



Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

KB8QOI Repeaters
146.74 MHz
443.900 MHz

September 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. The good news? Phil is doing much better and actually surviving treatments! Check in on the nets for more timely updates and keep Phil and Dolly in your prayers.



Where were you? No, not the third degree – what did you do about the eclipse? I'll talk about what I did and some of the nationwide reaction I followed on TV in my Ponder. Speaking of outer space: In case you ever doubted space aliens are among us, check out this being. They apparently lull us into submission by making us believe they crave corn!

This month I hope to have some additional information to bring to the table (there's that food reference again) and see what KB6NU has for us this month.

As always, good or bad, here we go:

Announcements:

Club breakfast: 2 September, 2017, 9:00am at Sharon's in Roger's Heights

Next meeting: 7 September, 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 – 3 August 2017

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 3 August 2017

Subbing for Jon, KD8GGA, Josh, KE8EKC, opened the meeting at 7:09 pm with 9 members and guests in attendance. (TVD: See my note following these Minutes)

Everyone introduced himself or herself as appropriate.

A few reminders:

The next Club Breakfast will be 2 September at 9am at Sharon's in Rogers Heights.

The next meeting will be on 7 September 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 6 July were published in the August 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 wrote a check to the USPS for our post office box in Paris. We are good for the next year.

He also notes he had some health issues in the last few weeks and was not able to deposit checks in a timely manner, but has gotten them to the bank in the meantime.

The treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE, is out of town. Bruce, WB8TVD, noted that Jeff will hold a quarterly EmComm meeting some time in September. He will have a definite date on his return.

Repeater: Mike, KD8DIB, is out of town also. General discussion ensued about the state of the repeaters:

The 2-meter repeater was having some serious problems. Tom, KB8TYJ, offered a suggestion via e-mail that we might try replacing the repeater with one of our older standby units.

The discussion ran through a variety of problems.

The question was asked who will be contacting Jeff, WD8DLK, to determine what is to be done with the 6-meter repeater. Dan will have a chat with Mike.

A reminder was offered about the link-system net weekdays at Noon.

Josh asked about the State Parks On The Air. Do we, as a club, want to activate the White Pine Trail in the Big Rapids area, possibly at the old depot? More discussion ensued, but there was no conclusion.

It seems a Club Field Day activation did not happen because of loss of interest.

General discussion ensued about the upcoming elections. Josh may consider running for president, but we will then need a treasurer. Bruce offered likely acceptance of the secretary's job, but declined secretary-treasurer, mainly due to no experience in accounting-type skills. (TVD: To say the least)

(TVD: Basically, we need some folks to step up – for a repeat performance if possible – for Club office. Please?)

Jeff Hernden, KC8HJT, offered a suggestion that perhaps, as other clubs have done, BRAARC run a Hamfest/swapmeet. Light discussion followed with no conclusion.

General discussion about creating more interest in the club:

Tech sessions as part of meetings increase levels of interest as do other events outside the meetings. We, as a Club, need to stir up interest in attending. Perhaps project nights or fox hunt type activities would be good.

A question was asked: Who comes to the breakfasts? The short answer was mostly regulars, with occasional visits from other members and family.

It was noted that several regulars are on vacation.

Dan, WA8AEN, presented information about various radiation sources including Radon. The American Cancer Society provides many details about various causes of lung cancer and prevention of Radon entering living areas.

He also pointed out the decay cycle of various radiation sources and how each level decays into the next level/type of radioactive material. Some have half-lives in eons, some in milliseconds.

Shila, KD8IAL, suggested a few ideas for presentations:

In February, she would be happy to explain the new property tax changes, for Mecosta County or surrounding areas, Ham or not.

Makers Faires are quite popular these days, and we could make a presentation (or booth) at some area Faire.

(TVD: From MakerFaire.com: *Part science fair, part county fair, and part something entirely new, Maker Faire is an all-ages gathering of tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, authors, artists, students, and commercial exhibitors.*)

A fox hunt does sound like a fun activity.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts both have badges for electronics or radio, which would be a natural for BRAARC to help attain.

Leon, KC8ACO, asked for help troubleshooting and fixing his Kenwood 450.

Josh won the 50/50.

Josh complimented Dan on the brownies he brought as refreshments.

The secretary is still unclear who volunteered to bring refreshments to the next meeting. (TVD: Typical or it could have been the brownies.)

