



Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

KC8QOI 146.74 MHz
443.900 MHz

July 2017

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Hello From Temporary Newsletter Editor Bruce Werner, WB8TVD

I hope nobody is bummed out. The Secretary has taken over the newsletter this month. That's the guilty party in his normal Hamfest pose, scoping out some trinket at a recent Cadillac 'fest.

I'll be piloting the newsletter in Phil's stead this month, while Phil does some medical tests and a bit of recovery work. At this moment, evening of Saturday, 24 June, I have no other information, except he is on his feet and doing well. I volunteered (good or bad) to take over this once and we'll see how badly it goes. Or to be more positive, how well it goes.

I'll try to fill out the issue with whatever I can find to slip in, things people send me plus the minutes and a pondering.

As I said, for good or bad, here we go:

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Announcements:

Club breakfast: 1 July, 2017, 9:00am at Sharon's in Roger's Heights

Next meeting: 6 July, 2017, 7:00pm at the BR Dept. of Public Safety

Club nets: Sunday, 7:30pm, 440 repeater / Tuesday, 9:00pm, 146 repeater

Secretary's Ponderings – July 2017

After 40 years in IT, dealing with people who don't speak IT-Talk ("Civilians"), I should have known what would happen if I started talking to a Civilian about Ham Radio.

The first instance was last year when I happened to mention to a couple fellow retired old codgers that I was becoming more involved with my old Ham Radio hobby and brushing up my Morse code skills. I was met with incredulous looks as though I had said I was moving to the Moon. "I thought Ham Radio had faded away," one declared. I explained how our numbers had actually been on the rise in the last few years and how it was growing all over the world. I told them about some of the things Hams had developed or improved on. They were still shocked and probably thought I should seek counseling.

A recent incident was at church one Sunday morning. A couple who had been keeping tabs on me and following my medical adventures asked how I was doing and what I was up to lately. In a moment of exuberance, I mentioned I was getting back into Ham Radio after quite a while away. I got a definite "Huh?" look, then compounded the problem by talking about hearing and trying to contact other Hams via satellite. Oh-oh. I should have cut bait at "Huh?"

As the woman's eyes began to glaze over, she asked how I did that. Now my brain was scrambling to find some non-jargon way to explain it. It would have been easy to equate a voice satellite to a repeater – after explaining how a repeater worked – but I chose as an example the ISS which is mostly used by Hams as an APRS i-gate. Oh boy! "... Because time of orbit and small window of opportunity is so short, we exchange digital messages."

Okay, that didn't help. "How do you understand those?" Okay, maybe a chance to swing to something more familiar to her: Computers. "The digital signals are translated by a computer so we can read them on the screen." "Uh-huh." Her eyes were getting glassier. "There are some satellites that you can use to talk to other Hams by voice." At least that slowed the eye glaze. I steered my description back toward more recognizable Ham Radio topics and they seemed satisfied that I was not self-destructive, if not entirely stable from the neck up.

I think it would have been simpler to just tell them about some of the new stamps I have been saving from incoming e-mails. Though they probably would have glazed over when I complained about self-stick stamps not releasing electrons when you try to mount them in albums.

73

Bruce, WB8TVD

Minutes From The Meeting – 1 June 2017

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 1 June 2017

Subbing for Jon, KD8GGA, Josh, KE8EKC, opened the meeting at 7:02 pm with 14 members and guests in attendance.

Everyone introduced himself correctly.

A few reminders:

The next Club Breakfast will be 1 July at 9am at Sharon's in Rogers Heights.

The next meeting will be on 6 July 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.

The Bulldog Bike Tour has been cancelled. As last year, the organizers did not have enough entrants. Girls On The Run is scheduled to go on as planned. Are they looking for our help? Dan or Jeff will check with the event organizers.

Secretary, Bruce, WB8TVD: The minutes for the meeting on 4 May were published in the June 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 he does not recall a new member's name, but has it in his full accounting papers. He summarized newly submitted dues.

The treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

Jim noted that Jeriel, KC8MMF, is in the hospital, not serious, but Jim has no further details.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE: The next ARES net will be 6 June, 8:00pm, prior to the BRA-ARC net on 2 meters.

He needed to upgrade the firmware in the Icom 5100 in the trailer. Once that was done, he was able to program the radio using the RT software.

Repeater: Mike, KD8DIB: Mike restarted the Echolink connection and it now seems to work.

He also notes that the battery backup may not be working.

Per Dan, WA8AEN, the 2 meter repeater has been acting strangely, giving lower S-meter readings and generally not receiving as well as it should. Dan sent an e-mail to the IRA asking if they had done some work on the link. He also was not sure, but the radio station may be back in the background.

The 440 repeater seems to be working well, but at times has trouble receiving.

The purchase agreement with Yaesu states that we must keep the repeaters on the air for one year. That requirement is almost up.

Dan asked about returning the 6 meter repeater to its operating location. Mike asked anyone who was able, to contact Jeff.

Josh asked about the State Parks On The Air. Informal discussion notes that the White Pine Trail activation is this year and that our Club logo is on the park's home page.

Field Day: The bandshell has power and access to bathroom facilities.

An alternate location could be Hungerford Lake, in Newaygo County, part of the Manistee National Forest.

Josh notes that he may suggest to President Jon that he send a club-wide e-mail to judge level of interest in participation. We may not have enough participants to set up any station. Josh will talk with Jon about sending an e-mail and will also find out the Hernden's plans.

