

BIG RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



JUNE 2003 JULY
AN ARRL SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB

"SKYWARN WITH A UNIQUE TWIST"

Tom Behler: KB8TYJ, Mecosta County EC/RO

On Sunday: June 8, our local ARES/RACES group suddenly found itself to be quite busy with not one, but two skywarn activations. The first formal net occurred after approximately an hour of "condition green" operation, with the issuance of a severe thunderstorm warning for Mecosta County. Although most of Mecosta County was spared from any significant weather, two reports of significant weather events were recorded and relayed to the National Weather Service in Grand Rapids. Specifically, 1/4 inch hail was reported in the Barryton area by one of our "fixed" net check-ins. In addition, 1/4 - 1/2 inch hail was reported to have covered the ground and possibly done some minor crop damage near Austin Township by Tim Stoecklein (KC0MDC), our



roving weather spotter for the event. All relevant "calling tree" calls were made well before the severe weather struck, and our formal net was terminated approximately one-half hour later, after it was concluded that the severe weather had exited the area. Even our "condition green" status was eventually relaxed, since no further severe weather appeared to be in the offing.

However, it soon became apparent that the work for the day was not done. Approximately 1 hour after our first skywarn activation had been disbanded we began to receive word of another Severe Thunderstorm Warning for Lake County. At the time of notification of the Lake County warning, the storm merely appeared to be a "pop corn" cell that likely would move northeastward and away from our area, possibly clipping the very northern part of Osceola County. Motivated probably by nothing more than basic curiosity, two of our ARES members took to the roads to see what they could see. They were Tim Stoecklein (KC0MDC), and Bob Moody (AB8NC). Within roughly 30 minutes, we received an emergency message from Mark Watkins (KC8CBX), Osceola County EMD, that a tornado was sighted, and on or near the ground in the Tustin area. Another skywarn net was immediately activated, with the repeater being placed directly into "condition red" status. At the request of Mark Watkins, the sighting was reported immediately to the NWS, and to TV 9 and 10 from Cadillac. The calling tree was implemented once again, with all relevant calls being completed within minutes, well before the NWS issued an official Tornado Warning for the county. Although neither Tim nor Bob actually saw the tornado on the ground, Tim was able to observe significant hail, and what appeared to be a funnel cloud just southeast of Tustin. Tim also observed considerable hail immediately northwest of Rose Lake Camp, one of our calling tree entities. With the expiration of the Tornado Warning for Osceola county, and the eventual cancellation of the Severe Thunderstorm Watch for the entire area, this second skywarn net ultimately was terminated, and our ARES/RACES group stood down.

However, this wasn't the total end of the story! Tim (KC0MDC), had managed to take some video shots of the weather events he had observed that day. The folks from TV 9 and 10, already being somewhat aware of our skywarn activities, became sufficiently interested to contact us for more information about what we do, and how we do it. And, wouldn't you know it: Several days later, an entire TV crew came down to Big Rapids to do an interview with Tim, and to see some of his equipment first hand. The interview was recorded, and aired on several subsequent newscasts. For those who didn't see the actual interview, Tim promises to provide us with a copy of the tape, so it can be shown at our next club meeting.

In short, Sunday: June 8 turned out to be a very eventful and positive day for our local ARES/RACES group. I thank everyone for their participation and dedication. Special thanks to Tim and Bob for their mobile spotting efforts. Mark Watkins passes his sincere thanks along as well. We are still not perfect in our skywarn operations, but we are making great progress. Let's keep it up, so we can be even better prepared and more effective during future severe weather situations.

ANNUAL DINNER A GREAT GET TOGETHER WITH ACCOLADES FOR MANY FRITZ PINS, NI8E



This year's awards were presented to a number of people for their accomplishments during the past year. We thank each of you for your contributions to the club and to amateur radio in general.

Welcome certificates to new Ham members went to KC8WGJ Russ Brittain, KC8WGH Justin McCauley, KC8WGC Chris Stapp, KC8VJR Matt Trombley, KC8WGE Billie Jo Straus, KC8WFX Gordon Trute.

