Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

Presidents Message:

What is your most useful piece of ham radio gear? For me, I think it might be a notebook and a pen. I dedicate this notebook to amateur radio stuff. (This is not my logbook). In the front of it I list all the major pieces of equipment and when they were bought (radios, tuners, power supplies, amplifiers, etc). On the last page I write down the call signs and names of hams I have met and want to remember. Some I don't want to remember and those don't go in. In between, I make note of anything I think could be useful in the future. In many cases, it is how to connect equipment together. Or how to configure a piece of software like AGWPE, which is a little fussy. Or validation keys for software. Or which of two USB-serial cables actually works. You get the idea. It is amazing how often I refer to this notebook. It has saved me many times. I hope you will consider using one if you don't already.

I had my first non-contest cw qso today in many years. For the first 10 years or so that I was licensed, about all that I did was morse code, mostly low power (QRP). Every night, I would try to make 2 cw contacts if possible. I was never a real speedster, but in order to qualify for the extra class license, we had to pass a 20 wpm test. I flunked it first time, too nervous, then passed it the second time. Some people said that I had a pretty good "fist"- an understandable style with no major bad habits. Certainly I am rusty now, but after doing that much code the mental part comes back quickly. I now have some arthritis in my thumbs that I never had to contend with before so it may be necessary to keep the qso's short. But I look forward to doing more cw in addition to the other modes that I enjoy. The meeting on May 2 will include a foxhunt! That is something I have never done- should be great fun.

73s, Jeff K8OE

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April Meeting Minutes:

Ham Radio Club might be helping out with an FSU bike tour in June. (save June 29 – all day event) Need people to sign up for net control.

Next club breakfast April 27th at 9am Sharon's Restaurant
Next club meeting May 2nd at 7pm
 Repeaters seem to be working fine.
Ham in a day went well, 4 people got their technician license and 3 people upgraded.
Thanks to Phil Marcotte for teaching the class.
Fundraiser April 14th at BWW make sure you have the coupon, if you need one contact Jim Woolen or look on the BRAAC website.
Jeff Sell did a demo on SDR Dongle software for the program.
Field day is June 2nd.   If anyone wants to come out and check things out before hand they are welcome to just give Jeff Hernden a phone call.
Jens will bring refreshments for the next meeting.
Members showed off some of their recent projects.

Submitted by: Monica, KD8GGB

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 Announcements:
Thursday, April 18, World Amateur Radio Day
Saturday, April 27, Regular club breakfast at Sharon's in Rogers Heights, 9AM.
Thursday, May 2, Regular BRAARC meeting at BR Public Safety Building, 7PM

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W8P Spreads the Word about End Polio Now

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

On Saturday and Sunday, February 23-24, 2013, amateur radio operators gathered at WA2HOM, the amateur radio station at the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum. We were there to operate special event station W8P to commemorate the founding of the Rotary Club on February 23, 1905 and spread the word about Rotary International's End Polio Now Campaign (www.endpolio.org).

The goal of the End Polio Now program is to rid the world of this terrible disease. Rotary International launched this program in 1985, and with the aid of UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has cut the number of cases by more than 99.9%. In 1988, polio was endemic in 125 countries. In 2012, polio is endemic in only two regions. We like to say that we're "this close" to eradicating polio.

The unique part of the special operating event is that stations all over the world took part in it. Rotary is an international organization, and its amateur radio fellowship, Rotarians on Amateur Radio (ROAR), includes members all over the world. In Australia, a group operated the special event station VI4POLIO. In Europe, Pertti, past president of ROAR, operated his station, EA7GSU. Here in the States, a group that included yours truly; Jack, N8PMG; Jameson, KD8PIJ; Dinesh, AB3DC; and Mark, W8MP operated W8P.

Since the museum is only open from 1500Z – 2200Z, we were only able to operate for seven hours on Saturday. We spent all of our time on 20m phone, with our beam pointed southwest, concentrating on working mostly U.S. stations. We had originally intended to operate on 14.287 MHz, but quickly had to change frequencies, as that portion of the band was occupied by participants in the Mississippi QSO party.

We finally ended up on 14.227 MHz and made a total of 110 contacts on Saturday. This included 29 states and four DX contacts.

On Sunday, we only operated for a couple of hours and made another 27 contacts. While we made fewer contacts on Sunday, the contacts that we did make were more poignant than the ones on Saturday.

