

BIG RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2003 SEPTEMBER



ELECTION OF OFFICERS WILL BE AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING. BE THERE TO VOTE!

These club members were nominated at the last meeting and are willing to run for office: For President, Richard Osborne, KC8UB and Tim Stoecklein, KC0MDC; for Vice President, Dale Colby, WD8AUL; for Secretary, Jim Orlowski, N8PUG and for Treasurer, Sue Behler, KC8IFP. Only members are allowed to nominate a candidate and to vote.

You may nominate anyone who is a member until the final request for nominations is made just before the votes are to be cast. If you intend to nominate someone, be sure you have their approval and that they are willing to take on the position.

ONLINE NEWSLETTER IS A REALITY - LOOK IT UP

If you have internet access, check out our newsletter at the BRAARC site (<http://www.braarc.net>). When Editor George Rouman, W8OWN completes the newsletter, he now relays a copy to Thom Durfee, WI8W who immediately enters it into the club site for your ready access to it. Only a few incidental features are now being addressed.

One is a procedure for notifying those members who have elected to forgo receiving a paper copy of the newsletter and make their own color copies on their printers. This might be accomplished by making an email address list of those persons and notifying them as soon as the newsletter is posted. To achieve this we will need your cooperation. Contact George, W8OWN ASAP that you will forgo the paper copy and include your email address. Without that, it will not come about. Keep in mind that your participation will help the club's financial situation by saving postage on unneeded copies.

A second refinement will be to get George properly trained to send Thom an acrobat version of the newsletter instead of the Word for Windows version being used now. I admit it, George is not a computer nerd, he is a computer klutz. But that problem will be solved soon with the help of a full team of computer hams!

If you have any suggestions to offer to make the operation easier or more effective contact George at 231-796-3114 or by email at w8own@arrl.net.

COME FORTH WITH YOUR IDEAS!

Dale WD8AUL has received little response from his newsletter request for club program ideas. He will have a form available at the September meeting asking for your input.

Help him by coming up with some thoughts on what you would suggest. What in ham radio would you like to learn about? Would you be willing to provide a program on the subject of your choice? Can you point to someone who would be willing to speak to us about radio or a related topic? If so bring it to his attention or contact him at 231-972-2488 or email at colbyd@mindnet.org.

" FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Editor's note: Even though there was no space for it in last month's Field day review, consider these thoughts on Field Day that are especially significant considering our experiences this year. It is from the Contest Rate Sheet for July 2003 and found by Tom Behler, KB8TYJ.



If It's Not a Contest, Then What Is It?

Ah, Field Day. It isn't supposed to be a contest, but how many of us got launched into this great sub-species of ham radio called "contesting" by learning at the elbow of a somewhat intimidating master operator in the (pick a band) meter tent working (pick a mode)?

Remember that feeling of terror and exhilaration when after hours of watching he handed you the mike, key, or keyboard and said, "Here, take it for a while"? You...an instant band master!

Field Day was originally envisioned as an emergency test and training opportunity. That aspect lives on in the sheer process of collecting, hauling, installing, and activating tons of radio equipment and antenna hardware. Recent years have seen more and more class "E" emergency power stations and this year we have the new class "F" EOC stations. I took the opportunity to get our local EOC station (W7VMI) on the air for the first time. It was as much work as a "real" Field Day, pulling cables through conduit, putting up antennas, installing connectors, wondering why the radio that worked fine before didn't work now (and figuring it out), and making a few QSOs in the bargain.

