



The HWN Report

The Official Newsletter of the Hurricane Watch Net

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March 2025

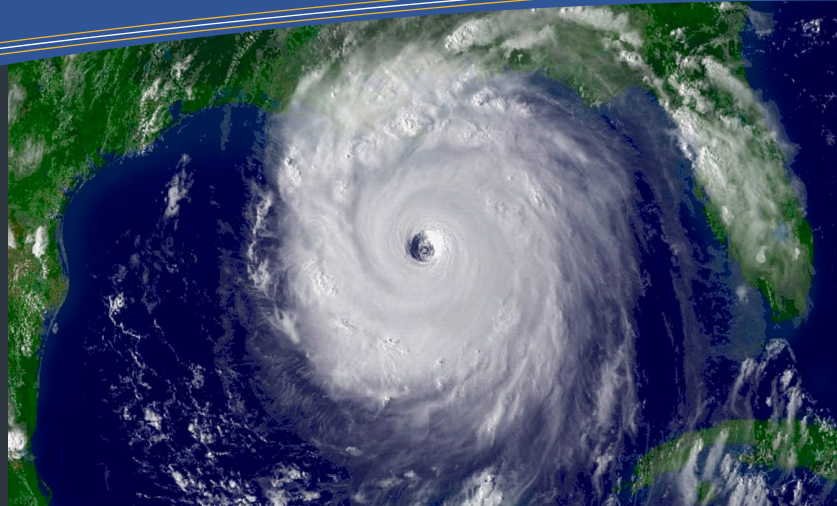
HWN 60th Anniversary and Celebration

Labor Day Weekend, 2025, will mark the 60th Anniversary of the Hurricane Watch Net.

In honor of our 60th Anniversary, we will host an "On-Air Celebration" on June 7th and 8th. We will operate on 14.325 MHz and 7.268 MHz. More information on the event will be posted on our website, hwn.org, our social media pages, and more. We hope you will join us.

COMING SOON

March 2025, we begin hosting a new video podcast to hosted on our YouTube Channel, www.youtube.com/HurricaneWatchNet. This program will focus on the tropics, the history of amateur radio's involvement with the National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center, Hurricane Preparedness, and more.



Hurricane Katrina 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

In Memoriam **P.1**

From the Manager **P.2**

Meet Dick Seeley, N8NIF **P.6**

Ham Stories **P.7**

How to Prepare for a Hurricane **P.9**

In Memoriam: HWN Remembers its Founder

By Bobby Graves – KB5HAV

It is with great sadness that I make the following announcement.

Gerald E. "Gerry" Murphy, Jerry as some knew him, passed away on February 25, 2025. He was a licensed Amateur Radio Operator with the callsign K8YUW. He is also the founder of the Hurricane Watch Net. There is a full write-up in our January 2025 edition of our monthly newsletter "The HWN Report".

Gerry, or Jerry as many knew him by, managed the Net from September 1965 until February 1988. He continued to serve HWN as Assistant Net Manager until he retired from in March 1991.

I first met Gerry, (he always addressed himself as Jerry to me and others) via email back in June of 2013, not long after I became net manager. Over the years, I learned a lot from him. During some of our discussions, I learned exactly how our organization came into being. For many years there were various stories of how HWN came into being. During the summer of 2015, I learned there was an article in the ARRL Storm Spotter Book that contained a story about HWN that was completely different. I told Jerry about this and suggested we take the time to set the record straight for everyone. Within a week, we composed and posted to our website and submitted to the ARRL the actual the creation of HWN, noting this was approved by the man himself, Jerry Murphy, K8YUW. So, the version in the ARRL Storm Spotter Book should now be correct.

From time to time, Jerry would log into our Chat Room during Net Activations to see how things were going. He once told me that he truly missed being on the air. He said a few years back, a tree in his neighbor's yard fell hitting his house and destroying his tower and beam. He never replaced it.

In 2016, Jerry sent me an old VHS tape of him preparing for Hurricane Hugo in 1998 as well as a couple of local news interviews of him. I converted that tape to digital and it is in the members section of our website. The title is called, "A man named Jerry". I plan to post this video to our YouTube channel very soon.

From time to time, during our Net Activations, Jerry would log into our Private Chat Room, this where we do a lot of coordinating behind the scenes, just to be a part of the action and cheer us on.



In 2019, shortly after Hurricane Dorian, Jerry sent the members of HWN the following in an email.

HWN Members:

Once again, as happens each and every year, I continue to be amazed, pleased, and gratified, that the minor inconvenience at the time which I experienced in Labor Day weekend of 1965, some 54 years ago, with Hurricane Betsy, would lead to such a marvelous and engaging enterprise as the Hurricane Watch Net!

Radio Amateurs at that time were fully engaged in satisfying PICON, which is defined on Google: *PICON stands for public interest, convenience, and necessity. PICON is the standard that the FCC uses to set parameters for its control. It is a basis the FCC uses to decide how to monitor the radio stations, and what they broadcast. PICON was brought into action when the Communications Act of 1934 was passed.* I am certain such thinking still guides what we do, in all of our ham radio comings and goings. It will be a very sad day if/when that no longer applies!

I often regret very much the nasty thunderstorm that took out my neighbor's big trees, and my entire antenna system. I was suddenly no longer "radio active." I was also, at that point in time, starting to have health challenges that continue even today. That is no surprise, given that I am 82 now. But I still enjoy some of my earlier activities, many of which through the blessings of the Internet, and now principally by carefully monitoring the activities of the modern Hurricane Watch Net. As I said earlier, *I continue to be amazed, pleased, and gratified!*

I thank each and every participant! This recent storm has been a marathon, and one for the ages. May God continue to bless you all, and

give you the strength and guidance to overcome all difficulties, as you serve the Public Interest, Convenience or Necessity!

In post from the ARRL in their weekly email, "The ARRL Letter" posted March 6, 2025, they including the following.

ARRL Great Lakes Division Director Scott Yonally, N8SY, has known Murphy for decades.