Newsletter: Phil, KC8QOV: The deadline he established for input to the newsletter was the Sunday before the Club breakfast, but notes that this creates a moving deadline. He suggests that we make a firm deadline of the 25th of each month. He will assemble the newsletter the next day and have it ready for publication and mailing the day after that. Consensus agreement on that suggestion, making the deadline for newsletter submissions the 25th of each month. Dan asked if we could cut back the printing to 25 copies, eliminating some waste. Everyone seemed in agreement with Dan's suggestion.

Doug, KD8SLS, gave a demonstration of his portable/mobile setup for DMR. He explained the hardware and some of the programming necessary, but noted that he is able to successfully connect to the Internet using his TYT handheld with some added hardware, which can be fitted in a small canvas satchel. It worked well and was successful in connecting as Doug had described. He also notes there are DMR repeaters in Morley, Greenville and Reed City.

There was going to be another Tech Corner presentation, but the hookup to the venue's computer projector netted only a "No Input" message. Instead, an informal discussion of EMP ensued.

Bill, N8MZB, offered to bring refreshments to the next meeting.

There was no 50/50 drawing. (TVD: Probably saving the secretary trying to remember who won.)

Josh asked Mike about the mailbox. Josh will pick up the key and check the mail.

Josh adjourned the meeting about 8:20 pm. No Hams or guests were harmed in the conduct of business. We all went home. Well, mostly.

This is worth repeating

Dear fellow amateur radio operator and Midwest ham club contact:

It's our hope that you might help us spread the word about the 65th annual W9DXCC DX Convention and Banquet on Sept. 15-16, 2017, in Schaumburg, Illinois. Please consider sharing the following information with your members via e-mail, website or word of mouth: (May 21, 2017) – Online registration is now available and much of the program is in place for the 2017 W9DXCC DX Convention and Banquet in suburban Chicago. This year's keynote speaker will be ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR. The ARRL has approved the gathering as an Operating Specialty Convention. Discounted hotel rooms can also be booked now.

Sponsored by the Northern Illinois DX Association, W9DXCC will also offer Contest University and DX University programs on Friday, with presentations for new and veteran DXers and contest operators. The daylong session on Saturday will feature speakers, exhibits, QSL card checking, a CW pileup contest and many valuable prizes. The evening banquet is a time to relax and enjoy our keynote speaker. For non-ham family members, Woodfield Mall, which offers a wide array of shopping, is one traffic light south of the convention site at the Hyatt Regency Schaumburg, 1800 East Golf Road.

Updates and Registration: <http://w9dxcc.com/>

For more information: John McCormick, K9KE@arrl.net

I don't have the answer to the June Technical Question, so I'll repeat the last one to give you another chance at it. I know the answer in most of my failed equipment, but it may not be the correct answer!

This Month's Technical Question:

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

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

July Hamfests in Michigan (source ARRL):

07/22/2017	GMARC Summer Trunk Swap	Location: Shelby Township, MI
07/22/2017	HARRISON HAMFEST	Location: Harrison, MI
07/29/2017	CMARC "Outdoor" Hamfest	Location: Lansing, MI

BITS & PIECES OF THIS & THAT

SPECIAL NOTE: The ARES net scheduled for 4 July, 8:00pm, will be postponed to 11 July, 8:00pm, preceding the BRA-ARC club net.

Elections are coming up in a couple months!! Please consider serving in a Club office. Everyone knows the trouble we had filling the positions we did, and that we are still without a vice president. So, let's step up to the plate, to use a food expression.

According to what I've read, some information Dan, WA8AEN, sent me and some article snips, the sunspot cycle has bottomed out and shows signs of going back up again. It may be a few months and all will be well on the bands again!

During the day, I usually have my mobile VHF/UHF rig listening the 145.825 satellite APRS frequency. I hear mostly PSat and ISS with an occasional bump from PCSat. This past couple days during Field Day, there have been a lot more beeps sounding on the radio and quite a number of unique IDs with a message of "CQ FD". Lots of extra FD activity on the "birds".

13 Colonies Special Event Returns July 1-7: The ninth annual "13 Colonies Special Event" will take place July 1-7, with activity starting at 1300 UTC on July 1 and continuing until 0400 on July 7 (the evening of July 6 in US time zones). Participating stations try to contact all 13 Colony Stations plus two Bonus Stations -- a clean sweep, a la ARRL November Sweepstakes. Stations in each of the original 13 colonies will be on the air using 1 x 2 special event call signs. Additional information on the 13 Colonies website: <http://www.13colonies.net/>

FIELD DAY June 24-25

Unfortunately, the BRA-ARC Field Day effort was cancelled due to lack of participants.

HOWEVER!! One advantage of putting together the newsletter on the Sunday afternoon of FD is that I get to sample what went on over the weekend. I got a nifty photo from N8OE, who visited Sue, KC8IFP, and Tom, KB8TYJ, operating with the Grand Rapids Club. Jeff sent along this photo.



The GRARA (Grand Rapids) was operating on the White Pine Trail at Cedar Springs for Field Day and Michigan State Parks on the Air. Tom, KB8TYJ, and Sue, KC8IFP, Behler were operating and Jeff, KC8HJT, and Delcy, KC8HVR, Hernden and Jeff Sell, N8OE, were visiting. The setup was impressive, operating as 3A and included Jim Hessler's, K8JH, utility truck with a telescoping mast. (N8OE photo)

SUDOKU: My math skills aren't very good, so, I'll leave it to Phil to present a new puzzle and the solution to the earlier puzzle for his return to the editor's chair.



I like this guy, so he's in for this newsletter as a reminder for each of us to get outdoors!! Get out and enjoy the water and fishing; the woods and fields; hills and dales. Wherever you find Nature, go there.

Take a young person fishing! Hey! Take an OLD person fishing!

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