What I like best, though, is that we're all equals at Field Day. Do you remember that first feeling of actually belonging and getting the hang of ham radio, even if just a little? There's nothing like that first late night bull session with the unshaven older guys drinking that muddy coffee and telling the most amazing stories while the generators putter and throb in the night and the lights in the radio tents dim in sync with each dot, dash, and syllable. In our sweaty work duds through the day and then gathered around at night under the kitchen fly lantern wearing old camp jackets, the distinctions between OT and newcomer fray and dissolve. This year I had a pleasant surprise that jogged me into this little reverie. While experiencing "the innate cussedness of inanimate objects" late in the afternoon, wrestling yet another connector onto an obstinate cable, a young voice burst through the 2-meter rig's squelch calling, "CQ Field Day" on 146.52. I was only too happy to put the connector down and called him back. The contact was a little stiff, with some coaching audible in the background. At the end, the young man added, "And you're my first contact!" Really, I said, your very first? And so it was, my connector forgotten, as we chatted a little while. What a treat for both of us! Those are rare moments.

As I look back through my own checkered ham career of thirty two years, starting with the high school club tearing around in my back yard, the Field Day memories are strong and numerous. I remember having to pound that vertical mounting pipe all the way into the ground because we couldn't pull it out and hoping my dad wouldn't catch us. Then there was freezing in the back of a buddy's VW bug all night and working unexpected DX on 40-meters. Watching the tide come in farther - a whole lot farther - than I expected and slowly covering up the bases of that fine 40-meter vertical array. Running a phone pileup with Mt. Rainier looming across the water in the evening sunset. I'm sure you have yours, too.

Yes, the very best thing about Field Day, useful intentions aside, is connecting with each other. To let new hams join our tribe and for the warriors to grow reacquainted once again. Life moves at such a fast pace these days, it's too easy to forget that we need to make contact, so to speak. Suddenly, six months are past and we've only chatted with the same dozen guys on the repeater or at the meetings. I really enjoy seeing a new face join in and pull on that guy rope or a familiar old face pop through the tent flap.

Sharing the work and the rewards do wonders for the ham spirit. A successful Field Day recharges our enthusiasm, widens our circle of friends, and enriches ham radio for us. It's not just about QSOs. Given the pastoral nature of the event's name, it seems appropriate to end this ramble with a quote from Thoreau, "Some men fish their entire lives without realizing it's not fish they're after." Field Day, at least, gives us a hint.

THE LONG WAIT MAY SOON BE OVER

The 6 meter repeater has been on a slow, long steady trail towards completion but may soon be up and running. An additional insurance premium for the 6 meter equipment has been paid from the club treasury and all parts of the installation will be at hand soon.

As soon as some bits and pieces have been resolved, the hope is that a final push will put it on the air. Stand by for the announcement which will hopefully come before the snow flies.

2-METER REPEATER BACKUP SYSTEM PLANNED



Club members at the August meeting authorized \$150.00 to be available to the Repeater Committee for a 2 meter repeater battery backup system. The old system suffered a dastardly death some time ago and has yet to be replaced. During the recent power outages the machine was non-existent with no emergency backup operating. With fowl weather occurring so often this season we are at a serious disadvantage when the power company becomes defunct. Now, with funds allocated, the repeater committee will proceed to put the backup in place. This is not just installing a battery. It requires circuits as well. The committee will review all choices and move ahead to complete the installation before the snows come again.

BECOME A NET CONTROL OPERATOR NOW

Tom Behler, KB8TYJ needs net control operators to fill in the 2-meter and 440 repeaters net control schedules for the coming 6 months. If you can help, he would certainly appreciate it.

Tom has recently gone through a medical procedure and suffered a setback when he developed blood clots in his lungs. While he is now home somewhat recovered and functioning, he cannot possibly cover the nets often as he has in the past. For the foreseeable future he must devote his lessened energy to preparing his school assignments and teaching classes. He truly needs your support.

Don't worry if you are not experienced. The net preambles are available in written form and the other more experienced net controls will help you learn your way through the process during nets. The 2-meter net is held at 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and the 440 net is held at 7:30 p.m. on Sundays. You do not have to act as net control every week. Just sign up for the weeks you would be available and wish to serve.

Tom has a signup sheet for each net so you can choose any evening that is still available. If you are not going to be at the next meeting, get together with Tom by calling 231-592-9854 or send him an email at kb8tyj@arrl.net. Give this serious thought. Let's pitch in to give him a hand.

