



Branch Signals

February 2012

EmComm Corner,
with Jan Hayden
Page 2

Notes from Club
President, Justin
Lopshire Page 2

What's With the
Funny Little Box in
the Lower Corner?
Page 4

Monthly
Mindbender
Answers from
January Page 6



TM

SKYWARN
WEATHER.GOV

Skywarn Training Sessions, Page 3

Branch Signals is published monthly by the Branch County Amateur Radio Club. This publication is posted to our website, www.branchcountyarc.com, but can be conveniently emailed to you as well. To subscribe, email the editor, Justin Lopshire, at skywave21@hotmail.com.

Greetings to all!

It is now February in Branch County, there is no snow on the ground, and I think the grass is a darker shade of green than it was last week. The weather so far this winter has been strange to say the least, and what still awaits us is still up in the air. Spring isn't that far off. I have seen the first road kill skunk of the season on Fremont Road a few days ago, so the critters are starting to awaken...

I would like to take this "down time" in between the advent of severe weather seasons to update and work on updating our ARES/RACES membership roster. This is a tool for me to know who is available in the event that our skills are needed by the various departments of the county and surrounding

areas. If you are a member of the Branch County ARES/RACES corps, or would be interested in becoming a member, would you please email, phone or see me at the club meeting this month.

January was filled with various events throughout the month. The monthly Hospital Net was held on the first Wednesday of the month. The monthly siren test was also held on January 7th. Thank you to all of our members that participate and help out with this vital service. Our monitoring of the locations frees up the law enforcement departments during testing times.

Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, February 28th for Skywarn training, to be held at 2PM, at the CHC Conference Center, 370 East Chicago Street, Coldwater (the old Kmart Building), or



At 6PM, at the Branch Area Careers Center, 366 Morse Street, Coldwater. Please feel free to attend either session. We look forward to seeing you there!

Also, for those who are interested, there will be an advanced Skywarn training held in Battle Creek on March 3rd, from 3-5PM, at Lakeview Middle School. This

See **EMCOMM**, page 4

Notes from the President

Justin Lopshire, KD8JEL

MID-WINTER LULL?

Usually at this time of the year, us Michiganders are scheming to travel to more southern reaches of this great nation of ours to escape winter's nasty reaches. However, as most people around the country are quite aware, this winter has been one of many oddities. Sure, we've seen many days of freezing conditions, which have supported periods where we have had to deal with snow and ice, but we've also witnessed rare warmth and sunshine! In the midst of this unusually warm winter, the annual Ice Fest in Coldwater, and the Chain-of-Lakes Tip-Up in Quincy were held, and, oddly enough, there was just enough ice for the bravest of ice fishermen to take their shanties out on some of the thicker ice on Marble



Lake and participate traditionally in the event, that has seen ice so thick in the past, that vehicles could be driven out to the fishing sites (although you would NEVER see me do such a thing, EVER!) I personally visited downtown on January 28th, for the annual Ice Fest. If you were able to get downtown to see the ice sculptors creating their frozen works of art, consider yourself lucky! Due to the warm conditions that pre-

ailed shortly thereafter, the icy creations quickly became cold puddles on the sidewalks of downtown Coldwater. Be sure to check this issue of *Branch Signals* for some pictures from this year's Ice Fest!

On to some more news that's more in tune with Amateur Radio, we have a Club Meeting that's coming up on Tuesday, February 21st, at 7PM, in the Emergency Operations Center, in the basement of the Branch County 911 building, just west of Coldwater. We were hoping to have Carl and Vicki Luetzelschwab from Fort Wayne with us for our program, but due to the fact that we were not able to secure the Training Room, we had to reschedule them for April. However, we are planning another BCARC favorite for this month,

See **NOTES**, page 4

Club Calendar

February

4, 11, 18 & 25-Club Breakfast, 8:30-10AM, Stoagies Family Room Café, 91 East Chicago St., Coldwater

