

KC8QOI 146.74 MHz
443.900
MHz

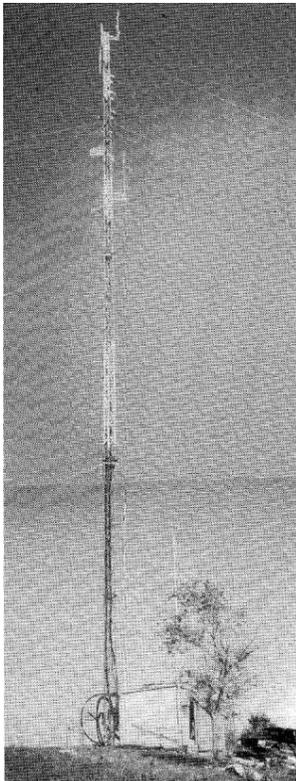
Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

August 2017

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Hello From Temporary Newsletter Editor Bruce, WB8TVD

I'm baaaaaaack. The Secretary is helping the newsletter for another month in Phil's stead. Good news, though! Phil is through with the far most popular portion of rehab – the inpatient festivities. As I pen this, he should be home and looking forward to periodic visits as an outpatient. Check in on the nets for more timely updates and keep Phil and Dolly in your prayers.



In case you have not been out to the 2-meter repeater site, here's a photo borrowed from the IRA newsletter, "Purple Crystal" of 1999. The caption notes that it is 180',

This month I have some additional information to bring to the table (another food reference) and we'll see if we can stimulate some activity on the HF bands with some reminiscing in the Secretary's Rambling. I mean Pondering.

As always, good or bad, here we go:

Announcements:

Club breakfast: 29 July, 2017, 9:00am at Sharon's in Roger's Heights

Next meeting: 3 August, 2017, 7:00pm at the BR Dept. of Public Safety

Club nets: Sunday, 7:30pm, 440 repeater

Tuesday, 9:00pm, 146 repeater

ARES net: First Tuesday, 8:00pm, 146 repeater

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Minutes From The Meeting – 6 July 2017

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 6 July 2017

Subbing for Jon, KD8GGA, Josh, KE8EKC, opened the meeting at 7:04 pm with 13 members and guests in attendance.

Josh thanked Bill, N8MZB, for the refreshments.

Everyone introduced himself or herself as appropriate.

A few reminders:

The next Club Breakfast will be 29 July at 9am at Sharon's in Rogers Heights.

The next meeting will be on 3 August at 7pm at the BRDPS.

Our nets are Sunday 7:30pm on the 440 repeater and Tuesday 9pm on 2 meters.

There are no signup sheets available.

Secretary: Bruce, WB8TVD: The minutes for the meeting on 1 June were published in the July newsletter. There have been no comments or corrections to those minutes.

The minutes were accepted by consensus.

Treasurer: Josh, KE8EKC, handed out the treasurer's summary and covered several items on that summary. A full written summary is available on request, in case you did not receive one at the meeting. Josh notes that there are a couple transposition errors in the printed list, but the accounts are correct to date.

A guest asked the cost of dues. Josh replied \$30 annually.

He was also asked about the Club mailbox and if the rental had been paid. Josh replied, Yes.

The treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE: The tower at the EOC has been erected and is ready for the next step. They are planning a pair of microwave dishes. Once those have been tested and declared ready for use, then RACES can start the process of installing antennas for HF and UHF/VHF. The setup will consist of a vertical HF antenna, a J-pole dual band V/U antenna and a rope and pulley arrangement for raising wire HF antennas as needed.

Jeff may ask the Club to purchase 500' of low loss coax from the repeater fund in order to get the J-pole antenna as high as possible.

There may also need to be a new cable feed-through into the building, but that will have to be negotiated with the EOC physical plant person. They may already have plans to create a new opening for the microwave transmission line.

RACES has RG-8 coax for HF.

