

DECEMBER Meeting Minutes by Mike McKay, KD8DIB

Call to order: 7:03pm by Bob, AB8NC

Guests: none

Secretary's report: November, 2006 minutes read by Mike, KD8DIB and approved

Treasurer's report: December, 2006 Financial Report read by Sue, KC8IFP and approved.

Announcements:

- Phil, KC8QOV has extra sound project kits available for \$10
- Club Breakfast: 18 people attended - Wild Rose Café on Saturday (+4 guests)
- Bill, N8MZB spending winter in AZ. Monday, Wednesday & Friday on 14.329 MHz (20 meters) at 2:30pm the Sunlife Amateur Radio Club communication net - call and talk to Bill.
- Fritz, NI8E has an offer to have a ham in a day class at Osceola County. Saturday in the future.
- Ham in a day class - Jan 21 at GR Red Cross.
- ARGYL Hamfest December 16, 2006 9 to noon.
- Send your classified ads and announcements to Mike, KD8DIB for the newsletter.
- A thank you card was received from Abe at IRA for \$100 donation from club.
- Net controls are needed - contact Tom, KB8TYJ
- Mark your calendar: March 15, 2007 Skywarn training location TBD
- Bill Eckels, W8ZNH in attendance after long absence (welcome back!)

Old Business:

- Club Dues are currently being accepted.
- Auction / Mini hamfest / Fox hunt: TBD
- Suggested fundraiser: ARRL renewal/new membership though club should be considered as possible fund source.
- Club Ham Class interest from SAR, Venture Crew. Fritz, NI8E; Don, WA4FRJ and Jeff, WD8DLK beginning to organize.
- Ham Club in High School - Don, WA4FRJ still working with school to increase interest.
- Newsletter Editor - A volunteer is still needed to take over as Editor.

New Business:

- 440 Repeater - frequency problem with probable factory fix necessary.
- Board meeting Jan 16 at Bob, AB8NC's house.
- Winter potluck - Sunday afternoon meeting last year was successful. Saturday, January 20, 2007 at noon. Don, WA4FRJ will need help setting up at the Lodge.
- Tom Bray, WB8COX appointed Vice President at December Board Meeting to fill vacancy.
- Future programs: Send ideas and suggestions to Tom Bray, WB8COX.
- BPL and other bits by Don, WA4FRJ. 2003 Government announced internet for all. Medium voltage power lines to carry internet signals. Testing caused broad interference. The ARRL is planning to sue FCC over this issue. Propose that club donate to Spectrum Defense Fund before the end of the year. Members should consider donations also. ARRL is trying to raise \$250k for defense fund.
- A motion by Jeff, WD8DLK to donate \$200 of club funds to ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund approved by membership.
- Pete, W8PET in hospital. Motion to send flowers and card approved by membership.
- Flower arrangement approved to be sent in memory of John, KC8BAR's mother.

Program: by Tom Bray, WB8COX - RTTY and PSK31

50/50 winner: Gordon, KC8WFX

Newsletter: Articles due: December 21, 2006 to Gordon, KC8WFX in .doc format.

- Photos provided by George, W8OWN of Club breakfast.

Club Breakfast: Saturday, December 30 @ Mia's Restaurant in Hersey on Main Street at 8:30am

Refreshments: Don, WA4FRJ: January 2007 meeting

Adjourn: 8:46pm

Next Club meeting Program: Jeff Barstow - WD8DLK has agreed to do a presentation on designing ground systems, lightning protection, and maintaining the ground

Upcoming Events

Do you have an event that needs to be listed here? There are a multitude of activities one can take part in. However, to have people attend your event they need to know about it. This section is devoted to the pursuit of fun and interesting stuff to do. Contact Mike McKay, KD8DIB at the next club meeting or by email to have your event included.

BRAARC Club Breakfast

Mia's Restaurant at 8:30 am in Hersey on December 30, 2006.

Talk-in on the 146.740 2-meter repeater for anyone needing directions.

Club Meeting

Next BRAARC monthly club meeting Thursday: January 4, 2007 at 7 p.m. at the classroom in the Department Of Public Safety building, 435 North Michigan Ave in Big Rapids.

