

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

October 2011

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

If you did not attend the club meeting in September, you missed another awesome time:

- Our main program was presented by Doug Blakemore on computer security, EMF, and the Information Security and Intelligence (ISI) program at Ferris. The ISI program at Ferris was designated as a Center of Excellence for Information assurance by the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Dr. Blakemore also talked about solar flares and EMP that could entirely disrupt communications and all digital-based devices (computers, phones, pads, satellites, power grids, etc.).
- Mike McKay rounded out the meeting with a Tech Corner presentation on the ARES/RACES Go Box, which was put together by Mike for the county's emergency operations.

Club elections held and officers for 2011-2012 are:

- Secretary – Sue Behler (KC8IFP)

- Treasurer – Jens Rick (KC8OIV)
- Vice President – Jeff Sell (K8OE)
- President – Jim Woolen (K4UIH)

Tom Behler, Mecosta County EC-RO is updating the ARES and RACES list. Please let him know if you would still like to participate in these two groups. Some paperwork is necessary.

Tom has also put together a month-long event, which will be called the "Worked All Prefixes" contest, and will occur, on all three of our repeaters (2 meters, 440, and 6 meters) during October. See details in this newsletter.

Our Celebrity Fund Raiser will again be held on October 18th (6-8 PM) at Cankers' restaurant in Big Rapids. Look for more details in the very near future. Tell all of your friends to come and eat at Cranker's that night so we can raise more money.

Unfortunately, I will not be at the October meeting because of a business trip to Dayton (Ohio). Jeff Sell will be conducting the next club meeting on Thursday, October 6th at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety.

73s,
Jim
K4UI

Meeting Minutes: Unavailable at time of publishing. Meeting pretty well covered in President's comments.

Announcements:

Saturday, October 1, 9:00AM, Breakfast at Sharon's Restaurant in Rogers Heights.

Sun, October 2, 12pm – 3pm, Crop Walk, Big Rapids. Join us for this fun and worthwhile communication event. We need volunteers to staff check points along the walk route to monitor conditions.

Thursday, October 6, 7:00PM, Regular club meeting at Big Rapids Public Safety Building, 435 N. Michigan. Presentation Topic: PSK31

Tue, October 18, 6pm – 8pm, Crankers in Big Rapids. Join BRAARC at Crankers for this fun fundraising event. We need your help as a server or a diner. Donations from this event support club activities such as licensing exams, communication events, and equipment maintenance. We hope you'll join us and bring a friend or two.

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Brain Teaser:

Last Month's Brain Teaser:

Two guards were on duty outside a barracks. One faced up the road to watch for anyone approaching from the North.

The other looked down the road to see if anyone approached from the South. Suddenly one of them said to the other,

"Why are you smiling?"

How did he know his companion was smiling?

Solution:

They were facing each other.

As to why his companion was smiling, the world may never know.

This month's brain teaser

Submitted by Phil, KC8QOV:

What can run but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, and has a bed but never sleeps??

This month's column was written by Craig Miller, W8CR. I worked Craig about a month ago, and when he mentioned that he'd written articles for his club's newsletter, I asked if he'd like to provide a column occasionally. I hope you enjoy this column as much as I did.

73!

Dan KB6NU

Bitten by the Bug

By Craig Miller, W8CR

Ahhhhh, just put the kid on the bus, and the wife is on her way to the salt mine. Now, I have 45 minutes to see if I can scare up a quick QSO.

40 meters sounds pretty quiet this morning--no ear splitting static crashes. The usual morning CW junkies must have already headed off to work or out mowing the grass. I spin the dial down to 7.023 to see if any speedsters are still on. Some days, I can even keep up with them at 30-35 wpm. It must be later than I thought, though. Those guys are gone too.

Tuning back up to 7.030, I hear a couple of guys wrapping up a chat at about 20 wpm: "FB FRED MUST QRT TO WALK THE DOG 73 ES CUL..." (translation: "Good copy, Fred, but I really gotta go to the bathroom! Best regards and see you later.").

