

Ham radio clubs, COVID-19, and “social distancing”

March 18, 2020 By [Dan KB6NU](#)

I don't know about you, but I dislike the term “social distancing.” The distancing part is fine. We do need to keep a safe distance from one another, but don't want to distance ourselves socially from one another. If anything, we need to come together more now than before this pandemic hit.

So, the question is, what can we do about it? Well, in a way, ham radio offers a perfect solution—communications! Ham radio lets us keep in touch with one another without being in physical contact.

Here in Ann Arbor, members of our club, [ARROW](#) have been congregating at 10 am and 7 pm on our 2 m repeater (146.96 MHz), and at 2 pm on the Brandmeister MI Talk Group (TG 3126). Please feel free to join us, even if you're not an ARROW member. The nets are conducted in a roundtable format, with one of the participants (often Jay, WB8TKL) acting as the ringleader. We babble on about how we're coping with this situation, including what projects we're working on and what bands and modes we're operating.



Another solution would be to hold club meetings online. Gil, N7GIL, emailed me a couple of days ago, describing how his club, the Ogden (UT) Amateur Radio Club, is keeping their members in touch. He writes:

Due to the concerns of the COVID-19 and “social distancing,” our monthly club meeting as well as other club meetings have been cancelled until further notice. Our club views this as an opportunity to show how amateur radio can solve problems. We will replace our “face to face meeting” with an “Over The Air net”.

I realize the idea of a net is not new, however, I am surprised that other clubs are not considering this option. Holding meetings on the air in this way has been met with great enthusiasm. This is as close to an actual emergency we can get. What a fantastic opportunity to exercise our privileges and show the world how creative hams really are.

We are planning an over the air meeting this following Saturday on our local club repeater. I will be net control and present the topic. My station consists of a FT3DR handheld at 300 mw feeding an Elk log periodic. In order to make the net more personal, it has been suggested that members submit a selfie for the club newsletter.

I would be happy to share details of what we are planning with you or any of your readers who are interested.

This sounds like a great plan to me. What, if anything is your club doing to keep club members close in your area?