

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

March 2015

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Presidents Message

Hello,

January and February has been a busy months for me. Lots of company and more food than any one person should eat. But I also have been working on electronic problems. Problems include two desktop computers that decided to die and a dual band Icom transceiver that slowly quit working on two meters.

My Icom 207H started having problems at the first Hungerford Games that we worked at (about 2 ½ years ago). It would transmit for about one minute and then quit but never giving any indication that something was wrong. Back then I had worked on it and decided it was a heat problem and I reseated the amplifier module in new heat sink grease. That didn't seem to change anything. Last week I decided it was time to try again. Checking the internet I found a posting that explained that the two meter amplifier had a problem with the copper traces over the ceramic substrate. The heating and cooling of copper and ceramic was not compatible. The thermal expansion and contraction of the materials and would cause cracking in the traces. Armed with this information I again stripped the transceiver down to the amplifier and started probing the traces to find a break. Below is a picture of the amplifier. The arrow points to the broken trace.

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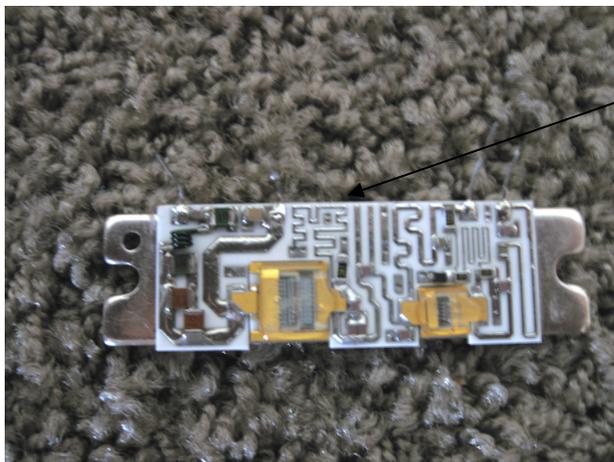
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Adding solder to this trace has gotten the amp back running (this crack was not observable even with 7 power magnification). Not sure what the reliability of this fix will be but for now I know the problem and can watch for the signs again.

A further note would be that my experience buying things on sale is a bit dubious. This transceiver had a really great price but if things are put on sale because of inherent problems then maybe it's not such a good buy. Let the buyer beware.

Dan WA8AEN

Minutes From The Meeting – 5 February 2015

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, More-Or-Less Permanent Secretary

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

Dan, WA8AEN, opened the meeting with 21 in attendance, including 4 visitors, of whom at least one is an active SWL, interested in learning and earning a license.

Prior to business being conducted, I asked who maintains the Club Roster. That is Jens, Treasurer. I will send him an e-mail address update. We also chatted for a couple minutes about maintaining the roster on the club web site. It would not be practical at the moment, since the site is open, but Mike will investigate creating private areas with a members-only login.

I also asked if anyone had dealt with the noise on the Central Dispatch frequency. It seems to have resolved itself, as nobody has heard anything in a while, other than regular communications.

Our program speaker did not make the trip up to Big Rapids because of the weather. The consensus was that if he has to cancel for March, we would make other arrangements for a program.

Several **reminders** were offered:

The next Club breakfast will be Saturday, 28 February, 9:00 am at Sharon's in Roger's Heights.

Our next Club meeting will be Thursday, 5 March, 7:00 pm at the DPS "Clubhouse."

A sign-up sheet was passed around to be net control for the two nets on 2m and 440. The two nets – 2 meters and 440 – have seen declining numbers of check-ins and it is getting harder to find people to act as net control operators.

The printed **Treasurer's report** was accepted as correct. Jens asked what to do about our current CD (bank certificate of deposit). Consensus was to leave it as is, to roll over to the next period. Since no action was required to do so, no vote was needed.

\$60 payment to Jens for paper and ink to print the financial statement and other various documents was voted on and approved.

A short discussion of putting the Club rosters in the newsletter, but was undecided. We also decided, by consensus to keep printing the newsletter in the same size and format it has been. Jeff Sell noted that the Club liability insurance premium was due. It was agreed to continue the policy, which is through the company affiliated with ARRL.

The phone bill is also due soon. The phone is used not only for autopatch, but for repeater control. The rate is a fixed fee with unlimited calling.

EC: Jeff Sell. Jeff noted that the Red Cross will be moving or closing the Big Rapids office, because of the movie theater expansion. Several buildings on Warren Ave. have been marked for Public Domain purchase by the city to accommodate a new parking lot for the expanded theater, including the Red Cross office.

Jeff also noted a presentation in Traverse City about how the ARES did damage assessment following last year's ice storm.

Repeaters: Mike noted that there was some scratchy noise returning to the 2m repeater that may be caused by a relay.

Mike had talked with Jeff, WD8DLK, about the 6m repeater. They suspect that some of the problem may lie in the duplexer cans.



BREAKFAST

Sharon's Restaurant

9:00AM

Saturday, February 28

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



Make your own dipoles with these center insulators

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

One of the things that always gets my goat is the price some companies charge for dipole antennas. It's not that they're charging an outrageously large sum of money, and I certainly don't begrudge them making a profit for their efforts. It's just that if hams would just buy their own wire and parts, they would not only save money over the long run, but be encouraged to experiment with antennas. That's what I started doing about ten years ago, and I've been very happy with the results.