I spin the dial up to 7.032, and don't hear any beeps or boops. I guess here is where I'll cast my line. "QRL?" (translation: "Anybody out there working that last rare DX station for your DXCC that I can't hear?"). Nuttin' heard. I'll QRL one more time before "CQ CQ CQ DE W8CR W8CR K". Silence. Again "CQ CQ...". Just the hiss out of the speaker. Well maybe this ain't gonna happen today. One more time...

Bam – I got one! He's got a nice strong signal too. But, wait. What the ...? What is he sending me? "DAAAAHHHHHHH DIT DIT DIT DIT DAAAAAAHHHHHHH DAAAAAAHHHHHHHH DAAAAAAHHHHH DIT DITDITDIT DIT DIT DITDITDITDAAAAAAHHHHHHH." NUTS! He's using a bug, a mechanical key dating back to the old railroad days. It's an ingenious mechanism for sending high speed code, but it takes a lot of practice to send clear, copyable code. I can barely make out my callsign let alone his – this isn't gonna be fun.

I have two options:

1. Don't reply and pretend I didn't hear him. He's really strong, though, and most likely I am, too. He knows I can hear him. Plus, that's the coward's way out.
2. Answer him and tough it out.

I answer him. We exchange the usual stuff. My RST is 579, his name is Bill, and he lives in Niassa Fihls, errrrr, Niagara Falls, NY. "Niagara Falls, eh?" We've been wanting to visit there before our kid gets too old to even want to be seen with his parents, let alone ride in a car for 6 hours to look at water flowing over rocks. Plus, that's where Nikola Tesla built his hydro power station that illuminated Buffalo over a hundred years ago. I'm hooked now – lotsa questions for him.

“So, How About Some More Contest Fun!” from Tom Behler: KB8TYJ

I am sure that some of you remember all of the fun we had several years ago with the “Worked All Townships” contest. Not only was it neat to see how many Mecosta and Osceola County townships each of us could work on our local 2-meter repeater, but it was also nice to see the repeater being used once again. Well, in the spirit of promoting some more friendly competition, and use of all of our repeaters, here’s another fun contest opportunity.

The contest will be called the “Worked All Prefixes” contest, and will occur on all three of our repeaters—i.e. 2 meters, 440, and 6 meters. The object of the contest is simple—work as many prefixes as you can during the contest period, which will run from October 1 through October 31st. Prefixes consist of the letters and number designator of any valid amateur radio call (e.g. KB8, N8, WA4, K8, W8, WA8, AB8, etc.). Don’t forget too that you can work many other prefixes in addition to the usual ones because our 440 repeater has echo-link, which literally can put you in touch with hams from all over the world. Any listener to the 440 repeater will tell you that many hams from outside our area do check into our echo-link node, so when they do, go ahead and snag them!

All current dues-paying BRAARC members are eligible to participate. Each person competing in the contest will be responsible for keeping his/her own log, with all logs being due on Thursday: November 3—the night of our November BRAARC club meeting. Logs can either be e-mailed to me at: tombehler@gmail.com or can be turned in on the night of the club meeting. Each log entry should list the call sign and name of the person contacted, the date and time of the contact, and the repeater on which that contact was made.

Prizes will be awarded to the three hams with the highest number of contacts. First prize will be a NOAA Public Alert Weather Radio; second prize will be a first aid kit; and third prize will be a \$10 gift card to Latitudes in Howard City. These prizes have been donated to BRAARC by Mecosta County Emergency Management.

But wait, there’s more! I want to introduce what I’m going to call a “net control bonus”. If you serve as net control for any of our 2-meter or 440 club nets during the month of October, you will be able to count all net check-ins toward your total contest score. After all, since they checked into your net, you essentially have worked them. Net control slots for the month of October will be filled on a first-come-first-serve basis, so be sure to contact Patricia McKay (KD8GGD) if you wish to volunteer.

