



BIG RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2004 APRIL

PORTABLE GROUND SYSTEM

Grounding is a critical portion of any antenna system. Most of us haven't seen the grounding pit on the two meter repeater hill. Fig 1 shows the entrance to the deep ground system on the hill. Not a pleasant place to work but necessary if a location is high above the water table. Jeff Barstow (WD8DLK) is shown as he prepares to enter the pit. Jeff says that no one should have to put up with the pit, "It smells bad," he says. Now he has come up with a portable "ground pit" constructed out of simple components.



Fig 1. Jeff prepares to enter the ground pit. White corrosion on the wiring is caused intermodulation fumes from the link repeater.

Parts required are: one-10 gallon (approximate) metal pail; six metal tent nails (8-10 inch); about 15 pounds of RF rated or equivalent white sand; sixteen ounces of salt (ice melting, Kosher or garlic) and two quarts of warm water. Punch the tent nails through the bottom of the pail around the rim. Fill the pail with the RF sand. Dissolve the eight ounces of salt in the two quarts of warm water. Pour the water onto the top of the sand. That's all there is to it.

To use the portable ground simply work the tent nails into

the earth until the pail sits level with the surface of the ground. Connect your rig's ground wire to the rim of the pail and you are in business. The ground is rated to handle at least 1000 milliwatts.

If, during use, you find your SWR increasing you can add more water or other liquid. Your fellow hams are sure to talk about your unique accessory. Nice job Jeff. You can always count on a Michigan Tech Grad!!

GRASS ROOTS POLITICAL ACTION FORUM AT THE HAMVENTION IN DAYTON



There will be a forum at noon on Friday May 14th of the Hamvention this year on grassroots political action.

The program will feature ARRL General Counsel and our man in DC Chris Imlay, W3KD, New England Vice Director Mike Raisbeck, K1TWF and ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP as speakers. Great Lakes Division Vice Director Dick Mondro, W8FQT will be the MC and Great Lakes Division Director Jim Weaver K8JE will offer the opening remarks.

This forum was called by your Division Leadership to bring attention to the importance of communicating with your legislators on amateur radio issues. They have gathered experts to answer your questions. President Haynie and General Counsel Imlay have spent more time lobbying in Washington than anyone in recent history and they have the knowledge to teach us how to get action.

If you will be attending the Hamvention make this a MUST SEE Forum and perhaps we can kick off an effort within our club. We need to act now to protect our spectrum and protect our ability to enjoy the Amateur Radio Service.

If you have not met President Haynie, or heard him speak, you have missed a real treat. Here's your opportunity to meet the people that work for you as a League Member. Plan to be there.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER APPOINTED



Sue Behler KC8IFP has accepted the task of serving as our Public Information Officer (PIO). For the duties of this new position see the article in last month's Newsletter in which we asked for volunteers.

This is an effort promoted by ARRL to have clubs "blow their own horns" a bit and to make ham radio a more visible service at the local level. This task is fully as important as the efforts on the national scale for it can influence the public we directly deal with to support our goals as we protect our frequencies and build relationships with local agencies and other community groups.

Thanks, Sue for taking on this most important function.

NEXT CLUB BREAKFAST IS AT 8:30 A.M., SATURDAY MARCH 27th AT GRANDMA'S



KITCHEN IN DOWNTOWN MECOSTA VILLAGE. NEVER

BEEN THERE? JUST
LOOK ON THE SOUTH
SIDE OF THE MAIN

DRAG ON THE EAST SIDE OF
TOWN. THE FOOD HAS ALWAYS

BEEN GOOD LEADING TO GOOD TIMES BY ALL.



TECHNICIAN LEVEL AMATEUR RADIO CLASS IN PROGRESS OPEN VE EXAM PLANNED FOR APRIL 17, 2004

Nine students make up this spring's class and the sessions are well underway with various instructors teaching the weekly sessions on Wednesday evenings. A detailed description of what is being covered and other details are available in the January/February issue of the Newsletter.



