

BIG RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



JULY 2003 AUGUST



AN ARRL SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB

SIGN UP FOR THE ARES – RACES TRAINING PROGRAM

A basic course in Disaster Telecommunications is coming to you on Saturday, August the 2nd right here in Mecosta County! This program counts as credit for RACES certification and it won't be given again in our part of Michigan until February the 21st of 2004 in Otsego County and March the 20th of 2004 in Grand Traverse County. The Michigan State Police provides 6 hours of credit; yes, it is 6 hours of training. Remember that to continue as a RACES member you should complete this course within 2 years of joining a local RACES program. The entire session is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with a break for lunch and according to those who have taken it at Grand Rapids recently, it is a really excellent program, excellently presented. If you will attend, even if not a RACES member, call Tom Behler, EC/RO at 231-592-9854 to be added to the list of those who will take the course.

The morning segment covers basic disaster telecommunications planning and basic emergency response measures for RACES programs and individual members. Specific emphasis is placed on the application of emergency communications resources to specific disaster telecommunications problems.

The afternoon portion covers basic radiotelephone net procedures, a discussion of the application of various common telecommunications modes to facilitate message flow, an introduction to the standard NTS message format, and a review of basic on-air practices.

This may seem as though you will be inundated, but it is all valuable information you can use not only in assisting during a real emergency but to make you more proficient in operation during your pleasure times. Besides, it never hurts to learn new things or review that in which you may already feel competent.

NEXT MONTH'S BREAKFAST will be AT A NEW SITE. It will PRECEDE THE ARES - RACES TRAINING PROGRAM covered in the article above.



FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE TRAINING SESSION, BREAKFAST WILL START AT 7:30 A.M. SATURDAY

THE 2ND OF AUGUST AT the BIG BOY LOCATED ON STATE STREET IN BIG RAPIDS. OTHERS MAY join

us at that time or may arrive later as they see fit. But, by all means do come join the group.



BRAARC ASSISTS IN BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS EVENT



Big Brothers/Big Sisters held a bicycle tour and we were there assuring that all went well and that no participants were lost or lacking assistance as they enjoyed the trip.

Club members not only maintained communications but actually biked placing themselves among those traveling the route. That's Jeff Barstow, WD8DLK, Chairman of our team, at far left sporting the roller blades he used on the trip. George, W8OWN, served as net control at the meeting point in Paris Park. Bikers came from both Reed City and Big Rapids and met at the park to enjoy hot dogs

and other goodies. Other club members included Jake Spence, KI8CK, Jerry Buskirk, KC8CII, , Bob Croaker, WB8YPG, Gary Atteberry WB8WIA, and Mike Foster, KC8PZA, who pulled his children in the super trailer shown in photo at lower left.



AUTO RALLY NEEDS RADIO OPERATOR VOLUNTEERS

Can you help? Six volunteers are needed to participate in an upcoming rally in the Cadillac area. The Cadillac Amateur Radio Club will be providing communications at this event. However they need additional operators and can place you at strategic points along the route providing progress reports and handling communications on any accident situations or safety problems that might develop.



This is a large annual rally and may draw worldwide competition and first class drivers. If you need more information about your role in such an event, our President, Fritz Pins, NI8E, can give you the details you need or can get you in contact with event personnel.

The date of the event is September 13, 2003 so you have ample time to check it out!

FIELD DAY 2003 WAS FUN, BUT NOT FUN IN THE SUN

It was a fun loaded event for the 35 participants even though the rains came in more than one overwhelming deluge. That alone wouldn't have slowed us down too much, but the thunder and lightning bolts required our respect and kept us off the air for much of the time.

In fact while Field Day is, at least in some measure, a practice emergency event that tests our ability to set up equipment with alternate sources of power, it became a real event in that the Club Calling Tree was initiated by George, W8OWN, and hospitals, nursing homes, industries, campgrounds and others were notified within minutes of the impending severe weather. George's wife Helen had received the official word from 911 Dispatch and contacted the Field Day site to have us activate it. We in turn disconnected rigs until the first blow ended.

