



FEEDBACK

April 2017

Your Story:

Do you have a story, humorous or otherwise about amateur radio? If so, please contact the newsletter editor (ac8ps@arrl.net) and get it published in FEEDBACK.

If you would like to place a classified ad to sell or purchase amateur radio related items, please contact the editor.

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Inside this issue:

- KB6NU Article
- Meeting Minutes
- For Sale
- Battle Creek Special
- Club Repeaters
- Upcoming events and local nets

- 1
- 2
- 4
- 4
- 5
- 5

Interesting gadgets I wish I had time for

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I'm on a lot of mailing lists and participate in a bunch of amateur radio forums. As a result, I see a lot of interesting gadgets that guys are buying or are thinking about buying. Here are three of the latest that look interesting to me. I wish I had time (and money) to purchase all of these and try them out.

Android antenna analyzer

On Reddit

(https://www.reddit.com/r/amateurradio/comments/60nnp1/finally_got_my_mini60_ebay_antenna_analyzer_time/), some of the guys have been talking about the Mini60 Antenna Analyzer (<http://www.ebay.com/itm/CW-USB-Interface-Cable-WINKEYER-compatible-3-5mm-plug-/132121085623?hash=item1ec307c6b7:g:up8AAOSw241YeTei>). Its frequency range is 1 – 60MHz, but the cool thing about this device is that you can use it standalone with the built-in LCD display or with some software (http://www.jtelectronics.co.nz/information_links/MINI60/Add-Bluetooth-Module-To-MINI60-Antenna-Analyser.htm) and a tablet with a Bluetooth interface to get fancy frequency vs. SWR plots. See <http://www.kb6nu.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/mini60-ant-analyzer.jpg> for a photo of the Mini60 Antenna Analyzer being used with an Android tablet.

Of course, this is made in China, but how can you beat the price? It costs \$112 shipped.

Multi-functional component tester

Here's another marvel of Chinese engineering and manufacture – a smart component tester (http://www.banggood.com/3_5inch-Colorful-Display-Multi-functional-TFT-Backlight-Transistor-Tester-p-1083042.html) for only \$30, shipped. It identifies and characterizes NPN and PNP transistors, capacitors, resistors, diodes (including Zener diodes), N-channel and P-channel MOSFET, IGBT, JFET, triacs, and batteries.

This isn't the first smart component tester to hit the market, but the unique thing about this unit is that it has a graphical display that not only identifies the type of component that you've connected to it, but also draws the schematic symbol of the part. You can see a video of this tester in action at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07FH6tjzwWg>.

Make your Raspberry Pi into a desktop PC

Newark/element 14 will soon start selling a kit of part that will make it easier to turn your Raspberry Pi into a desktop PC:

https://www.element14.com/community/docs/DOC-83477?CMP=e-email-SEPO-210317-e14PI&et_cid=28941683&et_rid=1231362216&cmp

The kit includes:

- Intelligent and Safe Power Controller
- Interface to connect mSATA SSD (up to 1TB)
- Real Time Clock to keep track of time
- Heat Sink
- Enclosure

They don't list the price just yet, but this might be what I need to actually make use of the Raspberry Pi 3 I bought several months ago.

If you have one of these gadgets, or buy one in the future, please let me know how you like it. I'll put your review up on my blog, so that everyone can benefit from your experience.

When he's not drooling over electronic gadgets, Dan blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, writes the "No Nonsense" amateur radio study guides, and teaches ham classes. You can contact him by e-mailing cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Board Meeting 04/04/2017

Officers present: Gary N8QC, Steph W8AEZ, Jan W8JKG, Jay, N8ARR, Tom WR8G.

Others present: Kyle W8KDB, Don W8RVT, Smokey N5MKY.

Called to order at 17:30.

Bills for Wings Event Center as well as door prizes turned in to Jan. Checks cut.

The ATT phone bill was apparently never received and wasn't paid and that might have caused a problem at the repeater site.

HIAD at DPW had 19 candidates.

Hamfest – Attendance was down somewhere around 400 attendees. The fact that the SKYWARN training was the same day at 10:00 and there was bad weather east and south of Kalamazoo. Still, those in attendance reported it was a good swap and they look forward to next year. Because the gate wasn't very high we will have to watch the club's bills a little closer this year.

The ticket stubs with email addresses have been turned over to Tom for the email flood next year. He asks for some help entering the information and Jan

(depending on work schedule) and Smokey both volunteered to help.

