

# BIG RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2004 JULY

## LAST WARNING: FIELD DAY IS NOW

If you haven't started yet, start preparing now! Get out the bug spray, the rainproof jacket, prepare the voice and gather whatever else you may need to be happy at the site.

This is the biggest event of our year for outdoor activity and to test our performance in event of a natural calamity or man made disaster. Besides that, it is the most fun two day event of the year. Added to that, it will give you a great opportunity to gain proficiency in radio communications.

Here is the "skinny" based on the work session at our last club meeting. The site is located, as it was last year, next to the Superintendent's offices near the Big Rapids High School. (see map, BELOW) We will be operating "4A" with stations on 40, 20, 15 meters and a "swing station" on 10

and 80 meters depending on whether it is daytime or nighttime. Station leaders are Thom Durfee, WI8W, Tom Behler, KB8TYJ, Tim Stoecklein, KC0MDC, and Matthew Trombley, KC8VJR in that order. Any available beams will be used along with dipoles or verticals if and where necessary.

The stations will be located in trailers supplied by Fritz Pins, NI8E, Jerry Buskirk, KC8CII, Jeff Barstow, WD8DLK, and Jake Spence, KI8CK. The trailers will protect from any foul wet weather. Power will be supplied by

generators (one per station) so the electrical runs will be short and keep overall noise to a minimum. Fritz, NI8E, Thom Durfee, WI8W, Russ Brittain, AB8TA and Tom Behler, KB8TYJ have offered their units and others are also available if needed. Logging will be done on laptop computers so the results can be tabulated easily and to make it easier to know if you have already contacted a station (dups). That's a real advantage.

A food committee of Russ Brittain, Lillian Spence, KC8OMJ, Sue Behler and others will keep us fed and gastronomically happy. We do ask for a donation from those eating on site to lower the drain on the budget. If you can help the food committee in any way with food, or helping on site, contact Sue at 231-592-9854. Gregg McDaniel, KB8ZSU will supply a tent for the food area and you can count on Beverly Callewaert, WD8PFC bringing her super parachute as a great sun umbrella.

For the extra points we will be doing an assortment of things such as inviting public officials, providing a public information booth, sending messages to the ARRL section manager, using other power sources than generators, having publicity in local media source, by our ARRL appointed Public Relations Officer Sue Behler and any other such activities we might manage.

LOCATION OF THE SITE:



## 5K RUN/WALK SERVICE PROJECT SERVICED 124 STUDENTS



Sue Behler, KC8IFP, Project Chairperson, reports that club volunteers handled the task of directing the 124 grade school girls who participated in a fun event without a hitch by covering the route where auto traffic could be a hazard. No major incidents occurred that required the volunteers assistance but our club members kept the parade of children from harm at key locations along the route from PT Plus north to Woodward Avenue to 230<sup>th</sup> and back. In the photo at left find Jim Orlovski, N8PUG, Tom Behler, KB8TYJ hooking up a control station rig, behind him Matthew Trombley, KC8VJR and Bob Moody, AB8NC. In the right photo are Bill Stankey, N8MZB and Jerry Buskirk, KC8CII to the left of Tom, Bob and Jim. Sue missed being in the photos since she had already gone off to walk the route with the children; some of whom you see in these shots.

### NEXT MONTHLY MEETING: THURSDAY, JULY 1, 04

IT'S EARLY THIS MONTH SO MAKE A SPECIAL NOTE TO REMEMBER IT. PARTICULARLY SINCE WE WILL HAVE AN

UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN TO AN AMUSING, SPELLBINDING SPEAKER PROVIDE A HISTORY OF AMATEUR RADIO AND THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC SYSTEM. SUE AND TOM BEHLER HEARD HIS SPEECH AT A CONFERENCE IN LANSING AND ARRANGED FOR HIM TO PRESENT IT AT OUR MEETING. JOE TURNER, K8CQF IS THE ARRL SECTION TRAFFIC MANAGER AND LONG TIME HAM.

PLEASE BE AT THIS MEETING TO MAKE HIS TRIP FROM SAGINAW WELL WORTHWHILE. THE MEETING WILL START AT 7:30 P.M. AT THE BIG RAPIDS PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, 435 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE IN DOWNTOWN BIG RAPIDS.



