

# Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

June 2008

PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338 Pres. Steve Cowan Web Page: [www.braarc.net](http://www.braarc.net) Editor: Phil – [phildolly@power-net.net](mailto:phildolly@power-net.net)

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## Note from the President:

The first thing I would like to say is thank you to all that helped me when I took over as club president. Tom Bray was a great president and his shoes will be hard to fill.

I would like to congratulate **Patricia McKay** for winning the all-townships contest. The contest really helped in getting the repeater a workout and there are other contest in the works.

The club dinner was a success with a great meal and a lot of good conversation. I would like to thank the McKay's for all their hard work in getting it all set up. Speaking of work, field day is right around the corner and we need volunteers to help out with set-up, take down, and the many steps that are involved over the weekend. Last years field day was really nice and I think that we as a group can make this years just as good. So if you can help please get hold of myself, Mike KD8DIB or Don WA4FRJ.

I almost forgot, construction day will be at field day this year so if you want some Anderson power poles we will have a construction table set up. So please stop by.

73 KD8DHZ  
Steve

## May 1, 2008 BRAARC Meeting Minutes by Mike McKay, KD8DIB

**Call to order:** 7:07 pm by Steve, KD8DHZ  
**Guests:** Pat Hillenbrant, Josh Resfort

**Secretary's report:** April 2008 minutes submitted by Mike, KD8DIB and approved.

**Treasurer's report:** May 2008 Financial Report submitted by Sue, KC8IFP and approved.

## Announcements:

- 440 on the air w/ temp antenna. 440 Sunday Nets have restarted at 7:30pm.
- June Club Meeting: June 5, 2008 at Big Rapids City Hall
- July Club Meeting: July 3, 2008 at Big Rapids DPS building
- We need net controls sign up with Tom, KB8TYJ – no net controls, no nets!
- 2 meter net on 146.74 repeater Tuesdays at 9pm
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays – Digital Net on 2 meter repeater at 8pm - no activity
- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays – ARES / RACES Net at 9pm
- Email [Jakeaspence@charter.net](mailto:Jakeaspence@charter.net) to join the Club Listserve.
- May 31 – Girls on the Run Saturday Morning – 9am to noon Sign up with Tom, KB8TYJ Northend Park in Big Rapids.
- Mini-swap/foxhunt/picnic - June 14
- July 4 Airfest at Robinhood in Big Rapids
- July 11- 18 Michiganader bike tour

- Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) Group. Contact Mike, KD8DIB for more info or to join.
- Diane, KD8HYI will be offering IS courses (100,200,300,400,700,& 800) at Osceola County. Contact Diane to sign up.

#### Old Business:

- Vanity call for EOC's submitted to FCC by Tom, KB8TYJ and Mike, KD8DIB for a total club cost of \$23.40. Received call KD8ILD for Osceola County EOC and will be applying for vanity call soon. Motion to pay application fee for all three vanity calls approved by membership.
- Club Dinner tickets sales
- Powerwerx supplies arrived – prices to be set and offer a construction event at field day
- Field day t-shirts orders
- Trail Mixer – need 12 to 15 hams to help out.
- Motion to purchase brackets to attach 440 antenna approved by members

#### New Business:

- N8OE Trustee – Peter, W8PET requested that the club choose a new trustee for the club call N8OE. Motion approved to change trustee to Tom, KB8TYJ approved by members
- Possible Club Patch opportunity for fund raiser
- Ham basics class survey receives positive responses
- Field Day Order needed by May 22. Motion to include awards in regular Field Day budget approved by membership (5 bottles, 5 pins, 3 shirts, 1 youth T-shirt, etc)
- Band Captains 40 M – Tom, KB8TYJ; 20 M – Jerry, KC8CII; 6 M - Don, WA4FRJ; 15/80 M – Mike, KD8DIB. Plan to be 3A with a GOTA station. Volunteers needed for set up, operations, and clean-up.
- Diane, KD8HYI to donate gifts for Field Day
- Board meeting May 22 at 7pm at Don's house (new location – Behler's House)

**Program:** Don's Antenna tall tails

**50/50 winner:** Steve, KD8DHZ donated back to club

**Newsletter:** Articles to Phil, KC8QOV before May 19, 2008 (phildolly@power-net.net)

**Club Breakfast:** Saturday, May 31, 2008 at the Wild Rose in Big Rapids at 8:00am due to Girls on the Run Event

**Refreshments at next meeting:** Valarie, KD8IAM  
**Adjourn:** 8:30 pm

#### Club Calendar:

##### JUNE

Monthly meeting Thurs. June 5<sup>th</sup> 7 pm – Big Rapids City Hall  
 IRA Swap June 7th  
 Club equipment insurance due  
 Post Office Box rental due  
 Field Day – June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29th  
 Sunday 440 net 7:30 pm  
 Tuesday 2 meter net 9 pm  
 ARES net Wed. June 11 & 25 9 pm  
 Club breakfast Sat. June 28<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am – Cranker's Restaurant in Big Rapids

