

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

March 2017

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Presidents Message

Hello all I have been working a lot of overtime at work lately and haven't had any time to even think about what to write for a newsletter article for this month so I have decided to pull a article off the internet. I found this article on ARRL website about the first VE session in Antarctica. It was written in 2010.

10/11/2010

October 8, 2010 was one of those gorgeous early fall days we in New England get to enjoy from time to time: Sunny, highs in the mid-70s and not a cloud in the sky. Although her department coordinates thousands of VE sessions each year, Maria Somma, AB1FM, was particularly excited about the one that began at 5 PM last Friday: The first VE session from Antarctica. As it happens, the temperature outside Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station was also in the mid-70s – with the addition of a minus sign!

A total of eight candidates took the Technician exam, and all eight are now licensed amateurs. As of Monday, a couple have even created pileups while making their first contacts! The point of contact “way down under” was Ernie Gray, W1MRQ. Ernie also served as an examiner. The other two were in the ARRL VEC office in Newington – Penny Harts, N1NAG, and Steve Ewald, WV1X.

It was the first VE exam on the Antarctic continent, and no doubt the coldest exam session in history.

Ernie told the ARRL that the process began last year, but didn't get too far until this past winter (summer in the Northern Hemisphere), when “they were in my face asking how we can make this happen.” He continued: “A meeting was held in May and about a third of the 47 winterovers attended....The idea of an exam session came up almost right away.”

“We are all contract workers for Raytheon Polar Services Co of Centennial, Colorado....They have been exposed to ham radio through the permanent ham stations here on the ice and some wanted to be hams for years, just didn't know how to go about it....The South Pole winter crew has been isolated here since February and I have been giving talks and demonstrations about Amateur Radio and even made some contacts from my

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shack. We do try to fight isolation from all the things at home and the boredom from being sequestered inside this steel cocoon. I knew at that moment that I had to make this happen, I was going to make this happen.”

Somma provided this report: “On Friday, October 8, 2010 at 5 PM, we gathered in the VEC office to start the video conference exam session. At the South Pole it was already 10 AM Saturday. Everyone there was in their conference room with each candidate’s laptop logged onto the ARRL VEC examination Web site. All three participating ARRL VEs were able to observe and communicate before, during and after the session. Participating VEs filled in all forms related to the session via the Web. Three different interactive online Tech exams were available so Ernie could randomly assign different versions to the candidates and they could all take the exam at the same time. The results were reported to the candidates within a few minutes of electronic submission to the VEC and VE team. All eight had passed!”

Gray reported: “I had a couple in the KC4AAA ham shack and they had a short QSO on 40 SSB this past weekend. I hope to have them all through before we depart for home [starting in November].”

IT support was provided by Andy Shefrin and Hugh Brower, KB1NFI at ARRL HQ and by Marc Stavale at Amundsen-Scott.

Somma was pleased with the way the historic session turned out: “During my 25 year tenure at the ARRL, this has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever been involved in. It was very gratifying to help them achieve their goal!”

Gray agreed, commenting: “*Nothing* I have ever done previously and probably *nothing* I will ever do again will give me as much satisfaction as what has been accomplished by these eight individuals down here this winter. This is the highpoint of my ham radio experience and I hope I still have a few more good years to go!”

For photos of the session and video of Maria Somma, AB1FM, go to

<http://www.arrl.org/antarctic-vec>.

Thanks, Jon

KD8GGA

Minutes From The Meeting – 2 February 2017

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here’s what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 2 February 2017

Jon, KD8GGA, opened the meeting at 7:10pm with 17 members and guests in attendance. (TVD: The evening’s meeting was held in the “back half” of the hall, due to the unexpected presence of another –larger – group up front. We also did not have access to the projector, as nobody could fathom how to connect or use the one available.)

A few reminders:

The next Club Breakfast will be 25 February at 9am at Sharon’s in Roger’s Heights.

The next meeting will be on 2 March 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 to sign up for attendance and net control of the Club nets.
(TVD: The ARES/RACES net will be Tuesday 7 March at 8pm on the 2 meter repeater.)

Secretary, Bruce, WB8TVD: The minutes from the December and January meetings were published in the combined January/February newsletter. The minutes were accepted by consensus.

Treasurer: Josh, KE8EKC, handed out the treasurer's summary and noted several items.

The General Fund is in the black, due to several recent membership renewals.

