

KCRA Newsletter

Keweenaw County Repeater Association, Inc.

“Michigan=s Northernmost VHF-FM Voice Repeater@

DST ENDS:

Daylight Saving Time ends the first Sunday of November, at 2am Sunday, November 1, 2009, so remember to move your clocks BACK one hour on Saturday night.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT:

The Fourth quarterly meeting of the KCRA was held Wednesday, October 14, 2009 at the home of Gary and Dianne Hansen on Bumbletown Hill, in Keweenaw County, 1108 Bumbletown Rd. in Keweenaw County.

ANNUAL MEETING:

Our constitution names October as our Annual Meeting, and one in which the Election of Officers takes place. Our present slate of officers is as follows:

Office	Name	Call sign
President:	Gary L. Hansen	K8YSZ
Vice President	Howard F. Klann	KD8ABP
Sec./Treas	George R. Thurner	W8FWG
Engineer	Gary L. Hansen	K8YSZ
Tech. Adv. Committee:		
(Chairman)	Gary L. Hansen	K8YSZ
	Paul A. Kemppainen	KC8FLK
	Glenn P. Ekdahl	WA8QNF
	David S. Sheffer	KD8CGA

You may nominate (from the floor), any licensed radio amateur you wish.
New Officers for 2009-2010 are:

Office	Name	Call Sign
President	Gary L. Hansen	K8YSZ
Vice President	William R. La Bell	KD8JAM
Sec/Treasurer	George R. Thurner	W8FWG
Engineer	Gary L. Hansen	K8YSZ
Tech./Adv. Chair	Gary L. Hansen	K8YSZ
A/T Member	Gary L. Hansen	K8YSZ
A/T Member	Howard F. Klann	KD8ABP
A/T Member	William R. La Bell	KD8JAM
A/T/ Member	David S. Sheffer	KDCGA

MINUTES OF THE KCRA, Inc. Meeting: October 14, 2009:

The last meeting of the year for the KCRA, Inc was called to order by President Gary Hansen, K8YSZ at 7 pm EDT, with 9 members present. Self introductions followed, and a roll call of officers showed the following present: President (K8YSZ), Vice President (KD8ABP), Sec-Treas. George Thurner (W8FWG), Engineer (K8YSZ). Other Committee Members in the Tech-Advisory Committee Chairman, were absent: Paul Kemppainen (KC8FLK), A/T Member, Glenn Ekdahl (WA8QNF), David Sheffer, (KD8CGA). Other members present were: Dianne Hansen (Assoc.) Virginia C. Thurner (Assoc.), Stan La Muth (WB8QJZ), Paul Grabig, (KB8UDD) and Dennis Royce (K9GIR). The Treasurer's report was read and is included as an attachment to this Newsletter. The Engineer's Report was read and accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

(See the enclosed attachment)

ENGINEER'S REPORT: Given by Gary, K8YSZ: Repeater operating properly and inspections made.

A/T COMMITTEE REPORT: By "Bill" La Bell. The New cabinet (enclosure) for the repeater was completed, full details follow:

CABINET CONSTRUCTION:

At the last meeting on July, 2009, we gave the "go-ahead" to a group of our club members to construct an 8' X 8' "cabinet" for our equipment at the Mt. Horace Greeley site. The group consisted of Bill (KD8JAM), Howard (KD8ABP), David (KC8CGA), Gary (K8YSZ) and George, (W8FWG) An inspection of the site was made on Saturday, August 8, 2009 and construction is scheduled to begin in early September of 2009. Construction began on Saturday, September 12, 2009, with the basic shell of the building completed. Wiring completed on Saturday, September 19, 2009. The move of equipment was accomplished the same day. The repeater was off for just a little over an hour on Saturday, when we had to move it from one location to the new one. Many hidden items were donated by anonymous donors such as insulation for the walls, clock, broom and dustpan, voltmeter, VOM, bulletin board, overhead lighting, writing shelf, and two new cooling fans for the transmitter's power amplifier were provided. All transmission line was left intact (but rerouted) and the power and grounding were moved. The new installation provides for summer cooling and winter heating. Insulated walls and ceiling provide for a more even temperature all year round. The cost of the carpentry materials was \$322.06 and the cost of the electrical material was \$ 349.47, and for miscellaneous items it was \$73.61.. for a total of \$745.14. On Saturday, October 10, 2009 Bill (KD8JAM) and Howard (KD8ABP) completed the lighting rearrangements, and added a switch so we don't have to use a flashlight to find our equipment! A thermostat was added for the heater (winter operation) on Saturday, October 17, 2009. A special thanks to the Team Leader, who was Bill La Bell (KD8JAM), and his assistants: Howard (KD8ABP), David (KD8CGA) and Gary, (K8YSZ) Thank you all....very much!

CORRESPONDENCE: COPPERMAN TRIATHALON:

This triathlon consisting of swimming, bicycling, and running, had 316 registrants, with the ham radio operators and firemen of the Copper Harbor area helping with communications. This year with the addition of the new K9SJ repeater (operating on 70 cm [440 MHz]), and the use of the new 800 MHz band (K8YSZ now has a handheld unit, and it was used) the communications worked flawlessly. We'd like to give credit to KCRA "Hams" who took part: Thank you to the Ham Radio Volunteers who helped with the 2009 Copperman communications.

(This note from race organizer for the radio hams, , Dick Powers, KA8L of Copper Harbor.)

"This years communications net was the largest ever and I think it generally worked very well. The use of Mike Musiel's 440 repeater was a welcome addition to our capabilities. Terry Smythe, the Race Director, is always very grateful to the speed in which we can answer her questions about competitors and race conditions. She tells me there were 316 contestants registered this year.

There were no injuries reported and only a request for three bicycle pickups. Thanks again for you help."

Dick Powers
KA8L

(Editor's Note: KCRA members that took part either relaying traffic, or who took part in any way were: W8FWG, K9GIR, KD8CGA, K8YSZ, KD8JAM, K9JCO, N8CSF, KB9UCO, and KA8L)

OLD BUSINESS:**EQUIPMENT INSURANCE:**

We have been advised by our new insurer, that we are now covered, as of July 23 , 2009. This "all-hazards" coverage is for fire, theft, storm damage, water damage, etc. All of our equipment is insured along with our antenna systems and APRS station. Our total equipment value was \$7,358.04 (a little more than originally estimated), with our insurance premium coming up to \$109.87/annually.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Revise "Application & Renewal Form: for 2010
2. Report on new "cabinet" for the repeater (See "Cabinet Construction"...above)
3. Motion to allow LSPR to use the "315" repeater the weekend of the rally.

HAM EXAMS:

October 10, 2009 at Douglass Houghton Hall on the campus of M-T-U Room G32, (Ballroom)

We had five applicants and all five earned a Technician class license. The new licenses were issued on October 20, 2009, and are good for a period of ten years:

<u>CALL SIGN</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>QTH</u>
KD8MFL	Jason P. Mark	Houghton
KD8MFM	Ryan V. Szpara	Calumet
KD8MFN	Zach J. Sponhauer	Hesperia, MI
KD8MFO	Jason E. Sacha	Hancock
KD8MFP	James M. Pidgeon	South Range

BUILDING FUND:

Donations earmarked for the **BUILDING FUND** are now being accepted. An anonymous "lender" provided us the necessary funds to complete this project this year, as our treasury could not support this very necessary project. If you wish to make a donation toward this project please mark it as "BUILDING FUND" in the notation on your check. Your help is very much appreciated.