##### JULY

Monthly meeting Thurs. July 3<sup>rd</sup> 7pm – DPS Building - classroom  
 Roben Hood Airport Fly-In - Fri., July 4<sup>th</sup> 6 am  
 Michigander Bike Tour July 11 – 18th  
 Special Service Club Renewal – even numbered years  
 Sunday 440 net 7:30 pm  
 Tuesday 2 meter net 9 pm  
 ARES net Wed. July 9 & 23 9 pm

##### AUGUST

Club breakfast Sat. Aug. 2<sup>nd</sup> 8:30 am - Chuck Wagon in Reed City  
 Monthly meeting Thurs. Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> 7pm – DPS Building - classroom  
 Emergency Comm. Mtg. Thurs. Aug. 14<sup>th</sup> 7pm - Central Dispatch  
 Nomination of officers  
 Annual Club picnic  
 Sunday 440 net 7:30 pm  
 Tuesday 2 meter net 9pm  
 ARES net Wed. Aug. 13 & 27 9 pm  
 Club breakfast Sat. Aug. 30<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am – Wild Rose Cafe in Big Rapids

**Please let Steve, KD8DHZ, know by June 5 (next club meeting) what club items/equipment/materials you are in possession of. Needed for inventory!!**

## Updated Club Announcements

### 1. Important upcoming events:

A. May-June club breakfast Saturday: May 31 at 8:30 a.m. at the Wild Rose Cafe in Big Rapids.

B. Girls On The Run public service communications event Saturday: May 31 at approximately 9 a.m. at North End Park in Big Rapids. If you can help with communications, contact Tom Behler: KB8TYJ. The 440 repeater will be used for this event.

C. June BRAARC club meeting Thursday: June 5 at 7 p.m. at Big Rapids City Hall Commission Meeting Room—226 N. Michigan in Big Rapids.

D. BRAARC Field Day Saturday: June 28, and Sunday: June 29<sup>th</sup>—If you'd like to help organize the effort, or assist with actual set-up and take-down, contact Steve Cowan (KD8DHZ), Mike McKay (KD8DIB), or Don Macconnel (WA4FRJ).

### 2. Club nets:

A. 440 general net on 443.900 repeater Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m.—

B. 2-meter general net on 146.74 repeater Tuesday evenings at 9 p.m.

C. Local ARES/RACES net on 146.74 2-meter repeater the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 9 p.m.

3. BRAARC fox hunt/miniswap/picnic to be rescheduled - more details to come as the time gets decided. If you can help, contact either Mike McKay (KD8DIB), or Don Macconnel (WA4FRJ).

4. If you would like to serve as net control for one or more of the BRAARC club nets, contact Tom Behler: KB8TYJ).

5. A BRAARC e-mail listserv or users group has been established for all BRAARC members to use as a forum for exchanging thoughts, ideas, questions, and any other concerns related to our club or amateur radio in general. If you'd like to join this group, please contact our club

web master, Jake Spence, KI8CK. Jake will get you signed up on the list, and will give you verification that your registration has been completed and accepted.

## Brainteaser

WA4FRJ

Last Month's Brainteaser:

A car wheel with a tire on it has a radius (r) of 15". The circumference of the tire is: 2 times Pi times r, (Pi=3.14...) So 2 times 3.14 times 15 = circumference

That gives a circumference of about 94.2..." Every time the wheel rotates once the car moves about 94.2..."

The tire goes flat and the distance from the center of the wheel to the ground goes from 15" to 12". Now how far does the car move when the wheel rotates once?

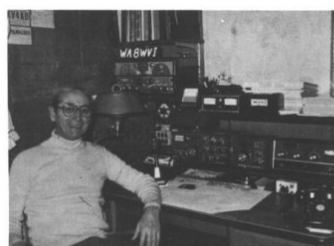
Answer:

The car still moves about 94.2 ..." Even though the tire is flat, the distance around it is the same. We can't treat a flat tire as a circle, it isn't.

**This month's Brainteaser:**

Would you rather a crocodile attack you or an alligator?

