

Branch Signals



An ARRL Affiliated Club
Since 1961



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Larry Has Left The Building!

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2009 ARRL Annual Report Now Available

The *ARRL Annual Report for 2009* -- now available online and in print -- reviews the major events of the year and documents the renewed growth of both the ARRL and the activities of the Amateur Radio Service. In 2009, the ARRL experienced a growth in membership, ending the year with 156,125 members, an increase of nearly 1 percent from 2008.

“Measured against our expectations at its beginning, 2009 turned out to be an exceptionally good year for the ARRL,” said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ. “Many non-profits -- most of which rely more heavily than we do on voluntary contributions -- are having a much tougher time holding onto their benefactors. Ultimately, we ended 2009 solidly in the black for the year.” <http://www.arrl.org/annual-reports>



Dennis Jaques WD8OUO, SK

We sadly report the passing of yet another member of our Ham Radio group, Dennis Jaques, WD8OUO. Dennis had not been active since moving to an apartment several years ago, however, at one time he was a fixture at any club event or operation.

Dennis died at his home on June 21st. No particulars have been announced as yet with arrangements being made by the Dutcher-Kolcz Funeral Home in Bronson. He was 65.

Our sincerest condolences go to his family.

Upcoming

Hamfests

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>

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SARA Inside/Outside Trunk Sale

Baker College, Owosso

<http://www.W8QQQ.org>

August 21, 2010

PCARC Swapfest

All States Radio Club Complex

LaPorte, Indiana

<http://www.pcarc.net>

September 11, 2010

GRAHamfest

Home School Building

Wyoming, Michigan

<http://www.grahamfest.org>

September 19, 2010

Adrian ARRL Hamfest

Lenawee County Fairgrounds

Adrian, Michigan

<http://www.w8tqe.com/>



EmComm Corner

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

While last month I talked about May being a slow weather month, June has been nothing even close to slow. We have had a total of 4 serious activations as of this writing (June 29). Three of the activations (June 12, 18, and 23) resulted in Severe Thunderstorm Warnings and/or Tornado Warnings and all three resulted in significant damage. Fortunately the damage was caused by straight line winds or microbursts instead of tornadoes. The fourth activation (June 27) looked ominous at first, but it turns out the bad weather split north and south around us. We were spared that Sunday.

My thanks go to those who checked in and helped out during the lengthy nets during those activations. The EOC was manned for the duration of those events and we played a large role in communications between the Public Safety agencies in Branch County and the hams of the county and the good folks at IWX.

On a different note, we operated Field Day from the Communications Trailer of Emergency Management for the first time. Read all about the trials and tribulations of that adventure in the Field Day article elsewhere in this issue.

Larry Camp, WB8R

Emergency Coordinator/RACES Officer

D-STAR Illegal in France

While Radio Amateurs in the rest of the world have embraced modern digital communications, it would appear **D-STAR** is illegal in France and there is now a European Parliament petition on the matter.

A report on the French digital ham radio website (DR@F) says that the regulator, the ARCEP, has said the D-STAR protocol specifications could allow ham-radio operators to connect their station to Internet and that is prohibited.

The ARCEP also cites alleged concerns regarding Cryptography & National Security as well as the use of a proprietary CODEC.

The DR@F are calling on all European Ham-radio societies to help them in their battle to allow all Digital Voice modes, Internet access and no restrictive experiment in France.

It seems incredible that in the 21st century a country would attempt to stop its Radio Amateurs from using modern means of communications.

You can sign the European Parliament Petition - **Digital Voice & Internet Access in France** at <http://draf.asso.fr/index.php?pages/...rance-Petition>

CLUBMEETING NOTICE

The July meeting of the Branch County Amateur Radio Club will be held on Tuesday, the 20th beginning promptly at 7:00 p.m. in the basement meeting room of the Branch County Communications Center (911). The Program will be Fox Hunting Hints and Kinks.

