

THE PURPLE CRYSTAL

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A BULLETIN OF THE INDEPENDENT REPEATER ASSOCIATION, INC.

562 92nd Street, S.E. -- Byron Center, MI 49315

GRANDS RAPIDS IRA-SPONSORED HAMFESTIVAL IS JUNE 1, 2002 AT THE HUDSONVILLE FAIRGROUNDS GET READY!

The IRA Hamfestival, the largest hamfest in Western Michigan, is again being held at the Hudsonville Fairgrounds this year. The fairgrounds are 2 miles north off I-196 Exit 62, midway between Grand Rapids and Holland. Overnight camping is available with showers and electricity. Or if preferred, motels are available at Exit 62 (Rest-All Inn, 800 866-4322 and Amerihost Inn, 616 662-4000).

Friday night camping and setup is available by reservation (camp in your trunk sale space). Bring a "big" dish to pass with your own service and join in the traditional "road-kill-chili" potluck at 7:30 P.M. Bring along your musical instrument and join in the fun!

The huge facilities at the Hudsonville Fairgrounds provides convenient parking (including handicapped parking next to the gate) and three large exhibit buildings of exhibit space with handicapped access. Hundreds of 8' tables are available along with trunk sale spaces. All tables and trunk sale spaces are available by reservation. Plenty of electrical outlets are available both inside and outside (free). For information, call Kathy, KB8KZH at (616) 698-6627 between 4 P.M. and 7 P.M. E.D.S.T. Camping and table and/or trunk sale space rental does not constitute admission to the Hamfestival. All attendees must have an admission ticket. Children under 12 years of age do not require a ticket if accompanied by an adult.

Michigan-Florida hams will meet at 9 A.M. for an "eyeball coffee-klatch" in the cafeteria. VE exams will be given starting at 10:30 A.M. Bring the original and a copy of your license, any C.S.C.E.'s and some form of photo ID and a check made out to "ARRL/VEC."

There will be talks and demonstrations on "Alternative Energy Concepts" involving solar, wind, and generators that are of interest to hams. The Michigan Repeater Council will hold their June quarterly meeting at 1 P.M. All repeater owners and Trustees are invited.

Don't miss this great event put on for your enjoyment! Support the IRA link system, even if you can't attend. See the IRA web-site at www.w8hvg.org for more info.



Floyd, W8RO and Brad, KB8QAU "jammin" at the IRA Hamfestival potluck supper. Great fun!



Tom, KA8YSM at the keyboard providing background music at the IRA potluck. Bring your musical instrument and join in the fun.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The IRA Hamfestival is a GREAT BIG EVENT! It's the primary activity that generates funds for the IRA to support the link repeater system. If you can donate some time to help set up tables Friday evening before the potluck dinner, or sell tickets, or help tear down and clean up on Saturday afternoon, it would be very much appreciated and it's a lot of fun when everyone pitches in! If you can help, let it be known on the link repeater or get in touch with Randy, N8KQX, at (616) 532-5450. He keeps the master schedule. You can also catch him on the link system on Monday nights after the Newline broadcast at 8 P.M. Please volunteer and sign up because we need your help!

THE VIEW FROM THE HILL.....

.....STILL ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!

Greetings from the Board of Directors of the Independent Repeater Association! On behalf of the IRA it is my pleasure to wish you a prosperous New Year! I will try to update you on a number of things happening to and around the "link system" and in the IRA. It has been another great year to say the least.

Thanks to the users of the system, the 2001 IRA Hamfestival was a great success. Not only did the attendees make it a big success by being there, they also helped to run it. Without the volunteer help during setup, admission, and tear down, this event would not be possible. We try hard to make it better and it's been growing every year for the past three years. Make sure to contact Randy, N8KQX to volunteer this year. A good time to do this is Monday evenings between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M. right after the "Newsline" broadcast or the "Traders Net" (aka 'The John and Randy Show').

Every Monday evening, the IRA continues a long standing tradition of bringing you the "Amateur Radio Newsline." In recent years a "Traders Net" has been added to the schedule and continues to grow in popularity. Users often make the comment, "Things really move on this net." The fun begins at 8 P.M. with Newsline, followed by announcements from all over the State by numerous amateur radio organization representatives. Does your club partake? Just do it! A new feature is a "general check-in" process from around the link system to see who's on and where they are at in the state. It aids in testing and maintaining the link system. On the first and third Mondays of the Month, October thru May (*except during the summer months*), "Traders Net" follows the announcements segment. Your hosts, John, KC8KK and Randy, N8KQX, deserve a lot of credit for their tireless dedication to making things happen on Monday nights.

In November 2001, the IRA mailed a special package of information to 173 hams who have faithfully supported the IRA link system with donations over the past years. By year's end, their response continued to be overwhelming, and many hardly ever use the system! Thank you very much! Those that are new on the link system and think it worthy may send a donation to the address in the header of this Purple Crystal.

Operating and taking care of the link system takes funds and involves many people. Each site has a number of dedicated hams lending their skills and support. If you have the technical skills and are interested, and live near one of the link sites, contact Abe, W8HVG to learn how you can be of service.