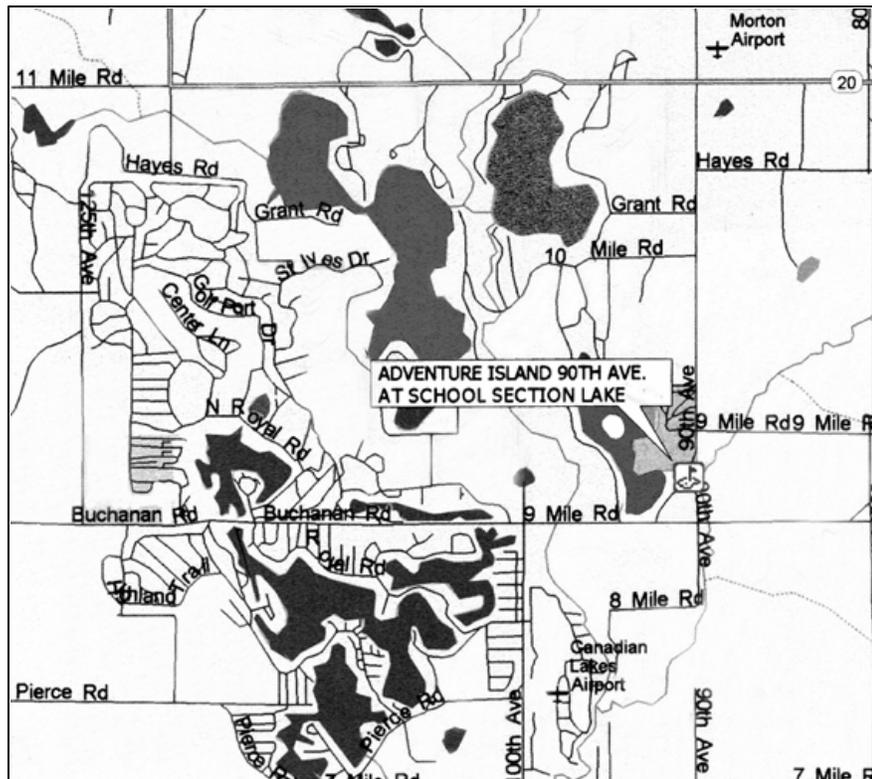
Incidentally, the photo of a frustrated Tom was taken in the hospital while he listened but could not speak. Perhaps he ran a voice-tube to a transceiver on the outside with that apparatus.

**MONTHLY CLUB BREAKFAST AND COFFEE KLATCH,
8:30 A.M. AUGUST 30, 2003. AT
GRANDMA'S KITCHEN ON M-20 IN
MECOSTA VILLAGE.**



**JOIN US AND BRING A FRIEND. SPREAD
THE WORD TO ALL HAMS IN THE AREA AND
LET'S MAKE IT A FUN GET TOGETHER!**

ANNUAL CLUB PICNIC PLANNED FOR SEPTEMBER 21, 2003 AT ADVENTURE ISLAND



Russ Brittain KC8WGJ will be host of this year's club picnic which will be held at the site of his Scoops Restaurant and Adventure Island located just south of the entrance to the School Section Lake Campgrounds in the Canadian Lakes area. That's exactly at 8701 90th Avenue.

The festivities and pot luck will begin at 1 p.m. so bring a dish to pass, your own table service and a beverage; no alcoholic beverages please.

Our host has a large grill on which he will be cooking hot dogs and hamburgers for everyone. If you have special diet needs but would like

something else grilled, Russ advises that you bring it along and it can be put on the grill for you. There will be picnic tables available in a shaded area for all. In case of rain we can move inside.



Russ' Adventure Island includes an exceptional and lavish miniature golf course that you really should see even if you cannot make this event! It is complete with scenic waterfalls and with pools surrounding the greens. It will be available for all to enjoy so bring the children and grandchildren. Cost to play is \$4.75 each for 18 holes with all proceeds going to the BRAARC treasury. In the photo (right) Russ is checking out the course while a family watches the action on a green.