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

<http://www.rfcafe.com/reference/s/amateur-radio.htm>

Here's a great website with dozens and dozens of links to ham related websites. You can spend a whole afternoon surfing the various places here!



From The Desk of the President

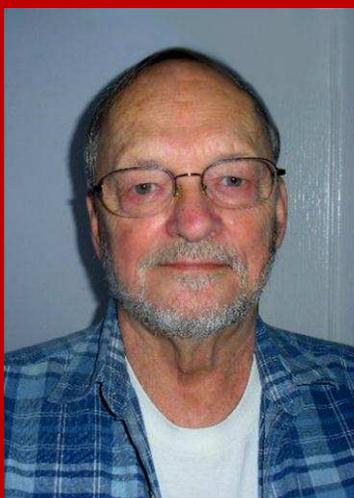
Hi,

Well, here is a very uninformed President. I have been away for a week, and I know a lot has happened here.

Where I was, it was in the mid 90's, while you were having storms. It don't seem fair, does it.

I'm sure that the group will bring me up to date at the board meeting on July 6th. Until next month, have a great summer.

Arnie, NS8T



Arnie Hayward

QMN Marks 75 Years!

The year 2010 will mark an important anniversary in the History of Amateur Radio: The birth of the first public service net.

Before the implementation of a net concept, radiogram traffic and emergency communications activity was conducted on a system of schedules and random contacts. Radiogram traffic moved across the country on "Trunk Line" networks staffed on a daily basis by "iron man" traffic handlers. From these key stations, traffic was routed to its destination via individual schedules, directional "CQ" requests, and similar techniques. The ARRL "Amateur Radio Emergency Corps," "National Traffic System," and similar programs had not yet emerged.

This all changed during the autumn of 1935 when members of the Detroit Amateur Radio Association (DARA) formed the Michigan Net and adopted the net call "QMN." The plan was simple and elegant in concept. Using the relatively new technology of crystal control, radio amateurs from throughout the State of Michigan would gather on a single "spot frequency" to exchange radiogram traffic and coordinate emergency communications response to disasters. A QMN Committee standardized the procedures and created the familiar "QN-Signals" so familiar to generations of traffic handlers. With the creation of QMN, the modern traffic net was born.

This year, QMN will celebrate its Diamond Anniversary with a very special event! A 75th Anniversary Banquet will be held at Owosso, Michigan on Saturday, October 23, 2010.

QMN members both past and present are invited to attend, as are all radio amateurs with an interest in the history of Amateur Radio and the history of public service communications.

Those wishing to attend this event should request a registration form from James Wades, WB8SIW at the following e-mail: jameswades@gmail.com



A Tip of the Hat

A bow of the bowler goes out this month to Larry Camp, WB8R, who has headed up Field Day for many a year. A flip of the ol' fedora goes to you, Larry!

FREE! ADVICE

Just consult any local amateur and you will find all the free advice you could possibly need pertaining to any ham radio subject you would care to ask about. This advice is provided without charge and is often available on the local repeaters, coffee clatches, club meetings and most anywhere hams meet. This is a public service announcement provided by your editor so as to fill space.

Immediately after the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti that killed 230,000 people, injured an estimated 300,000 more and destroyed much of Port-au-Prince, medical teams from the University of Miami Project Medishare program had sporadic communication with the United States and the nearby U.S. Naval Ship (USNS) Comfort's Medical Treatment Facility — until teams of amateur/ham radio operators arrived, that is.

"They had already lost one satellite link. The other one was not reliable," said Julio Ripoll, an architect for the University of Miami Medical School, who coordinated amateur radio communications during the disaster. "So they were worried that they would not be able to communicate to Haiti from Miami in case they lost their other satellite link."

What was initially designed as a backup system soon handled all local emergency communications. Before Ripoll's teams of radio operators arrived, the field hospital had very little communication directly with the USNS Comfort. "They would send an e-mail by using a BlackBerry," Ripoll said, "and sometimes it would sit there for quite a while before someone saw it."

