

FEEDBACK

DECEMBER 2008



DUES

Time for the renewal of your membership in SMARS. The yearly dues is only \$10 per member with a bargain of only \$1 more for each family member living in the same residence. If the family member is a ham he has the full rights of any other member including voting and office holding.

There are a few members that were awarded the status of a senior member. They do not need to pay dues, though they are encouraged to do so if possible. However, if they do not pay dues they must notify SMARS that they wish to continue their membership by a written message.

Where else is there an activity that costs only \$10 a year? And --- on top of that, you support three repeaters, a club that has equipment for use as needed, that has a VE program that has resulted in many new "hams", plus the opportunity to come to meetings that vary from the epitome to the pits --- There is something for everyone!

Please note that a membership data sheet is enclosed. When you take care of your dues, please turn in a up to date membership sheet. Much has changed since the last time this was requested. Thanks!

Did you know?

73 + 88 = FB in hexadecimal

WORLDRADIO GONE

WorldRadio to Cease Print Publication: In a joint statement, WorldRadio Publisher Armond Noble, N6WR, and CQ Publisher Dick Ross, K2MGA, announced that WorldRadio magazine will no longer be published as a print magazine. According to the announcement, CQ Communications Inc has acquired WorldRadio and plans to continue it as an online publication on CQ's Web site. WorldRadio subscribers will have their subscriptions transferred to CQ magazine. Readers will be notified of details as plans are finalized.

SMARS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER

This Saturday, the 13th of December, the annual Christmas party will be held at THE OLD COUNTRY BUFFET . They have reserved space in the main dining room as they did last year for our group. There will be a table for the gifts that might be brought.

For the newbees, the idea on the gift is that ladies bring a gift for ladies and men bring gifts for men. This usually results in some fun as some members enjoy surprises.

The weekly 50/50 challenge award this year will be something different. A large gift certificate to a major ham store will be the only prize drawn. Be there!

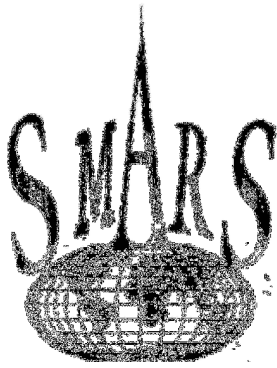
REPEATER

Don-W8RVT reports improvements to the 443.95 repeater. The transmitter and receiver have been replaced with Motorola Radius equipment controlled by the clubs original CAT 300DX repeater controller. The Motorola Radius equipment was donated by Radio Communications.

Initial indications show the repeater is working quite well. Interfering signals made it necessary to install CTCSS access and users will need to program a 94.8 Hz CTCSS tone into their transmitters to use the repeater.

Make an effort to use the repeater and judge for yourself as to its performance. Remember there are nets scheduled every Wednesday at 7:00 P.M. and Saturday at 8:00 P.M.

***Only in America
Do we leave cars
worth thousands of dollars
in the driveway and
put useless junk in the garage***



Board of Directors

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Bill Booth
KD8CDS
Sqjumper@aol.com

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Norman "Ned" Davis
WB4BKO
Wb4bko@arrl.net

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John Davidson
KC8WMM
Kc8wmm@arrl.net

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KC8LSI
Kc8lsi@yahoo.com

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Lewis (Lou) Ryason
WB8WXS
Wb8wxs@mei.net

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Lewis (Lou) Ryason
WB8WXS
Wb8wxs@mei.net

Trustee

Russ Beutler
N8UU
n8uu@mei.net

Technical Engineer

David Gerber
AB8HK
David@mei.net

Editor

Marion Davidson
WA8MFL
wa8mfl@arrl.net

SMARS Web Site
www.w8df.com

All correspondence should be addressed to
SMARS
P. O. box 934
Battle Creek, MI. 49016

ECHOLINKS

W8DF-R Echolink Callog show 106 connections for the month. A relatively small number, but there were far fewer "just testing" connections made.