**Do you know this person? See next page!!**



**RALPH LE ROY**

1187 N. RIVER ROAD  
ST. CLAIR, MICH.  
48079



ST. CLAIR COUNTY

**WA8WVI**

The Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club would like to thank Ralph LeRoy for his generous donation of amateur radio equipment. The equipment donation is as follows:

1. Kenwood AT-180 antenna tuner
2. Kenwood SP-820 speaker
3. Kenwood PS-430 power supply
4. Kenwood TR-7730 Transceiver
5. Kenwood KPS-7 Power Supply
6. Kenwood TS-430s Transceiver
7. Kenwood MC-85 Microphone
8. HTX-202 HT
9. Bencher paddle
10. MFJ econo keyer 2
11. Pyramid PS-22KX power supply
12. Speaker
13. Johnson messenger 123A
14. R.L. Drake TV-1000 low pass filter

This donation will be put to good use for the club as a whole, with some of it being sold and the money going to the general fund and other equipment being used by the club for Field Day and other events.

73 KD8DHZ  
Steve

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Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club now has a Facebook Group. Facebook?!? What is Facebook you ask? "Facebook is a social utility that connects you with the people around you." Great, that tells me a lot. Now what does it really do?

I would compare Facebook to a packet radio bulletin board system. It allows uploading of pictures, internet links, discussion board topics, videos and messages. It gives our club a place to share ideas, show off the things we do and have fun outside of our normal activities. All group members can publish their own materials to the site with a few easy mouse clicks. So the site becomes a joint effort between all of the members.

This service is free but you must create a user account. There are many security options on the site that you will want to review closely to determine how much information will be published about you. The Group is "closed" and requires approval from the administrator to join. After registering your profile, a simple search from the Facebook site for Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club should produce a familiar result.

If you would like to join our Facebook Group or have any questions you may email Mike McKay, KD8DIB at [mckaym@ferris.edu](mailto:mckaym@ferris.edu) or request group membership through [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com).

## Girls on the Run

Don't forget that this year's Big Rapids Area Girls On The Run communications event will occur on Saturday: May 31st. We will need to meet at 9 a.m., at North End Park. The run itself starts at 10 a.m., but we will need the extra hour to get ourselves organized and in our respective locations along the route.

Right now, I have the following volunteers on my list:

1. Yours truly--KB8TYJ--Who will be serving as net control
2. Jim Orłowski--N8PUG--Who will be serving as net control's assistant
3. Mike McKay--KD8DIB
4. Patricia McKay--KD8GGD
5. Steve Cowan--KD8DHZ
6. Bill Stankey--N8MZB
7. George Rouman--W8OWN--who will be operating from his vehicle
8. Bob Croaker--WB8YPG--Will make the trip if needed.

As you can see, we have a good list of volunteers started, but we could still use one or two more.

If you can help, please contact me directly, and I'll be happy to put you on the list.

As I said earlier, the run starts at 10 a.m., and based on past experience, the run usually lasts an hour or so.

I am planning to use the 440 repeater for communications between net control, and the various check points along the route. However, if our 440 repeater should fail for some reason, please have 2-meter capability so that we can either go 2-meter simplex, or to the 2-meter repeater if needed.

Between now and the 31st, I'll have Sue check with the organizers regarding exactly where they'd like to have folks stationed.

P.S. Don't forget the club breakfast at the Wild Rose Cafe early Saturday morning. Most of us will probably get to the breakfast a bit early, so we can be ready to go over to North End Park by 9 a.m.

73 from Tom Behler: KB8TYJ

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### Ham Cram, or the One-Day Tech Class

by Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I used to be skeptical of one-day ham radio classes, sometimes called "Ham Cram" classes. After teaching a couple of these classes over the past year, however, I've become a supporter of this method of teaching, at least for the Technician Class license test.

One reason I'm an advocate of the one-day class is that I think a lot of people "learn by doing." I'm not an expert on pedagogy, but my guess is that more people learn by doing than learn by reading or by listening. That being the case, isn't it a good thing that new hams get their licenses quickly so that they can begin doing--thereby learning--more quickly?

Second, people are busy. Tell them that the class is going to eat up one evening a week for six to eight weeks and a lot of them will tell you that they just don't have the time to do it. Squeezing in six to eight hours on a Saturday is, however, something that they can do.

Critics of the one-day classes say that if people just cram for the test, they may learn enough for just long enough to pass the test, but they really don't know enough to be "good hams," whatever that may be. There's some truth to this. It's important not to abandon them once they get their tickets. I encourage all of the students to join a ham radio club and make myself available to answer any questions they may have as they get started in ham radio.

Critics also say that releasing this horde on the amateur bands will create nothing but chaos. Fortunately, I've personally seen no evidence that the hundreds of folks that have taken these classes across the country have created said chaos.

