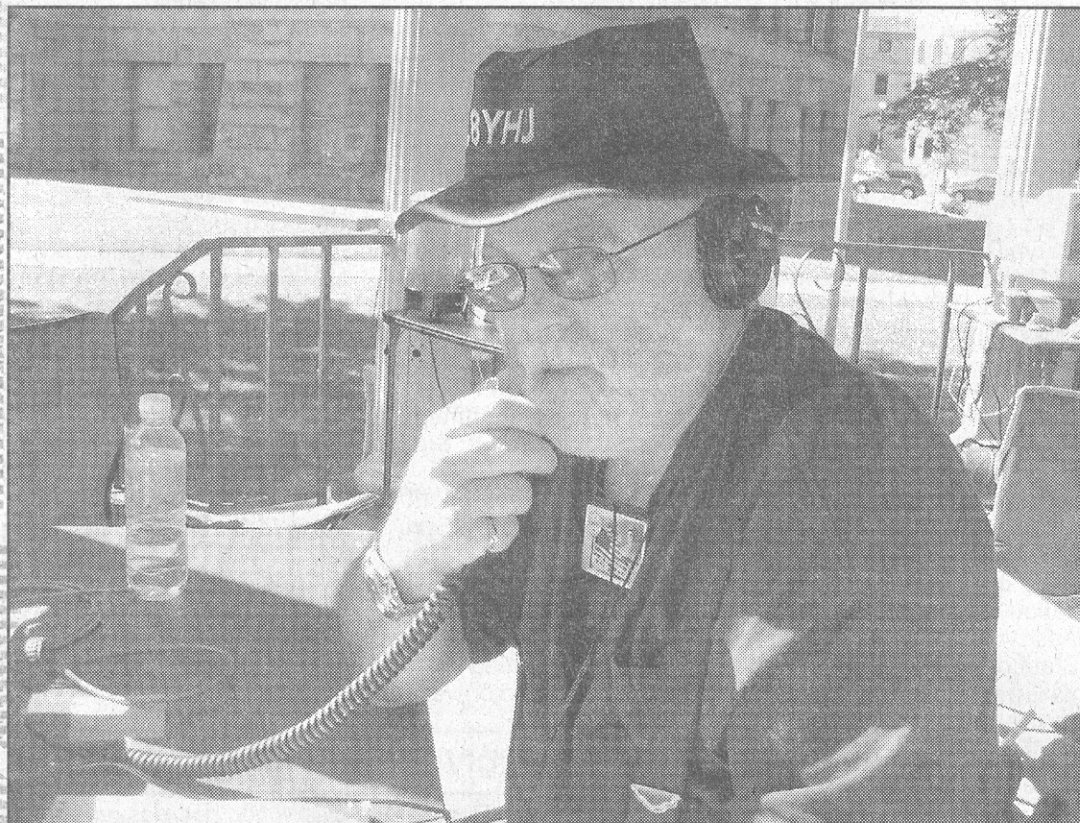


LOCAL / STATE



Tribune Chronicle / Marly Kosinski

Sherman Davidson, a member of the Warren Amateur Radio Association, communicates Saturday with a member of the American Radio Relay League during the annual Field Day event at Courthouse Square in Warren. The event continues until noon today.

Radio operators have 'field day'

By MARLY KOSINSKI

Tribune Chronicle

WARREN — Mayor Michael J. O'Brien spoke to an amateur radio operator in Dayton Saturday afternoon, wishing him a happy 80th birthday and telling him about the city.

The exchange took place in Courthouse Square as part of the American Radio Relay League's national Field Day. The Warren Amateur Radio Association sponsored the local event, which is held annually. There also is an Amateur Radio Association in Newton Falls, as well as several in Youngstown. Warren's is the largest, drawing members from across the county as well as other states. It was founded in 1938.

Peter Kozup, WARA member and event organizer, said the local Field Day event usually is held at the home of one of the club's 130 members. He said that when he offered to organize it this year, he immediately knew he wanted to hold it on Courthouse Square.

"I have always thought this would be a good place to have it because it's downtown, and more people would come to see what we're all about," he said.

He said amateur radio operators from across the United States and Canada were participating in the event,

which will wrap up about noon today. Kozup said 38,000 amateur radio operators, or hams, participated in last year's Field Day.

"The event helps us gauge where we are in terms of emergency preparedness because we have to keep communicating for 24 hours. But it's also a contest of sorts to see how many different stations you contact and how many transmissions you make," Kozup said.

He said the American Radio Relay League sponsors contests and events throughout the year, but Field Day is the largest organized event. He said the ARRL also offers online emergency preparedness classes.

Kozup, who has been a WARA member for 45 years, said amateur radio is still an important means of communication even in a world dominated by the Internet and cellular phones.

"It is not dependent on any other infrastructure so it can always be used, even in the midst of a natural disaster or terrorist attack," he said. "Ham radio is protected by the government because of its usefulness."

Bob Maurer, WARA president, was broadcasting on an amateur television from a solar-powered trailer on North Park Avenue.

"But the TV has a range of

about 100 miles," he said, noting the devices usually are taken on airplanes to fly over disaster areas.

He said most astronauts are licensed in amateur radio operations and have ham radios on board.

Maurer said he can communicate with the space shuttle when it flies over the area by finding out what frequency the ship is on. He said the radio inside the trailer is the exact model on board the space shuttle.

Maurer said ham operators have to attend classes to learn the technique and special codes, but it's very easy to learn. He said children as young as 5 can operate a ham radio.

Frank Bosak, 18, of Warren, has been a ham operator for six years. He said his father used to talk a lot on his CB radio, and the pair attended several ham swap meets that got him interested in the hobby. Andrew Juchnowski, 23, of Newbury, attended Warren's event with Bosak. Juchnowski is a seven-year member of the Geauga Amateur Radio Association, serving as president for the past three years.

"This event helps us keep our skills sharp and is a tradition that we're proud to maintain," Kozup said.

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