

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

November 2016

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Presidents Message

This is my first letter as the new BRAARC president. I would like to thank everyone for electing me for this term. For those of you that do not know me very well I have been

licensed since 2007 I have a General class license. I like to build projects the latest was a electronic keyer for CW also have built a rf detector circuit for a light up sign with my callsign on it. I am a machinist I have been working for Reed City Tool for 5 years.

I do not know for sure what a president duties entails but I am open to ideas for stuff to do as in activities, things to build, club fundraisers and other such ideas. I would like to see a radio room for the club in the future so that

we can teach new hams what some of the options are to do in the radio world.

I would like to remind everybody about the potluck in December along with the white elephant auction the date for this is December 1st so start looking for those items that you no longer want or need. We will talk about this more at our upcoming meeting on November 3.

Please feel free to contact me at the meeting if you want my email or phone I do want them out freely on the internet.

Jon Hernden
KD8GGA

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Minutes From The Meeting – 6 October 2016

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here’s what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 6 October 2016:

Dan, WA8AEN, reluctant to get “trapped” into presidency again, held back from leading the evening’s meeting. To assure Dan of his safety, Treasurer Josh, KE8EKC, took the lead and opened the meeting at 7:15pm with 15 members in attendance.

Each attendee introduced himself or herself as appropriate.

There being no written agenda for this evening’s meeting, it was decided to roughly mirror past meetings and add items as needed -- with leeway.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE: He has not yet heard from Trans Canada concerning our grant request for low-loss coax cable. It may take up to 8 weeks to hear from them.

The county communication test will be Saturday, 8 October, and Jeff could use three people in the EOC and three travelling with the trailer. (TVD: There were two each and it seemed to work out). He also reminded those that might want to participate that he could use some people operating from home stations, and it would be useful if someone was checking in while mobile. All activity will be on the two BRA-ARC repeaters and simplex. There would be a basic net, with those participating exchanging signal reports. D-Star would not be in play for this session. Tests would use the radios installed in the trailer and any handheld radios (TVD: The Kenwoods from the EOC) and home/mobile stations. The test would include stops at eight fire stations around the county, using the trailer's battery and generator systems. It should give Jeff and the county emergency communication personnel a sense of where communication is good or difficult.

Tom, KB8TYJ: The CROP Walk will be on Sunday, 9 October. The step-off will be at 2:00pm, so we will meet at the Ferris IRC Connector at 1:00pm, to give us time to organize and get everyone to assigned locations. Tom has maps and he noted that all communication will be on the BRA-ARC 440 repeater. Weather this year should be good (TVD: No rain!). He estimates the event should last until about 3:30pm, if there is a large contingent. Everyone will be invited to meet afterward at a local eatery to gain some sustenance and warm up, as needed.

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 29 October, 9:00 am at Sharon's.

The next BRAARC meeting will be 3 November, 7:00 pm at BRDPS.

Secretary report: Bruce, WB8TVD: The minutes from the meeting in September were published in the October newsletter. There being no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved by consensus.

Treasurer report: Josh, KE8EKC, distributed a summary sheet of the club finances and gave a brief rundown.

The treasurer's report was accepted by voice vote, unanimously.

A question was asked about retention of the attendance sign-in sheets. Allaying fears that the lists were used for some nefarious (TVD: !) purpose, it was noted that the sheets were in safe keeping within the club files for posterity.

Repeaters: Mike, KD8DIB, reports some blips in the 440 repeater Echolink. He is looking into what exactly the symptoms and possible cause might be. There is also some sort of audio problem in the 440 machine that has not lent itself to serious diagnosis.

The 6 meter repeater is still waiting for volunteers to get together to take it to The Silo.

Discussion was begun about the possibilities for president and vice president.

The name of Dom (TVD: Dominic) Theodore, K8HHL, was brought up. As with the other people who might be qualified and who were contacted, Dom has a "plate full" of activities in which he is involved, and probably would not have the time to devote to the office.

Jon Herndon, KD8GGA, who was in attendance, was asked if he might be interested in the

president position. Without a lot of coercing, he agreed that he would like to serve. (TVD: No, really!!) Several members spoke up about Jon's qualifications, energy and store of ideas for the direction of the club.

With Jon's willingness, a motion was made and seconded to accept Jon (TVD: Jonathon), KD8GGA, as president for the remainder of the year, September 2016 through September 2017. The assembly approved by unanimous voice vote.

Jon joined Josh as co-director of the remainder of the evening's meeting.

Secretary Bruce asked Jon if he cared to make a victory speech. He declined.

Dan noted that he will contact Dave Huhtala, K8WGA, to see if he has any interest in the vice president position.

