



Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

August 2009

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From the Presidents Desk

First of all, good-bye and good luck to Tom and Sue Behler. What a great gathering at the

field day potluck. Thanks to all who made field day happen this year.

At the August meeting we will be forming a nominations committee, for the election of 2009-2010 club officers, with elections in September.

73

Jim N8PUG

BRAARC July 2, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Call to order: 7:05 p.m. Called to order by Jim N8PUG

Guests: none

Announcements:

- Fly in July 4th Freedom Airfest car/motorcycle & planes flying in
- Mike explained what volunteers would do. Come early 7 a.m.-11:30

WA4FRJ Don- is coordinator

W80WN George

Chris Cakes- pancake flipper will be serving breakfast

Secretary's Report:

- Discussed and approved. Sent sympathy card to Bill Kelso.

• **Treasurer's report:**

- Discussed and approved.
- Treasurer to take over for June, July, August and September
- Shila to take over until September: Mike KD8DIB, Shila KD8IAL, Lavonne KD8LAB will be the signatures on checking accounts.

New Business

- Field day report Mike KD8DIB QSO points approx. 270. About 31 people/3 youth contacts
- Postponed Ham-in-a-Day
- Michigander: Approved to let them use the 2-meter repeater July 15-16. Mike KD8DIB passed around schedule and asked for volunteers.

- 2-meter repeater needs to be looked. Approved. Mike Kd8DIB, Don, Gary WB8WIA to check it out Sunday, July 12.
- Tom KB8TYJ: Trustee of Club Call and will remain so until some point when the club decides who will take over.
- Thank you card passed around for Jerry Buskirk and Tractor Club for using their space. Approved to donate \$25 for the use of the grounds. Don WA4FRJ is going to match the contribution.
- Certificate of appreciation presented to David KC8WGA for being youth coordinator.

Old Business

- Jim N8PUG and Russ will be setting a time for antenna work day/night.

Program: Mike KD8DIB presented Montreal Fox Controller

Wrap up items:

- **Newsletter Articles** – To Phil KC8QOV by July 20 or 21
- **Club Breakfast** – 9am on 08/01/09 at Sharon’s
- **Treats:** Bob WB8YPG
- **50/50 winner:** Bob WB8YPG
- **Next meeting:** 08/0609, 7PM at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety Building.
- Val passed out Hambucks to the net controllers and net participants. 2 net sheets are still outstanding, she will catch those up when she receives them.
- A sad good bye to the Behler’s

Adjourned: 8:20 PM

Minutes taken by Shila KD8IAL

Announcements:

August 1, Saturday, Club Breakfast at Sharon’s at 9am. This is a breakfast buffet so you should find something you can enjoy. Come and enjoy the company and have a cup of coffee if you’re not hungry.

August 6, Thursday, Club meeting at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety Building, 7pm sharp.

Brainteaser

Don MacConnel WA4FRJ

Last month’s Brain Teaser

Three hams check into a somewhat seedy motel in Dayton. They pay \$30 to the manager and go to their room. The manager suddenly remembers that the discount room rate is \$25 and gives \$5 to an assistant to return to the hams. On the way to the room the assistant reasons that \$5 would be difficult to share among three hams so he pockets \$2 and gives \$1 to each person. Now each person paid \$10 and got back \$1. So they paid \$9 each, totaling \$27. The bellboy has \$2, totaling \$29. Where is the missing \$1?

Answer: You have to be careful as to where the money is. The motel manager has \$25, the bellboy has \$2 and each of the three hams has one dollar so the thirty dollars is accounted for. No money is missing.

Stuart's mother then inquired about taking the test. I explained that our Volunteer Examiners give the test every second Saturday of the month and gave her the URL of our website. She said that Stuart had been studying and was ready to take the test.

Unfortunately, they had to leave at that point. I told Stuart's mother that we'd be there through 2pm Sunday and to come back any time. She said that they'd definitely be back the next day.