"Murphy was a long-time resident of Lakewood, Ohio, and I've known him for almost as long as I've been a ham. He was always a talented guy with a strong military background that made you feel just like you had enlisted into the Marines," said Yonally. "But, in most cases he was just looking out for you and amateur radio. The Northeast Ohio SKYWARN® program was born directly to the work that he did, and as a testament to the devotion that he gave to it, still shows strongly in that the Northeastern Ohio SKYWARN program is still going on today."

Labor Weekend 2025 will mark the official 60th Anniversary of the HWN. Plans for various celebrations are in place and others in the planning stages. One such celebration will be a Special Event "HWN 60th Anniversary On-Air Celebration" scheduled for June 7th and 8th. Please watch our website, www.hwn.org, for more details. We will endeavor to make these celebrations even more meaningful.

Jerry, thank you for creating this great organization. Your vision, care, and compassion, without a doubt, have helped many before, during, and after these dangerous tropical cyclone events.

You can read his full obituary at

[www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/37994045/gerald-e.-"gerry"-murphy](http://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/37994045/gerald-e.-)

From the Manager



By Bobby Graves, KB5HAV

The past 3 months have been tough on the Hurricane Watch Net Family. In December, we lost John Ellis, NP2B, a member of over 32 years. Then January, we lost Terry Redding, W6LMJ, a member of over 40 years. Now, for the 3rd month in a row, we lost our founder, Jerry Murphy, K8YUW. He was with HWN from the beginning. We will certainly miss these great men and will strive to make them proud in all that we do!

In this issue, you will meet another member of our management team, Dick Seeley, N8NIF. He is a great addition to our management with a lot of background working with the Salvation Army SATERN Net.

Since the theme of the 2025 National Hurricane Conference will be, "Looking Back 20 Years After Katrina", I thought we would dive into some of the history of Katrina. A longtime friend of mine, Richard Webb, NF5B, ex. KBØRUU, lived in the New Orleans area during Katrina. In his article, he gives a firsthand account of his experience.

The 2025 National Hurricane Conference is scheduled for April 14-17 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel in New Orleans. The Amateur Radio Forum will be held on Tuesday, April 15th, 1:30 to 5:30 PM CDT. We will be in the Canal Room on the 3rd Floor.

The Amateur Radio Forum is open to the public at no charge. However, should you wish to attend any additional forums, you will need to register

and pay an entrance fee. You can do so either the door or online. Their website is www.hurricanemeeting.com.

This years speakers for the Amateur Radio Forum include:

NHC Hurricane Specialist (TBA)

Bob Robichaud, VE1MBR – Canadian Hurricane Center

Bill Feist, WB8BZH and Joe Bassett, W1WCN – Salvation Army SATERN Net

Josh Johnston, KE5MHV – ARRL Director of Emergency Management

Rob Macedo, KD1CY – , Director of Operations, VoIP Hurricane Net

Julio Ripoll, WD4R – Assistant Coordinator for WX4NHC

Bobby Graves, KB5HAV – Net Manager, Hurricane Watch Net

This forum will be livestreamed: www.youtube.com/live/6eFztSOLiEU This event will also be recorded and posted to our YouTube Channel, www.youtube.com/HurricaneWatchNet a few days later.

There will be very nice door prizes at the end of to the day. You must be present to win. Prizes include but are not limited to:

ARRL (various)

WX4NHC – Baofeng HT

Hurricane Watch Net

Various prizes from our merch store

Handcrank AM/FM/NOAA radio

Grand Prize: Tempest Personal Weather Station by WeatherFlow

If you have an idea or article for future issues of "The HWN Report", please let me know. You can reach me at editor@hwn.org.

Hurricane Katrina, 20 Years Later

2005, a year that many may never forget. Some people I know called it “The Year of Hell”. 2005 was indeed a historic and unforgettable year for tropical cyclones, both due to the sheer number of storms and their devastating impact, especially on the United States.

The use of the Greek alphabet to name storms for the first time signified just how extraordinary the season was. The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season broke numerous records, with 28 named storms, including 7 major hurricanes (Category 3 or higher), which was a notable increase in activity compared to typical years. The fact that 15 storms made landfall – 7 of which struck the United States – was an alarming and unprecedented statistic.

Among these, Hurricane Katrina was the most catastrophic, leaving an indelible mark on the U.S. Gulf Coast. It caused massive destruction, particularly in New Orleans, where levee breaches led to widespread flooding. The damage and loss of life were staggering, and it underscored the vulnerability of coastal cities to powerful hurricanes. The federal, state, and local response to the disaster was widely criticized, and the tragedy became a major point of focus for discussions about disaster preparedness and response in the U.S.

changes in policies, funding, and recovery efforts in the years that followed.

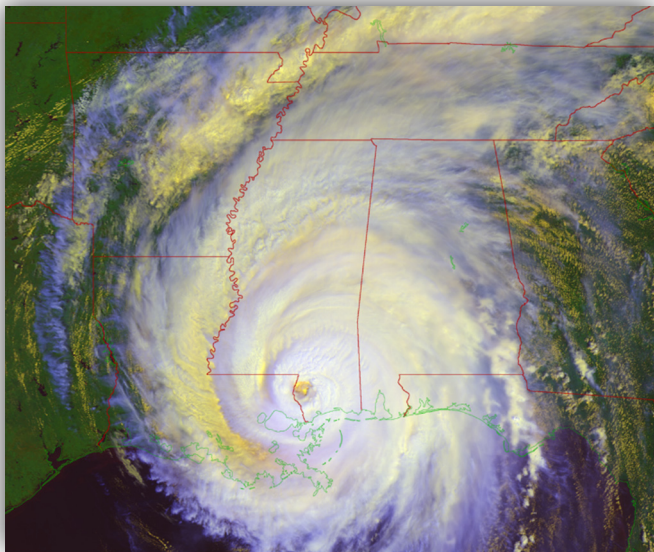


Flooding of New Orleans after the levees broke

The aftermath of Katrina became a pivotal moment in the U.S. history of natural disasters. It was a wake-up call about the need for better storm protection, better communication during emergencies, and a more coordinated approach between federal, state, and local agencies. The images of New Orleans submerged under water, the stranded residents, and the overwhelmed emergency response efforts remain etched in many people's minds, making it feel like the storm just happened yesterday.