There will need to be coordination between RACES and EOC on timing and how the RACES antennas will be mounted. EOC is using Crouch Electronics. RACES may need to use them or some other professionally licensed tower climbers.

Repeater: Mike, KD8DIB: The repeaters are repeating away.

The Echolink computer seems to randomly turn itself off, then Mike resets it again. The laptop has no battery, but is running directly from the UPS. Mike will continue to reset Echolink as needed.

The 2 meter repeater seemed to work very well for the most recent net.

There is still no progress on moving the 6 meter repeater.

Josh asked about the State Parks On The Air. Jeff would like to see the Club activate the White Pine Trail from the Big Rapids Old Depot during this Summer.

There was a question about the Old Depot. Brief informal discussion ensued.

Jeff visited the GR Club's (TVD: GRARA) Field Day operation, which was set up on the White Pine Trail in Cedar Springs, near the brewery. (TVD: !!!)

Jens, KC8OIV, asked about e-notification for the newsletter. He got a print copy even after signing up for the notification. Mike notes that the Web-based signup for the notification apparently does not work. He is looking into the problem.

Update on Phil, KC8QOV. He is doing in-patient rehab (TVD: Mid-July, he has returned home and is now doing outpatient rehab.)

Shila, KD8IAL, encourages everyone to send Phil a get well card. His address was noted at the meeting. (TVD: On request from me.)

Mike visited Bev, WD8PFC, and completed some HT repairs. She is doing well and misses us. She is still interested in the Club. Her husband was the one who built the wooden sign the Club has used at special events.

Question: Has anyone heard from Mary Ann, KD8NSP? She has also had some medical issues and is doing better.

Jeff participated with the CERT damage assessment team following the floods in Isabella County. He rode along with one of the teams and he notes that other counties joined in as well. Mecosta County does not have a CERT team, but there is one in Osceola County. Most of the damage was reported in Isabella, but there was some damage to homes in southeast Mecosta County along the M-66 corridor.

Josh asked if there was anything anyone could present for a tech corner. No takers this evening.

Dan, WA8AEN, offered to bring refreshments to the next meeting.

Bruce, WB8TVD, won the 50/50 drawing.

As a special second drawing, Jeff, K8OE, won an SWR meter.

Josh adjourned the meeting about 7:42 pm. No Hams or guests were harmed in the conduct of business. We all went home. Well, mostly.

Secretary's Ponderings – August 2017

Under the category “Never Throw Anything Away” comes my stash of ARRL Mini-Log books. In those days when all transmissions had to be logged (QSOs, CQs, tests, nets, etc.) I used the Mini-Logs for all my FM, portable and mobile activity. I even used one for the office. Yes, I took my 2-meter rig, power supply and a clip-on antenna to work for those times when things got slow (when mainframe compile times ate up a good portion of our day).

More importantly, I found a paper tucked into one of the books that listed the 50 qualifying QSOs for a Bicentennial Worked All States (WAS) award. To earn the certificate, one had to make valid contact with a Ham in each state – within the 1976 calendar year – then submit the QSLs and application to ARRL HQ. Sounds quaint in today's electronic world, but shipping QSLs through the mail was an act of faith and the only way to qualify.

One of my favorite activities has been “collecting wallpaper”, be it QSL cards or certificates. WAS is always a challenge. Doing it in 12 months seemed an unclimbable mountain, but a wonderful goal. I started with a bit of a handicap. Having earned my General in Summer '75, I still had my Novice station (DX-60 and SX-42) until April, when I found a well-proven National NCX-3 transceiver (80-40-20). It was light years ahead of my Novice setup, and it helped me begin my quest for the paper. On the other hand, life in general set about to thwart my pursuit of the award: Our son was born in May (BR Hospital gave him a Bicentennial certificate!), then I had to meet my Mom in Boston for a week to clean up some family business (I took my 2-meter rig and used my Canadian reciprocal permit crossing Ontario). Then there were the late nights with toddler and infant, not to mention that annoying career thing. Adding to all that hilarity, we moved in early Summer from apartment to duplex! Besides more room for the growing family, I had room for a dipole and vertical antenna! Bonus!