Matt Trombley, KC8VJR, taught the first session of the course.

A VE Exam will be held at 9:00 a.m. on April the 17th, the Saturday following the last class period, at the Big Rapids Public Safety Building with Club VEs in charge. This test session will be open to not only those in the class but anyone wishing to take the Technician exam or to upgrade to a higher level. A CW code test will precede the written examination. While there will be no requirement to pre-register, the number will be restricted by the 35 exam forms that will be available. Past experience has shown that we have not exceeded that number for some years. However,

if necessary and depending on the time available, it may be possible to run a second session reusing the forms after some of the applicants complete their exam.

NOW READ THIS: THE CONCENTRATED COURSE FOR THE GENERAL LICENSE CLASS HAS BEEN CANCELLED SINCE THE KEY INSTRUCTOR HAS SUDDENLY HAD SOME HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES COME UP. IF IT CAN BE INSTITUTED AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE, IT WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEWSLETTER.

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING IS ON THURSDAY, 7:30 P.M. APRIL 1ST AT THE BIG RAPIDS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY 435 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE IN BIG RAPIDS. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS AT 6:30 P.M.
PROGRAM: PREPARATIONS FOR THIS YEAR'S SUPER FIELD DAY; COME JOIN US IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIG EVENT!



LAST MINUTE REMINDER: TWO SKYWARN SESSIONS!!!



FIRST LOCATION IS AT THE FERRIS WEST CAMPUS COMMUNITY CENTER AT 6:30 P.M. WEDNESDAY THE 24TH OF MARCH. IF YOU CAN'T MAKE THAT ONE, YOU HAVE A SECOND OPTION. THE SAME PROGRAM WILL BE GIVEN AT THE LINCOLN TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT STARTING WITH ORIENTATION AT 6 P.M. AND TRAINING AT 7 P.M.

FOR THOSE WHO ATTEND, THE ECs FROM MECOSTA AND OSCEOLA COUNTIES WILL GIVE OUT REALLY SHARP LOOKING SPOTTER IDENTIFICATION CARDS.

THE HAZMAT TRAINING COURSE AN OUTSTANDING LEARNING EXPERIENCE



Those who took the Hazmat Course presented by Fireman and Certified Hazmat Trainer Randy Bell agree it was a good experience that was well worth the effort. Sue Behler, KC8IFP, videotaped the entire program for BRAARC to make it available for those who wish to obtain the information on their own time. You can reach Sue at 231-592-9854. While it will take several hours to go through, you will find it worthwhile.

Each attendee received a handout text that covered almost all aspects of the course and will serve to refresh one if the need for action arises. EC Tom Behler, KB8TYJ, will keep track of those who have completed the course and credit it towards RACES certification.



Randy makes a point. Note warning labels.



Class members waiting for the session to begin.



IF YOU ARE PRACTICING CW CODE ON OUR 2 METER REPEATER ON MONDAY NIGHTS WITH TOM BEHLER, KB8TYJ, BE AWARE THAT HE MAY BE ADDING A FEW SESSIONS ON SUNDAY NIGHTS TO MEET THE DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL 17TH VE EXAM. HE WILL LET YOU KNOW MORE ON A MONDAY NIGHT SESSION IF IT'S NEEDED.

HOLLINGSWORTH ISSUES INTERFERENCE REMINDER

FCC Special Counsel for Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth says no Amateur Radio stations are exempt from the requirement to avoid unnecessarily interfering with ongoing communications. "It is very important for all stations, including automated ones, to realize that they are responsible for any interference caused when they come on top of existing communications," Hollingsworth said in response to a recent inquiry. "There are no exemptions for automated stations." FCC Part 97 <<http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/news/part97/>> Amateur Service rules generally address interference with other communications in §97.101(d): "No amateur operator shall willfully or maliciously interfere with or cause interference to any radio communication or signal." An amateur had written to Hollingsworth alleging that what appear to be automated PACTOR stations routinely start transmitting atop PSK31 QSOs on 40 and 30 meters. The amateur also contacted one of the PACTOR stations in an effort to "dialogue about it not just complain." Hollingsworth expressed the hope that all involved could work things out. He also points out that stations responding to automated interrogations are equally responsible for not causing interference. "It doesn't mean the frequency is clear merely because they were interrogated by another station," he told ARRL this week. "It's a two-way responsibility."

