

# Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

December 2016

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



## Presidents

### Message

Hello all I have been busy with work and other things I am getting to writing this a little late matter of fact I am at camp

in the UP writing this hihi but heres what I have been up too. I now have a CNC milling machine that I have been working many hours after work getting it going and operational. When I got it only the computer would boot up it would not turn on spindle or move the table so I did diagnostics over the phone with a company in Florida that works on these particular machines he told me i had a possible a bad electronic board so he told me to send them to him so he could check them out. I

waited about 2 weeks and called him back he said the board's were fine so he shipped them back to me so it was back to the drawing board I started looking at the wiring harness AGAIN

after looking at a crack in the outside sheath 3 times without thinking to much about it I thought it was alright I decided to cut open the sheath this time found about 8-10 16 and 18 gauge wires completely cut off. It is still a work in progress to getting it going. I hope you all will like this read that I prepared for you.

Thanks  
Jon Hernden  
KD8GGA

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## Christmas Banquet

### Thursday, December 1

6pm - ???

Bring silent auction and white elephant items

Also bring non-perishable food items for the  
Jim Orlowski food drive for the pantry



Bring your favorite dish to pass, your utensils, and favorite beverage. Ham will be provided.

## Minutes From The Meeting – 3 November 2016

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 3 November 2016:

Jon, KD8GGA, opened the meeting at 7:04pm with 21 members and guests in attendance.

Each attendee introduced himself or herself as appropriate.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE: Jeff gave a summary of the 8 October EOC/ARES exercise. With the help of Scott Schroeder and Russ (fireman/driver), the emergency communication trailer was moved around the county to 8 different locations – all fire stations. Tom, KB8TYJ, joined Jeff at the county EOC in Paris, while Josh, KE8EKC, and Bruce, WB8TVD, joined Scott and Russ on the road. Communication was tested from each of the locations, trying out both repeater and simplex operation from both Amateur radios in the trailer and a handheld radio nearby. Jeff noted that he was able to receive APRS signals from one of the radios while the trailer was travelling between sites. Jeff also summarized – using charts – the effectiveness of each operation at each site with each radio. He notes that a complete “transcript” of the results is available via e-mail.

Jeff also showed a presentation about WSPR (Weak Signal Propagation Reporter) from GOKYA. The system was invented by Joe Taylor, K1JT, who specializes in weak signal processing. More information can be had at: [wspnnet.org](http://wspnnet.org)

A question was asked about the festival of lights upcoming in December. After some discussion, the general consensus was to pass on this year's activity.

A few reminders:

Please sign up for net control of our two nets: 440, Sunday, 7:30pm; 2m, Tuesday, 9:00pm. Sign-up sheets were passed around, with the attendance form. The next club breakfast will be 26 November, 9:00 am at Sharon's.

The next BRAARC meeting will be our annual potluck and white elephant silent auction on 1 December, at 6:00 pm. The change of time was emphasized as was the location, at BRDPS. As another reminder, the main course of baked ham will be provided. (TVD: There will probably be beverages and place settings, but taking nothing for granted, be sure you have something to drink and something to eat from/with).

Each attendee is asked to bring a dish to pass, a white elephant item (TVD: wrapped or unwrapped, mystery or not.) and a non-perishable food item for donation to a local food pantry. (TVD: You are not limited to only one donation, dish to pass or white elephant item!)

Secretary report: Bruce, WB8TVD: The minutes from the meeting in October were published in the November newsletter. He noted that in the entry for election of our club president, he misspelled the last name of the new president as “Herndon”. His last name should be “Hernden”. His last name is published incorrectly in the newsletter, but has been corrected in

the official file copy of the minutes.

One other faux pas: The secretary wrote that Dan, WA8AEN, had given the Tech Corner at the October meeting. The actual demonstrator was Mike, KD8DIB. That correction has also been made to the permanent file copy of the minutes.

Secretary Bruce made appropriate and profuse apologies to both Jon and Mike. (TVD: Which, thankfully, were accepted!)

