



# Branch Signals

April 2012

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

### Greetings to all!

The BCARC ARES/RACES members participated in the Michigan District 5 Hospital Net that is held on the first Wednesday of every month and the monthly siren testing held on the first Saturday of the month. Again, many thanks go to those who participated in both of these vital tests each and every month. While we have volunteers that step up to help out with these when asked, there will always be a need and a place for help.

Also, mark your calendars for Saturday, May 12. The BCARC has been asked to assist the 101 Lakes Bike Run as it will again go through Branch County from Indiana into Michigan along Southern Road and back down into Indiana. The final configura-

tion has not been finalized for the route through Michigan yet. I will have a sign-up sheet available for you to volunteer at our next club meeting on April 17th.

I would like to remind all that 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!

On a personal note, on March 27th, I went to the ER at the Community Health Center of Branch



County. If you know me, I detest doctors and hospitals in general. Tammy and I spent about four hours with me having an IV in the arm, getting fluids and antibiotics. The final consensus of the staff is that I have a full blown case of pneumonia. After two follow-up visits with my doctor, he said I was very lucky not to be still hospitalized. I am, at this

See **EMCOMM**, page 4

## Notes from the President

Justin Lopshire, KD8JEL

### Happy April!

First off, I would like to apologize for not being able to get this issue of *Branch Signals* out to you in a timely fashion. The past few weeks have been very busy ones, and I haven't been able to sit down and put together a quality issue until just now, so I thank you for being patient, and understanding with this matter. I will do my best to keep this from happening in the future. Then again, if you happen to read this issue next month, next year, or next decade, you won't even know that it's being published two weeks late, right?

Some of my busyness of the past few weeks has revolved around my "new" boat anchor HF rig. I had been looking into purchasing a new Alinco HF rig,



but my car repair issues of late put an end to my dreams of owning a new, solid state radio. Instead, I turned my attention to the Heathkit SB-102 rig that some of you may have seen at the past few club meetings. This radio was given to me by Dave Benson, WN8MUP, who assisted us at the radio station with the FM translator project. He dropped this rig off to me one day, and said it was mine. However, I was cautioned

by many to not plug it in directly to the wall plug and start transmitting. Besides, I couldn't (and still can't) transmit, due to the fact that I do not have a CW key or a microphone for the rig. Hopefully, I'll have better news to share with you on this front when the next newsletter comes out in May.

On Tuesday, May 17th, our club will be conducting our Competitive Foxhunt. More details on this fun event will be published in the upcoming Foxhunting edition of *Branch Signals*. What I can tell you about the foxhunt is that I will unfortunately not be able to hunt this time around. The good news is that I will still be participating, just in other ways! This will be my first time as the fox, so watch out!

See you at the next meeting!

## Club Calendar

### April

**7, 14, 21 & 28** -Club Breakfast, 8:30-10AM, Stoagies Family Room Café, 91 East Chicago St., Coldwater

**7**-Monthly Siren Test, 1PM, throughout Coldwater

**3, 10 & 24**-BCARC Emergency Net, 7PM, 147.300+, 100Hz PL, & 443.300+, 123Hz PL

**10**-BCARC Board Meeting, 7PM, Coldwater Bob Evans Restaurant

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

## North Texas Hams Respond When Tornadoes Strike

On April 3, 2012, perfect conditions conducive to tornado activity converged on North Texas. A slow moving front, combined with abnormally warm temperatures and moist air coming in from the south, produced large hail, numerous funnel clouds, and tornadoes. As the weather worsened, hams in North Texas activated ARES® and RACES nets. Spotters reported their observations to their local Emergency Operations Center, which acted on that information in a timely manner to inform the public of the approaching storms, giving them time to get to safety. A total of 21 confirmed tornadoes -- including one EF3 and two EF2 twisters -- swept through the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex during the seven hour storm.

According to ARRL North Texas Section Public Information Coordinator Jim Pope, N5JCP, the region suffered extensive damage, but thanks to the assistance of radio amateurs and trained weather spotters who tracked the storm's path and passed the information on to local officials who in turn passed the information to the public, there were no fatalities and very few injuries.