FROM ARRL

BOGUS ARRL.NET MESSAGES CIRCULATING VIA E-MAIL

Several members have notified ARRL that they have received e-mail messages alleging to be from the ARRL E-Mail Forwarding Service <<http://www.arrl.org/members-only/emailfwd.html>>, "The ARRL.net team" or some variation. The messages, which often carry a subject line along the lines of "Warning about your e-mail account," indicate that the recipient's ARRL E-Mail Forwarding Service <call sign>@arrl.net address will be closed within three days because of an alleged violation of acceptable practices. These messages are false and did not come from The ARRL Forwarding Service. They are the result of one of the variants on a number of viruses now permeating the Internet. A file usually is attached to these messages. As always, do not open any attachments that you cannot identify. Opening the file could result in your computer being infected by a virus. This is only one of the several virus-laden messages currently propagating across the Internet. The ARRL advises its members to be cautious in opening any message and/or attachment, even if it appears to be from someone you know. All of these viruses use e-mail addresses from the address book of an infected computer to falsify the "From:" address in the header to make it appear that the message is from someone the recipient knows.

FROM ARRL

GET THEM WHILE YOU CAN!

WITH FIELD DAY JUST AROUND THE CORNER THE ARRL'S



SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE T-SHIRTS AND PINS HAVE JUST BECOME AVAILABLE. THESE NEAT PRODUCTS SELL OUT WITHIN A FEW WEEKS SO YOUR ORDER MUST BE IN ASAP. CLUB TREASURER SUE BEHLER, KC8IFP,



WILL AGAIN SAVE MEMBERS EXCESSIVE POSTAGE BY PLACING A GROUP ORDER. CONTACT HER AT 231-592-9854 OR AT THE NEXT MEETING. THE PRICE IS \$15 FOR THE T-SHIRT, l e f t AND \$5 FOR THE PIN, r i g h t .