Certificates of Appreciation went to WD8PFC Bev Callewaert and KC8IFP Sue Behler for outstanding food service throughout the year. Maintaining club Website: W18W Thom Durfee and W8PET Pete Chesebrough. For maintaining the two repeaters: WA4FRJ Don MacConnel and W8PET Pete Chesebrough. To W8OWN George Rouman for producing our newsletter. W8PET Pete Chesebrough for organizing our club auction. WD8PFC Bev Callewaert and W8OWN George Rouman for maintaining our Emergency Calling Tree. W8PET Pete Chesebrough, for the years of service as Mecosta County EC. KB8TYJ Tom Behler, for taking on the responsibilities of Mecosta County EC. Jim Orlowski, N8PUG for helping hams on the repeaters.

Certificates of Appreciation were given to the instructors of the Technician class that was held in the winter of 2003. Those people are WA4FRJ Don MacConnel, W8PET Pete Chesebrough, KC8QOV Phil Marcotte, WD8DLK Jeff Barstow, W8OWN George Rouman, KI8CK Jake Spence, Tom Behler, KB8TYJ and NI8E Fritz Pins.

Certificates of Achievement were awarded as follows: To KC8WGH Justin McCauley for being the youngest ham in the club. KC8WGJ Russ Brittain, for the fastest upgrade. To W8ZNH Bill Eckles for 62 years of continuous service to amateur radio.

Oops awards were presented to W8PET Pete Chesebrough for transmitting without an antenna and to WD8DLK Jeff Barstow, (tower specialist) for falling off a stepladder and breaking his arm.

We set a new record for attendance at an annual dinner of 60! Thanks to all of you.



The photos above show the happy recipients of the certificates given during the evening's festivities. Each has done her/ his part during the year to make this the outstanding club of which we are proud members. They are the persons who most stood out in the minds of the awards committee this year. Many others in the club have also played valuable roles without recognition for their accomplishments. They too have made us what we are today.

The next page covers much of the dining area and most of the wonderful groups of hams that enjoyed each others company and conversation.





SIX METER REPEATER UPDATE FRITZ PINS, NI8E

If you review the six meter article in last month's newsletter and the photo of Fritz, NI8E who is heading up the effort to get the system on line, you will note that in this photo the duplexers have been shortened considerably; either that or I am still in my growing years. The duplexers are now tuned and ready to go. Some last details are being taken care of and then plans are to get the repeater to the temporary site by the end of July.

OUR MONTHLY BREAKFAST WILL BE IN CONJUNCTION WITH FIELD DAY STARTING AT 7:30 A.M., SATURDAY JUNE 28TH OR WHENEVER YOU WISH TO JOIN US. EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT COMING TO JOIN THE FIELD

DAY SET UP CREW, COME TO THE STATE STREET GRILLE ON STATE STREET IN BIG RAPIDS TO ENJOY A GOOD BREAKFAST AND CHAT.



FCC AFFIRMS HEFTY FINE FOR AMATEUR IN INTERFERENCE CASE



The FCC has affirmed a \$12,000 fine against Technician-class Amateur Radio operator Scott E. Kamm, N0UGN. The FCC released a Forfeiture Order May 7 alleging willful and repeated interference, broadcasting of music and failing to identify with his call sign. The FCC's Kansas City office had released a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture (NAL) on January 24, but Kamm never filed a response, the FCC said. The Commission ordered Kamm to pay the fine within 30 days.

Kamm's station was in Waterbury, Nebraska, at the time he was cited last fall, although the FCC granted his February 27, 2002, application to change his mailing address to a location in Sioux City, Iowa.

Responding to complaints of continuing interference on the input of a 2-meter repeater, FCC agents monitored the machine's input frequency last December 9. They observed a very strong signal on 146.31 MHz "consisting of music, sound effects and unmodulated carriers" and no station ID. The FCC said the transmissions were interfering with amateur communications already in progress.

The FCC twice tracked similar signals to Kamm's residence in Waterbury, Nebraska, inspected his station and found a transceiver capable of operating on 146.31 MHz, the FCC said. Kamm claimed no transmissions were made from his station.

