

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

June 2012

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President's Message May 2012

As I write this message, I am still recovering from my two whirlwind trips last week. On Tuesday

(May 16th), I flew to Washington (DC) for my annual Malcolm Baldrige training as a member of the national Board of Examiners. My flight back on Friday did not land until 11:15 PM, and I got home around 12:30 AM. Saturday morning, Gregory and I drove to Dayton (OH) for the annual Hamvention. We got back at 5:45 PM Sunday night! I even conducted the 440 net at 7:30 PM as usual.

Speaking of running a net - please volunteer to conduct a net as it is not hard and it is a lot of fun. The two meter net is every Tuesday at 9 PM and the 440 net is every Sunday at 7:30 PM. The script (preamble) for conducting the net is on the BRAARC Web site. Also, one can be provided in print, if needed.

I will have to admit that the Dayton Hamvention was very disappointing this year. Gregory and I have been to this international event at least five times since we've lived in Michigan the last ten years. There were many

empty exhibitor booths perhaps indicative of things yet to come. The air conditioner did not work in Hara Arena making it extremely uncomfortable for visitors and exhibitors alike. Also, there were many international vendors selling counterfeit or knock-off items throughout the arena. The amount of people shopping or looking seemed to be smaller than in past times we've attended the Hamvention.

I heard last night on the 440 net that the annual "I'm not in Dayton" fox hunt went well. And, that the picnic after the fox was found was very enjoyable. What I did not hear was who found the fox. Since Gregory and I found the fox the two prior years, we want to know who our competition is. Ha! Ha!

Don't miss the opportunity to eat breakfast with fellow hams on June 2nd at Sharon's Restaurant in Rogers Heights. Please plan to be at our June 7th meeting as we finalize Field Day plans.

73s,

Jim

BRAARC Meeting Minutes – May 3, 2012

1. Guests for the evening:
Tricia Walding-Smith
Gary Todd WD8ALT
2. Please sign up for net control opportunities
3. Next club breakfast is June 2nd at 9am – Sharon's Restaurant
4. Next club meeting June 7th at 7PM – BR Dept. of Public Safety
5. No secretary report was available.
6. Treasurer's Report was read and approved.
Yearly audit of the Treasurer's books has been performed – no problems located.
7. Everything appears to be fine with the various repeaters.
8. ARES/RACES update – James Buttleman is no longer the EMD for Mecosta County. Tim Ladd who is also the EMS Director will take over this position.. We still need cables and software to be able to program the Region 6 equipment.
9. Mike McKay (KD8DIB) is working with Mary Eckles on the sale/auction of equipment previously owned by Bill Eckles (W8ZNH). Look for the list on ebay or on the club website. Bill also had an extensive QSL card collection – we may try to scan the cards and create a virtual museum on our club website. Help in scanning the cards will be necessary – let Mike McKay know if you are willing to help. BRAARC history and past code classes are also on the web – check them out.

10. Girls on the Run event to be held June 2nd at Northend Park. Tom KB8TYJ will have more details soon. Volunteers are needed.
11. FOX HUNT planned for Saturday, May 19th at Charles E. Fairman Pool area. Training begins at 10 am. Prehunt briefing at 10:45. Actual FOX HUNT begins at 11:00 am. A potluck picnic will follow the hunt – usually around noon. Bring your own table setting, drink, and a dish to pass.
12. Spring Dinner planned for Friday June 8th 6 pm at THE ROCK, Ferris Campus.
13. Jeff Sell had a tech corner illustrating "NIFTY" radio guides that can be purchased for various pieces of equipment. The guides are a shortened, simplified version of the equipment manuals.
14. The evening's program focused on FIELD DAY. Field Day is Saturday, June 23rd and Sunday, June 24th. Tom and Sue Behler volunteered to help Jeff Sell with the Field Day planning and preparation. **MANY OTHER VOLUNTEERS ARE NECESSARY.** Please let Jeff know that you are willing to help with Field Day. Sue Behler volunteered to contact the Big Rapids School District to see if we can use the parking lot site again. The club authorized the expenditure of \$400 for the event. Sue Behler will look into the ordering of T-shirts, pins, and hats for club members who would like to place an order before Field Day.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Behler KC8IFP

Announcements:

Club Breakfast - Sat, June 2, 9:00am – 10:30am
at Sharon's restaurant in Rogers Heights. Talk-in on the 146.740 Big Rapids 2-meter repeater for anyone needing directions

Girls on the Run - Sat, June 2, 9:00am – 11:30am
Northend Riverside Park, Fourth ave, Big Rapids, mi 49307

BRAARC Meeting - Thu, June 7, 7pm – 9pm
435 N. Michigan Ave, Big Rapids, Mi 49307
Big Rapids Department Of Public Safety Building, 435 N. Michigan in Big Rapids. Presentation Topic: TBA

BRAARC Annual dinner – Friday, June 8, 6pm – ()
At The Rock on Ferris State campus.

