

Branch Signals



An ARRL Affiliated Club
Since 1961



Your 2010

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The Fox
Has Left
The Building

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Dennis VanWinkle KD8EPX - SK



We sadly report the passing of a member of our Ham Radio group, Dennis VanWinkle, KD8EPX. Dennis became a ham through one of our Technician classes and our VE Test Sessions in the fall of 2006. Dennis was a quiet ham who was often found on simplex talking with his friends.

Dennis was the unfortunate victim of a motorcycle accident near Grand Rapids and passed away on Sunday, May 16, 2010.

Our sincerest condolences go to his family. We were proud to have had Dennis as one of our own.

Mike Jepson KC8VFI - SK



We sadly report the passing of a member of our Ham Radio group, Michael Jepson, KC8VFI. Mike became a silent key on May 22, 2010 after fighting a battle with cancer and pneumonia. Mike was a most generous club member who was always willing to help the club do whatever task was at hand. He was directly responsible for our current UHF repeater and the associated equipment that supports it.

Mike was genuinely excited about becoming a Ham and being part of our club. Our sincerest condolences go to his family. We were proud to have had Mike as one of our own.

Upcoming

Hamfests

June 5, 2010

Hudsonville Hamfest

Hudsonville, MI Fairgrounds

www.w8hqv.org

June 5, 2010

Hamfest/Tailgate Party

Tedrow, Ohio

<http://k8bxq.org>

June 6, 2010

Chelsea Hamfest

Chelsea, MI Fairgrounds

www.wd8iel.net

June 20, 2010

Monroe Hamfest

Monroe Cty. Fairgrounds

www.mcrcs.org

July 18, 2010

Van Wert Hamfest

Van Wert County Fairgrounds

<http://w8fy.org>

August 15, 2010

Lapeer County Swap and Shop

Lapeer County Center Building

<http://www.w8lap.com>

August 21, 2010

SARA Inside/Outside Trunk Sale

Baker College, Owosso

<http://www.W8QQQ.org>



EmComm Corner

This month's notes from
Branch County's Emergency
Coordinator, Larry Camp, WB8R.

Bike Ride, One Severe Weather Activation Highlight Month

May was a relatively quiet month for the Branch County ARES/RACES group. We had one significant severe weather activation with some flooding and damage primarily in the Quincy area. We had an excellent turnout of operators to assist us.

Our group was asked to participate with the Steuben County RACES group to provide



communications for the 101 Lakes Bike Run on May 15. This bicycle ride consisted of 4 different length courses for individuals with varying skill and training levels. The two longest courses (62 and 106 miles) ran concurrently and came into Branch County from Orland. The riders turned east at Southern Rd. and continued nearly all the way across the county to Ray-Quincy Rd. where they turned south towards Indiana. That stretch across Southern Rd. was almost 16 miles.

We had the assistance of 14 hams and one civilian and we expended a total of 82.5 hours.

On May 18, we conducted our first Foxhunt of 2010 and you can read more about that elsewhere in this issue.

We are gearing up for Field Day which will be held on the weekend of June 26/27. This is a fun activity that hams and non hams alike can participate in. For all the Technicians in the crowd, this is your opportunity to get a real taste of the HF bands. For those who may have non-ham friends who may have an interest in ham radio, they can get their fill of operating as third party operators. Please plan to be at our next club meeting on June 15 at the 911 Center in Coldwater to get the latest info on the 2010 FD plans.

Larry Camp, Branch County ARES/RACES Officer



From The Desk of the President

Hi Again,

With no formal meeting in May, this column should be short. But again, I am a ham and I like to talk.

Once we get the cabinet, and all the parts here, we will be putting the new repeater together here in my garage. I will try to keep everyone up to date on the progress of the project. Once we start work on it, you are welcome to drop in to see how things are going, or just look at it if you want.

Our annual competitive fox hunt took place Tuesday May 18th. Larry WB8R, Steve N8LXV, and myself NS8T, found the fox in 37 minutes. That was good enough for first place. He really had us fooled for a few minutes. We had a

good reading on him, then he dropped his power way low. We were dumbfounded for awhile. But we kept at it, and finally found him. There are a couple of funny stories about the fox hunt that will probably be discussed at the June meeting. Ask Justin, KD8JEL, he has a good one to tell of his experience.

So far this spring, Branch County seems to be lucky with the weather. Most of the bad stuff seems to be someplace else. That's not bad, but don't get complacent. It can happen in a heartbeat. We have two members that are having health problems right now. Please keep them in your prayers until their health is better. They are Mike KC8VFI, (*see*

front page) and Gene KC8PWB. Both are very good members and have contributed a lot to our club.