Make Your Next Class a One-Day Class I would encourage you to give this a try. Make your next Tech class a one-day class. You don't conduct Tech classes? Well, get started! Another benefit of the one-day class format is that it's easier to find teachers since it takes less time for them, too.

As I mentioned previously, over the past year, I've taught two "ham cram" classes. We've

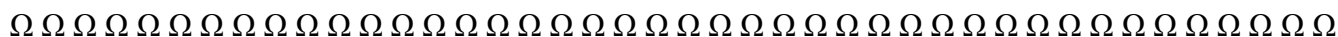
learned a few things along the way.

Perhaps the most important thing is to stress that students should study the material before coming to class. The study guide we use is one that I've written. You can find the KB6NU No-Nonsense Study Guide online at <http://www.kb6nu.com>. You can also purchase a pre-printed version of the study guide at [www.booklocker.com/books/3408.html](http://www.booklocker.com/books/3408.html).

Another key is to not get bogged down on a particular topic. Our class runs from 9 am to 3 pm, at which time, the VEs come in and give the test. To cover all of the material, you have to keep one eye on the clock and keep plowing ahead. To help you do this, a set of PowerPoint slides for teachers of Ham Cram Tech classes is available at <http://w9pe.us/>.

We conducted our first class last August. Nine out of twelve passed the test that day; the remaining three passed on their second attempt. In early May, we taught our second one-day class. This time, eleven out of twelve passed.

I am encouraged by these results, and I am planning to make these one-day classes a regularly-scheduled event here in Ann Arbor. Time will tell if these people become active, life-long hams, but so far, so good. If you have any questions about our experience with the one-day class, please e-mail me at [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).



*The article below is for the news letter with permission to reprint from Art Fettig, May 6, 2008... Mike*

### **Growth Unlimited**

When was the last time we really looked at what we do and how we do it? Over the past few years I've learned that hams are great volunteers and give well beyond most normal people. My friend Art produces a weekly newsletter along with the various other activities he pursues as an author

and professional speaker. It is a nice one page electronic newsletter about various safety and related topics. This week he was talking about volunteers and I couldn't resist sharing his message with all of you. Art has granted permission to reprint his article. I hope you enjoy this little true story. I know I did! Just hamming around, Mike McKay, KD8DIB

## Chair Man by Art Fettig

We had our Last Friday celebration the other night and at our church we featured a fantastic Tuba Quartet and free ice cream for all. This is an outdoor event involving the whole town with a lot of music everywhere, outside dining at many of our fine restaurants and hundreds of happy people just enjoying the community and the fine weather. I got there early and helped take some chairs down the outside steps and carried them over to where some people were setting up card tables for visitors so they could sit and listen to the fine music. My right knee had been bothering me as it sometimes does and I had been limping badly the day before. I went to our SportsPlex and my trainer-therapist did some magic and it wasn't feeling too badly as I started out that evening. About 6 trips up and down those stairs with armfuls of chairs were beginning to tell on me so I stopped and let some others carry on. Then when the concert ended I immediately folded up some chairs and started carrying them up the stairs and into the church. I figured that maybe if I got it going before everyone left I might start a chair movement. One other fellow joined me and then another and most people wandered on down the street. One young, healthy looking volunteer I did not know who had just probably come down the street as a visitor had gathered about a dozen chairs and lined them up to the bottom of the stairs and he smiled at me and said, "I brought 'em to the bottom of the stairs," and then he waved and walked off.

I'll be honest. I carried a few more chairs upstairs and my leg was really bothering me and so I gathered up my wife and we walked off into the night.

Now I've been thinking about that young fellow. He saw a need. He pitched right in and he made a real contribution. I

appreciate his help. He did a whale of a lot more than most who were there. The only thing is, he didn't take the time to observe the entire situation. Those chairs needed moving up a dozen steps, down a long hall and then up another ten or so steps. He just got involved with the tip of the iceberg, felt good about his contribution to the cause and then he moved on. I did just about what he did only I claimed a disability excuse for the moment.

What about all the other people in the world...Those who didn't show up...those who showed up and enjoyed themselves and were oblivious to the need; those in the majority who just didn't want to get involved?

And I have reached this conclusion. That situation was just about like most of life.

There are givers, there are takers, there are doers and those who don't seem to realize that anything is going on. It is life and the only one that we have any real control over is ourselves and our own actions. The secret to being happy and healthy is to be a giver and a doer and to spend the moments enjoying an active life and to have the good sense to let others take care of their own lives. That is what I am going to try to concentrate on the rest of the day.