HAM RADIO OPERATORS LISTED BY CALL MARCH 04

CALL	NAME	LAST NAME	STREET	CITY	ST	ZIP	PHONE	CL
AA8TM	JOSEPH	JONES	11801 NORTH ROLLAND ROAD	LAKE	MI	48632	989-544-3448	EXT
AB8MD	RICK	DEAN	23717 15 MILE ROAD	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-0394	EXT
AB8NC	ROBERT	MOODY	620 BIRCH STREET	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-2069	EXT
K4UIH	JAMES	WOOLEN	14955 CHULA VISDTA DRIVE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-1426	GEN
K8JE	JIM	WEAVER	5065 BETHANY ROAD	MASON	OH	45040-9660	513-459-0142	EXT
K8SHX	VINCENT	PANICCI	2557 NORTHLAND DRIVE	MORLEY	MI	49336	231-856-7802	GEN
K8YHJ	ROBERT	CARPENTER	18222 220TH AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	616-796-3714	GEN
KA8YKK	DEBBIE	KIRKBRIDE	1315 CENTER AVE APT. 1	BAY CITY	MI	48708-6107	989-892-1212	EXT
KB6NU	DAN	ROMANCHIK	1325 ORKNEY DRIVE	ANN ARBOR	MI	48103	734-930-6564	ADV
KB8JR	JACK	RICHARDS	19060 200TH AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-9426	EXT
KB8TYJ	THOMAS	BEHLER	511 SPRING STREET	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-592-9854	EXT
KB8VEE	THOMAS	VANDERMEL	5495 AIRLINE ROAD	FRUITPORT	MI	49415-8691	231-865-1558	GEN
KB8VST	ROBERT	HARRIS	17871 55TH AVENUE	BARRYTON	MI	49305	989-382-7717	ADV
KB8WXI	MARK	THURSTON	10101 MOUNTAIN VIEW TRAIL	STANWOOD	MI	49346	231-972-7083	GEN
KB8ZEP	GERALD	FLESSLAND	10121 MOUNTAIN VIEW TRAIL	STANWOOD	MI	49346	231-972-7016	GEN
KB8ZEQ	DANNY	GRAMER	P.O. BOX 46	PARIS	MI	49338	231-832-4917	EXT
KB8ZSR	JOAN	DEADY	20745 16 MILE ROAD	LEROY	MI	49655-8355	231-796-0521	TEK
KB8ZSU	GREGORY	MCDANIELD	21081 205TH AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-4860	TEK
KC0MDC	TIM	STOECKLEIN	21001 205TH AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-1360	GEN
KC8AUU	TOM	O'BRIEN	1408 BLACKBERRY LANE	FLINT	MI	48507	313-235-5781	TK+
KC8AW	JERRY	HEMMYE	1609 GALVIN AVENUE	PENSACOLA	FL	32526	805-941-1190	EXT
KC8BAR	JOHN	MCDOWELL	PO BOX 116	REED CITY	MI	49677	231-832-2251	EXT
KC8BHY	JONI	BLANCHARD	P.O. BOX 46	PARIS	MI	49338	231-832-4917	TEK
KC8CII	JERRY	BUSKIRK	20924 175 AVE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-2834	TEK