# ANNUAL DINNER: OUTSTANDING IN EVERY WAY



**SORRY, BUT WE COULD ONLY GET ABOUT TWO THIRDS OF THE THOSE WHO ATTENDED IN THIS PICTURE. however , FROM THE COMMENTS heard, A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!**

Conversation was plentiful, the service was excellent, and the food was ample and delicious, at least to this epicurean. The awards presentations by club President Tim Stoecklein were well presented and delivered with a humor that all enjoyed. If you weren't there, you should have been because you missed a special evening. Just check out the awards that were presented this year.

Our club's very first presentation of a club "Ham of The Year Award" was given to Jim Orlowski, N8PUG for having been outstandingly involved in many ongoing events as well as serving as our club's Secretary.

Gary Atteberry WB8WIA received the "I'll take care of it Award" for his willingness to be Key Master of buildings and meeting rooms.

"Storm Chaser Awards" went to Bob Moody AB8NC and Tim Stoecklein KC0MDC for dedicated Skywarn Spotter activities.

An "Entrepreneurial Award" was given to Russ Brittain AB8TA for his fundraising efforts on behalf of the club.

The "Longevity in amateur radio award" was garnered by George Rouman W8OWN for his many years of dedicated service to and participation in the hobby of Amateur Radio.

The "Fastest Upgrader Award" was certainly well earned by Matthew Trombley, KC8VJR for quickly upgrading to General Class and Extra Class in less than one year.

A "New Licensee Award" was presented to Jodi Harper, KC8ZRR for passing the technician Class License exam and becoming a member of our club. Will she break Matthew's quick performance?

A "I have a few announcements award" was certainly earned in full by Tom Behler KB8TYJ for his dedication in keeping the club informed and up-to-date on events and activities. Several Certificates of Appreciation were also a part of the presentations that evening. Check these out:

Jake Spence, KI8CK for outstanding efforts in planning and coordinating our 2003 field day activities.

Lillian Spence, KC8OMJ for being a dedicated and faithful CW student

Matthew Trombley, KC8VJR for outstanding efforts in teaching our 2004 Technician License Class.

George Rouman, W8OWN for continued dedication and efforts to create our top quality newsletter.

Fritz Pins, N18E for outstanding efforts in coordinating and teaching our 2004 Technician License Class and Pete Chesebrough, W8PET and Phil Marcotte, KC8QOV for excellent teaching.  
Tom Behler, KB8TYJ for continued dedicated teaching of the Morse code class.

Several photographers took far more photos than can be displayed in the space we have in this Newsletter, yet we will print a few here to give you an inkling of the activity at the event.



JIM ORLOWSKI, N8PUG, "HAM OF THE YEAR" THE FIRST OF ITS KIND FOR THE CLUB.



GARY ATTEBERRY RECEIVES HIS AWARD. THE MAN WITH THE CONNECTIONS.



AN AWARD FOR RUSS BRITTAIN, AB8TA, FUND RAISER SPECIALIST.



TOM BEHLER, KB8TYJ ENJOYS THE COMMENTS FROM PRESIDENT TIM.



AWARDEES MATTHEW TROMBLEY, KC8VJR AND JODI HARPER KC8ZRR OUR FASTEST UP-GRADER AND NEWEST HAM HERE SITTING NEXT TO ONE ANOTHER.

**MORE ANNUAL DINNER  
PHOTOS ON THE NEXT  
PAGE**



THE LINE WENT QUICKLY FROM TABLE TO TABLE AND WITH PLENTY OF SECONDS.



IS EVERYONE FULL AND CONTENT? IT LOOKS THAT WAY HERE.



TWO MORE SHOTS OF THE CROWD IN ACTION AS THEY ENJOY THE EVENING TOGETHER. IF YOU COULDN'T BE WITH US THIS YEAR THEN MAKE IT A PRIORITY NEXT YEAR.

[Photo credits go to Jeff Barstow, Sue Behler and George Rouman.]



### NEXT CLUB BREAKFAST:

ANOTHER NEW SITE THIS MONTH! WE WILL MEET AT ABOUT 8:30 A.M. AT THE EASTSIDE CAFE IN BIG RAPIDS ON JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup>. WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE GOING ON TO THE FIELD DAY SITE AFTERWARDS TO HELP SET UP FOR THE BIG EVENT THAT



STARTS AT 2 P.M., DO JOIN US FOR CONVERSATION PLUS BREAKFAST OR JUST COFFEE. THIS SITE IS LOCATED ON M 20 EAST OF THE MAPLE STREET BRIDGE JUST PAST CURRIE'S AT THE CORNER OF MAPLE AND 3<sup>RD</sup>. STREET. PARK ON THE SIDE OR IN BACK.

