

# BIG RAPIDS AREA

DECEMBER 2005

# AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

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## ARES emergency net established after Missouri dam break

When millions of gallons of water breached the wall of a mountaintop hydroelectric reservoir in rural Reynolds County, Missouri, December 14, an ARES emergency net was quickly established on the Van Buren repeater. The deluge washed down the mountainside, sweeping away homes and vehicles and flooding the valley below.

ARRL District G Emergency Coordinator Dave Hannigan, KN0D, reports stations checked into the net from Poplar Bluff, Piedmont, Eminence, Elsinore, Van Buren, Redford and Koshkonong. The net also heard from mobile stations near Leper, Piedmont, Van Buren and Ironton.

The reservoir breach reported occurred after a pump failed to shut down at utility Ameren UE's Taum Sauk hydroelectric plant, which stores water from the Black River in an upper reservoir, releasing it to a lower reservoir to generate electricity. Hannigan said HF and VHF stations activated at emergency operations centers in Shannon and Carter counties.

In all, 16 stations responded to the emergency callup.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS-CALENDAR

BRAARC meeting 5 January 1900	5
BRAARC breakfast 31 December 0830	1
Ham Fests	8

## CLUB NETS

440 NET Sundays at 7:30 PM

**2 Meter Net Tuesdays at 8:00 PM**

ARES/RACES Net 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 9:00 PM on the 2 Meter repeater.

If you want to be the net control station, for 2 meter or 440 nets, contact Tom Behler KB8TYJ email: [kb8tyj@arrl.net](mailto:kb8tyj@arrl.net) or phone 231-592-9854



The next Club Breakfast will be at Sharon's Country Kitchen Rogers Hts formerly The Seasons Restaurant . At 0830 31 December.

## Holiday Toy Drive trucks hit the highway

A convoy carrying contributions to the ARRL/Salvation Army Holiday Toy Drive set off December 15 from the Memphis warehouse where the toys have been collecting for several weeks. On hand to see them off were representatives of the ARRL, The Salvation Army, country music singer Patty Loveless, KD4WUJ, Amateur Radio volunteers, the news media, dignitaries and, of course, Santa Claus. Loveless, who served as national chairperson for the campaign, expressed her thanks to Amateur Radio clubs and individual hams who gave to the drive.

"I think it's just amazing. For those who couldn't be here, I'm sure they're here in spirit and giving from their hearts, and I just want to thank them--from all around--for collecting," Loveless told ARRL. "Love is a word that truly everybody knows."

It took three trucks to contain the 4500 toys bound for youngsters along the US Gulf Coast displaced or left homeless as a result of this year's devastating hurricanes.

ARRL Delta Division Vice Director Henry Leggette, WD4Q, ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP, The Salvation Army's Bill Feist, WB8BZH, and Loveless headlined a send-off ceremony as ham radio volunteers wearing Santa hats, coordinated by Joe Lowenthal, WA4OVO, packed up the trucks for the late-afternoon departure. Lowenthal says the Holiday Toy Drive received donations from upward of three dozen states plus the US Virgin Islands.

The ARRL partnered with The Salvation Army for this year's campaign. Feist, The Salvation Army's disaster services director for the Alabama-Louisiana-Mississippi division, said it was an exciting occasion and he was glad to see ham radio get some positive publicity too. "We are certainly very appreciative of what all the Amateur Radio operators around the country and the ARRL have done for the people of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi," Feist said.

League members gave more than \$4000 in cash donations to purchase even more toys--especially for older youngsters--and transport them to the Gulf Coast.

The ARRL thanks everyone who contributed to--and who volunteered to assist--in making the 2005 Holiday Toy Drive a success.

### Technician License Class

The Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club is sponsoring a class for individuals interested in getting their Ham Radio License. The class runs for 8 weeks and covers all topics necessary to acquire the Technician Class License. Several instructors will work weekly with you going over the material and answering any questions you might have. A license exam is scheduled at the end of the class sessions. Register today and be ready for the first day of class. The class is free; however it is necessary to purchase the book, Now You're Talking, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, ARRL Publications. The book costs \$20.00 and can be ordered in advance to be available on the first night of class. Contact Jake Spence, KI8CK, (231) 796-7232 or Phil Marcotte, KC8QOV, (989) 561-5091 to reserve your spot.

