

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

January-February 2016

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Presidents Message

Greetings,

The nets are getting a bit more active and maybe that is because the cold weather inspires

setting down in a warm place and chatting with friends. The 440 net is seeing a bit more activity. Alice (W4APN) has shown an interest in being net control. She took the January 17 net and did a commendable job. I am hoping she will be handling more activities in the future. I will try to pick up more of the 440 nets myself to keep that repeater active. When Mike (KD8DIB) returned from the warmth of the south he bumped the 440 up from 5 watts to 20 watts. On my S-meter it has made quite a difference.

The 2-meter repeater is ready for installation but we will need some decent weather and a 4-wheel drive truck to transport the 6 foot rack and repeater up the hill to the site. Right now everything depends on the

weather.

If there are activities you would like to see club take on please bring them up at the meeting or email them in. We have a fairly open agenda and are looking for new activities to broaden our horizons.

The February meeting will highlight Jennifer Heinzman from Mecosta county Chamber of Commerce. She will listen to our financial concerns and hopefully have some suggestions on how to improve the situation.

Gordon Trute (W8AKJ) passed away January 18. He has been an active club member for many years. His smiling face will be missed at the club meetings.

See you at the next meeting,
Dan W8AEN

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Meeting Minutes:

Minutes From The Meeting – 3 December 2015

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

You really missed it if you were not at the meeting on 3 December 2015:

Dan, WA8AEN, opened the meeting at 6:30 pm with many in attendance. (TVD: He just can't count that high) >Hush, you!<

Each attendee and guest introduced himself or herself, as appropriate.

The general mailing to all Hams in the area was successful in bringing in only two to the potluck. (TVD: But, information about the Club is now out there, and may reap rewards later.)

Dan remembered our Silent Keys for 2015:

Skip Mordue, KE8AXX

Chuck Boboltz, WA8KEP

Brian Coe, KD8SBF

Please sign up for club net control! A sheet was passed around for that purpose.

(TVD: Regular BRAARC nets: 2m Tuesdays, 9:00 pm; 440 Sundays, 7:30 pm. Remember: All are welcome to check in!)

(TVD: The ARES net is held the first Tuesday of each month, 8:00 pm, preceding that evening's BRAARC Net. K8OE is net control.)

A few reminders:

The next club breakfast will be 2 January, 9:00 am at Sharon's. (TVD: Good time & place to lift the New Year's Fog from one's eyes!)

The next BRAARC meeting will be 7 January 2016, 7:00 pm at DPS. (TVD: 2016!! Yikes!)

General consensus was that was enough business for the night.

Mrs. WA8AEN (Kathy Astleford) volunteered (TVD: I hope she volunteered!!) to bring refreshments to the next meeting.

There was no 50/50 drawing due to excitement over the vittles.

Jim, K4UIH, gave a blessing for the food about to be consumed and in general for all our members and friends.

The meeting was adjourned about 9:15 pm, with no injuries to any member or guest.

Each attendee was then free to introduce himself or herself – as appropriate -- to the excellent variety of food.

TVD Note: Following silent bidding, all White Elephant packages were given out, with a few chuckles, but we didn't get to see who got all of them. For instance, there was a package marked something on the order of "Summer Beach Vacation." Speculation had it ranging from a quantity of sand and some

flip-flops to an inflatable palm tree and bikini. I hope whoever won that bid will share with us what the actual contents were. As an additional note, Alice and her guest each independently won a "Canned Ham". No, really!! A real canned ham each!! What are the odds?

Minutes From The Meeting – 7 January 2016

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 7 January 2016:

Dan, WA8AEN, opened the meeting at 7:05pm with more than 20 in attendance

While sheets for attendance and net control were passed around, each attendee introduced himself or herself, as appropriate.

A few reminders:

Please sign up for net control of our two nets. Dan has been running as net control on the 440 repeater in the absence of any other volunteers. Tom notes that Mike has turned the 440 power up to 20 watts, and it seems to be doing a fine job.

The next club breakfast will be 30 January, 9:00 am at Sharon's.

The next BRAARC meeting will be 4 February, 7:00 pm at BRDPS.

A card honoring the memory of Helen Rouman -- wife of George, W8OWN -- was circulated for anyone to sign. Helen had requested a donation to Angels Of Action in lieu of flowers. Sue described the organization as providing backpacks to area children and filling them for weekend meals to any child who may not have nutritious meals over the weekend. A consensus was reached to donate a check for \$50 to Angels Of Action as a memorial to Helen.