I hope to see another good turnout at the June meeting, and don't forget the breakfast Saturday mornings at Stoagies. See you all soon,

Arnie NS8T



Arnie Hayward

CLUBMEETING NOTICE

The June meeting of the Branch County Amateur Radio Club will be held on Tuesday, the 15th^h beginning promptly at 7:00 p.m. in the basement meeting room of the Branch County Communications Center (911). The Program will be a presentation about Field Day.

BOARD MEETING INVITATION

Got an idea? Got a gripe? Got nothing to do the first Tuesday night of the month? Club members are always welcome to attend the monthly board meeting at 7:00 pm at Bob Evans in Coldwater.

MONTHLY WEBSITE PICK

www.digikey.com

Are you looking for an electronic, or any small part, for that matter? Try this website for a comprehensive list of tens of thousands of parts!

REPEATER UPDATE

The new repeater project is rapidly moving towards completion. Here is the latest update as of May 30:

The new Kenwood repeater is on order and delivery to the State Systems Radio in Portage is imminent.

The new Computer Automated Technology Cat 700 controller has been delivered to State Systems radio for integration with the new repeater. This controller is a significant upgrade from what we are used to with the controller (Cat 200B) that is on our Motorola repeater.

The Cat 200B controller will find its way over to our UHF repeater in the coming months which will enhance our capabilities with that repeater as well.

The amplifier that we will be using with the new 2M repeater is currently being tuned for our frequency and we plan to run it at approximately 100 watts output. That will give us an output comparable to what we are currently using. The amp is capable of 150 watts, but we prefer not to run it too hard in the interest of longevity.

One of the things that we need to be careful about is expecting the new repeater to be a zillion times better than what we currently have. Our goal is to significantly increase our reliability and our informational capabilities. It will still be using the same location as the old machine, so we need to understand that the new repeater and controller will not raise our antenna a single inch. We believe that the new equipment will round out our system and everything will be new or reasonably new (feedline is in good shape and the antenna was replaced 2 years ago) and we will be as good as we can be from the same location.

We are working towards a move back to the Charter site where we can get our antenna back up towards 300 feet, but that is another project.

Stay tuned as we should have the new system on line soon.

BCARC Assists With Communications For INAUGURAL BIKE 101 LAKES EVENT



About a dozen club members were called into service on Saturday, May 15th to provide communications for the Michigan leg of the first annual Bike 101 Lakes event. Despite threatening weather interspersed throughout the preceding weeks it turned out to be a perfect day for a bike ride. The Branch County leg of the ride came north from Orland to Southern Road and con-

tinued east to Ray Quincy Road before turning south. Over one hundred riders passed by between about ten a.m and one p.m. The closest thing to excitement was caused by a piece of large farm machinery which took up most of both lanes as it transited across the county.

Correspondence was subsequently received from a race official who said he had received several comments from

riders about "...all those people along Southern Rd." He talked to a couple of riders who expressed what a good feeling it was to know that they weren't out there alone and that there were people looking out for them. It appears that our club will be included in any plans for next year's event. The effort was headed up in Branch County by Larry Camp, WB8R.

SDO Now Operational

The Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) is now officially taking a closer look at the Sun, the source of all Space Weather. Space Weather affects not only our lives here on Earth, but the Earth itself, and everything outside its atmosphere. We radio hobbyists rely on space weather because of the affects space weather has on the ionosphere and on terrestrial weather. SDO is the first satellite under the Living with a Star (LWS) program at NASA. The spacecraft is being designed to fly for five years. However, since satellites go through a lot of testing and retesting, they often keep working long past their initial mission life. SOHO for example, which was built

to fly for five years, in 2010 celebrated its 15 year anniversary!

SDO is unlike any other satellite. It collects huge amounts of data everyday. In fact SDO produces enough data to fill a single CD every 36 seconds. While many satellites share a ground system (place on the ground where they



send data and photographs) and have recording systems to save the data collected until they can talk to their ground

station, not so with SDO. Today, May 14, 2010, the "keys" to the Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) were handed over to the staff that is now delivering LIVE data and images/movies. Providing incredible high-resolution (the highest yet of any scientific solar observatory), SDO is the newest research tool in our scientific endeavor to understand the Sun, space weather, and the Sun-Earth connection. SDO has been called the new "Hubble Telescope" of solar research.

The "latest" images are now on display at <http://prop.hfradio.org/> - and the images include views of the Sun in many more color bands than is available with SOHO. Thanks to NW7US



Feisty Hounds Find Fox Despite Fast Fizzling Battery

On May 18, 2010, the world renowned Fox Hunters of the BCARC gathered with some of their brethren from Hillsdale and Calhoun counties to once again take on the task of locating a pesky Fox with a hidden transmitter.

