

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

December 2015

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



Presidents Message

Greetings, Mike (KD8DIB), has been working on one of the new repeaters and has it sounding much

like the present 2-meter repeater. Adapting the CAT 1000 controller used on the present repeater to work with the new repeater did this. Unfortunately, this only allows the repeater to work in the FM mode. This seems to be a common problem with the Yaesu DR-1X repeater and maybe with time they will realize that they are losing much of the reasons they put these repeaters on sale (I believe it was to further the acceptance of the Yaesu digital modes). It is assumed that new firmware will be issued to correct this concern. In any event the new repeater should be up and running before the year is over. The only thing stopping us at this time is purchasing new cables to connect to the old system.

Our December meeting will be the usual Christmas potluck dinner. We have invited 159 hams from the Big Rapids, Evert, Idlewild, Irons, Leroy, Mecosta, Paris, Reed

City, and Rodney area.

Deleting the club members and duplicates for a given address, we sent out 159 invites. I'd like to express or thanks to Delcy (KC8HVR) for all the effort in creating, printing, labeling, and mailing the invitations. THANK YOU DELCY! It will be interesting to see how many respond to this invitation.

We may have to move the silent auction into the entry area and pull in more tables. That would be a good problem to have.

Also remember that the Christmas party will feature a silent auction (bring any sale items to donate to this auction) and we will be collecting food for the W8PUG food drive. Sliced ham will be provided. Please bring your own table service. Setup begins at 6:00 pm 12-3-15.

See you at the meeting,
Dan W8AEN

In This Issue:

Pg 1 – President's Message

Pg 2 - Oct Meeting Min.

Pg 3 – Nov Meeting Min.

Pg 5 – KB6NU Article

Pg 6 – Equipment Available

Pg 7 – Membership form

Pg 8 – Tech Question

Pg 9 – Your 2016 Officers

Minutes From The Meeting – 1 October 2015

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 1 October 2015:

Dan, WA8AEN, opened the meeting at 7:05pm with 23 in attendance, each introducing himself or herself as appropriate.

A few reminders:

Please sign up for net control of our two nets. A sign-up sheet was passed around. We seem to be okay on 2 meters, but attendance is sparse on 440.

The next club breakfast will be 31 October, 9:00 am at Sharon's.

The next BRAARC meeting will be 5 November, 7:00 pm at DPS.

The minutes from the September, 2015, meeting were accepted as published in the Newsletter.

Treasurer: Jens reports an approximately \$90 deficit in the General Fund, which is covered temporarily by a surplus in the Repeater Fund.

Jeff, Mecosta County EC: Jeff will hold a session at the Mecosta County Dispatch EOC on 24 October at 1:00 pm. The HF antenna that was donated by Tom will be set up and tested using the Kenwood HF/VHF transceiver in the basement EOC. Contact will be attempted with a Ham in the UP on both voice and digital. Time permitting, other of the equipment will be set up and/or tested.

Repeaters: Yaesu has approved our purchase of the two System Fusion repeaters and will ship soon.

The FCC has not yet taken action on an assigned club call sign.

All our paperwork has been forwarded to MARC (Michigan Amateur Repeater Council) and our listings have been updated.

The two people who are interested in a repeater in the Barryton area did not attend the meeting this evening.

CROP Walk: Sunday, 4 October. The step-off will be about 2:00 pm. It is best that our communicators arrive about 1:15 pm. They estimate 100 walkers and the new route will be unfamiliar to most.

Mike, KD8DIB, suggests that changing our non-profit club status from a social to a charitable organization, may enable us to be considered for grants.

Several ideas were discussed to make the newsletter "paperless", including sending an e-mail notification when the newsletter has been published on the website. There may still be a few entities that need a paper copy, but even those may not be necessary. There was a discussion about who is getting the newsletter besides members. A solution was left for a future meeting so members might come up with additional ideas.

Tech Corner:

Dan discussed using a section of PVC pipe cut to a particular length and placed over the radio speaker to act as an audio filter to aid in copying Morse Code. The idea would be to fine tune the tube so that the operator would hear the audio frequencies that are most clear and comfortable to copy.

Per Bruce's suggestion, Dan also discussed the differences between linear (transformer) and switching power supplies. While the switching power supplies are lighter and often smaller ("wall warts" and laptop computer supplies), they can produce birdies and interference in the form of buzz and other disturbing noise. The linear supplies, while heavier and sometimes costlier, do last longer and are more rugged under extreme load.

Dan asked Michael Matthews, KC0LNK, to introduce himself. Mike is our new Vice President. (TVD: And he *volunteered*!!)

