



KB8QOI Repeaters  
 52.860 MHz  
 146.74 MHz  
 443.900 MHz

# Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

February 2018

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## Hello From Newsletter Editor Bruce, WB8TVD

It's me again. February is on us and we go into the time of year we have all been waiting for. Pitchers and catchers report to Spring Training in a couple weeks! That can only mean one thing: Another Detroit team starts another futile search for a championship. Oh, it really means Winter is finally in its last throes and Spring can't be far behind. And that other thing about Detroit teams.



Tis month we have a message from President Dan, and I ponder (ramble on?) about DX.

There's a note from the ARRL Letter about the new FM repeater satellite, Oscar-92.

Certainly not the last call, but please don't miss this opportunity to renew your membership in BRA-ARC with the form on the next-to-last page.

Remember to listen for, or try, the 6-meter repeater on 52.860 MHz. It's in test mode and located south of Big Rapids. Dan has changed antennas, so it has omnidirectional coverage.

As always, good or bad, here we go:

### Announcements:

Club breakfast: 27 January 2018, 9:00am at Sharon's in Roger's Heights  
 Next meeting: 1 February 2018, 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

**In This Issue:**

- Pg 1 – Msg from TVD
- Pg 1 – Announcements
- Pg 2 – Message From President Dan
- Pg 2 – Newsletter Deadline
- Pg 3 – Meeting Minutes
- Pg 5 – AMSAT Oscar 92 Open For Business
- Pg 5 – AMSAT More Info
- Pg 6 – Secretary's Pondering
- Pg 7 – DX Highlights
- Pg 7 – Member Renewal Form
- Pg 8 – The Rest of The Story

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the weather being like Winter, I have been working on some of the new low signal ham radio programs. WSJTX has a free download that contains 11 different programs. These programs have a central theme, but they also vary in functions. Most of these programs are based on using slower transmissions with much narrower bandwidths. You may have seen K8OE's postings on the



BRAARC Facebook page using WSPR (Weak Signal Propagation Reporter) to make two-way contacts with 5 watts and all over the world. WSPR is one of the modes in the WSJTX set. ISCAT and MSK144 are fast modes that use ionized meteor trails to establish short time connections. One very unusual program is Echo. It uses the slow low signal strength capabilities to bounce a signal off the moon.

I have been working on getting my rig activated using the WSJTX program and have run into a couple of snags along the way. These roadblocks mainly revolve around not understanding where the audio comes from and how to implement the push to talk. But progress is being made and I hope to have it operational before the next club meeting. In any event take a look and maybe you will find something that interests you. There are also several YouTube videos that cover the program and its abilities.

If you didn't make it to last month's meeting, you missed an interesting presentation by Shila (KD8IAL). She has been a club member for many years. Her ideas for the club are varied and the passion for ham radio is self-evident. Shila will be doing the February program about the county equalization procedure and what you should be aware of.

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### Newsletter Deadline

Please note that because the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month seems to occur too close to the Club's monthly breakfast, I am returning the newsletter deadline to the Sunday before the breakfast. This will create a "moving target" for deadline, but 99% of the time I'll be able to get the newsletter published in time to remind everyone of the upcoming breakfast. I'm putting this letter together on the afternoon after the breakfast, so the date on the opening page means little when you receive this. If you have a submission for the newsletter, please keep that in mind and drop something to me at my e-mail address in the header of the first page.

Also, I would not mind seeing a few "want ads". If you have something to sell, or want something or need help, drop me a note and I can slip it in. If you have a talent you are itching to use, consider sending an item as a want ad!

## Minutes From The Meeting – 4 January 2018

Bruce Werner, WB8TVD, Secretary

Here's what you missed if you were not at the meeting on 4 January 2018

President Dan, WA8AEN, opened the meeting about 7:14pm. He noted that there were only six members in attendance, and everyone knew each other, so no introductions should be needed.