BRAARC Club Winter Pot Luck

Bring a dish to pass, table service and a beverage to the Masonic Lodge on Saturday, January 20, 2007 for the Winter Pot Luck Luncheon (noon)

Talk-in on the 146.740 2-meter repeater for anyone needing directions.

VE Exams

Ham in a Day - January 21, 2007 sponsored by Kent County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service. 1pm to 7pm, Cost: \$30, Red Cross, 1050 Fuller Ave, NE. Call (616)889-7101 or email jnawrot@kcraces.net to pre-register.

Local Hamfests

Swan-N-Shop, Cherryland ARC - February 10, 2007 at Immaculate Conception Middle School, 720 2nd St., Traverse City from 8 to noon. <http://www.carc.tc> Talk in 146.860 (Admission \$5) Contact Joe, W8TVt at (231)947-8555 to reserve a table (\$8) VE Exam at 10am.

Marshall Hamfest 2007 - March 17, 2007 at Marshall High School 8am to 1pm. Sponsored by Southern Michigan Amateur Radio Society & Marshall High Industrial Arts Club. Talk in 146.660 repeater & 146.520 simplex (Admission \$5) Contact Bill Booth (269)965-1415 to reserve a table (\$8)

GRAHamfest 2007 - September 8, 2007 at the Kent County Fairgrounds, 225 S. Hudson, Lowell. <http://www.grahamfest.org> Talk in 147.26- (PL 94.8)

The Sociology of Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

Enroll now in this "Special Topics" course at Ferris State University. Contact Tom Behler, KB8TYJ for more info about Sociology 390

Holton Repeater First D-star Repeater in Michigan. 147.32 is now D-star only.

Winter Field Day

January 13, 2007: start time 12 noon.

<http://www.spar-hams.org/contests/winterfd/index.php>

Net Control

We would like to hear you as net control soon! If you would like to serve as net control for one or more of the BRAARC 2-meter or 440 nets, contact Tom Behler: KB8TYJ

Classified Ads

List your Amateur Radio and non-amateur related items here for free. Submit your classified ad to Mike McKay, KD8DIB at the next club meeting or by email. Submissions may be edited for length and content.

Local Honey

Honey Bears \$2 Call 527-1688

Ham Equipment for Sale / Trade / Free

List your spare equipment here.



The President's Corner DECEMBER 2006

What are you wishing for? I wish for peace. I wish for freedom for all people everywhere. I wish for an end to terrorist activity all over the world. I wish for strength and guidance for our country's leaders. I wish for a good vertical antenna for the hf bands. I wish for a new hf rig, or least an amplifier. Most of all I wish for health, happiness, and prosperity for all of you. May those of our group who travel to warmer places have a good winter and return to the area next spring.

These are the words that I used to finish my article last month. I thought that they were appropriate to include for this month also. I also wish for good traveling weather for my wife and I. We plan to drive to Nebraska on Christmas Eve day, leaving the area right after the morning worship service. If I don't get my voice back, it might be a short service. Anyway, we have 12 hours to travel to Fairbury, Nebraska where we will spend some time with one of our sons. I also wish for good traveling weather for the Behler clan as they will be going to the Port Huron area for a wedding. And others of you may also be traveling to different areas to be with your family. I hope that you all have a wonderful and merry Christmas.

By now many of you are aware that the FCC (Funny Candy Co) has eliminated the code requirement for the General and Extra Class license tests. They have followed the guidelines that came down from the 2003 radio conference that gave each countries' licensing authority the discretion to keep or eliminate the code. I for one have not used CW in radio because it was like a foreign language to me. I did pass the required code test for license years back. However, I do think that there needs to be a code requirement for those who want to go the higher classes of amateur radio licensing. I like the entry level license without the code but I think that you need to be familiar with all forms and modes of communication in amateur radio at the higher levels.

Soon 2007 will be upon us. I see that year as an opportunity to advance the cause of amateur radio in the Big Rapids area. I think that we will have excellent opportunities to show the community what hams can do to communicate with the world. Friends, it is time that we join together demonstrate to our community that we are here to serve in whatever way we can. Happy New Year 2007.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the next club meeting. Please let me know if there any items that need to be on the agenda for that meeting. Until then,

73's Bob Moody, AB8NC



Why Can't Hams Talk? A treatise of topics for further discussion.