## OUR CLUB PRESIDENT RESIGNS

Tim Stoecklein, KC0MDC, announced that he found it necessary to resign as club president since he has accepted a position with Kansas State University. He will be leaving right after the Field Day event so if you want a last experience with him, that will be your last chance. Tim was honored at the club dinner for his excellent work in leading the club during his tenure. The club gave him praise and a few gifts to take on his departure. Among them were a "Ham T-Shirt" and a basket shaped like the Lower Peninsula containing gifts. From the Yoopers among us, he received a mug with the pasties.com label on it from Dobber's Pastie Restaurant in the U.P. so he can always order the hardy food for the Gods to keep warm on cold Kansas winter nights.



DOES IT REALLY FIT?



IT HAS A HANDLE. WHAT COULD IT BE?

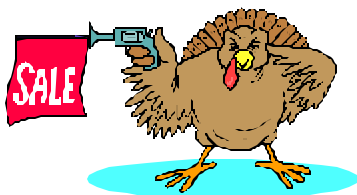
## NEW MICHIGAN QUARTER RECALLED!

### **BREAKING NEWS**

The United States Treasury has announced they are recalling the new Michigan quarters: "We are recalling all of the new Michigan quarters that were recently issued," Undersecretary Russell Shackelford said in a press conference Monday. "This comes in the wake of numerous reports to this agency that the quarters will not work in parking meters, toll booths, vending machines, pay phones, or other coin-operated devices."

"We believe the problem lies in a design flaw," said Shackelford. The winning design for the Michigan quarter was submitted by a Yooper. "Apparently, the duct tape holding the two dimes and nickel together keeps jamming in the coin-operated devices."

## ADS ON OUR WEB SITE



THE CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGREED WITH THOM DURFEE, WI8W, OUR WEB SITE GURU, THAT WE COULD ALLOW HAM RADIO ADS TO BE PLACED ON OUR WEB PAGE. WE WILL NOT BE CHARGING FOR THE SERVICE BUT FEEL THAT THESE ADS WILL ENHANCE OUR SITE AND COULD BE OF USE TO CLUB MEMBERS AS WELL. THE SITUATION CAME UP WHEN A MAKER OF CARVED

WOOD CALL LETTER SIGNS AND THE LIKE CONTACTED US. IN TURN WE HAVE OUR WEB SITE SHOWN ON HIS COMMERCIAL SITE. VISIT OUR SITE TO CHECK IT OUT

# A Pragmatic Look at Reliability

JERRY HEMMYE, KC8AW

(Jerry brings up a possibility that could increase reliability in emergency situations. Is this a possibility? Is it an issue worth exploring? It is a call for discussion. Could be interesting, eh? Ed.)

It was during the Second World War that the importance of knowing the reliability of equipment became mandatory. Today, the public has made high reliability a requirement for most of the things they purchase. Major items are sold based in part on the quality demonstrated by the warranty, and here the automobile is an excellent example. At the other end of the cost scale, the expected life of a light bulb has been studied. On the package you will find, in most cases, the lumens and the number of hours of operation to be expected from the bulb.

As you might expect, the reliability of a complex piece of equipment depends on the reliability of each of the components which make up the system. Almost everyone has had the experience, at Christmas, of getting a string of lights to work. One small bulb burned out can prevent all the other bulbs from lighting, an example of a series system. Continuing the example, in our club meeting room there are a number of fluorescent bulbs providing the illumination. If one of the bulbs fails, our meeting can continue since the others provide the necessary light. This is an example of a parallel system. Complex systems are made up of both series and parallel elements, and where high reliability is essential the use of parallel elements is required. In computer systems where failure is not an option the reliability is kept high with redundancy. That is, a sub-system or a whole system is duplicated and arranged so that the failure of one part does not bring the whole system down.

In our club, a sizeable fraction of our members have devoted a lot of effort and planning into an emergency system of communications. Currently, the weakest element, that is, the least reliable in that system is the repeater. There have been enough examples of repeater failure to demonstrate the need for a redundant, separate and distinct controlled repeater to maintain our high standard for reliable communication. In the most recent example, where the system was down for over a week and when several potentially serious situations developed a second repeater at a different site would have eliminated the potentially dangerous lack of repeater availability.

