

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

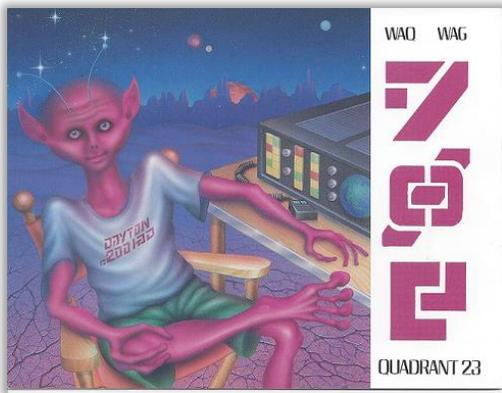
October 2017

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Hello From Temporary Newsletter Editor Bruce, WB8TVD

I'm baaaaaaack (yet again). The Secretary is helping the newsletter for another month in Phil's stead. I have taken the liberty (with Phil's permission, of course) to tweak up the header a bit.

This month I ponder a few good old times we had as a club, and a new activity that we just did, all in hopes of spurring on more of you (me, actually) to get on HF!



Speaking of outer space: Dan questioned the existence of my home planet Grelber, which is directly on the opposite side of the Sun from Earth. That's why you've never seen it! I asked one of my fellow Grelbers to send a QSL she got from another quadrant. She e-mailed me (in Earth parlance) a copy of this one from Mu-Ra Saki, on Vega-4. She said contacting him was no big deal. Well, I think it's a big deal. Propagation to Vega-4 is no picnic

in the Holodeck! It's spotty at best.

This month I hope to have some additional information to bring to the table (there's that food reference again) and a message from the ARRL about their support of hurricane relief efforts, especially in Puerto Rico.

As always, good or bad, here we go:

Announcements:

Club breakfast: 30 September, 2017, 9:00am at Sharon's in Roger's Heights

Next meeting: 5 October, 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

CROP Walk 8 October, 1:00pm, IRC Connector (FSU). No affiliation required. 440 handheld or mobile is. This is a fun activity.

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Minutes From The Meeting – 7 September 2017

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 7 September 2017

Subbing for Jon, KD8GGA, Jeff, K8OE, opened the meeting at 7:08 pm with 8 members and guests in attendance. Jeff noted that Josh, KE8EKC, was sick and could not attend to sub for Jon.

After surveying the group, consensus had it that we all knew each other, so no introductions were necessary. The secretary passed around signup sheets for attendance and net control, asking that the sheets be returned to him.

Jeff announced that he brought a box full of handy items for Hams that may be had for any donation to the Club.

A few reminders:

The ARES quarterly meeting will be 21 September at 7pm at the county EOC meeting room. Jeff, K8OE, will lead an activation of the White Pine Trail for MiSPOTA at the Big Rapids Depot on 23 September at 1pm.

The next Club Breakfast will be 30 September at 9am at Sharon's in Rogers Heights.

The next meeting will be on 5 October at 7pm at the BRDPS.

The CROP Walk will be Sunday, 8 October. Meet at the IRC Connector at 1pm for assignments. Step-off will be at 2pm.

ARES will hold a radio exercise on 22 October at the EOC in Paris. Time and details to come.

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

Bruce, WB8TVD, asked who owns the old train depot? Nobody is quite sure if it is the city or State Parks Department (or DNR).

Secretary: Bruce, WB8TVD: The minutes for the meeting on 3 August were published in the September newsletter. There have been no comments or corrections to those minutes.

The minutes were accepted by consensus.

Treasurer: Josh, KE8EKC, is sick and unable to attend, so there is no treasurer's report.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE: His personal family move has not been completed, but he is back on the air.

The tower at the EOC is almost finished. He will talk with Crouch Electronics to see if we – as a poor club – can get some sort of deal on their fees.

Jeff talked with Scott (County Emergency Management Coordinator) who would like to do an exercise with the ARES and/or Club. 22 October would be a good time.

Jeff notes that the CROP Walk will not be used as part of the SET occurring that weekend.

Repeater: Mike, KD8DIB: 440-repeater is doing pretty much the same as it has been.

Echolink has not been heard lately, so he reset and adjusted the computer. It seems to be working better.

2-meter repeater: Mike and Dan, WA8AEN, met with two IRA techs and, using "service monitor" equipment to run tests and troubleshoot, found a faulty section of coax cable and replaced it.

Mike is considering getting a weather module for one or both repeaters.

If we were to connect to Wires-X or System Fusion, we would need some additional work and equipment.

One of the possible solutions to the interference to the 2-meter repeater may be to install a PL tone. At this point it is just an option.

Dan, WA8AEN, has talked with Jeff, WD8DLK, briefly. They will chat again later, but Jeff is aware that we might be interested in retrieving the antenna(s) and duplexer(s) from The Silo for relocation. Dan will work with Leon, KC8KCO, and Jeff, K8OE, to arrange logistics.

Elections: Bruce, WB8TVD, has agreed to continue as secretary.