As we reflect on the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, it serves as both a reminder of the human cost of the disaster and a testament to the resilience of the affected communities who continue to rebuild and recover from the profound impact of Katrina. For those who lived through it, and for future generations, it is a stark reminder of the destructive power of nature and the importance of disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Hurricane Katrina made its first landfalling as a Category 1 Hurricane on Thursday, August 25th near Hallandale Beach, Florida with sustained winds of 80 mph and gusts to 92 mph. As the storm moved inland, the eye of Katrina passed directly over the National Hurricane Center around 8:30 PM Local. By 2:00 AM Friday, August 26th, Katrina exited southwest Florida into the Gulf as a Tropical Storm with sustained winds of 70 mph. By 5:00 AM EDT, Katrina had regained Hurricane status.

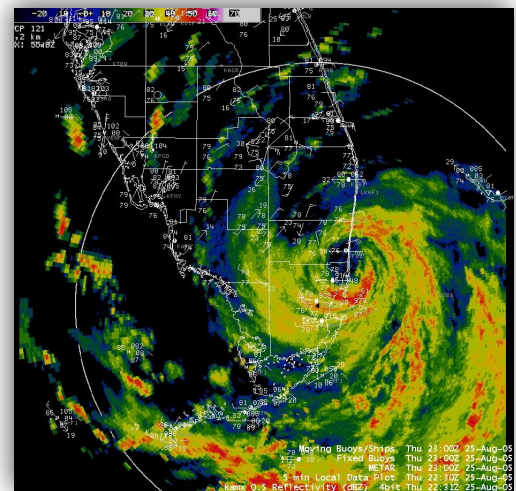


Katrina, not long after landfall on August 29, 2005.

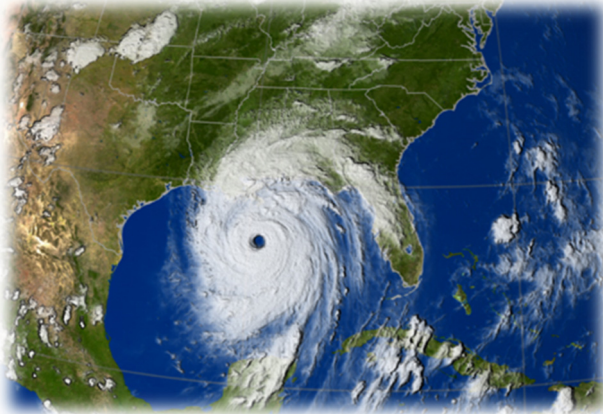
While Katrina's impact was by far the most severe, other hurricanes from the 2005 season, such as Rita, Wilma, and Dennis, also caused significant damage. Each one brought its own set of challenges, with some leading to widespread evacuations, power outages, and loss of life.

Indeed, 2025 marks the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, a storm that forever changed the landscape of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, especially in the United States. The impact of Katrina is still fresh in the collective memory of those who lived through it, as well as those who closely followed the events that unfolded during and after the storm.

When Katrina made landfall in late August 2005, it left a devastating legacy. It caused catastrophic flooding in New Orleans, Louisiana, due to the failure of the levees, and caused widespread destruction across the Gulf Coast, especially in Mississippi and Alabama. The storm led to over 1,800 deaths, displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and caused billions of dollars in damage. The disaster exposed significant shortcomings in emergency response, preparedness, and infrastructure, prompting major



Over the next few days, Katrina underwent a dramatic intensification. As it gained strength over the warm waters of the Gulf, it rapidly became a Category 5 hurricane, with sustained winds reaching an incredible 175 mph by Sunday, August 28, 2005. This marked the storm's peak intensity.



Katrina at peak intensity, August 28, 2005. Category 5, sustained winds of 175mph

On Saturday, August 27th, while the storm was a Cat 3 Hurricane, it was moving to the west at 7 mph. I suggested to my family and friends that they had better start stocking up for the storm. Being that I lived in Pearl, Mississippi at the time, a town just east of Jackson and some 150 miles inland, everyone thought me crazy, including my wife. They felt the storm would continue more to the west and not affect our state at all. Besides, if it did come our way, as far inland as we lived, certainly we would be spared any damage or power outages. As I told my wife, I may be crazy but I'm heading into town to get what I feel we need to survive for the next 3 weeks!

Back then, I was not able to walk...not very far at least...perhaps 20 feet at best using a cane or walker. I was still recovering from surgery due to a very rare form of spinal cord cancer. I had a power wheelchair that operated on two 12-volt deep-cycle marine batteries. I went to a local truck stop and found a 12-volt DC cooler that would hold a 6-pack of drinks. I thought this would be great to keep medications cool and to keep a couple of small plastic bottles of water cool. Then I stopped by the local Radio Shack (remember those?) to get a roll of zip cord and a few 4-inch 12-volt DC cooling fans. Then I stopped by the grocery store to grab a few cases of water and some non-perishable food. Something inside me said we would be without power for a long time. Again, people thought I was nuts.

Shortly after 6:00 AM local, Monday, August 29, 2005, Katrina made its second landfall in Buras-Triumph, Louisiana located in the southeastern part of the state, south of New Orleans. The storm had weakened to a Category 3 Hurricane with sustained winds of 125 mph. However, due to the sheer size of the storm and the long hours of being a Category 5 Hurricane, the storm surge would be historic!

By 11:00 AM local, the power at my home went out. The rain was heavy and getting heavier by the minute. Around 3:00 PM, the winds reminded me of being close to a tornado. I felt that at any moment the roof of our house would be blown off. My house backed up to a city park. It "used" to have a lot of large oaks and pines. Between 3 and 5 PM, trees began falling – big oak and tall pines. By 7:00 PM, the wind and rain had calmed down, so, like many, we began to check outside to investigate the damage. Thankfully, our house was safe; however, many homes on my street had major roof damage. Those who had wooden fences around their backyard, well, they were on the ground. There was no electricity, no telephone, no internet service, and, sadly, no cell phone service in my area. Thankfully, we did have running water.

