



# FEEDBACK

April 2014

**Your Story:**

Do you have a story, humorous or otherwise about amateur radio? If so, please contact the newsletter editor (wr8g@arrl.net) and get it published in FEEDBACK.

You don't have to be a professional writer, or even a writer at all. If you're comfortable with writing, great! If not, relate the story in the fashion that you are comfortable with and let the editor do the rest.

If you would like to place a classified ad to sell or purchase amateur radio related items, please contact the editor.

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## BEEP

This article is intended for our recently licensed hams and anyone else that might read it.

A few weeks ago, I listened to a conversation, and joined in, on the SMARS 146.66 repeater. The discussion centered on why this repeater stayed up so long before the transmitter dropped and allowed the next person to transmit. That encouraged me to provide the following explanation.

All three SMARS repeaters, the 146.66, 224.24 and 443.95, operate in a similar fashion as do the majority of amateur repeaters. When the input to the repeater is removed, the transmitter continues for five seconds. After one second, a beep sounds then four seconds later the transmitter will drop. The one second interval is intended to allow another station to "break" into the conversation, then after the "beep", one of the original stations might recognize the "breaker" and continue the conversation. In this way, the transmitter continues transmitting during the entire conversation. The practice of not letting the transmitter drop probably originated years ago when transmitters were energized with a relay and keeping the transmitter on reduced relay fatigue. Allowing the "beep" to occur also resets a three minute timer. If one transmits for longer than three minutes, the transmitter will stop then come back on when the "beep" occurs. This "beep" is known as a courtesy beep.

The courtesy beep on the 224.24 and 443.95 is a double beep which indicates the two repeaters are linked together. If the repeaters are not linked, each will sound a single beep. The double beep on the 146.66 repeater has no significance.

All three repeaters have some interesting features. If one presses keypad 84, the repeater will announce the time. Press 578 followed by any other digits, the repeater will announce the digits pressed. On the 146.66 repeater only, press \*72 and release the PTT. The repeater will announce "START TEST NOW". Transmit a maximum 30 second message and the repeater will replay your message. A great way to know how you sound to anyone else listening.

**W8RVT-Don**



### Board of Directors

#### President

Gary Williams, N8QC  
n8qc@arrl.net

#### Vice President

Dave "Doc" Ashbolt, K8OLY

#### Secretary

Jay Jarrett, N8ARR  
n8arr@hughes.net

#### Treasurer

Don Larkin, W8RVT  
w8rvt@arrl.net

#### Member At Large

Tom Goodson, WR8G  
wr8g@arrl.net

### Club Meeting

3rd Thursday of every month  
Maple United Methodist Church  
342 Capital Avenue NE  
Battle Creek, MI 49017

### Next Meeting

April 17th @ 7 PM

### SKYWARN Coffee

1st Saturday of every month  
Immediately after Siren Test  
Coney Island, N.E. Capital  
Battle Creek, MI

### Next Meeting

May 3rd

### BLB Luncheon

2nd Thursday of every month  
Coney Island, N.E. Capital  
Battle Creek, MI

### Next meeting

May 8th @ 11:30 AM

### SMARS Breakfast

2nd Saturday of every month  
Coney Island, N.E. Capital  
Battle Creek, MI

### Next Meeting

May 10th @ 8:30 AM

## Board Meeting 04/01/2014

Attendees: Doc K8OLY, Don W8RVT, Jay KD8OXR, Tom WR8G, John W8JRD, Stephanie W8AEZ.

Treasurer's report was passed around. The Hamfest income/expense report was also passed around. The club made \$2,170.99 on this year's Hamfest, which Don says is just barely enough to run the club for one year.

Mention was made about the General meeting remark regarding raising membership dues. The discussion went both ways and in the end no decision was made. Tabled until a future meeting.

Field Day 2014 – It looks like snow piles are back further than the area we would need. Of course, there is also the belief, or perhaps hope, that it will be melted by June. We also need to make contact with airport authority as soon as feasible to assure we have the spot. We also need to be sure there aren't any bad feelings from last year, since we all feel that we kept the area very clean and didn't violate the 30' antenna height restriction. It was agreed that Doc and Jay will work with Louie to make a trip.