To arrive there follow the map above from wherever you may be starting out. If you need additional directions, a call-in station will be operating on the Big Rapids 2-meter 146.740 repeater. Incidentally, we plan to invite members of the Cadillac Club to our club picnic.

JERRY HEMMYE, KC8AW KNOWS EZNEC

EZNEC stands for easy Numerical Electromagnetic Code. While some may argue that the EZ part is an overstatement, they have never seen the original code. The antenna modeling software works by dividing an antenna wire into small segments or elements. It then examines all the power going into and coming out of each element and next, adjusts the end conditions of one element so they match the end conditions on the following element. This is all done in the twinkling of an eye!

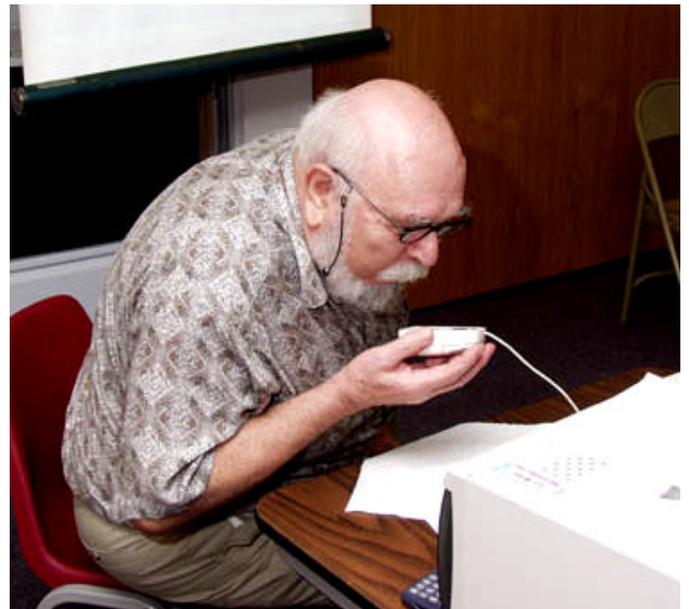


Part of the energy which comes into an element is what your coax provides, part of it is what is reflected from nearby objects, principally from a reflector or a director, or from the earth. Some of the power is lost in the resistance of the antenna wire, some is actually radiated, and some power is transferred to the next element in the antenna. Some power is actually sent back to the previous element, perhaps out of phase if the antenna is not resonant in general.

To use EZNEC, whether you have the freebie version or one of the other paid for versions, you need to describe your antenna to the program. Actually the trick is to make a sketch of the proposed antenna and label the ends on an X-Y-Z system of coordinates. You will need to decide

on how many individual elements to use, with the freebie that is limited by the software. You will need to choose the wire size and where you want to put your source, that is, the transmission line. The choice of a variety of earth conditions is also available.

Now is the time to look at your antenna using the view antenna feature of the program. If you goofed, you will see it immediately on the screen. Presuming everything is OK, and that you have set the operating frequency, you can let the program calculate the VSWR for your antenna at the chosen frequency. It is more useful to ask for a scan over a range of frequencies so you can see how the antenna will perform across the band. It is interesting to examine the SWR at both 50 ohms and 75 ohms, sometimes you get a better match with 75 ohms than with 50.



There are three options useful for seeing just what the antenna, at the height you selected, does for radiation. For the elevation option, it shows what the pattern looks like from the radiation along the earth to radiation directly toward the sky, all in a plane perpendicular to that antenna itself. Since DX requires a low radiation angle, this information helps determine how good the antenna can be expected to perform at any angle. Low angle power is most useful for that DXCC award. Another option is the azimuth plot. Here, the program plots the radiation pattern from north through all compass points and back to the north again. You will need to specify the vertical angle to plot since zero degrees will give you an error notice. The very low angle radiation is absorbed by the earth. The third option, while neat to look at is too complex to visualize. It shows the pattern in a three dimensional form; impressive but pretty useless.

