

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

November 2013

PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338 Pres. Jim Woolen Web Page: www.braarc.net Editor: Phil – phildolly@power-net.net

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 2014, join ARRL in celebrating 100 years of "Advancing the Art and Science of Radio." Founded in 1914, [ARRL](http://www.arrl.org) is the national association for Amateur Radio in the USA. Today, with more than 160,000 members, ARRL is the largest organization of radio amateurs in the world.



Many events are planned to celebrate the ARRL's one hundredth birthday culminating with the first ever ARRL National Centennial Convention (July 17-19, 2014) in Hartford, Connecticut. Tours of the league's headquarters and W1AW are included in this convention. Right now I plan on attending this once-in-a-lifetime event.

It is amazing that I've been through 56 of those 100 years with ARRL. I joined shortly after getting my license and became a life member in the 1960s.

First licensed as a novice in March of 1958 at the age of 14, I upgraded to General in June of that year before turning 15 in August. Unfortunately, I never upgraded beyond General Class since that time. I am making a promise to myself to study and take the Extra Class exam next year. Just hope my 70-year-old brain can take in some new and challenging concepts.

It is time to also begin thinking about the year-end club party. This is always a great social event for the club, and the silent auction for "white elephant" items raises money for the club and is a lot of fun. Come to our November meeting so you can voice your input on this fun social event.

As usual, the inimitable Tom Behler, ran the net for the annual Crop Walk on September 30th with a new starting location in the Ferris IRC Connector. Even though it was a miserable day with rain and

cool temperatures, the volunteers were outstanding in their dedication for this service to our community.

We have another service opportunity coming up in November: the Festival of Lights Parade is on November 23rd at 6:30 PM with a “decorating party” scheduled that day at 10 AM. I’m guessing that it is still being held at the McKay’s house.

I Hope to see you November 7th club meeting at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety.

73s,

Jim

Jim Woolen
K4UIH

September BRAARC Meeting Minutes - September 5, 2013

Meeting called to order at 7:00PM by Jeff Sell K8OE.
Request for additional nominations - None, nominations closed.
Motion accepted to consider all nominations at once.
No discussion on officers nominated.
Vote of members present
President: Jim Woolen K4UIH
Vice President: Mike McKay KD8DIB
Secretary: Delcy Hernden KC8HVR
Treasurer: Jens Rick KC8OIV
Program
Adjourn

Announcements:

Saturday, November 2, Regular club breakfast at Sharon’s in Rogers Heights, 9am.

Saturday, November 2, SET Exercise 10-11am.

Sunday, November 3, Day Light Savings Time ends.

Thursday, November 7, Regular BRAARC meeting at Big Rapids Public Safety, 7pm

Saturday, November 23, Float construction, 10-12am, McKays house.

Saturday, November 23, Festival of Lights Parade, 6:30 – 8:30pm, down town Big Rapids.

Uno, Dos, Tres...

If you have done any amount of listening to shortwave radio outside of the ham bands, you have undoubtedly run across "numbers stations." The broadcasts from these stations consist streams of numbers or letters, often in a computer-generated female voice speaking in Spanish. Every now and then, a numbers station pops up on 30m, sending five-character groups in Morse code.

According to the Conet Project (<http://www.irdial.com/conet.htm>), "Shortwave Numbers Stations are a perfect method of anonymous, one way communication. Spies located anywhere in the world can be communicated to by their masters via small, locally available, and unmodified Shortwave receivers. The encryption system used by Numbers Stations, known as a 'one time pad' is unbreakable. Combine this with the fact that it is almost impossible to track down the message recipients once they are inserted into the enemy country, it becomes clear just how powerful the Numbers Station system is."

The Conet Project sells a CD with a number of recordings for \$55, but you can find a bunch of mp3 files at <http://www.archive.org/details/ird059> for free.

Recently there was a thread on the Glowbugs Google Group about numbers stations. One fellow mentioned "The Numbers Station," a movie released earlier this year starring John Cusack. IMDB (<http://www.imdb.com>) says that The Numbers Station is about "a disgraced black ops agent dispatched to a remote CIA broadcast station to protect a code operator. Soon, they find themselves in a life-or-death struggle to stop a deadly plot before it's too late." It's currently available for streaming on Netflix, and I watched it recently. It's kind of violent (lots of people get shot), but it's a decent thriller.

Jim, K6FWT mentioned ENIGMA 2000 (<http://www.apul64.dsl.pipex.com/enigma2000/>). The group's website describes ENIGMA 2000 as "a UK based online group, whose aims are to bring together listeners and enthusiasts who monitor and gather information on 'Number Stations' and other related radio transmissions. Through our Yahoo Group monitors can share their logs, discuss frequencies, thoughts and opinions on this most emotive subject." Jim says, "These folks are SERIOUS enthusiasts. I have heard that they surpass many intelligence services with their thoroughness. You can get in up to your eyeballs if you don't watch it."

These stations have been around since World War II. I remember as a kid in the 1960s and 1970s, reading articles about numbers stations in Popular Electronics and Electronics Illustrated. They're as much of a mystery today as they were back then.

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When he's not listening to numbers stations, Dan, KB6NU enjoys working CW on the HF bands and teaching ham radio classes. 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.

Dropbox Lesson

DG's Computer Corner

Storing your computer data in the cloud can be very handy when you want to share files or access your data from multiple locations on different computers. That's why I started using Dropbox. Then I made a mistake.

I erased some of my Dropbox files by accident. With no local backups I was going to have a lot of work to redo the files. Like most guys I don't like to ask for help but did start digging through Dropbox's help files. Sure enough those bright people expected inadvertent file erasure and they back up files for thirty days after they've been erased.

