

BIG RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AUGUST 2004 SEPTEMBER

AUGUST MEETING: GUEST SPEAKER AND THE NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

The August meeting was highlighted by our guest speaker, Tom Vandermel, KB8VEE, District Six Emergency Coordinator who gave a very interesting talk and answered questions on ARES and RACES and how they fit into the overall emergency system of the nation and in particular within the Michigan ARRL Section 6 within which our club is located.

Nominations were entertained and the candidates below established for the coming elections at the September club meeting:

TOP ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: For President: Don Macconel, WA4FRJ. For vice president are Dale Colby, WD8AUL and Matthew Trombley KC8VJR

BOTTOM ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: For treasurer, Sue Behler, KC8IFP. For Secretary, Jim Orlowski N8PUG.

Any further nominations will be accepted at next month's meeting followed by the election. if you possibly can, attend to vote for your choices.



FCC SAYS NEW VANITY FEE WENT INTO EFFECT TUESDAY, AUGUST 10

A new Amateur Radio vanity call sign regulatory fee of \$20.80 for the 10-year license term will become effective Tuesday, August 10. If you now want a vanity call sign, you will pay more than before and if you desire to keep the call after the ten year fee period it will be whatever the cost of operation of the vanity call program costs the government at that time.

FROM THE KANSAS KID, TIM STOECKLEIN, KCOMDC.....
"Two antennas meet on a roof, fall in love and get married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent."

RIG FOR SALE:

ICOM 735 TRANCEIVER WITH MATCHING ANTENNA TUNER IN VERY GOOD CONDITION. \$500.00 FIRM. BILL SCHULTHEIS, CELL PHONE: 734-771-5569. OR WRITE TO 17597 RAPIDS DRIVE, HERSEY, MI 49639

REMEMBER: ANY INDIVIDUAL'S "SWAP AND SHOP" HAM RELATED ADS ARE WELCOME IN THE NEWSLETTER. JUST CONTACT GEORGE, W8OWN OR SEND YOUR WRITTEN AD TO HIM AT 300 WEST PINE STREET, BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307-1360.

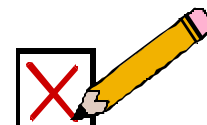
NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY 7:30 SEPTEMBER 2ND 2004 AT THE BIG RAPIDS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, 435



NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE IN BIG RAPIDS. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS AT 6:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

WILL BE THE MAIN HIGHLIGHT OF



THE EVENING. COME ENJOY AND EXERCISE YOUR VOTING PRIVILEGE.



THE CROP WALK IS BACK AND WE ARE NEEDED

These club members, along with others, assisted the Crop Walk effort in 2002. We need another contingent this year to serve at strategic points along the course, to keep tabs on walkers and to aid them in case of need. Tom Behler has been approached by the "Crop Walk for Hunger" group asking for communications assistance. We have

aided the group for many years and now after a year's hiatus, this year's crop walk will be held on Sunday September 26th. A signup sheet will be circulated at the September club meeting. Please volunteer as a communicator for this worthwhile cause,

BREAK TAGS

TOM BEHLER: KB8TYJ

At our August 12 Emergency Committee meeting, the following system of net "break tags" was reviewed and approved for use in future ARES and public service nets. The system originally was formulated by the Muskegon ARES group, and is being proposed for adoption throughout District 6, and perhaps the entire ARRL Michigan section.

There are currently seven one word Break Tags that we would like to implement. They are: "answer", "question", "info", "priority", "medical", "emergency", and "your call sign".

Here is how they are used. Instead of saying "break" in between transmissions during a directed net you use the appropriate Break Tag without your call sign. The Break Tags are to be used only when your traffic will be appreciated by net control and results in more efficient communications. The Break Tags are to be used wisely, as net control is directed to stop and turn over the net to the breaker. The message that follows a break should be as short as possible.



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Here are the Specific Break Tags:

Answer: To be used when you have the answer to a question currently being discussed on the air.

Question: To be used when the answer for a question can't wait, for instance when the Mayor is standing next to you and asks you to get some info using your radio.

Info: To be used when information needs to be transmitted rapidly but is not related to what is being said on the air. For instance if something that net control needs to know about is going to happen in the next few seconds or if waiting for the end of an exchange will negate the value of the information.