+++ Commercialization of Amateur Radio +++

As promised, the Board of Directors has issued a guidelines statement concerning the proper and improper uses of Amateur Radio to support not-for-profit or profit-making organizations. As you read this statement, please understand that it says absolutely nothing new. The reason for this is there is absolutely nothing new to say. It merely helps puts FCC regulations into perspective relative to new requests and demands being made of Amateur Radio.

(Commercialization of amateur radio....continued)

The basic fact is that the FCC has issued no new rules regarding pecuniary interest since it issued the "pizza rule" years ago. What the pizza rule says is it is OK for an amateur to use Amateur Radio to order pizza or other materials from a dealer. The logic is that the ham has no pecuniary interest in this type of deal. In sharp contrast, it remains a violation of FCC rules for the pizza parlor clerk to use Amateur Radio to take orders.

The philosophy remains unchanged and applies as much to hospitals, the Red Cross, etc. as it applies to a pizza parlor, a railroad and other business operations.

The result of all this is it is up to us as amateurs to know FCC rules and to apply them to situations we face. My suggestion is, "If it

doesn't feel right, it probably isn't."

The old "If it looks like a duck, waddles like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck" admonition works most of the time.

What can also be said is that trinkets (T-shirts, car signs, caps) given gratuitously by event sponsors that identify the event are not pay. They publicize the event and identify the event worker. Similarly, reimbursement for gasoline or other expenses incurred while serving an event is just this -- reimbursement, not pay. It's OK to accept reimbursement.

It also is OK for an amateur organization to accept donations. This is provided the donations are true donations -- freely given and not solicited. For example, if a served organization wants to give a ham club a gift, take it. On the other hand, it isn't OK to ask the served organization for a donation. By no means should we negotiate how much a donation should be.

When is a donation not a donation? If we have to play mental games to justify it as a donation and not as pay, it isn't a donation.

*Source K8JE, Division Director
Great Lakes Section, ARRL*

HERMAN REPEATER HISTORY:

As most of you already know, the Herman "67" repeater is now out of service. Here are some further details.

The Herman repeater went into service approximately 30 years ago, at a site formerly called the Michigan Bell Microwave hut at Herman. When Michigan Bell abandoned their microwave system at this site, and went to fiber optic cable, it was taken over by the State of Michigan, and was then passed down to the Department of Natural Resources. (DNR). In the early days we paid one-month out of the year's power bill to maintain our presence there. At some time the payment was stopped, but we remained at the site. Other agencies there included, Northern Michigan University, a microwave network, the Baraga Co. Road Commission, The Native American Indian Community, an ABC television network, and a few others.

Over the years it was rumored that eventually this site would be abandoned by the State of Michigan and torn down. That rumor circulated for many years and slowly, one by one, various agencies left this site and were moved to another site.

It wasn't until recently that our Office Of Emergency Measures, (Jack Dueweke), KC8NPI in Houghton received notice that we should remove our equipment as this site was going to be torn down, tower and building within the next 60 days.

Jack then gave the directive to remove our equipment and on Monday September 21, 2009, the "67" repeater was turned off, and equipment removed.

A confirming letter from the DNR to Jack Dueweke showed (and we quote)....."THE D.N.R NO LONGER USES THIS TOWER, AND HAS NO BUSINESS REASON TO RETAIN IT. IT HAS ALSO BEEN DEEMED UNSAFE BY D.I.T. PERSONNEL. FURTHER, THE FREQUENCY USED BY THE MICROWAVE LINK TO OUR BARAGA FIELD OFFICE THAT EXISTS ON THIS TOWER TO MONITOR THE LIGHT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO A PAGING COMPANY BY THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION AND IT MUST BE TAKEN OUT OF SERVICE SOON. THEREFORE, THE D.I.T PLANS TO DECOMMISSION AND REMOVE THIS TOWER." (The full letter is published following this note.)

At this time, Jack, KC8NPI of the OEM in Houghton is asking that all members of the CCRAA be on the lookout for a new tower location, where we might place "67." In the meantime, he is negotiating with Wisconsin Energy Systems for a site in the town of Covington, which is actually higher than the Herman site. To date, no information has been received from WE Systems.