KC8DNN	RAY	FULLER	11259 LAKE ROAD	STANWOOD	MI	499364	231-9722678	GEN
KC8DNO	DAN	BEHLER	511 SPRING STREET	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307-9530	231-952-9854	TEK+
KC8DTY	JIM	DEADY	20745 16 MILE ROAD	LEROY	MI	49655-8355	231-796-0521	TEK
KC8FYH	SUSAN	HARRIS	17871 55TH AVENUE	BARRYTON	MI	49305	989-382-7717	TEK
KC8IFP	SUSAN	BEHLER	511 SPRING STREET	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307-9530	231-592-9854	GEN
KC8IJQ	CRAIG	BAILEY	2398 130TH AVENUE	MORLEY	MI	49336		TEK
KC8JOM	ROBERT	TYSON	23191 HOLIDAY DRIVE	HERSEY	MI	49639-8625	231-832-5626	EXT
KC8LQY	ANDREW	LANGENDERFER	312 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVE. APT 1	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-0683	GEN
KC8MMF	JERIEL	BEARD	815 WINTER AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-3470	GEN
KC8OIU	RENATO	CERDENA	404 SANBORN AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-8814	TEK
KC8OIV	JENS	RICK	17799 TRESTLE BEND DRIVE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-6325	GEN
KC8OMJ	LILLIAN	SPENCE	21463 30th AVENUE	BARRYTON	MI	49305	989-382-7894	GEN
KC8OTI	ALLEN	ALTER	1940 N. CAMPBELL ROAD	FOUNTAIN	MI	49410		TEK
KC8OZX	RICHARD	THOMAS	74 MARKET S.W.	GRAND RAPIDS	MI	49503	616-937-4557	NVC
KC8PZA	MICHAEL	FOSTER	7937 E. 36TH	NEWAGO,	MI	49337	231-598-2588	TEK
KC8QOV	PHILLIP	MARCOTTE	558 20TH AVENUE	BLANCHARD	MI	49310	989-561-5091	TEK
KC8RBO	JOHN	MAY.	7395 3 MILE ROAD	BLANCHARD	MI	49310	989-352-6959	TEK
KC8RBP	CONNIE	MAY.	7395 3 MILE ROAD	BLANCHARD	MI	49310	989-352-6959	TEK
KC8RBS	KATHY	FOSTER	7937 E. 36 TH	NEWAGO	MI	49337	231-598-2588	TEK
KC8SWY	KEN	SCHNEIDER	P.O.BOX 988	COLOMA	MI	49038		TEK
KC8TDJ	CORA	JONES	11801 NORTH ROLLAND ROAD	LAKE	MI	48632	989-544-3448	TEK
KC8UB	RICHARD	OSBORNE	17317 RAPIDS DRIVE	HERSEY	MI	49639	231-832-2610	ADV
KC8VJR	MATTHEW	TROMBLEY	225 WALNUT STREET	SHELBY	MI	49455	231-591-6689	GEN
KC8WFX	GORDON	TRUTE	15775 COOLIDGE ROAD	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-5629	TEK
KC8WFZ	CHRIS	TAAL	12435 183 RD AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-0824	TEK
KC8WGC	CHRIS	STAPP	P.O. BOX 704	HOWARD CITY	MI	49329	231-629-1443	TEK