Art Fettig is well known as an author and a professional speaker but many others know him as a Songwriter and a Bongo Drummer. Over 50 of his songs have been recorded by Greg Brayton and they have 4 CD's available. ***Songs for Pathetic Lovers, A Mixed Bag, Songs for Today and Crotchety Songs.*** Art occasionally performs at the some of the finest bistros in North Carolina where he appears on bongos with noted classical flamenco guitarist Julio Carrasco and tenor sax player Don Neish. Art Fettig 1-800-441-7676 919-732-6994 artfettig@aol.com Website - [www.artfettig.com](http://www.artfettig.com)

**What is a Good Time??? Having a great meal and conversation with your fellow hams!!!**



**Club dinner, May 8, West Commons  
Community Center, Ferris State University**

**Thank you Sue, KC8IFP, for the great pics**

Dan KB6NU

## Build Something!

A couple of years ago, a group of us were talking on the club repeater, and the talk got around to building stuff. One of the guys said, "You can't really build anything anymore." I almost fell out of my chair. That's simply not true. Heathkit may be just a fond memory, but there are still many companies out there selling kits that are not only fun to build, but are useful additions to the ham shack.

Here are a couple of sources: \* Elecraft ([www.elecraft.com](http://www.elecraft.com)). In my mind, Elecraft has become the premiere ham radio kit company, if not the premiere ham radio company, period. The new K3, for example, outperforms just about anything on the market by many accounts. Personally, I have built the KX-1, which is a real blast to operate from a park bench or to take on vacation. I also have and use the W1 wattmeter. \* TenTec ([radio.tentec.com/kits](http://radio.tentec.com/kits)). While perhaps known more for their ready-made rigs, they also sell a line of single-band transceivers and receiver kits.

\* QRP Kits ([www.qrpkits.com](http://www.qrpkits.com)). QRPKits.Com sells kits that were originally projects of the Northern California QRP Club. My current General Class students are going to build the DC40A kit (\$40) as an exercise in building and as a way to learn about how radios work.

Below are some other companies whose kits have good reputations, but with which I have no personal experience:

\* Small Wonder Labs  
([www.smallwonderlabs.com](http://www.smallwonderlabs.com))

\* Wilderness Radio  
([www.fix.net/~jparker/wild.html](http://www.fix.net/~jparker/wild.html))

\* Milestone Technologies  
([www.mtechnologies.com](http://www.mtechnologies.com))

\* Almost All Digital Electronics

([www.aade.com/index.html](http://www.aade.com/index.html))

\* FAR Circuits ([www.farcircuits.net](http://www.farcircuits.net))

\* Jackson Harbor

([home.att.net/~jacksonharbor/ham.htm](http://home.att.net/~jacksonharbor/ham.htm))

\* QRPme ([www.qrpme.com/](http://www.qrpme.com/))

\* Linear Amp UK ([www.linamp.co.uk](http://www.linamp.co.uk))

QRP clubs are also a good source of cool kits. The problem with QRP clubs is that they order parts only for a very short run of kits. Once they sell out, the kits are no longer available. Even so, here are some clubs that are worth checking out:

\* American QRP Club ([www.amqrp.org](http://www.amqrp.org))

\* Four State QRP Club  
([4sqrp.com/kits/kits.htm](http://4sqrp.com/kits/kits.htm))

\* NORTEX ([www.kk5na.com/nortex.htm](http://www.kk5na.com/nortex.htm))

Ready to rock and roll? Here are a couple websites that you might want to check out before you dive in: \* Electronic Construction from A to Z

([www.mtechnologies.com/building/atoz.htm](http://www.mtechnologies.com/building/atoz.htm)).

This site includes a page that lists all the tools you'll need to become a successful kit builder. \* Crystal Sets to Sideband: A Guide to Building an Amateur Radio Station

([www.qsl.net/k3pd/book.html](http://www.qsl.net/k3pd/book.html)). This site not only discusses kit building, but also radio theory.

\* The Art of Kit Building  
([ww2.netnitco.net/users/wt9w/kit%20building.html](http://ww2.netnitco.net/users/wt9w/kit%20building.html))

I hope that I've whetted your appetite for building a kit or two.

They're a lot of fun to build, and you really do get a rush from operating a radio or using a piece of test equipment that you built yourself.

What have you built lately? Let Dan know.

Email him at

[cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).

Remember, notify Steve, KD8DHZ, if you are in possession of any club materials/equipment by June 5, next club meeting. Inventory needs to be updated. Thank you.

If you have items to sell and would like them in the newsletter, please let Phil, KC8QOV, know by e-mailing [phildolly@power-net.net](mailto:phildolly@power-net.net).

The next newsletter, July 08, will be published early due to editors vacation plans. All newsletter items must be to Phil, KC8QOV, by June 11.