Priority: To be used to report an important but non-life threatening situation such as a fender-bender that just happened.

Medical: To be used to report a minor medical incident that affects the operator in some way, like having to leave their post for a few minutes to walk someone with a minor cut over to a med tent.

Emergency: Only to be used to report an ongoing life or property threatening or damaging incident.

You're Call Sign: An indication that you have traffic that can wait and does not require the stoppage of the ongoing exchange. This tag carries an expectation that you will be put on hold and in queue for your transmission.

The proper use of these Break Tags takes very little training. Their use is contagious and comes very naturally.

WELCOME TO THE NOT SO SECRET WORLD OF INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE!

AVERY FINN, KOHLA,

The story goes about a couple of kids sitting in their junior/middle school class tapping on their desks. First one then the other one. They were sending each other Morse code and talking about how



boring the class was and how they wished the school day would be over so they could do some things with their ham radio that of course was much more interesting. The teacher seeing this asked them to stop disturbing the class and strongly invited them to come back after school for a little while. Both the kids were thinking OH! OH! detention was in order for interrupting the class but came in to face what they knew they deserved. The teacher then went on to explain that

before being a school teacher he/she taught International Morse Code to the Military and had copied 100% everything the kids were saying and would they like to start up a Ham Radio Club after school?

I happened to think of this story Friday after a phone call I received from someone asking about learning the International Morse Code. And Yes ! Like the Railroad it's "hay day" is over but also like the railroad it will still be around for a long time. So for those that still want to learn it this is what I say:

1) Think of Morse Code as learning another language, like French, German, Spanish, whatever. Now think back to when you learned English, first you learned the alphabet, then words, then sentences, then paragraphs. This whole process took a very long time. Several years in fact so don't think you will learn it in one or two days. It might take a few weeks of very dedicated practice. ALSO! pick a time when your mind is the most active to learn Morse code. For one person that may be two in the after noon but for someone else that may be two in the morning. Morse Code is kind of like learning a new language in that you have to be able to know the letter as soon as you hear the sound.

2) Ham Radio is a Hobby so make learning this code stuff fun. Do whatever works for you because each of us is different and what works for one person may or may not work for someone else. Make it a big game.

3) If you have a receiver listen to code on the ham bands and just see how many letters you can copy and with each session you should get a few more. Remember ! you are only in competition with yourself. The Handiham (with net control station W8IRT on 7.112MHZ Friday mornings 1330 - 1530 UTC) slow speed net would be a good place to listen. Another good place would be the ARRL's W1AW code runs and you can get the times and frequencys off their web page. After several sessions all of a sudden you find yourself listening to what they are saying and the code is just the tool to help you figure out what they are talking about.

4) After you have the letters down start listening for rhythms like the words: the, name, QTH, QSO, QRZ, 73, CQ and of course your own call. At some point you will get so you can recognize your own call , CQ, and some other things no matter how fast they are sent.

5) Last of all learn from the story and be careful what you say because like the story you never know who else may just understand the other language , International Morse code.

From Handiham Newsletter

A QUERY FROM THE EDITOR

Does anyone out there know if I can over slash the number 0 (zero) in Word? As above, Avery's call would be better if the zero had a slash through it. It seems that many moons ago in other programs I used to do that. If that is not possible, does anyone have a reference to a font that has a slashed zero? I had a cad program that did that but the font could not be used in windows or word. Please contact George, W8OWN, at 231-796-3114 if you can help with this.

MICHIGAN TRAFFIC NET SCHEDULE

NET:	FREQUENCY:	NET NAME:	DAYS:	LOCAL TIME: NETS MEET AT THE SAME TIME ALL YEAR:
QMN	3663 KHZ	MICH. CW	DAILY	1930
MITN	3952 KHZ	MICH. TRAFFIC	DAILY	1900
MACS	3953 KHZ	MICH. AMATEUR COMM. SYSTEM	MON THROUGH SAT SUNDAY	1100 1300
GLETN	3932 KHZ	GREAT LAKES EMERG./TRAFFIC	DAILY	2030
UPN	3921 KHZ	UPPER PENINSULA	MON THROUGH SAT SUNDAY	1700 1200
MARPSC	3932 KHZ 7232	MICH. AMATEUR RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE CORP	SUNDAY	1700
WMTN	145.270	WEST MICHIGAN TRAFFIC NET	MON/WED/FRI/SUN	2100
WOLVERINE	3935	WOLVERINE SINGLE SIDEBAND NET	DAILY	1900
NEWAYGO	146.920	NEWAYGO COUNTY	WEDNESDAY	2000