The amateur radio station became a critical communication link. "When we had patients who would come in and needed emergency surgery that we couldn't handle, we called the Comfort," he said, "and then we would coordinate either the helicopter medevac or [transport] a few times by speedboat if it was in the middle of the night."

That's just one example of how amateur radio operators, who use various types of radio communications equipment for nonprofit purposes, can provide a valuable resource during a disaster.

Links With Emergency Responders

Volunteer radio operators assisting emergency personnel fall into two groups: Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) and Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) members. Many people participate in both organizations, but the main difference between the two is that ARES members provide emergency communications before an emergency has been officially declared, while RACES operators, which are registered with state and local governments, are activated after an emergency declaration. RACES members may operate from state emergency operations centers (EOCs).

The American Radio Relay League (ARRL), a U.S. organization of amateur radio operators, has memorandums of understanding with numerous organizations, including FEMA, the American Red Cross, National Weather Service and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International. As a result of those agreements, the ARRL trains with and works to develop these organizations' amateur radio communications capacity. It also builds relationships with these organizations to collaborate during disasters.

About 684,000 amateur radio operators are ARRL members. The

best way for these ham operators to connect with local responders is to participate in their local Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). "We may, in our case, probably connect with CERT, and so we'll probably be linked up close with the fire department," said Charlie Lum Kee, founder of the Virgin Valley Amateur Radio Club in Mesquite, Nev., and leader of the local CERT program. "We do have a little bit of a plan for our area as to where we would locate individuals [in an emergency]."

Amateur radio operators can also get special license plates displaying their call signs, which identify them to emergency crews, getting them past roadblocks and into the affected area to provide communications assistance.

In Oregon, about 1,800 RACES volunteers are authorized to work in state and county EOCs facilitating communication during disasters. For example, during the Great Coastal Gale of 2007 that knocked out communications to the state's Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook counties, ham radio operators used a radio frequency messaging system called Winlink to transmit the counties' requests for assistance to the state's Office of Emergency Management. "Monday morning the governor came in and we were briefing and later on called amateur radio operators 'angels' because that was the only source of communication we had to the coast," said Marshall McKillip, the Emergency Management Office's communications officer.

Following the storm, Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski funded improvements to the state's amateur radio infrastructure with a \$250,000 grant for Winlink systems in each of the state's 36 county-level EOCs. "We bought the appropriate equipment and then organized the delivery, the set up, the training and everything with amateur radio resources," McKillip said. "It was quite a task for the amateurs to take on, but they did a great job."

Assorted Roles

Amateur radio operators can play a variety of roles that allow public safety officials to maximize their resources, including facilitating communications; providing emergency managers with on-scene situational awareness; and helping manage large-scale events, such as state fairs and marathons.

Earlier this year as blizzards blanketed Delaware, RACES members manned ham radio stations at the Sussex County EOC, and 60 ARES members drove around the county's 958 square miles reporting what they were seeing and confirming reports from the National Weather Service. "While [the police and emergency medical services] were moving around, they had better things to do than stop and measure the snow," said Walt Palmer, public information officer for the ARRL in Delaware. "So that's where amateur radio's guys were coming in."

At one point during the storms, the county set up two shelters for approximately 70,000 residents, all of whom were without electricity, and deployed an amateur radio operator to the larger shelter to facilitate

communication with the EOC. "We were able to get good information back from the shelter as to how many people were there, were they making out OK and that kind of thing," said Sussex County EOC Director Joe Thomas. "We actually tried to get an operator in the second shelter, but we never did get to that point because of the snowstorm."

In the aftermath of a disaster, amateur radio operators are often the first to report what happened to emergency managers so they can start formulating a response. "Let's say up the street a nuclear facility has an issue, and we start losing power here. The ham operators would start reporting that because we would be the ones on the ground," Palmer said. "Our job is to communicate that to public officials. Our mantra for that is, 'Provide the right information to the right people at the right time so they can make the right decisions.'"

