Zero Beat

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AARC Meeting Announcement

The May meeting of the Alliance Amateur Radio Club is coming up on Wednesday, May 9th. This months program will be presented the Ohio Military Reserve.

Before the meeting, we meet at Frank's Alliance Family Restaurant (428 E. State St) for dinner. We meet there around 5:45 PM on each meeting night.

We meet at 7:30 PM, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Alliance Community Hospital. We will be in the Cafe Conference room, which is just off the cafeteria.

Club Breakfast

Each month, we sponsor a breakfast at Frank's Alliance Family Restaurant (428 E. State St). We meet on the first Saturday of each month, at 8:30 AM.
The next club breakfast will be Saturday, May 5th.

Field Day Planning meeting

On May 8th, there will be a planning meeting for this years Field day effort. As before, we will attempt to have it at the Field Day site, which is the Pavilion just north of the Marlington Horticulture building on Moulin Ave. We're shooting for 6:00 PM, and it should be a short meeting.

We'll be talking about plans & expectations for this years effort. Yes, I'll be looking for some volunteers. Field Day is our big event each year, but it comes off pretty easy when we share the load.

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AARC Meetings

The Alliance Amateur Radio Club meets on the Second Wednesday of each month, at the Alliance Community Hospital. For times, and program information, check the meeting announcement in this newsletter, or check our website (see below)
Talk-in on either of the club repeaters.
Meetings begin at 7:30 PM. Visitors are always welcome.

Find Us Online:

Web: www.w8lky.org

E-mail: W8lky@w8lky.org

AARC Repeaters
2 Meters
145.370 (-) W8LKY
(PL 110.9/110.9)
-W8LKY Echolink node

440 MHz
442.350 (+) W8LKY
(PL - 131.8hz)

Nets
Thursday is our "net night," with the following nets held, beginning at 8 PM

Ten Meters
8:00PM 28.400 MHz (SSB)
8:30PM 28.100 MHz (CW)

Two Meters
9:00 PM 145.37 MHz W8LKY (-)

Homeland security Net
(Meets on the 2nd & last Tuesday of each month
7:00 PM 147.51 Simplex

N8AUH Donates equipment to the club

Thanks to the generosity of Dave, N8AUH, we have the following items listed for sale:

Description	Make	Model	Comments
Twin-Bander	Heath	HW-24H	W/Manual
	Kenwood	TR-7950	
HF Rig	Kenwood	TS-130S	With Matching power supply & Manual
HT	Icom	IC-3AT	
HT	Kenwood	TH-21AT	
Power Supply	MFJ	MFJ-4035MV	
Power Supply	Kenwood	PS-30	Matching supply for the TS-130
Power Supply	Kenwood	KPS-12	W/Manual
Wattmeter	Swan	WM-2000	
Misc 10 Meter Hamsticks			
ARES Field Resources Manual			
ARRL 2018 Calendar			
Hints & Kinks ci. 1978			
W1FB Antenna Notebook			
ARRL Extra Class License Manual			Current question pool good until 2020
Hints & Kinks ci. 1989			
Small Antennas for Small Spaces			
ARRL Extra Class Q & A Manual			Current question pool good until 2020
HT	Kenwood	TH-21AT	Battery pack needs re-assembled

I haven't had time to test the equipment out yet, but will be working on that after the 5th. I'll be posting prices at that time. If you are interested in any items, just let me know. Best way to reach me is by call, or text (330-936-5021. Please leave a message, as I do screen my calls.

Note: The remainder of the estates we were liquidating were sold at the Cuyahoga Falls Hamfest. Besides myself, Frank, WA8WHP, and Bryan, NW8D were involved in transporting the equipment, and disposing of it.

Coffee Break Rag Chew

The following comes from Tom, KD8JRK:

There will be a "Coffee Break" Rag Chew on May 6th at Complete Driving School 1150 Ely Street Alliance, Ohio 44601 Between 1:00 to 4:00. Hope To See You There

Minerva Rag Chew Starting Up Again

The following comes from Sue, K8STH. The Minerva Rag Chew is starting up again. It'll be on the first Thursday of the month at Minerva Classic 57 at 6-6:30 Dinner is available.

There Website & Mailing List News

There's not much to tell in this department. We had a slight glitch on the website a few weeks ago. This was due to a corrupt update to the plug-in.