KC8WGE	BILLIE JO	STRAUS	3235 HOOVER ROAD	BARRYTON	MI	49305	989-382-7242	TEK
KC8WGH	JUSTIN	MCCAULEY	P.O. BOX 104	MECOSTA	MI	49332-0104	231-972-7721	TEK
KC8WGJ	RUSSELL	BRITTAIN	3791 FOSTER	MT. PLEASANT	MI	48858	231-972-2522	GEN
KE4CFV	WILLIAM	SCHULTHEIS	27885 EAST RIVER ROAD	GROSSE ILE	MI	48138		GEN
KI8CK	JAKE	SPENCE	20598 OKEMOS DRIVE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-7232	EXT
KL7WI	RICH	HAWLEY	521 WEST FULLER APT 103D	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	796-4761	GEN
N8ALF	RICH	HOLE	2559 EAST 88TH STREET	NEWAYGO	MI	49337		GEN
N8HDD	WALTER	NEVILL	9820 SOUTH PULASKI #210	OAKLAWN,	IL	60453	708-499-6254	GEN
N8JCP	WILLIAM	BROWN	4666 PARK STREET	REED CITY	MI	49677	231-832-4224	EXT
N8MZB	WILLIAM	STANKEY	5221 MARQUETTE TRAIL	CHASE	MI	49623	231-745-8845	GEN
N8PHZ	JERRY	COVEY	7774 140 AVENUE	STANWOOD	MI	49346	231-823-2170	TEK
N8PUG	JAMES	ORLOWSKI	10386 5 MILE ROAD	LAKEVIEW	MI	48850	989-352-7128	GEN
N8SFG	NOWELL	LA ROCK	700 SOUTH BRONSON	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-9080	TEK
N8XQG	JOHN	REIMAN	4108 DEER RUN LANE	SEARS	MI	49679	231-734-3018	GEN
NI8E	FRED	PINS	420 HUTCHISON STREET	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-592-5251	EXT
NI9R	ROBIN	CORBIN	7330 N. ASPLUND ROAD	TUSTIN	MI	49688-9630	231-829-3933	EXT
W4NKL	PAT	PENNOCK	7165 NORTHLAND BLVD PMB 12	BARRYTON	MI	49305-3547	989-382-9691	GEN
W8FQT	DICK	MONDRO	800 DOVER DRIVE	DEARBORN HGTS.	MI	48127	313-730-2111	GEN
W8HVG	RAY	ABRACZINSKAS	4295 KENTRIDGE DRIVE S.E.	GRAND RAPIDS	MI	49508	616-455-3915	GEN
W8IQB	LOWELL	CORBIN	7330 N. ASPLUND ROAD	TUSTIN	MI	49688-9630	231-829-3933	EXT
W8OWN	GEORGE	ROUMAN	300 WEST PINE STREET	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307-1360	231-796-3114	EXT
W8PET	PETER	CHESEBROUGH	21021 MADISON AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-1433	EXT
W8SO	DEBRA	MCCAULEY	P.O. BOX 104	MECOSTA	MI	49332-0104	231-972-7721	EXT
W8UFS	NELSON	HURST	3974 WISPERING WAY S.E.	GRAND RAPIDS	MI	49546	616-954-0341	EXT
W8ZNH	WILLIAM	ECKELS	12322 175TH AVENUE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-5707	EXT
WA4FRJ	DONALD	MACCONNEL	17961 ROUND LAKE ROAD	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-592-1434	EXT
WA8EEK	DALE	WILLIAMS	291 OUTER DRIVE	DUNDEE	MI	48131		EXT
WA8IIH	BRUCE	MACLEAN	13125 K.T. DRIVE	BITELY	MI	49309	231-745-4740	GEN
WA8LKV	ALAN	VANANTWEVRP	23204 20 MILE ROAD	TUSTIN	MI	49688-8060	231-829-3433	EXT
WA8TNQ	OSCAR	DENNIS	LOT C 11 606 BJORNSON ST.	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-6984	TK+
WA8WVI	RALPH	LEROY	11296 ALPINE	STANWOOD	MI	49346	231-972-2279	GEN
WB8G	ROBERT	MCCAULEY	P.O. BOX 104	MECOSTA	MI	49332-0104	231-972-7721	EXT
WB8GAO	WALTER	NALEZYTY	10401 SCHWYZ CIRCLE	REED CITY	MI	49677	231-734-0172	ADV
WB8TVD	BRUCE	WERNER	20839 COOLIDGE ROAD	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-2749	ADV
WB8WIA	GARY	ATTEBERRY	115 SOUTH MAIN PO BOX 147	HERSEY	MI	49639	231-832-5565	GEN
WB8YPG	ROBERT	CROAKER	10411 SCHWYZ CIRCLE	REED CITY	MI	49677	231-734-6832	ADV
WD8AUL	DALE	COLBY	10119 EAGLE PASS	STANWOOD	MI	49346	231-972-2488	ADV
WD8DLK	JEFFREY	BARSTOW	12630 WILSON ROAD	RODNEY	MI	49342	231-867-3325	EXT
WD8MOD	ROBERT	WILLISON	7170 NORTH HICKORY	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-4488	EXT
WD8PFC	BEVERLY	CALLEWAERT	18197 STONE HOUSE ROAD	HERSEY	MI	49639	231-832-9371	EXT
WI8W	THOM	DURFEE	3509 COLLINGWOOD AVENUE	WYOMING	MI	49509	616-531-9435	EXT
	CAROL	BERRY	13574 NORTHLAND DRIVE	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-7684	
	CYNTHIA	GLAZIER	502 NORTH STATE STREET	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231 796-4831	
	DANIEL	DOWDY	20650 EDGEWOOD	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-592-0872	
	GEORGE	KEEN	BOX 1064	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-4887	
	JIM	CREES	101 WEST SLOSSON	REED CITY	MI	49677	231-832-5566	
	LAURA	SMALLA	20701 NORTHLAND DRIVE	PARIS	MI	49338	231-796-4811	
	SHARON	OLESON	218 SOUTH WARREN	BIG RAPIDS	MI	49307	231-796-0566	