He passed out an attendance sheet and net signup sheets then ran down a list of reminders:

The next Club Breakfast will be 27 January at 9:00 am at Sharon's in Rogers Heights.

The next meeting will be on 1 February 2018 at 7:00 pm at the BRDPS.

Our nets are Sunday 7:30 pm on the 440 repeater and Tuesday 9:00 pm on 2 meters.

Secretary Report: Bruce, WB8TVD, noted that the minutes for the November meeting were published in the December Newsletter. He had received no corrections or comments. The minutes for November were accepted by consensus.

He noted that the December meeting minutes had been published in the January newsletter, but two errors had been pointed out: Dan opened the meeting about 6:30 pm, and he had not given the blessing, rather Phil, KC8QOV, had given the blessing. Those corrections will be noted in the minutes for this meeting and published in the February newsletter. The corrected minutes were accepted by consensus.

Treasury Report: Bruce, WB8TVD, as temporary custodian, noted that the Club still does not have an elected treasurer, and hopes that until there is, he can keep track of the Club's finances, hoping not to "screw them up", using the vernacular.

Bruce gave a summary of the account at Chemical Bank, passing out a sheet listing those items mentioned in his report. There were no comments or corrections to the report. The report was accepted by consensus. (TVD: If you would like a printed copy of the January report, it will be available at the February meeting, as will the report to be given that evening.)

EC Report: Jeff, K8OE, was on vacation and asked Bruce to relay an item Jeff received via e-mail.

Summarizing: Scott Schroeder, Mecosta County EMD, told Jeff that the grant request for funds to mount an antenna system on the new Mecosta EOC tower had been approved in the full amount, to include all hardware and labor. Planning will begin soon for what work needs to be done. He also notes that the tower company is able to climb the tower in all but the most extreme weather, so we might not have to wait until Spring.

Jeff will also schedule an ARES/RACES quarterly meeting for some time in February or March.

Repeater Report: Mike, KD8DIB, gave a rundown on some of the situations at the 2-meter site, including receiver and coax difficulties.

There was a brief discussion about the phone line and how it might be replaced with a 222MHz link for repeater control. It was also asked if anyone knew the usage statistics of the phone patch. There was nothing definitive. The phone bill is on automatic payment, in the range of \$42 per month.

Bruce offered to look into pricing for some 222 transceivers and it was noted that the repeater end of that link would only need to have a receiver.

### Old Business:

Dan notes that while we still have no treasurer, there are not enough people at this meeting to nominate and elect a treasurer. It will have to be tabled again.

In a similar vein, Mike is already a board member. Three of the other participants are officers of the club, therefore board members, leaving 2 meeting participants to take 2 board positions. Again, there are not enough members present to select board members.

Club Insurance for Equipment and Liability: Dan has talked with Scott Brelle of Risk Strategies – the current ARRL member insurance carrier.

Mike made a list of the Club's apparent equipment, including both active and dormant/backup repeater hardware.

Bruce asked if some of the equipment is old Motorola gear, can it be sold or donated? Mike notes that it still works and could be used as emergency backup.

Mike will continue his investigation of Club insurance.

Jens would like his newsletter sent via e-mail and gave his e-address to the secretary.

The legislation exempting Amateur antennas in homeowner CCRs in condominiums and associated communities (Amateur Radio Parity Act) originally passed in Congress, died waiting for completion and has been reintroduced. It is now in Senate committee.

#### Tech Corner:

Dan led a group quiz in acronyms, from DPDT to PDA. Double Pole Double Throw and not Public Display of Affection, but Personal Digital Assistant.

Shila, KD8IAL, gave a very interesting presentation of what Hams look like to the rest of the world, offering video and audio clips from several sources, including vintage and current TV shows and news reports. She noted that many celebrities are or have been Hams, from Walter Cronkite, KB2GSD, to Tim Allen, KK6OTD.

Shila continued her presentation by describing what she and Mecosta County EC Jeff, K8OE, do for the EOC. Her primary function after a disaster is damage assessment and Jeff will coordinate putting Ham operators together with her staff members that go into the field.

