



Hamming It Up — Two ham operators mount a special antenna on the roof of a Brown County Fairgrounds exhibition building for a national

ateur radio contest. The antenna can be directed to pick up the best radio signals. The print is in reverse of a Press-Gazette photo by Ken Behrend.

Ham Operator Meet Stresses 'Emergencies'

In one of the exhibition buildings at the Brown County Fairgrounds, you can talk with a Californian in his own home, or with a person in Greenland.

The Green Bay Mike and Key Club is participating in a nationwide contest-exercise for all amateur radio clubs. It has been running since 4 p.m. Saturday and will last until 4 p.m. today.

The purpose of the contest is to test the skills of licensed operators.

"We are set up under emergency conditions when we would have to run off a generator in an open field," said Dick DeWitt, co-chairman of the local club.

Emergency Work

Oftentimes in an emergency, ham radio operators have kept communications channels open.

The exercise becomes a contest, because points are awarded for every contact made during the 24 hour period.

"We are supposed to make as many contacts as possible throughout the world," DeWitt said. "When we make a contact using less than 30 watts we get three points. If the contact is made by using 30-150 watts, we get only two points. This is done to see how good we are with the least amount of power."

65 Members

The local club has about 65 members. "There are around 300,000 ham operators around the country, and the list is growing rapidly," said Mert Nielson, the other co-chairman.

"It is a fascinating hobby. You can meet all kinds of people — rich, poor, sick."

The contest, which is sponsored by the American Radio Relay League, is held every year.

"The Green Bay club has never won," Nielson said, "but we sure have a lot of fun."