Field Day Breakfast – Saturday, June 23, 9:00am – 10:00am
Sharon's Restaurant, Rogers Heights.

Field Day - Sat, June 23, 12pm – Sun, June 24, 1pm More info to follow.

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Mailing lists, blogs, and podcasts are good sources of ham info

Whether you're a newcomer or an old-timer, the Internet is possibly the best way to learn as much as you can about amateur radio. On the Internet, you'll find many, many ham radio mailing lists, podcasts, and videos. In essence, these resources give you access to hundreds, if not thousands, of Elmers.

One mailing list that I always suggest to new hams is the HamRadioHelpGroup (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HamRadioHelpGroup>). The purpose of this group is to help "those who are interested in getting started in Amateur Radio or upgrading their license." This mailing list has a good mix of beginners and experts, and most questions are answered quickly and correctly. One thing that I really like about this group is that the moderators do a good job of keeping the discussions on track, and will squelch them when they stray off topic or threaten to turn into flame wars.

In addition to the HamRadioHelpGroup, you might also want to join a more targeted mailing list. For example, if you're interested in learning Morse Code (hint, hint), you might join the SolidCpyCW list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SolidCpyCW/>). If you just bought a Yaesu FT-60 hand-held transceiver, you might want to join the FT-60 list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FT-60/>). Chances are that no matter what your interest, there's probably a mailing list to discuss that interest.

I'm subscribed to a lot of amateur radio mailing lists and could probably spend most of my day just

PLACE YOUR FIELD DAY ORDER NOW

Our club will be placing an order for Field Day T-shirts, caps, and pins. Please let Sue Behler know by Friday, June 8th if you would like to place an order with the Club and save yourself some shipping costs. Orders must be prepaid.

Available items for the 2012 Field Day:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| T-shirt | sizes Small thru 4XL | \$16.00 |
| Hat | | \$11.00 |
| Pin | | \$ 5.00 |



cap



t-shirt



pin

Dayton Hamvention 2012: Another great ham radio experience

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

My Dayton experience started at 3:45 am Thursday morning. That's when I had to get up so that I could make it to the Fairborn Holiday Inn in time for the first session of this year's Four Days in May (FDIM) conference. FDIM is a one-day conference put on by the QRP Amateur Radio Club International (<http://qrparci.org/>) and is a great way to start the "Dayton experience."

This year, we were treated to six very fine presentations. They included talks on using microcontrollers for various projects, software-defined radio, VHF and UHF for QRPers, homebrewing with "hollow state" devices (more commonly known as tubes), using open-source electronic design tools, and operating pedestrian mobile. The two talks that I enjoyed the most were "Hollow State (Thermatron) Homebrewing" by Grayson, TA2ZGE/KJ7UM and "Leveraging Free and Open Source Tools in Homebrewing" by Jason, NT7S.

Friday morning, I got up early again, so that I could make the 7:30am bus to the Hamvention. We arrived about 8:00 am, just as the gates were opening. The first thing that I did was to head to the FAR Circuits tent, which is—as the name implies—at the far end of the flea market. There, I made my first purchases, a board to make a regenerative receiver and one to make an audio breakout box.

The rest of the day was a combination of wandering the aisles of the outdoor flea market, fighting the crowds inside the arena, attending seminars, and meeting people that I know. By the time, 4:30 pm rolled around, I was pretty hot and tired. Temperatures topped 80 degrees, and on the blacktop surface of the flea market, temperatures were undoubtedly higher. I was happy to get on the bus and head back to the hotel.

Saturday, was pretty much the same story, except it was even hotter. The temperature almost hit 90 degrees. I didn't bring any sunscreen, either, so I got a little rosy.

I ran into some people that I knew that had just come down for the day, or perhaps that I'd missed the day before. One guy I ran into at the Ohio Repeater Council booth, pulled out his new Elecraft KX-3 and gave me a quick demo. It's actually quite a cool, little radio. I'm still saving up for a K-3, though.