During 2002, Kamm was the target of several letters and an FCC Warning Notice from Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth. Last fall, the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau set aside Kamm's amateur license renewal based upon complaints about the operation of his station and questions regarding his qualifications to be a licensee. Kamm's amateur license expired last September 29, and his license renewal application, filed August 8, has reverted to pending status.

From ARRL

NEW 60-METER "BAND" TO BECOME AVAILABLE JULY 3!



ANNOUNCING A NEW "BAND"

We get something new but possibly fraught with danger for those operating within the very narrow channels allocated. But I'll bet it will be fun to try out this new grant of frequencies! I plan on it; how about you. (ed.)

The new five-channel 60-meter amateur allocation becomes available to US Amateur Radio operators at midnight (12:00 AM) local time on July 3. The local time designation means that amateurs in the US territory of Guam likely will be the first to get a crack at the new band.

The new band will be a secondary allocation--federal government users are primary--and the first on which the only permitted mode will be upper-sideband (USB) phone (emission type 2K8J3E). The FCC last month announced it would grant hams access to five discrete 2.8-kHz-wide channels instead of the 150 kHz-wide band ARRL had requested and the FCC initially proposed. The League remains optimistic, however, that Amateur Radio eventually may be able to enjoy a band segment with multiple mode privileges at 60 meters. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, has said that in the meantime hams will have to be on their best behavior when taking advantage of the limited channelized allocation, open to General and higher class licensees.

The FCC has granted amateurs center-channel frequencies of 5332, 5348, 5368, 5373 and 5405 kHz--the last channel common to the amateur experimental operation under way in the United Kingdom <<http://www.rsgb-hfc.org.uk/5mhz.htm> . To be "on channel," users of 60 meters should set their transmitted carrier frequency 1.5 kHz lower than the channel-center frequency. In terms of day-to-day operation, the new band is expected to resemble the sort of channel sharing typical on local repeaters.

ARRL Laboratory Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, says hams need to be very careful if they're considering modifying their current transceiver or transmitter for 5 MHz. The ARRL advises that members check with the appropriate equipment manufacturers regarding specific modification information. Some modifications not only may void the warranty but could affect or alter a transmitter's operation in unpredictable ways.

"Hams need to be sure that any modifications put them right on the desired channel," Hare said. "Most hams are used to just having to think about band edges, so on other bands, if a mod were a bit 'off,' all operators would need to ensure is that they are not transmitting outside the band."

Hare recommended that on 5 MHz amateurs remain within "a few tens of Hertz" of suppressed-carrier accuracy. He also pointed out that hams have a mandate not to have any of their signal occupy spectrum outside the assigned 2.8 kHz channels. Noting that high-frequency audio response can vary considerably from radio to radio, Hare has suggested restricting occupied channel audio bandwidth to 2600 Hz, rolling off below 200 Hz on the low end and above 2800 Hz on the high end.

Last-minute opposition to the granting of a band segment at 5 MHz came last year from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), which cited the ongoing spectrum requirements of federal government licensees having homeland security responsibilities. The NTIA administers spectrum allocated to the federal government. A compromise between the FCC and the NTIA resulted in the limited, channelized allocation.

The NTIA selected the channels the FCC authorized to minimize the possibility of interference to federal government users, and it dictated the use of USB so that federal government users--who also use only USB--could readily identify amateur stations if necessary.

The FCC has set maximum power at 50 W ERP and said it would consider a typical half-wave dipole to exhibit no gain.

Source: ARRL Newsletter

HAM RADIO PHILOSOPHY WELL PRESENTED AT A SPECIAL TIME BY DEBORAH KIRKBRIDE, KA8YKK, ARRL MICHIGAN SECTION MANAGER

Those who know Deb know just how dedicated she is to promoting amateur radio to both fellow hams and the public. She is an exceptional person who has freely and willingly given of herself. I know we all are hoping with her that Chuck does well and is on his feet soon. As for her message, it speaks for itself. (ed.)