By Ray Abraczinskas, W8HVG

Catchy title huh? Got your attention? I hope so because maybe this article will cause you to think about the situations and may even create some conversation on the ham bands. The main reason for this article is to think about what we say and do with our great amateur radio privilege.

First, we need to add some appropriately descriptive words to the title, like *nicely, politely, often, about interesting things, to other hams, and like they do in real life*. For example, why can't hams talk nicely? Why can't hams talk about interesting things? And why can't hams talk to other hams? Why can't they talk like in real life person to person? Maybe you can add your own example scenarios! Of course hams do talk to other hams on the radio, by definition it's the hobby! And there are hams that do talk nicely, politely, and about interesting things, but there are those that often don't. One way to greatly improve ham radio is to do these simple things. That is, talk nicely, politely, about interesting things, and welcome all other hams. Talk like you would in person and try to meet all the hams that you can and help them to improve also. Think about it. Why can't hams talk?

There are hams that seem to talk a lot and never say anything and there are hams that say the same thing over and over. There are hams that support clubs and organizations and there are hams that never contribute or do anything. There are hams that complain about everything and there are hams that openly offer to help. There are hams that explore cultures on the air and there are hams that just exchange signal reports and sign clear. There are hams that help other hams and there are hams that intentionally interfere with other hams conversations. There are hams that actually say they don't like "no coders" and there are hams that will leave the conversation if another ham joins in. What's happening in our world of wonderful privilege? Why can't hams talk?

I've been an active ham for over 50 years now. You can look up my call on QRZ and read my story. "Active" is a quantitative word and I can truly say that I have operated on one of the bands from 160m to 70cm often during those 50 years and worked on many different kinds of equipment and many types of antennas. For the last three-decades, I've been the Trustee of a wide-area linked 2m repeater system (www.w8hvg.org) which involves working with several clubs and organizations throughout Michigan. Not that all that makes me an expert on these matters but I do have a lot of observations for my comments. Someone once said on the ham bands that an opinion is not necessarily based on factual data so these comments are beyond opinions.

One thing that continues to be good is that our ham radio capabilities continue to change. We have more frequencies and modes to operate than ever but how many hams take advantage of them? The equipment available to us is mind-boggling but there are still things that can be built. The license restructuring and VE program has been very good. It allows more people easy access to the hobby but how many clubs are taking advantage of growing their numbers with classes and license exams? If we all would bring one new ham into the hobby a year, our ranks would double! And who trains all the new hams? In the last decade, it seems there has been more "splinter-growth" of ham clubs. There is an increased number of clubs occurring. But somehow in the last five years, the total number of hams in the U.S. has gone down just under 28,000. Attendance at hamfests seems to be decreasing probably due to the Internet. Many repeaters seem to be getting quieter than ever. Changes are occurring. Hams need to talk.

Emergency communications backup is one of the primary reasons for ham radio's existence so why do certain hams pooh-poo the training that occurs on the link repeater system during the West-Michigan Traffic Nets? I believe that more people listen than actually check into the net, which means that they still get some familiarity anyway (one always learns by listening). Listening is a skill that needs to be developed. It's sometimes more important than talking. There was this ham on one of the repeaters that would always break into an on-going informative discussion, just to say, I don't know who all is in here yet and what the conversation is about, but put me in the roundtable. And then he doesn't turn it over to someone. Duh!

Listening on 20m you can sometimes hear a ham in western Canada continually chastising a ham in Kalamazoo along with calling Riley Hollingsworth names. He goes on for hours in a tirade claiming he was on the frequency first. If it weren't for Mr. Hollingsworth's great efforts, ham radio would be a big mess today. Hams need to talk nicely.

Ham radio is more than the ego trip of having the strongest signal on the band, the biggest station, winning contests, working the most contacts in all the countries, states, counties and 10-10 members. In doing all that, hams usually aren't talking; they're just exchanging reports for a QSL card or certificate. Talking means sharing, helping, exploring, learning, teaching, and expanding our ranks.

