

# Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

November 2012

PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338 Pres. Jeff Sell Web Page: [www.braarc.net](http://www.braarc.net) Editor: Phil – [phildolly@power-net.net](mailto:phildolly@power-net.net)

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This is my first column as President of BRAARC. My writing skills are a little rusty so please be patient. I'd like to start by thanking the former officers (Jim, Sue, and Jens) for their

service. Also I'd like to thank Jens for reupping as Treasurer and Mike as accepting the VP position and Monica for becoming our new Secretary. We will all do our best in our new roles. Also, thanks again to Jim for the nice cake and gift card.

Our former officers left the club in very good shape so there are no real crises for us to deal with. So our job is to continue the good stewardship of the club and leave it in even better shape for the next officers.

I asked Jim to email the club bylaws which I had never seen. The only one that surprised me was one that said we need to support the community in technical projects as well as radio ones. I was actually pleased to see this since it recognizes we are a group of folks that have technical skills beyond just radio. In particular, I would say that we have skills in science, engineering, computers, electronics, making stuff, and probably others as well. We may be one of few organizations in the community with such skills. So I'd like to ask all members to begin thinking about one project we might do this year to fulfill this bylaw. An example

might be to hold a class on soldering or one on web page development. So think about it and let us know your ideas.

Of course our main focus will always be on amateur radio. We need to come up with club goals in amateur radio for the year. We started this discussion at the September meeting. You are starting to hear about a proposed balloon launch project. But let me ask you all one question- what are your own goals in AR for the next year? Maybe you haven't thought of that. After all, this is just a hobby. You might think of it this way- what can I do to improve my skills as an AR operator. What are mine? Well, I think I told you I will be taking an ARRL course online on emergency communications. Also I want to learn about towers this year. Finally I want to work some more difficult satellites beyond ISS and the easy FM birds. Think about yours and let's talk. Based on our own goals maybe we can work some into club goals or programs.

Speaking of programs, the one on November 1 is a video on SWR and then December 6 will be our white elephant sale and potluck dinner.

Upcoming activities include the club breakfast on Oct 27, and the Festival of Lights parade on Nov 17.

73s, Jeff K8OE



along the route. They not only provided the needed communications for the event, but they also provided a great deal of routine assistance to the walkers :

George Rouman—W8OWN  
Bill Stankey—N8MZB  
Joe Aldrich—KD8KPS  
Mike McKay—KD8DIB  
Patricia McKay—KD8GGD  
Calvin McKay—KD8KQC  
Dan Tuuri—W8GRR  
Jim Woolen—K4UIH  
Don MacConnel – WA4FRJ  
Ken Bartolome – KD8NNO  
Bruce Werner- WD8TVD

These hams were quite noticeable in their vehicles and emergency vests, and provided ongoing counts of the walkers as they passed by their designated station locations. They also were available for possible emergency assistance to anyone who needed it.

In all, approximately 150+ walkers took part in the event. A significant number of the participants were representing a variety of Ferris State University Registered Student Organizations. I will add that those participants included a group of ROTC men and women who chose the long route and even “double-timed” the route wearing fatigues, combat boots, and packs.

As always, our group was complimented frequently on our skill in handling the communications, and our presence was sincerely appreciated by all those in attendance. Thanks to everyone for a job well done!

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**2012 BRAARC Holiday Extravaganza**

The holiday season is rapidly approaching. The club will again be celebrating the season with the annual holiday extravaganza. This is a pot luck dinner, white elephant sale, and social time held during the December meeting. We hope you'll attend with your spouse, family members or a friend. Members are asked to bring their favorite dish to pass for the meal and your table service.

The white elephant is a favorite fund raiser for the club. We ask that members bring a wrapped gift to donate to the sale. The sale is conducted in silent auction fashion. Your donated gift may be anything of your choosing. Some suggestions from past years include fruit gift baskets, snacks, radio gear, and many other fun and valuable offerings.

