

KCRA Newsletter

Keweenaw County Repeater Association

Vol. 34, No. 1

First quarter 2024

Meeting minutes — Saturday, January 13, 2024

Call to order at 11:37 a.m.

Roll call of officers, [all present]:

President/Treasurer Bill LaBell, KD8JAM

Vice President Don Lafreniere, W8PSP

Secretary Dave Gonigam, AG8NT

Also present:

Mike Hicks, KL2YE; Stuart Kauppila, W8EEK; Amy Applin, KE8OZX; John Applin, W8WU; Reece White, KE8ZDM.

Engineer's report

Since the October meeting, the weather cooperated long enough on several consecutive Saturdays for Bill and Jeff Stricker, W9GY, to install and tweak the Motorola MTR2000 VHF repeater donated by Houghton County. The consensus is that it hears better than the Yaesu DR-2X it replaced.

The unit works well with the controller that was already in use. The club has acquired two more 6V batteries (for a total of 4) along with a 24V power supply.

Springtime project: A bank of meters and a webcam for further ease of remote monitoring.

Treasurer's report

Balance at the end of the year: \$3,993.65. Balance as of the meeting date: \$4,568.61 after a \$271 deposit plus a \$303.96 transfer from PayPal.

Going forward, the PayPal balance will be transferred the bank account daily; PayPal charges no extra fee for this service.

Technical/advisory committee report

See engineer's report above. Going forward, this section of the minutes will be discontinued.

Secretary's report

See minutes from the October meeting. No changes or corrections.

Old business

No takers for January exam session.

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

New business:

As of Saturday, Jan 6, the FCC approved the **change in vanity call sign for the repeater** from K8MDH to W8FWG in honor of George Thurner, W8FWG (SK). The change is now reflected on the automated repeater ID, on APRS and on the KCRA website.

At the invitation of Amber Kraft, KD9KKY, Don attended a **Civil Air Patrol** meeting the previous week. Six CAP members are already hams, and 11 more have expressed interest. The area's CAP group has a 25-foot communications trailer that's underused; KCRA members will check out its VHF and HF capabilities later this spring with an eye toward public outreach possibilities such as Field Day.

Winter Field Day is Jan. 27-28. Members of the CCRAA plan to gather at the CCRAA clubhouse along with other local organizations interested in winter readiness. Contacts: Amber, KD9KKY at kd9kky@gmail.com or Heliena, KR8VEN at HJHeqvine@gmail.com

Adjournment:

Stuart motions, Mike seconds. The meeting adjourns at 11:50.

Next meeting:

Saturday, April 13, 2024, 11:30 a.m., location TBA (will be announced via email and during the Friday night net).

Post-meeting presentation:

Reece White, KE8ZDM, delivered a presentation about Keweenaw County Search and Rescue — formed in 2022 by Sheriff Curt Pennala in response to the COVID-era influx of tourism.

Reece says amateur radio volunteers will be integral to the ongoing effort — which just got a boost in the form of a \$50,000 state grant to be applied toward the opening of a full-blown emergency operations center.

In memoriam: George Thurner, W8FWG (SK)

Since the October meeting, founding KCRA member and longtime KCRA officer George R. Thurner, W8FWG, became a silent key on Nov. 14, 2023 — a few days after his 89th birthday.

A licensed ham since 1950, George was “present at the creation” of the KCRA in 1983. The following year, he became one of the first volunteer examiners under the present-day VE system. George helped administer hundreds of exams over the next four decades, as recently as the Oct. 7, 2023 session at the Franklin Township Hall. For dozens if not hundreds of current licensees, George was their first contact.

George was the hobby’s most passionate ambassador in the Keweenaw, shoes that no one individual will be able to fill. As noted in the minutes above, his call sign lives on as the call sign of the 147.315 repeater where his voice was such a steady presence for so long. The club extends its heartfelt thanks to Antonia Burich, KE8SMB, for releasing the call.