One ideal solution to the lack of availability would be to have a secondary repeater located at another location. In the event of a tornado, the probability is high that one of the systems would survive. In the event of a facility fire, the loss of telephone service, other possibility disasters, one of the systems is very likely to survive. One possible site which meets many requirements is Central Dispatch. The antennas could be mounted on the tower, and power provided by the marvelous emergency generation capacity there. It would require the approval of the appropriate board, and with some skillful marketing, the equipment and installation costs could and should be borne by the two counties. It might even be possible to have the cost of maintenance covered by the two counties in view of the public service provided by our emergency team. While other sites can be found, this location is easily accessible, its dispatch capability also makes logistical sense when dealing with an emergency.

With a new club administration to be elected in a couple of months, it seems reasonable to ask candidates for office to support a more reliable repeater system if they expect our vote. 73 KC8AW

## **FEAR NOT! WE ARE COVERED**

THE CLUB'S ARRL EQUIPMENT INSURANCE HAS JUST BEEN PAID FOR ANOTHER YEAR. CONSIDERING THE LOUD AND FURIOUS WEATHER WE HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING, THAT IS GOOD TO KNOW. WE HAVE BEEN HIT BY LIGHTNING BEFORE AND IT COULD WELL HAPPEN AGAIN. WITHOUT THE INSURANCE WE COULD SUSTAIN A SUBSTANTIAL LOSS.

# A FEW QUICK ARES/RACES NOTES

## TOM BEHLER: KB8TYJ: MECOSTA COUNTY EC/RO

I just want to take a few moments to pass along several brief reminders and updates pertaining to ARES and RACES operations in our local area. Since there is no truly logical order to these items, I'll simply number them so that they can be considered as separate topics:

1. After a considerable amount of discussion both at recent Emergency Committee meetings, and at our June BRAARC club meeting, the following list of available local repeater and simplex frequencies was finalized. These frequencies have been entered into our local emergency operations plan, and are reprinted here for your convenience:

Local repeaters and frequencies:

VHF FM Primary Repeater: 146.74 - offset

Secondary (Simplex): 146.74

Tertiary (Simplex): 146.47

UHF FM Repeater: 443.90 + offset

2. During the late summer and/or Fall months, an ARES/RACES exercise will be conducted for Mecosta and Osceola Counties. After discussing several possible scenarios at an initial planning meeting with available ARES/RACES members in early June, it was decided that the exercise will center around a hypothetical tornado touchdown at a number of key locations throughout Mecosta County. Substantial damage, injuries, and possibly even a few casualties will be involved. Stay tuned to upcoming ARES/RACES nets for more details. In the meantime, existing antennas and other amateur equipment at the Mecosta county Sheriff's Office, the local American Red Cross chapter, and 911 Central Dispatch will be checked and tested.

3. Net controls continue to be needed for our local 2-meter and 440 nets. This is a great way to learn the mechanics of operating an amateur radio communications net in a very friendly and relaxed environment. For those who previously have been net controls, it's a great way to refresh your net management skills. If you'd like to serve as net control for one of our nets, please contact me and I'll give you all the information you need.

4. Finally, let's not forget about the all-important "Field Day" event, which is scheduled to occur late this month. (See this and other news letters for more details.) Not only is Field Day a fun social event for our club, but it is a very effective way to test our ability to conduct various kinds of communications without the benefit of commercial electrical power, and many of the other comforts of home.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone sincerely for continuing to support our local ARES/RACES program here in Mecosta and Osceola Counties. Your participation in our recent local skywarn nets, and our bi-weekly ARES/RACES net is most appreciated. As always, if you have questions about any ARES or RACES issues, please contact either me (your Mecosta County EC/RO), or Gary Atteberry (your Osceola County EC/RO).

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.

## VO1MRC 60-METER EXPERIMENTS SET FOR JUNE 19-20

**Even though you might not be able to transmit on the "band" this should be of interest to anyone who would like to tune in with their receivers. Looks as though activity could pick up in spite of the limitations. Ed.**

The Marconi Radio Club of Newfoundland's VO1MRC will conduct an experiment on 60 meters Saturday and Sunday, June 19-20, from 0000 to 2400 UTC (ie, starting the evening of Friday, June 18, in North America). During this period, a CW beacon will be in operation on 5269.5 kHz to determine the relative performance of high and low radiation angle antennas. The antenna in use will be identified by a code in each transmission.