We must check the Toledo/Maumee dates for next year so we can lock in Wings.

MSPOTA – Smokey has run into some shortfall and thus has not been able to purchase the antenna and tuner he wants to operate. Tom offered to purchase the antenna and Gary offered up a tuner he has on hand; problem overcome.

Kyle has offered to tow trailer #3 out on Friday and back on Sunday. Thanks Kyle!

Repeater site problems – Don believes that the thunderstorm on Thursday morning took out the Internet modem. Don was able to swap out a modem he had on hand and the problem was solved. The ATT tech wouldn't believe it so he fiddled around for quite some time before finally offering up a new modem. APRS is still not working and Don isn't sure just why. He and Kyle are noodling a solution.

A new noontime net on the W8IRA link repeater(s) will be starting on Friday the 14th. Initially it will be held Monday, Wednesday and Friday at noon local time. If enough interest is seen it may go to daily. The idea is to get more use out of the links and to spread the information about them. Locally the link is on 145.150.

The general meeting will be held on the 20th of April and the Georges will have a presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 18:20.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Jarrett, N8ARR, Secretary

Calhoun County SKYWARN Club meeting 03/21/17

Called to order at 18:30. Brett KD8RHB presiding. 14 in attendance total.

Treasurer's report – 324.09 in checking account, 5.00 in savings, 88.00 cash on hand.

As there was no set agenda, we went around the room to see if anyone had anything to offer.

Jim W8JMZ is tweaking the new radar software. Reports from NWS are predicting an active spring weather pattern, more than usual over the past couple of years.

Terry N8LN is reaching out to Bronson to hook up to D-Star repeater. Currently there is a minor Internet problem at their end.

Tom KE8GDN a new ham introduced himself. SMARS members thanked him for his help with the Hamfest.

Smokey N5MKY reported that Hamfest attendance was down, maybe due to the SKYWARN training and also to inclement weather to the east and south of Kalamazoo that morning. He also mentioned the MSPOTA May 5-7 at Custer Rec Area. Setup will be on Friday and operation will be anytime after we are setup and anytime there are operators on hand. All hams are invited to come out to work some DX or even local. And the Allegan Amateur Radio Club will be having a mini-Hamfest on April 1, 2017.

Roy W8BCK reported that the first weather net was run during the recent windstorm. He asks that anyone checking in please give their locations, even if at home QTH.

Other info - 5th District HIAD March 25th at DPW from 9-5. 25 are signed up to test. Barry Co. hosting a bike race starting at 9 a.m. Some radio help would be appreciated. Contact Ron KC8SFQ@mei.net to volunteer.

Charlie Pfister will conduct a traffic handling session at Kal Co. EOC on 4/3 starting at 7p.m.

Some sort of Expedition will be held 6/11 – 6/17 but no real info available ATT.

Ken KC8QNQ is stepping down as president but will assume the duties of treasurer. Candidates will be chosen for Pres., VP, and Secretary. Brett volunteered to be President, Max KD8TWB was “volunteered” to be VP as he was not in attendance! Jay N8ARR will share minutes that are taken for the SMARS club newsletter.

Roy W8BCK will give the Tuesday SKAYWARN net back to Doc when and if he is able. Doc would like to be able to take it back since he isn't able to do the physical things like Hamfest and Field Day. We all hope that Doc will be back at the microphone soon.

Meeting adjourned at 19:08.

Respectfully submitted, Jay N8ARR, SMARS Secretary

Meeting Minutes 03/16/2017

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions

Officers present - Gary N8QC, Stephanie W8AEZ, Jan W8JKG, Tom WR8G, Jay N8ARR. 28 members in attendance total.

Secretary's report was accepted.

Treasurer's report was accepted.

Committee reports:

Hamfest 2017 - Volunteer list passed around. Everything that can be done has been done. All we can do now is do it. Emilie was asked to rent a handful of tables in case we have walk in vendors.

SKYWARN - Training in Calhoun Co. will be on the 18th, while we are conducting our Hamfest: 10-12 noon. Kalamazoo Co. will be the same day from 2-4. Couldn't be helped since the timing was set by NWS in Grand Rapids.

VE session - HIAD on March 25th at DPW. VEs will be needed at 3 p.m. Our next VE session will be held on April 27th in the Babcock room of Maple Methodist Church.

Old Business - MSPOTA – New location will be the Temporary Equestrian area. Dates are still May 5, 6 and 7. Smokey planning on 2 HF radios and 1 VHF radio. Trailer #3 will be used. Rules can be found on MSPOTA.org website.

