

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

KB8QOI-146.74MHz

April 2017

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Presidents Message

Well folks I have been busy this month i have been moved to 2nd shift for awhile. I haven't had time to write a newsletter but I

found this short story on ARRL website. Enjoy the read, I did. 73s

An old mobile adds a spark to one family's history.

As my youngest daughter drove up to our annual family reunion picnic, the summer breeze blew past where I was standing and a flashback of time hit me. I recalled being at the same family reunion picnic. It was a hot and sunny summer day and we were sitting around a shade tree at the picnic. I looked around and saw my father driving up in his old 1952 Plymouth Cranbrook. He bought it new back in '51.

I heard all the kids say, "Far out, look at that old car!" As my father sat down, I asked him if he still had the old ham radio in it. He looked at the car and said, "Yep and it still works too." My youngest daughter ran over and said, "Wow! Grandpa, that is a big radio in the car." I asked my dad to tell us the story about how he got the radio. It was always a good story. He looked at us and asked us to sit down and he began this story.

A Story to Tell

When your dad was about 12 years old, I came home one day with a new car; it was a pear green 1952 Plymouth Cranbrook. Your dad stared at the car for

hours. He looked at the inside and out of the car with a ruler in his hand. I was perplexed by what he was doing. He walked over to me and said, "If I get my Amateur Radio license can we put a transmitter in the car?" I had my Extra Class license for just about 3 years and had asked your dad if he would like to get his Novice license, but he was not interested at the time. But now, with the new car, he was very interested.

Your dad read all my QST magazines and told me all about the Elmac A54H and that it could run on 6 V from the car's battery. I had to think about this. The radio cost \$175 new at the time. With the new car and the Korean War going on cash was going to be tight. I told him if he got a summer job mowing lawns like I had been asking him, then I would help him get his Novice license.

Your dad asked all my ham radio buddies in the area if he could mow their lawns. He told them that if he got his Novice license, he was going to get the Elmac A54H

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and put it in the Plymouth. All my ham buddies jumped at the chance to get a new ham radio operator on the air.

Your dad started that week mowing the lawns. He picked up more jobs as neighbors saw him mowing. It took him a little over a year to get \$112, he was almost there. He passed his Novice test and was waiting for his call in the mail. With a Novice call back then he could operate some CW on the 80 and 40 meter bands. The Elmac A54H was an AM phone transmitter and he was going to have to work third party until he upgraded to General.

Well, your dad worked more and saved up \$135. Then I pitched in and we ordered the radio. While we were waiting for the radio to arrive at the store the Armistice was signed and the Korean War was over; that was on July 27, 1953 and my brother, your great uncle, was going to come home. We had not seen him since the US started sending troops to the Korean conflict in 1950.

A Clean Installation

We lived in an apartment and could not set up an Amateur Radio station. We had to use my buddy's station. When the radio arrived, we got right to installing it in the Plymouth. It took most of the afternoon. We took our time wanting to get it right the first time. We mounted the whip antenna on the car first and moved inside to mount the radio. We made a direct power connection to the battery and brought the leads through the firewall right next to the heater hose. The radio was mounted right under the car radio, but it stuck out on the passenger side just a little.

Your grandma came out and asked how it was going? I told her we were done and ready to test it. She opened the back driver's side door and sat down. I called CQ and no one answered back; as I recall the bands were dead. She then got out and closed the door, but the door would not latch and to this day we always have to close the door twice to secure it.

A day or so passed before we got the opportunity to operate the radio again. I came home from work and

the bands were hopping. A station was working some phone patches and another was sending messages to and from Korea. We listened for a while and they were calling for any station in our small town. I jumped and gave my call. They came back and asked if we could deliver some messages in our neck of the woods. I sent your dad in to get some paper and pencils. He came back with his school tablet and three pencils.

We must have been on the 10th message. It turned out it was for us from your great uncle. It read: "My unit is packing up and coming home, will get in touch with you when back in Seoul to regroup and will have date when we head back to US." We delivered all the messages to the town folks and they gave us more messages to send back to the troops.

