

# Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

December 2008

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## From the Presidents Desk



First of all let me on behalf of the club, offer my condolences to Bruce Werner WB8TVD, and family, on the passing of his wife. A card was sent to the family from the club along with a

donation to the Parkinsons Foundation at St Marys Hospital.

We are attempting to collect a list of equipment belonging to the club, so if you have any please

let myself or Mike KD8DIB know. As we are looking at having all equipment in one storage location.

Plans are in the works for club members to ring bell for the Salvation Army this year, so look for more info on this on future nets. We need net controls, so if you are interested let Tom, KB8TYJ know. Remember Tuesday night net at 9 pm and four forty net on Sunday evening at seven thirty.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

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## BRAARC November 6, 2008 Meeting Minutes

**Call to order:** 7:07pm at Big Rapids DPS, by President Jim N8PUG

**Guests:** none

### **Announcements:**

- Emergency Committee Meeting: December 11, 2008 at 7pm.

- Skywarn Recognition Day: December 6, 2008 (Tom will check on the time)

**Secretary's Report:** October 2, 2008 minutes submitted by Val KD8IAM for Shila KD8IAL (discussed and approved)

- Shila sent thank you letters to the Big Rapids Big Boy and to the Big Boy Corporate Office





## Last Month's Brain Teaser

If Fred the Squirrel can find one nut in 15 minutes and Jane the Squirrel can find one nut in 12 minutes. How many whole nuts will they accumulate in a 24-hour day if they work together? Bearing in mind their daughter, Teresa, takes 20 minutes to eat a nut and she eats all day long!

Fred finds a nut every 15 minutes or four per hour. Jane, always more efficient, finds nuts every 12 minutes or five per hour. Theresa eats one of the nuts every 20 minutes or three per hour. Between Fred and Jane they find nine nuts per hour. Subtract from that the three nuts per hour that Theresa eats and you end up with a net of six nuts per hour. Multiply the six nuts per hour by the number of hours in a day, 24, and they end up with a grand total of 144 nuts.

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### **Hams at their best**

In a perfect example of inter- and intra-organization cooperation, the source of a continuous string of dits transmitted on the 40 meter band was located and resolved. The offending signal was reported to HQ by an amateur in North Carolina one recent morning. This brought the crew into action.

The folks at HQ contacted the FCC's HFDFing station and requested the general location of the transmission if the staff there could spare the time. The report came back that it was coming from a suburb of Columbus, OH.

Ohio Official Observer Coordinator Rick Swaim, KK8O, was notified of the problem and volunteered to tackle the task of locating the source and getting it turned off. Unfortunately, no one in the vicinity of the transmitting site was able to hear the dits the rest of this first day. The next morning the signal was readily heard throughout the area.

Rick contacted Ohio Assistant Section Manager, Bill Carpenter, AA8EY for assistance. Bill lives in the area from which the signal was coming. Together, Bill and Rick in their respective cars found the source of the dits and were able to turn the transmitter off.

No one knows for certain what caused the transmissions. However, the owner of the station had left the transmitter on when he left for work. He operated CW and uses a set of paddles with a keyer. No one -- except the pet cat -- was at home when the long series of dits were transmitted. This leaves everyone involved believing the cat somehow pushed against the paddle to activate the transmitter.

With the only suspect in this case being the cat, does this make it a possible feline felon? Will we soon have FE1INE join K9DOG on the bands?

Submitted by: KB8TYJ

**Handifinder Construction**



Hmmm, what's the next step?

Some intense work going on and a little consultation. Some are more relaxed than others.



Now where did you say  
this thingee goes??  
Real ham talk you  
know.



A



full classroom of  
constructors. Some  
do appear far too  
relaxed.

**By KB6NU, Dan**

About a week ago, I got an e-mail from a ham down in Texas who had attended the Maker Faire ([makerfaire.com](http://makerfaire.com)). "Makers" are people who love to tinker and make things. They even have their own magazine, Make ([www.makezine.com](http://www.makezine.com)).