The secretary reports that the minutes for the December meeting were submitted to the newsletter publisher (Phil) ahead of deadline, but there was no January newsletter, since the Copy Center is closed for the holidays break. The minutes for December will be published in the next newsletter.

The treasurer's report was accepted as published and distributed.

Dan notes that Jennifer Heinzman, Director of the Mecosta County Chamber Of Commerce, is a possible speaker for our February meeting program.

Finishing up the December potluck (TVD: administrative, not food!!), Dan notes that two potholders were found in the parking lot after the dinner.

Bruce wanted to clear up the mystery of the "Summer" white elephant gift item. The original thoughts ran from a blow-up palm tree and bikini to a box full of sand. Turns out it was a mix: Sand and a blow-up palm tree with some Summer-style accessories. (TVD: Whew!)

Tom, standing in for Jeff, Mecosta County EC: Tuesday's ARES/RACES net drew only two check-ins.

Jeff has a list of possible 2016 projects for ARES/Public Service, of which Tom mentioned a few.

There will be Skywarn training on 27 February. (TVD: Tom has brochures available. If you did not get one and would like one before the next meeting, send Tom or me an e-mail: tombehler@gmail.com or wb8tvd@gmail.com)

Larry Camp, WB8R, Michigan Section Manager, reports that the Parity Act he spoke about at one of our meetings has taken a few steps forward. Tom will forward a link so anyone may individually send a letter or offer comments to the appropriate congressional people.

(TVD: Larry's official Michigan Section Manager page:

<http://www.mi-arrrl.org/index.php/author/wb8r/>)

Repeaters: Mike notes that he is not yet sure of the true duty cycle of the new Yaesu 440 repeater. Question from Bruce: Is the repeater yet running all analog and digital functions? Mike notes that since it is running with an external controller, it is only able to run analog, much as the former repeater.

Mike would like to invite a Yaesu representative to come by and help us set up the two repeaters. He is not sure how and when that could happen.

He also notes that there are different digital modes that we have yet to explore.

The 2-meter repeater seems stable, so no action is required at the moment.

There is an overwhelming amount of information available in the manuals for the 6-meter repeater and Mike will be going through some of it.

No old business came up for discussion.

Bruce offered some thoughts: He was at The Mecosta County Community Foundation (MCCF) Match Day in November. The event is an opportunity for non-profit organizations to explain their purpose and accept monetary donations. At the end of the day, those donations will be matched by the MCCF up to a certain percentage per dollar. He noted that not all organizations asking for money were public service organizations, but included schools, sports and entertainment groups. He offered the information as a stimulus to think about whether we should participate and educate the public about BRA-ARC and ARES in the community, and, of course, hope for some donations. If we decide to do it, we would need a presentation and some PR with a local spin, giving people a reason to donate to us.

(TVD: Match Day is explained on the MCCF website: <http://mecostagives.com/match-day/>)

Dan noted that we do have a brochure in the works, and Tom noted that there are several videos available. (TVD: Are we up to producing videos of our own, too?) Dan suggested that Jennifer Heinzman of The Chamber may have some information, too.

Sue notes that since he does not drive, George will be staying home and could use some help and support. It would be a good idea to give him a call or visit every so often and keep tabs on him. His HF rig may need some work as do his antennas and tower. (TVD: He has a crank-up tower with beam, plus wire dipole.)

We have other Hams in a similar situation.

Bev, WD8PFC, has returned home after an illness. She has an Icom 735 that may need some work.

(TVD: She lives in Hersey, and her phone number is available on request)

Jim notes that he has gotten some prices for Ham equipment from the estate of Rich Osborne, KC8UB. There is a lot of gear to go through.

Sue notes that our Silent Key plaque is full. Do we need a new one? Where should we display it?

Tech Corner

John, KD8GGA, provided an interesting Tech Corner about an electronic CW keyer he made. It is used for both stand-alone code practice and as a keyer driving a transmitter. The entire project cost about \$20, and used some scavenged parts, including the housing and speaker. It is based on an Arduino platform which John programmed to his own specifications. He notes that it can also be connected to a computer for additional functionality.

Bruce noted that as a "car guy", he watches some of the car-guy shows. One had a short feature on some 12v external LED dash lighting that could very well have Ham Radio uses. He could not find any at a true automotive store, but was able to find a two-pack at Meijer. (TVD: You could hear some wheels turning) One use might be for radios with some non-lighted and out-of-the-way controls.

Dan gave a demonstration of a coherer—an early radio frequency (spark gap, mostly) detector. The unit employs iron filings that react when an RF signal is present, then causing a noise similar to CW enabling the operator to “hear” Morse code.