My first contact on Sunday was with a gentleman who was spending the winter in Florida, but whose hometown was Standish, Michigan. He told me that his mother had polio, and in the late 1930s and early 1940s, they would put her on a bus for Ann Arbor, where she would receive treatments. While there's no way to be sure, I think that this ham's mother was taking part in some of the research leading to the Salk vaccine in 1955. That research took place right here at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

I also talked to hams that had direct experience with polio. One was a polio survivor himself. Another's wife was a polio survivor. A third was a physician who had been to Africa and had treated polio victims there.

It was a real treat to combine two activities that I enjoy so much–amateur radio and Rotary–and it felt good to know that in some small way I was furthering the work of the End Polio Now campaign. I hope that next year we will once again operate this special event and get even more Rotarians and amateur radio operators to participate.

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When he's not trying to save the world, Dan, KB6NU enjoys working CW on the HF bands. For more information about his operating activities and his "No-Nonsense" series of amateur radio license study guides, go to KB6NU.Com or e-mail cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Last Month's Technical Question:

An RF amplifier has a series-fed plate circuit. A short circuit of the plate RF bypass capacitor will cause:
- a. An open plate circuit
- b. Plate voltage failure
- c. High plate current
- d. High plate dissipation
- e. Greater power output

ANS: b. Plate voltage failure

This Month's Technical Question:

When tuning a transmitter one of the first steps should be to:
   a. Adjust the plate tank circuit for maximum power output
   b. Clean the crystal with carbon tetrachloride
   c. Connect a dummy antenna
   d. Apply all voltages to the stages
   e. None of these are correct

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Worth Repeating -- BRAARC Net Preamble

This is _(your call sign)_____ requesting the use of the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club repeater for the purpose of operating a communication net for all appropriately licensed amateur radio operators in the repeater area in West Michigan. This net operates every _____ evening at_____ p.m. for the purposes of fellowship, passing on club news, and items of interest to the amateur radio community. This is a directed net, with all calls being directed to the net operator, unless instructed otherwise. Is there anyone listening who needs to use the repeater for another purpose, such as auto-patch or priority traffic? If so, please feel free to do so at this time. This is _(your call sign)_____ net control. *Listen for any response.*

Hearing no response, this is _(your call sign)_____ the name is _(your name)_____ and I'll be serving as your net control operator for this evening's net. To begin the net, let me ask if there are any mobile check-ins, or others who need to check in and out quickly because of time constraints? When you do check in, please give your call-sign twice, slowly and clearly, second time phonetically, and please also give your first name. *Write down check-in's call sign and name on form. If there are no mobile / short time check-ins skip to regular check-ins. This is the list of mobiles and/or short-time list calls that are handled first. Read back call signs and name then ask if there are any corrections to the list of mobile and/or short-time check-ins?*

Now, we'll move to regular check-ins. When you do check in, please give your call-sign twice, slowly and clearly, second time phonetically, and please also give your first name. If you'd like to join us as a regular check-in, please call _(your call sign)_____. *Write down check-in's call sign and name on form. This is the list of regular check-ins. Read back call signs and name then ask if there are any corrections to the list of mobile and/or short-time check-ins?* Are there any announcements for the net? *Obtain the club announcements from* http://www.braarc.net *or the current news letter. Read announcements.* Tonight's topic is _____. *If you do not have a topic, ask the participants for a topic. Give your thoughts on the topic and then move to each person in order of check-in. After each participant's statement feel free to comment or just move on to the next one on the list. Every 15 minutes or so ask for additional check-ins. Don't forget to ID every 10 minutes!* At this time I would like to ask for any additional check-ins. *If there are any add them to the list. Return to the topic with the next participant on the list. After all participants have given their comments ask …* Does anyone have questions regarding the topic tonight, questions about amateur radio or any technical questions? *After questions have been answered conclude the net.*

I'd like to thank everyone for checking into this evening's net. We had a total of _____ check-ins with _____ participants including myself as net control.

Does anyone have any questions regarding the announcements made earlier?
Please join us on next _____ evening at __:___p.m. when _(call sign and name of the next net's control operator)_____ will be conducting the net.

At this time, I will return this repeater to its normal operation. This is _(your call sign)_____ clear of repeater net operations.
73 and good evening.