There were no other people at the meeting who were interested in running for Club office.

Motion was made by Bruce, WB8TVD, to table the elections until next meeting in October. Second was by Dan, WA8AEN. There being no discussion, the motion was passed on unanimous voice vote. Discussion will then continue at the general Club meeting on 5 October.

Shila, KD8IAL, notes that as Equalization Director, she is responsible for damage assessment for the county following a disaster, natural or otherwise.

A team or teams go out to assess the reported damage using criteria defined by the State of Michigan.

Their commission is to report the damage to Scott Schroeder – County Emergency Management Coordinator – within 72 hours.

There will be a damage assessment training session on 27 September at 7:30pm at the County Services Building. (TVD: South end of town, near Pizza Hut)

Shila sees there being one Ham operator with each assessment team.

Shila led a discussion of possible program, tech corner or extracurricular activities:

(TVD: Several people offered these suggestions, listed as summary items.)

Makers Night	Spring pot luck or lunch
Project Night	Scott Schroeder describing an exercise
Speakers (various topics)	Set up your PL night (any repeater)
Have Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts attend	Help set up a club or club station at Ferris
Demonstration of Raspberry Pi	A Get On The Air station at the meeting
Fox hunt(s)	Jeff's Theremin would be interesting to see
Repairs fair (bring your faulty equipment)	NASA (or other) speakers by Skype
Show & Tell	

There was no 50/50 drawing.

Mike will bring refreshments to the October meeting.

Shila will bring refreshments to the November meeting

Jeff adjourned the meeting about 8:08 pm. No Hams or guests were harmed in the conduct of business. We all went home. Well, mostly.

Secretary's Ponderings – October 2017

Have you been on the air on HF lately? Yeah, me neither. While I have been trying to get my HF rig up and running and an antenna actually working, I have been bouncing between a lot of chores and activities, some of which don't actually involve Ham Radio, if you can believe that.

I recently said yes to Jeff's, K8OE, invitation to join him to activate the White Pine Trail, Mecosta County Section, as part of the Michigan State Parks On The Air (MiSPOTA). His plan was to operate for a few hours next to the old depot in Big Rapids. I got there shortly before his start time, and found Jeff, his wife Lynn, KE8HRN, and Dan, WA8AEN, had already set up and were on the air. It was hot and very bright, but under Jeff's canopy, it was shady enough to be comfortable.

After exchanging pleasantries and watching Jeff work the 20 meter band for a few minutes, he handed me the mic and told me to jump in. I sat for a couple minutes familiarizing myself with the few controls available on the Icom IC-706, then squeezed the mic to answer a QRZ from another station. No answer on that first shot, but after a couple more tries, he came back to me. After a couple tongue stumbles trying to get out my exchange and confirming his, I was back on the air on HF! What a wonderful feeling. The station was in Texas as part of the Texas



*Lynn, KE8HRN, at the mic with Jeff, K8OE, logging.
(WB8TVD photo)*

QSO Party, so he wasn't interested in hearing about our MiSPOTA activation. I made a couple more contacts and turned the mic over to Dan, who was successful making a couple more. Most of our contacts were with Texas stations, as it seemed there were millions of them! We had a chance to work KY4KY, commemorating 40 years of their organization in Kentucky, but the pileup was much more than our peanut whistle could crack. There was some DX, mostly Italy and Slovenia. They couldn't hear us either, so only domestic stations in the log book. Lynn got on the air and made her very first contact! I can only imagine her thrill. Congratulations Lynn!

It was a good time and brought back memories of Club operating events, including a few Field Days. One of the earliest memories was our coverage of the Muskegon River canoe race. Not an HF event, but it brought out many Hams, including several Club members, who were stationed at the Hemlock Park finish line and along the river up to the Evert starting line.

Someone in the Club was friends with the Ridenour family, who owned The Back Room decorating center, which resided in what is now the city hall shopping mall. We set up a demonstration HF station in the Back Room front window and managed to make contacts on

the air and new friends for Ham Radio. As I recall, there weren't very many actual on-air contacts, but we had fun, the Ridenours had fun and our visitors had fun.

We will probably never forget the fun we had (although I wasn't able to participate) in operating demonstration stations at the Labor Day Craft Fair in Big Rapids' Hemlock Park.

There have been many memorable Field Days, all providing fun for the group and an opportunity for many to get on the HF bands. Those that stand out include the year we had to weed-whack a field before we could set anything up.

Several FDs were held on top of Repeater Hill (before the broadcast station was on the air). On one occasion, Tom, WD8KBD (now WA8AA), brought his full-size 15 meter beam, which we mounted on a crank-up/tilt-over tower, which itself was mounted on a trailer, towed by Bob, WD8MOD (SK). After the event, as we were packing our equipment, the western sky began to darken, and the antenna began to hum! You never saw a dozen Hams safely crank down a tower and take down a beam antenna so quickly! Several Field Day events saw the late-night operators seeking any warmth at all – at the end of June! One operation that really stands out was when Craig, K8SF, a master CW operator, was manning one of the CW stations, and calling CQ FD. In his sleep, face planted on the desktop! That is true dedication!