On most all the bands (when they are open and active) you can find nets and roundtables galore. Some nets have catchy titles and have existed (met religiously) for years. Some nets provide a real service; some seem to just provide a home for hams that can't talk. Roundtables are great, if you are welcome and accepted when checking in, bad if you're not. In many of the nets and roundtables, hams seem to be communicating but are they really talking? Are they exchanging meaningful information or are they saying the same kind of stuff they said yesterday, last night, and last week? Like, the weather is ..., the rig here is ..., your signal is ..., my SWR is ..., I should work on my ..., the band conditions are ..., etc. Think about ALL the talent and expertise involved in all the ham radio operators. What an education we all would receive if hams could really talk!

Repeaters are wonderful assets as they provide an extension to a ham's capability and a valuable service in dire need. I think that quiet repeaters are useless, a waste of an asset. But then the same person(s) talking most of the day, everyday, saying the same things over and over, will eventually contribute to the repeater becoming quiet. All hams (in the repeater coverage area) need to talk. There has to be a sensible balance, especially on a wide-area repeater system.

Some really dumb things heard on repeaters lately include the hams that switched repeaters because they could not stand listening (and talking) to the blind lady that got her license recently. There is the 'ham nut' that sometimes mocks the ham that talks with a raspy voice because he has one vocal chord. The 'ham nut' also occasionally mocks the mentally challenged ham that is in a care facility, which by the way can talk about more subject matter than most hams. Those hams all worked very hard to get their license and then they experience that kind of behavior. Maybe it's an indication of the world problem. Those hams that antagonize can't talk but they must satisfy their ego somehow! They have never really learned how to use their ON / OFF switch.

(continued on page 7)

Brain Teaser— WA4FRJ

Here's one for our members. Take the letters in these words and arrange them to make three words that explain what's being talked about: HERE COME DOTS

Answer to the last Brain Teaser, "Busy Bee."

The trains start 60 miles apart and are heading for each other at 30 miles per hour. That says that in one hour they will meet. The bee flies 40 miles per hour as it flies back and forth between the trains and it will also travel for one hour. Thus it flies 40 miles.

ARGYL Hamfest

The December 16th ARGYL Hamfest was, in a word, awesome. We had heard that it was good but it was way beyond good. ARGYL is the acronym for "Amateur Radio Group of Youth in Lowell." This organization is formed of youth from all local schools including public, charter, home schooled and parochial. This very active group runs two repeaters; a two meter and a 440. The two meter offers echo link and is on 146.620, negative offset and 94.8 PL. The 440 is 443.85 with an input of 448.85 and a PL of 94.8. The ARGYL advisor is WW8WW, Al Eckman, who we met at the event. He and the club members do outstanding work and their involvement is a model for what we would like to have here in our proposed affiliated youth club. Their club is also an ARRL Special Service Club. That's impressive.

Seen at the swap, and I'm sure we missed someone from our club, were George (W8OWN) and Helen Rouman, David Huhtala (KC8WGA) and Mike (KD8DIB) and Patricia MacKay.

The event is held in the Lowell High School, a beautiful facility that has a brightly lit gym where the tables were set up. ComDac was there along with a number of other familiar vendors. Our members couldn't resist buying something so Mike's wife had a mysterious bag that turned out to have an HT in it, David ended up with a speaker mike and a nifty LED badge and I couldn't resist an ICOM HT that ComDac offered. We didn't count tables but there were quite a few and a whole bunch of interesting goodies for sale.

Dale Williams, our affable section manager, was running the ARRL information table and down the hall a walk-in VE session was going on.

This is a hamfest that is fun, growing and great to attend. You can get information about ARGYL activities at:

www.argyl.org/index.html

David's Propagation Report: David Huhtala—KC8WGA

Here's a reference to a really neat site run by Julian Moss, G4ILO, in England. He is a ham and a software guru. The site is very interesting. On the download page is some propagation prediction software that you can download and use for free. It has very nice graphics. The site is: www.g4ilo.com/

Now for my prediction: I am going to stick with 40 meters as a favorite. I also think we might have some good VHF band openings. You won't know it if you don't monitor so keep your radio warmed up!