Overnight, those 4-inch fans came in handy. Without power, there was no AC to keep the house cool. I had the fans hooked up to one of the batteries on my power wheelchair. I also hooked up a battery-powered AM/FM/TV in hopes of learning more about the storm and when power may return. I could find only one TV station on the air. This is when I began learning just how bad Katrina was. But this was just the beginning.

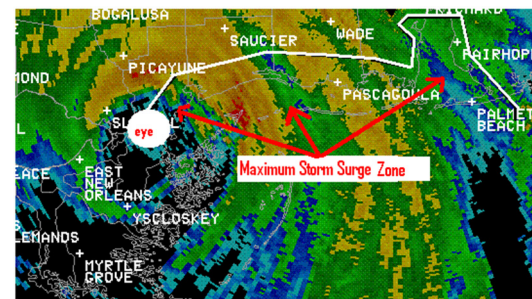


This is the battery powered AM/FM/TV that I used.

That evening, what I learned was devastating – the full scope of the destruction was still yet to be seen, much less comprehended. There was no doubt, Katrina caused "Extreme" widespread damage. While heartbreaking to see and witness on TV over the next few days, the flooding of New Orleans after the levees failed, what wasn't being told was the devastation to the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast!

My neighborhood was without power and telephone service for 3 weeks. For some in our neighborhood, those needing gas and other supplies were out of luck for about a week as trees blocked all roads. But, we all pulled together to help one another as best as possible.

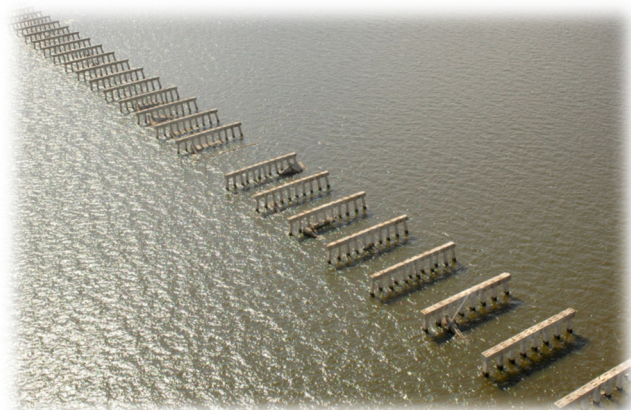
Besides the catastrophic flooding in New Orleans, caused by the levees failing, Katrina's storm surge was historic. The highest storm surge occurred along the Mississippi-Alabama border, particularly in the area of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, and Bayou La Batre, Alabama. The peak surge in these areas was estimated to be between 12 and 20 feet. In fact, the storm surge reached up to 6-12 miles inland in some of the hardest-hit areas.



0.5 deg Base Reflectivity - 1431 UTC - NWS WSR-880 - KMDB - Mobile, AL

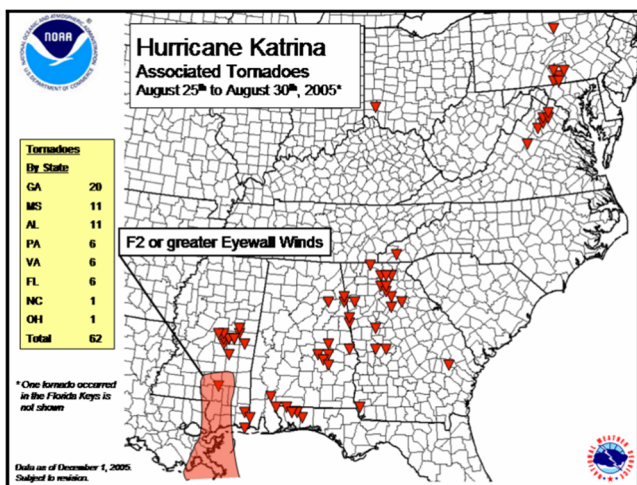


Wind and Storm Surge Damage in Gulfport, Mississippi



Biloxi, Ms., October 4, 2005 - Destroyed Mississippi Gulf Coast Highway I-90 as a result of winds and tidal surge from Hurricane Katrina. The support columns are all that remain of this section of I-90 that connects Biloxi with Ocean Springs, Miss. John Fleck / FEMA

Whenever I speak about Hurricanes, I try to remind people that these are not a coastal event. These storms can affect people in a massive way well inland. Hurricane Katrina not only brought a devastating storm surge and widespread flooding but also spawned a significant number of tornadoes. These tornadoes were a secondary but destructive effect of the hurricane's outer bands, which are common in strong storms. Between August 29 and August 31, 2005, at least 60 tornadoes were reported in states such as Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, and even Tennessee. This is a substantial number, making Katrina one of the deadliest and most widespread tornado-producing hurricanes in history.



Many of these tornadoes caused significant damage, particularly in parts of Alabama and Mississippi. The tornadoes were typically weaker than the ones associated with traditional severe weather outbreaks, but they still caused considerable destruction. Some of the tornadoes were rated EF2 (significant damage) and EF3 (severe damage) on the Enhanced Fujita scale.

As Katrina weakened over land, its remnants still generated tornadoes, particularly in the outer rainbands of the storm. These tornadoes extended well beyond the Gulf Coast, affecting areas well inland, including parts of Tennessee and even North Carolina. The tornadoes were often brief but violent, striking with little warning. The tornadoes caused more deaths and injuries in addition to the overall destruction caused by the hurricane's winds, rain, and storm surge. At least 40 people were reported to have died due to tornadoes related to Katrina, and many more were injured. These tornadoes added another layer of chaos to the already dire situation caused by the hurricane itself.