It's a good thing we got the radio. Your dad had a great idea. When we were not sending and receiving messages to and from Korea we both worked some DX. Your dad upgraded to Technician that summer. We had so much fun working together, I told him, "There will come a time when I will pass this car to you." With a smile ear to ear, he just gave me a hug. We were working some message handling when the message from my brother came in that he was in Seoul and should be back in town next week. When he arrived, we went to the park and had a picnic, right here in this park. We always have the annual family reunion picnic the third Saturday in August, same tree, same park.

Handing Down History

"What a story, Grandpa!" My youngest one shouted out. Every now and then at the picnic the story would be told to the little ones when they saw him drive up in that old Plymouth. I'm now holding the Extra Class license and received my dad's old Extra Class call after he passed away in '91 and true to his word that old Plymouth showed up in my driveway with the radio still working and extra tubes in the trunk.

Now, I follow in his footsteps. As I get older and drive up to the picnics and all the kids swarm around the old

car and look at the radio, I find myself sitting under the same tree telling the same story. Grandpa will be at the picnic in our hearts. Yes, I did promise the old 1952 Plymouth Cranbrook to my youngest daughter. It will be up to her to keep the memories and pass them down to the next generation. The door will probably never get

fixed, but that's okay, it's just one of those things that adds character to the car. So, if you see an old pear green '52 Plymouth sitting at a park with a whip antenna, stop by and ask to hear the story. It's worth it. 73 and may you always remember how important your family is.

Minutes From The Meeting – 2 March 2017

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 2 March 2017

Jon, KD8GGA, opened the meeting at 7:03 pm with 12 members and guests in attendance.
Everyone introduced himself or herself as appropriate.

A few reminders:

- The next Club Breakfast will be 1 April at 9am at Sharon's in Roger's Heights.
- The next meeting will be on 6 April at 7pm at the BRDPS.
- Our nets are Sunday 7:30pm on the 440 repeater and Tuesday 9pm on 2 meters.
- Sheets were passed around for attendance and to sign up for net control of the Club nets.

Secretary, Bruce, WB8TVD: There seems to have been a couple miscues with the minutes from the February meeting, which were published in the March newsletter: The secretary had mismatched several of the club call signs with their administrators. The correct list of calls/administrators:

KB8QOI (repeater)	Patty, KD8DDG
K8FSU (Echolink)	Mike, KD8DIB
K8MEC (Mecosta)	Jeff, K8OE
K8OSE (Osceola)	Bill, N8NJA
N8OE (club)	Jeff, KC8HJT

There was also a slip-up of who had asked for a list of members requesting hard copy vs. e-mail notice of the newsletter publication. Josh will get that list as requested.
Those items will be corrected in the minutes for this meeting.
The minutes as amended were accepted by consensus.

Treasurer: Josh, KE8EK, handed out the treasurer's summary and pointed out several items on that summary.
The treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE: The next ARES/RACES net will be 7 March at 8pm.
The quarterly ARES/RACES meeting will be held on 16 March at the 911 EOC in Paris.
Skywarn training will be on Saturday, 27 April, 10:00 am to Noon. The location will be in Room 217 of the University Center. (TVD: An information sheet is available on the club website.)
CERT training will be coming up soon as well.

Repeater: Mike, KD8DIB: John, KC8BAR, reports that the owner of the building housing the repeater is working on repairing the damaged door.
Mike also notes that if anyone has trouble accessing the 2-meter repeater, try the link repeater as they share a receive preamp.
Otherwise all seems normal with the repeaters.
Bruce asked Dan what was the intent of trying to make the Motorola power amplifier work with the 440 repeater. Dan said that there would be significant range increase, such that it would be worth the effort to make

it work. Bruce accepted Dan's answer, with the caveat that eventually there is a point of diminishing returns and wondered if there might be an alternative. Dan will keep that in mind.

Jon reminded everyone of Field Day in June. The Michigan State Parks celebration will only be for certain parks at certain times, and an organized plan for Ham Radio activations has not been announced. In that light, we should be looking to having our Field Day at a closer-in location.

Dan noted that the highest point in Mecosta County is south from 15 Mile on 220th Ave., and should offer a good radio location. He will look into it further and let the assembly know.

