



# "News & Views"

Your Taylorville HAMnet newsletter

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## HAMS and the FLOOD

A lesson in being prepared!



(see page 2 for more)

Page 2 HAM's and The 1937  
Ohio River Flood

Page 3 A First Hand Account

Page 5 Hams and The Teton  
Dam Disaster

Page 7 Calendar Events

Who's calling the Net



Happy Holidays  
to you

# HAMS and the FLOOD

Again, raging waters have brought tremendous loss and deep misery to the peoples of cities, towns and villages within reach of the mighty Ohio and Mississippi rivers,



Amateur station W8ESN, and the boys who handled the flood traffic. From left to right: Paul Luckman, W8KPH; Lee R. Kemberling, W8ESN; and Ed. Melville. (Photo courtesy Toledo Blade.)

And again, the Radio Amateur has rolled up his sleeves and taken over the huge task of establishing an emergency communications network. He has braved danger, gone without sleep and stuck it out all along the line because of an ideal. He has had as a motivating force that has seen him through many a tough spot, the bright knowledge that he was upholding a fine and courageous tradition that is a gold thread woven

through the history of amateur radio. The thread of gold is unbroken. The radio amateur has played his part efficiently, effectively and heroically. How well he has lived up to the tradition of his fraternity.

## The flood of 1937 on the Ohio River

The **Ohio River flood of 1937** took place in late January and February 1937. With damage stretching from Pittsburgh to Cairo, Illinois. One million people were left homeless, with 385 dead and property losses reaching \$500 million (\$8 billion in 2012 dollars). Federal and state resources were strained to aid recovery. Cities were overwhelmed and people came to the rescue with food, shelter and communication to those outside of the affected area. Radio stations broadcast news and updates to authorities. --- *continued on next page*

## **The Flood of 1937 continued.**

Behind the local stations lay a web of HAM RADIO operators. For a time, Attorney Warren Middleton's shortwave station W9CXD provided Paducah's sole means of radio communication. A phone company employee strung a line from the Red Cross's local headquarters to Middleton's house. The agency then called in messages that he, his wife and three other radio enthusiasts then took turns at the microphone, transmitting to other ham operators. W9CXD stood down after 175 hours on the air.

An amateur in Dyersburg, Tennessee, relayed broadcasts for several days. The weary man sounded apologetic when a friend asked how he was holding up. "I haven't had but three hours of sleep since Friday" he replied, "and I'm getting kind of tired. I can hold on here a while yet, but if you can get me a relief operator, I'd sure appreciate it.

Whether famous or unsung, these radio operators were among those who stayed behind to make sure vital information was made available to those in need and information of those needs given to authorities who could facilitate relief.

## **A first hand account from RUSSELL W. BANKS, W8PGL**

**"I'VE got lots of kick out of ham radio working DX from all corners of the earth, and it was quite a kick working my first ham station. But it was not until the Ohio River was demonstrating its mighty destructive power during the great flood that I got my first real thrill.**

**"Here's how it happened: W8PGL at that time was located ten miles east of Portsmouth, Ohio, in the river valley. It was after three days and nights of continuous operation handling only emergency messages for food, clothing, and necessities, since this station was the only outlet for communication to the out-side world for three small towns. All telephone and telegraph service was wiped out during the first day of destruction, in fact, it was possible to get out of these towns only by boats and one or two small hill-side roads that were made.**

**"On the fourth day of operation, about 8 am, our a.c. power failed. Messages began to pile up; food was getting low. The local doctors were there with messages for medicine and were also in need of a surgical nurse.**

**"All of my equipment operated on a.c. power. I had no time to lose. I made up my mind to be back on the air so I could get rid of my traffic. I got in touch with the local rural postman and asked him if he could help us locate a power supply somewhere in the district. He was more than glad to help so we started looking and we were pretty much disgusted for awhile.**

**"We then were told by a farmer that his neighbor had a plant that he thought was an a.c. plant. To our disgust it turned out to be a d.c. 32 volt plant. We were about to leave when the farmer told us he had a small converter if it would do any --- *continued on next page***

*A first hand account continued*

good. To my surprise it was a small Essco converter 32-100 ac. We lost no time in getting back to our shack with it. The men who helped out around the shack secured six car batteries from different automobiles and by 2:00 p.m. I was turning on my receiver to see if it would operate it. It worked perfectly. I heard stations calling me and they were wondering what had happened.

"The next thing was to get the transmitter to operate. I switched the power over to the transmitter and turned it on. But nothing doing! It would just barely light up.

There were only a couple things left to do. Build another small transmitter or overload the converter by putting more storage batteries on the input and try it that way.