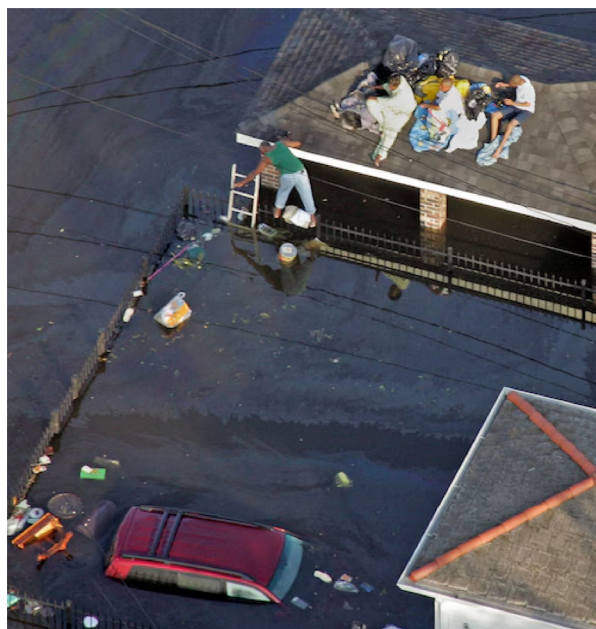
Hurricane Katrina holds a significant place in U.S. history for several profound reasons, each contributing to its lasting impact on national awareness, preparedness, and response to natural disasters. Below are some of the key reasons why Katrina is historically important:

1. Catastrophic Destruction and Loss of Life:

- **Unprecedented Damage:** Hurricane Katrina caused massive destruction across a wide swath of the Gulf Coast, including Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The storm's storm surge, flooding, and strong winds left entire communities in ruins. The total damage was estimated at over \$125 billion, making it one of the most costly hurricanes in U.S. history.
- **Loss of Life:** The storm claimed the lives of 1,800+ people, most of whom were in Louisiana. This massive loss of life, combined with the long-term displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, marked Katrina as a humanitarian disaster as much as a natural one.

2. The Failure of the Levee System in New Orleans:

- One of the most significant and devastating aspects of Katrina was the failure of the levee system in New Orleans, which was supposed to protect the city from storm surge. When the levees failed, large parts of the city, particularly in the Lower Ninth Ward, were inundated with several feet of water.
- The levee failures resulted in catastrophic flooding, which trapped residents, destroyed homes, and left New Orleans submerged for days. This failure exposed serious vulnerabilities in the nation's infrastructure and raised questions about the adequacy of flood protection in major cities.



3. Impact on Vulnerable Populations:

- Katrina disproportionately affected low-income communities, minority populations, and elderly individuals. Many of these residents were unable to evacuate before the storm due to lack of resources, transportation, or government assistance.
- The lack of timely evacuation and support efforts made the aftermath of the storm particularly devastating for these groups, highlighting the deep social and racial inequalities in the U.S. regarding access to resources and disaster preparedness.

4. The Inadequate Government Response:

- The federal, state, and local government response to Hurricane Katrina was widely regarded as slow, disjointed, and inefficient. The FEMA response was criticized for being poorly coordinated, and delayed aid to those in need, particularly in New Orleans, where many were stranded without food, water, or medical assistance for days after the storm.
- The chaotic response led to a loss of public trust in government agencies and was a key factor in political debates about the effectiveness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Bush administration's handling of the disaster.

5. Media Coverage and Public Awareness:

- The widespread media coverage of the disaster—particularly images and stories of people stranded on rooftops, in shelters, or being rescued by helicopters—brought the devastating impacts of the storm into homes across the nation and the world. The images of New Orleans flooding and rescue operations were broadcast 24/7, highlighting the scale of the disaster and the suffering of residents.
- The media coverage played a significant role in sparking national debate about the country's preparedness for major natural disasters and its ability to respond effectively to crises.

6. Environmental and Economic Consequences:

- The environmental consequences of Katrina were severe. The hurricane caused massive coastal erosion, wetland loss, and damage to wildlife habitats along the Gulf Coast. The storm also caused significant damage to oil rigs, refineries, and other infrastructure, leading to disruptions in oil production and gas prices across the U.S.
- The economic toll on local communities, especially in Mississippi and Louisiana, was immense. In addition to the physical damage, businesses were forced to close, and recovery was slow, with entire industries, including tourism, fishing, and energy production, suffering long-term effects.

7. Rebuilding and Recovery:

- The recovery efforts following Katrina were long and difficult, as it took years for many of the hardest-hit areas to rebuild and restore basic services. The effort to rebuild New Orleans and the surrounding Gulf Coast areas was complicated by funding issues, bureaucratic challenges, and political disagreements.
- The disaster also underscored the need for better planning and preparedness in rebuilding efforts, particularly for those most vulnerable in the aftermath of the storm.

8. Policy and Preparedness Reforms:

- Katrina led to significant reforms in U.S. disaster response policies. In the wake of the storm, FEMA was overhauled, and the National Response Plan (now known as the National Response Framework) was revised to address weaknesses in the nation's disaster preparedness and response systems.
- The storm also influenced policies regarding flood protection and levee standards in major cities and coastal areas. Efforts to strengthen infrastructure and improve early warning systems became a national priority.

9. Legacy of Resilience:

- Despite the immense destruction, the people of the Gulf Coast showed remarkable resilience in the years following the storm. The rebuilding of New Orleans and the surrounding areas, including the Mississippi Gulf Coast, became a symbol of recovery, highlighting the strength of the local communities and the determination of individuals to overcome the challenges of living in a hurricane-prone region.
- The recovery process also sparked a national conversation about how communities could better prepare for future natural disasters and how the U.S. could adapt to increasingly frequent extreme weather events.

Hurricane Katrina was a landmark event in U.S. history due to the widespread devastation, the failure of infrastructure, the human cost, and the ineffective response that followed. It highlighted the vulnerability of coastal cities, the need for better disaster preparedness, and the importance of government accountability in times of crisis. Katrina's impact is still felt today, and it serves as both a tragic reminder of the destructive power of nature and a catalyst for reform in disaster response and climate policy.

Meet Dick Seeley, N8NIF



By Dick Seeley, N8NIF

Growing up in the 60/70's I had a neighbor who had a pair of CB handheld radios. They were black and silver, as large as a brick, with a 3-foot chrome collapsible antenna. Great fun, everybody had to have at least one to be able to join in. As I began to drive in the mid-70s, the "real" CB craze began. I had several mobile CBs, advancing to the sideband version in my vehicle. Having grown up in a snowmobile family, before there were cell phones, there was no way to communicate when out on the trails when you needed help for emergencies or breakdowns. Snowmobiles were not very dependable in the 70's and 80s! A friend of mine suggested

that I take and pass the amateur radio Novice Class exam and then the Technician class so that I could utilize the auto patch system on the repeaters in the counties where we would snowmobile in. Got my Novice license with code in 1989 and directly followed with my Technician in 90-91. My first two radios were an Icom 2GAT handheld which I wore the button indicators off of the buttons, and an Icom 229H mobile which is still in use as a portable packet/Winlink station. I accumulated several other radios in that time frame before life changed towards a "let's have a family direction".