A question was asked about upcoming club activities.

Our social event of the year is the potluck dinner at the December meeting. It is our biggest and most fun activity. It includes a main course and white elephant sale (TVD: More details later, but it's a fun part of the evening). We do, however, need someone to organize it.

It was offered that quite a while ago, we had an awards "ceremony".

Josh has been looking into getting together with the Scouts or other groups to get them interested in Ham Radio.

Informal discussion began on the possibility of a club "radio room". It would serve as a central point for Hams to operate while building a home station; to demonstrate Ham Radio to anyone, including the Scouts; or to serve as a contest station for one or a group of club members whose own station might not be a powerhouse.

It was noted that the Red Cross has already moved all the radio equipment from their building, and has scaled back their local operation. However, some of the antennas may still be up, so we should be aware that we might be called on to remove them.

There may be other locations to house a club station, which would allow easy access.

Tech Corner: Dan, WA8AEN, found a cassette tape (TVD: If you don't know what a cassette tape is, Google it.) that was put out by Radio Shack (TVD: Ditto, Google Radio Shack) as an introduction to shortwave listening. Dan also provided a cassette boombox (TVD: Ditto, Google) to play the cassette. On side two of the cassette, the narrator provided introductions and played some signals from stations that used to be very popular (TVD: May still, but sadly, a lot have disappeared from the airwaves). Following the broadcast examples the narrator provided audio clips of a variety of transmission types, including CW, SSB and RTTY. (TVD: For many of us, SWL was our gateway to radio in general, and those stations were regulars in the log book)

It was also noted that the Radio Parity Act (HR-1301) has been approved and moved on to the Senate. The ARRL has more information and a form letter to fill in and submit. The letters will be gathered together and given to the senators to show our support for the bill.

Tom, KB8TYJ, described the Distracted Driver legislation that has been introduced in the Michigan legislature. As it has been written, no radio transmission will be allowed in any form from a moving vehicle, which would preclude any Ham Radio activity, and might inadvertently block public safety communication, in addition to any radio dispatched commercial enterprise (UPS, taxis, etc.). This bill needs to be seriously clarified, or all radio users would be off the air.

"Yes, we all have taken an FCC test to receive our license, however that's only the starting point. Remember that person that helped you set up your first radio, or gave you the courage to press the PTT button, or answered endless questions about a radio, or an antenna? That's the kind of thing we're talking about.

"Thanks to a great suggestion from Gary Skaggs WB5ULK [not sure it was my idea. – Editor], we've created the SCARS Elmer Page, located at <http://w5nor.org/elmers>, for us to celebrate Elmers; past, present, and future. We provide a place for Elmers to list their specialty, and contact information, which allows new hams to find someone they can ask questions of.

"Since this is a new section of the web site, this list is rather short. If you're willing to help others on a given topic, send a message to n5hzz@arrl.net and you will be added to the list. Right now we need lots of different categories, like antennas, radio setup, HT programming, contesting, satellite operation, high power operation, test gear, building your own gear, repairing radios, APRS, D-Star, DMR, CW, logging, etc. oh well, you get the idea.

"You don't need a PhD to be listed here. You just need a willingness to help others in a given area. It's OK to be a new ham, and be listed here. You may have just struggled through your first space contact, but you'll have infinitely more knowledge than the person who's been a ham for 40 years, and has never tried that portion of the hobby.

"Also, there is a link to the "ARRL Elmer Award" page of the American Radio Relay League's web site. Here, you can enter your favorite Elmer's name and callsign. The ARRL will print a nice certificate, and mail it to the address you enter. Yes, for FREE! This certificate can either be mailed to your favorite Elmer, or you can mail it to yourself so you can present it to them personally. Feel free to order an Elmer certificate, and present it to your Elmer at an upcoming SCARS meeting. Talk with one of the officers before the meeting to get your place on the agenda. What a great way to recognize these people for their extra efforts.

"Finally, we've got a place to list YOUR favorite Elmer in our SCARS Elmer Hall-of-Fame. This is the place to memorialize your Elmer, whether they are SCARS members, Silent Keys, or not. I've already listed a few Elmers on the list from my own travels through the hobby. We'd love to list the people that help us all succeed.

"So, please help make this page useful, visit the SCARS Elmer page at: <http://w5nor.org/elmers> and be listed as an Elmer, and list your favorite Elmers."

I think this is a wonderful idea, and I hope that you will consider doing something similar in your club. A little recognition could go a long way, and we need all the Elmers we can muster. And, if you're already doing this, please send me a link. I'll add that link to my website, KB6NU.Com.

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When he's not Elmering new hams, you'll find Dan building kits and working CW on the HF bands. He 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.

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