I have had a number of new contacts, both on the repeater and by Echolink on my computer, that definitely indicate Echolink has had an impact on the success of recruiting new amateurs. It seems Echolink presents a way of communicating with no equipment cost.

I also talk with a number of hams stuck in an apartment with no ability of erecting an antenna. Interesting thing is, for the most part, they all indicate an interest in upgrading and getting on the HF bands. I think it is time all of us "old fogey's" to get on with it and try something new.

THINK OF IT

The broadening of the utility of our 220 repeater by the installation of Echolink has resulted in contacts far out of the range of any repeater. This last month there were eight different contacts outside of the USA. A few of those eight were contacted more than once. Of the ten call areas in the USA, seven call areas were represented by amateur stations.

Think back to your early experiments in amateur radio. You wanted to be able to contact people all over the Earth as well as various places much closer such as the different call areas. Echolink allows you to do much of this in a way that can be much more interesting. Instead of an exchange giving a simple signal strength and location report, you can have a real conversation.

Try it! You don't need a 220 rig, just a working computer. Once you are on, you will enjoy it so much that your pet mouse that sleeps in the computer will get mad and go someplace else!

WA8MFL

GREAT LAKES DIVISION SURVEY

By Jim Weaver K8JE

The question asked in the poll was: "Do you favor ARRL signing a new Statement of Understanding with American Red Cross (RC) before RC drops its demand that amateurs agree to submit to credit checks and manner of living checks? Criminal checks will remain."

The results of the 273 responses to the poll are:

Yes = 13 or 5% of respondents (pursue a new SOU without regard to the status of RC background checking demands).

No = 260 or 95% of respondents (do not pursue a new SOU before the background checking demands are changed).

MYSTERIOUS DITS

In a perfect example of inter- and intra-organization cooperation, the source of a continuous string of dits transmitted on the 40 meter band was located and resolved. The offending signal was reported to HQ by an amateur in North Carolina one recent morning. This brought the crew into action.

The folks at HQ contacted the FCC's HFDFing station and requested the general location of the transmission if the staff there could spare the time. The report came back that it was coming from a suburb of Columbus, OH.

Ohio Official Observer Coordinator Rick Swaim, KK8O, was notified of the problem and volunteered to tackle the task of locating the source and getting it turned off. Unfortunately, no one in the vicinity of the transmitting site was able to hear the dits the rest of this first day. The next morning the signal was readily heard throughout the area.

Rick contacted Ohio Assistant Section Manager, Bill Carpenter, AA8EY for assistance. Bill lives in the area from which the signal was coming. Together, Bill and Rick in their respective cars found the source of the dits and were able to turn the transmitter off.

No one knows for certain what caused the transmissions. However, the owner of the station had left the transmitter on when he left for work.

He operated CW and uses a set of paddles with a keyer. No one -- except the pet cat -- was at home when the long series of dits were transmitted. This leaves everyone involved believing the cat somehow pushed against the paddle to activate the transmitter.

With the only suspect in this case being the cat, does this make it a possible **feline felon**? Will we soon have FE1INE join K9DOG on the bands?

ARES / RACES Report for November

in Calhoun County
RACES / Skywarn Nets and Training
4 Skywarn Training Nets 1hr each @ 76 People = 76hrs
1 E.C. Meeting 6hr each @ 1 Person = 6hrs

Total NETS and Training Seminars, 77 People = 82hrs

Public Service Events
Total Public Service Events, 0 People 0hrs

Emergency Operations

Administration Hours, Total for Nov. Total = 12hrs

Travel Hours for Nov Total = 15hrs

Expenses- Out of Pocket Total = \$125.00
avel Miles for Nov. Total = 200
Miles 34

Dave Smith
KC8COT
E-12
City of Battle Creek and Calhoun County
RACES, Emergency Coordinator

STATIC PROBLEMS ?

Ken N6KB contributes three easy ways to prevent static build-up and discharge from a vertical antenna.

