

AN ARRL AFFILIATED CLUB
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BRANCH SIGNALS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BRANCH COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.

Club Repeaters: 147.300 + 100 Hz 443.300 + 123 Hz

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Elmering CW Ops By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I have a reputation for being a CW zealot. It's a reputation that I quite deserve, thank you very much, and one that I'm proud of. Working CW is a heckuva lot of fun, and I want to help as many hams as I can enjoy it as much as I do.

Unlike some OFs (e-mail me if you're not familiar with that CW abbreviation) who just complain that no one operates CW anymore or bemoan the elimination of the code test, I try to walk the walk as well as talk the talk. Here are some of the things I do to get guys to operate CW:

I always carry around copies of the K7QO Code Course on CD-ROM (<http://www.kc5cqm.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php?n=Main.K7QOcwCourse>). K7QO has graciously allowed this version to be distributed freely, and when I'm at a ham event, and anyone expresses even the slightest interest in CQ, I pull one out of my briefcase and hand it to him or her.

I try to keep one or two inexpensive paddles around to sell to interested folks. Bencher BY-1s are good starter paddles, and you can often find them at hamfests or on EBay for fifty to sixty bucks. I usually keep one or two "in stock." When someone asks about paddles, I offer to sell them one of the ones I have for exactly what I paid for it. Since they know me, they get a good feeling that they're getting a decent paddle at a decent price. And once they have it in the shack, it takes away one excuse for not operating CW. I also, provide technical support. By that I mean I help them get the key and keyer adjusted properly and help them use it properly.

I never denigrate or complain about hams that never had to pass a code test. That's a sure turnoff. As soon as people get the feeling that you're looking down your nose at them, you lose all credibility with them and they just stop listening to you. My personal opinion is that if more folks have ham licenses, then the pool of potential CW operators is bigger. I never denigrate or complain about hams that don't operate CW. See above.

I acknowledge that Morse Code can be difficult to learn. I often apologize for the fact that I got into it when I was young and it was easier for me to pick it up then. I also apologize that I seem to have at least a limited talent for Morse Code. I acknowledge that this is not something one learns overnight. You're more likely to win someone over if you sympathize instead of criticize. I like to challenge them to learn it, noting that once they've acquired the skill, it's something that they can be proud of. Not only that, it's a lot of fun!

I try to show them how much fun CW is! I have an Elecraft KX-1, which I take to things like club picnics. Throw up a simple antenna and I am on the air making contacts. I also invite guys to my shack and show them in person how cool it is.

Finally, I give presentations to just about any club that invites me, if I can make the arrangements. On my blog at <http://kb6nu.com/a-cw-presentation-for-your-club/>, you can find the text for the slides I used for my presentation, "CW is Fun!" Feel free to use them to give a presentation to your club.

Who knows? If you give this presentation to your club, maybe you'll even get one or two guys interested enough in CW to learn the code and get on the air. If every current CW op Elmered one other ham every year, the CW bands would be chock full of activity. We'd be complaining that it's impossible to find a clear frequency instead of complaining that it's getting hard to find a contact.

HAMFEST CALENDAR

Sep 14 2008

Adrian Amateur Radio Club

<http://www.W8TQE.com>

Talk-In: 145.37 (PL 85.4)

Contact: Marjie Willey, KB8TMM

307 Pentecost Highway

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Adrian, MI

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Sect: Michigan

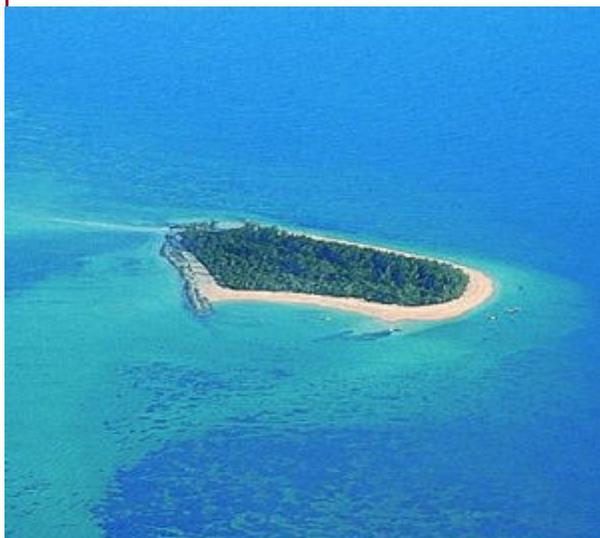
DXpedition

5H3AP - Mafia Island (AF-054) Sept 22 - Oct 1

CW and RTTY operation

QSL via DL1CW

Aerial view, Mafia Island, AF-054



NEXT MEETING - Tuesday September 16th—7:00 P.M.

Liar's Club

BRANCH COUNTY A.R.C.

