

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

September 2016

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Presidents Message

Greetings,
Hope you
have been
enjoying the
recent heat wave.
Although the rain

has been sparse, it has been enough to keep the garden growing although not enough to keep me from staining my deck. Not much ham radio efforts in the last month except for the testing of a GE MASTR II VHF output amplifier being driven by a Baofeng HT with 6 dB of attenuation between the HT and the output amp. My hope is that we will be able to connect the GE between the Yaesu repeater and the antenna system so we can have more isolation of the repeater and more power output. That's an ongoing effort that hopefully we can test before winter.

My old Icom 706 MKII is under the weather due to an audio modulation problem. I have tried to track down the circuits associated with the problem with little headway. It is amazing the number and size of

the components in that transceiver considering that it is 25 years old.

I have been BRAARC club president for the last two years and it is time for me to step down. It has been an exciting time and a busy time. I've learned a lot and yet feel there is a mountain of activities to learn about and participate in. Under those guidelines, I will not be running for another year as president. However we do not at this time have anyone committed to being president or vice-president. The September meeting will be election of officers and if anyone is interested in running for office we would be thrilled to have volunteers. The elected officers will assume their responsibilities for the October meeting. So come to the meeting on September 1 and enjoy the fun.

Enjoy what's left of summer,
Dan (WA8AEN)

In This Issue:
Pg 1 – President's Message
Pg 1 - Announcements
Pg 2 – August Mtg Min.
Pg 3 – KB6NU article
Pg 4 – Tech Question

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Announcements:

Saturday, August 27, Breakfast at Sharon's in Rogers Heights, 9 A.M.

Thursday, Sept 1, Regular BRAARC meeting at Big Rapids Public Safety Bldg, 7 P.M

Minutes From The Meeting – 4 August 2016

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 4 August 2016:

Dan, WA8AEN, opened the meeting at 7:02pm with 17 members and guests in attendance.

Each attendee introduced himself or herself as appropriate, while sign-up sheets for attendance and net control were passed around.

A few reminders:

Please sign up for net control of our two nets.

The next club breakfast will be 27 August, 9:00 am at Sharon's.

The next BRAARC meeting will be 1 September, 7:00 pm at BRDPS.

Secretary report: Bruce, WB8TVD: The minutes from the meeting in July were published in the August newsletter. The minutes were approved by consensus.

Treasurer report: Josh, KE8EKC distributed a summary sheet of the club finances and gave a brief rundown. His report was accepted by consensus.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE: 1: Jeff attended the full-scale Mecosta County emergency response test last Friday, 29 July. There was no need for Amateur Communication Services, but Jeff did observe the drill and came away with some new information. The drill was a simulated crash of a vehicle carrying high school students visiting Ferris and there were simulated mass casualties. The drill included several agencies from Mecosta and other nearby counties.

2. All equipment has been set up and tested in the ECC trailer. It may be available for use in the national SET on 8 October. There may be a possibility of using the trailer during the test in various parts of the county.

3. Mecosta County ECOMM (Emergency Communication) officials would like a briefing – perhaps 15 minutes or so – and demonstration of ARES/RACES capabilities on 14 September. Jeff would like to meet on 18 August (TVD: Note: Changed to 25 August) at the EOC to plan what we will show and demonstrate.

4. The “new” tower will be going up soon at the EOC. A question was asked if the 2 meter repeater could be relocated to the new tower. The conclusion is that it would lose substantial height.

Repeaters: Mike, KD8DIB notes that all seem to be working as expected. Dan showed a surplus power amplifier (TVD: From Public Safety?) that we could use for the 440 repeater. However the output of the repeater would need to be dropped to a quarter watt from 20 watts as that is the only specified input level for the amplifier, but that would give a final output of 50 watts. Both repeaters have a tendency to have some random crackling and both seem to lose some “oomph” after running a net for even a short period.

Dan notes the 6 meter repeater is still cooling its heels in his basement.

The NPOTA effort for 6 August is cancelled. A variety of obstacles popped up in our way.

Elections are coming up in September. (TVD: A cold shudder went through the room) Dan would like to retire from the presidency after a storied career of service to the club. He called for anyone who would like to be an officer of the club to step forward and offer their time. (TVD: It's really not all that bad!!!)

Mention was made of Jeriel (Jerry) Beard, KC8MMF. (TVD: However, due to the secretary's "Senior Moment", he did not write down the association of the name.) It was also noted that Jerry's wife, Carol was a secretary at Ferris. (TVD: she is KD8LCV)

Tech Corner 1: Dan demonstrated tracking on busy comm units, mainly in some of the commercial units. What he showed us also has applications in Amateur Radio.

2. Leon, KC8ACO, showed a pair of test prototypes of micro foxhunt transmitters. They should be able to output 500mW, 1 or 1/2 watt or 5mW. He will be working to get his final prototypes together, and perhaps final finished units. Once set up, they should be programmable in the field, using a laptop computer. His future plans include frequency agile units and matching or integrated duplexers.

There was no 50/50 drawing.

Dan volunteered to bring refreshments to the September meeting.

Tom, KB8TYJ, will be getting information about the CROP Walk soon.

Phil notes that he will be taking the rest of the year off for fishing, but will be able to handle newsletter duties.

The meeting was adjourned about 8:06 pm. No Hams or guests were harmed in the conduct of business. We all went home. Well, mostly.

5...4...3...2...1: Readability Reports

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I'm big on Twitter. It connects me to a lot of interesting amateur radio operators, and I find a lot of food for thought there. Yesterday, I saw the following Tweet:

Charlie – M0PZT @M0PZT

Blog updated: RST and Speed Matters <http://www.m0pzt.com/blog/rst-and-speed-matters/> #hamradio

Being a CW geek, of course I was interested. Charlie's point is that if you get a bad report, you probably should send more slowly. I certainly have no argument with that. What I do take a little bit of an issue with is that Charlie says, "A Readability 4 report should really make it known that information needs to be brief, but repeated – Certainly no ANT/RIG/WX waffle!"

According to most sources, Readability 4 means, "Readable with practically no difficulty." When I receive an R4 report, I might slow down a little, but it doesn't mean to me that I have to cut the contact short or repeat information over and over. I replied on Twitter that if the operator at the receiving station is having so much trouble copying, then the report should probably be 319 or even 219.

Of course, RST reports are open to interpretation. With that in mind, I thought I'd explain a little more fully how I decide what Readability report to give:

R5: Perfectly readable. To me, this means that copying a signal is no work at all, and that it sounds like it's coming out of a code practice oscillator. I can put my feet up on the desk or putter around the shack while I'm rag chewing with the other operator.

R4: Readable with practically no difficulty. "Practically no difficulty" is the key phrase here. There may be some QRN or QSB on this signal, and I have to pay some attention while copying. An R4 is

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

Solution to last month's puzzle

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

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