Shila concluded her presentation by asking some pertinent questions of the club's members:

What do we do for the community? What can we do?

What will bring people here to meetings? What will bring people to Ham Radio?

What will keep them here?

What will make this group succeed?

We all need to commit to something to move the organization forward.

We need an "I don't want this to end" attitude.

This has to be a group we want to be a part of.

Jens, KC8OIV, volunteered to bring refreshments to the February meeting.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Jens, KC8OIV.

President Dan adjourned the meeting about 8:30 pm. No Hams were harmed in the conduct of business. We all went home. Well, mostly.

*From the ARRL Letter, Satellite edition, a new satellite:*

## Fox-1D (AO-92) Now Commissioned, Open for Amateur Use

AMSAT Vice President-Operations Drew Glasbrenner, KO4MA, has declared that Fox-1D (AO-92) is now open for general Amateur Radio use. That word followed an announcement from AMSAT Vice President-Engineering Jerry Buxton, NOJY, that AO-92 had been commissioned and formally turned over to AMSAT Operations.

Initially, the U/V FM transponder will be open continuously for 1 week. After that, operation will be shared among the U/V FM transponder, L-Band Downshifter, Virginia Tech Camera, and the University of Iowa's High Energy Radiation CubeSat Instrument (HERCI).

AMSAT News Service, AMSAT-BB, AMSAT's Twitter account (@AMSAT), the AMSAT-NA Facebook group, and the AMSAT website (<https://www.amsat.org/satellite-schedules/>) will report any updates.

AO-92 was launched from India on January 12. For the past 2 weeks, the AMSAT Engineering and Operations teams have been testing the various modes and experiments on board. Testing has shown that both the U/V FM transponder and L-Band Downshifter are working well. The Virginia Tech camera has returned photos of Earth and data from HERCI has been successfully downlinked.

AMSAT thanked the 178 stations around the world that used FoxTelem to collect telemetry and experiment data from AO-92 during the commissioning process.

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Check the AMSAT website for much more information: <https://www.amsat.org/>

The February "QST" has an interview of the new AMSAT president who has some very interesting ideas and plans for the future of satellite and space communication. You can also read his message and vision for the future on the AMSAT homepage. I rather like the idea of geostationary satellites and an FM repeater on the Moon!

Of all the new technologies, I have been most successful with hearing several of the voice (FM) satellites and bouncing an APRS signal off PSAT (NO-84). PSAT and PCSAT were put together by Bob Bruninga, WB4APR, and a team of Midshipmen at the US Naval Academy. If you can't tell by his call, Bob – an instructor at USNA – is instrumental in developing APRS. By the way, I have three QSLs in my collection that were garnered by hearing (no, you can't actually contact a satellite) Oscars 6, 7 & 8 many years ago.

## Secretary's Ponderings – February 2018

Last month I pondered the changes in “QST” and how they might apply to BRA-ARC. My pondering was not for naught. In the February issue of “QST”, Editor Steve Ford, WB8IMY, tackles a basic DX operation by explaining how to work a DX pileup using either split VFO or dual VFO. If you’ve ever worked DX, you probably encountered the DX station saying they are listening “5 up” or some such phrase. As Steve notes, with a modern transceiver, it’s a piece of cake (I prefer easy as pie, but that’s me). I knew the basics, but he explained it in detail and I was able to check my Icom 735 and see just how to do it.

Not that I’ve worked much DX in my day. I’ve always had peanut whistle rigs (not QRP, but 100 watts or less). My antennas have been a Hustler 4BTV vertical (I miss that old antenna), wires – sometimes with tuners – and dipoles. It’s been a challenge, but always fun and satisfying.

What’s DX to you? Bhutan, Bouvet or Brunei? South or Central America? The Caribbean? Alaska, Hawai’i? I was so excited, you would have thought my first contact as a Novice was DX. Toledo! What a rush! The QSL is on the first page of my QSL album.