It's 4 in the morning and I sit here at my computer reading my email. Why you ask, at 4 AM would any one be doing email? I am waiting for my husband Chuck AA8IY to finish getting ready to go so that we may leave for the hospital as today he will be having hip replacement surgery.

So what does this have to do with amateur radio? As I sit here reading through the many various emails of friends wishing us well with today's surgery and think back to the many phone calls that I received this weekend and radio contacts all wishing us well it reminds me of why I got into amateur radio.

For some of us amateur radio is just a hobby, for others it seems like a career. Stop to listen the next time you turn your radio on to the many different people involved in this hobby. Some are Doctor's, some are Lawyers, and some are truck drivers, but do they care what the other does for a living or how much money you make or what your background is? No one really cares. There are so many mornings I listen to the guy at GM on his way to work talking to the trucker who is chatting with the engineer and each in his own profession have found something that joined us together.

Amateur radio? Yes, we have problems. I know about the guy who never shows up at any of the events and volunteers for everything, the occasional bad apple that has to spoil the repeater for the rest of us, but take a look at the bigger picture.

Look at the many various friends you have acquired through this hobby. Think about the local guys who meet for coffee every night, or go on ice cream runs in the summer just to meet with each other face to face. Think about your morning commute, or that long drive home after a hard day at work. Even if we work an entire exhausting week, we spend our time and money and efforts volunteering to help with disasters, weekend events and local RACES and ARES meetings, all for no paychecks. We get up at 5 in the morning to make sure we arrive to help provide communications for the local Red Cross Chapter as a situation arose in your county as you were trying to sleep on a Saturday morning. If you think there is no paycheck at the end of the volunteering, think again; think about your new friends, and the other things that this hobby has given to you.

Myself, I always enjoy meeting the new guy on the local repeater, or chatting with someone traveling through my area and learning about them. I always look forward to meeting a new friend on the air. It may be the guy down the street, a few cities or states away, or maybe even overseas, you never know where your next friend will appear from in this hobby.

In closing, let me ask that you think about my thoughts and consider your new and old friends that you have met and continue to meet on the air, and ask yourself why it is you volunteer your time. I could never give back as much as I have received from this hobby, and to all my friends and acquaintances, let me state that amateur radio is still one of the best things I have found and I will always look forward to meeting with you on the air, at the next hamfest, or in my travels. Amateur radio is such a great hobby!

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING: 7:30 P.M. THURSDAY JULY 3RD AT THE MECOSTA COUNTY SERVICES BUILDING ON STATE STREET (OLD U.S. 131) JUST NORTH OF THE PIZZA HUT IN BIG RAPIDS. PROGRAM: FIELD DAY REVISITED. DISCUSSION TIME TO DETERMINE WHAT WENT RIGHT, WHAT WENT WRONG AND HOW WE CAN IMPROVE OUR PERFORMANCE NEXT YEAR.

ARES/RACES TRAINING UPDATE

TOM BEHLER: KB8TYJ, MECOSTA COUNTY EC/RO

With heightened concerns about terrorism, and our overall national security, it is little wonder that ARES/RACES-related training activities seem to be occurring at a fever pitch. For example, on Wednesday: June 11, a number of our local ARES/RACES group members attended an "Emergency Exercise Control/Simulation" course that was sponsored by the Osceola County Emergency Management Office, and conducted by a representative of the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division in Lansing. The course was held at the Yoplait USA Conference Facility in Reed City, and was attended by me, as Mecosta County EC/RO, Gary Atteberry, as Osceola County EC/RO, Bob Croaker, Matt Trombley, George Rouman, and Dale Colby. The course provided a very comprehensive overview of the mechanics and logistics of planning, conducting, and evaluating various kinds of emergency simulation exercises on the local level. All those in attendance agreed that the course was well worth our time. It is also certain that the course will directly benefit us when our participation is requested in future county-wide or inter-county exercises. (See photos on the next page.)