Around noon, I went to the food court for a slice of pizza and a glass of beer. Seating is catch as catch can, so I shared a table with several other hams. This is great because you get to meet all kinds of different people.

This year, an older gentleman sat down next to me with his beer. We got to chatting, and as it turned out, this was his 55th straight year attending the Dayton Hamvention! He started going before it was even held at Hara Arena, and even after they moved to Hara, they didn't use the entire facility as they do now. I'm really glad that I got to speak with him.

So, what did you buy?

I didn't really go down to Dayton with much of a shopping list. In addition to the PC boards, I did pick up a bunch of other little stuff including some strain reliefs, more clamp-on ferrite cores, a paddle

pad from Vibroplex (\$1) to keep the paddle down at the club station from sliding around, and some tube sockets! One of the vendors there had a box of tube sockets that they were selling for a quarter apiece or five for a dollar. I picked out five and paid the lady, and as I was walking away, I decided that they were such a good deal that I went back and bought five more.

My biggest purchase was NT7S's OpenBeacon QRSS transmitter (www.etherkit.com). It cost me \$40. It looks like a very nice kit, and I'm hoping to be on 30m QRSS shortly with it. The nice thing about this transmitter is that it has a microcontroller that lets it transmit DFCW and Hellschreiber, in addition to CW. It should be fun to both build and operate.

Too rich for my blood

In other news, both Kenwood and FlexRadio both introduced new radios at Dayton. Perhaps the most buzz was around the Kenwood TS-990. All they were showing was a prototype under a Plexiglass cover. In addition to being incredibly expensive, the radio is huge! I heard someone joke that to produce this radio, Kenwood is going to have to corner the market on buttons and knobs. If you've seen the photo in QST (which was allegedly produced with Photoshop), you'll know what I mean.

The other radio with a bit of buzz is the new FlexRadio FLEX-6000. For the past couple of weeks, the FlexRadio website was proclaiming that this radio was going to be a game changer. Perhaps it is, but at \$6,000+, this radio is out of my league, and too expensive for the majority of radio amateurs. That being the case, I really don't know what all the buzz is about.

I'm sure that the TS-990 and the FLEX-6000 are both great radios, but I think that the law of diminishing returns applies here. At some point, are you really getting \$6,000 or \$12,000 of fun out of the radio? I don't think that I would.

Well, that's it. Another Dayton Hamvention is in the bag. It was a lot of fun, and I'm already looking forward to next year. I've already contacted one of the forum organizers about adding an adult education forum. I think that's something that's both needed and would be popular. I'll just have to make sure to leave enough time to hit the flea market and grab some more tube sockets or coax or whatever.

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When he's not tromping around flea markets, or attending conferences, Dan, KB6NU, writes books about ham radio. His latest, 21 Things to Do After You Get Your Amateur Radio License, is available as an e-book from Amazon, Barnes&Noble, or from his website, <http://www.kb6nu.com/>. You can e-mail him with comments, questions, compliments, or brickbats at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.



Foxhunters find fantastic fun and are fruitful in their find. Charles E. Fairman Community pool was busy with foxhunting fun for the annual "I'm Not a Dayton" Foxhunt. The famous Montreal Fox hidden transmitter was employed again to add to the excitement. A short Foxhunting 101 class was held prior to the hunt and a picnic potluck was enjoyed by all after the hunt. Hope to see you next year.

Ham Humor

"Electricity originates inside clouds. There, it forms into lightning, which is attracted to the Earth by golfers. After entering the ground, the electricity hardens into coal, which, when dug up by power companies and burned in big ovens called 'generators,' turns back into electricity...where it is transformed by TV sets into commercials for beer, which passes through the consumers and back into the ground, thus completing what is known as a "circuit".....Dave Barry

Solution to last month's Sudoku:

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| 8 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| 3 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| 6 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 1 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| 4 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 |

This month's Sudoku:

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| 4 | 2 | | 5 | | | | 7 | |
| | | | 4 | 6 | | | 1 | 5 |
| | 6 | | 9 | 1 | | | 3 | |
| 6 | | 2 | | 8 | | | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | | 5 | 2 | | | | 9 | 6 |
| 9 | 4 | | 7 | | | | | |
| | 5 | | | 7 | | | 3 | |
| 3 | | | 6 | | 1 | | 8 | 2 |
| | | 9 | | | | | | |

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