The assembly discussed procedures needed in order to "camp" in the National Forest. It might be a backup plan. Bruce noted that the Manistee National Forest HQ is in Baldwin.

As noted at the last meeting, the Ham-In-A-Day exams in April will need three or more Volunteer Examiners in attendance. And there must be a VEC (VE Coordinator) in addition. We also need six participants in the class. Mike asked whether we have a certificate of insurance for the session. Josh has a certificate to print. Dan asked if we need one for this specific event. It was noted that we do not need extra insurance; we just need to make sure we have liability for Ferris. Josh will call our agent for a certificate.

Mike, KD8DIB: We have been invited to provide communication for the Bulldog Bike Tour (TVD: This is the 100 mile bike event) on 10 June. The discussion will continue at next meeting.

Shila, KD8IAL, asked if posters and information about Ham-In-A-Day could be e-mailed to Scott Schroeder?

Jeff, K8OE, reported there was some difficulty programming the radios in the county communications trailer and has sent the information to RT Systems Software.

Dan noted the letter in "QST" about a fellow who was using his Baofeng HT near his clothes washer and happened to burn out the main bearing. It only happened with the Baofeng, not his other HT.

Shila, KD8IAL, is the director of the Mecosta County Equalization Department and as such has a prominent role on the Local Emergency Planning Team (LEPT). Because she has all records of property in the county, she is responsible for damage assessment after any disaster, natural or otherwise. She has been part of most emergency planning sessions and simulated disasters, including a recent simulated forest fire that involved many agencies. She spoke briefly about NIXLE text notifications, available to all. Shila also noted that all counties in the state have adjusted all property values and offered to answer any questions on new equalized assessments, regardless of county.

A question was asked about ARES vs. RACES. Jeff, K8OE, noted that ARES is open to anyone without restriction, other than ability. RACES is a credentialed federal program which requires several training courses and a background check. In most cases, RACES ID is required for a Ham without other affiliation (fire, police, etc.) to enter an EOC under emergency conditions. That includes Mecosta County.

Dan and Josh reminded the secretary that they would like a membership list. He does have one in Excel format and will forward it ASAP. (TVD: He forgot until this moment) (TVD: ****)

Andrew, KE8AYC, offered to bring refreshments to the next meeting.

George, W8OWN, won the 50/50.

Jon adjourned the meeting about 8:10 pm. No Hams or guests were harmed in the conduct of business. We all went home. Well, mostly.

Secretary's Ponderings – April 2017

No Foolin!

One evening I had my mobile V/U rig on scan. It stopped on a repeater broadcasting the ARRL Audio News podcast. The lead story was about Radio Shack going through Chapter 11. Again!

That item took me back to 1966 Boston and memories of frequenting the Radio Shack downtown where I was able to buy parts from actual wood bins. No, really! I began to recall other electronic stores in the area, including one whose name I could not immediately recall. Bits of their name flashed before me (DUDE!) until I had enough to start searching. Repeated tries with different spellings on Google finally gave me “De Mambro” electronics on Commonwealth Avenue – near Fenway, no less!

The amazing thing was that the first hit in the list took me to a copy of “Radio Craft” magazine from 1947! (No, I wasn't reading then, but I was around) Now that was a trip! I found the reference to De Mambro – a parts manufacturer's ad listing all the suppliers who carried their parts, which, by the way, included Radio Shack. Then I began “flipping” through the magazine (“flipping” using Adobe reader isn't quite the same, but just as interesting). In just a few pages, I found three radio or electronic schools. A later count brought that total to seven. The noteworthy part of that tidbit is that it was post-war and a lot of GIs were coming home to start school under the GI bill, and many earned the much-prized radio-telephone license needed to get a job in broadcasting, including the fledgling television, which was touted in many of the ads, and several projects in the magazine! As time went on, one would even need a third class license to operate a TV camera in a studio. The second and first class licenses granted more privileges and showed more ability.