Doc is working on the traffic handling class he wants to hold. Time and place to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 1750.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Jarrett, N8ARR, Secretary

## Calhoun County SKYWARN Club meeting 03/18/14.

Called to order at 1830. Ken K8QNNQ presiding.

Financial report – with the purchase and resale of the Arrow antenna kits, the club saw a profit of \$125, bringing the checking account to \$606.18. Other expenses: a SKYWARN banner along with calling cards for the club and SKYWARN training cards to be given out at the training session March 29<sup>th</sup>. It was suggested that another banner be purchased and one will be acquired by Judy KD8SHK.

Antenna workshop – will be held April 26<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Emmett Township Hall training room. The class has been sold out and no kits are available. More can be purchased from the Arrow website (arrowantennas.com) as well as other supply outlets but the cost will be higher.

HIAD – May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Emmett Township Hall training room. Registration begins at 0900, class at 1000 and testing begins at 1500. Cost is \$35 and coffee and donuts will be served. HIAD flyers will be distributed by Judy.

HAM101 – will be scheduled after the HIAD.

(Continued on page 6)

**Hamfests**

04/26/2014: Jackson County ARC Hamfest  
 Jackson, OH  
 Jackson County Amateur Radio Club  
<http://jacksoncountyar.org/page3.html>

04/27/2014: Arthur Hamfest  
 Arthur, IL  
 Moultrie Amateur Radio Klub  
<http://www.qsl.net/mark/>

04/27/2014: Athens Hamfest  
 Athens, OH  
 Athens County Amateur Radio Association  
<http://ac-ara.org/>

05/03/2014: Cadillac Amateur Radio and Computer Swap  
 Cadillac, MI  
 Wexaukee Amateur Radio Club  
<http://www.wexaukeearc.org/>

05/03/2014: ORC Spring Hamfest  
 Cedarburg, WI  
 Ozaukee Radio Club  
<http://www.ozaukeeradioclub.org>

05/04/2014: Jackson County ARC Hamfest  
 Ripley, WV  
 Jackson County ARC

05/04/2014: The Dekalb Hamfest  
 Sandwich, IL  
 Kishwaukee Amateur Radio Club  
<http://www.karc-club.org>

05/16/2014: Dayton Hamvention - "REGIONAL ARRL CENTENNIAL EVENT"  
 Trotwood, OH  
 Dayton Amateur Radio Association  
<http://hamvention.org>

06/01/2014: Chelsea Radio Swap 'n Shop  
 Chelsea, MI  
 Chelsea Amateur Radio Club  
<http://www.wd8iel.com>

06/01/2014: Starved Rock Radio Club's (W9MKS) 2014 Hamfest  
 Princeton, IL  
 Starved Rock Radio Club  
<http://www.w9mks.org>

06/07/2014: Fulton County ARC Hamfest  
 Tedrow, OH  
 Fulton County Amateur Radio Club  
<http://k8bxq.org>

06/07/2014: IRA Hamfest (W8IRA/R)  
 Hudsonville, MI  
 Independent Repeater Association (W8IRA/R)  
<http://www.w8ira.org>

06/14/2014: Midland Hamfest  
 Midland, MI  
 Midland Amateur Radio Club  
<http://w8kea.org>

06/15/2014: Monroe Hamfest  
 Monroe, MI  
 Monroe County Radio Communications Association  
<http://www.mcrca.org>

06/15/2014: Six Meter Club of Chicago's 57th Annual Hamfest  
 Wheaton, IL  
 Six Meter Club of Chicago  
<http://k9ona.com>

06/21/2014: MILFORD HAMFEST  
 Milford, OH  
 Milford Amateur Radio Club  
<http://www.w8mrc.com>

**S.M.A.R.S. W8DF Club Repeaters**

Southern Michigan Amateur Radio Society  
 2 Meter Repeater 146.660 MHz -600KHz offset, PL 94.8  
 2 Meter Digital/DStar 146.79/19 (-600KHz Offset)

70cm Repeater 443.950 MHz  
 +5MHz offset, PL 94.8  
 1.25 Meter Repeater 224.240 MHz  
 -1.6MHz offset  
 70cm and 1.25 meter repeaters are linked.  
 Also available via echolink.