Mike, KD8DIB, asked for a list of paid members and asked several questions about the breakdown on the summary report.

The treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE, was not in attendance, so there is no formal EC report for February.

In Jeff's absence, Bruce, WB8TVD, will be NCS for the next ARES/RACES net on 7 February. He will contact Jeff for any discussion topics or announcements.

Mike notes that there will be Skywarn training on Saturday, 27 April, 10:00 am to Noon. The location will be in Room 217 of the University Center. Mike also handed out an information sheet. (TVD: Which should also be available on the club website.)

Josh, KE8EKC, asked if there was a formal Skywarn ID card, and if it was numbered. Bruce, WB8TVD, recalling he actually has one, produced it and it does indeed have a "serial" number and signature by the Skywarn Coordinator.

(TVD Special note: We had a discussion about Club-sponsored call signs at the January meeting. I had found two other calls, K8MEC and K8OSE, via a QRZ.COM search. Those calls are for the Mecosta and Osceola Counties – respectively – EOCs and the trustees would be the Emergency Managers of those counties.)

Repeater: Mike, KD8DIB, notes that both available repeaters are working well. (TVD: Same status for the 6 meter repeater: Waiting for the weather to break.)

Mike has increased the squelch on the 440 repeater to help with the random interference. He is hoping that will work. We had talked about inserting a PL tone, but that discussion is tabled for later, as long as increasing the squelch works as hoped.

The shack which belongs to our host commercial radio station had been broken into, but nothing was stolen except for some very specific and obscure pieces and nothing was damaged except for the door lock. The door has already been repaired and the shack is once again secure. (TVD: Secure?

Ummmm.....)

Leon, KC8ACO, offered a suggestion of borrowing a friend's quad drone to inspect the 6 meter repeater antenna at The Silo to determine the ease (or not) of removing it.

In answer to his own question at the last meeting, Bruce offered that he had driven by the County EOC and saw that the "new" tower was still in pieces on the ground in the snow. (TVD: Perhaps they, too, are waiting for better weather?)

Jon reminded everyone of Field Day in June, but will continue to keep the discussion tabled until closer to the date.

According to regulations for testing, the Ham-In-A-Day exams in April will need three or more Volunteer Examiners in attendance. We must be sure they are lined up before we can seriously advertise the session.

We also need to produce a flyer for the session and get them ready to distribute and publish, as needed.

Secretary's Ponderings

A couple weeks ago I ran into a friend and fellow BRA-ARC member in one of our mega-box stores. We chatted for a while, and then he asked me if "they" had gotten together and decided a direction for The Club. Realizing he meant the board of directors, I let him know that "they" (which includes me as secretary) had not gotten together yet, but that in the case of a direction for The Club, we had not gotten a lot of input from members about what they wanted The Club to be. Not exactly the answer he was looking for, but he was satisfied that the subject was not forgotten and still on the table for discussion. However, he is anxious for The Club to have a direction.

As I pondered his question, I thought about The Club on several levels. What do I want The Club to be? Is it close to that? (No, I am not answering that question in this note.)

What is The Club today and what has it been? First, by our charter and agreement as an ARRL Special Services Club, we support and promote public service; do what we can to increase the number of Hams (in general and locally); and help to inform the public about Ham Radio and our services. The Club provides a common meeting ground for the exchange of ideas and for social interaction of fellow Hams in the area. The Club is a common center for training and practice of skills and provides a pool of talent for ARES, RACES, SKYWARN and community-based services. Keep in mind that membership in ARES or RACES is not a requirement for membership in BRA-ARC. The Club supports three repeaters (The Big Rapids Area Radio Amateur Repeater Association) which are completely open and free to use by any licensed Amateur.

The Club has been part of many community events, from canoe races in the '70s, to Girls On The Run, to the CROP Walk and many other events needing our communication security. We have Field Day, even with lower attendance; we have had swap fests; we supported the balloon festival and Independence Day air shows; we even had a very successful Ham-related auction. Under the umbrella of the ARES/RACES, Club members have participated in severe weather nets and deployed as spotters. We could have provided communications for parades down Michigan Avenue, but a parade where you can see the beginning and end from any spot along the route does not need more than a few, public safety members, Sheriff's Posse members or police (several of whom are in the parade). Remember our special event stations at the Labor Day craft fair? We do have successful Ham-In-A-Day sessions with VE testing every year.