"In Rowlett -- a city of about 56,000 people in the northwest corner of Dallas County -- hams at the Rowlett Fire and Police dispatch unit received information on an approaching tornado from weather spotters," Pope told the ARRL. "Because of this advance warning, Rowlett officials activated the sirens, warning its citizens of the imminent storm nine minutes before the National

issued a tornado warning for the area."

Pope told the ARRL that radio amateurs from across the region provided communications support to the National Weather Service and their local Emergency Operations Centers. In Fort Worth, local ARES® members activated a net 45 minutes before the National Weather Service requested assistance. "We notified our spotters and went into RACES mode per our SOP with the City of Fort Worth," said ARRL North Texas District Emergency Coordinator (District 4) Gerry Dalton, W5MAY. "We stayed in RACES mode until approximately 4:30 PM. Garry Cooper K5TXC, served as primary net control on 146.940 MHz, coordinating spotter reports to the National Weather service in Fort Worth. The City of Arlington requested an operator come to their Emergency Operations Center about 1:15 PM when the first reports of a touch down had been reported in Burleson. Linda McMillian, W5LMC, reported to the Arlington EOC and started monitoring the 146.940 RACES frequency, along with the 147.140 Arlington Amateur Radio Club repeater where spotters were sent to give damage reports or request city services. The 147.140 net stayed in ARES mode until approx 5:00 that evening.

According to Dalton, most of the senior members of the various cities and counties that were impacted by the storm were at the Texas Department of Emergency Management Homeland Security Conference in San Antonio. "The State Operations Center normally would have been activated in Austin, but since so many members of the TDEM staff and County Emergency

Management were at the conference, the State of Texas stood up the State Operations Center on the floor of the convention," he told the ARRL. "Vendors used their demonstration equipment to bring up WebEOC, which provides situational awareness for the State Emergency Management officials. Tables were setup up and the Incident Command Staff worked from those tables for the next four hours. [Live television feeds](#) were available from the Dallas-Fort Worth area so that officials were able to watch much of the destruction in real time."

In Mesquite -- a city of about 139,000 people located on the western side of Dallas County and overlapping into Kaufman County -- local officials relied on reports from Dallas SKY-WARN radio amateurs to make decisions regarding local disaster plans. "Reports from hams in Forney -- the site of the EF3 tornado -- as well as municipal communications between cities resulted in street and cleaning logistics vehicles and personnel being sent from Mesquite to Forney," Pope explained. "Mesquite also sent about seven police officers to Forney to assist during the first few hours of response."

In Carrollton -- a city of about 119,000 people located on the northeast side of Dallas County and overlapping into Collin and Denton Counties -- a high school principal requested weather information from ARRL Carrollton Emergency Coordinator Mike Hennifer, KD5ZCF. "We sent him an operator, Hennifer told the ARRL. "He was then able to get information directly from the net that was current and up-to-

date from the Emergency Operations Center and from the field."

Officials in Hunt County -- separated by Rockwall County to the west from Dallas County -- initially told members of the Sabine Valley Amateur Radio Association and ARES® that it was not in need of assistance, but that they should continue to monitor the weather. But around 2 PM, the National Weather Service activated the groups and to contact net control on the 147.16 repeater. The ARES® weather net was started just a few minutes later from the City of Commerce's Emergency Operations Center. "ARES net control broadcasted updates from the National Weather Service as they were received," Pope told the ARRL. "They also received reports of golf ball size hail. One storm spotter outside of Commerce reported seeing wall cloud and wind gust up to 48 miles per hour. During the storm, hams at the Commerce EOC reported that they could see 'visible rotation' from a tornado. All ARES® communications were done via FM phone on the 147.16 repeater in Greenville, Texas (the county seat), with some traffic also being handled on the 147.02 repeater in Commerce and the 146.78 repeater in Greenville."

According to Pope, Hunt County suffered very little damage, even though an EF2 tornado came through the county. "We have 5 residences that were totally destroyed and nine others with damage, he said, "but no deaths or injuries. A colt, horse and donkey were killed by flying debris. Hunt County was on the tail end of the tornado touch down, which mainly occurred in Rockwall County."