New Business - The full page ad for the SKYWARN training that appeared in the Shopper just before the 18th was donated and cost \$1,000. Could it have deterred attendees to the Hamfest?

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Jarrett N8ARR, Secretary

FOR SALE

KENWOOD TS440SAT

Has Auto Antenna Tuner

MC43 Mic

Power Cable

Owner Manual

Unit is very clean and has no issues

\$375

W8RVT-Don 269 963-7797 or
w8rvt@arrl.net

Short Battle Creek Special Introduction - Rewritten April 11, 2017.

In the 1980's Charlie Dewey, W0CD, was very active on 160 meters and was instrumental in getting other hams on the band. Charlie was also helping support a travelling vertical antenna designed and built by Barry, W9UCW, named "The Minooka Special", a vertical antenna 42 feet tall plus a loading coil and whip above for 160 meters. It worked on 20, 40, 80 and 160 meters using a matching network and ground radials. Unfortunately, the mast was made of soft aluminum conduit that was easy to bend, making more work for Charlie after each DXpedition.

Charlie thought about this problem, and decided the antenna should be made of aircraft quality 6061-T6 aluminum tubing, be taller for more signal strength on 80 and 160 meters, and stronger, so that it could be assembled on the ground and tilted up by as few as two people without risk of bending the mast. The final design is a mast 48 feet tall with a 40 meter trap at 33 feet and an 80 meter trap on top, with loading wires to make inverted-Ls for 80 & 160.

It was dubbed "The Battle Creek Special".

Charlie, George, W8UVZ, George, K8GG and Wayne, W8SEY, decided to take the antenna to Grenada for the 1990 CQ WW 160 CW contest in January 1990. Then we heard about a DXpedition to Bouvet, a Norwegian island in the South Atlantic near Antarctica, and offered the antenna to them. We wrote a manual, and the first Battle Creek Special was loaned out. (We did go to Grenada with a wire antenna hung in palm trees.)

Since then Charlie built three more Battle Creek Specials, including one heavy duty model for 100+ MPH winds. One was donated to the NCDXF and sent permanently to South Africa. The others are maintained in Battle Creek by W8UVZ, W8VVG, and K8GG and shipped around the world to various locations so that DXpeditions have a reliable antenna for the low bands.

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY FEEDBACK

S.M.A.R.S. W8DF Club Repeaters

- 2M Repeater 146.66MHz, -600KHz offset, CTCSS 94.8Hz
- 2M DStar 146.79MHz, -600KHz offset
- 70cm Repeater 443.95MHz, +5MHz offset, CTCSS 94.8Hz
- 1.25M Repeater 224.24MHz, -1.6MHz offset
- APRS Digipeater/Igate, 144.39MHz

70cm & 1.25 meter repeaters are linked, and also available via echolink.

Other Repeaters

- 2M Repeater 147.12MHz, +600KHz offset, CTCSS 186.2Hz
- 70cm Repeater 442.35MHz, +5MHz offset, CTCSS 94.8Hz

<p>Club Meeting 3rd Thursday of every month Maple United Methodist Church 342 Capital Avenue NE Battle Creek, MI 49017</p>	<p>SKYWARN Coffee 1st Saturday of every month Immediately after Siren Test Coney Island, N.E. Capital Battle Creek, MI</p>	<p>BLB Luncheon 1st Thursday of every month Coney Island, N.E. Capital Battle Creek, MI</p>	<p>SMARS Breakfast 2nd Saturday of every month Coney Island, N.E. Capital Battle Creek, MI</p>
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<p>SMARS Nets: Monday—Friday 11:30 AM, 146.66 Sunday Evening 8:00 PM, 146.66 Monday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95 Wednesday 7:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95 Wednesday 8:00 PM, 28.365 Saturday 8:00 PM, 224.24 / 443.95 Other Nets: Skywarn Net: Tuesday 7:00 PM, 147.12</p> <p><i>Please see page 3 for offsets and CTCSS tones</i></p>	<p>Upcoming Events: Club Meeting: May 18th @ 7:30pm BLB Luncheon: May 6th @ 11:30am Board Meeting: May 2nd @ 5:30pm Coney Island Cafe, 962 Capital Ave. NE SMARS Breakfast: 13th @ 8:30am MSPTOA: May 5th to 7th @ Ft. Custer</p>
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