Getting creative was the name of the game. I was part of the National Traffic System, checking into MidCars Net on 40 meters. I took part in a variety of contests and state QSO parties, not to mention the goldmine County Hunter's Net (did you know Mecosta County is not rare?).

I made it under the proverbial wire by scoring North Dakota and Oregon on 24 December! I sent my QSL to each operator, hoping they would respond quickly. They both did and I sent my application and QSLs just after the New Year. What a ride the pursuit was, but when my QSLs came back accompanied my freshly-minted Bicentennial WAS certificate, I was walking on air!

I heartily recommend a healthy dose of HF operating to everyone. It need not cost multi-thousands to get on the air. I assembled my Novice station bit by bit, having the receiver and antenna before my license then scraping together some coin for the Heath transmitter and VFO (which had recently been approved for Novice use). My recall of the accessories is a bit sketchy – I don't know if I had an antenna tuner nor how I switched between RX and TX. When it came time to jump on the General bands, I was able to find the NCX-3 for not much money, selling the Heath transmitter to help cover the cost.

Generals have extensive voice, data and CW privileges on HF while Technicians have voice, CW and data privileges on 10 meters and can still operate CW on the Novice bands on 80, 40 and 15 meters. What a wonderful training ground that is! “QST” lists all manner of opportunities for chasing paper with their directory of special event stations. A compendium of contest activity is listed in their ‘Contest Corral’. If you aren’t an ARRL member, you can find the same sort of information on the Web. Get on the bands. Have fun with your hobby!

Oh, by the way. My QSO/QSL from Michigan for my WAS? None other than the world-famous W8OWN – George, our esteemed friend and colleague, on 75-meter phone. Thank you, George!

73

Bruce, WB8TVD

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Here are two columns by Dan Romanchik, KB6NU. Attribution is at the end of the second.

Growing The Ranks Vs. Growing The Enjoyment

May 21, 2017 by Dan KB6NU

Because I teach amateur radio classes and publish a series of popular amateur radio license study guides, I often get kudos for “growing the ranks.” In fact, Gordon West, WB6NOA, told me this just yesterday, when he stopped by the booth I was in at the Dayton Hamvention. I’m paraphrasing a little, but after telling me that he’s heard good things about my study guides, he said something like, “You’re doing good work in helping get more people into ham radio.”

People say that as if this is—or should be—the ultimate goal of teaching a license class. While this may be one of the goals, if that’s your primary goal, I think that you’re barking up the wrong tree.

In a way, creating more hams is selfish. If there are more licensed amateur radio operators, they say, then amateur radio will have more political clout with the FCC and with Congress, making it easier to pass legislation like the Amateur Radio Parity Act. While this may certainly help the new ham down the line, its main thrust is to reduce restrictions on those who are currently hams.

With that in mind, my goal isn’t to create more hams. My goal is to help people have fun with ham radio. The first step in helping people have fun with ham radio is, of course, helping them get their license. I do that by publishing my study guides and teaching ham classes.



The next step, and I'm only really getting started on this right now, is to help people learn what they need to know to become better ham radio operators. I touched briefly on this recently in the blog post. "A program to help new hams." I've started soliciting help developing and teaching these classes, but if you're at all interested in working with me on this, please get in touch.

Helping new hams—and old hams—have more fun with amateur radio is a lot more satisfying than just "growing the ranks." It would be nice to say that we have a million licensed radio amateurs in the U.S., but I think it would be a lot more valuable to the hobby to say that a larger percentage of licensed hams were active and enjoying ham radio. I know that, for me, increasing the number of active, engaged hams would be more personally satisfying than simply creating a lot of new licensees.