Shunt the antenna with a resistor of high enough value (10 kohms or higher - Ed) that no significant amount of received or transmitted power is dissipated.

Shunt the antenna with an RF choke.

Make your vertical into a folded monopole, so that one leg of it connects directly to ground.

All three of these methods keep the antenna DC potential equal to ground. Any static charge picked up from rain, snow, wind is immediately drained to ground.

Only in America
Do we buy hot dogs
in packages of ten
and buns
in packages of eight.

LET'S GET ON THE MAKER \ BANDWAGON

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

About a week ago, I got an e-mail from a ham down in Texas who had attended the Maker Faire (makerfaire.com). "Makers" are people who love to tinker and make things. They even have their own magazine, Make (www.makezine.com).

He was amazed at the lack of any amateur radio content. He wrote, "The Maker Faire was unbelievable. Incredible stuff. Pedal powered carnival rides, robots, computer drive routers, kits. Outside of a table with a Vectronics kit, and a license manual, and a QRP book, the only radio stuff was from a pirate radio group."

I'm kind of amazed at this as well. It just goes to show how disconnected amateur radio is getting from the mainstream. These are exactly the kind of people we want to get interested in amateur radio, yet there was no one there representing us.

Ham radio needs to be at these events and get plugged into the "maker community." The Faire has not yet released attendance figures for this particular Faire, but more than 65,000 people attended the Faire held in May 2008. Dayton, with its attendance of about 20,000, looks anemic by comparison.

I blogged about this back in May (<http://kb6nu.com/why-cant-dayton-be-more-like-the-maker-faire/>). One of the things I suggested then is moving Dayton to some place like Austin. Seriously, if you were a new, young ham, where would you rather go, Dayton, OH or Austin, TX? Let's be real here.

And can there be a worse place for an event than Hara Arena? The parking lot, where they hold the flea market looks like a mine field, and it usually rains, making the flea market a wet, unpleasant experience. Is it any wonder that fewer and fewer vendors choose to haul stuff out there? Some of us older hams might fondly reminisce about the bargain we found while traipsing around wearing a trash-bag poncho, but a story like that is not going to resonate with new hams.

Please don't get me wrong. I don't mean to badmouth the Dayton Amateur Radio Association or the Hamvention. I actually think that they do a great job, all things considered. I'm just pointing out that if ham radio wants to again be part of the mainstream, we have to get with the program. Unfortunately, that program probably won't be at the Hara Arena.

Ham radio has got to figure out how to latch onto the Maker phenomenon. At the very least, the ARRL should have a booth at the next one, and in addition to all the books and t-shirts, they need to come up with some kind of demo or display to attract makers into ham radio. I don't know what exactly, but I'm willing to start talking about it.

This phenomenon might also be a boon for clubs who hold hamfests. Just as the computer craze turned ham swaps into ham and computer swaps in the 80s, perhaps ham clubs could turn their hamfests into a combination hamfest and Maker Faire in their communities.

As I said earlier, Makers are exactly the kind of people we want in ham radio. Let's go out and get them.

SMARS Board Meeting

December 4, 2008

Called To Order: 7:04 P.M.

Officers Present: Bill KD8CDS, Ned WB4BKO, Rene KC8SLI, John KC8WMM. Others Present: Bob KC8PRL, Stephanie W8AEZ, Don W8RVT, Jerry W8FOK, Marion WA8MFL

Topics Discussed:

Christmas Party. Proceeds from the Club drawings totaled \$107. Rene will purchase a gift card from R & L with this and the rest from Club general funds. There is also the unclaimed antenna from the Hamfest to give away.

Rene had no specific issues to discuss.

Marion wished people would read Feedback. Many of the questions that he gets asked about upcoming events are right on the cover.

Don reports that the 440 repeater is up and running using the "new" equipment donated to the Club. He will set the repeater to use a tone of 94.8 to minimize noise.