You can download the free version of EZNEC from <w7el@eznec.com>. Recognize that this is a version with reduced capacity, but useful for a variety of Ham antennas.

73, JERRY

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

GREGG (KB8ZU) MCDANIELD

This month I'd like to introduce to you someone unique,... Why unique? He is not from Detroit, but on the other hand he is, sort of... Read on and I'll explain.



The person is Bruce (WB8TVD) Werner. Bruce was born in Chicago but, when he was still very little, moved with his family to Southern Florida for a short time and then moved again to the Big "D" area and I don't mean Dallas (Wasn't that in a song?). Bruce attended and graduated from Grosse Pointe High School (which is, you see a sort of Detroit connection) and then went to Eastern Michigan University at Ypsilanti Michigan for a year before the family moved again, this time to Massachusetts.

While in Massachusetts, and between schooling, Bruce worked in retail sales, selling radios! Shortly after, Bruce was drafted by the Army, and since he was familiar with radio, he was assigned to the Army Signal Corp repairing and operating long haul and micro wave radios.

After the military experience, Bruce returned to Eastern Michigan and graduated in 1973 with a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration and Computer Systems.

Before graduating from Eastern Michigan, Bruce met and married his wife Mary. They have two grown children. His daughter has three children, and his son who graduated at a Law School in Indiana has just recently married.

After graduating, he applied for a position at Ferris State and was immediately hired. Ferris must really be sold on his ability and since he is still employed there after more than 30 years, he must have really enjoy the job and the Big Rapids area.

Bruce first became interested in radio while still in High School, and was curious about Short-Wave reception, so he ordered a short-wave Knight Radio Kit from an Allied Radio Catalog, put it together and found out what short wave was all about. Also at the retail store where he worked, he met ham employees who tweaked his curiosity even more.

Then after moving to Big Rapids Bruce met "Pizza Bob", you may know him as Bob (K8YHJ) Carpenter. Bob became Bruce's mentor and "Elmer". So in 1974 Bruce obtained his novice ticket, and as of today, he carries the privileges of an Advanced Class amateur.

In 1976 Bruce received the Bicentennial Award, which was given by the ARRL for contacting all 50 states during the Bicentennial year. The certificate is a neat souvenir to have of the 200th birthday year of our country.

Bruce spends most of his radio time on VHF and takes pleasure in experimenting with Wire Antennas. Also of note, Bruce has been a Charter Member of our radio club since 1973, served as County E.C. (Emergency Controller), served two terms as club President and also served as Vice President and Secretary. Bruce say's when he was younger, he even liked to participate in Field Days, staying up all night making contacts on the CW bands. Bruce said he just loves being involved in radio and participating in it as much as he possibly can.

So this is Bruce... Who are you?... I'll be calling.

WANT A Vanity License? ACT FAST.

The FCC has announced that the new Amateur Radio vanity call sign regulatory fee of \$16.30 for the 10-year license term will go into effect September 9. Until then, applicants for amateur vanity call signs will continue to pay the current \$14.50 fee per vanity call sign application. The FCC says it expects to collect close to \$160,000 from 9800 Amateur Radio vanity call sign applicants during Fiscal Year 2003. That's up by almost \$30,000 and 800 applications from FY2002.

In releasing its annual Report and Order on the assessment and collection of regulatory fees for FY2003, the FCC responded at some length to comments filed from the amateur community. Some commenters had questioned the need for the fee, the requirement to pay it when renewing a vanity call sign and why refunds were not automatic.

Telecommunications Act provisions governing regulatory fee assessment cover applications for vanity call signs, which, the FCC said, "are voluntarily requested by licensees" and are "a value-added benefit not afforded to all licensees." Assessment of a regulatory fee to cover the FCC's processing and enforcement costs to make the vanity call sign service available is reasonable, the FCC concluded.

The FCC said its current policy of assessing "a nominal fee" at the time of initial application and at each renewal also allows greater access to vanity call signs. "A high one-time-only fee would be cost prohibitive for many entities wishing to obtain a vanity call sign," the Commission said. The Commission also said it incurs costs to manage each vanity call sign throughout its existence, not just in the first 10 years.