There being no other additions or corrections, the minutes were approved by consensus.

Repeater: Mike, KD8DIB, notes that Echolink is finally working. However, the battery had run down because he had not plugged the power supply after maintenance.

The rest of the repeater equipment seems to be working well.

As a point of information, it was brought up that our next club breakfast will fall on New Year's Eve.

That date is fine with the membership, and should not interfere with that evening's merriment.

It was also brought up that the club needs to reserve dates for the upcoming breakfasts in 2017. We have been doing this long enough that they do expect us, but just to make sure someone will drop by and let them know.

Mike reminded the assembly that we still need a VP.

Treasurer: Dan, WA8AEN – in Josh's absence – passed out copies of the treasurer's summary report.

The treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

Mike, KD8DIB, has renewed the BRA-ARC web URL for the coming year at \$250.

A motion was made and seconded to reimburse Mike for the cost of the web site hosting.

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Jim, K4UIH, proposed doing something at the December meeting in recognition of Tom, KB8TYJ, and Sue's, KC8IFP, years of service to the club. Tom notes that they will not be able to attend the meeting, so Jim will work on the recognition for a later date.

Tom, KB8TYJ, notes that he has been trustee of the N8OE and K8MEC club callsigns. He has the paperwork enabling transfer of trusteeship of either callsign to someone else, since he and Sue are moving from the area.

Also, he and Sue have the orange safety vests for someone to hang on to. (TVD: I volunteered to store the vests and have them available as needed.) Sue also has a collection of Field Day tee-shirts that she had intended to make into a quilt. She brought them in, offering them to anyone who would like them.

They also had a lot of vintage printed material (TVD: magazines) to hand out, rather than sending it to Recycle.

Phil, KC8QOV, forgot to include the 2017 membership renewal form in the newsletter. He will include it in the December issue. Please use that form when renewing as it will help keep everyone's information up to date.

Tom, KB8TYJ: The CROP Walk on Sunday, 9 October, was a great success for BRA-ARC. He has not heard definitely from the organizers, but believes it was a success for CROP as well. Tom says there were many new people operating who had never been part of the operation. He noted that we were appreciated by the organizers and have already been asked to be part of the next CROP Walk.

Phil suggested having a rundown on building a 2-meter Yagi as a future Tech Corner. Bruce asked if he wanted something like the tape measure antenna that Jeff had demonstrated and built at a previous meeting. Phil is interested in a permanent antenna. The frustration he is running into is that while looking at several construction articles, he gets conflicting information about dimensions and would like to have someone build and demonstrate an antenna that works.

Shila, KD8IAL, gave praise to Jeff, K8OE, for his work as Mecosta County EC. As part of the county LEPT and EOC, she appreciates the additional support that has been given by ARES/RACES, led by Jeff.

She also suggests turning a trophy that would have been given to Tom into an annual community service award, with Tom as its namesake.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Bill, N8MZB.

Everyone attending will bring refreshments to the next meeting, as it will be our pot luck. (TVD: Mmmmmmm.) (TVD: Think about bringing refreshments to the February meeting.)

Jon adjourned the meeting at 8:10 pm. Only the secretary suffered light wounds (TVD: He'll recover) in the conduct of business and interesting discussions. We all went home. Well, mostly.

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Note from TVD:

I just "discovered" online SDR -- I was actually looking for something like this, but hit the jackpot. Check out: <http://websdr.ewi.utwente.nl:8901/>

The site is University of Twente in Enschede, Netherlands (I'll pronounce "Enschede" in person, because I don't think I can do justice in print).

It's a WebSDR -- one of many available. I like this one because you are not limited to just Ham bands. It's tunable from 0 to 30 MHz, with all modes.

It allows many users at the same time -- there were well over 250 when I was listening earlier. I heard a Ukraine station working DX on 40m, occasionally hearing a US station. It is really a trip, because with this SDR, you are using a radio in eastern Holland. Medium and long wave (Yes, long wave) broadcast stations all over the Continent are available.

