



Southern Michigan Amateur Radio Society

FEEDBACK

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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How much performance do you really need?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A reader recently e-mailed me:

"Just a quick question – Are you still in the thinking stage about getting an Elecraft K3? Great rigs, aren't they?"

"What I would like you to think about, though, is how many contacts you log in one year's time. If you log 100 per year (check your log) then your cost will be \$50 per contact for that year. If you log 500, then your cost will be \$10 per contact. If you keep that rig for three years, and log 500 contacts over that time, then you will have spent \$10 per contact.

"Now, consider what that rig will be worth in three years. Will there be something come along that just blows the K3 away in terms of performance?"

I replied:

"K3s are great radios. I've just purchased a used KX3, though, so I am not planning on getting a K3 in the near future. I have purchased a 50-W HobbyPCB amp to use with the KX3, so I'm not going full QRP."

"I make a lot of QSOs/year. My average over the last 13 years is more than three per day, and that doesn't include contacts made with other callsigns, such as the club station, or on Field Day. I'm sure that my cost/QSO will be low enough to justify my investment. :)"

"In addition, rigs seem to keep their value pretty well. I'd guess that you can sell a three-year-old K3 for at least 80% of what you paid for it. I think that one of the reasons that an Elecraft K3 is worth the investment is that Elecraft provides such good customer support, and that they are continually improving their radios. For example, they just came out with a new synthesizer board, with better RF specs, for the K3."

"I don't see anyone coming out with a radio that blows the K3 away in terms of performance in the near future, although I might be wrong. FlexRadio has perhaps the best chance of doing that, but you'll have to buy into the Flex user interface philosophy to take advantage of that."

I think that Elecraft and Flex, plus the three Japanese manufacturers, will make incremental performance improvements over the coming years, leapfrogging one another as they bring out new models.”

“One thing to think about is how much performance is overkill? Just like you can now buy a computer that has way more computer power than the average user will ever need, I think that most of these high-end radios offer way more performance than the average ham will ever need. It's cool to look at the Sherwood Engineering receiver tests and see that your rig is in the top ten, but will the average ham actually notice the difference? My guess is probably not.”
“Thanks for sparking my thought process on these issues.”

My guess is that most amateur radio operators don't think about what the rig will be worth in three years when buying an HF transceiver. Instead, they're looking at what the radios that are currently available cost, and when there's a big price difference between two models that appeal to them, they're trying to figure out if the higher price is warranted. In many cases, the lower-priced model wins out. It's not because the more expensive radio isn't better, but it's not that much better.

It all goes back to how much performance you actually need. Yes, you can probably do more with a \$10,000 radio than you can with a \$1,500 radio, but is it really worth the added expense? In other words, are you going to have more fun with a \$10,000 radio than you are with a \$1,500 radio? Let me know what you think. E-mail me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

When he's not agonizing over what radio to buy, Dan operates CW on 30m and blogs about amateur radio at www.kb6nu.com. He's the author of the “No Nonsense” amateur radio license study guides and the CW Geek's Guide to Having Fun with Morse Code.

SMARS Meeting Minutes 07/16/15

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions

Officers present – Brian W8BDM, Gary N8QC
22 members in attendance total.

NOT AN OFFICIAL MEETING

Secretary's report and Board Meeting Minutes were read

Treasurer's report was circulated

Committee reports:

- Hamfest 2015 – Jay (N8ARR) planning to provide Tom (WR8G) materials, since he will be able to attend next years event.
- SKYWARN – Requesting that all participating attend next Tuesday's Skywarn Meeting
- Field Day 2015 –
Results ... 23 CQ QSOs, 87 Digital QSOs, and 186 Phone QSOs plus 750 Bonus Points for a Total of 2780 Points ... Great Job !!!
We reviewed notes from Board Meeting about Field Day.
3 individuals joined during event.
We received a recommendation to advertise the event more next year.
- Tech Committee –
Fusion Repeater - Research of Rules indicate that we are not to sell system for one year and we must put system on-line for one year.
Brian (W8BDM), Tom (WR8G), Don (W8RVT), and Scott(AC8PS) planning to form official Technical Committee. Planning more discussion at next "official" meeting.
- Scott (AC8PS) volunteered to takeover Feedback Editor role. Tom (WR8G) will help him get started. Thank you Scott!!!!
- VE session – Next month's testing session will be on Thursday August 27th at 7pm.

· Doc (K8OLY) is still doing much better and is planning to be home on Sunday. Unfortunately, his brother Mike (KD8NJA) passed away recently.

· Gary (N8QC) checked on Church Rental and the church indicated that they thought our dues were paid up.

· Gary (N8QC) discussed proposal to move nominations for officers to September and elections in October.

Presentation: None

Quote of the Meeting: "What do I know?"

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Marsh W8BDM, secretary

Note from the editor:

Hello all,

I am honored to take the role of Feedback Editor after Tom! I apologize for the delay of this month's issue of Feedback: There were some problems regarding the compatibility of the template and my office software. Thank you all for your patience!

73,
Scott, AC8PS

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 443.59MHz, +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

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY FEEDBACK

<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 2nd 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: Before Lunch Bunch Monday—Friday 11:30 AM, 146.66 Sunday Evening 8:00 PM, 146.66 Monday 7:00 PM, 147.12 (Skywarn) 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</p> <p>Please see page 3 for offsets and PL tones</p>	<p>Upcoming Events: Club Meeting: August 20th @ 7:00pm BLB Luncheon: August 13th @ 11:30am Siren Test: August 1st @ 1:00pm Skywarn Coffee: Immediately after Siren Test SMARS Breakfast: August 8th @ 8:30am</p>
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