One of the first things that I did was to purchase ten Budwig HQ-1 center insulators and ten HQ-2 end insulators (<http://www.budwig.com/antenna-connector-insulators.html>). I've made a bunch of antennas with these insulators, including several 40m/20m inverted vees for portable use (such as Field Day and special events), a 17m dipole, and a 10m loop antenna. These insulators are very well-made, and can easily be reused, too.

Universal Radio sells the set (<http://universal-radio.com/catalog/antsup/1782.html>) for \$18.50. I just placed another order for ten HQ-1s and 20 HQ-2s (the minimum number that you can purchase to get a quantity discount). The price, including shipping, is \$143.

There are a bunch of other center insulators on the market, including:

- * The Alpha Delta Delta-C antenna hardware kit (<http://universal-radio.com/catalog/antsup/0297.html>) consists of a Delta-C Center Insulator, antenna connecting hardware, 1 SEP Arc-Plug™ static protector (installed in Delta-C) and 2 Delta-CIN end insulators. This is a little heavier-duty than the Budwig insulators, but it costs more, too (\$30 at Universal Radio). Unless you're going to be running a kW, I don't see the need to spend nearly twice as much money on these insulators.

- * The TEN-TEC ACRO-BAT Antenna Connector & Hanger (<http://www.tentec.com/products/ACRO%252dBAT-Antenna-Connector-%26-Hanger.html>) is an interesting product. Unlike the Budwig and Alpha-Delta insulators, this product does not have an SO-239. Instead, this insulator clamps over the coax and antenna wire, and in doing so, provides strain relief. I haven't tried this one, but it seems like a nice design. The cost is \$10, directly from TEN-TEC

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

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Solution to last month's puzzle

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For Sale:

Tom Bahler, KB8TYJ

***Ten-tec Scout 555 HF Transceiver, including all 9 Band Modules, Ten-tec 607 Paddle/Keyer & Ten-tec 937 Power Supply. Included are all Manuals and documentation, Power Cords, and Ten-tec Mic. All equipment is in excellent condition, and comes from a smoke-free environment. This is a complete station that was previously owned by our silent key friend, Bill Eckels (W8ZNH). Am asking \$600, or best offer. Local pickup can be arranged in order to avoid shipping costs.

***Ameritron AL811H Amplifier in good working condition. The amplifier has a matched quad of 572B tubes. An extra set of four (4) 811A tubes will also be included. The amp has been very successfully used on 20 and 40 meters, and tunes on other HF bands, from 80 through 10 meters. Manuals and other documentation will be provided. The amplifier has been in a smoke-free environment. Asking \$600, or best offer. Local pickup can be arranged in order to avoid shipping costs.

2015 Skywarn Training

When: Saturday, March 21st at 10:00AM - Noon

Location: Ferris State University – West Campus Community Center,
1414 Family Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307

Cost: FREE - Preregistration not required



Description: Skywarn is the National Weather Service (NWS) program of trained volunteer severe weather spotters. Skywarn volunteers support their local community and government by providing the NWS with timely and accurate severe weather reports. These reports, when integrated with modern NWS technology, are used to inform communities of the proper actions to take as severe weather forms. Skywarn, formed in the early 1970's, has historically provided critical severe weather information to the NWS in time to get the appropriate warnings issued. Thus the key focus of the Skywarn program is to save lives and property through the use of the observations and reports of trained volunteers.

Despite the elaborate radar and forecasting equipment at the National Weather Service, they are only able to determine the potential for severe weather. They rely on reports from the public and law enforcement.

Accurate and reliable information from the general public is difficult to obtain. Severe weather is complicated and confusing. The NWS has found that only regular training of weather spotters improves the quality of information. The National Weather Service (NWS) collaborates with Amateur Radio organizations and others to put together training programs. The NWS brings its weather knowledge, the Amateur Radio Service brings its expertise in emergency communications, and together they work with local government and the Red Cross.

Call (231)591-2147 FOR QUESTIONS (M-F; 8A-5P)



Ham In A Day

The Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club is sponsoring a **HAM IN A DAY STUDY SESSION** for individuals interested in earning a Technician Class Amateur Radio License. **VE testing*** will be available for license upgrades as well.

Date: Saturday, April 11, 2015
Cost: \$30.00 includes license exam fee**
Location: Ferris State University
Room 109: West Commons Building
1319 Cramer Circle
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307
(see map on reverse side)
Time: Registration: 8:30 am
Class: 9:00 am—4:00 pm
Lunch: 12:00—12:45 pm on your own
VE Testing registration: 4:00 pm
Testing begins: 4:30 pm

Questions or

Registration: Please call Dan at 796-2784

Preregistration for class required by Sunday, April 5th.
Bring to the exam: photo ID (or two other forms of ID) and #2 pencil. **For license upgrades:** bring any completed CSCEs, and a photocopy of your existing license. Coffee and treats provided.
30 days advance notice required for special testing.

This class is an intense 6-hour structured self-study session of the test material. No guarantee is made by BRAARC as to your testing success. * VE Test Fee \$15
**2015 Club membership awarded to successful "hams in a day".

March 2015

PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338