WHERE: Big Rapids Department of Public Safety,  
435 N. Michigan, Big Rapids  
Classroom to the left of the main entrance

WHEN: Wednesdays from 7 pm until 9 pm  
Classes held Wednesday, February 1, February 8, February 15,  
February 22, March 1, (no class March 8<sup>th</sup>), March 15, March 22,  
and March 29

December Meeting Minutes  
by Jim Orłowski N8PUG

## Board of Directors List

**7:00pm Call to order**  
**Introduction of guests**  
**Informal Chat**  
**Minutes Of the Last meeting Not read**  
**Treasurers report Read and approved**  
**Announcements**  
**Committee Report Emergency Eoc is Doing Fine**  
**Newsletter Let Gordon know if you wish to receive the newsletter online.**  
**Website: Jake to work with Matthew on the website.**

**Old business:**

**J-Pole Construction: Coming along**  
**Permanent Digipeter Running on 145.090**  
**License Class/ve session**  
**Looking into the availability of the DPS Facility.**  
**WB8WIA to check on the availability of dps building in Jan/feb (6-8 weeks). Beginning Wednesday Feb 1,8,15,22March1(skip March 8th).**

**March15,22,29, with a VE Exam on Saturday, April 1. Contact Jake Spence or Phil Marcotte by January 25th so books can be ordered.**  
**Tom Kb8tyj will be doing the Cw class on Monday evenings.**

**Toys for hurricane relief Sue to mail in.**

**New business:**

**Potluck Tentatively scheduled for Sunday Jan 15th**  
**1:30pm At the Masonic lodge on 19mile road.**  
**Construction/Instruction event In Spring.**  
**Getting to Know you newsletter articles: Matthew to check with Gregg McDaniel to Make sure he does not want to do this anymore. We will have to find someone to do this.**

**Breakfast Location: Sharon's formally Seasons in rogers heights 12/31/05 at 8:30am**  
**50/50 winner John McDowell donated all to the club.**

**Program:Kevin Strieter Showed a video of his trip to the hill and the repeater shack. He is still working on the video and will include more footage of the trip for the next meeting.**

**Adjourned 8:45pm**

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Don MacConnel Past president

[don@omnitrack.com](mailto:don@omnitrack.com)





## A Note From The President

Holiday greetings to all. I hope the season finds you with hot chocolate mustaches and contented smiles all around. Yes, 'tis the season to be thankful for our many blessings. I know that I feel blessed to have so many wonderful friends in our club. I look forward to the coming year and some fun-filled activities and events. With your help and involvement, our little club can continue to grow. What a terrific example of the benefits and good will of amateur radio.

One development that is very exciting is the organization of a new Technician License Class. The information for this class is included elsewhere in this newsletter. A big thank you to Jake KI8CK and Phil KC8QOV for stepping forward and making this class a reality. Let's show our support for Jake and Phil by getting out there and encouraging friends and family members to take the course. We need at least 6 individuals to sign up before the class is a "go". Flyers are being sent to the local schools, FSU, the newspaper, and other organizations in the area, but encouragement by our fellow hams would do wonders to generate enthusiasm. Please also volunteer to help Jake and Phil in whatever way you can. Assistance during class or assistance at the VE session scheduled for Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> would be most appreciated.

I'm also excited about our next planned social event. A potluck is scheduled for Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm at the Masonic Lodge on 19 Mile Road. We have so much fun at these events - and the food is always delicious. Please plan to join us and share in some good eating, good conversation, and ham radio fellowship.

A construction night is also being planned for mid-spring. Please let Don, WA4FRJ know of any ideas you might have. We had such a ball soldering the last X-mas tree kits. For those of us not too familiar with soldering, it was quite the fun and educational experience. There are many kinds of kits like the tree one that are available at a reasonable cost. We have several months to organize this event - so let's put our heads together and come up with something great.

My last bit of discussion here is to say a big THANK YOU for all who donated toys to the Katrina victims. I was able to send quite a big box of toys from our club members and I'm sure they will be very appreciated by the children this season. Another monetary donation by a club member was sent along to the toy fund as well. Thank you for your generosity and concern.

