

Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

September 2011

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President's Message

If you did not attend the club meeting in August, you missed an awesome time:

- Jeff Sell did a short

presentation on his trip to *Maker Faire 2011* at the Henry Ford Museum. He showed us pictures that he took during the event, and the Detroit show is one of only three nationally held such events. Check out the link (<http://makerfaire.com/detroit/2011/>) for the Detroit event.

- Jeff also talked about our visit to *The Geek Group* in Grand Rapids. Jeff, myself, Gregory and Mike made the trip to their headquarters on July 15th. *The Geek Group* occupies an old YMCA on Leonard Street with 43,000 square feet for any type of project activities. Check out this link (<http://thegeekgroup.org/>) for *The Geek Group*. We are looking at the feasibility and/or advisability of forming a chapter in Big Rapids.

- Our main program was presented by Bill Stankey on his recent trip to Alaska. What a beautiful country and evidently much "wilder" than I thought. Bill did a great job on his presentation, and was very enthusiastic about the adventure he had on the trip. The

combination of a cruise and a week on the ground gave him a lot of time to see and experience Alaska in its pristine state.

- Mike McKay rounded out the meeting with a Tech Corner presentation on Amateur Radio Television.

Just another reminder that club elections are coming up at our September 1st meeting! Nominations can be made from the floor after the Elections Committee makes its recommendations. It looks like we will have the following slate of officers up for election at the September meeting:

- 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.

Our Celebrity Fund Raiser will again be held this October at Cankers' restaurant in Big Rapids. Look for details in the very near future.

I hope to see you at the next club meeting on Thursday, September 1st at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety. Our program will be provided by Dr. Barbara Ciaramitaro on the subject

of computer forensics and security. She will also talk about how our Information & Intelligence program at Ferris received national recognition as a Center of Excellence for Information Assurance. It should be an exciting topic.

73s,

Jim
K4UIH

BRAARC August 2011 Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7PM by President Jim Woolen, K4UIH.

Next breakfast will be August 27 at Sharon's in Rogers Heights at 9am.

Next club meeting will be Sept 1 at Big Rapids Public Safety at 7PM.

Sign-up sheet for club nets was circulated.

Secretary's report – none – secretary absent.

Treasures report – none – treasurer absent.
Treasures report was approved as submitted

Repeater Report – Mike, KD8DIB, has obtained the 6M controller and transmitter:

Mike rebuilt the controller cat 200B cable as it sustained mouse damage

After repairs it worked but was distorted

Updated processor for \$25 has been ordered
Some materials at Jeff Barstow's, WD8DLK

Due to absences there were no reports from:

Emergency Vest Committee

Club Name Badge update

Election Committee

Elections will take place at the Sept 1 meeting

IRA Link System Update

Youth club projects

Celebrity Serve will take place in October, date to be announced

Jeff Sell, K8OE, gave a presentation on Makerfaire 2011 at the Henry Ford Museum, one of 3 national Makerfares.

Jeff had a number of pictures showing a variety of vehicles, low elevation windmill, and robots along with many other projects – some whimsical.

Grand Rapids Makerspace occupies the old YMCA building of 43,000 sq ft. They are quite active and a person can become a member for \$40/mo giving them full key card access.

BRAARC could conceivably become a chapter. Check out Geekgroup.org

Crop Walk is Oct 2, 2011, Same route this year as last, more info to follow later.

Big Bad Wolf Race – Sept 3, 2011 – Contact Jeff Sell, K8OE, if you want to help. Race starts at 8:30am. Meet at 8am to receive instructions and assignments.

The club received several donations to their equipment cache:

17M dipole

Battery Switch

Hustler BTV6 vertical antenna (needs some repair)

\$53.50 was earned at the Reed City Trunk Swap

Bill Stankey, N8MZB, had a great program of him and his wife's recent trip to Alaska. Bill had a number of beautiful and interesting photos from the trip. Bill had a couple of stories to relate that everyone found interesting. When you see Bill ask him to tell you of his trip if you were not present at the meeting.

Mike, KD8DIB, gave a short presentation on ATV (Amateur Television), ATV 2011 (adapted from Michael Wrights presentation). One can get started in ATV relatively inexpensively and there are many websights which provide tons of information. Simply Google amateur television.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm

Respectfully submitted by Phil Marcotte, KC8QOV

It's Back to School Time...for Ham Radio, too!

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

As I write this, it's about 85 degrees, and I'm sitting on the patio of a cottage overlooking Elk Lake in northern Michigan. This idyllic spot is about as far away from school as you can get. And yet, in less than a month, kids will be back in school, and if kids are going to be back in school, why not ham radio operators?