Meeting Every Third Tuesday
Branch County Communications Center
At The Branch County Airport
7:00 P.M.



WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.BRANCHCOUNTYARC.COM WE

Thanks! And a tip of the hat



A thanks and a tip of the hat goes to: Tim Miner. As Emergency Manager, Tim has shown overwhelming support of Branch County ARES and RACES.

**JOIN US ON THE WEEKLY TWO METER NET
TUESDAY - 7:00 P.M. - 147.300 - ALL WELCOME!**



**NOTES FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

As you can see the rest of August has been pretty busy and September is no exception. Congratulations to the latest Hams who upgraded or passed their Tech Class exams. Applefest is September 20th and we will be set up in the Park Downtown. The ARRL SET is September 27th. All Hams are encouraged to participate.

FOR SALE ITEMS

?

VE TEST SESSIONS

Nothing Scheduled

See pages 8 & 9 for details of last months test session.



Coordinator's Corner



EC Comments for September Newsletter

Hospital Net

On August 6, the BCARC ARES/RACES group participated in the quarterly Hospital net communication test. This test was different in that we had the use of an ICOM IC2200H D-Star rig that we set up at the hospital in Coldwater. We also activated the Club station at the EOC for the test as well.

The first portion of the net was checking communication paths via analog repeaters and simplex. Once that task was completed, the net switched to digital voice. Here is the amazing stuff: from the hospital, we were able to work the Kalamazoo County EOC via the D-Star repeater in Moline, MI. For those that are not familiar with Moline, it is near Dorr, MI, which is just south of Grand Rapids. True, we were on the fringe of coverage and there were a couple of transmissions that did not get through, but those that did were absolutely crystal clear. Digital voice is amazing. It is becoming apparent that D-Star is the wave of the future and is expanding rapidly across Michigan and we will be part of it.

D-Star

We are anticipating the receipt of grant funding which will allow us to purchase two IC2820H dual band D-Star rigs and two power supplies in the coming months. One station will be set up in the dispatch area at 911 and the other will be housed at the Coldwater Public Safety Department. Hillsdale County will have both a 2M and 440 D-Star repeater up in their county in the coming months and we are anticipating that similar equipment will be installed somewhere in south central Michigan where we will have access to the rest of Michigan via D-Star.

This is pretty exciting stuff. We had a hands-on demonstration on Aug. 23 where seven hams at our club station were on the air via D-Star talking to hams in Litchfield. The voice clarity is amazing there is considerable interest in getting involved by some of the ARES/RACES personnel. Your EC has made the commitment to D-Star and I have an IC2820H installed in my vehicle. We are testing and learning as we go along.

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Coordinator's Corner Continued



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Applefest September 20

On September 20, the BCARC will be participating in the annual Applefest in downtown Coldwater. As we have for the past 2 years, we will be located in the 4 Corners Park which is a very high traffic area. We will have an HF station on the air along with VHF and UHF analog and digital equipment. We are working on some digital surprises that can't be divulged at this time, but if we can pull them off they should be pretty impressive, entertaining, and informative.

Please stop by and spend some time with us. We will be recruiting prospective students for a Technician licensing class to be held sometime this fall, so if you know of someone that may be interested, bring them along to do a little hands-on. More info will be forthcoming soon.

Simulated Emergency Test September 27

September 27 is the date for this year's Simulated Emergency Test or SET. This is a statewide communication exercise that we will be participating in. We expect to involve the County EOC, the Coldwater Public Safety Department, Life-care ambulance service, and other agencies around the county. We expect some activity to take place on D-Star, but the major portion of the exercise will take place on VHF and UHF. There will be more information coming forth as we get closer to the 27th, so please join us on the ARES nets on Tuesday evenings and be sure to be at the club meeting on the 16th.

On SET day, there will be plenty of opportunities for all to participate. We are not expecting everyone to get out and drive all over the county and burn up a tank of that near \$4 a gallon gasoline, but for those that are willing to be out and about a bit, we will do our best to be conservative of your fuel status. There will be activities that can also be done at home and you can rest assured that having emergency power capability is going to be a big plus!

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coordinator's corner continued



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I can't tell you about the scenario for the exercise, but it will be interesting. I would expect things to begin sometime around 8:00 to 9:00 AM on the 27th and we should have everything pretty well wrapped up early in the afternoon. Be sure to have your radio on that morning. Even if you can't spend the whole time with us, be sure to check into the nets (VHF, UHF, Simplex?) to give us additional participants in the exercise.

Again, be sure to join us on our Tuesday night nets and at the club meeting for more information as the day draws near.

August was a very busy month with RACES administrative work and with work on equipment. Lots of things are going on as we enter what is supposed to be our "Off Season". Our program continues to gather steam and there are good things ahead for the Branch County ARES/RACES Program. Thanks to all who participate for making all of these good things possible. You are the reason the program is working.