The magazine has a treasure trove of articles and ads – which may seem quaint today – of that era that make very interesting reading. You can see that particular issue of “Radio Craft” at:
<http://www.americanradiohistory.com>

At the left side, select the “R” under publications, then “Radio Craft” in the titles. Scroll down to 1947 and click on the check-mark for May. You will have the PDF version of the magazine. Or select any magazine they have archived.

I have not explored much of the rest of the site yet, but with such a selection of magazines to choose from, there should be no end of fascination. I saw titles that I actually held in my hand or owned and some I had forgotten completely. Don't laugh, but I still do have a couple from back in the mid-60s that I had put away in a box and kept even after recovering them from storage. I've built a few projects and used many for SWL reference. All those I had in my hand at one time or another built up a knowledge base that led me down the path of SWL, retail radio sales, the Army Signal Corps, more SWLing and eventually to Ham Radio.

There are titles I had never heard of and some that came and went. All-in-all, quite a wonderful trip back in time to days when electronics was simpler, but building all the while to what we have today with satellites to palm-sized computers fully connected to the world through telephone and Internet.

If you want a trip down memory lane, or want to see what us old codgers had for reference and reading material, check out the site. It will take you on a comparison ride to see what electronics was in the beginning or to experience a bit of a “wow factor” for those who paved the road for today's technologies.

While you are doing that, I have to go adjust the cat whisker on my crystal set to see if I can pick up the International Space Station.

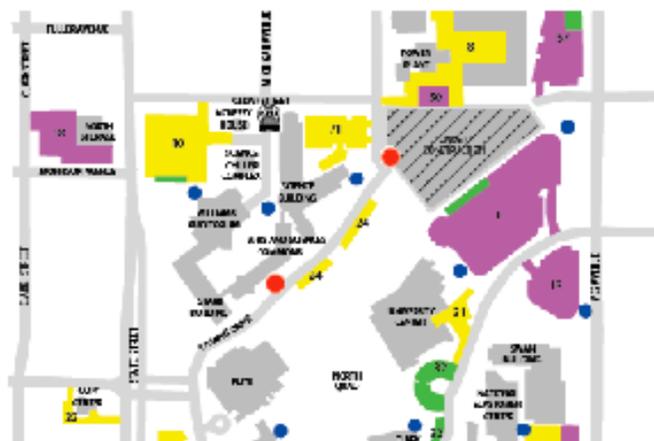
2017 Skywarn Training

When: Saturday, April 29th from 10:00 AM - Noon

Location: Ferris State University – University Center 217
805 Campus Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307

Parking: Lot 1

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.

Anyone with a disability that needs special accommodations to attend this event should contact Mike McKay at (231) 591-2147 at least 72 hours in advance.

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



Why are there so many Techs?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Recently, one of my readers asked, "Why do most people have a Technician license and not a General or Extra? Is it simply not interesting enough to get more privileges?"

This is a very interesting question, one that I've written about before. I think there are several issues at play here. In no particular order:

- It's pretty easy to get a Tech license, so a lot of people get them just for the challenge, but really never intend to use the license.
- Some people get a Tech license, but then find out that amateur radio isn't what they thought it was going to be.
- Some people get a Tech license, then can't find an Elmer to help them. They lose interest and give up on ham radio.
- Some people get a Tech license, buy an HT, and think that's all there is to amateur radio. They quickly lose interest in amateur radio, because talking on the repeaters just isn't all that interesting.
- Some people get licenses to participate in local emergency communications or CERT organizations. There's no need for them to get anything more than a Tech license.
- Since it's so easy to get a Tech license, even those that aren't technically inclined get them. Getting a General Class license requires a fair amount of study, and because they don't see the benefits of putting in that kind of work, they just don't bother.

I posted this question to my blog and got several interesting replies. Perhaps the most cogent was by Kenneth, W6KWF. He wrote: "The only thing General/Extra gets you is HF, which is becoming an increasingly small fraction of the possibilities of the amateur hobby. Amateurs could easily spend their whole lives moving from FM repeaters to microwave to VHF packet to EME to CERT/event support, etc, etc, without having any interest to explore what few facets of the hobby need HF privileges."