Regarding refunds due when the FCC denies an application, the FCC said its rules require a written request from applicants before it can process refunds of regulatory fees. "The written request serves as documentation when cross-referencing each unique file number that may be entitled to a refund," the FCC added.

The FCC said the documentation was particularly important in the case of Amateur Radio vanity applications, "because filing trends indicate that some applicants file several vanity call sign applications per day for several days on end." Requiring a written request makes it easier to certify "which fees are to be refunded for which dismissed applications," the Commission said. In addition, those processing applications in FCC bureaus and offices don't have the authority to issue refunds without proper documentation.

A copy of the Report and Order is available on the FCC Web site at, http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-03-184A1.doc.



YOU CAN'T KEEP A HAM OUT OF THE ACTION FOR LONG

Tom, KB8TYJ Thanks all who wished him well during his recent hospital stay. While he could not get on the air, he at least kept track of ham activity in the Grand Rapids area with his handheld and of course the catheter and urine bag no doubt served as a fine ground system. A simple procedure was complicated by three blood clots and a longer stay, but he is now well on the road to recovery and is again active in the Big Rapids area. Incidentally, this photo of a frustrated Tom was taken while he listened but could not speak due to the hospital's transmit restrictions. Perhaps he could have run a "catheter cable" to an antenna on the outside with that apparatus!

CLUB MEMBERS ATTEND RACES - ARES TRAINING

Many BRAARC members attended the course "Introduction to Disaster Telecommunications" presented by Jim Wades, WB8SIW, held right here in Mecosta County on Saturday August the 2nd. Jim (photo at left) is the Michigan State RACES Officer, Section Emergency Coordinator and General Manager of the Michigan Net, QMN, Inc. If that does not seem impressive enough, his knowledge of the subject of this session certainly is.



Everyone I contacted expressed positive reactions to his course. Since several persons who wanted to attend could not, Dale Colby video taped the entire session and it is available from the club to be reviewed by club members. The six hours of training credit given to those who attended is not available to those who only review the tape, but the information should be useful to anyone who desires to participate or even just expand their horizons.

The course content is quite broad and it covered basic disaster telecommunications theory and practice, the application of the emergency management cycle to telecommunications planning, and basic emergency response measures for RACES programs and individual members. Specific emphasis was placed on the application of emergency communications resources to specific disaster telecommunications problems. While the session was to last into the afternoon after a luncheon, the instructor instead continued with the afternoon portion, with the classes blessing, and covered basic radiotelephone net procedures, a discussion of the application of various common telecommunications modes to facilitate message flow, an introduction to the standard NTS message format, and a review of basic on-air operating practices. But don't let all this content dissuade you. Jim will make it easy to take.

The class is required for radio amateurs registering as RACES members so if you are willing to join the Amateur Radio Volunteer Service that protects and aids our communities in time of disaster you will need to complete the course within two years of joining a local RACES program.

The next opportunities to take the class will be as follows:

Oct. 18, 2003 Washtenaw County (American Red Cross); Nov. 29, 2003, Clinton County; Feb. 21, 2004, Otsego County; Mar. 20, 2004, Grand Traverse County; June 5, 2004, Marquette County



Can you pick out the Big Rapids Hams here?

Almost all are club members!

NOTICE JIM ORLOWSKI, N8PUG IN THE LEFT PHOTO? HE HAS JUST PASSED HIS GENERAL EXAM. CONGRATULATIONS, JIM!

SPECIAL CW "ON THE AIR PRACTICE" NOTICE

The Monday night CW practice sessions will begin at 8 p.m. as of this announcement.



The change will allow Tom Behler, KB8TYJ to continue to carry out the live program for those who wish to know the code or just to gain that general license. Experience shows that many hams who learn the code "because they have to" wind up CW advocates.