IF YOU FIND A PROBLEM WITH YOUR LISTING, PLEASE CONTACT GEORGE ROUMAN, W8OWN AT 231-796-3114.

Summary of March 13, 2004 Michigan ARRL Section Meeting

Tom Behler: KB8TYJ, Mecosta County EC/RO

On Saturday: March 13, Bob Croaker (WB8YPG), Assistant EC for Osceola County, Sue Behler (KC8IFP), Assistant EC for Mecosta County, and I attended the Spring meeting of the Michigan ARRL Section in Lansing, Michigan. Although the meeting certainly did have its controversial moments, it seems that the vast majority of those in attendance felt that it was a worthwhile endeavor.



The meeting began with remarks from Dale Williams, Michigan Section Manager, and Val Rose, Michigan's Assistant Section Manager. These two Section officials voiced some common concerns for us all to consider. They stressed the need for us to clarify our identity in the eyes of both the agencies and the general public we serve. We need to develop clear

positions on exactly who we are, what we do, and how strong we are, both in terms of numbers and the specific resources that we have to offer. We need to publicize what we do, however we can, and we need to avoid the all-to-common tendency for us to be subsumed under larger organizations as responders to public-service or emergency situations. The need for us to be trusted and to use reliable trained operators was also stressed. Repeated emphasis was placed on the necessity for local clubs, as well as ARES/RACES organizations, to report their activities to the ARRL. The ARRL needs to know the number of people involved, the activities conducted, and the "person hours" of service provided for every net and other event with which we become involved. This information can readily be transformed into dollar amounts. These dollar figures become very effective tools when asking regulators and other government entities for the support and recognition we deserve. Another common thread in the remarks from our top section leadership was the need for us to recruit new members, and to work more closely with the agencies or officials we wish to serve.

The focus of the meeting then shifted to some aspects of emerging digital communications technology which, I have to admit, went somewhat beyond my current level of knowledge and expertise. In short, the discussion centered around the fact that the ARRL has voted to implement a standardized Pactor communications system called Winlink 2000. This new system, which apparently uses a combination of internet and HF circuits, should allow for uniform e-mail message communication for radio amateurs in both emergency and non-emergency situations. It should bring amateur radio more in line with current digital technology, and should allow for the transmission of longer or more involved messages than might be possible via normally-used modes such as CW and SSB. The Winlink system will be implemented gradually throughout the State of Michigan in the months to come.

After a needed lunch break, the State meeting continued with a very interesting and informative presentation on the history of amateur radio and the National Traffic System. The presentation was given by Joe Turner, our Michigan Section Traffic Manager. In fact, Joe's presentation was so interesting that I have asked him about the possibility of coming to one of our upcoming club meetings to do a club program. I eagerly await his response, and if he feels he can do this, I will work directly with Joe and Richard Osborne (our program director) to make it happen.

One final set of concerns that was addressed at the March 13 meeting involved our current RACES standards. Although space does not permit me to go into much detail here, I will suggest briefly that, even though some complications have arisen at the State MSP/EMD about what the current standards for RACES membership technically are, these issues are in the process of being resolved, and should be laid to rest within the next few months. In the meantime, my plan as EC/RO for Mecosta County is to continue using the new recommended standards for RACES certification under which we all have been working for the past year. Another note of interest is that starting April 1, 2004, the FEMA.gov web site will go out of existence, and will become www.dhs.gov.

AMATEUR RADIO: A NATIONAL RESOURCE

CLUB EXPLORES POSSIBILITY OF FUNDRAISER

The possibility of attempting a new fundraising event looms closer to fruition. How is that for a statement meaning very little. Actually the reason is that we are not far along but the real possibility does exist that the club may have a food concession booth at the Wheatland Festival in the fall. Russ Brittain, KC8WGJ, has made several contacts and reports that we have a good chance of securing a spot in this huge event that could really bolster the club's treasury. However, it will take many members to man the operation and that is where we all come into the picture. As soon as there is more information, planning sessions will be held. If it all comes together, please expect to help with this project.

CLUB DINNER PLANS BEING MADE YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED

After the disappointment with the service at last year's annual dinner, the Board of Directors resolved that we will definitely not return again this year. In the last newsletter we asked for any suggestions for this year's event but have only received a few: both Bennigans' and the Conference Center at the Holliday Inn, Maxfields' near Edmore, the Centennial Dining Room at Ferris State, the St Ives Golf Club at Canadian Lakes and the Falcon Head Golf Course. Phil Marcotte, KC8QOV, has been checking these food establishments to determine the feasibility of each but judging from the results so far we would like to hear of more possibilities before determining which site would be best in terms of quality, location and cost.

Therefore you are asked again for any leads for another site we might consider. Please contact Tim Stoecklein, KC0MDC at 231-796-1360 with your suggestions.