Sorry Tom and I didn't make it to the last breakfast. We were all geared up to go, but sometimes life gets in the way. We'll sure be looking forward to the next breakfast in Rogers Heights on New Year's Eve. Hope to see many of you there and hear the news about your holidays.

With warm wishes and much hope for a wonderful new year - I look forward to seeing you at future meetings and events.

Sue, KC8IFP

## BRAARC POTLUCK



Have you ever known a HAM to go hungry at a potluck?? NEVER!!!  
Come join us for a mid-winter meal and share in some HAM Radio camaraderie.  
Relax, eat good food, have some good conversations, and enjoy some time together.

When: Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 1:30 pm

Where: Masonic Lodge on 19 Mile Road in Big Rapids

What to bring: Your own table service  
Your own beverage  
A dish to pass.

A good time guaranteed for all! Hope to see you there  
Contact Sue, KC8IFP if you have questions - 592-9854  
Listen for talk-in on 146.74 two meter repeater.



Next BRAARC monthly

Thursday January 5 th

In the classroom of

Department Of Public

### BRAARC YEARLY DUES INCREASED TO \$25.00

The decision was unanimous at the October BRAARC meeting. The dues for membership must be increased to \$25.00 per year. The club members present had a good discussion of our financial situation and offered excellent suggestions on both keeping expenses to a minimum as well as coming up with fundraising ideas. Please remember that your dues payment is DUE JANUARY 1, 2006. If dues are not paid before March 1, 2006, your name will be dropped from active membership. Thank you for your continued support of our club and the hobby of amateur radio.

Call: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues \$25.00 for 2006. \_\_\_\_\_ Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues payable by January 1, 2006. Checks should be made out to the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club (BRAARC). Mail your check and this form to John McDowell, KC8BAR, Treasurer, P.O. Box 116, Reed City, MI 49677 or bring your dues to a meeting.

Shoe Box Electronics Don MacConnel WA4FRJ

Lately we've been bombarded with ads for XM and SIRIUS satellite digital radio services. Honda and GM have made XM service an option, and Ford and Chrysler have chosen SIRIUS. Since it looks as if satellite radio is here to stay, I thought we should take a look.

Until recently, broadcasting satellite signals to little antennas was impossible. The satellites didn't have enough RF power. That's all changed. Now huge solar cell arrays power the satellites, and RF technology allows ample broadcast power; therefore, there's no longer any need for big receiver antenna dishes. XM and SIRIUS use this technology.

XM's two satellites are in what are called "geo-synchronous" orbits. These orbits, located 22,000 miles over the equator, exactly track the earth's rotation. Thus, they appear to be stationary. SIRIUS has three satellites which are not geo-synchronous. They orbit across the US and are spaced so that there are always two in transmitting range. The satellite signals are in the 2300 Mhz range and are modulated with digital information.

Both XM and SIRIUS satellites can be blocked by obstructions such as downtown buildings. To assure minimum loss of signal there are some 800 repeaters that cover the urban areas. Also, the satellite receivers have a memory (buffer) that records several seconds of program material used to fill in gaps. That means that what you hear is actually delayed by several seconds. There still may be dropouts but they are infrequent. Interestingly my XM receiver antenna works in the house, at least on the second floor, since the satellite signal will make it through most non-metal roofs.

Satellite radio antennas are very small, about an inch square. Both XM and SIRIUS receivers are also tiny; some are about the size of a deck of cards. The receivers have an audio output for stereos with an audio input, and also a small FM stereo transmitter that can be set to broadcast a low power signal to your car or house radio. They allow the user to select, in XM's case, any of 160 channels and, in SIRIUS's, about 120 channels. Music channels on both XM and SIRIUS are commercial free and offer a tremendous variety of music types. Other channels include comedy, news, NFL, NASCAR, weather and even city specific channels for traffic conditions. Special features include "crawlers" that show stock quotes.

Is the broadcast industry in trouble because of satellite radio? Not yet. Only broadcast carries local programming. Also broadcast is free. Satellite radio service costs about \$15 a month for the first receiver and \$7 for additional units. Receiver costs vary from about \$50 upward.

