 digitally connected world makes news reporting highly competitive with everyone scrambling to be the first to report the headline story, even at the risk of being incomplete, inaccurate, and sometimes erroneous. Add to the mix, specialized interests using social media to warp and distort (aka misinformation), and even create fake news (disinformation). The divisiveness in America today makes us appear to be the dis-United States of America more than the United States. The resulting overload has caused some to avoid watching the news. This brings to mind Mark Twain's 1800s comment that not reading the news makes you uninformed but reading the news makes you misinformed.

For the AM issue, many amateurs may take the position of being a special interest group and monitor the situation in the context of spectrum defense. It amounts to, "What's in it for us?" The way to rise above it all is to take a more holistic view using the S⁵ policy litmus test.

The challenge in addressing change is figuring out how to deal with the new unknowns (and the unintended consequences of any implemented solutions). Most of us work from our knowledge and experience. By definition, this inherently means we attempt to deal with the new using the old. Without a curious and open mind, it is difficult to overcome habits and mindsets which may have helped us successfully navigate our world. There can be no doubt learning is lifelong, if only because the world keeps changing. 🌱



Public Policy S⁵* Litmus Test

All public policies should be scored using the following test. Policies with lower ranks should be re-examined and improved. Implemented policies should be, periodically reviewed, modified and updated as needed due to changing conditions and circumstances.

Public Policy Litmus Test Questions	Yes	No
1. Is the policy based on valid science ?		
2. Does the policy deal with the entire system relative to the issue?		
3. Does the policy promote or result in synergy ?		
4. Does the policy result in a sustainable system?		
5. Is the policy good for society as a whole?		

Scoring: Yes = 5, implement; Yes ≠ 5, review, revise, update to get scoring to equal 5. Public policies not passing the test are questionable for implementation.



Applied Geography for Sustainable Living
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Experimental Emergency HAM Radio

We received preliminary reports that testing is underway for a new model of consumable survival EmComm radio saving space in your Go-Bag. It is rumored that the honey-baked model includes a generous serving of chips (e.g., microprocessor chips, etc.). There is concern about shelf-life in warmer climates. Import and use restrictions may apply in some countries due to laws and cultural considerations. Informed sources say a low salt model is being considered but research on a vegan version may be abandoned. Batteries are not included. 🌱

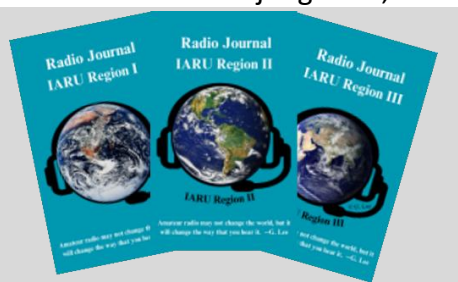
Documenting Untold Stories with Journals

Everyone has a story. Most of these stories remain untold mainly because 1) they are never recorded, and 2) the protagonist is ordinary and lives in ordinary circumstances (unlike notable folks who are also ordinary but who lived in extraordinary times or circumstances). This came home to me when my father, in a rare adult conversation with me, slipped and expressed a degree of pride in me. He said something like “You should write a book about your life, or no one will ever know what you’ve done.”

In a recent meeting for a collaborative community-based education project, journal writing was a key topic of discussion. The main purpose was to encourage students to keep a journal to 1) be a historical record for reflection at a later time to better understand themselves, their thoughts, feelings, and actions over time, 2) to monitor emotional growth and development, 3) to help relieve stress and anxiety, 4) to privately vent frustrations and anger without risking unnecessary confrontations, 5) to examine personal thoughts and feelings without the risk of judgment, and 6) for the chance to produce a personal family treasure for future

GECO Radio Journaling Project

This effort encourages amateur (HAM) radio operators to keep personal journals of their thoughts, feelings, and insights into their hobby. These are NOT logbooks. The journal covers depict a variety of topics related to amateur radio. This article features some of the early releases with more to come. [Note: For updates and new releases, click [here](#).] The journals are compact pocket-sized paperback books (4" W x 6.5" H) with 120 pages of lined paper. This makes these journals easy to keep nearby when going to the field, DX-peditions, etc. [FFI: Use the hyperlinks on the samples.]