The fall is a good time to begin teaching a new group of Technicians. I favor the "Tech in a Day" or "Ham Cram" type of class. This type of class focuses on teaching students the answers to questions on the test rather than the material itself.

There's a lot of controversy about this, and many decry this method of teaching, but I think the best way to learn about ham radio is by actually doing it, and you can't do if you don't have a license. Besides, how much more instruction will students actually get in a more traditional eight-week or ten-week course, maybe 16 hours? Will those 16 hours make that much of a difference?

For the sake of argument, let's say that you've decided to offer a one-day Tech class. Now what? Well, the first thing you have to do is to find a place to teach it. Possible sites include your local public library, a township hall, a community college, perhaps even your church.

Now that you have the place, you need to find some students. Your local emergency-management group would be a good place to start. Also, make sure a notice gets published in your amateur radio club's newsletter. Chances are most of the subscribers already have licenses, but they may have friends or relatives who would be interested. Also, make sure the class gets listed in the upcoming events section of local newspapers or magazines.

Once people start signing up, you should suggest that they either purchase a study guide or download my free study guide (www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual). Because I use my study guide when teaching the class, I always advise them to get a copy, but if you'll be using other materials, then your advice may differ.

I counsel the students to read through my study guide a few times and take some online practice tests before coming to class. That will make them familiar with the material, especially areas they may be weak in or have questions about. By bringing those questions to class, we can address those areas in a little more depth, which will, hopefully, give them the help they need to pass the test.

The class itself is six hours long, running from 9am to 3pm, at which time we give them the test. This is not a lot of time for the amount of material I have to cover, so I move along at a pretty brisk pace. I concentrate on giving them the answers, but with enough context to that it all makes sense.

OK, let's say your class was wildly successful, and you now have a group of newly-minted Techs. What do you do now?

Well, you might consider offering some short sessions on what ham radio operators do--Ham Radio

101, so to speak. The topics could include how to choose your first radio, the basics of FM repeater and net operation, and building your first antenna (say a 2m ground plane). They'll be more enthusiastic about these classes now that they actually have a license.

It might also be a good idea to schedule a General Class license course for sometime shortly after the Tech class. This will encourage them to upgrade while they are enthusiastic about the hobby.

I hope that this has encouraged you to offer some ham radio courses of your own. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com or phone me at 734-930-6564. Good luck, and let me know how your classes turn out.

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When not preparing for his next ham radio class, Dan publishes the "No-Nonsense" study guides for the Technician and General Class license exams. Free versions and print version are available from his website at www.kb6nu.com/tech-manual. E-book versions are available for the Kindle and devices that run the Kindle app on Amazon.Com and for the Nook on BarnesandNoble.Com.

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Christmas in July

Have you been a good little hammy? That famous holiday season, "Christmas in July" is here! Santa sure thought the Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club was good enough this year to receive a few gifts for the club's equipment cache. That jolly old elf dropped off a brand new 17 meter folded dipole, an AGM 12 volt battery, a MFJ battery backup switch, and best of all a Hustler BTV6: 10 through 80 vertical antenna.

The battery and back up switch went into service on the Echolink system. Both the computer and now the radio are fully backed up and can stay on the air during power outages. The 17 meter dipole will be used as the start of an antenna kit for that band. These dipole kits offer a quick way to set up when in the field. The 10 through 80 meter BTV6 needs a few repairs and ground radials but it will offer a great quick-up vertical antenna. This antenna will offer multi-band opportunities for demonstrations, club events, contests and emergency communications.

That Santa is a great guy and super ham. He wants us to get out there and explore the ether and find fellowship. So, if you see Santa, be sure to say, "Thanks, Old Man, we'll catch you down the log." Santa's little Elf

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BRAARC 6 Meter Repeater Repairs

By Mike, KD8DIB

Hey all you 6 meter fans! The BRAARC 6 meter repeater is undergoing "burn in" testing today, August 13, 2011. The CAT200B was updated, the power cord repaired, and blown fuses replaced. If you are around Big Rapids you might be able to hear it on the cantanna. Listen on 52.860 MHz with a - offset. Moving of the equipment to the repeater site will take place in the next few weeks.

To add additional features, I am looking for a Peet Brothers Ultimeter Weather Station. The U100, U800, or U2000 / U2100(?) will interface with the CAT200B and provide on air weather reports. Check out <http://www.peetbros.com> for more information. Donations of equipment or funds can be made to BRAARC. Please earmark your donation of funds to 6 Meter Repeater Weather Station.