This event is the social event of the season for the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club and we are calling every ham, every where to join in the holiday fun. Bring a friend, too!

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**BRAARC Members Support Project Starburst  
By: Calvin McKay KD8KQC**

It's time again for the N8PUG Food Drive because there is never a time for hunger. We need your help to collect food items. Your donation of non-perishable food items will be accepted at the December 6, 2012 club meeting and holiday extravaganza – pot luck dinner.

Due to the state of the economy food pantries such as Project Starburst are being dealt a double blow. The higher demand for services and lower amounts donations are leaving the shelves empty. The N8PUG Food Drive can help fill a small part of this need but only with your help. Please only bring as much as you can spare.

The club food drive was originally organized by late club member James Orlowski, N8PUG (1960 – 2009). Known to every club member as Jim, he was a man of action in preventing hunger in our community. Jim was a man of little means but he always donated more food than any other club member. We lost a dear friend in his passing but we honor his memory by helping feed those around us that are in need.

The N8PUG Food Drive benefits Project Starburst through the collection of non-perishable food items. Annually, BRAARC member collect and donate many food items during the club's annual holiday celebration.

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# BREAKFAST

Saturday, October 27, 9AM

Sharon's Restaurant, Rogers Heights



# KITS MAKE A COMEBACK

Don MacConnel WA4FRJ

There was a time when hams looked forward to learning about new kits from Heathkit in Benton Harbor Michigan. Heathkit and others like Eico and Allied Radio's Knight Kit offered electronic kits for building a variety of equipment including hi-fi audio, test equipment, SWL radios, TV sets and ham gear. The kits were economical, fun to build and instructional. Many hams got their start in electronics by building kits.

Over time the Japanese moved into American markets with mass produced, low cost stereos, TV sets and even test gear. With automated assembly, low wages and aggressive prices the Japanese products edged out American brands and, worse yet, killed the kit market. It was possible to buy finished items for less than kit costs. It was the beginning of the end of major kit electronics.

Heathkit survived for a while by making computer and educational kits. Finally they also succumbed. Not all vendors are gone. Elenco and Velleman have some fun kit projects and Elecraft maintains a significant presence in the kit market and is noted for excellent, advanced ham gear in kit form.

Today it's possible to get a start in electronics, learn how to solder, build some neat kits and know the fun of home built electronics. We were pleased to find a nice assortment of kits at the Radio Shack on Perry St. in Big Rapids. Some are small like the LED Christmas trees club members built a few years ago. Others, Arduino for example, involve a number of clever microprocessor based kits with many accessories. Still others are part of do it yourself toys.

It's worth a trip to Radio Shack to see their variety of kits. Here are some pictures of the "kit corner" at Shack.



Scott Romain



Arduino kits

Small kits from Christmas trees to radios.

Note: Some kit instructions are printed with very small fonts and illustrations. Take a trip to Ferris's copy center where they can make greatly enlarged instruction copies that are much easier to read.





## BRAARC MEMBERSHIP

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:			
Call:	Class:	Phone:	
address:			
City:	State:	ZIP:	Email:
ARRL Member: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Newsletter: <input type="checkbox"/> US Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Website – minimizes postage and printing costs	

### SPOUSE INFORMATION IF JOINT MEMBERSHIP

Name:		
Call:	Class:	Email:

### LICENSED CHILDREN

Name:	Call:	Class:

### DUES / DONATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Member (\$25) <input type="checkbox"/> College Student(\$12.50) <input type="checkbox"/> Youth(free if oldest licensed family member<18 yrs)	\$	
<input type="checkbox"/> Club Patch _____ X \$5 each - The club patch supports the repeater systems operated by the club.	\$	
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation – General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Repeater Committee Donation <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Committee Donation	\$	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$</b>	

Membership runs from January 1 to December 31 each year. Please submit dues by the regular February club meeting to prevent accidental removal from club roster. Mail to: **BRAARC, PO Box 343, Paris, Mi 49338**