4-Monthly Siren Test, 1PM, throughout Coldwater

7, 14 & 28-BCARC Emergency Net, 7PM, 147.300+, 100Hz PL, & 443.300+, 123Hz PL

21-BCARC Club Meeting, 7PM, basement of Branch County 911 Building, 141 East Chicago Rd., Coldwater

28-National Weather Service Skywarn Spotter Training, 2PM, at the CHC Conference Center, 370 East Chicago Street, Coldwater (old K-Mart building), and at 6PM, at the Branch Area Career Center, 366 Morse Street, Coldwater (**NEW LOCATION!**)

Branch County Radio Station Starts Simulcast on FM Dial

At 8:45PM, on Friday, January 13th, 2012, FM broadcasts of WTVB-AM commenced, bringing Branch County's only true local radio station back onto the FM dial for the first time in almost 40 years.

WTVB began operations in August of 1949, as a 1000 watt, daytime-only AM radio station. In 1953, the FCC granted the Coldwater station permission to build a nighttime directional tower array, to transmit at 1000 watts, and to boost their daytime power to 5000 watts. However, continual upgrades to the radio station led to one of the first FM stations in the region in the early 50s, transmitting at 98.3 MHz. Through the

1960s and into the 1970s, WTVB and WTVB-FM, which became WANG, and changed frequencies to 98.5, continued to provide timely information and music to the Tri-State area. At some point in the 70s, WTVB and WANG were split, with WANG becoming WNWN-FM, a full-time country station, as well as boosting their ERP to 50,000 watts, and building a new transmitting facility at the old Girard Township dump on Herricksville Road.

In 2010, efforts to bring a low-powered FM station back to Coldwater were started, so WTVB could once again be heard on the FM dial.

Through the hard work of many engineers and tower climbers, and our friends at Munn-Reese, WTVB can now be heard on FM 95.5, with the call sign of

W238CD. The FCC classifies this FM station as a translator, meaning that it can only re-broadcast another radio station's signal. Therefore, it cannot originate its own broadcasts.

With this new FM signal, WTVB can now be heard in areas of the county that could not receive the AM broadcasts at night, due to FCC requirements to pull the signal away from WAKR in Akron, Ohio.

Although the new FM signal has been reported in three states, and as far north as Pottsville, MI, the average useable coverage of the 250 watt signal is about 15 miles. Coverage maps of the daytime and nighttime AM signal, as well as the new FM signal, can be found on page 5.

Calling All Readers!



Branch Signals is eager to hear your Amateur Radio stories! If you have anything that you feel may be of interest to our growing list of loyal readers, send it to newsletter editor, Justin Lopshire, at skywave21@hotmail.com.

Thank you!

Skywarn Training Comes to Coldwater, Region

The National Weather Service is ramping up for their Annual Skywarn Training sessions, coming to Coldwater on Tuesday, February 28th.

The first session will take place at 2PM, at the CHC Conference Center, at 370 East Chicago Street (in the old Kmart building). The second session will be held at the Branch Area Careers Center, at 366 Morse Street.

These sessions are very informative, especially if you are interested in learning more about the severe weather that routinely affects the area throughout the convective weather season.

One of the common misconcep-

tions of many locals is that there is some sort of a block that keeps the worst severe weather from hitting the county. Anybody who is a trained Skywarn spotter knows that previous statement is just plain false. One only needs to look back to late May of last year to see that destructive weather can occur right in our own back yard, with an EF-1 tornado striking Coldwater's southeast side, ripping the roof off a house and adjacent business, and destroying a self-storage facility across the road.

The sessions last about two and one-half hours, and include a break for stretching and to ask the presenter any questions you would like.

If you cannot make it to the Coldwater sessions, but would like to travel to a neighboring county

for theirs, please feel free to do so.

On Tuesday, February 14th, Lagrange County will have their session, at 6PM, at the Shipshewana Fire Department, at 1100 North Van Buren Street. The next evening, February 15th, at 6:30PM, a training session will be held at the Hillsdale High School choir room.

On Wednesday, March 21st, at 7PM, they'll be at the Montpelier Fire Department, in Montpelier, OH, and on Thursday, March 29th, the final Skywarn Spotter Session of the season for the IWX office will take place at the Fabius and Park Townships Fire Department in Three Rivers.