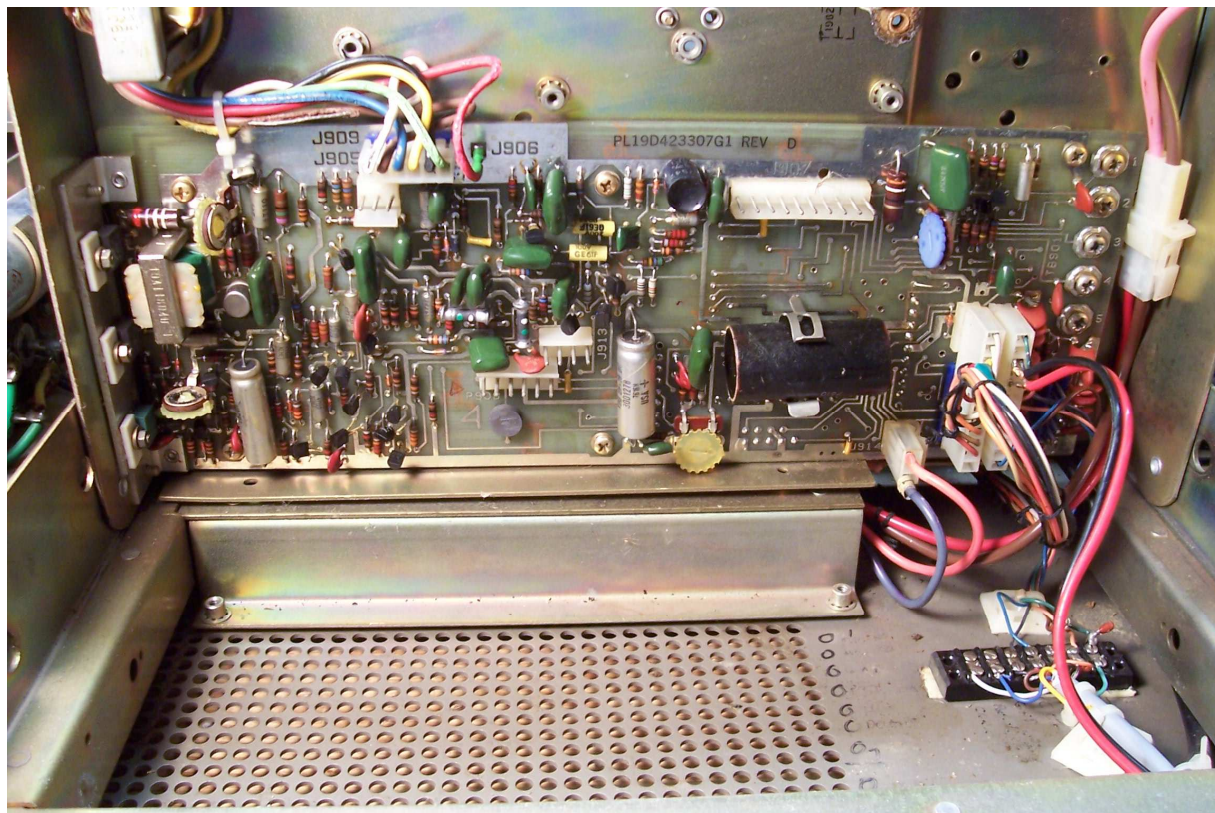
DTMF Keypad Test – This command will read-back all DTMF numbers and letters decoded.

- Key up, and enter [375], the DTMF keypad access code followed by the keypad numbers and letters to be tested.
- The entries can be in any order.
- Unkey, and the voice will read-back all numbers and letters that were decoded including the "star" and "pound".

Weather Report – This feature is **not** active until a weather station is available.

- Key up, and enter [200 XX] Where XX is replaced by the two digit weather report code below.
 - [00] – complete weather report
 - [01] – inside temperature
 - [02] – outside temperature
 - [03] – wind speed and direction report
 - [04] – rain fall report
 - [05] – one minute wind speed report
- Unkey and the repeater will provide a weather report.

Visit the club website at <http://www.braarc.net/repeaters.html> for more information about the club repeaters, including the Net Preamble and Repeater Operation Guide. So, dust off that 6 meter rig and get ready to get on the air!



More Field Day Pictures
Provided by Don, WA4FRJ







Breakfast

Saturday, August 27
Sharon's Restaurant
Roger Heights
9AM



September 2011
PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338