Let’s now go out and have some contest fun! Let’s heat up the air waves, and give our repeaters a good work-out! If you’re at all like me, I think you’ll find the contest fever to be contagious! I’ll be looking for you!

(Note: The following link on the BRAARC web site contains some basic repeater operating instructions, including some tips for using echo-link on our 440 repeater:

<http://braarc.net/repeaters.html>

RACES go-kit for Mecosta County Emergency Management

By Mike, KD8DIB

I was given a project this spring and I finally made some headway on it. I thought that I'd better jot down a few notes about the Mecosta County Emergency Management RACES go-kit. The project was to convert an empty box and a pile of radios into a workable emergency communications center. I am using plywood as the shelving material, a large Pelican case as the box and a lot of great radios from Icom and Yaesu to create a functional storage and deployable RACES go-kit. The idea is to have everything all packed inside the box and deployable as needed.

The basic layout is a box with removable shelves that hold the radios. The top three shelves are removable and will hold three complete stations. The bottom wooden shelf is fixed in place. I found, as I was adding the shelves, the box sides would tend to bow and cause the box to become hard to latch. I also didn't want the shelves falling out of their tracks and smashing the radios. eek!! So the bottom shelf is doing double duty as a place to store more equipment and as a strut to prevent bowing. The bottom of the box is filled with the power supply.

If you look hard you can see how I laid out the radios on the shelves. They are attached directly to the removable shelves. The shelves are supported by a bracket system that holds the shelves as they slide into place. The brackets are attached through the side of the Pelican case with screws. Beauty rings cover the screws used to attach the internal brackets. If I were to construct multiple go-kits I would build a template to locate the side rails and act as a drilling template. That way there would be less time involved with the lay out process.

The box is quite portable when closed up and ready for transportation anywhere. It is equipped with three fold down handles, a telescoping handle on the back side, and built in wheels. Additionally, these cases are waterproof and nearly indestructible. The next step is to get all of the radios and TNC's working! Stay tuned for updates.

The September 2011 regular club meeting was the big presentation of the "go kit" back to emergency management. Director James Buttlerman had a big smile on his face when we demonstrated the box. Also, members present seemed to like the set up. A big bonus of the presentation -- I could get everything out of the box and back in again. It was fun.

See next page for several photos of the Gokit and producers!!

This go-kit was designed and constructed by local amateur radio operators for the benefit of the Mecosta County Community. The materials used in constructing this go-kit were supplied by BRAARC member donations and Homeland Security grant funds.



www.braarc.net
PO Box 343, Paris, Mi 49338
September 2011





FREE CERT Disaster Survival Training!!!

Friday October 21st– Sunday October 23rd

At the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety
435 N. Michigan Ave
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Where will you be when
the next **DISASTER**
Strikes? What will the
next **DISASTER** be?

ARE YOU PREPARED?

The Mecosta and Osceola Emergency Management Departments are offering a FREE Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) class in Big Rapids. This three day class will provide you with information and training to help yourself, family, and community in times of disaster. All citizens 18+ years old are encouraged to attend. No experience necessary! Topics include:

- Disaster Preparedness
- Light Fire Suppression
- Triage & Patient Assessment
- Light Search and Rescue
- Incident Command System
- Disaster Psychology
- Terrorism



Front Entrance to Big Rapids Department
of Public Safety
435 N. Michigan Ave
Big Rapids, MI 49307

FREE CERT TRAINING **October 21st 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.**
October 22nd 9a.m. to 5 p.m.
October 23rd 9a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pre-Registration is required for this course. Please RSVP by
going to <http://bit.ly/certraining> or calling James at
(231) 592-0158

To Learn more about the Mecosta County CERT program please visit
<http://www.co.mecosta.mi.us/emergency.asp> or Find us on
Facebook; Mecosta County CERT.



Breakfast @ Sharon's

Rogers Heights

Saturday, October 1, 2011

9AM

We were saddened by the news of Nancy Campau's death on August 17th. Nancy was a long time friend of Bev, WD8PFC, and accompanied Bev to many of the club functions. She will be missed by all.