Make it a priority to attend one of these area spotter sessions!

Area Nets

Last month, we focused on local 2 Meter nets. This time, we'll talk more about nets on the HF bands. For your convenience, you can go to http://www.n1yz.com/HFNET_LIST.HTM for a list of some of the more popular nets throughout the country. Or, if you prefer, scan the QR Code* below to see this list on your smartphone!



*Read more about QR Codes on Page 4!

Birthday Club

Calling all readers of *Branch Signals*!

We are currently looking for brave individuals to occupy this portion of the newsletter! Just send your date of birth to editor, Justin Lopshire, at sky-wave21@hotmail.com, and we'll make sure to let the rest of our readers know when you're getting ready to blow out another candle on your birthday cake!

EMCOMM from page 2

session will be put on by the folks from the Grand Rapids National Weather Service office. The last session I went to was very informative and enlightening.

I would like to remind all the every Tuesday evening, except for the third Tuesday of the month, at 7PM, is the Branch County ARES/RACES Net. It is a good place to meet and talk for a bit every week.

We will always need more people that are willing to give some of their time to be of assistance for their fellow neighbors and citizens. We have a core group of well trained individual volunteers that stand ready to help when the call arises. No matter

how busy it gets, there will be a place for you!

Hope to hear you on the air!

73's!

Jan, KD8CYW
Emergency Coordinator/RACES
Officer

Editor's Note: Jan can be reached via email, at kd8cyw@arrl.net.



IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

If you haven't already done so, please be sure to renew your Club Membership for 2012! It only costs \$15 to join, which allows you to have club privileges, and opportunities to vote at Club Meetings! For more information, see Bill Kubiak, K8SVWI, at the next Club meeting.

Upcoming Meeting Programs

February's monthly meeting will feature a bunch of lies! Okay, we'll keep from lying until after the business meeting. However, after the gavel has dropped, and our monthly 50/50 drawing has been conducted, be sure to stay for an evening of laughs and trying to identify some of the very odd items that did have some purpose in the past. We'll see you there!

NOTES from page 2

the popular "Liars' Club" will once again convene, after we take care of a bit of club business. So make sure you're in attendance of this month's meeting! If you're interested in being part of the Liars' Club panel, be sure to contact myself, either via email, or by phone, so we can start to organize our resources for this event, that is almost guaranteed to make you laugh!

I hope to either hear you on the air, or see you at the next club meeting! Stay safe!

Justin, KD8JEL



WHAT'S WITH THIS BOX?

This box is a QR Code, which is used to direct smartphone users to a website, without having to key in a long URL address. All the smartphone user needs to do is download a free QR Code reader from iPhone Apps, or from Android Market, and then point your camera part of the phone at the box. Your phone will scan, and automatically direct you to more information. QR Codes are popping up everywhere, from "You Are Here" maps at area malls, to TV and print advertisements, and now here in *Branch Signals*! Any time we print a URL in this publication, we will also include a QR Code, so our readers with smartphone capabilities can easily find more information on the topic at hand! Scan the QR code in this article, and see where it takes you!