"The low-angle aerial is a vertical, and the high-angle one is an inverted V," says RAC Newfoundland-Labrador Section Manager Joe Craig, VO1NA. He's coordinating the 60-meter experiment in Canada and will be the primary operator for the antenna tests. Craig will use the club's Marconi CH-150 for simplex QSOs, for the beacon and as a transmitter for split operation. VO1MRC will open briefly for two-way contacts with stations authorized to transmit on 60 meters starting at 0000 UTC each of these days, operating CW on 5260.5 kHz (US stations may not transmit on this frequency, nor may they use CW on 60 meters). VO1MRC will listen on 5346.5 kHz USB. Following this VO1MRC will transmit on 5327.5 USB and receive 5346.5 USB and 3807.5 kHz LSB. "For split operation," Craig said, "I will be using a manual T/R switch, so it's going to be a bit awkward and patience will be needed from those looking for QSOs." He invites signal reports from all stations via e-mail to Joe Craig, VO1NA <[vo1na@rac.ca](mailto:vo1na@rac.ca)>.

Proposed by the Marconi Radio Club of Newfoundland, the 5-MHz experiment has been endorsed by Radio Amateurs of Canada <<http://www.rac.ca>> and authorized by Industry Canada, which approved resumption of the 60-meter experiments in February.

US licensees unfamiliar with the rules for operating on 60 meters may consult the "60 Meters - Frequently Asked Questions" page <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/faq-60.html>> on the ARRL Web site. For further information, visit the MRCN Web site <<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jcraig/mrcn.html>> and The VO1MRC 5 MHz Experiment page <<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jcraig/5megex.html>>.

ARRL NEWSLETTER

## **VIRGINIAN IS FIRST US HAM TO ACCOMPLISH "TUNA TIN II" WAS**

**SO DON'T SAY YOU CAN'T DO IT WITH 100 WATTS!**

It took him four years, but a ham from Bealeton, Virginia, has become the first US amateur licensee to work all states using a flea-power "Tuna Tin II" transmitter. ARRL member Bob Chapman, W9JOP, recently completed his "QRPP" (less than 1 W output) accomplishment and has received his ARRL Worked All States Award certificate.

"Unfortunately, ARRL does not issue a certificate for WAS QRPP," he said. "Mine is endorsed with 'QRP-CW.'"

Chapman, 71, says he actually used two Tuna Tin transmitters to accomplish the feat. He worked and confirmed the contiguous 48 states with a classic Tuna Tin, which uses an inverted tuna can as a chassis. Not only was Chapman running just 250 mW--one-quarter of a watt--he was crystal controlled on 7043 kHz! Chapman says he snagged the last two states, Hawaii (KH6U) and Alaska (WL7WH) using a homebrew 20-meter Tuna Tin, rockbound on 14,060 kHz and also running 250 mW.

"No QRO here," Chapman says of his setup. "Just a low-power, low-tech station with a G5RV wire antenna at 50 feet and a 'TiCK' keyer." He uses a vintage Collins 51S-1 receiver. A ham for 50 years, Chapman further points out that he accomplished his QRPP WAS without any schedules but "just by waiting for the states to pass within my capture area--namely, on my frequency," he said. He also has a QRP Amateur Radio Club International QRPP Worked All States certificate. His wife, Joy, is KA9TTB.

In 2001 Steve Chapman, VE7SL, in British Columbia, Canada, became the world's first amateur to accomplish QRPP WAS using a Tuna Tin II running about 400 mW. ARRL NEWSLETTER

# EVERYONE'S QTH: WELCOME TO THE NOT SO SECRET WORLD OF INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE!

FROM THE JUNE 16, 2004 HANDI-HAM WEEKLY E-LETTER

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 afternoon 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.

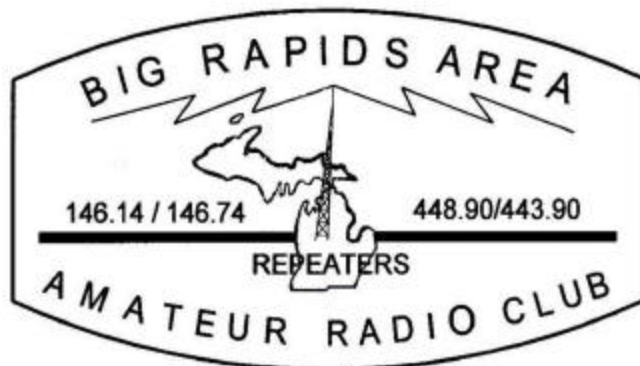
2) Ham Radio is a Hobby so make learning this code stuff fun. Do whatever works for you because each of us is different and what works for one person may or may not work for someone else. Make it a big game.

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 frequencies 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.

## SEE YOU AT FIELD DAY!



FIELD DAY SET-UP SITE FOR 2004



P.O. BOX 343, PARIS, MI 49338