He was amazed at the lack of any amateur radio content. He wrote, "The Maker Faire was unbelievable. Incredible stuff. Pedal powered carnival rides, robots, computer drive routers, kits. Outside of a table with a Vecronics kit, and a license manual, and a QRP book, the only radio stuff was from a pirate radio group."

I'm kind of amazed at this as well. It just goes to show how disconnected amateur radio is getting from the mainstream. These are exactly the kind of people we want to get interested in amateur radio, yet there was no one there representing us.

Ham radio needs to be at these events and get plugged into the "maker community." The Faire has not yet released attendance figures for this particular Faire, but more than 65,000 people attended the Faire held in May 2008. Dayton, with its attendance of about 20,000, looks anemic by comparison.

I blogged about this back in May (<http://kb6nu.com/why-cant-dayton-be-more-like-the-maker-faire/>). One of the things I suggested then is moving Dayton to some place like Austin. Seriously, if you were a new, young ham, where would you rather go, Dayton, OH or Austin, TX? Let's be real here.

And can there be a worse place for an event than Hara Arena? The parking lot, where they hold the flea market looks like a mine field, and it usually rains, making the flea market a wet,

unpleasant experience. Is it any wonder that fewer and fewer vendors choose to haul stuff out there? Some of us older hams might fondly reminisce about the bargain we found while traipsing around wearing a trash-bag poncho, but a story like that is not going to resonate with new hams.

Please don't get me wrong. I don't mean to badmouth the Dayton Amateur Radio Association or the Hamvention. I actually think that they do a great job, all things considered. I'm just pointing out that if ham radio wants to again be part of the mainstream, we have to get with the program. Unfortunately, that program probably won't be at the Hara Arena.

Ham radio has got to figure out how to latch onto the Maker phenomenon. At the very least, the ARRL should have a booth at the next one, and in addition to all the books and t-shirts, they need to come up with some kind of demo or display to attract makers into ham radio. I don't know what exactly, but I'm willing to start talking about it.

This phenomenon might also be a boon for clubs who hold hamfests. Just as the computer craze turned ham swaps into ham and computer swaps in the 80s, perhaps ham clubs could turn their hamfests into a combination hamfest and Maker Faire in their communities.

As I said earlier, Makers are exactly the kind of people we want in ham radio. Let's go out and get them.

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When Dan's not pontificating about ham radio, you'll find him working CW on 40m, teaching ham classes, or running for the ARRL Board of Directors. Read

more by going to [www.kb6nu.com](http://www.kb6nu.com). Send e-mail to [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).



## Club Member Takes First Place



David Huhtala, KC8WGA, works on a tube type 2 and 6 meter receiver.

David Huhtala, KC8WGA, took Michigan's first place in this June's field day. Operating a single CW transmitter on commercial power, David scored over all others in his class in Michigan and was 49<sup>th</sup> out of 372 in the U.S. David's father, Jon, N8ZH, is a long time member of the club and another CW whiz. Nice job David!

## New Ham Orientation Workshop a Success



Mike McKay

Al Ball Alice Nunn

Val Antor Shila Kiander

Three of our members and one prospective new ham completed the six hour New Ham Orientation Workshop. The hands on workshop provided loads of information on everything from getting the best out of a battery rig to CW to directional antennas.

Mike McKay KD8DIB moderated the class with panel members Tom Behler, KC8WGA, Bill Kelso, N8NJA and Don MacConnel, WA4FRJ. A pizza lunch made for a nice mid-day break. The Big Rapids Public Safety building gave us a perfect classroom and was arranged for by Gary Atteberry, WB8WIA. Class helpers included Sue Behler and Patricia McKay.

## Time to pay your 2009 YEARLY DUES

Your dues payment **IS DUE JANUARY 1, 2009**. If dues are not paid before March 1, 2009, your name will be dropped from active membership. Send in your dues payment right now so that your membership will not be interrupted. 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 2009. \_\_\_\_\_ Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to :

**Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club (BRAARC).**

Mail your check and this form to  
Sue Behler  
511 Spring Street  
Big Rapids, MI 49307

or bring your dues to the next meeting.

PO Box 343 Parts MI 49338  
December 2008