We haven't covered digital radio in Shoe Box Electronics since I don't know if there is any interest and also since I can't do it in one article or perhaps even two. Let me know if you are up for a longer course!!



### A report on "Skywarn Recognition Day" 2005

On Saturday, December 3, a number of our club members once again traveled to the National Weather Service office in Grand Rapids to participate in the annual Skywarn Recognition Day event. This year's activities occurred inside the NWS facility itself, and 5 BRAARC members were able to attend. George Rouman W8OWN, Jake Spence KI8CK, Matthew Trombley KC8VJR, Tom Behler KB8TYJ, and Sue Behler KC8IFP all participated in the event. George's lovely wife, Helen, also came along and enjoyed touring the National Weather Service office. A good time was had by everyone, and our efforts were deeply appreciated by the weather service personnel. Sorry that we didn't get more pictures of the entire group. We got lost in the event and forgot to snap additional shots.

For those who may not be familiar with what we are talking about here, Skywarn Recognition Day (SRD) is co-sponsored by the National Weather Service, and the ARRL. This was the seventh year in a row for the event, and from all accounts SRD for 2005 turned out well. Amateur stations were set up at a total of 106 National Weather Service offices across the country for a 24-hour period, running from 0:00 UTC through 23:59 UTC on Saturday, December 3. The goal was for the NWS stations to log as many contacts as possible during this time period both from the general amateur community, and from other participating NWS offices. Amateurs themselves also were challenged to see how many NWS stations they could contact, with various endorsements provided by the Weather Service for specific combinations of contacts with NWS stations throughout the country.

The Grand Rapids NWS station was staffed for 18 out of the 24 hours by a number of groups of hams from the 23-county warning area that is served by that office. Our scheduled operating shift was from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. During these 4 hours, we made a number of contacts.

In short, this year's Skywarn Recognition Day was a very worthwhile event, and I think it's safe to say that SRD has now become a regular part of BRAARC's yearly calendar of amateur radio happenings. Information on next year's event will be provided as it becomes available. Please consider joining us, so you can have as much fun as we did.



Tom Behler KB8TYJ mans the microphone, while Matthew Trombley KC8VJR logs and enjoys a delicious lunch.

**BRAARC Web Site**

The secure web page for members only is now up at [bigrapidsarc.net](http://bigrapidsarc.net)

. You may use this page to view/read/print future newsletters online. This will have color pictures and will be easy to read. Your user name will be your call sign. Please send Matthew the password that you want to use so that he can add you to the list. Contact him at : [trom9@fsuimail.ferris.edu](mailto:trom9@fsuimail.ferris.edu)

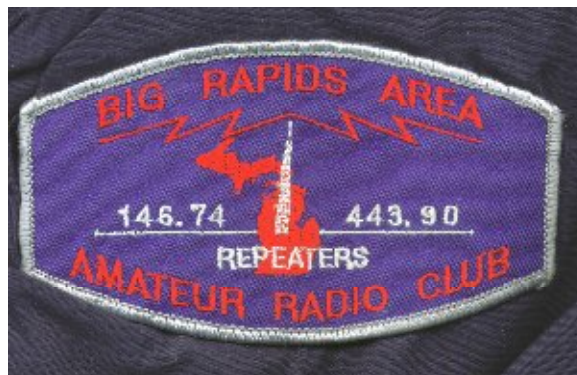
Those who no longer wish to receive a paper copy should let the Editor know and provide him with an email address so he can send out a reminder when the newsletter is posted to the website. Contact Gordon at : [gordon-kc8wfx@usa.net](mailto:gordon-kc8wfx@usa.net)

**Hamfests in Michigan**

14 January- Amateur Radio & Youth Club  
<http://www.arayclubl.org> Contact: Clayton Hewitt, KF8UI  
 Ph: 810-233-7889 Email: kf8ui@ar1.net  
 at Flushing MI, St Robert Catholic School

**CLUB PATCHES**

Club patches are available at a cost of \$5 a piece. \$3 for each patch will go into the club's repeater fund, so buy a patch and support our local repeaters. Patches can be ordered from John McDowell KC8BAR our club treasurer.



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL  
 AND  
 HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR



P.O. BOX 343, PARIS, MI 49338