Ham researcher to investigate effects of solar eclipse

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

August 21 is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many in the U.S. to see a total eclipse. It's also an opportunity for a team of Virginia Tech researchers to study the effects of the eclipse on changes in the upper atmosphere that have an impact on HF propagation and the global positioning system (GPS). Backed by research funding from NASA and the National Science foundation, the team is headed by Dr. Greg Earle, W4GDE.

The Virginia Tech team plans to gather data from a variety of sources, including radar systems, transceivers, satellites, ham radio, and GPS receivers, in order to analyze the effects of the solar eclipse on the conductive region of the atmosphere.

"Whether military radar, or consumer GPS signals, the eclipse is going to have effects on the medium that we would like to understand better, so that we can either mitigate them or use them to our advantage," said Earle.

Here are a couple of links to news stories on the research team and the experiments:

- [Virginia Tech team prepares for special project during total solar eclipse](#)
- [Virginia Tech expert to study August solar eclipse effects on radar, ham radio,GPS](#)

Let's party!

In conjunction with the eclipse, the HamSCI and the ARRL are sponsoring the [Solar Eclipse QSO Party](#). (SEQP). According to an article in the August 2017 issue of *QST*, the goal of the SEQP is to "flood the airwaves with contacts, all measured by the automated receiver networks of the Reverse Beacon Network, PSKReporter, and WSPRNet." Once all the logs are in, researchers will analyze the data to see what effect the eclipse had on radio propagation.

A YouTube video of a presentation at Dayton on the SEQP can be found at <https://youtu.be/3EviY2Cuxpo?list=PLihPo8xWmo8-xDYAtpP9BWX9QnhUoT7k4>

The SEQP will run from 1400Z - 2200Z on Monday, August 21. This is well before the eclipse is due to begin on the West Coast. The reason it starts before the eclipse is to establish a baseline for radio propagation conditions.

SEQP organizers urge you to make as many contacts as you can on as many bands as you can operate. Like nearly every contest, contacts are not allowed on 60m, 30m, 17m, and 12m. CW, RTTY, and PSK31 are the preferred modes because automated receivers can record those contacts, but phone and other digital modes count, too.

An interesting twist to this contest is that, like Field Day, you can earn a number of bonus points, including:

- Operating outdoors (100 points)
- Operating in a public place (100 points)
- Operating a wide-band automated receiver at your station (100 points)

Hams have had a long history of supporting scientific research. They provided communications for some of the early polar explorations and listened for Sputnik as it flew overhead. The Solar Eclipse QSO Party continues this tradition, and it's going to be a lot of fun as well. Visit the HamSCI website at: <http://www.hamsci.org/seqp> for more information.

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, and is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides and the CW Geek's Guide to Having Fun With Morse Code." You can reach him by emailing cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

The June Technical Question and Sudoku answers:

In radio circuits, the component most apt to break down is the:

- a. Resistor
- b. Crystal
- c. Transformer
- d. Wiring
- e. Capacitor

The actual, real answer is E: Capacitor. My answer would have been "C: Transformer" since most of my equipment failures have been either power transformers or some sort of coil. Many thanks to Phil for getting that to me. When he returns to save the Newsletter from complete disarray, he will bring new Technical Questions and Sudokus.

In the meantime, here is the answer to the June Sudoku:

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

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

Bits & Pieces Of This & That

August Hamfests in Michigan (source ARRL):

08/05/2017	UP Hamfest 2017	Location: Escanaba, MI
08/12/2017	Midland ARC Hamfest	Location: Midland, MI
08/13/2017	Seaway Trunk Swap	Location: Port Huron, MI
08/19/2017	Alpena SWAP 2017	Location: Alpena, MI

As noted in Dan's, KB6NU, second article, there will be a total solar eclipse on 21 August. It looks like a great opportunity to get on the air and do some serious operating! Also check the August "QST" for much more information.

Elections are coming up in a couple months!! Please consider serving in a Club office. Let's step up to the plate, to use a food expression.

August 2017

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