

Emergency Communications, are you ready?

(Submitted by Jeff Drew, N4JDU)

Ham operators have always prided themselves on their ability to assist in time of need, you know, “When all else fails...”.



Suppose some one asked you, “What’s that big aerial attached to your car for? Would you tell them proudly that you are a ham operator? One of those guys that can communicate when all else fails? That you can operate under catastrophic conditions, using non-commercial power, construct a simple transmitter and (aerial) antenna out of raw wire and a few other simple items?

I would hope so. It would give a lot of credit to the ham community if you answered in a positive way.

Suppose the person who asked you about your antenna went on to ask you for help. Or that someone nearby needed to communicate vital information to save a life. No cell phone is available, no commercial power, nothing. Just

you, the ham operator, at the site of a simple emergency and/or injury. Do you know what to do?????

More to come in the next issue....

Merry Christmas! It’s time to Party!

The BARC Christmas party will be held at the Piccadilly Restaurant on Hwy 31 in Hoover on Dec 2nd at 6:30 PM. No tickets are needed, just come and go through the line. We’ll be gathered in the back room for some food and fellowship. Hope to see you there!

Silent Key

Please remember the family of John (Mac) McCrory, NM9A, who became a silent key on 10-04-2010.

Up Coming Events

12-02-2010 Christmas Party

01-08-2011 Blount Co
“FreezeFest” in Locust Fork

03-05-2011 BirmingHamFest

BARC History

(Submitted by Dave Cisco, W4AXL, Club Historian)

Most of the time from 1931 to 1936, the Birmingham Amateur Radio Club (BARC) held its twice monthly meetings at the YMCA building. But the members dreamed of having a permanent station location and their own meeting place.

Bennett Adams, W4APU, and E.C. Atkerson (Ack, W4ECI) were able to lease some land from TCI on the south slope of Red Mountain on a secondary ridge overlooking Homewood called "Goat Hill".

Members donated money, (Pete, W4AUP, says he gave \$25) and a building was constructed at a cost of \$500. The building was approximately 20ft by 20ft with a porch on the front.



When completed in April of 1937, it had a first class ham station set up with emergency power and several antennas. Two of the members' wives remember attending a great party on October 14, 1937 where they played bingo while the men played radio. At this time the club had 30 active members. There were approx. 150 hams in the B'ham area in 1938.

But it was not to last....Someone broke into the club house in February 1938. What was not stolen, was destroyed. Mac McLeod, W4FKG, and Bennett Adams installed a steel plate on the door so no more break-ins occurred.

Forbes Distr. Co. donated a new Hallicrafters Sky Champion to the club to get them back on

the air. The club enjoyed their 'new' home until December 1941. Several hams (W4FIG and W4FKG) remember riding the street car past Vulcan and walking to the club house.

The war in Europe began to influence ham activity in many ways. Many countries banned ham radio, many young men entered the service and emergency preparedness came to the forefront. January 1942 saw all amateur radio activity cease. Some of the hams donated their equipment to the military.

The club house on Red Mtn. was then disassembled and moved to a storage building at Ack's Shades Mtn. home. BARC's clubhouse was never reassembled and this picture is all that remains.

New Manager of Emergency Com/Net Control Manager

Grady Evans, W4GLE, is the new Manager of Emergency Communications and Net Manager for the Birmingham Amateur Radio Club. He is very active in ARES, Red Cross, emergency communications and the ALERT group at the Birmingham National Weather Service.

Please join us, also, in welcoming Grady as the newest member of the Jefferson County ARES Leadership Team. He has accepted an appointment as an Assistant Emergency Coordinator and liaison to the Birmingham Amateur Radio Club.

Our previous manager, Hub Harvey, N4HUB, stepped down as net manager to concentrate on his expanding work duties with Liberty University and to focus more time on his responsibilities as the Jefferson County ARES Emergency Coordinator.

Please contact Grady at w4gle@arrl.net if you are interested in being a Net Control Station or if you have any questions. I am sure he would like to hear from you!

Kindle 2 Review

(Submitted by Jim Henson, KG4KCM, edited by M Green, K4MHG)

The Kindle 2 is supposed to be an improvement over the original...though in some aspects that's a little debatable.

For instance, they took out the card slot. It's smaller than the original Kindle and quite thin. The buttons on the keyboard are TINY round keys.

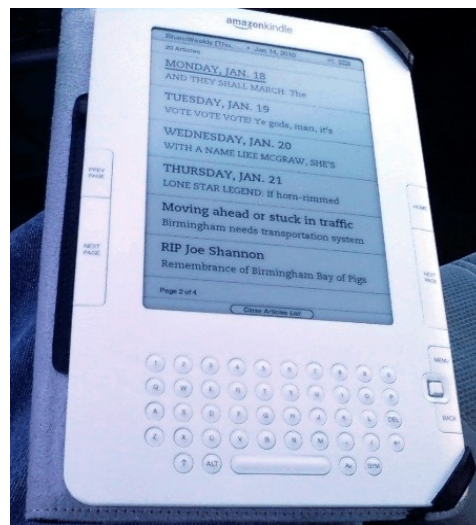
It's black on gray, not black on white, so the contrast isn't great, but it's more than easy enough to read on. Direct sunlight does not cause a problem. I haven't had any trouble with glare, either. The screen, being eInk, isn't backlit, so reading in the dark is out.

The cover I bought for mine was the M-Edge, which has the Kindle attachment system on it. The front cover folds all the way around to the back when you open it to read, and makes it easier to hold.

I currently have 330 text files and ebooks (that I have collected over the past 20 years) on my Kindle, with 1.4 gig of space left over. Even though more space is available, there are 30+ pages of files on the Kindle now. It could get really cumbersome digging through them if I took advantage of all the memory.

There are only 3 categories to sort files into, so finding things can be a bit difficult, even with the search feature. "Personal Docs" requires a flag set on the file that's a PDOC flag. Amazon converts the file for you, for a small fee. The "Subscriptions" category is for blogs and newspapers you get through Amazon, again, you pay Amazon to send them to you. The last category, "Books", is where everything goes when you just drag and drop them into your Kindle. Menus and sorting is its biggest failure, in my opinion.

It also has a VERY basic web browser in it. It connects you to the "Kindle Store", of course.... The Internet not only doesn't look good, most web pages seem to reset the Kindle; it shuts



down and restarts. The only webpage that doesn't seem to have this problem is gmail...Just be prepared, it's SLOW. Since it's eInk, there is no animation, no flash & images are not great.

The "Text-to-Speech" feature is easy to Understand and worth using.

Kindle has the biggest library of available books, plus, you can read more than just Amazon content on it. I have loaded MOBI books from other sources, as well as converted files to MOBI format and put it on the Kindle. It reads them just fine, too.

If you don't mind paying for your books, you can sit comfortably in your favorite chair, browse the Kindle store and have the books sent wirelessly to your Kindle as you choose them. I understand you can now get library books for the Kindle from library web sites, too. Amazon also has FREE books for the Kindle. (Some of which are books that are free for a limited time only.)

All in all, I think it's a very good device, nice to read on and the amount of content for the Kindle is impressive, but, in this economy, it's a bit on the pricey side. (Mine was a gift.)

The Kindle is a really good device as it stands. BUT...once you download a free program called "Calibre" (<http://calibre-ebook.com/>), the Kindle becomes a GREAT device. "Calibre" downloads, converts and sorts the files for you!