NOTE: Local time from the first Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October plus 4 hours equals UTC time and local time for the rest of the year plus 5 hours equals UTC time.

BRAARC NETS

440 NET	443.900 REPEATER	SUNDAY	7:30 P.M.
2-METER NET CW PRACTICE (TEMPORARILY "ON HOLD" UNTIL PLANS FOR MOST BENEFICIAL FORMATTING ARE RESOLVED)	146.74 REPEATER	MONDAY	8:00 P.M. SLOW SPEED
2-METER NET	146.740 REPEATER	TUESDAY	9:00 P.M.
ARES/RACES NET	146.740 REPEATER	2 ND AND 4 TH WEDNESDAY	9:00 P.M.

BRAARC NET CHANGES IN THE ABOVE LISTING



Tom Behler, KB8TYJ, would like to pass along two minor changes in net scheduling that may be of interest. These changes were decided upon after talking with a number of people about the two involved nets. If you have any questions on these changes and the thinking behind them, please contact him.

1. Our 2-meter FM CW practice net Monday evenings at 8 p.m. has been put on hold until after Labor Day. This is because of the low level of participation that we seem to experience during the summer months. The CW practice net will resume on Monday: September 13, at which time the level of interest will be determined, and the future direction of the net will be decided by the involved participants.

2. Due to a significant amount of confusion as to exactly when it will occur, our local ARES/RACES net will now be held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 9 p.m. on our 2-meter repeater. Therefore, the next net session will be Wednesday August 25. During the August 25th net session, we are going to do a little exercise which may prove to be interesting. We're going to see how many folks we can get on our repeater within a ten-minute time period. This will test our ability to mobilize quickly in the event of a disaster or need for a major net activation of some kind. So, start thinking about who you'll call next Wednesday evening when the time for the exercise arrives.

CLUB BREAKFAST: 8:30 A.M. SATURDAY AUGUST 28TH
AT THE CHUCK WAGON
RESTAURANT ON HIGHWAY 10
JUST EAST OF REED CITY
(SOUTH SIDE OF THE ROAD).
YOU WILL KNOW YOU ARE
THERE WHEN YOU SEE THE
LARGE RESTAURANT SIGN
AND BUILDING SHOWN IN THE



PHOTO AT LEFT. WATCH OUT FOR THE SWEET
ROLLS; THEY ARE HUGE, ENORMOUS AND TOTALLY
OVERWHELMING. SEE YOU THERE!

BEAR IN MIND! DUES PAYMENT CHANGE GOES INTO
EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 2005

THIS ARTICLE FROM THE FEBRUARY/MARCH 2004 NEWSLETTER EXPLAINS IT ALL

Previously, club dues were paid on a varying schedule by various folks in the club. This method was certainly inefficient and troublesome for the club treasurer to maintain the books and keep up with who had paid and who had not. Following discussion by the Board, there was a lengthy discussion in the general meeting with much great input being offered by the membership. When it was all said and done we had come up with a new dues schedule for our club.

Membership dues will be due on January 1st of each year. Anybody not paying their dues by **March 1st** of that year will be dropped from the club roster and no longer receive the club newsletter. What happens if they join mid-year??? Anyone joining prior to July 1st will pay the full dues of \$20. Should they join after July 1st, they will pay \$10 dues which will cover them until the end of the year.

If you have not paid dues for 2004, please take this opportunity to get it done with this form.

Call: _____ Class: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-mail Address _____

Dues \$20.00 for 2004 _____ 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.

CLUB PROJECT: POWERPOLE CONNECTORS

BY THOM WI8W

Recently, on the ARES/RACES Net the question was raised about setting a standard for the connectors we use for power (13.8 volts) on our radios. Further research indicated that most ARES/RACES groups have settled on the Anderson Powerpole connectors as the standard for power connections.