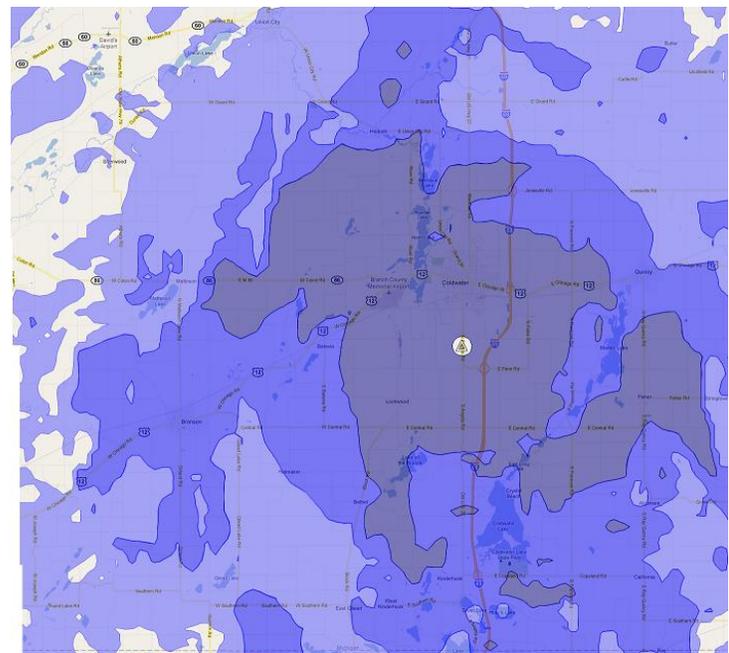
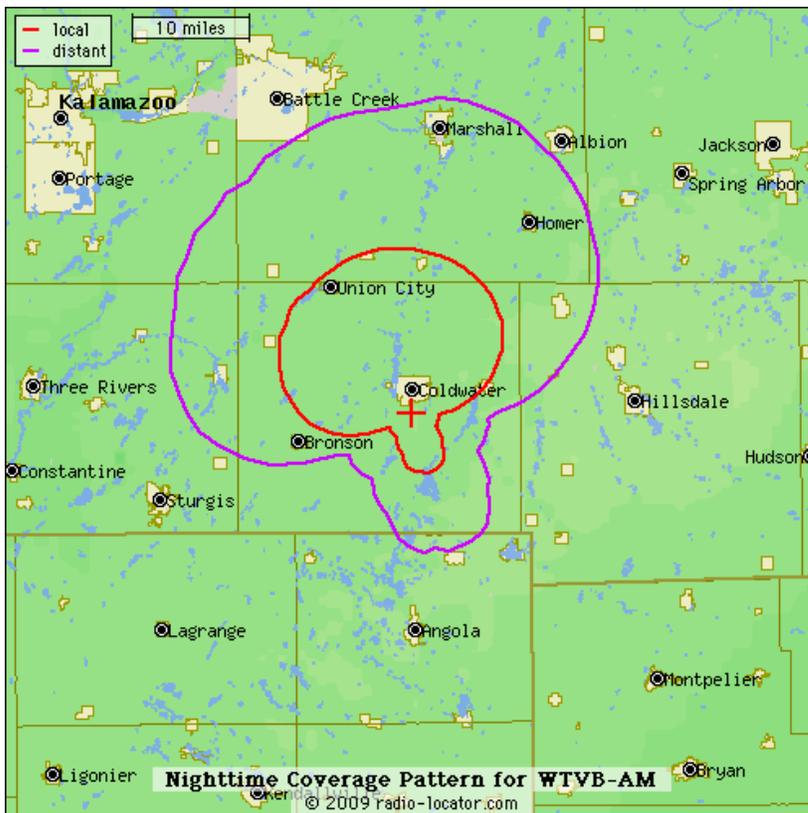
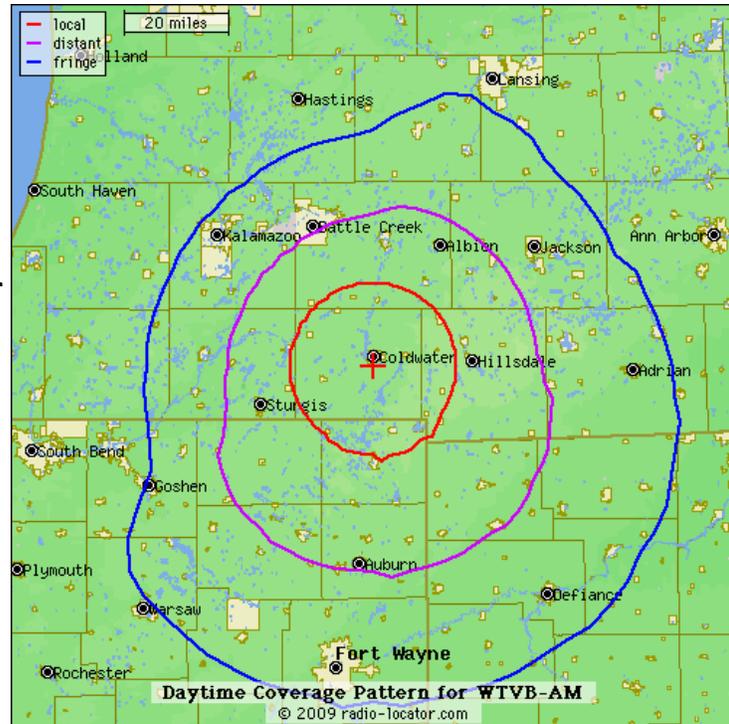
BREAKFAST!
Join us every Saturday morning, from 8:30-10AM, at Stoogie's Family Room Café, at the corner of East Chicago and Jefferson Street in Coldwater, for some great food and fellowship!