Communities countrywide have signature large-scale events like state fairs, marathons and food festivals during which amateur radio operators can work with public safety personnel so the departments can maximize their resources. "Rather than use police or other county or state officers, ham radio operators will come together and we'll get assigned to different points around, let's say, a 26-mile race course," Palmer said. "We're there just to observe. If somebody has a problem, if a runner goes down or a bicycle falls apart or whatever, our guys are there and they're able to report back so a proper response can be orchestrated to help that runner."

If Delmarva Peninsula — a popular resort area on the East Coast with a winter population of 700,000 that can swell to 4 million in the summer — needs to be evacuated, ham radio operators can monitor traffic or facilitate communications between shelters and EOCs.

"While the Red Cross does a terrific job with the shelters, they're there helping to prepare food and taking care of the residents of the shelter," Palmer said. "They don't always have the communication needs to get information back to the EOC — we have this many special needs people; we need more insulin because we have a problem here with a lot of diabetics. Amateur radio folks will be assigned to shelters to move that kind of traffic."



[Photo: Members of the USS Wisconsin Radio Club chat with others throughout the world via Morse code onboard the retired battleship the USS Wisconsin. Courtesy of Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Mandy McLaurin/U.S. Navy.]

Field Day 2010

Our Field Day on June 26-27 was an interesting exercise as we conducted our first operation in the Communication trailer belonging to Emergency Management. We left the trailer at the 911 Center and set up shop in the parking lot.

The inside of the trailer has not yet been completed, but the operating counters are in place along with electrical power strips. We set up two stations – one in the communication room up front and the other back in the kitchen area at the small dining table. We utilized the club's TS-480, EM's IC 706 and the Yaesu of KC8UGV. For antennas, we installed EM's 40-80M wire and CH-250 vertical HF antenna.



All things considered, the operation went reasonably smoothly and no one lost any fingers or other important appendages. We utilized the camouflage support poles which really worked very well. The vertical was placed on a mount on KC8UGV's pop up.

We had the use of two of Emergency Management's generators: 10 Kw generator that is capable of powering the entire trailer, including the air conditioner. In addition to that generator, we also had use of a "light trailer" which has 4 huge Metal Halide lamps mounted on a crank up mast on top of a 8 KVA diesel generator which is mounted on a trailer. We ran both new generators in order to help break them in.



Many thanks to KC8UGV, W8KI, WB8VWI, WB8R, WD8MGF, KD8CYX, W8CSS, KD8LEK, KD8JEK and KD8GOB for all their help and companionship.



The Obama administration said Sunday it intends to nearly double the available amount of wireless communications spectrum over the next 10 years in an effort to keep up with the ever-growing demand for high-speed video and data transmission to cell phones, laptops and other mobile devices.

The White House said President Barack Obama will sign a presidential memorandum Monday committing the federal government to auctioning off 500 megahertz of federal and commercial spectrum. Revenue from the auctions would be spent on public safety, infrastructure investments and deficit reduction.

National Economic Council director Lawrence H. Summers will explain the new policy in a speech Monday at the New America Foundation, a Washington think tank.

In an excerpt released by the White House, Summers said, "This initiative will catalyze private sector investment, contribute to economic growth and help to create hundreds of thousands of jobs."

The administration said it hopes to encourage the spread of wireless broadband across the country, including rural areas. The auction is intended, in part, to counter fears of a potential "spectrum crunch" as smart phones and laptop computers become more popular and new wireless devices hit the market.

BCARC Celebrates 50 Years!

The Branch County Amateur Radio Club will celebrate its 50th year on July 17, 2010. Special Event station W50 will be on the air and the certificate below will be issued to any stations making contact. For details about how to secure your certificate see info on the club website at www.branchcountyar.com

An ARRL Affiliated Club
Since 1961



www.branchcountyar.com



Special Event Station

W50

*Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary
of the founding of the
Branch County Amateur Radio Club*

*This certificate will confirm contact
with the BCARC Club Station*

WD8KAF

Confirming QSO with

WD1ABC

Day
Month
Year
UTC

Mode
Report
Freq
Operator