IARU Region [I](#), [II](#), [III](#) Radio Journals.

Generations. These are NOT logbooks.

The GECO Radio Journal collection begins with a cover for each of the IARU regions. The COVID-19 pandemic was an opportunity for amateur radio to set an example for local/regional



Global social distancing IARU Region [I](#), [II](#), [III](#) Radio Journals

social distance of 2m and beyond to the global scale of up to 160m.

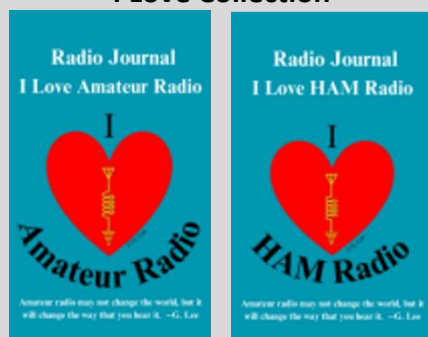
We created a sextet of journal covers related to topics germane to EmComm operations. [Note: Click on the link for the 6th card in the group to see an enlargement of the cover.] The pace of technological change increases with each passing year. Journaling is a way for ordinary people to tell the human side of the story of amateur radio. We’ve all seen how details get lost in the fog of time, such as how the term HAM got applied to amateur radio operators. The truth may not definitively be clarified. Written journals have stood the test of time for centuries. This low-tech communication method will continue to serve us well. I wonder how future historians will be able to do their research as the superabundance of digital data could vanish in the slip of a keystroke or be rendered inaccessible through obsolescence. Imagine a future someone reading a 2023 Field Day journal and



Wonder about the old stuff used.

I Love [EmComm](#)
I Love [CW](#)
I Love [QRP](#)
I Love [Field Day](#)
I Love [Portable](#) Operating.
I [Think EmComm](#)

I Love Collection



I Love ([Amateur](#), [HAM](#)) radio

Plain Heart Covers



I Love [DX](#)

I Love [HF](#)

I Love [VHF](#)

Others in the collection are listed below. More plain heart covers are in review and will be published soon.

Click [here](#) to access the Update List.

I Love [UHF](#)

I Love VOIP (TBD)

I Love DMR (TBD)

Quotable Quips

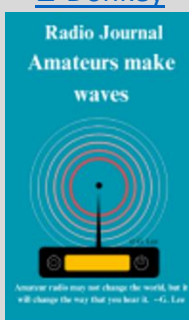


[1 Donkey](#)

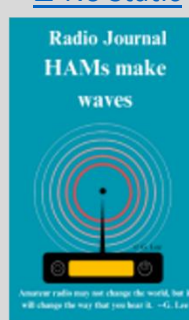
[2 No Static](#)

[3 Don't Bug](#)

[4 Bigger](#)



Make Waves ([Amateur](#), [HAM](#))



W ell-grounded ([Amateur](#), [HAM](#))



Originally, the intention was to introduce or rekindle the idea of amateur radio operators writing personal journals. No one has to see or read them. It gives people a chance to gauge their progress and involvement in the hobby or their lives in general.

Field Day is coming, and the idea arose that clubs should create a group journal for the club's history. Use the Lewis & Clark expedition as a model. They were charged with searching for a trade route across the continent, conducting scientific observations, and maintaining peaceful relations with the people along the way. In addition, the ordinary members of the venture were included in the journal writing process. Each could comment in their own words, their thoughts, and impressions. The diversity of the men, their backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives produced a very different story of the event well beyond the technical and scientific journal entries.

If all club members had the chance to write something in the club's Field Day journal it would add a more personal dimension and color to the club's history. As a collective effort, the journal would be for club members to see and read. It would be a new way to celebrate the club and its members that can be treasured through the years. Prepare for Field Day 2023 by getting a journal and include journal writing as part of your club's activities this year. Consider writing a club journal for every event. This can supplement the club's history. If there is no club historian, journals can fill the gap. 🌱

Food for Thought

"You review the past to assess the present and then determine what actions are necessary to change your future. You take what you know and apply it to how you want to grow. Thus, the power of journaling."

— Melissa Steginus, [Self Care at Work: How to Reduce Stress, Boost Productivity, and Do More of What Matters](#)