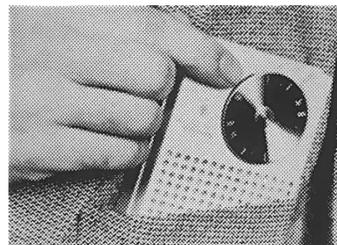
Recovery was easy. Of course now I'm more careful with file deletion and for some very critical material I will back up locally

Dropbox is a free service for limited amounts, up to 2 gb of data and very reasonably priced for larger file sizes. It's a handy service. Take a look at www.dropbox.com

Radio Trivia

During the early 50's Texas Instruments, (TI), was trying to sell transistors and wasn't having a great deal of luck. Designers were not comfortable with the solid-state devices and stuck with vacuum tubes. TI's management decided to try the retail market and sell a portable transistor radio. In those days portable radios all used vacuum tubes that were powered with A and B batteries. The A batteries used a low voltage battery to light their filaments and the B batteries were higher voltage and used to power the plates on the vacuum tubes. The batteries were bulky, heavy, expensive and didn't last long.

Transistors require lower voltages and only one battery is required. Furthermore transistors are tiny compared with vacuum tubes so a portable radio using transistors would be far smaller than the tube model. TI knew a lot about transistors but didn't know how to design a radio that used them. Instead they went to Regency division of Industrial Development Associates who designed the new radio. The completed fitted in a shirt pocket, used four of TI's germanium and sold for a hefty \$50 (That would be \$434.72 in dollars.). First year sales topped 100,000 radios!



Engineering
four-inch unit
transistors
today's

Take Care of Your Battery

An Editorial Staff Article

It's a good time to think about taking care of your back up or other lead acid batteries. With no maintenance every single lead acid battery is going to go bad or at least go down in voltage until they are useless.

Your rig back-up battery should be a deep cycle type. Deep cycle batteries are designed to be deeply discharged and not damaged by the deep discharge. A car battery, intended to provide heavy cranking amps, may be severely damaged by as few as three deep discharges.

By deep discharge we mean discharged to the point that the battery won't crank the engine or run the headlights dimly or not at all.

All batteries will discharge themselves even without any load. Deep cycle batteries are less susceptible to self-discharge but will still go dead after a period of months.

As an aside, car batteries in today's cars are always supplying current to the car's electronics. The amount of the current depends on the manufacturer and may range from something like less than 10 ma to 40 ma or even more. 10 ma used to be Ford's limit but I don't know what present standards are.

To check your rig battery measure the no-load voltage. At room temperature a fully charged battery should read close to 12.65 volts. A 50% charge will read 12.25 volts and an almost dead capacity battery 12.00 volts or less.

Always get rid of any corrosion or dirt on a battery. Remember that the acid in lead acid batteries is sulfuric; it's corrosive and poisonous. It's very dangerous for any body parts and a holy terror on clothing. I use a solution of one cup of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) dissolved in a gallon or water. After cleansing the battery with this solution rinse with lots of tap water. Many batteries are maintenance free so there should be little or no acid on the battery top. If for some reason you get acid on your body or in your eyes, rinse copiously and seek immediate professional help. That's a 911 must do.

To keep the battery charged* you're going to need a maintainer type of charger. That is not a trickle charger but rather a charger that electronically measures the battery's condition and adjusts its output to meet the battery need. For example it might switch from a 1.5 amp charge to a 50 ma. charge. One of my favorites is the Battery Tender Plus 12 volt model. It's a four state charger that does a nice job. Another, less expensive model is the Schumacher 1.5 amp Speed Charge Maintainer. None of these chargers are intended to power your rig and both are intended to stay connected to the battery when the battery is not being used. Amazon.com is one source for these chargers.

Take the steps to keep your backup battery checked and charged and it will be there when you need it.

*Batteries make hydrogen gas when they are charging so any sparks or open flame can be very dangerous and cause an explosion.

Survey Show Interest in Community Service

Don MacConnel WA4FRJ

A survey we took at the October 3rd club meeting showed that members really like community service and Fox hunts. That's quite a mixture. Service includes the communications we provide to

events such as Crop Walk, Girl's on the Run and the newest event, the Hungerford Games.

The

Games included partial marathon to double marathon runs over a huge area west of us and characterized by very poor cell service but covered by our two-meter repeater. The

organizers were

impressed.

Fox Hunts also had a high score. Mike's (KD8DIB) tiny fox in a box automatic transmitter made for

fun hunts. Team Woolen, Jim and Gregory, set a high standard for finds and a lot of us want to

catch up with them,

Take a look at the survey results and get your thoughts involved by filling out a copy of the survey

on the next page and bringing it to the next meeting. Also please note if you want to assist or teach.

	Interest	Teach or assist
Fox hunting	10	—
Service: Emergency, ARES, Crop walk etc.	10	1
Building ham or fun things:	9	2
Digital (packet etc.)	9	2
Introductory electronics	9	3
Antenna types, build, designs...	7	6
DX and contests	7	2
Youth activities, kids day..	7	3
Parades, Christmas..	7	3
CW (learn code)	7	1 (Guess who! Hint: KB8TYJ)
Breakfasts, dinners, potlucks	7	3
APRS (GPS location over vhf...)	5	—
Outreach to non-member hams...	4	4
QRP and QRP rigs	4	4
Upgrade of obtain license	4	2
Fund raising, celebrity serve...	4	3

Back of sheet add ons. Field Day (I missed this topic, thank you for reminding me Sue and Tom Behler.)

Bruce Werner wants to get back on the air and also attend Field Day.

**Come Join Us!
Come Join Us!**

BREAKFAST

Sharon's Restaurant

9:00AM

Saturday, November 2

Come order from the menu or
enjoy the breakfast buffet!!!

Great Food and Drink!

**November 2013
PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338**