I'll look for you on the air and don't forget I work CW as well as phone!
73 David KC8WGA

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There are hams that demonstrate their technical ability by just kerchunking and kerchunking the repeater. Apparently they like to hear the courtesy tone, it must give them a feeling of power. And there are hams that set their radio and/or microphone on the car seat or in the ashtray while not using an inexpensive mic hangup clip. Yes, you guessed it! Everyone on the repeater has to listen as they drive around with a stuck mic, and during that situation, hams can't talk.

Enough of these examples; they could go on and on. What's the bottom line? What's the solution? Well, the answer lies in people. People can and must make the difference and things will always improve. The ARRL has continually strived to improve ham radio with recommendations, information and programs such as the recent "Hello" campaign celebrating 100 years of radio. Ham radio is a privilege and an asset to our lives. It involves talking (listening too). Did you ever think about the fact that ham radio could NOT exist without talking? So let's all try to talk *nicely, politely, often, about interesting things, to other hams and, like we do in real life*. Let's try to improve!

A simple algorithm I've found and used throughout my life is using the 'six-questions of life' approach to any situation you face. Ask Who, What, When Where, How and Why, while simply adding what specifics you want know and then do it again and again. It'll make a more interesting conversation and you'll talk more.

Comments and suggestions about this treatise can be sent to the author at w8hvg@w8hvg.org and/or you can talk to me on the link repeater system.

PROPOSED CHANGE TO DUES STRUCTURE

A change to the dues structure was proposed at the last meeting. Specifically, this change involves dues paid by college students. **It was recommended that college students wishing to become members would pay \$15.00 a year instead of the normal \$25 amount.** High school students would continue to be members, free of charge. The dues for other members remains at \$25.00. This recommendation will be voted on at the next club meeting - come and make your feelings known. If passed, the recommendation will be added to the By-Laws. A majority vote of members present at the next meeting will make this decision.

Time to pay your 2007 YEARLY DUES

Your dues payment **IS DUE JANUARY 1, 2007**. If dues are not paid before March 1, 2007, your name will be dropped from active membership. Send in your dues payment right now so that your membership will not be interrupted. Thank you for your continued support of our club and the hobby of amateur radio.

Call: _____ Class: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Dues \$25.00 for 2007. _____ Donation: _____

Dues payable by January 1, 2007. Checks should be made out to the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club (BRAARC). Mail your check and this form to Sue Behler
511 Spring Street, Big Rapids, MI 49307 or bring your dues to the next meeting.

BRAARC Web Site

The secure web page for members only is bigrapidsarc.net

Jake Spence in the new Webmaster for our web page.

. You may use this page to view/read/print future newsletters online. This will have color pictures and will be easy to read. Your user name will be your call sign. Please send Jake Spence KI8CK, the password that you want to use so that he can add you to the list. Contact him at jakeaspence@charter.net Those who no longer wish to receive a paper copy should let the Editor know and provide him with an email address so he can send out a reminder when the newsletter is posted to the website. Contact Gordon at : gordon-kc8wfx@usa.net



CLUB NETS

440 NET Sundays at 7:30 PM
2 Meter Net Tuesdays at 9:00 PM

ARES/RACES Net 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 9:00 PM on the 2 Meter repeater.

If you want to be the net control station, for 2 meter or 440 nets, contact Tom Behler KB8TYJ email: kb8tyj@arrl.net or phone 231-592-9854

The Michigan State Police-Emergency Management & Homeland Security Training Center (EMHSTC) has many training opportunities for you in the upcoming year. Online registration is now available for all EMHSTC courses. http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3507_5914---.00.html for course information and to register for courses by clicking on the "2006-2007 Training Course Link."

Next BRAARC monthly meeting
Thursday January 4 at 7 p.m.
In the classroom of the
Department Of Public Safety
building 435 North Michigan
Ave in down town Big Rapids.



ARES/RACES Training – go to <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWep/IS/is22.asp>

Next Emergency committee meeting 8 February 2007.

HF test net – This is statewide, on the 2nd Tuesday each month at 7pm on 3.932 MHZ on LSB.



DEC 06

P.O. BOX 343, PARIS, MI 49338