A general discussion of fund raising was entered. The most feasible seemed to be raising dues by \$5.00 to \$30.00 per year. Dues have not been raised in many years. Everyone concurred, and brief further

discussion took place. Sue, KC8IFP, made a motion to raise the annual BRAARC dues to \$30.00 beginning in the next membership cycle, 2016. Jeff, K8OE, made the second. There being no additional discussion, the measure was put to the vote: Ayes were unanimous, there being no Nays. The measure has passed: BRAARC dues will be \$30.00 per year, beginning with the 2016 membership cycle.

Recruiting suggestions were offered, including a one-time mailing with addresses extracted by zip. We would need a brochure and web information. We might show what events are on schedule for the Club. There was a general discussion of other ideas for recruiting and revitalizing club activity.

Dan asked for volunteers for a study committee for recruitment and got a show of hands from Jeff, Jim, Mike (TVD: Which??), and Delcy.

Alice offered to bring refreshments to the next meeting.

Sue's ticket was pulled for the 50/50 drawing. She returned her half as a donation to the General Fund. The meeting was adjourned about 8:15 pm, and we all went home. Well, mostly.

Minutes From The Meeting – 5 November 2015

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 5 November 2015:

Dan, WA8AEN, opened the meeting at 7:05pm with 22 in attendance

Larry Camp, KB8R, ARRL Michigan Section Manager, presented a program comparing FCC PRB-1 and two pieces of Federal legislation going through the US House and Senate. Before talking about the regulations, Larry noted that the ARRL annual dues are increasing from \$39 to \$49. One can still join or renew at the old rates until 31 December.

Larry first introduced the FCC's PRB-1, which is an FCC regulation issued in 1985 stating that local zoning boards must reasonably accommodate Radio Amateurs erecting antenna structures in order to communicate. Larry noted that this only affects local zoning laws, and not private contracts, such as CC&R (Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions) agreements.

Larry next covered legislation in the US House and Senate collectively known as The Amateur Radio Parity Act of 2015. The Act “ -- **H.R.1301 in the US House of Representative and S 1685 in the US Senate** -- would direct the FCC to extend its rules relating to reasonable accommodation of Amateur Service communications to private land use restrictions.” (Quote from ARRL: <http://www.arrl.org/amateur-radio-parity-act>). These bills would ensure that Hams must be reasonably accommodated in order to erect antennas and communicate.

The bills are gaining support in both chambers, but could use a little kick start from Amateurs. Larry asked each attending member to sign a pair of letters to our two Federal senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters. If enough letters are sent to senators, the sheer numbers will encourage them to support the bill.

Following the program, each attendee introduced himself or herself, as appropriate.

Dan announced Chuck Boboltz, WA8KEP, recently died. (TVD: A tribute and remembrance page is available on the Dagget-Gilbert Funeral Home site)

A few reminders:

Please sign up for net control of our two nets. A sign-up sheet was passed around. We seem to be okay on 2 meters, but attendance is sparse on 440.

The next club breakfast will be 28 November, 9:00 am at Sharon's.

The next BRAARC meeting will be 3 December, 6:00 pm at DPS. Again: 6:00 pm (SIX). This will be our annual pot luck and white elephant auction.

The minutes from the October, 2015, meeting missed the newsletter, hence were not published. The October meeting minutes will be in the next newsletter, along with the November minutes.

Treasurer: Jens reports a surplus in the General Fund, which should increase as more people turn in their 2016 dues. The treasurer's report was accepted.

Jeff, Mecosta County EC: Tuesday's ARES/RACES net participation was small.

Jeff held a setup and testing session at the Mecosta County Dispatch EOC on 24 October. The HF antenna that was donated by Tom was set up and tested using the Kenwood HF/VHF transceiver in the basement EOC. Voice contact was made on HF with a Ham in the UP. Digital mode(s) was not attempted.

Jeff also noted that most law enforcement agencies have moved over to new 800 MHz radios. Other Public Safety entities will take longer, due to the number of radios involved in those services. This move is significant because as ARES supports local or regional events, those volunteers may be asked to use Public Safety radios – and Public Safety licenses – which means different procedures and tactical callsigns. Michigan State Police has extensive training available, as the use of the radios is much more involved than simply pressing a PTT button.

Repeaters: The two new Yaesu System Fusion repeaters have arrived and are being set up and tested. Dan brought one of the repeaters to have a try with dummy load. The time and voice have been set and worked appropriately. He ran through the steps remaining for installation.

Bruce showed a copy of the September, 2014, "QST" with reviews of two Yaesu System Fusion radios: A handheld – FT-1DR – and mobile – FTM-400DR. Both are rather pricey, but will take full advantage of the digital capabilities of the new repeaters, plus have analog FM. Nobody from Barryton was there again.

Bruce asked about last meeting's note about the club callsign being "in limbo", noting he had inadvertently looked up call N8OE, which is listed as a call for BRAARC. Basically, the response was that it was a different call for a different purpose, one of several assigned to BRAARC. (TVD: He's still confused)

Dan described the antenna situation at the 2 Meter site and showed photos of the equipment and duplexers.