What else could we do? We have not had extensive contact with the Boy or Girl Scouts. I'm sure local scouts would be delighted to participate in JOTA! We have not done much outreach for schools' STEM programs. We have never participated in senior (or any other) enrichment days. K8SF and I gave Ham Radio introductory presentations to various civic groups, but I can't even remember when those were. Do we want to reach out to those groups again? There have to be greater presenters than Craig and I were! Has anyone thought about helping our local schools contact the ISS (International Space Station)? How about helping schools or the college start a Ham Radio club and build up a station? We don't have a club station of our own! Does anyone attend meetings of other radio clubs? What's that like?

Like the craft fair event or Field Day, we could get together as a club group to enter contests or feature some special event station. I'm sure there are community milestones that are worth commemorating. Is there interest in a Makers' Faire? It would probably be beyond our ability to organize one, but we could participate as a group. Why not have communication competitions among ourselves? Have we lost our will to bring in speakers and presenters? Does anyone have really vintage equipment they'd like to show off and possibly demonstrate? By the way, how do Scouts earn their Radio Merit Badges? We could be a resource for them in a big way!

What has happened that we don't do much of this any more? You could call it a self-fulfilling prophesy. You need active members to have a vibrant, active club. If we don't have activities, or activities don't have much

attendance, the membership loses interest and complaints arise, then membership drops and you don't have the pool of Hams for the next event. You get the picture.

In big cities – Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Cadillac, Traverse City, the lower right quadrant of the state – clubs have dozens, or even hundreds, of active members to draw from for activities, ideas and inspiration, even if half don't participate. BRA-ARC doesn't have the luxury of having half participation. We, of course, need more Hams in the area to be members of The Club, but more important, we need a very high percentage of members to be active participants in activities and in the spirit and administration of the organization. Witness the trouble we have had finding a vice president – a post still vacant as I write this.

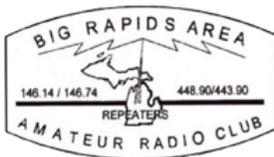
BRA-ARC is not like one of those mega-banks where “the board” is big enough alone to make all the decisions and run the operation with minimal input from members (depositors and other customers). We are much like a credit union, whose members are co-owners of the institution. You, as members – and local Hams who are not members – are co-owners of BRA-ARC.

So, please, if you are a HAM – or even just interested in Ham Radio – and not a member. Join! And if you are a member, be active! If you aren't physically active, use your voice (we are supposedly communicators, no?) – at meetings, in private, by e-mail. Just let someone on “The Board” know what you are feeling or concerned about! I have several e-addresses (a curse of when I worked helping student customers, but I have kept some of them), but the one you can reach me: wb8tvd@gmail.com.

Vent, complain, gripe, bitch. Whatever it takes to make you feel better! But join and participate!

See you at the next activity, breakfast, net or meeting!!

--Bruce, WB8TVD



Ham In A Day

The Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club is sponsoring a **HAM IN A DAY STUDY SESSION** for individuals interested in earning a Technician Class Amateur Radio License.

VE testing* will be available for license upgrades as well.

This class is an intense 6-hour structured self-study session of the test material.

No guarantee is made by BRAARC as to your testing success. * VE Test Fee \$15

**2017 Club membership awarded to successful "hams in a day".

- Date:** Saturday, April 8, 2017
- Cost:** \$30.00 includes license exam fee**
- Location:** Ferris State University
Room 109: West Commons Building
1319 Cramer Circle
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307
(see map on reverse side)
- Time:** Registration: 8:30 am
Class: 9:00 am—4:00 pm
Lunch: 12:00—12:45 pm on your own
VE Testing registration: 4:00 pm
Testing begins: 4:30 pm

Questions or Registration:

Please call Dan at (231) 796-2784

Pre-registration for class required by Sunday, April 2nd.

Bring to the exam: photo ID (or two other forms of ID) and #2 pencil.

For license upgrades: bring any completed CSCEs, and a photocopy of your existing license. Coffee and treats provided. 30 days advance notice required for special testing.

Parking is available in Lot # 45 off of Cramer Circle.

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)

Last month's technical question:

What is the duty cycle of a 1.0 microsecond radar pulse if the repetition rate is 1000 and the average power is 20 watts?

- a. 1,000,000
- b. 20,000
- c. 30
- d. 0.09
- e. 0.001

Ans: e.

This 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

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

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5						7		2
7		3				5		
3			4	9			2	1
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1								

Solution to last month's puzzle

PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338
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