WTVB-AM & FM COVERAGE MAPS

RIGHT-The projected daytime coverage for WTVB-AM

BELOW-The projected nighttime coverage for WTVB-AM

BELOW RIGHT-The projected coverage for W238CD (WTVB-FM)



NOTE-On the FM coverage map, dark blue represents local coverage, blue represents distant coverage, and light blue represents fringe coverage. Maps courtesy of radio-locator.com and covweb.crc.ca.

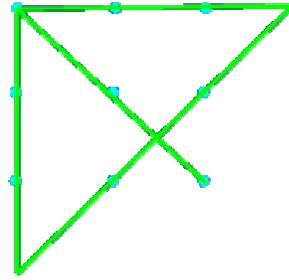


Monthly Mindbender Answers from January

ANSWERS FROM JANUARY

1. Without lifting pen from paper join these dots with four straight lines:

2. A man and his son were admitted unconscious to a local Casualty (Accident and Emergency) department after a car crash. The Casualty Doctor on duty took one look at them and said that they although they had the skills somebody else would have to deal with them. Why was this?



ANSWER-The doctor was his wife.

3. You have nine ball-bearings, all of the same size but one slightly heavier than the others, though not enough to be detected by holding them. You have some balance scales and are allowed to do only two weighings of any number of ball bearings. How do you find the heavy one?

ANSWER-Place the ball bearings in a 3 x 3 grid and label each ball bearing according to its position in the grid, A1, A2, A3, B1, etc. You are allowed two weighings so compare the weights of any two rows (the 3 ball bearing in that row) and note which row is the heavier (if any). Replace the ball bearings and then as with the rows compare the weight of any two columns. note which is the heavier column. Replace the ball bearings. The heavier row and column will give the position of heavy ball bearing in the grid. If either weighing is a perfect balance then you know the heavier ball bearing is the row or column you didn't weigh.

Alternative:

Put any 3 balls on each side of the scale. This will tell you which group of 3 has the heavy ball. For the second weighing, put 1 of the heavy group on each side of the scale. If the scale is balanced, the heavy ball is the one you didn't weigh. This way you don't need to keep track of which ball is which.

4. So you can spell coke, joke, poke but how do you spell the white of an egg?

ANSWER-Albumen, which is the white of an egg. Did you think it was yolk?

5. Name a commonly used four-letter word ending in E-N-Y (If you find this easy it is because you are seeing it writing. Try it on someone verbally and see them suffer)

ANSWER-Deny... it if you can!!

6. A farmer has to transport a fox, a goose and a sack of grain across a river. The boat is so small that there is room only for him and one of the others at a time, but if he leaves the fox and goose together the fox will kill the goose, and if the goose and the sack of grain are left together the goose will eat the grain. How does he get them all over?

**ANSWER-1st journey takes goose only, leaving fox and grain. Returns leaving goose on other side.
2nd journey takes fox over, leave fox on other side, returns with goose.
3rd journey takes grain over leaving on the other side with fox. Returns and picks up goose again taking it over on the 4th journey.**

Alternatives

Geese can swim so takes fox over first goose tethered and swimming behind each journey, returns picks up grain.

MORE MINDBENDERS COMING SOON!