Josh adjourned the meeting about 8:15 pm. No Hams or guests were harmed in the conduct of business. We all went home. Well, mostly. (TVD: Some had to fire up the Evinrude to get home!)

The secretary mulls attendance: The August meeting was rather sparsely attended for a variety of reasons. I wondered for a while, but checking further, several members were on vacation, which meant families as well. The evening's weather was somewhere on the miserable scale for both chill and rain. Our walkers stayed home rather than risk being washed down Mitchell Creek. How many members does BRA-ARC have? Several. Let me be less vague: 29 by one count, which I'll use for now. That includes "Primary" and "Family" members. How many are active? That's a moving target really hard to pin down. How many former members are still in the Club area? I wish I could tell you, but there are a few. Do they keep tabs on the Club? I really hope so.

It would be great to have all former members be a part of the Club Family again. They have much to offer BRA-ARC, and the more members, the more BRA-ARC has to offer everyone. If you have “fallen away”, please think about coming home. If you are wavering about staying – stick with it. Let’s make the organization bigger and better.

Secretary’s Ponderings – September 2017

“Where were you?” Simple question, usually asked after some momentous event. 1965: I was working at a large retail store near Boston. Late afternoon, with a few hours to go on my shift, the lights went out and the store was awash with emergency lighting and a few women’s shrieks. We learned it was going to be a long-lasting event, so we were charged with ushering out remaining customers, securing our departments, then clocking out – in pencil, because the timeclocks would not work. A very dark and treacherous drive down US-1 and I was home safe. Thus began The Great Northeast Blackout.



A couple years earlier, during the Summer before my senior year in high school near Detroit, I saw my first eclipse and my first Aurora. What a rush those were. In October, 2014, here in BR, I saw another eclipse. It was not spectacular, except for the great view of a solar storm. This shot from my double-pinhole camera isn’t the greatest, but you can see the sunspots either before or after the eclipse portion of the festivities.

On 21 August, I again made a pinhole camera courtesy of a DX Engineering long shipping carton (mobile antenna). I snapped some images until max eclipse then gave up just before the sun went behind my maple.



I was completely fascinated by the TV coverage by The Weather Channel, which followed totality from Madras, Oregon, through Nashville, Tennessee, to Charleston, South Carolina, to the final sighting aboard a cruise ship 400 miles out in the Atlantic. What really captivated me was people’s reactions and emotions, from cheering totality and a weeping on-air reporter to disappointment when clouds covered the sun before totality and elation when the clouds parted just as the eclipse went total. On a peak near Jackson, Wyoming, an eclipse-chasing couple got married immediately following totality. From that elevation, you could also see a 360° sunset. Just a great display by Mother Nature and Mother Earth.

Even though we did not have totality, at maximum, birds disappeared and crickets began their night concert. Natural wonders are always fascinating and usually better than anything man can devise to attract our attention!

Did you do anything or go anywhere to participate or view the eclipse? Were you a part of the Solar Eclipse QSO Party? Did you check any of the bands or listen in on the medium wave

broadcast band to see how much night time propagation took effect? MW BCB stations in the path of totality were expected to act as though night had fallen and their reception would have expanded. What did you do? Would you like to share with the Club at the next meeting on 7 September, during a Tech Corner?

See you there!

73

Bruce, WB8TVD

A brief note from Dan, KB6NU, with some info about Great Lakes HamCon.

Plans firming up for HamCon, October 7-8

May 9, 2017 by Dan KB6NU

The plans are now firming up for the first Great Lakes HamCon, October 7-8 at the Michigan International Speedway. The second issue of the HamCon Newsletter includes a bunch of information on times, activities, and facilities. As you can see, yours truly will be teaching a one-day Tech class on Saturday. I'm really looking forward to this event personally.



You can download a PDF version of this newsletter and get on the HamCon mailing list by going to <http://glhamcon.org/>.

Keep in mind that 8 October is the date for the Big Rapids CROP Walk. If you do go, please take pictures and let us know how it was!

From Dan's blog, which follows, I pulled this statement, which could be taken as an indictment of us all: "... market research findings that have continued to reveal that only a small percentage of new hams join the League, and only about one-half of new hams actually get on the air." What can you and I do to help solve this? I am "guilty" of not being on the air on HF. I should be. I want to be. How about you?