W8DF-5 144.39Mhz Digipeater/Igate  
 Find it on [www.aprs.fi](http://www.aprs.fi)

**Other Area Repeaters:  
 Skywarn/ARES/RACES (WX8BTL)**

2 Meter: 147.12, +600KHz offset, PL 186.2  
 70cm: 442.350, +5MHz offset, PL 94.8



**FOR SALE****\$465**

Kenwood TS400SAT HF Transceiver, Includes DC cable and mic. Has internal automatic antenna tuner. About 7 of 10 condition, minor blemishes and scratches. Works Great. Add \$30 for 30 amp power supply

**W8RVT-Don at any SMARS repeater, 269 963-7797 or w8rvt@arrl.net**

**Meeting Minutes 03/20/2014**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions

Officers present – Gary N8QC, Doc K8OLY, Don W8RVT, Jay N8ARR, Tom WR8G. 28 members in attendance total.

Secretary's report accepted.

Treasurer's report accepted.

Committee reports:

Hamfest 2014 – Doc thanked all who participated. We made money though not a fortune. Don may still have some bills outstanding and stated that the profit we cleared will just allow us to continue for the year, paying for the meeting room, incidentals, etc. We need a better outcome at Hamfest 2015. We sold 699 tickets, about 100 fewer than last year, which was down by about 100 from 2012. It is evident that Hamfest attendance is falling at all regular swap meets and this may just be the trend. Either attendance must increase or the prices will have to.

SKYWARN – Ken KC8QNN reminded the members that SKYWARN training will be held on March 29<sup>th</sup> at Lakeview Middle School on 28<sup>th</sup> St. The training will start at 10:00 but it is recommended that interested parties arrive by 9:30 to get registered. A call also went out for some help in registering attendees.

VE session – The turnout at the last session at the Maple Methodist Church netted 11 successful candidates (100%). The session at the Hamfest saw 12 candidates with 11 passing either upgrade or Technician testing. It was suggested that we try to get email addresses from

candidates (not from their official documentation) to keep them informed of radio news from the county. A voluntary signup sheet can be created for future sessions. Doc would like to hold a Traffic Handling class in the future, time and date to be determined. Next session is April 24<sup>th</sup> at the Maple Methodist Church.

Field Day – Intending to be at Territorial Rd. at Helmer Rd. as last year. We hope that the snow that is piled there will be gone and the ground will be thawed and dry by the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in June! We will also investigate the grassy area adjacent to Meijer's on Columbia Ave.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Ken KC8QNN asked if we should consider increasing our membership dues. He mentioned several associations he belongs to that charge several times what are dues are. The idea was considered and can be taken up by the board later.

Terry N8LN mentioned that the D-Star repeater is up and running, albeit in a temporary location. Negotiations are ongoing to find a more permanent location.

Hamfest 2015 – The committee must be reformed as Doc and Mike are backing out. The new committee will have to have members for tickets, reservations, location, etc. All the outgoing members have offered to help the incoming members with information/training. Five members raised their hands to be on such a committee. More will happen soon. Ideas have already been forwarded regarding a new location. Hamfest 2015 will be held on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

Meeting adjourned at 1800.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jay Jarrett N8ARR, Secretary

## FCC TO REINSTATE MORSE CODE TEST

"It was a big mistake eliminating the Morse Code test," admits FCC official

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Washington, D.C. – April 1, 2014 - Today, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC) approved Report and Order 14-987af which reinstates the Morse Code test for General Class and Amateur Extra Class licensees. "It was a big mistake eliminating the Morse Code test," admits Dotty Dasher, the FCC's director of examinations. "We now realize that being able to send and receive Morse Code is an essential skill for radio amateurs. As they say, it really does get through when other modes can't."

Not only will new applicants have to take the test, but General Class licensees who have never passed a code test will have one year to pass a 5-wpm code test. Similarly, Amateur Extra class licensees that never passed a code test will have one year to pass a 13-wpm test. Those amateurs that fail to pass the test will face revocation of their operating privileges. Materials for administering the examinations will be distributed to Volunteer Examiner Coordinators by the end of April, so that they can begin the testing on May 1, 2014.

"This isn't going to be one of those silly multiple-choice type tests," noted Dasher. "We're going to be sending five-character random code groups, just like we did in the old days. And, applicants will have to prove that they can send, too, using a poorly adjusted straight key."