LETTER TO THE OEM IN HOUGHON RE: HERMAN REPEATER:

(This letter was received by Jack Dueweke from the DNR of the State of Michigan)

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JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

REBECCA A HUMPHRIES
DIRECTOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

September 18, 2009

Mr. Jack Dueweke
Emergency Management Coordinator
Houghton-Keweenaw Emergency Management
401 E. Houghton Avenue

Houghton, MI 49931

Dear Mr. Dueweke:

Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you this morning about the radio equipment your organization has on the Herman Hill tower located in SENE Section 1, T49 N, R33W, L'Anse Township, Baraga County, Michigan. We appreciate your understanding of the situation the state is in with regard to this tower. The tower was originally owned and operated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), but was transferred to the Michigan Department of Information Technology (DIT) several years ago.

The DNR no longer uses this tower, and has no business reason to retain it. It has also been deemed unsafe by DIT personnel. Further, the frequency used by the microwave link to our Baraga Field Office that exists on this tower to monitor the lights, has been given to a paging company by the Federal Communications Commission, and it must be taken out of service soon. Therefore, the DIT plans to decommission and remove this tower.

The DNR still owns the land the tower sits on, and for liability reasons, an unsafe tower cannot be allowed to remain on state land. Unfortunately, this land cannot be sold, because the current Michigan Public Safety Communications System (MPSCS) tower is immediately adjacent to this tower and on the same parcel of land.

Since this tower has been deemed unsafe, and it cannot remain on state [and, your agency will be required to remove your equipment by October 31, 2109.]

The DIT will consider requests to move your equipment to the nearest MPSCS tower. If you decide to do so, the MPSCS Co-location Coordinator is Mr. Gerald (Buzz) Leach at 517-333-5004 (voice) or 517-490-4148 (cell). You will be required by them to obtain a structural analysis, at your own expense, of the tower being considered to ensure it is capable of handling the additional equipment. The current shelter at the MPSCS tower is full, so you would need to construct an additional shelter.

Keith J. Charters, Chair • Mary Brown • Hurlay J. Coleman Jr. • John Madigan • Timothy L. Nichols • J.R. Richardson • Frank Wheelake • STEVENS T. MASON BUILDING P.O. BOX 30026 LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909-7528
www.michigan.gov/dnr .. (517) 373-2329
Great Lakes, Great Times, Great Outdoors!

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Mr. Jack Dueweke

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September 18, 2009

I apologize for the inconvenience this may cause you. If I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at 517-335-3348. My return address is Department of Natural Resources, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, PO Box 30452, Lansing, MI 48909.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Donald J. Johnson
Fire Management Specialist
Forest, Mineral, & Fire Management
517-335-3348

cc: Mr. Joseph Krenke, DIT
Ms. Lynne Boyd, DNR
Ms. Stacy Welling, DNR
Mr. Michael Paluda, DNR
Ms. Debbie Begalle, DNR
Mr. Don Mankee, DNR

[In accordance with this letter, and by the order of Jack Dueweke, KC8NPI, Emergency Coordinator for Houghton & Keweenaw Counties, we were instructed to remove our radio equipment at Herman ASAP. Chuck Savolainen, WB8FCY, our Chief of Radio Operations, did remove all of the equipment at Herman on Monday September 21, 2009. Remaining on the tower is 300 feet of 7/8" Heliac transmission line and the antenna at the top of the tower. These are both newly installed just two years ago. Value of this line and antenna, approximately: \$2,900.00.] We would like to recover the feedline and antenna but Houghton County has no funding for us to remove same. A crew from Marquette County is coming up to remove antennas and feed lines of other agencies, but nothing was said about removing ours. It may be up to the radio club to absorb any costs involved.....we just don't know at this point.)