One of my favorites is also one of our earliest. We had many transmitters, and had several positions set up ready for testing. One was not receiving, nor was there a good match using the SWR meter. The coax was traced from the back of the transceiver and eventually the trackers found their way to – the back of another transceiver on the facing table!! That machine had not yet been powered up so no damage was done. Most of us had a good laugh, while there were a few very interesting monologues. We and our radios all survived, made a lot of contacts and had a great time.

My point? Our brief setup at the Depot activating the White Pine Trail Park (Mecosta County Chapter) gave me a quick flashback of what I used feel making HF contacts. You can get that same feeling, especially if you have never been on the air using HF, by squeezing the mic at a Club or ARES sponsored event. There are several operating activities planned that will include HF. Check for them and when they come up...

See you there!

73

Bruce, WB8TVD

Look for no less than six state QSO Parties in October. Check the ARRL Contest Calendar in "QST" for details. These are always fun and good, relaxed contest practice. The Michigan QSO Party is in April.

As you may have heard, there have been several hurricanes in the past few weeks. Many Caribbean Islands have taken massive hits and will be helped by their home countries. In the US, major hits have been taken by Texas, The Florida Keys, parts of the Southeast, The US Virgin Islands and most especially by Puerto Rico. The following note was sent by the ARRL and forwarded many times. In case you have not received the note, and may wonder how to help, here is but one suggestion.

From the ARRL Website 09/26/2017:

Fifty of the nation's most accomplished Amateur Radio operators responded within 24 hours to the call of the American Red Cross to deploy to Puerto Rico and provide emergency communications. At the behest of Red Cross, ARRL rallied the US Amateur Radio community to provide up to 25 two-person teams of highly qualified hams. The group's principal mission will be to move health-and-welfare information from the island back to the US mainland, where that data will be entered in the Red Cross "Safe & Well" website.

The group will deploy the middle of this week and remain on the island for up to 3 weeks.

ARRL will equip each two-person team with a modern digital HF transceiver, special software, a dipole antenna, a power supply and all the connecting cables, fitted in a rugged waterproof container. In addition, ARRL is sending a number of small, 2,000-W portable generators as well as solar-powered battery chargers of the variety the US military uses on extended deployments. The hams and their equipment will be sent to Red Cross shelters extending from San Juan to the western end of the island. "This generous outpouring of response represents the finest qualities of the Amateur Radio community," ARRL CEO Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, said. "These individuals are dropping whatever they are doing now, heading off to an extended hardship-duty assignment, and offering their special talents to Americans who have been cut off from their families, living amid widespread destruction and without electrical power since Hurricane Maria struck the Caribbean region last week."

ARRL's Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, KI1U, said this was the first time in the nearly 75-year relationship between ARRL and the American Red Cross that such a request for assistance had been made. "Hurricane Maria has devastated the island's communications infrastructure," Corey said. "Without electricity and telephone, and with most of the cell sites out of service, millions of Americans are cut off from communicating. Shelters are unable to reach local emergency services. And, people cannot check on the welfare of their loved ones. The situation is dire."

How You Can Help In a letter to all ARRL members, ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, asked for contributions to ARRL's Ham Aid fund. "Equipment has been flying out the door since

Hurricane Harvey struck the US mainland,” he emphasized. “From meeting requirements in aid of Hurricane Irma victims in the US Virgin Island and Florida, our store of Ham Aid kits has been depleted.”

ARRL’s Ham Aid program loans Amateur Radio equipment kits to established Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) groups and partner agencies during disaster responses, in order to establish Amateur Radio communication support. Ham Aid is supported by donations from individuals and corporations, including many of our ham radio industry partners.

ARRL has previously staged Ham Aid equipment in Texas, and in the last few weeks, ARRL has supplied kits to Florida, the US Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. With our Ham Aid inventory depleted, your donation is needed now. Contributions to Ham Aid are 100% tax deductible. To make a donation online, go to the ARRL donation form and select “Ham Aid.” To donate by mail, print a donation form, and mail it with your check payable to ARRL, noting “Ham Aid” on the memo line of your check. Mail to ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111 USA.

ARRL Michigan Section
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There are many ways to help and many organizations that need monetary donations. Choose one or more worthy and legitimate groups and give them a hand – physically or monetarily as best you can.

BITS & PIECES OF THIS & THAT

October Hamfests in Michigan (source ARRL):

10/07-08/2017	ARRL Great Lakes Division Convention	MIS, Brooklyn, MI
10/21/2017	Muskegon Color Tour Hamfest	Muskegon, MI
10/22/2017	Kalamazoo Hamfest and Swap	Kalamazoo, MI
10/29/2017	USECA Hamfest/Swap & Shop	Madison Heights, MI

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

If you would rather receive an e-mail version of the newsletter, let the secretary know!

October 2017

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