Dan also offered a tablet demo of PSK31 digital mode. The tablet app is available for \$3.00 and will enable the user to send and receive digital modes using the tablet rather than a computer.

We had a discussion about Angels Of Action.

Someone mentioned a book by Erik Larson called “Thunderstruck” which has as protagonists a fleeing murderer and G. Marconi. (TVD: Yes, that Marconi)

Jim won the 50/50 drawing.

Sue offered to bring refreshments to the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned about 8:35 pm. No Hams or visitors were harmed in the conduct of the meeting. We all went home. Well, mostly.

Many thanks to Dan, WA8AEN, for building and donating to ARES/RACES this nice shelf for our station at Paris Dispatch. It looks professionally done and greatly increases our horizontal working space. Thanks Dan! (The IC2200 and KPC3+ TNC on the top shelf is a packet/APRS station. The TS-2000 on the right is our HF/VHS/UHF rig. The laptop is an XP donated by Dispatch.)





What would Wayne (Green) do?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Wayne Green was a crackpot...but he was a great one. For those of you who aren't as old as I am, Wayne Green, W2NSD, was not only the publisher of 73 Magazine, but also the founder of Byte and other PC magazines in the early days of personal computing. In 73, he would write these long, rambling editorials. Often, he would take the ARRL to task, criticizing what he thought to be some lunk-headed policy or another. Just as often, he'd be encouraging hams to take up some new technology. He was, for example, one of the guys driving hams to set up repeater systems. He would often exhort hams to get started in their own technology-related business. I remember one column where he urged hams to get involved in the home-security business. And, of course, when personal computers became popular, he wrote that hams should think about getting into that business. His reasoning was that our knowledge of electronics would stand us in good stead in those businesses. Today, I think that he would be telling us to get more involved in with technologies like the Internet of Things, WiFi, or whatever other wireless technology is coming down the pike. "Wireless" is the key word here. These networking technologies are based on good, old radio, and who better to push these technologies forward than guys like us who understand radio. This point was brought home to me last week as I was interviewing an executive of a wireless company for an article that I'm writing. He said to me that many of the companies he works with are taking a software-centric view to their wireless products. They simply use the reference designs provided by the wireless chip makers and expect those designs to work flawlessly in their products. While they often do, he gave me an example where simply using the reference design was a colossal failure. In one case, he said, the company mounted the board inside a metal enclosure. Since the antenna was part of the printed-circuit board, the enclosure acted like a shield, and of course, the device had little or no range. He went on to say that he thought that there was a real shortage of experienced RF guys in the wireless industry. Does that sound like an opportunity to you? It does to me. So, I'm going to make like Wayne Green here and exhort all you guys to get out there and take advantage of it. This is not only a business opportunity, but a way for amateur radio operators to fulfill a couple of the "purposes" of amateur radio, as set forth in Part 97.1 of the amateur radio regulations. Part 97.1(b) says that one of the purposes of the Amateur Radio Service is "Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art." According to Part 97.1(d), another purpose of the Amateur Radio Service is "Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts." Let's do it!

When he's not ruminating on the latest wireless technologies, KB6NU likes to make use of some vintage wireless technologies by working CW on the HF bands. He's also a prolific blogger (www.kb6nu.com) and the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides (www.kb6nu.com/study-guides).

Hi, all--

This month, we have a guest columnist. When I read this post by Bob, K0NR, I liked it so much that I asked Bob if I could use it for this month's column. I'm sure you'll find it thought-provoking.

Be sure to find the chart attached to this e-mail and insert it in the indicated spot in the column.

73, Dan KB6NU

===== start column =====

Kids are Not the Future of Ham Radio

By Bob Witte, K0NR

You've heard it a million times: our kids are the future. That statement gets applied to almost everything, including amateur radio. How can you argue with an obvious fact like that?

But I am starting to think it is incorrect.

We've had really good success on creating new hams of all ages in our Technician License Class (at the Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association). We've been doing this for a while now and I think I am seeing a pattern emerge. We've been able to attract middle schoolers to the class and help them get their ham radio license. I've talked to many of them on the air. They've helped out with public service events. They seem to have fun playing with radios.