The most worthy fox for this hunt was Brett Smith, KC8ZDA from Litchfield. Brett volunteered to be the fox and he made us work for it. His hiding spot was close to the 911 center, but his clever use of varying amount of transmitter power added a new dimension to the hunt. An added degree of difficulty came from a problem with the fox's battery pack when he went to high power and his transmissions were very brief as a result of his battery not having enough power available to drive his mobile rig. This problem was unknown to Brett, so he gets no blame there. The situation was just one more thing that the hunters had to overcome in

order to be successful.

We had a total of 17 hams involved in the event in one form or another. We were especially happy to have W8JRD and WA8MFL from Calhoun County join us for the hunt.

The first team to locate the fox was the team of Arnie, NS8T, Steve, N8LXV, and Larry, WB8R who located Brett 37 minutes after the initial transmission. The second team to locate him was the team of Jim, N8NG and Bill, W8ILL who located the fox just before the conclusion of the hunt at 8:30.

Honorable mention goes to the team of Justin, KD8JEL and Julie, KD8NSL. Justin actually had a conversation with the fox without realizing who he was and without asking him if he was the fox. It is rumored that every person that Justin comes in contact with now is asked "are you the fox?" just to be on the safe side!

The prize for the winners

was \$20 for the first team to locate the fox and \$10 for the second. The third prize of \$5 went back into the treasury for the next hunt.

A great time was had by all and we are already looking forward to our collaborative hunt in August. It is also rumored that the Battle Creek club is on the verge of scheduling a hunt in their neck of the woods. As soon as we have a date and time, we will get the information disseminated so that as many of us as possible can participate in their hunt.

For those that are interested, there is a Yahoo Michigan Fox Hunter group that provides a lot of information on Fox Hunts in Michigan. The Holland/Grand Rapids areas are particularly active and this is a good forum for information on Fox Hunting. You are encouraged join that group.

Larry, WB8R

FCC Denies ID Time Petition

The FCC has denied a Petition for Reconsideration filed by Glen Zook, K9STH, that asked for changes in Part 97. This in regard to how often United States hams must identify themselves on the air.

The May 18th action follows the Commission's denial of Zook's April 2009 Petition for Rule-making. At that time K9STH asked the Commission amend Section 97.119(a) to change how often amateur stations must identify themselves. Zook specifically asked that the FCC require that an amateur station transmit its call sign during the first transmission of any communication or series of transmissions, and to allow an amateur station to not transmit its call sign at the end of a communication when the communication or series of transmissions lasts less than three minutes.

In denying his reconsideration request the FCC stated that Zook's petition did not demonstrate that the current station identification rule is inadequate. Nor did he prove that revising the station identification requirement as requested would address the concern that many amateur radio operators do not identify their station in a timely manner or at all.

The FCC also noted that in response to Zook's 2006 petition, that many who commented believed that the current station identification rule properly balances the burden of requiring the station to transmit its call sign with the convenience of those receiving the transmissions to determine the identity of the station making the transmission. (FCC)



A Tip of the Hat

Our noggin nod goes out this month to Brett Smith, KC8ZDA, who volunteered to be the fox in last month's foxhunt. A tip o' the ol' tam goes to you this month, Brett!

FREE!

Thanks to the efforts of a number of our club members we have been able to liquidate all of the large ticket items from the estate of Steve Williams, N8CTI. His XYL, Carole, has expressed her deep appreciation to us and has suggested that we offer to our members the miscellaneous parts and gear which is contained in several boxes left over from the sale. We're sure you'll find a few treasures in those boxes, so **bring a bag to the June meeting and take home whatever you can use.** If you insist on making a donation for any item we will make sure it gets to Carole.

FOR SALE



- Kenwood TS-820S Transceiver
 - Kenwood External VFO
 - Kenwood External Speaker (needs work)
 - Kenwood MC-50 Microphone

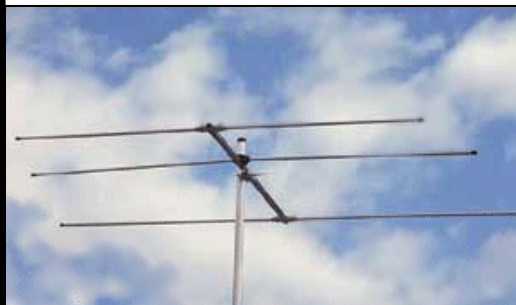
Asking \$600 - Contact Alvin Bringman – 517-278-2451



Cushcraft 13B2 2 Meter 13 Element Boomer

- Forward Gain 15.8 dBd
 - Power Rating – 2,000 watts PEP
 - Length – 39.75 Feet

Call For Price - Contact Arnie Hayward, NS8T – 517-278-8507



Free To Good Home!

3 Element 10 Meter Beam

Contact Arnie @ 517-278-8507