Nevertheless all agreed that the outing was fun and that we had met the challenge well. Our



Field Day banner (left) was in plain site for visitors to see and did not blow down. We weathered the storm with all but one overhead tarp staying in place over the equipment. That collapsing cover caused no problem since some of us had brought extra plastic sheets and covered the star of our Field Day event, the hydrogen energy generator brought in by Pete Chesebrough, W8PET. It is shown in operation in photo 1 with Pete and Nate Moore, KC8RBR, at the rig, the hydrogen cylinder behind them and the light colored cube (the generator) on the right side of the photo. Photo 2 shows the partially collapsed cover and the equipment now

under plastic sheets and with Jeff Barstow, WD8DLK, in poncho keeping tabs on it. Ken Schneider, KC8SWY and Vince Panicci, K8SHX also operated this system for five contacts and bonus points.

We began operating on time and had some contacts before the first storm wave hit us. Then it became a pattern of reconnecting and operating between succeeding waves as they occurred (See photo 3 with CW operator Debra, W8SO and Bob WB8G, Mccauley on the right and Vince Panicci, K8SHX logging on the left. In photo 4) Thom Durfee is operating the CW key and George, W8OWN logging. The quick start was due to the efforts of the setup crew who put up the antennas and installed the stations (In photo 5 Bill Eckels, W8ZNH and Jake Spence, KI8CK string a guy wire).

We also had our share of younger hams and visitors; another goal. In photo 6 Renato Cerdana, KC8OIU works the rig with Joe Genovese, the grandson of Jerry Buskirk (KC8CII, and in photo 7 Ken Schneider, KC8SWY and Nate Moore, KC8RBR help with installation of a 40 meter loop antenna while Mike Foster, KC8PZA tries out his gunstock mounted 2 meter beam.

We did not suffer for lack of food either. In photo 8 Tim Stoecklein, KC0MDC prepared the super grill for some tasty dogs and burgers.

How did we do with contacts? Here are some stats to chew on. 109 contacts on 20 Meters Phone, 69 contacts on 40 Meters Phone, 106 contacts on 80 Meters Phone, 105 contacts on GOTA, 137 contacts on 40 Meters CW, 33 contacts on 15 Meters Phone. In all, 773 points on phone and 548 points on CW. Bonus points for 100% emergency power, public location, Public Info Table, media publicity, alternate power, non-traditional mode demo (Hydrogen generator), site visitation by elected official and by local emergency management, and GOTA station earned additional points for a overall total of 2521 points. These are preliminary figures but are close to the final result. Jake Spence, KI8CK, Field Day Coordinator thanks those who participated in this year's Field Day for making it a most successful event enjoyed by club members and visitors alike. Those who participated, in turn, thank Jake for the wonderful job he did in providing an efficient operation under adverse conditions with the result that we came away with warm memories of time well spent. It was outstanding, Jake!



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Skywarn: An Easy Way to Serve Your Community

Tom Behler: KB8TYJ, Mecosta County EC/RO

Since the publication of our June-July news letter, we have had three activations of our local 2-meter skywarn net, and our Emergency Service calling tree. Fortunately, the severe weather that prompted these activations turned out to be little more than a minor inconvenience for those in our county warning area. Nevertheless, these three recent activations point out several ideas that I'd like to share.

First and foremost, our service is important, and is appreciated. I am constantly reminded of this by the various unsolicited comments I receive from local hams in response to our net activities, and by the words of thanks that our calling tree callers often receive at the conclusion of their telephone calls.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, our skywarn net and Emergency Service Calling Tree are activities that are relatively easy to participate in. Unless you are involved with mobile weather spotting, checking into skywarn nets, and making calls for our calling tree can be done right from the comfort of your home. If you don't mind getting a phone call in the event of severe weather at any time of the day or night, these may be your ways to serve the community and show your appreciation for the privilege of enjoying our special hobby.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I would like to thank those who have already become active in our skywarn-related services. In addition, I'd like to encourage anyone with an interest in helping to contact either myself (KB8TYJ, Mecosta County EC/RO), or Gary Atteberry (WB8WIA, Osceola County EC/RO). We need reliable net participants who can monitor the weather, and check into our skywarn nets if conditions warrant. If you happen to have a particular interest in mobile severe weather spotting, we would like to hear from you as well, since spotter information becomes extremely valuable under rapidly-changing weather conditions. Finally, If you would like to be put on our Emergency Services calling tree, please contact George Rouman (W8OWN), our calling tree manager.