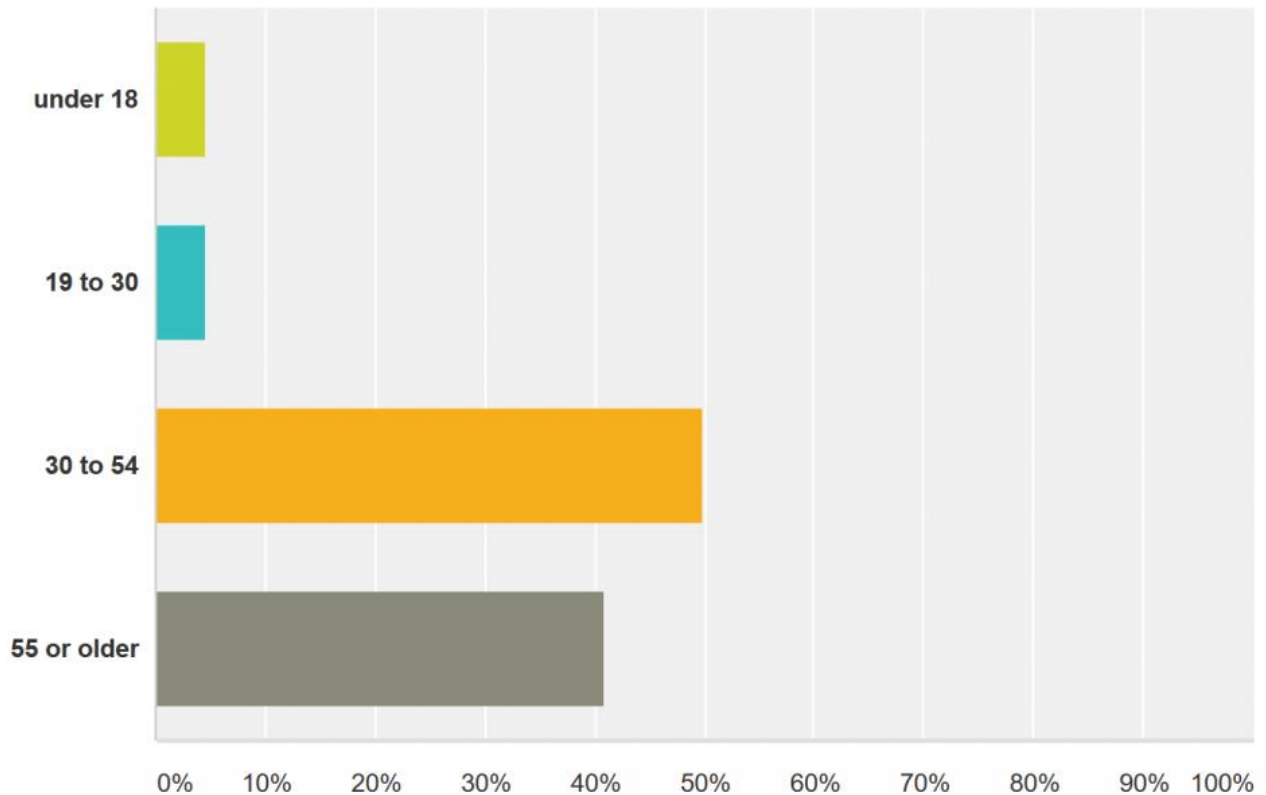
Then this thing called high school happens. The high school phase in the US is filled with tons of stuff to do: studying, homework, AP classes, science competitions, sports, dating, movies, driving and after school jobs. Way too much stuff. Ham radio starts to take a backseat to these normal high school activities. Then we don't see the kids at the radio club meetings or chatting on the local repeater because they are busy doing other things. Have we lost them forever? Not sure.

High school is often followed by college which has its own set of challenges: a totally new environment, away from home, a new set of people, new studies, etc. There might be a ham radio club on campus but maybe not. If a kid is not off to college they are (hopefully) out doing something to establish themselves in this world. Eventually they emerge on the other side, get a job, get themselves established, sometimes with a spouse and maybe a kid or two. By this time they are 25 to 30 years old, depending on the individual.

I recently posted about the demographics of our students in the Tech License Class (<http://www.k0nr.com/wordpress/2015/10/where-are-the-new-technicians-coming-from/>). The chart below shows the age distribution of our students from our most recent class. Hmm, clearly most of our students are 30 or older. (Sorry, we have not collected age data with finer resolution.) This particular class is light on the under 18 crowd...sometimes we have a clump of kids in the mix.

What is your age?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



For whatever reason, it seems that most people find themselves in a situation as an adult that causes them to say “I want to get my ham radio license.” When asked why they want to get their ham license, the top response is always emergency/disaster communications, followed by backcountry communications, pursuing electronics as a hobby and learning about radio communications. I suspect that starting to be established in a community and having some disposable income also play a role.

My hypothesis is that the most effective way of growing a vibrant ham radio community is to target adults ages 25 to 40.