If you are waiting patiently for the roster to be updated, please excuse my procrastination. I will get the roster caught up after the next meeting.

AARC Welcomes New 2 Meter Repeater

Well, the new repeater went online a few weeks ago. It turns out that my house is not as good a location as OMO's was. The range is reduced, but workable. We are currently running 35W out, and employing a tone of 110.9hz on the transmit & receive sides.

Echolink is back up and running, but will be moving in the future if my internet service will play nice with it. Ben, KD8KMQ is currently checking that out .

We have not picked up the old repeater & duplexers yet, but should have that done by the night of the club meeting.

Again, If you have any trouble with programming your radios, frank, WA8WHP will be available at the club meeting to help you program them. He assures me that he always carries his laptop and cables with him.

Alexa, help me with ham radio

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I have had an Amazon Alexa (https://www.amazon.com/Amazon-Echo-And-Alexa-Devices/b?ie=UTF8&node=9818047011) for nearly a year now. Mostly, I just use it to listen to internet radio stations or tell me a joke, but I think it has more potential than that. For example, I've written before about how I'd like to develop an Alexa skill to control my IC-7300 (https://www.kb6nu.com/use-alexa-amateur-radio/). I haven't gotten around to that yet, but, Joe, N3HEE, has just published an Alexa skill called Continuous Wave (https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B07C7HS47J/?ref=skill_dsk_skb_sr_0). It's designed to help you learn Morse Code.

To use this skill, you have to first enable it. Once enabled, say, "Alexa, open Continuous Wave." This opens the skill at the main menu. You can then say any of the following at any voice prompt…

- Learn
- Practice
- Alphabet
- Common words
- Random words
- Words
- Sentences
- Call signs
- Contest
- Quick Brown Fox
- QSO
- Help
- Stop – To end your session.

I've just played around with this app for a short time, but I've found it to be quite entertaining. It does, however, have one big drawback. You can't set the speed. It's currently limited to sending at 20 words per minute only.

Also, the learn function could use a little refining. When you give the command "learn," it asks you for a character, sends that character three times, and then asks you for another. If you could set the speed at which the skill sends characters, it could teach a character like the K7QO Code Course, first sending the character slowly, then ramping up the speed.

Overall, though, I think this is a great first shot at a usable Alexa skill for teaching Morse Code. I hope this is the first of many versions of this skill.

Other ham radio skills

While I was poking around on Amazon, I decided to see what other amateur radio skills might be available. Here are a few that I found:

- **Ham Exam** (https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B01N7NQ3JE/?ref=skill_dsk_skb_sr_6&qid=1524602919). Ask Alexa to ask you questions from the Technician Class question pool.

- **Ham Lookup** (https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B073YL88SL/?ref=skill_dsk_pnps_dp_1). Allows you to look up amateurs by call sign. Information is provided from the callbook.info database.

- **Ham Radio Propagation Forecast** (https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B073THV6ZP/?ref=skill_dsk_pnps_dp_0). Reports the latest forecasts directly from HamQSL (run by N0NBH).

- **ARRL Audio News** (https://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html#skills/dp/B078Y7NGYT/?ref=skill_dsk_skb_sr_1&qid=1524750783). Adds ARRL Audio News to your Alexa flash briefing.

Building your own voice app

The Continuous Wave Alexa skill was developed using tools found at [VoiceApps.Com](). Two other websites—Pullstring (https://pullstring.com) and StoryLine (https://getstoryline.com)—also have tools to help you build voice apps. And, Amazon has an online tutorial that will teach you how to build an Alexa app. I'm just getting started with these tools, so I can't recommend one over the others, but they do look like they'll make developing voice apps easier.

Since I'm currently in the process of updating my No Nonsense Technician Class License Study Guide, it occurs to me that I should also develop an Alexa skill for drilling students on test questions. I guess you could call them audio flashcards. Stay tuned for that.

When he's not trying to figure out how to build voice apps, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, teaches ham radio classes, and operates CW on the HF bands. Look for him on 30m, 40m, and 80m. You can email him about the voice apps that you like at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

KD8MQ Rambling

Hi folks, Remember, I said that the newsletter would be done each month if/when I have time? Well, welcome to the issue that almost wasn't. Things have been crazy here. Luckily, I had an unexpected free day today.

So, that's it for now.

See you next time. 73 all! DE KD8MQ

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Newsletter Information

The Zero Beat is a publication of the

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