IT'S CADILLAC HAMFEST TIME; IRA FEST TO FOLLOW

GEORGE ROUMAN, W8OWN

THE CADILLAC CLUB HAS ALWAYS PRODUCED A FINE HAMFEST. FOR MANY YEARS A VERY LARGE CONTINGENT WOULD EVEN SHOW UP FROM THE UPPER PENINSULA. TODAY THEIR HAMFEST IS PROBABLY THE BEST OPPORTUNITY YOU HAVE TO SEE FELLOW HAMS NORTH OF US. LONG AGO, BEFORE WE HAD A CLUB REPEATER, THE CADILLAC REPEATER SERVED US ALL VERY WELL. WE HAD THAT MACHINE TO THE NORTH AND MANY GRAND RAPIDS REPEATERS TO THE SOUTH. ABE, W8HVG, AND THE IRA CREW THEN HELPED US DEVELOP OUR FIRST

REPEATERS, PROVIDED MANY GENERATIONS OF REPEATERS FOR OUR USE AND HELPED SERVICE THEM OVER THE YEARS.

EXTENDING THE LINK SYSTEM NORTHWARD, THEY FIRST ESTABLISHED A LINK REPEATER IN NEWAYGO COUNTY THAT WAS EXTREMELY MARGINAL. THEN ABE AND OUR CLUB MEMBERS APPROACHED GEORGE KEEN OF SKE WHO READILY AGREED TO LET THEM ABOARD. THUS BIG RAPIDS JOINED THE LINK SYSTEM.

IT IS WORTH MENTIONING HERE BECAUSE THE OTHER AREA

HAMFEST THAT HAS MUCH TO DO WITH OUR CLUB IS INDEED THE IRA. THEIR HAMFEST WILL BE NEXT! OH, INCIDENTALLY, THE IRA IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP OUT BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THEIR HAMFEST. I HAVE FOR MANY YEARS HELPED BY SELLING TICKETS WITH THOM DURFEE. I FIGURE IT IS IN GRATITUDE FOR THE MANY TRIPS ABE MADE FROM GRAND RAPIDS JUST TO GET ME UP THE HILL AND HELP CORRECT OUR PROBLEMS. HE WOULD SURE LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU IF YOU ARE WILLING TO HELP FOR A FEW HOURS.

Michigan (Cadillac)—May 1, 8 AM to 1 PM.
Spr: Wexauke ARC. Cadillac Jr High School, Chestnut St; US 131 to Exit 177, Mitchell St to Pine St, turn W, continue ½ mile to School. Amateur Radio/Computer Swapmeet, commercial vendors, various meetings, VE sessions (pre-register 8:30 AM, testing 10:30 AM), QCWA Luncheon, free parking, refreshments. *TI:* 146.98. *Adm:* \$5. Tables: 8 ft \$8. Brian Polk, KC8TXT, 13826 Serenity Dr, Marion, MI 49665; 231-743-6860; bandb@netonecom.net; members.fortunecity.com/wexauke.

USE THIS FORM TO PAY THIS YEAR'S DUES

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.

SIX METER REPEATER NEWS

The 6 meter repeater is alive and well and available for all with that capability. While the range is still limited, callers have joined the roundtable Sunday nights a 9:00 p.m. in the past from such sites as Clare County and Cadillac. The committee is looking forward to spring when it is hoped a tower can be raised and the range extended to a larger number of hams. In the meantime, if you hear anyone from outlying areas please report your findings to Fritz Pins, NI8E, Thom Durfee, WI8W, or Tom Behler, KB8TYJ. It is important that we learn as much as possible about the range of our site.

BRAARC AFFILIATION AGREEMENT RENEWED

Each year the club must renew our Affiliation Agreement with the ARRL. Tom Behler, KB8TYJ has accepted the task of doing that as well as renewing our Special Service Club status which must be done every two years.

The Affiliation Agreement is a simple form-filling exercise, but the Special Service Club renewal requires that we do much documentation of our club activities related to that distinction. Since that activity must be done again in June of this year, Tom will be asking for volunteers to lend a hand.

HAMLIST BY CALL SIGN - CHECK YOUR LINE FOR ACCURACY