Technician Class licensees will not be required to take a Morse Code test, nor will a test be required for new applicants. "We discussed it," said Dasher, "but decided that since most Techs can't even figure out how to program their HTs, requiring them to learn Morse Code seemed like cruel and unusual punishment."

When asked what other actions we might see from the FCC, Dasher hinted that in the future applicants taking the written exam may be required to draw circuit diagrams, such as Colpitts oscillators and diode ring mixers, once again. "We're beginning to think that if an applicant passes an amateur radio license exam it should mean that he or she actually knows something," she said.

For further information, contact James X. Shorts, Assistant Liaison to the Deputy Chief of Public Relations for the FCC at (202) 555-1212 or [jim.shorts@fcc.gov](mailto:jim.shorts@fcc.gov). For more news and information about the FCC, please visit [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov).

Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No-Nonsense" amateur radio study guides and a leading amateur radio blogger. You can find his study guides by going to his blog at [www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com). You can contact Dan by e-mail at [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com), or, after you pass the test, by CW. Look for him at the bottom of just about any HF band.

Editor's note: Please be sure to note the date on the previous article. —WR8G

### Income and Expense Statement

3/1/14 Through 3/31/14

| Category Description           | 3/1/14-3/31/14 |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                  |                |
| Donations                      | 281.00         |
| Dues:                          |                |
| 2014                           | 41.00          |
| <b>TOTAL Dues</b>              | 41.00          |
| Gift Received                  | 31.00          |
| Hamfest Inc:                   |                |
| Electric                       | 55.00          |
| Snacks                         | 493.60         |
| Tables                         | 750.00         |
| Tickets                        | 3,495.00       |
| <b>TOTAL Hamfest Inc</b>       | 4,793.60       |
| Interest Inc:                  |                |
| Checking                       | 0.24           |
| <b>TOTAL Interest Inc</b>      | 0.24           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>            | 5,146.84       |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                |                |
| Hamfest:                       |                |
| Administration                 | 0.00           |
| Door Prize                     | 161.25         |
| Drawer Change                  | 0.00           |
| Facility                       | 945.50         |
| Snacks                         | 325.65         |
| <b>TOTAL Hamfest</b>           | 1,432.40       |
| Utilities:                     |                |
| Telephone                      | 84.16          |
| <b>TOTAL Utilities</b>         | 84.16          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>          | 1,516.56       |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME - EXPENSES</b> | 3,630.28       |

# SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

## FEEDBACK



*(Continued from page 2)*

SKYWARN101 – March 29<sup>th</sup> at Lakeview Middle School beginning at 1000. It is suggested that interested people should arrive around 0930 to sign in/register.

Terry, N8LN, reported that he has started another 6 week Technician class. He expected 4 students and 12 showed up! The classes are designed to end just before the SMARS VE session on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The first night's class showed a lot of interest as well as successful testing.

Terry also reported on the successful start up of the D-Star repeater. It is in a temporary location at this time but it is hoped that it can be moved to the location of the W8DF repeater. The frequency, coordinated with repeaters in the local area, is 146.790 with a negative offset, no PL tone. It was reported that three more D-Star repeaters are due to be brought on-line in the near future for the District 5 Emergency area of responsibility. One is to be in Coldwater, one in Paw Paw, and one in Plainwell.

Jim, W8JMZ presented a brief introduction of Meteorology 101.

Meeting adjourned at 1610.

Respectfully submitted, Jay N8ARR.

### SMARS NETS

Before Lunch Bunch

Monday—Friday 11:30 AM, 146.66

Sunday Evening 8:00 PM, 146.66

Monday 7:00 PM, 147.12 (Skywarn)

Monday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95

Wednesday 7:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95

Wednesday 8:00 PM, 28.365

Saturday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95

Please see page 3 for offsets and PL tones

### Upcoming events:

**Club meeting: April 17th @ 7:00 PM**

**VE Testing: April 24th @ 7:00 PM**

**Siren test: May 3rd @ 1:00 PM**

**SKYWARN Coffee: after siren test**

**BLB Lunch: May 8th @ 11:30 AM**

**SMARS Breakfast: May 10th @ 8:30 AM**