ARRL finally realizes status quo isn't going to cut it

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

An item in the July 2017 ARRL board meeting caught my attention. It notes that a committee of staff members was tasked with identifying the challenges facing ARRL and possible solutions. The August 3, 2017 issue of the ARRL Letter ran the following report:

"ARRL Chief Executive Officer Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, presented the report of six Headquarters staffers who had been tasked with identifying the challenges facing ARRL and devising feasible solutions. Specifically, the committee addressed market research findings that have continued to reveal that only a small percentage of new hams join the League, and only about one-half of new hams actually get on the air.

"The committee began with the premise that ARRL must act in order to remain relevant going forward. It proposed instituting a Lifelong Learning Program to focus on developing a clear developmental path for all radio amateurs, from newcomers to established radio amateurs. The committee recommended the creation of new programs and services to increase the knowledge base of newcomers in order to get them active, as well as programs to keep experienced amateurs up to date with changing technology and practice."

The board meeting minutes were a little more detailed:

"Mr. Roderick yielded the floor to CEO Gallagher who presented the report of a committee of staff members tasked with identifying the challenges facing ARRL and possible solutions. The members of the committee – Diane Petrilli, KB1RNF; Norm Fusaro, W3IZ; Becky Schoenfeld, W1BXY; Debra Jahnke, K1DAJ; Steve Ford, WB8IMY; and Sean Kutzko, KX9X, joined the meeting at 9:20 AM, to present this report. Their findings show the importance to ARRL of getting newly licensed hams actively on the air and how that relates to continued growth of the organization. In order to achieve that goal, the committee proposed developing a lifelong learning department, which would address the needs of all amateurs with the focus being on developing a clear knowledge path for all amateurs. They proposed creating straightforward programs and services to enhance the knowledge base of new amateurs as well as to enhance their sense of community within the hobby.

"Another recommendation involved refocusing the priorities of the emergency preparedness department to address the current trends in public service.

"A third recommendation was to improve the value proposition of membership. The committee proposed doing a survey, which would include test material that is targeted to the interests of newer hams. The content would include a strong emphasis on serving communities, agencies, and partners; digital communications, and human interest. Projects would be simple. The survey would obtain information on new ham's interests and needs in the hobby. The survey would also try to determine the delivery system that

might best meet the newcomer's desire for receiving this type information (print, digital, messaging, etc). The test material is proposed to be delivered to recipients in fall 2017.

“From the committee's vantage point, **the status quo is no longer adequate: we need to have a vision of the future and convey it to our current membership** [*emphasis is mine...Dan*]. If we do not convey the need to change the paradigm, the ARRL's relevancy will not move forward.”

The good thing here is that the ARRL finally realizes that there are some serious problems. I've written about these in the past. I've challenged the ARRL to set a membership goal of 25% of the licensed amateurs in the U.S (<http://www.kb6nu.com/arrl-membership-is-25-asking-too-much/>). I've also encouraged the ARRL to play a bigger part in emergency communications research (<http://www.kb6nu.com/go-big-go-early-go-fast-smart/>).

Unfortunately, it appears that the ARRL is approaching this issue in typical ARRL fashion. That is, working on these issues in their little cocoon in Newington and then issuing these statements as if they expect everyone to just fall in line. I quote, “From the committee's vantage point, the status quo is no longer adequate: we need to have a vision of the future and convey it to our current membership.” That approach is doomed to failure. Any “visioning” or strategic planning that doesn't get the membership involved right from the start just isn't going to work.

The ARRL HQ staff just doesn't have the horsepower to pull this off properly. The staff is already pretty bare bones, and they still have to publish QST every month, keep Logbook of the World running, process thousands of license applications, etc., etc. The only way this is going to be a fruitful effort is if they get members—and lots of them—involved in this process.

If you agree with me, please let your director know. Contact your director and tell him that you want to be involved. The status quo of having the HQ staff not working with the membership “is no longer adequate.” That's how we got here in the first place.

Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the “No Nonsense” amateur radio license study guides and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. You can email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

BITS & PIECES OF THIS & THAT

September Hamfests in Michigan (source ARRL):

09/09/2017	GRA Hamfest	Wyoming, MI	Grand Rapids ARA
09/17/2017	Adrian Hamfest	Adrian, MI	Adrian ARC
09/23/2017	GMARC Fall Trunk Swap	Shelby Township, MI	General Motors ARC

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!

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