Jumping forward several to many years, a good friend of mine, whom I did not know was a Ham, asked if I was interested in going to a weekly dinner with a group of Hams. The radio bug was immediately re-installed. The radio collection began to grow, and of course, they were all weather geeks as well. Always having been a weather geek myself, we all got along and still get along very well. We have a phrase that we all use that is: *"It's not that we like radio so much, it's that we don't like money! Just seems to be the*

thing that we spend the money on!"

I blame two of the guys in the group for getting me deeper into radio sports and emergency communications. 1st is Bob Dennis, WX8BOB, who was the West Michigan Northern Indiana SATERN Coordinator, got me into Salvation Army SATERN and encouraged me to get my General license. Bob also groomed me to take over as the Great Lakes Division SATERN Coordinator when he retired, as well as the 20-meter Salvation Army SATERN Net Manager. 2nd is Tom Bosscher, K8TB, who is the Ottawa County Michigan Emergency Services Volunteer Coordinator, who challenged me to take his General in a day class, coming up in several months. I was so fearful of being the first person to ever fail the class that I started to study immediately. I took the General class test at the club offering and passed it before the General in-a-day class came to fruition.

I have been blessed to be involved with radio in SKYWARN for Michigan for 15-20 years. I have been and continue to be the assistant SKYWARN manager in Kent County for the past 5 years. I am also Ottawa County Emergency Communications and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) certified, State of Michigan certified AUX-C, CISA/DHS licensed, two SHARES stations for home, and the Great Lakes Division Salvation Army. Currently, I am the SATERN coordinator for the Great Lakes division as well as the Salvation Army SATERN International 20m net manager.

During the 2020 and 2021 seasons, representing Kent County, Ottawa County, and SATERN, my plans won two 1st Place and one 3rd Place in the bi-annual State of Michigan AUXCOMM Simulated Emergency Test (SET). Last year I was called up from the state to work in the Muskegon EOC for 3 days after the tornado, running the damage assessment teams and assisting and scribing for the emergency manager as well as posting to the state critical incident boards.

In May of 2021, there was a falling out with the then-current non-credentialed Salvation Army SATERN 20-meter International Net Manager. The Net, frequency, and acronym SATERN were hijacked leaving the Salvation Army without a Net for their SATERN program. Having been a regular daily check-in, I was very disheartened and disappointed being a Salvation Army SATERN member. I suggested to Bob Dennis, WX8BOB, who was the current SATERN Coordinator for West MI/Northern IN, that I should reach out to Bobby Graves, KB5HAV, Net Manager and President of the Hurricane Watch Net, asking to share their long-standing presence on the 14.325 MHz frequency when there is not a hurricane threatening, knowing that there was a partnership already in place for Salvation Army SATERN to assist them with outgoing health and welfare traffic from the affected areas.

I had been a financial supporter of the Hurricane Watch Net for several years and had several personal conversations with Bobby in previous years. With Major Michele Heaver, SATERN liaison to the Salvation Army, blessing, the plan was put into motion. During my first conversation with Bobby, he was sad about the situation with our Net, but ecstatic about

sharing the frequency and a renewed partnership with the Salvation Army SATERN group, expressing that every time they had to pass health and welfare traffic, their net control personnel and or people with traffic would have to leave the 14.325 MHz frequency and move down the band to 14.265 MHz for SATERN to take and pass that traffic.

After 3 meetings with Bobby, myself, Bob Dennis, Major Michele Heaver, and Bill Feist, WB8BZH, SATERN Southern Territory Coordinator, the partnership was secured, and Bob Dennis was asked to write a new MOU. Bobby immediately granted access to the private section of their website and chat room privileges to SATERN personnel that were recommended. SATERN has activated with the Hurricane Watch Net and National Hurricane Center for every activation since.

Personally, being a night shift for most of my career, I had the pleasure of being on the night shift until morning and assisting with putting out calls and logging contacts, acting as both Hurricane Watch Net as well as SATERN. 2 seasons ago, I was honored by Bobby asking me to join the Hurricane Watch Net as a full member and Net Control/Relay/Scribe. I was the first member to have ever been granted full membership without having to go through training or first-year probation based on my previous work with them. This past season I was honored to be chosen, with one other gentleman, to become one of the now 4-person management team.

My career has been in the printing trade my whole life. My Father was a printer and I followed in his footsteps. I started working in the print shop he was a foreman at when I was 14. When he opened his own print shop, I started working for him directly after I graduated from high school. I spent some time at Rochester Institute of Technologies print management school, before leaving his shop and moving to large format printing. I retired after serving 29 years as 2nd shift plant production manager for Westrock Corporation.

In my other life, I have been a semi-pro musician playing drums and more so guitar in several successful bands. After retiring from regular gigging, I owned and operated a sound company and now just run sound for 1 band and an occasional event.

I currently live in Jenison, MI with my wonderfully tolerant of radio wife, Heidi. We have 2 boys with their wives and families of a total of 4 Grandchildren who are all within 30 minutes of us. 3 boys and one girl. My oldest Grandson is 16 and has held a Technician license since he was 14, youngest is in his terrible 2s! We lost our special needs Daughter to the lord at 25 several years ago. We have a very small cabin on a 60-acre lake in Baldwin, MI, approx. 80 miles north of home. I have a full and better station set up at the cabin than at home. Again, wonderfully tolerant wife!

Stay safe and God Bless,
Dick N8NIF

Ham Stories – Marooned on Hospital Island



By Richard Webb – NF5B

In 2005, Kathleen, KCØHZU, my partner, and I lived in New Orleans, Louisiana. As July turned to August, we made a move from inner-city New Orleans to a mobile home with an addition grafted onto it on the outskirts of Slidell, LA (northeast of New Orleans across from Lake Pontchartrain).