Other training activities are being planned as well, and it is my sincere hope that all ARES/RACES members in our area will be able to participate. For those seeking RACES certification under the new RACES standards, the "Introduction to Disaster Telecommunications" course, which is required for new RACES card holders, will be offered in Big Rapids on Saturday: August 2 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Although the location for the course is tentative at this time, the plan is to hold it at the Masonic Lodge Hall, just off 19-mile road north of Big Rapids. The course will be given by Jim Wades (WB8SIW), our State Emergency Coordinator. Advanced registration is required, so please notify me soon if you wish to attend.

Another ongoing training opportunity takes the form of our local ARES/RACES net. This net occurs every other Wednesday evening at 9 p.m. on the Big Rapids 146.74 2-meter repeater. The purpose of the net is to discuss any relevant ARES/RACES-related concerns, and to provide some basic "hands on" training regarding certain important aspects of ARES/RACES activity. These include a review of the TEL weather reporting format, an introduction to the mechanics of creating and handling NTS traffic messages, and an overview of basic net control procedures. All those with an interest in ARES and/or RACES are encouraged to participate.

Finally, for those who have a special interest in portable HF field operation, plans are in the works for us to participate in a series of Wednesday evening HF exercises, which is being sponsored by the Michigan State ARES/RACES leadership. I will be attending a workshop on portable HF field operation in mid July at the State Leadership camp in Lupton, MI. After this workshop, I will set up a meeting with interested folks from our group, at which time the nature and scope of our involvement will be determined.

These are just the highlights of ongoing ARES/RACES training activities in our area. Stay tuned to future news letters and nets for more details on these and other items. If you have any questions on ARES or RACES, or if you would like to become a member of either service, please contact either me (KB8TYJ) in Mecosta County, or Gary Atteberry (WB8WIA) in Osceola County.



CLUB SERVICE PROJECT: "BIG RAPIDS FLY-IN" IS JULY 12, 2003 AT THE ROBEN HOOD AIRPORT. VOLUNTEERS SHOULD SIGN UP WITH PETE CHESEBROUGH AT 796-1433. FROM 6 A.M. TO NOON, WE WILL BE DIRECTING PLANES TO PARKING SITES, CHECKING THEM IN AND INFORMING PILOTS AS NEEDED. BRING YOUR ORANGE VEST IF YOU HAVE ONE BUT THEY'RE AVAILABLE IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE. ALSO, DON'T FORGET TO CHARGE YOUR HT IF YOU HAVE ONE TO BRING WITH YOU.



Above: Mark Watkins, left, Director, Osceola County Emergency Management Division moderated the Emergency Training Workshop course and Robert Ballard Exercise Training Officer of the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division taught it.

Below: Some of the club members who attended the training session.



MANAGING SPAM IS INDEED COMPLEX!

But Craig Bailey, KC8IJQ, (left) can handle it without going bananas. His presentation on spam email was a winner at the last club meeting. Dale Colby, WD8AUL, left in photo, introduced Craig, right, who presented a program called Mail Rules that can deal with spam and help keep your computer free of unwanted messages. What's more, he is willing to help club members who need assistance in solving their problems with it. Craig is located in Morley and not too distant

NEW TRAFFIC NET FOR WESTERN MICHIGAN

Jeff Nawrot N8JSN ARO KCRACES West Michigan Traffic Net Coordinator
n8jsn@n8jsn.org

For the first time in a long time West Michigan now has a net dedicated to passing traffic. This net is on VHF not HF. We will pass traffic on this net. If it needs to be moved using HF, it will be moved. We encourage everyone to join in and check in. If enough interest is generated we will add more nights to the schedule. Unless there is severe weather the Dedicated Traffic Net is on the 145.27/r at 9pm every Sunday and Wednesday nights. (Now updated to Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday Ed.) The Wednesday night net will follow after the weekly Kent County Amateur Radio Public Service Corp. training net. Any questions please email kcestinfo@k8sn.org. Please pass this information on to any amateurs in the West Michigan Area.

We are growing rapidly and our net reps need to pass the traffic quickly and efficiently. As we grow we will need new net control operators. If you are interested please contact me. Please check in even if you do not have traffic, we can help you format traffic if needed, pass traffic through or deliver traffic as needed, I thank everyone who has checked in so far.

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.

ANNUAL DINNER PHOTOS INSIDE!