Dan led a discussion about how to invite local Hams to the December potluck dinner. It was decided that a postcard will be sent to Hams in the Big Rapids area, based on extracts from a site such as QRZ.Com. Also, as a Special Services Club, we can get mailing labels from ARRL.

It was also suggested to encourage members to pay dues ASAP, a prize might be given away at the January meeting with all 2016 paid-up members eligible.

Bruce asked if the recent Club dues increase needs to be in the by-laws. The response was, "No".

He also asked where the Club documents and archives reside or are stored. Mike, 'DIB, noted they were in several (?) file cabinets. (TVD: Bruce didn't seem to catch on where, but they seem to be safe.)

Jim W has contacted Mrs. Osborne.

Mike, 'DIB, noted that the web site bill is due 31 November. GoDaddy is our host, and he uses Word Press as the web page editor. Consensus agreement to allow Mike to pay the GoDaddy bill.

A short discussion of the Word Press software to edit the web pages, and possible replacement so that more people would be able to edit. Bruce, driven by a sudden burst of confusion (TVD: another?), asked about the need to completely revamp each page when switching web page editors. Seems that Word Press saves the pages in its own proprietary format, and no other editor can touch it. (TVD: He caught on eventually)

Phil made an interesting observation: Lithium batteries are being withdrawn since they are being used by drug people to extract the lithium for whatever lithium is used for. **(Addendum – I have since found Ultimate Lithium batteries at Wal-mart, as has Dan, WA8AEN, so apparently the clerk was mistaken. Phil)**

Everyone will bring refreshments to the next meeting, since it is the potluck.

resume major kit sales. All this effort enables us to introduce a fleet of new kits and helps ensure Heathkit can grow, prosper, and continue to bring you great new products for a very long time."

So, what's the exciting news? A new QRP transceiver? Maybe a shortwave radio? A new 100-in-1 experimenter kit for Makers?

Uh-uh. Sorry. The "exciting" news is a tuned radio frequency (TRF) AM band (yes, I said AM band) radio kit that costs \$150 (<https://shop.heathkit.com/shop/product/explorer-jr-trf-am-radio-receiver-kit-black-case-gr-150-bk-16>). Not only is that crazy expensive for an AM radio, it doesn't even come with a speaker. On top of that, there's no soldering. You screw all of the components to the board. I'm speechless (well, figuratively, not literally).

I'm not sure what the target market is for this product. It's certainly not amateur radio operators, who expect a lot more (in terms of both functionality and "fun") for their money. Nor is it the "Maker" folks, who want something more challenging than an AM radio. I think that if I took this to show off at the local Ann Arbor Maker group, they'd laugh me out of the place.

I really hope that they have something better up their sleeves. A strong Heathkit would be good for the Maker movement and for ham radio.

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When not thinking about what kit to build next, Dan, KB6NU, operates CW on the HF bands (mostly 40m and 30m). His #1-rated amateur radio blog can be found at KB6NU.Com, and you can e-mail questions, comments, or complaints to cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

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ATTENTION: Experimenters, builders and other geeks: I have a load of excess computer parts and pieces to give away. I eventually will send it all to the recycler(s), but I'd like to know if anyone needs anything to "play" with.

I have two 15" CRT monitors, three old form metal computer cases (with mo-board, but no HDD). One flat, two tall, all AT or ATX. Some memory: SIMM, DIMM, DDR? Lots and lots of cables.

I see someone building a radio into one of the cases (good imagination). Someone using ribbon cables to make some sort of UHF or SHF antenna (it might be interesting to try). Someone using a lot more imagination than that.

I also have a scanner that worked fine, but I could not get software or drivers to go beyond Win 98 (!!!) AND it's SCSI. To make things more challenging, it's a proprietary ISA SCSI board and cable. Anyone want to try and make it work in today's USB world? Oh, to make it sweeter: It's a cool light and 14" flatbed! Sold yet? :-)

I also have an HP 990 inkjet printer with a couple extra carts. It worked when I took it out of service (in favor of a bigger all-in-one).

I have not yet sorted through all of it, but ask and you shall receive!! (Did I mention I procrastinate?)

I would much rather see someone using and experimenting with this "stuff" than sending it to the computer recycler.

Bruce, WB8TVD

wb8tvd@gmail.com -or- brucewerner@ferris.edu (Either works)

73!

Please note the increase in dues from \$25 to \$30 annually.

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 (\$30) <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			\$
Total:			\$

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**

Your Club Officers for 2016



Pres. Dan Astleford – WA8AEN



VP Mike Matthews – KC0LNK



Sec. Bruce Werner – WB8TVD



Treas. Jens Rick – KC8OIV



Merry Christmas to All and don't forget the Potluck

Christmas Banquet on Thursday, December 3 at

6:00 P.M.

Big Rapids Public Safety Building



December 2015
PO Box 343 Parts MI 49338