With this in mind a Club Project has been created by Thom WI8W to make sure that every ARES/RACES member has their radios using the standard connectors. Of course, this is in no way limited to ARES/RACES. My station at home and in my car uses nothing but various sizes of these great connectors.

The plan, at this point is to have a Construction Day on Saturday September 18 beginning at 10am at the Masonic Lodge Hall off 19-mile Road, just north of Big Rapids.

Any member is welcome to attend and bring either your radio with the power cord attached or else just the power cord and a schematic of your radio. You will learn how to assemble these connectors and have a great time.

Anderson Powerpole connectors have been around for several years. They are fully polarized connectors and when assembled properly eliminate the possibility of plugging the wrong wire into your power supply.



The connectors come in several sizes from 15 amps on up to 175 amps. I use 50 amp connectors for my power supply and 30 amp connectors on all the radio cables. Here is the photo of my 50 amp power buss for my power supply. It consists of a Anderson Gray SB Series 50 amp Powerpole connector with four 30 amp pigtails for connection to my radio equipment. My radios each have a 30 amp connector

on the power cables.

A CONSTRUCTION DAY IS PLANNED SO YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN POWERPOLE STANDARDIZED CONNECTORS:

If you would like to have standard connectors on all of your radio equipment you are invited to attend this Construction Day. The catch is this. If interested you need to let us know you are coming.

We plan on ordering the connectors after the

September meeting. The deadline for reserving

your place is September 2. Contact Thom WI8W (wi8w at wi8w dot org), Tom KB8TYJ (kb8tyj at arrl dot net) or Jim N8PUG (n8pug at pathwaynet dot com) right away and let us know your interest. If you want to use telephone contact Tom, KB8TYJ at 231-592-9854. If we don't get enough participants by September 2 the project will be cancelled for lack of interest.



EMERGENCY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

TOM BEHLER, KB8TYJ: MECOSTA COUNTY EC/RO

On Thursday: August 12 at 7 p.m., Bev Callewaert (our Emergency Committee Chair) conducted the most recent quarterly meeting of our "Emergency Committee" at the Meceola 911 Central Dispatch Facility. After quickly taking care of some general "house-keeping" items, the committee moved on to address a number of ongoing ARES and RACES-related matters. I will focus on the most important of these in the next few paragraphs.

Our first order of business was a brief follow-up discussion of Tom Vandermel's visit to the Thursday: August 5 BRAARC Club meeting. The clear consensus of the group was that Tom's visit was a great success, and that his program presentation remarks were most helpful in terms of shaping the focus of our ARES and RACES-related efforts in the months ahead. The committee would like to extend a sincere word of thanks to Tom for making the trip to Big Rapids, and for maintaining an excellent ARES and RACES program throughout District 6 of the ARRL Michigan Section.

Our next topic for discussion was a review of some training opportunities that continue to be available to all ARES and RACES members. KB8TYJ reminded everyone that videotapes of the Hazmat training, and Introduction to Disaster Telecommunications courses are available on loan from him for those needing these courses to ensure their compliance with the current recommended standards for RACES certification. KB8TYJ also urged everyone to give serious consideration to taking the ARRL "on line" Emergency Communication Certification courses (EC001, EC002, and EC003). The courses must be done sequentially, with each class lasting for an eight-week period. Every student is assigned a mentor, who reviews all course assignments, and answers any questions that the student may have as he/she proceeds through the course. Once the student completes all course activities, he/she takes a 25-question final exam. Although there is a \$45 registration fee for each course, the fee is refunded to everyone who passes the course, thanks to a grant by the United Technologies Corporation.

Our attention then turned to a number of issues pertaining to "Skywarn" net procedures, and our "Emergency Services" calling tree. Most importantly, a newly-revised version of the Emergency Service calling tree was approved, and will be put to use after some minor final modifications are made. The new calling tree is sub-divided into columns by county, and will make it much easier for callers to only focus on one county if appropriate. Relatedly, it was determined that the skywarn net control will have the ultimate authority to decide whether entities in both Mecosta and Osceola counties should be alerted if only one county is under an official severe weather warning. KB8TYJ and W8OWN also urged anyone interested in helping with the calling tree to get in touch, so that they can be added to the list of callers, and be given a list of entities to call. The calling tree work is very easy to carry out, and can be done from the comfort of one's own home.