Jerry is just visiting to see what the Board Meetings are like.

Ned has no entertainment lined up for December, but has the station engineer for WGVU for early next year about HDTV.

Bob reports the Field Day site for next year has been secured. Vendors are calling about the Hamfest. Notices about the Hamfest have been sent to ARRL, eHam, QRZ, and World Radio. Stephanie is sending fliers to local clubs, as well as clubs in Ohio, Indiana and as far as the UP.

The next Board meeting will have to be changed, falling on New Year's Day. It was decided to have it January 5, 2009.

Adjourned: 7:57 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Davidson KC8WMM
SMARS Secretary

Treasurer's Report

November Check Register Beginning Balance: \$1,048.17

Checks Written	
#2265 AT&T Billing	(\$64.85)

Deposits Made	
11/28 Billy Booth Radio Purchase Deposit	\$70.00
11/28 09 Membership Dues Received	\$30.00

November Check Register Ending Balance: \$1,083.32

Money collected at the November club meeting is not included in the deposits made total as I was not in attendance at that meeting.

Renee (KC8SLI)

SMARS Club Meeting

November 20, 2008

Called To Order: 7:10 P.M.

Officers Present: Ned WB4BKO, Bill KD8CDS, John KC8WMM

Secretary's Report: approved as published in Feedback

Treasurer's Report: no report this month

Committee Reports:

Hamfest. Stephanie has discussed the Hamfest with Marshall Schools. They have reservations about the long term viability of the Hamfest, but will host it in 2009, and review the situation after March. The changed date of March 14 has been approved. Fliers are being printed and distributed. Some members of SMARS expressed reservation about some of the equipment sold at last year's Hamfest, being non-approved. After discussion, it was decided to leave off of the flier the notice about non-FCC equipment not being allowed for sale.

Field Day. Bob reports the results of the 2008 event have been published in QST. SMARS placed 37 out of 350 in class 3A. SMARS placed well among Michigan stations, with total Michigan entries only behind Ohio entries. SMARS can use the Battle Creek Airport site again in 2009 and Bob is going to take the results to the City of Battle Creek.

ARES/RACES. No report.

VE Testing. No report.

Election Committee. Ned and John will run again in 2009. Jerry W8FOK has agreed to run for President and Don will run for Treasurer. Space for write-ins will be on the ballots.

Old Business:

Repeaters are doing OK. The work that needs to be done on the 2/220 tower has been OK'd by the tower owners. Bill has committed to climb the tower when weather permits.

New Business:

There was some discussion about some local hams splitting away from SMARS, with emphasis on SMARS having purchased all of its own equipment from funds raised by SMARS.

Presentation:

Jeff Hamelink gave a presentation on the history of the Internet and some of the technologies behind it.

Drawing:

Won by WA8MFL (again!)

Adjourned: 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Davidson KC8WMM
SMARS Secretary

**Only in America.....
Do they have
drive-up ATM machines
with Braille lettering.**

SOUTHERN MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

FEEDBACK



DECEMBER 2008

SMARS
P.O. BOX 934
BATTLE CREEK MI 49016

FIRST CLASS MAIL



SMARS NETS

Before Lunch Bunch
Monday-Friday 11:30 A.M.
146.66

Sunday Evening 8:00 P.M.
146.66

Monday 7:30 P.M.
224.24

Wednesday 7:00 P.M.
443.95

Wednesday 8:00 P.M.
28.365

Saturday 8:00 P.M.
443.95

ARES/RACES/SKYWARN.NET
Monday 7:00 P.M. 147.12

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

B4LUNCH BUNCH LUNCH DEC 11
CHRISTMAS DINNER DEC 13
THIS MONTH SMARS CLUB MEETING DEC 18
SMARS BOARD JAN 5 (MONDAY!)
SMARS BREAKFAST JAN 3
B4LUNCH BUNCH LUNCH JAN 8
NEXT MONTH SMARS CLUB MEETING JAN 15