The competition for DXCC is hot with the really heavy hitters vying to sit atop the DXCC Honor Roll with roughly 350 entities worked. I do like a good challenge, but you all know that I’m not terribly competitive. I doubt I will ever snag 300 entities, but I hope to one day make DXCC.

In my SWL and Ham careers, I have bagged many QSLs and can claim several entities in each phase. It is easier finding countries as an SWL than as a Ham. First, you don’t have to establish 2-way contact and broadcast stations run higher power and on a fairly tight schedule, so you know when to listen. However, writing a reception report to convince the station you actually heard them is a bit more tedious.

Listening to Hams was a revelation when I first tuned a Ham band. Here were these people using their own equipment and talking with each other. For an SWL it was a crap shoot to see who was on and if I could hear both sides of a conversation. There were all kinds of signals out there. Fixed locations all over the world to maritime mobile stations, literally in the middle of nowhere. I even heard the Ham stations aboard both the USS America and USS Forrestal!

Looking back in my logs, those were heady days in the mid to late 60s. Propagations was magnificent! I even had many loggings on 10 and 15 meters! It’s no wonder I wanted in on the fun when I settled in after college!

See you at the next meeting.

73

Bruce, WB8TVD

Here are a few exotic – and warm – DX from the ARRL DX News:

ST. LUCIA, J6. Bill, K9HZ is QRV as J68HZ from Soufriere until February 3. Activity is on 160 to 6 meters between 1200 to 0600z. QSL to home call.

CURACAO, PJ2. Jeff, K8ND and Jim, W8WTS are QRV as PJ2ND and PJ2/W8WTS, respectively, from the Signal Point station until February 5. Activity is on the HF bands. They will be active as PJ2T as a Multi/Single entry in the CQ World Wide 160 Meter CW contest. QSL to home calls and PJ2T via W3HMK.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, VP5. John, N9EAJ is QRV as VP5/N9EAJ from Grand Turk, IOTA NA-003, until February 4. Activity is on 40 to 10 meters using CW and SSB. QSL to home call.

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**TIME TO RENEW!**

BRAARC Membership			
<b>Applicant Information</b>			
Name:			
Call:	Class:	Phone:	
Address:			
City:	State:	ZIP:	Email:
ARRL Member: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Newsletter: <input type="checkbox"/> US Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Website – minimizes postage and printing costs	
<b>Spouse Information if joint membership</b>			
Name:			
Call:	Class:	Email:	
<b>Licensed Children</b>			
Name:	Call:	Class:	
<b>DUES / Donation</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Member (\$30) <input type="checkbox"/> College Student(\$12.50) <input type="checkbox"/> Youth(free if oldest licensed family member<18 yrs)			\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Club Patch _____ X \$5 each - The club patch supports the repeater systems operated by the club.			\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation – General Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Repeater Committee Donation <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Committee Donation			\$
<b>Total:</b>			<b>\$</b>

Membership runs from January 1 to December 31 each year. Please submit dues by the regular February club meeting to prevent accidental removal from club roster. Mail to: **BRAARC, PO Box 343, Paris, Mi 49338**

**Club Membership Renewal form should be filled out and submitted with payment, so we can track who has paid and if you want the newsletter by email or mail.**

## Bits & Pieces Of This & That

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February Hamfests in Michigan (source ARRL):

3 February 2018	HARA Swap and Shop	Negaunee, MI
10 February 2018	45th Annual Swap & Shop	Traverse City, MI
18 February 2018	Livonia ARC's 47th Annual Swap & Shop	Livonia, MI

A few 'fests in February. If the weather doesn't cooperate so you can attend one or more, check the Contest Corral and Special Events activities in "QST" and on the ARRL website to find things to do instead of attending a Hamfest. Get on and operate! Earn some wallpaper!

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

**February 2018**

**49338**

**PO Box 343 Parts MI**