Stuart Makes His First Contact

Stuart and his mother returned about 1:30 pm on Sunday. He wanted to see the VHF/UHF station again, so that was our first stop. He took a couple of photos of the setup, and then I suggested we go over to the GOTA station. When we first got there, someone was at the mike, but shortly afterwards, they got up, and Stuart and I took the controls.

When we first sat down, I made a few contacts using my call to show him how to use the paddle. I noted that holding the levers down produces a series of dits or dahs, and that by tapping the other lever while holding down the first, you can produce a dit between dahs or a dah between dits.

Then, I asked him if he'd like to try it. He said yes, so just to see how it would go, I tuned up to above 7100 kHz. There was no activity up there, so I set the keyer speed to 15 wpm and told him to send my callsign a few times. He reached over with his left hand and sent it perfectly. Now, remember, this is someone who'd never touched a paddle of any kind before. Not only that, he even sent the K (dah-di-dah) iambically! That is to say that he held the dah paddle while tapping the dit paddle to slip in a dit between the two dahs.

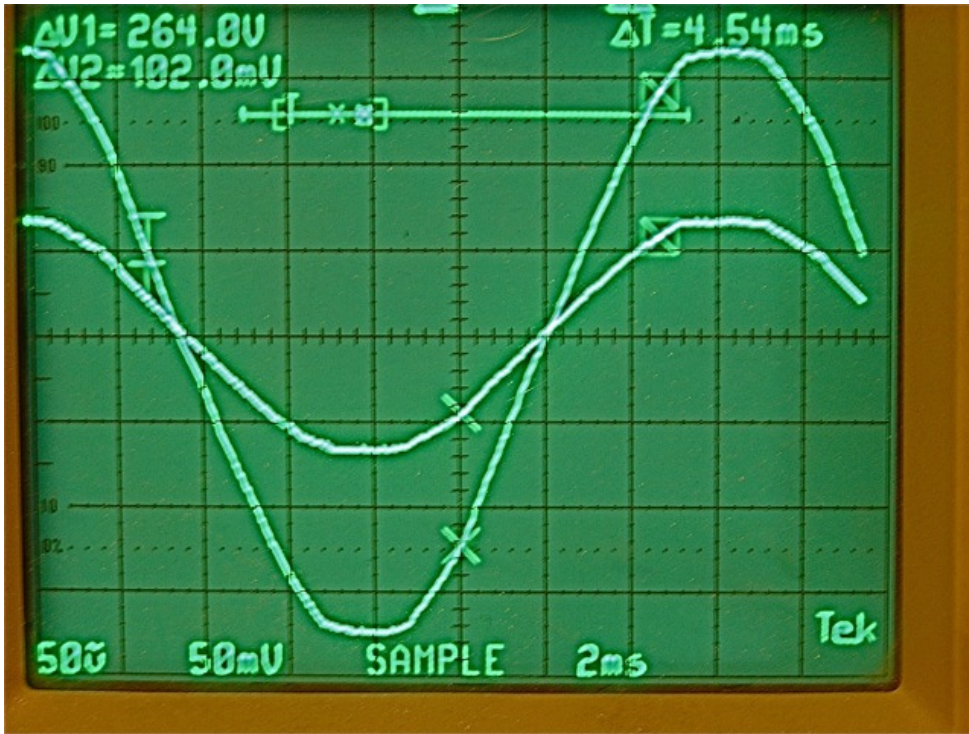
Then, I asked if he'd like to make some contacts. He said yes, so I said, "Let's switch seats." We switched seats, and I said, "OK, tune around a little and find a strong station calling CQ." We found K2ZR, and I coached him a little on how to reply. "Now, remember," I said, "we're going to use the W8PGW callsign." When I gave him the nod to send, he reached over with his RIGHT hand and sent W8PGW perfectly! When K2ZR replied with our call and the exchange, I coached him to reply with "4A MI." Not only did he do that, but he slipped in a "R" to denote that we'd copied the exchange. When K2ZR replied with a "TU," I showed him how to log the contact.