The third major focus of our August 12th meeting centered around upcoming drills and exercises. Dan Dowdy (Mecosta County Emergency Management Director) gave a quick update on a "table top" exercise to be conducted on Friday: August 27, and a "functional" exercise which will occur on Friday: September 24th. Although a small slate of volunteers has now been set for the August 27th "table top", larger numbers of volunteers may be needed for the "functional exercise in late September, so stay tuned to future nets and news letters for details. KB8TYJ also discussed continuing preparations for an ARES exercise to be conducted in Mecosta and possibly Osceola County. The exercise will involve multiple tornado touchdowns over a considerable geographic area, and simulated failures of normal telephone and other communication channels. A variety of communication modes will be tested from various locations throughout our area. Once some initial testing of already-existing antennas and/or radios at important local facilities has been completed, the plans for the exercise will be finalized. The drill likely will occur sometime in the early Fall, possibly in conjunction with the ARRL'S annual SET exercise. The assistance of ARES and RACES members will be required for this exercise, so please plan to participate if you can.

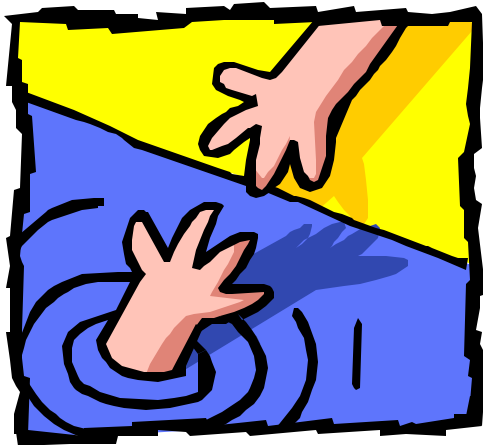
As if all of this activity weren't enough to keep us busy, our Emergency Committee also was introduced to the details of another upcoming public service initiative. The initiative will center around programming, and doing whatever else may be necessary to insure the reliable functioning of approximately 70 NOAA Weather Alert radios, that have been distributed to key agencies and facilities throughout Mecosta County. Mike Foster (KC8PZA) has agreed to head up this effort, along with the assistance of Tom Behler (KB8TYJ), and Don Macconel (WA4FRJ). It is hoped that this project can be completed well in advance of the 2005 severe weather season.

Our committee meeting concluded with a consideration of two additional items. A very helpful set of skywarn net scripts from Muskegon County was distributed by KB8TYJ. These scripts will be reviewed by interested committee members for suggested modifications to our current skywarn net script. Any such modifications will be discussed at our November 11 meeting. In addition, a system of net "break tags", formulated by the Muskegon ARES group, was also reviewed and approved for use in future ARES and public service nets. (See the separate article on "break tags" in this news letter for more details.)

In summary, as you can see, life in the world of ARES and RACES continues to be quite busy. We have a variety of events and activities to look forward to. With all of this in mind, it goes without saying that we could use any help that anyone could provide. Therefore, if you are interested in lending a hand in any way, please contact either me (your Mecosta County EC/RO), or Gary Atteberry (Osceola County EC/RO). Furthermore, if you have any questions regarding any ARES or RACES-related issues, please get in touch with us as well. Yet another available forum for the exchange of ARES and RACES-related topics consists of our local ARES/RACES net, which meets the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 9 p.m. on the Big Rapids 146.740 2-meter repeater.

GRAND RAPIDS AREA HAMFEST AT THE FOREST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2004 STARTING AT 8 A.M. UNTIL ABOUT 1 P.M. LOCATION IS AT 3801 LEONARD STREET EAST OF HIGHWAY 44 APPROXIMATELY 1 MILE SOUTH OF FREDRICK MEIJER GARDENS. TALK-IN IS 147.26 OR 146.52 SIMPLEX.

