

KCRA Newsletter

Keweenaw County Repeater Association

Vol. 29, No 4

Fourth quarter 2019

Meeting minutes— Wednesday, October 9, 2019

Call to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call of officers:

Present: President/Treasurer Bill LaBell, KD8JAM; Vice President Don Lafreniere, W8P-SP; Secretary Dave Gonigam, AG8NT

Also in attendance:

Jeff Stricker, W9GY; Erik Lee; Kevin Kirschke, N8ZGO; Cristy Kirschke, KC8SGQ.

Engineer's report:

Everything in good working order. A site visit was needed in late August-early September when the repeater was dead; the culprit was a dirty pot on a power supply board. At present the repeater is putting out about 60 watts.

Bill says he hears people kerchunking the 440 repeater and he comes back to them — and then there's no response.

Treasurer's report:

Balance in treasury at end of quarter: \$4,215.76. After paying the \$25 pasty.net bill, the current balance is \$4,189.76.

On October 8, Don took delivery of a 20-amp power supply for the 6m repeater at his QTH. On the question of the KCRA covering that expense (approximately \$80), Jeff moves, Dave seconds, and the motion carries by acclamation.

Technical/advisory committee report:

Bill received correspondence from Michael Carelli, W8MJC, vice president of the [General Motors Amateur Radio Club](#) in Detroit. The GMARC is interested in having the KCRA's 440 Fusion repeater join the GMARC's internet-linked WIRES-X system (Yaesu's proprietary version of Echolink).

This system currently links to seven repeaters — one in Ohio, the rest in the Mitten (the closest to us in Gaylord). Bill says he'll experiment with the DR-2X repeater to see if it can link directly to Yaesu's server, which would eliminate the need for a dedicated IP port.

Then the question arises whether we need a WIRES box to make it all work, or whether the repeater already has that capability (or could have it with a firmware upgrade). The [Yaesu HRI-200 internet interface device](#) runs about \$120. On the question of spending up to \$200, Don moves, Jeff seconds and the motion carries by acclamation. Should the expense be necessary, all agree the install should be done before the snow flies.

Secretary's report:

See minutes from the third-quarter newsletter. Jeff moves to accept, Don seconds. Motion carries by acclamation.

Old business:

Autopatch test: George Thurner, W8FWG, did a test run on Oct. 1 and found the autopatch in good working order. Website instructions for the autopatch need updating, however: Do not dial 1, and in the UP do not dial area code. Also, for the tones to get through, a full quieting signal is a must.

Technician-class instruction for prospective hams in Franklin Township (discussed in April, tabled until after summer):

- In May, Don made contact in Dayton with an ARRL representative who said study materials can be provided free because the KCRA is an ARRL-affiliated club
- For the format, Don envisions a couple hours' introductory session, including how to study. Then after sending candidates away with some homework, they come back for a second session covering key concepts, plus a Q&A session and maybe a demo.
- Venue? We're assuming Franklin Township Hall will be no problem
- Time frame: Don says January would be good (after the holidays), with the exam session to take place on a special date in February, apart from the regular quarterly exam schedule in February. Dave agrees to pass along the word to Franklin Township Supervisor Mary Sears, KE8FEU.

Thanks as always to pasty.net for covering the club's telephone and electric costs.

New business:

Jeff wonders who covers the cost of the doughnuts served at the quarterly exam sessions. If VE Team Liaison Mary Sears, KE8FEU, is paying out of her own pocket, Jeff believes the two sponsoring clubs (KCRA and CCRAA) should split that cost. Dave agrees to bring up the subject at the next monthly CCRAA meeting.

Because he's a Homeland Security Officer for the Civil Air Patrol, Erik Lee recently met Pete Costa, K8PDC, ARES District 8 Emergency Coordinator. Knowing Erik is from the Copper Country, Pete inquired about lining up area hospitals with dedicated ham radio systems; neither UP Portage nor Aspirus Keweenaw has one at this time.

Jeff says the hangup is having licensed operators on hand; the station setup itself would be simple with a 5/8 wave antenna on the roof and quality coax, acquired at the hospitals' expense. Erik says he'll reach out to both hospitals to determine the appropriate contact person.

Adjournment:

Motion by Jeff, seconded by Bill. Meeting adjourns at 7:37 p.m.

Post-meeting fellowship:

Erik shares pictures of the HF dipole now hanging at his home for his CAP duties.

Don and Bill graciously troubleshoot Dave's Kenwood TH-F6A that can't hit repeaters despite all the right settings. Diagnosis inconclusive, alas.