That's all the coaching I needed to do. After the first contact, I said, "OK. Now, tune around for another station calling CQ, and we'll make another contact." He was off to the races. As soon as he made a contact, he jumped up to type it into the log. His arms weren't long enough to reach the computer from where he was seated.

When we started, the keyer speed was set to 15 wpm. After a couple of contacts, I asked if he might want to send faster. When he said OK, I bumped it up to 18 wpm. After a few QSOs with only a couple of mistakes, he asked if we could go faster, so I set it at 20 wpm. Again, only a couple of mistakes, so we bumped it up to 22 wpm. There, he started making more mistakes, but let me repeat, he never touched any kind of key before in his life. I have no doubt that with a little practice, he could easily do 30 wpm.

Overall, he made 12 contacts in the 21 minutes he operated the station. Not a bad rate for someone who'd never sent a character of Morse Code in his life, don't you think?

Unfortunately, Stuart was not able to take the



Incandescent (standard) Lamp Current, 0.5 amps/division, and Applied Voltage



CFL Lamp Current, 0.5 amps/division, and Applied Voltage

Wow, the current into the **23 watt CFL** peaks at **1.3 amps**. The consumed power is 23 watts but the peak wattage is **156** watts. By contrast the **60 watt** incandescent lamp draws a peak of **0.68 amps** or **82** watts. From the power company's electric meter standpoint, the 23 watt CFL consumes 23 watts and the 60 watt incandescent lamp consumes 60 watts. Well, if we get charged for the 23 watts everything is just fine. Not so. That peak current has to come from somewhere and it has to be supplied by the power company and be delivered to us through the wires in our homes and the power company grid.

The extra current causes extra losses in the power grid and wires in our homes. Also because it is drawn in bursts, it creates what are known as "harmonic" currents. Harmonic currents also cause losses in the power grid. Now, does a CFL save energy? Sure it does but not as much as the EPA and others claim.

What about the claimed life? 10,000 hours is a nice number but even if it is achieved all fluorescent lights lose brightness over time. By the end of claimed life, fluorescent lamps lose about 50% of the original brightness. After using dozens of CFL's in the house I've learned that the life of some of them is fairly long. It seems to depend on how much I pay. Thus far in my house the expensive CFL's last about four or five times longer than standard incandescent lamps. The cheap ones sometimes go in just a few weeks. Even the expensive ones may fail within a few weeks but in general they do last longer.

Lighting quality varies with manufacturer. None of the CFL's exhibit entirely balanced, natural light. At best the warm white ones look natural until compared with incandescent lamps or daytime lighting. Then all of them look a little greenish yellow.

CFL's, aside from the stupid situation of disposal, do offer energy savings. They don't perform well in very cold environments and do take a while to warm up. The initial cost is high and cost payback is not that easy to calculate since one or two early failures easily eat up savings. Losses in the power grid from the harmonic currents are unknown to me but power companies are aware of the problem and are working it.

What's my favorite? For good reading lighting I like Halogena® incandescent lamps made by Phillips. Also, I'm watching their development of newer, more efficient halogen lamps. For kitchen lighting I use CFL's by GE. I bought a case of a lower priced brand and they have performed poorly. No matter what brand, they all seem to come from China and product quality may vary.

Note: For you technical types out there, the scope picture of the voltage waveform shows distortion. That was my fault. There was a ground loop that messed up the voltage waveform. My scope pictures were handheld camera work since the plotter ran out of pens.



Good Luck Tom, KB8TYJ and Sue, KC8IFP on your new endeavor. May the hams of Louisville and Boulder welcome you with enthusiasm. We will miss you but hope to keep in touch. Announcements will never be the same again for the BRAARC nor will potlucks and all the other exciting stuff in Big Rapids.





Thanks to Jerry, KC8CII, and the Big Rapids Antique Farm & Power Club for allowing the BRAARC to conduct their field day activities on their site. It is greatly appreciated.

Mike, KD8DIB, and Jim, N8PUG, discuss some field day events.



During the field day event the club also had a going away potluck for the Behlers. As usual, there were plenty of eaters.



Young hams back for a visit – Justin, Julie, and Kevin

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