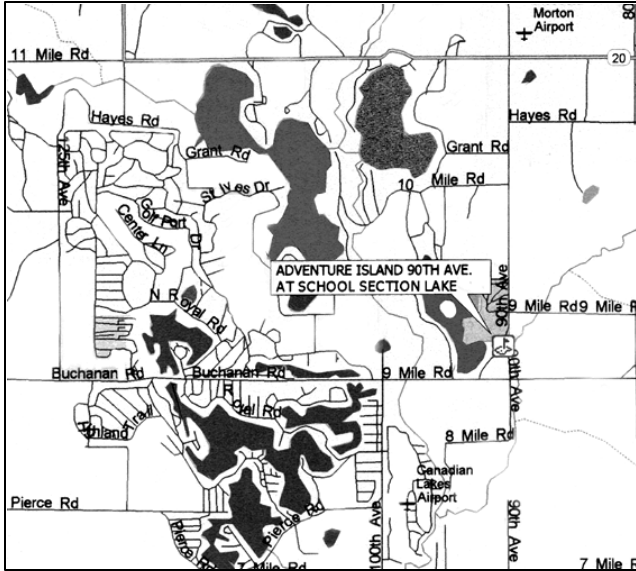
OREGON AMATEURS AID IN OCEAN RESCUE:



Two members of the ARRL-affiliated Coos County Radio Club in Oregon happened to be in the right place at the right time June 19 and were able to direct an emergency team to the correct site of a near-drowning. Ed Makaruk, KD7JFB, says he and Rick Livellara, KD7NTA, were walking along Bastendorff Beach when they monitored a call on the public safety band that a rip tide had carried three youngsters out to sea. Looking up the beach, they were able to spot the commotion. "A surfer was in the water, and we knew that the rescuers were being dispatched by a tourist who was giving them the wrong location," Makaruk said. As Makaruk headed up the beach, Livellara ran to the parking where the surfer had taken the swimmers. "I watched them to make sure they were all right, then put an emergency call out on the 146.280 repeater," Makaruk said. Andy Hoyle, KD7VCQ, heard it and called 911. "Andy was on the phone with them as we were talking and relayed the right location and that the kids were all right," Makaruk said. "I stood and waved in the sheriff when he showed up, then got out of the way so the pros could do their thing. It happened so fast that I was amazed at how walking on the beach and playing with radios turned into a way to help out. How great it is to have an ear listening when you need it!" Ham radio's role got a mention in *The World*, the local newspaper in Coos Bay, which identified the surfer-rescuer as Klint Wirebaugh. The three youngsters, ages 12, 12 and 14, were not seriously injured.

ONE LAST REMINDER: COME TO THE POTLUCK ON AUGUST 29, 2004 AT ADVENTURE ISLAND

Russ Brittain, AB8TA will again be host of this year's club picnic which will be held at the site of his Scoops Restaurant and Adventure Island located just south of the entrance to the School Section Lake Campgrounds in the Canadian Lakes area. That's exactly at 8701 90th Avenue. The festivities and pot luck will begin at 1 p.m. so bring a dish to pass, your own table service and a beverage: no alcoholic beverages please.



Our host has a large grill on which will be cooked hot dogs and hamburgers for everyone. If you have special diet needs but would like something else grilled, Russ advises that you bring it



along and it can be put on the grill for you. There will be picnic tables available in a shaded area for all. In case of rain we can

move inside. Russ's Adventure Island also includes an exceptional and lavish miniature golf course that you really should see even if you cannot make this event! It is complete with scenic waterfalls and with pools surrounding the greens. It will be available for all to enjoy so bring the children and grandchildren. Cost to play is \$4.75 each for 18 holes with all proceeds going to the BRAARC treasury.

To arrive there follow the map above from wherever you may be starting out. If you need additional directions, a call-in station will be operating on the Big Rapids 2-meter 146.740 repeater.

SIGN UP TO BE A NET CONTROL: Tom Behler, KB8TYJ, asks that you contact him if you are willing to handle the 2 meter or 440 club nets. It is a fun task that should be spread among the multitude, not just a few. If interested in joining the team that keeps the nets functioning, contact Tom at 231-592-9854 or do it with an eyeball contact.

WHAT'S A "BREAK TAG"? CHECK INSIDE.