The Office of Emergency Manage-

## 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](mailto: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!

## Weather Siren Volunteers Still Needed for Monthly Exercise

On the first Saturday of the month, at 1PM, Branch County 911 sends out the signal to all the county's sirens in every city and village to test their operational capabilities.

In Coldwater alone, there are five sirens that stand ready in the event of a weather emergency, such as a tornado, or other severe weather situations that could put the city's population in jeopardy.

These sirens are located at the corner of Western Avenue and Farm Lane, near the West Side Shell gas station, at Grand and Hanchett Streets, just north of downtown, at the intersection of South Clay and

Industrial Avenue, on Vans Avenue, just north of Jefferson Elementary School, and at the corner of South Willowbrook Road and East Chicago Street, adjacent to Interstate 69.

Branch County EC, Jan Hayden, is always in need of volunteers to help provide this necessary public service, so the city's law enforcement personnel can continue their top-notch services to the community.

If you would like to volunteer, call or email Jan, or see him at the next club meeting.



## 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, KBSWI, at the next Club meeting.**

## Upcoming Meeting Programs

April's monthly meeting will feature a person we all know (and hopefully like)! Join us on Tuesday, April 17th, at 7PM, for the monthly Club Meeting, and stay to listen to our special speaker, Larry Camp (WB8R). Larry recently became the Michigan Section Manager for the ARRL, and he'll present some new information on what the League is doing these days. **DON'T MISS THIS PROGRAM!**

### EMCOMM from page 2

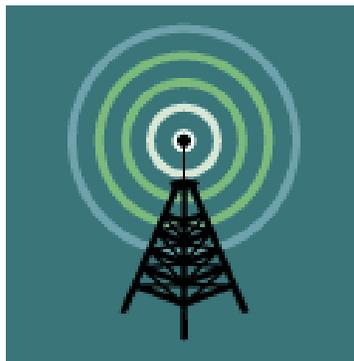
point, looking at a six to eight week recovery time frame to get back on my feet.

So, if you don't hear a lot of me on the radio, text and/or email, this is the reason why. I do apologize and hope to be back as soon as possible.

73's!!

Jan, KD8CYW

*Jan is the Emergency Coordinator/RACES Officer for Branch County. Jan can be reached via phone, at (517) 812-9009, or by email, at [kd8cyw@arrl.net](mailto:kd8cyw@arrl.net).*



## BREAKFAST!

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

# News From the ARRL continued...

## TORNADO from page 3

ment in Dallas requested RACES and SKYWARN net activation around 1 PM the day of the storm. City of Dallas RACES Radio Officer Pat Hykkonnen, N5NPL, initiated a net on the 146.880 Dallas Amateur Radio Club repeater and a SKYWARN net for Dallas County was active by 1:15. "The net handled traffic to the Fort Worth/Dallas National Weather Service office, the City of Dallas Emergency Operations Center, as well as Emergency Operations Centers in Irving, Garland, Richardson, Sachse and numerous others in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex," he told the ARRL. "Amateur Radio operators provided reports to the served agencies regarding severe weather events, including large, damaging hail, funnels and very destructive tornadoes."

"This storm received national media attention," Pope said, "but what did not receive attention was the dedication and commitment of radio amateurs. In every case, Amateur Radio was present and utilized by various Emergency Operations Centers. When asked to provide communication support for a school or business, hams stepped up to the plate and were there. Kudos and thanks go out to the North Texas hams for their dedication and professionalism during this severe weather event."

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**ARRL** The national association for AMATEUR RADIO

## Digital QST: Coming Soon to a Computer Near You!

The new Digital Edition of QST will debut toward the end of May. If you are an ARRL member and you haven't yet signed up to be notified automatically when the Digital Edition becomes available, you can do so easily. Just go to EDIT YOUR PROFILE at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org). Click EDIT EMAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS and then check the box next to NOTIFICATION OF MONTHLY DIGITAL EDITION OF QST. That's all there is to it.

A new [FAQ](#) about the Digital Edition has the answers to the questions ARRL members have been asking. (It can also be accessed from [www.arrl.org/qst](http://www.arrl.org/qst).) We hope you enjoy the new Digital Edition of QST.