For other WebSDR sites, check: <http://websdr.org/>

The University site is the first. Each entry shows the frequency coverage. Good luck and enjoy! Bruce



## Is there a market for a \$400 “prepper” radio?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A couple of days ago, a reader wrote:

"I would like to know if it would be feasible to build a radio with the following features:

- \* SSB operation (only SSB is required, CW would be an additional benefit)
- \* 20 – 50W of power
- \* Portable-friendly (lightweight, capable of operating at lower voltages

from small portable batteries)

- \* Low receiver current drain
- \* Coverage of 40m and 80m bands. Very limited coverage is acceptable. Even channelized coverage of a few select frequencies would be acceptable.
- \* S-meter

"It strikes me that there is a large market for ham radio products for “preppers,” and there has been a lot of interest in the Baofeng line of radios from that market. I think there would be a LOT of interest in a radio that could go far beyond line-of-sight and contact friends or family hundreds of miles away. Preppers would have little interest in contacts more than a state or two away, and no interest at all in novel operating modes. I wonder if a radio that trims away excess features (all-mode operation, wide frequency coverage, high power output, sophisticated audio filtering) could be produced for a lot less cost than currently available HF rigs. If so, and it was paired with a decent NVIS dipole and some General-class study materials and sold as a package deal, it could be a huge hit – Something you could tuck in a bug-out-bag, set up in the field, and use to make contacts in a reasonably local area, or set up in your backyard at home and use minimal power to operate.

"Is there a reason why I don't see radios like this on the market, some kind of technological limitation that would make this sort of thing impractical? If something like this was built, what kind of cost and performance would you expect? I'm certainly not expecting any kind of detailed analysis, but even just a speculation about if such a project could be feasible would be appreciated."

I replied:

"I think one of the reasons you don't see radios with the feature set you describe is that more full-featured radios are already pretty inexpensive. The Yaesu FT-450D, for example, costs less than \$800 and offers 100W output. The FT-817ND, which is designed for portable operation, costs less than \$700. Is that too much for preppers?"

"While it might seem like you could sell a radio with fewer features for less, I think that you hit the law of diminishing returns. At some point, removing features, doesn't reduce the cost all that much. For example, removing the CW capabilities from a transceiver capable of SSB operation really doesn't save that much because in a way CW operation is really just a subset of SSB operation. You'll save the cost of a key jack, but how much is that? Maybe a buck or two. Having said that, it could be that the big amateur radio manufacturers are overlooking an opportunity here."

We swapped a couple more e-mails about this. He noted, “Most preppers would probably rather buy a high-end AR-15 or several months worth of storage food for \$800 than a radio.” I suggested, “If there was a catastrophic event, and you really needed to communicate, wouldn’t it seem silly to have not spent the extra \$400 on a really decent radio?”

What do you think? Is my analysis a little too simplistic perhaps? Are amateur radio manufacturers ignoring a potential market?

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Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides, and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. You can contact him by e-mailing [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).  
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BRAARC Membership			
<b>Applicant Information</b>			
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		
<b>Spouse Information if joint membership</b>			
Name:			
Call:	Class:	Email:	
<b>Licensed Children</b>			
Name:	Call:	Class:	
<b>DUES / Donation</b>			
<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			\$
<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**

**Club Membership Renewal form should be filled out and submitted with payment so we can track who has paid and if you want the newsletter by email or mail.**

**Last Month's Technical Question:**

If the turns ratio of a transformer is stepped up 1 to 5:

- a. current will be 20% higher in the secondary
- b. current will be 125% higher in the primary
- c. current in the secondary will be 20% of the current in the primary
- d. there will be no difference
- e. voltage will be 20% higher in the secondary

Ans: c.

**This Month's Technical Question:**

The best insulation at UHF is:

- a. Black rubber
- b. Bakelite
- c. Paper
- d. Cotton
- e. Mica

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

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

Solution to last month's puzzle

**December 2016**  
**PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338**