There is something about that Di DAh thing that gets them working it. It has been the best way to work those hard to get countries and to get the thrill of pulling a signal out of the mud when you can't with voice or other digital systems. Tom says join us and get involved. That's 8:00 Monday evenings, got it?

NEXT MONTHLY CLUB MEETING 7:30 P.M.



THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 4TH AT THE MECOSTA COUNTY SERVICES BUILDING ON STATE STREET (OLD U.S. 131) JUST NORTH OF THE PIZZA HUT IN BIG RAPIDS.

PROGRAM: DALE COLBY, WD8AUL WILL DISCUSS PAST PROGRAMS AND ELICIT SUGGESTIONS FROM YOU FOR THE YEAR AHEAD. PLEASE COME PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE.

NOTES FROM THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

If you are an Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) member, and have not obtained your new up to date card, please contact Tom Behler, KB8TYJ, Emergency Coordinator. He has several that have not been distributed. To check on whether you have the updated card, just look to see if the signature is that of Tom's or Pete Chesebrough's, the former EC. If it is Pete you need to get in touch with Tom.

The distribution of Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) cards is now being handled by Tom, KB8TYJ, Mecosta County and Gary Atteberry, WB8WIA, Osceola County. The RACES program has changed materially since the 9-11 incident. With the possibility that terrorists are among our Ham radio ranks, more stringent criteria for RACES members have been instituted. Before you receive your new card, Tom or Gary must have a new completed RACES application form from you as well as a felony background check available from the sheriff's department, a copy of the Completion Certificate for the FEMA IS2 (or equivalent) course and a copy of your amateur radio license. The IS2 course was required in the past so you should have that item already. If you can't find it, contact Tom or Gary.

Certainly, all of us should keep October 4th open for the state-wide Simulated Emergency Test (SET). That time will come fast and plans will need to be set in place for our participation. Note it on your calendar now!

IF YOU HAVE NOT TAKEN THE TIME TO TURN IN YOUR DUES FOR
2003, PLEASE DO SO SOON.

Call: _____ Class: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-mail Address _____

Dues \$20.00 for 2003 _____ Donation _____

Checks should be made out to the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club.

Mail this form to Sue Behler, KC8IFP, Treasurer, 511 Spring Street, Big Rapids, MI,
49307 or bring your dues to the next meeting.

IT'S HAM RADIO TO THE RESCUE AGAIN

Recently a ham radio distress call yielded help from the next state. When 83-year-old Walter Siebert, K3KBR, of Valley Lee, Maryland, started suffering serious chest pains July 15, he called 911. For reasons yet to be determined, no one answered. So Siebert turned to ham radio and put out a cry for help on 75 meters, saying he was having chest pains and needed to go to the hospital. Larry Wheeler, KG4RGN, heard Siebert's plea in Williamsburg, Virginia. At the time, Wheeler was monitoring a net on 3947 kHz as part of Amateur Radio Emergency Service District 7's participation in a Surry Nuclear Power Plant VOPEX (Virginia Operations Plan EXercise) drill. He notified the net to clear the frequency and contacted Siebert to get the necessary details. Wheeler then got in touch with the 911 dispatcher in James City County, Virginia. The 911 dispatcher in turn was able to reach the proper authorities in Maryland and get medical help to Siebert, who was hospitalized.

SEPT. 6: M.C.A.R.CLUB TRUNK SWAP, THE FIRST OF MANY. 8:00 AM EST TILL 11:00 OR SO.
PLACE: US-10 WEST OF US-31 EXPRESS WAY, AT TRACTOR SUPPLY PARKING LOT,
SOUTHWEST CORNER. BRING LOTS OF GOODIES. THERE WILL BE A \$5.00 DONATION TO
THE. M.C.A.R.CLUB FOR SETTING UP. THE CONTACT PERSON IS KC8OTI, ALLEN AT
n2radio@triton.net
THERE WILL BE AN AUCTION AT 10:00 OR 11:00 AM IF YOU WANT TO PUT SOMETHING UP
FOR AUCTION

BRAARC: AMATEUR RADIO AT ITS BEST!