I think this is a great point. When incentive licensing was put into place in the late 1960s, HF was where the action was. Nowadays, more of the "cool stuff" is happening on VHF, UHF and microwaves. Getting additional HF privileges is not really a big deal anymore for many hams.

Yet another new license class?

Right on the heels of this discussion, the ARRL posted a news item, "ARRL Seeks Opinions Concerning Possible New Entry Level License" (<http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-seeks-opinions-concerning-possible-new-entry-level-license>). According to this report, the ARRL Board of Directors set up an An Entry Level License Committee in September 2016.

The committee is gathering member input via an online member survey (<http://www.arrl.org/license-1>) and will make recommendations to the Board for possible rules changes to submit to the FCC. They note, "The result could mean changes to the Technician license, but it could also be an additional, but simpler, license with privileges that would give a newcomer a taste of most facets of ham radio from HF to VHF and UHF. The survey will be online until April 7, 2017.

According to the survey page, the committee is trying to address several issues, including:

- The declining population of new hams under the age of 30.
- A decline in the number of new licensees who actually get on the air.
- Amateur Radio's lack of appeal for those under the age of 30, compared to other technical hobbies.
- The increasing challenge of engaging and retaining Technician licensees.
- A reluctance in much of the amateur community to embrace newer technologies of interest to the younger segment of the population.

Personally, I don't think that coming up with a new entry-level license class with privileges that are even more limited than the Technician Class is a bad idea, but whether or not it's successful will depend completely on the implementation. Unless the new class of license is accompanied by some kind of program that will help these new licensees really become engaged with amateur radio, then we're just creating another class of inactive licensees. I don't know exactly what this program would consist of, but without it, this effort is doomed to failure.

And, who's going to develop and run this program? The only organization that has the horsepower to make this work is the ARRL. They are going to have to step up big time. Most clubs don't have the people or resources to do it properly. If you have any thoughts on this, I urge you to contact your ARRL division director (<http://www.arrl.org/divisions>).

When he's not pondering questions about the amateur radio licensing structure, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, writes the "No Nonsense" amateur radio study guides, and teaches ham classes. You can contact him by e-mailing cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Edmore Repeater: I received an APRS message referring to the Edmore 146.800 repeater, but with no further details. I tried contacting the sender of the message – being an APRS rookie, my "reply" didn't – so if you hear anything, please share with everyone via the Tuesday or Sunday nets.

–Bruce, WB8TVD

The April "QST" has a review of the new Kenwood TH-D74A handheld. It's very interesting and very capable, being loaded with features, including D-Star. If you would like to see one in action, one of our members has recently purchased one and I'm sure he would be willing to show it off at a meeting.

–Bruce, WB8TVD

I need a bit (well, maybe more than a bit?) of tower work done. If there is anyone qualified and willing, please let me know on the air or via e-mail to my call at Gmail. It's a Universal aluminum free-standing at 40 ft. We can talk specifics later. If you have access to a bucket truck: Bonus! Thank you in advance!
 –Bruce, WB8TVD.

Tom, KB8TYJ, sent a note after we hooked up on the Lowell repeater that there is a linked system with a node in Morley.

442.075	+5 MHz	103.5	Morley	Mecosta	K8SN	OPEN
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Note the tone. The listing is from Repeater Book.

Tom also suggests anyone interested in emergency communication join the Lowell ARES/RACES net on Sunday evenings at 8:00. Lowell is on 145.27, minus offset, with a tone 94.8. Don't worry about the distance, Lowell Radio Club has a remote receiver in Morley.

--Bruce, WB8TVD

Last Month's Technical Question:

In a series circuit, the $X_L = 3\Omega$, $X_C = 10\Omega$, and the $R = 15\Omega$. The phase relationship of the current is:

- a. voltage equals current
- b. voltage leads current
- c. current lags voltage
- d. current leads voltage
- e. current equals voltage squared

Ans: d.

This Month's Technical Question:

The time constant of a capacitor-resistor network is:

- a. Capacitive reactance times frequency
- b. Capacitance times resistance
- c. Capacitive reactance times resistance
- d. Capacitive reactance times temperature coefficient
- e. None of the above

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

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Solution to Last Month's Puzzle

April 2017
PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338