A previous move forced me to no longer have a viable station at home, so I did my work handling traffic and as Net Control for various amateur radio networks from

the station at LSU Medical Center New Orleans.

LSU New Orleans consisted at that time of the old Charity Hospital, and the building where I was housed was about a mile distant which had been a Catholic Hospital.

The hospital station consisted of an Icom IC-746 Pro connected to a G5RV 10 stories in the air, and an Icom dual bander for 2-meters and 70-centimeters connected to an omnidirectional antenna also mounted on the roof.

After our move to Slidell, I was still operating primarily from the hospital station in New Orleans as my home station was a work in progress.

We knew that if a hurricane or other communications emergency was to occur our posts would be at LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. With that awareness, I kept a weather eye out, not just by monitoring local weather information but also via the Hurricane Watch Net website, www.hwn.org, and other sources. So, I was well aware of Katrina before she struck New Orleans that Monday morning during the small hours.

Since I was active in NTS, the Gulf Coast Emergency Net, as well as the Maritime Mobile Service Network, my plan was to operate from the hospital station when Katrina made landfall, no matter where she was projected to come ashore.

That Friday I had various errands to run in the city as well as our usual monthly meeting of emergency and disaster response people at LSU medical center. These meetings were held during the lunch hour usually, and that day was no exception. I stated during that meeting that no matter where Katrina made landfall I would be operating from the hospital station as was my custom for other storms that summer.

We finished our business in the city after the meeting, had dinner at a favorite restaurant, and headed home. The next morning I put some clothes in the laundry, performed Net Control duty on a 40-meter traffic net, and planned to relax until later that day. A phone call from a friend changed my plans rapidly, however. I was told that New Orleans would be shutting down the city to inbound traffic at 5:00 P.M. If I planned to be at the hospital, I'd better get moving. We quickly loaded up some changes of clothing, some spare radio gear, and of course my acoustic guitar so I would be able to entertain myself during periods of downtime, if there were any.



Richard Webb – NF5B (ex KBØRUU) and Kathleen Anderson – KCØHZU (SK) operating the ham station KESCOA at LSU Medical Center in New Orleans, LA

Sunday was spent with the minutiae of recordkeeping and preparation. I charged batteries to power the HF and VHF/UHF stations, made sure handheld radios were fully charged; kept eyes and ears on the weather, registered with the clerical staff, and got my temporary bracelet. I already had the remainder of my volunteer credentials, as did Kathleen. We had previously made attempts to get additional volunteers on board, as all other licensed hams at both facilities were medical professionals who had other duties. These efforts had borne no fruit, so we spent part of the day trying to expedite the certification of a couple of additional candidates, but that effort bore no fruit.

After discussions with management of the ARRL Gulf Coast Emergency Net, it was agreed that they would begin operations at midnight on Monday, August 29.

Sometime over that Monday morning, our G5RV was snapped in the wind.

It would be repaired later in the week, first with a wire nut, then with a proper solder joint.

Of course, we expected flooding, but the flooding didn't happen to any great degree for almost 24 hours after the hurricane was past us. By then we learned that the local emergency operations center at city hall was off the air. I could contact other people doing Search and Rescue, and folks providing other support to local agencies, but getting traffic out was going to be a problem without a reliable HF link to the outside world. One person at the hospital had an Iridium satellite phone, but the user had to go up on the roof, and then often those channels were so busy that he could not get a connection to place a call.

After some discussion with the building electrician, I told him I needed to either get onto the roof myself to survey what was needed or have him take a look and report back. He did so, telling me that he found both of the severed pieces of the G5RV and was able to join them with a wire nut. I fired up the Icom IC-746 Pro and hit the automatic antenna tuner, and she tuned right up, so we were once again in the HF comms business. That occurred just in time, as we had a couple of patients that had gone critical who would need to be evacuated by boat to somewhere that a chopper could land, as well as other traffic that needed to reach state and federal authorities. So, I spent quite a bit of time on 40 and 80-meters during the first couple of days, at first handling priority traffic ensuring adequate supplies, and evacuation of critical patients when necessary.

Cell phones were available, but they were unreliable. Still, many staff and patients were paying \$5.00 and even more for an attempt to get a message out via working cell phones. Since there was some propagation enhancement on UHF after the storm some success was had, but many were disappointed.

Soon I had more business with outbound health and welfare advisories to family and close friends than one might expect. I kept traffic nets well supplied with this traffic, which was easy to handle as the text of each message was the same, and only the signature of the sender and the address info of the recipient differed. Needless to say, the radio room became a popular place, not just because of outbound messages, but because we had one of those free-play AM/FM human-powered radios which we would loan out to various departments so they could get news and maybe entertain themselves a bit. This allowed folks to save those all-important batteries for flashlights.

So, you are asking at this point, what about other power? The main auxiliary generator for the hospital was located in the basement, go figure, so we were dependent on small portable generators. Luckily we were well supplied with them, and numerous fire escapes and open windows sported small generators with various extension cords supplying essential devices.

In the radio room, we powered numerous power strips to recharge small batteries and VHF/UHF radios. The HF and VHF/UHF fixed stations were powered by regular deep cycle 13.8 Vdc units. We had backups, so each day the hospital electrician did us another solid, brought a hand truck, and took yesterday's pair to a generator to charge them. We couldn't do it there as we shared a generator with the pharmacy, and they had a couple of refrigeration units they needed to keep running.

We never really had a power problem. In fact, I would unplug a couple of power strips every morning and use some of our ration of bottled water to make that all-important pot of coffee, making sure, of course, that both doors to the radio room were closed securely so that the smell didn't cause a riot.

Conditions were of course primitive, but we had an air mattress for sleeping in the conference room next door, coffee; extra rations that we had

stockpiled ahead of time in the radio room, and of course reading material and my guitar.

Life settled into a rhythm, wake, handle traffic through most of the day, take breaks and slip outside for a breath of air, lather-rinse-repeat. Fall into bed around eleven, sweat and sleep as best one could. That all changed Friday morning, however.