In closing, if we all do our part, we hopefully will be able to stay on top of any surprises Mother Nature sends our way, and be a stronger and more close-knit community of hams in the process.

CLUB PROGRAM CHAIRMAN DALE COLBY, WD8AUL ASKS

I have several ideas for up coming programs, like antenna demonstrations, Antenna building, fox hunting, Digital communication, etc. We have lots of different interests in our hobby so as I look at a new club year, I would like some input from you. Please do your part and contact me at 231-972-2488 or at colbyd@mindnet.org.

#1 Do you want programs?

#2 Do you want speakers or video tapes or a mix of both?

#3 How long would you like the programs i.e. 10 min, 20min, 30min, etc?

#4 What kind of programs (topics) would you like to have?

#5 Would you like to have a shared program with another Club like Cadillac?

#6 Do you prefer speakers from our membership, outside, or both?

#7 Other comments?

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE MEETING: AUGUST 14, 2003

The next regular Emergency Committee meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Mecosta-Osceola 911 Dispatch center on Thursday August 14th. Chairperson Beverly Callewaert, WD8PFC is preparing the agenda which will include a review of the present Calling Tree, the Net procedures and other important items that will be announced on the club 440 and 2-meter nets.

Club members are invited (urged) to attend and learn more about the Emergency Committee. Remember that it is a vital part of our community emergency communications efforts and deserving of your time.

VOLUNTEER OBSERVER NEEDED FOR WEATHER SERVICE FROM DALE COLBY, WD8AUL

The National Weather Service Forecast Office in Grand Rapids is seeking a volunteer in Mecosta County to take river readings on the Little Muskegon River near Morley, Michigan. Training and equipment for taking the river readings will be provided. It is preferred that the volunteer have Internet access. A minimum 2 year commitment is required.

If you are interested in volunteering to be this observer, please contact Mark at (616) 949-0643 Ext 493, or via e-mail at mark.walton@noaa.gov

CLUB BOARD MEETINGS NOW SCHEDULED MONTHLY

In the future, the Board of Directors will be meeting monthly at 6:30 p.m. before the 7:30 p.m. regular club meetings which will allow more time for the evening's program.

In the past, the business session could take so much time that the program presenter was pressured to rush or end the program before covering the subject which was frustrating to say the least. The new procedure was tried for the first time at the July meeting. It seemed to work well with the business items discussed and readied for presentation at the actual club meeting. Then results of the Board meeting were presented to the general membership, discussed and any decisions made by 8 p.m.

However, there was no program during the meeting due to a last minute situation where our presenter was called out of state. As a result, some time was spent on the outcome of the Field Day event and the meeting was adjourned to Wendy's for an after meeting social hour.



NEXT MONTHLY MEETING 7:30 P.M. THURSDAY AUGUST 7TH AT THE MECOSTA COUNTY SERVICES BUILDING ON STATE STREET (OLD U.S. 131) JUST NORTH OF THE PIZZA HUT IN BIG RAPIDS.

PROGRAM: JERRY HEMMYE, KC8AW WITH A DEMONSTRATION OF THE EZNEC PROGRAM. HE WILL ANALYZE A 40 METER DIPOLE UNDER VARIOUS HEIGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS.

NOMINATIONS FOR CLUB OFFICERS WILL BE ON THE AGENDA FOR THE AUGUST MEETING AS WELL WITH ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE ANNUAL CLUB AUDIT HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND PRESIDENT FRITZ PINS HAS VERIFIED THAT THE BOOKS ARE CORRECT AT THIS TIME. THIS IS A REQUIRED CHECK OF OUR FINANCIAL RECORDS AND IT IS GOOD TO KNOW ALL IS WELL IN OUR CAMP. IT'S CERTAINLY BETTER THAN IN SOME LARGE CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS WE HEAR ABOUT THESE DAYS. (IS THIS A GOOD TIME FOR A HI HI?)