Larry Camp, WB8R

Emergency Coordinator/Radio Officer

Branch County

August Fox Hunt Results

The second fox hunt of 2008 is in the books. We had an excellent turnout on a beautiful summer evening with 17 hunters present. Five teams took part in the hunt to track down the Wiley old fox.

Bill Slade, WD8MGF was the Hunt Master and he gave us our instructions at 6:45. We synchronized our watches and at 7:00 pm sharp we heard the first transmission from the fox. After quickly taking a directional bearing, the teams headed in a general easterly direction to go to another location to begin to triangulate the signal.

Through the next few transmissions the teams worked their way over to the east side of Coldwater and through triangulation were able to pinpoint an area near the movie theatre on Willowbrook Rd. After the 7:55 pm transmission, Patrick, KD8ATL said "bring the vehicle and follow me, boys" and took off on foot across the parking lot of the Family Medical Practice located immediately south of the theatre. The next time we saw Patrick was near the dumpster with a huge smile on his face and his arm in the air with thumbs up gesture! Moments later the fox came out from behind the dumpster.

Bingo...55 minutes to the kill!

Generally speaking all of the teams were in the general vicinity of the fox and it was just a matter of time until he was found. Andrew was a worthy opponent and gave us a good run for our money.

My own observations are that the quality of the operators and their equipment has increased substantially and we have a very solid Direction Finding team. I have no doubt that if we got the call to track down a signal on a fire or police frequency that we would be able to find the individual responsible.

We were fortunate to have Tim Miner, (now KD8JEK), Branch County Emergency Management Coordinator, with us on the hunt so he could see first hand just how good our equipment and operators are. His comments indicated that our abilities impressed him.

The Cast of Characters:

The Fox was played by Andrew Glenn, KD8AGZ and was assisted by Fox Supporter Mark Rogers, KD8CYV.

The Hunt Master was played by Bill Slade, WD8MGF and the Staff Photographer was played by Bill Kubiak, KB8VWI.

The teams consisted of:

Mike Jepson, KC8VFI, Justin Lopshire, KD8JEL (new call) and Don Cook, KC8PRM, Jim King, KC8UGV, and son Aaron King, Bruce Wilcox, WB8ZSK and Jan Hayden, KC8CYW, Bill Shaw, KC8CYY and his dad, Jim Shaw, N8NG, Larry Camp, WB8R, Patrick Beeman, KD8ATL, Arnie Hayward, NS8T and Tim Miner, KD8JEK (new call)

A great time was had by all and we all gathered at the Dairy Queen to swap lies and eat ice cream that was provided by the club. The next hunt will be in late spring or early summer so be thinking about it. If you would like to try your hand at being the fox, contact us and we will help you out.

Larry, WB8R

One Day Class a Resounding Success

On August 9, the BCARC held its first One Day Technician class followed immediately by a VE session. We are happy to report that all who attended the class passed their tests in great shape. How could we ask for more than 100% success?

The class was based on a simple premise: Get the books into the student's hands 5 to 6 weeks before the class, tell the students the expectations for the class including taking online tests from the beginning, and have the instructors available to answer questions.

Sprinkle in liberal encouragement as the students go through the process and you have a recipe for success, *IF* the students are serious about getting their licenses. I think we all know that if a person doesn't really want to obtain that license or are not willing to put forth the required work, that no amount of instructor effort will overcome that resistance. This method places the responsibility for success squarely on the shoulders of the students, which is exactly where it should be. Generally speaking a person who obtains a license that doesn't really care if they do it or not just leads to one more person with a license that never gets on the air. We want hams that are active and share our enjoyment of the hobby.

The BCARC Instructor Team is convinced that this is the way of the future for licensing classes and we will be putting together another class for this fall. Stay tuned!

Congratulations go to the following students who successfully obtained their Technician licenses from our most recent class:

Mayann Worley KD8JEG (XYL of our Bob, KC8ZFQ)

Amanda Klein KD8JEH (XYL of our Ed, KC8MCC)

Al Miller KD8JEI (Coldwater Fire Dept.)

Frank Barker KD8JEJ (Branch County Deputy Sheriff)

Tim Miner KD8JEK (Branch County Emergency Management Coordinator)

Justin Lopshire KD8JEL (Radio Station WTVB)

Kenneth Miller KD8JEM (Son of Gene Miller, KC8PWB)

In addition to the new hams, there were four upgrades:

Andrew Glenn, KD8AGZ to General (waiting on new vanity call)

Patrick Beeman KD8ATL to Extra (waiting on new vanity call)

Bob Worley KC8ZFQ to Extra

Russell Amaden KC9EDE to General

The new hams are automatically full members of the BCARC for the balance of the year in which they were first licensed. Congratulations to all!!