(Update: October 6, 2009): A group from the CCRAA is going to put in a "temporary" "67" repeater down near Kenton, for one-day operation only during the LSPR (road rally). No new site has yet been approved for the Herman Repeater.)

Late Breaking news! We “can” get on a Michigan State tower anywhere.....for just \$12,000 a year (One-Thousand dollars per month!) provided..... we supply an engineering study that it would be safe to place an antenna on their tower (structural analysis) and that we supply our own building, as their building are already full of Michigan State equipment!

One more time: Howard has contacted the General Manager at MTU (Eric Smith, (N8RRZ), and was told there is a possibility of getting a tower site from NMU at either Champion or Baraga, for the Herman repeater. Let’s let our sister club (CCRAA) know about this one!

FOR SALE:

48' ROHN HDX (Heavy duty) self-Supporting steel tower \$600.00

86' Andrew Superflex cable \$75

Bracket (Commercial Grade) \$25

G7 Hustler Antenna (Commercial Band) but works on 147.315 MHz 14' high \$50

Contact Stan Strangle, K8NYT AT (906) 827-3526

FOR SALE TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER: The CCRAA (Our sister club) is offering a free standing , 40 foot tower for sale (It was declared surplus at the October meeting of the CCRAA) Submit sealed bids right up to the time of the December 1 meeting (7 pm) at the Dollar Bay Fire Hall, with a minimum bid of \$25.

RENEW YOUR ARRL MEMBERSHIP OR START A NEW ONE THROUGH THIS CLUB:

The Reason? For each NEW ARRL membership we submit to ARRL through the KCRA we receive FIFTEEN DOLLARS! For each RENEWAL processed through this club the club gets TWO Dollars. Please see the Treasurer (George, W8FWG) for further details. You will be helping the club by doing it through us! Thanks!

I-GATE POSSIBILITIES: In a recent telephone call with Jon Hopper, AB8WU, he mentioned there would be a possibility of adding a world-wide connection via the APRS (Automatic Packet Reporting System) to our existing digipeater K8MDH-1 on the fourth floor at the Keweenaw site.) More news on this venture at the January, 2010 meeting.

FD/2010: There was a discussion of having a “short session” of Field Day at Eagle Harbor, to show the presence of “ham” radio in the Keweenaw. More about this one at the January meeting.

APRS: Suggested to have a “Power Point” presentation about APRS, “Automatic Packet Reporting System” at MTU next year.

MOTIONS AND RESULTS:

Motion	Moved/Second	Call Signs	Vote
1. To elect a new VP	Howard/Stan	KD8ABP/WB8QJZ	Unanimous
2. To Elect two new A/T members	George/Stan	W8FWG/WB8QJZ	Unanimous
3. Contact Jon Hopper about I-Gate	Bill/Howard	KD8JAM/KD8ABP	Unanimous
4. Allow LSPR to use repeater	Howard/Paul	KD8ABP/KB9UDD	Unanimous
5. To drop the Non-Pub Tel. Number	Howard/Bill	KD8ABP/KD8JAM	Unanimous *

- Original idea came from David, KD8CGA. This \$5.50/month charge is what the telephone company charges the club to have the number NOT published!

5A. On October 16, 2009 George, W8FWG had the Non-Published telephone service changed to “Published” meaning it will now appear in the telephone directory as “KCRA” a savings of \$66/year.

6. **MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Dennis/Stan (K9GIR/WB8QJZ) The meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm

REFRESHMENTS: Served by Gary & Dianne Hansen and Virginia Thurner

DOOR PRIZE:

The tool box, filled with tools, was won by Bill La Bell, KD8JAM.

NEXT MEETING: Second Wednesday in January (January 13, 2010)

P.S. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS NEWSLETTER CONTAINS THREE ATTACHMENTS:

1. The Newsletter itself.
2. An “Application for Renewal” (Disregard if you’ve already paid for 2010).
3. Treasurer’s Report for the October , 2009 meeting.