This age range is more equipped and ready to be ham radio operators and are still young enough that they will be around for a while. Of course, we still want to work with all age groups, including kids and retirees. We’ve all seen very young hams get the bug for ham radio early and carry it throughout their life. And we also see plenty of older folks get interested in the hobby as they approach or enter retirement. We don’t want to miss out on either of those groups.

So that’s my read on the situation. I’ve got some data to support my theory but I can’t really prove it. What do you think? What are you seeing in your ham radio community?

Bob Witte, K0NR, blogs about amateur radio at K0NR.Com. You can find this post at <http://www.k0nr.com/wordpress/2015/11/kids-not-the-future/>. You can e-mail him at bob@k0nr.com.

Helen Rouman

October 8, 1931 - December 28, 2015

Big Rapids - Helen G. Rouman, 84, of Big Rapids fell asleep in the Lord on December 28, 2015.

She was born on October 8, 1931 in Merrill, WI, the daughter of George D. and Katherine (Kalifice) Papadakis.

Helen loved working with children.

Helen was an elementary teacher in the Big Rapids school system children. She also worked as a classroom aide well beyond normal retirement. Helen and her husband, George did almost everything together, and they enjoyed attending Cardiac Rehab together at the former Mecosta County General Hospital.

Helen is survived by George (W8OWN), her husband of 59 years, one son, Lee (Cathie) Rouman, one daughter, Ann (Rick) Lapham, 4 grandchildren; Ambre and Blake Forslund, and Christopher and Aslyn Lapham plus 3 great grandchildren, Demitri, Noah and Ana. Also surviving is one sister, Irene Ballas, plus many cousins and nieces and nephews.



Helen's family extends a special thank you to all family and friends who visited, sent cards and prayed for them.

Memorial contributions may be made in Helen's name to Angels of Action.

To the Big Rapids Amateur Radio Club:

I have received the card and appreciate knowing the Big Rapids Amateur Radio Club has made a donation to the Angels of Action. It is fine local group aiding children. As a teacher, Helen was involved with children in Wisconsin and Michigan schools and would tell me how hunger affected a child's ability to learn.

The organization helps children in our area to have enough food by providing them with meals and snacks.

Helen backed and supported my amateur radio activities and enjoyed meeting with club members at hamfests and at activities such as our monthly gathering at Sharon's restaurant.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George W8OWN". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "G".



Gordon M. Trute (W8AKJ)

June 27, 1939 - January 18, 2016

Big Rapids – Gordon M. Trute, age 76, of Big Rapids passed away unexpectedly at home on Monday, January 18, 2016.

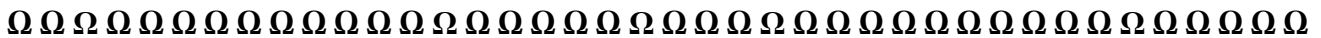
He was born on June 27, 1939 in Muskegon, the son of William and Jacoba (Wolf) Trute.

Gordon loved his country. He enlisted in the US Navy when he was 17 years old. Gordon was proud of his military service. He could talk about that and politics for hours. Gordon was first to raise his hand for his Republican party. He was an avid member of the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club.

He is survived by Lynnda (Spears) Trute, his wife of 47 years; three daughters, Leslie (Robert) Lower of Tennessee, Joy Trute of Tennessee, and Laura Trute-Ruelle of Grand Rapids; seven grandchildren, Andrew, William (Woody), and Samuel Horn, Paul, Sean, and Nicolette Ruelle and Colsyn Van Galder.

He loved his brother Karl’s children as if they were his own. They are David, Steven, Chad, Mark (Donna) Trute, Michelle (Richard) Brooks, Tricia Trute of Muskegon and Lisa Forward of Florida.

Funeral services for Gordon were at 11:00 am Friday, January 22, 2016 at the Mohnke Funeral Home in Big Rapids with State Representative Phil Potvin officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association.



Decembers Month’s Technical Question:

Static and interference from motors can be eliminated by:

- a. Grounding the battery with a 2” copper strip
- b. Installing Faraday shield around connectors
- c. Installing RF chokes across power line to ground
- d. Installing bypass capacitors from the power line to the grounded parts
- e. Installing bypass capacitors between stages

Ans: d.

This Month’s Technical Question:

When a difference of potential (EMF) exists between two points without current flow,

- a. Pitting occurs from arcing
- b. Shielding must be provided
- c. Harmonic radiation
- d. No difference could be seen
- e. An electrostatic field exists

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

Solution to Decembers puzzle

4			5	3	7		9	1
9			1			2		
8	5							4
5		9		8				3
7				2		4		5
	4					7		
1		8	4		9			
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February 2016
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