"We all got in a huddle in the shack and decided to try over-loading the converter. We put cracked ice on the bearings and turned her on. Everybody was excited. We were taking a big risk on losing our power supply. The little converter hummed quite a bit. The transmitter was given a little time to warm up because it didn't light to near full brilliancy. The send switch was turned on. The antenna meter just moved up slightly. I knew it was working, but could I raise anyone?

"I called an emergency call to any station that could hear me, at the same time explaining that I was operating on auxiliary power and that they would have to call me for about 5 minutes in order for me to change the power supply from the transmitter to the receiver and that the receiver would have to warm up.

"It seemed as though the receiver would never warm up. The room was packed with people, but one could have heard a pin drop they were so eager to listen. I tuned the band and heard no one calling. I tuned over again and close to my own frequency was W3FJU at Allentown, Pa., calling me and calling all stations near my frequency to stand by because I was operating on auxiliary power and it was hard to understand my voice and that I was in trouble. They stood by and then W3FJU stood by for me. I gave all my messages to them and they informed me that they would send me another power supply as soon as they possibly could. However, the little converter did the trick. Food and supplies that were ordered were soon arriving.

"I saw the farmer a couple of months ago and he said the little converter was working as well as ever. "If I ever get a bigger thrill out of radio, bigger than this one, I am afraid I would never survive to tell about it." RUSSELL W. BANKS, W8PGL



The card above the globe reads  
"Radio Station -W8PGL- operator, R. Banks"

# The Teton Dam Disaster

The **Teton Dam** was an earthen dam in Idaho built by the Bureau of Reclamation, one of eight federal agencies authorized to construct dams. Located on the Teton River in the eastern part of the state, between Fremont and Madison counties, it suffered a catastrophic failure on June 5, 1976, as it was filling for the first time.



The beginning of the  
Teton Dam failure

Photo by

Mrs. Eunice Olson of St.  
Anthony, Idaho

The collapse of the dam resulted in the deaths of 11 people and 13,000 head of cattle. The dam cost about \$100 million to build, and the federal government paid over \$300 million in claims related to its failure. Total damage estimates have ranged up to \$2 billion. It only took 6 hours for the reservoir to empty.

With power out, phone lines down and roads impassable, it took days to fully assess the destruction. Early media reports placed the death toll into the hundreds. Yet, many of those thought to be dead were found and the final tally of deaths stood at 11—six by drowning and five in flood-related incidents. Of those who drowned, only one had no warning of the approaching water.

Madison County officials singled out the radio warnings as being the greatest reason for the miraculously low number. Local historian Louis Clements stated, “I think it was a credit to the people of the valley that they reacted properly and promptly when warned of the coming destruction thus keeping the death toll to a minimum.” ***Officials also credited the numerous CB and HAM radio operators who worked diligently with civil defense and first responders to make sure vital information was passed along.***



Total  
Destruction!

Photo by  
Mrs. Eunice  
Olson of St.  
Anthony, Idaho

## SO, why the emphasis on these two disasters?

We do not know when events such as this will affect us. We need to be prepared.

As we go forward into 2015, we will be developing a new and more organized plan to help the Taylorsville HAMnet provide our community the communication services they will need in the event of a local disaster or emergency.

You are a vital member of that effort and we look forward to your participation.

## Calendar Events – Dec, 2014

Dec 1 - Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
Dec 8 - Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
Dec 15 - Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
Dec 22 - Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
**Dec 27 – No in person meeting – Happy Holidays**  
Dec 29 – Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater

## Calendar Events – Jan. 2015

Jan 5th - Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
Jan 12th - Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
Jan 19th - Weekly Net, 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
Jan 26th - Weekly Net 8:30 p.m. 146.94 repeater  
**Jan 31<sup>st</sup> - In Person meeting - Taylorsville-Bennion Heritage Center**

## Who's calling the net?

December 1 <sup>st</sup>	Rulon	K7BTU
December 8 <sup>th</sup>	Doug	AD7LO
December 15 <sup>th</sup>	Open	Please Volunteer
December 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Rulon	K7BTU
December 29 <sup>th</sup>	Doug	AD7LO
January 5 <sup>th</sup>	Rulon	K7BTU
January 12 <sup>th</sup>	Open	Please Volunteer
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	Open	Please Volunteer
January 26 <sup>th</sup>	Open	Please Volunteer

**We need you to volunteer to take your turn in calling the net.** Each member should call the net as part of their readiness training. **Please, take your turn in calling the net.**

Thanks to those who have volunteered to help.

To get your name on the list, send an email to [tville.hamnet@gmail.com](mailto:tville.hamnet@gmail.com) and indicate the day or days you can be net control. You can call the net from your home or if you want to call it from the pantry radio room, let us know and we will make sure you can get in.