Around 5:00 A.M. I was awakened by Tim Butcher, my supervisor. Tim told me that a woman stranded in a nearby attic had gone into labor and knew she was going to need a cesarean section to give birth. She had seen lights in the hospital of course, which were staff moving about by flashlight caring for patients, so she exited the attic and swam five blocks to us hoping that she could get the procedure done safely. That had to be one nasty swim!

Tim told me we needed a Coast Guard chopper to evacuate her to somewhere that could perform the procedure safely, and it had to be the U.S. Coast Guard as they had the facilities to lift her in a rescue basket as a chopper couldn't land on our roof. Since the Nets on 14.300 MHz, the Maritime Mobile Service Network and Intercon were not on the air, I went to the Gulf Coast Emergency Net on 3873 kHz and broke the Net with emergency traffic.

Net Control on the Gulf Coast Net was rather new and dithered a bit not sure how to respond, but Rob Norris, N8ORT, who at the time was an MMSN Net Control Operator, had been listening to the Net. Rob had con-

tact with his local Coast Guard facility in Cleveland, OH and after ascertaining the street address of our hospital was able to give USCG New Orleans GPS coordinates. The patient was successfully evacuated and gave birth to a healthy baby boy later that morning via C-Section.



Due to lawlessness and those firing weapons on first responders and those being evacuated to better locations for help, armed guards on air-boats helped protect and assist nurses and moms with babies relocate to hospitals better equipped to serve their needs.

Later on that day all of the remaining patients and staff were evacuated from the hospital. That adventure is a story for another time.

How to prepare for a Hurricane?

By Bobby Graves – KB5HAV

At the 2016 National Hurricane Conference in Orlando, FL, Dr. Rick Knabb, Director of the National Hurricane Center at the time, gave a presentation to the Amateur Radio Forum. His presentation was a reminder of the critical role amateur radio operators play in supporting hurricane forecasting and emergency response efforts. He shared insights on hurricane preparation, emphasizing four key actions that everyone should take when preparing for a hurricane: **Evacuation, Supplies, Insurance, and Strengthen Your Home.**

Let's dive deeper into these topics one by one.

Evacuation:

Evacuation is often the most important and immediate action to take when a hurricane is approaching, especially if you live in an area prone to flooding, storm surges, or significant wind damage. Dr. Knabb emphasized the need to:

- Know evacuation routes: Ensure you know where to go and how to get there, with multiple routes in case some are closed due to flooding or debris.
- Leave early: Don't wait until the last minute. Traffic congestion and road closures can make it difficult to evacuate during the final hours before a storm.
- Have a plan for pets and loved ones: Ensure everyone in your household is included in the evacuation plan, including pets, and that you know the shelters that accept animals.
- Stay informed: Keep track of storm warnings and evacuation orders from local authorities, ensuring that your decision to evacuate is based on the latest, most accurate information.

Supplies:

Building a hurricane supply kit is essential for making it through the storm and its aftermath. Dr. Knabb stressed the importance of preparing in advance:

- Water: Have at least one gallon of water per person per day for

at least three days, for drinking and sanitation.

- Non-perishable food: Stock up on canned goods, dry food, and energy bars that don't require refrigeration.
- First aid kit: Include bandages, antiseptics, prescription medications, and any personal health items.
- Flashlights and batteries: Power outages are common during hurricanes, so have a reliable source of light.
- Portable charger: Keep your cell phone charged with a backup battery or solar charger.
- Important documents: Keep copies of insurance policies, IDs, and other critical documents in a waterproof container.

Having enough supplies on hand will help you stay safe and comfortable until conditions improve.

Insurance:

Insurance is a crucial element in hurricane preparedness, as it ensures that you are financially protected from damage caused by a storm. Dr. Knabb advised homeowners to:

- Review your policies: Make sure you have sufficient coverage, especially for flood damage, as most standard homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flood damage.
- Flood insurance: If you live in a flood-prone area, consider purchasing flood insurance, as it often requires a waiting period before coverage begins.
- Document your property: Take pictures or video of your property before the storm to document its condition. This can be crucial when filing claims after the storm.
- Understand your deductible: Know your insurance deductible for both hurricane and flood damage and how it might affect your financial responsibilities after the storm.

Having the right insurance in place can help you recover financially and rebuild after a hurricane.

Strengthen Your Home:

Lastly, Dr. Knabb emphasized the importance of strengthening your home to withstand the impacts of high winds and storm surges. Some actions to consider include:

Do You Have Ideas or Articles for this Newsletter?

If you have ideas or articles you would like to see in this newsletter, as well as have any questions or comments, they are most welcomed and can be sent to editor@hwn.org

When submitting an article, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Articles should be of general interest to readers if possible.
- Articles should be in MS Word format (.doc) or plain text files (.txt)
- Vulgar or offensive language should be avoided.
- No copyrighted materials.

HWN, Inc. reserves the right to edit submissions for content or length. HWN, Inc. reserves the right to refuse submissions for any reason.

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- Install storm shutters: Protect your windows and doors from flying debris with shutters or impact-resistant glass.
- Secure your roof: Ensure that your roof is securely anchored and that any loose shingles or tiles are replaced.
- Reinforce your garage door: Many garages fail during hurricanes due to the pressure changes and high winds, so reinforce your garage door to avoid structural failure.
- Clear gutters and drains: Ensure that gutters and downspouts are clear of debris to prevent water from accumulating and causing water damage.
- Anchor outdoor objects: Secure loose objects like lawn furniture, grills, and anything that could be blown around by strong winds.

Strengthening your home makes it more likely to survive the storm, reducing the damage to both your property and belongings.

Upcoming Events



April 14th – 17th, 2025
Hilton New Orleans Riverside
New Orleans, LA

Amateur Radio Forum
April 15th, 1:30 – 5:30 PM CDT
Canal Room, 3rd Floor

For complete details, visit <https://hurricanemeeting.com>



HWN 60TH ANNIVERSARY ON-AIR CELEBRATION

June 7th and 8th, 2025

For complete details, visit www.hwn.org

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Bobby Graves – KB5HAV
Newsletter Editor
7856 New Light Road
Starkville, MS 39759
www.hwn.org
editor@hwn.org



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