**OUR BIG RAPIDS FLY-IN COMMUNICATIONS TEAM
DOES IT AGAIN**

Club members turned out again this year to handle the communications and the planes after they touched down on the runway. This is a vital service with our hams leading the planes from the runway to a parking spot using a parking vehicle called a Mule and others on foot spotting the planes in proper positions on the tarmac. When the plane was parked, the pilot was greeted and a form made out for each plane listing specific information about the aircraft (photo C on next page). This was stapled around the propeller as in photo D. The pilot and crew were then directed to the main hanger where a hearty breakfast catered by the Bungalow Restaurant was served. Also, throughout the event, we operated a net control station to coordinate all the individual efforts.



In the above photo is shown our entire crew except for Dale Colby, WD8AUL who was behind the camera and who served as the net control for the day. From the left are Pete Chesebrough, W8PET, Jerry Buskirk, KC8CII, George Rouman, W8OWN, Jake Spence, KI8CK, Jim Orłowski, N8PUG, Gary Atteberry, WB8WIA, Jerry Hemmye, KC8AW, Adam Orłowski, Tim Stoecklein, KC0MDC, Beverly Callewaert, WD8PFC, and Bob Harris, KB8VST who with Jerry Buskirk, KC8CII handled the Mule.

Incidentally, while they may look a bit hungry in this photo taken when first arriving shortly after 6a.m, they were soon filled with a free breakfast (photo A) so that their energy level could last the morning. The greeters covered miles walking from one end of the parking area to the other over and over again. But it was a fun and an excellent experience as it has always been including a warplane (photo B) If you are interested in joining in on this effort next time, contact Pete Chesebrough when the event is announced in the club Newsletter next year.

FIELD DAY "MUNCHERS" TAKE NOTE:

The cost of the food at field day was not covered by the donations. If you did not know we were collecting money for that purpose at the field day site and would like to donate now, contact our Treasurer, Sue Behler. Call her at 231-592-9854 or send your donation to her at the address shown on the membership application form in this newsletter.



D



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B



A

WEB VERSION OF THE NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE!?!

If you do the Web, try out the June/July 2003 version of the Newsletter on the club web site, www.braarc.net. George, W8OWN and Thom Durfee, W18W are in the process of firming up a procedure to provide the Newsletter on the Web each month. Stay with us on this effort. We still need to overcome some minor problems before we have an easily operating system that won't be disappointing you with erratic performance. For any member not having access to the Web, the paper version will continue to be available as in the past. However, the intent is to have as many club members as possible accept the Newsletter on the club web site and discontinue receiving it by mail. For a paper version they will be able to download the Newsletter and even have it in "living color". This would save both time and money for the club and reduce the effort required to mail out copies to so many persons. For "snowbirds" it will bring the Newsletter to them as soon as it is posted on the club web site rather than receiving it by "snail mail". If you are willing to receive only the web version and not receive the paper version of the Newsletter by mail, contact George, W8OWN, (that's me) at [w8own@ arrl.net](mailto:w8own@arrl.net).



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However permit me to give you one very strong word of caution. Try downloading the Current Newsletter. If the time required for you to obtain it is prohibitive, you may elect to receive it by mail as well as reviewing it on the web in color.

We hope to have all ends together and a smooth operation in place in a few months, so get with it. Make your own decisions and let me know as soon as you have made a firm decision. Of course you will be free to change your mind at any time.

Call: _____ Class: _____ Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
E-mail Address _____
Dues \$20.00 for 2003 _____ Donation _____
Checks should be made out to the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club.
Mail this form to Sue Behler, KC8IFP, Treasurer, 511 Spring Street, Big Rapids, MI, 49307 or bring your dues to the next meeting.

FIELD DAY INFORMATION AND PHOTOS INSIDE

P.O. BOX 343, PARIS, MI 49338