Check out the IRA web-site at www.w8hvg.org for other new and interesting information. See you at the Hamfestival in June.

73, de Tom, KA8YSM
President, IRA

THE IRA LINK REPEATER SYSTEM STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE!

It was another great year for activities on the IRA link repeater system in 2001 thanks to all your support. We continued to improve the link system and we got lots of help from dedicated and supportive people.

The Traverse City 145.15 link repeater was installed in February with the help of many local hams. It's working and sounding great! The coverage is excellent!

The Mt. Pleasant 145.15 link repeater has been temporarily off the air since September 2001 because the 800' high transmit antenna was removed from the tower due to tower loading after the owner installed a "backup" FM broadcast antenna near that level. A new Decibel Products antenna has been purchased by W8HVG (paid for by CMARA) and will be installed ASAP. Hopefully, it will be back on-line in early 2002.

Efforts and negotiations were completed in the fall on a location and a signed agreement for the Ludington-Scottville 145.31 link repeater. Unfortunately, time ran out to install it in 2001 due to uncontrollable circumstances. Plans are to install it in early 2002. NOTE: There is a possibility of it being switched by agreement with the Ludington / Mason County Club 145.47 repeater frequency to be overall compatible in the area.

The Vanderbilt 145.29 link repeater has been performing somewhat below par due to a marginal "downlink signal" to Cadillac. A new link receive beam antenna was installed at Cadillac and improvements were made at Vanderbilt in early December. It's working great again!

NOTE: Operating handheld or mobile in the Kalamazoo area on 147.16 requires a 107.2 PL for the Oshtemo link receiver.

It was another great year for the IRA link system! Thanks to all who helped (in random order): Ken K8YYC, Tom KA8YSM, Tom K8LZH, Terry N8MJE, Jeff KA8HDY, Dan KA8WOW, Abe W8HVG, Dan W8BCI, Hank W8GVK, Rick K8WZS, Chuck W8SGR, Ward N8WK, Dale N8VX, Barry K8BK, John WB8VOJ, Dave KB8YNC, Jeff N8NII, Rick KD8CP, Jim AA8JR, Chuck KA8IBY, Randy N8KQX, Bud KG8BK, Randy N8DAN, John KC8KK, Bob N8DOG, Pete W8PET, Fritz KI8IJ, Dave WD8JOF, Alan KC8OTI, Bob AB8CY, Jim KC8PCJ, the CMARA members, the LCDRA members, the BRAAC members, the CASCADES members, Walker Sisson WA8CZE, Glen Walker who does our tower climbing, George Keen at SKE Communications in Big Rapids, Brian Monaghan in Grand Ledge, the management at Lansing WILX-TV, all the people who helped make Hamfestival 2001 a great success, and all the donors! Apologies to anyone missed. Sincere thanks to all from the IRA!

Abe, W8HVG
IRA Trustee

INFO ABOUT THE IRA

The Independent Repeater Association, Inc., is a tax exempt non-profit corporation registered in the state of Michigan and is responsible for managing the technical and financial aspects of its repeater systems. It has 501C3 status with the IRS. It is not a club and there are no dues. Operating expenses are covered by donations which are tax deductible, and fund raising activities such as the yearly sponsored Grand Rapids Hamfestival coming up June 1st at the Hudsonville Fairgrounds.

The Association operates and maintains a network of 2-meter repeaters covering western Michigan from the Indiana border to the upper peninsula. Everyone is welcome to use and enjoy the link repeater system.

The Vision of the IRA with the link repeater system is to provide:

- Dependable communications
- Opportunity for service
- Technical assistance forum
- Occasion to support
- Spread ham radio goodwill

As a result of elections held in December 2001, the IRA Board of Directors for 2002 are as follows. On the executive board are: Tom Werkema KA8YSM, President; John Rittenhouse WB8VOJ, Vice-President; Randy Chelette N8KQX, Secretary; and Jeff Ansley N8NII, Treasurer. Ray Abraczinskas, W8HVG, is the Trustee and Purple Crystal Editor. IRA Directors are John Knoper KC8KK, Steve Stutzman WB8NCD, Rick Dykstra KD8CP, Randy Hofmeyer N8DAN, and Bob McClymont K8DOG.

IRA Board business meetings are held at 7:30 P.M. on the second Thursday of the month at Russ' Restaurant on Division Avenue in Cutlerville, Michigan. You are all welcome to attend.

Listen on the link repeater system for the Amateur Newslite Report every Monday evening at 8 P.M.

THE LINK SYSTEM IS FOR EVERYONE TO USE AND ENJOY!

We occasionally receive comments about the same people talking on the link for hours throughout the day (most everyday). If you fit into this scene, please think about how you operate. Everyone is welcome to talk on the link system whether it's across town or across the state, but please use common sense and be considerate of those listening. If you participate everyday (all day and night) in lengthy gabfests or saying your call sign more than three times per QSO (over 20 minutes use), you may be one of the "complainers." We like to see the link system used 24 hours a day with new hams meeting new hams all over the State while talking about interesting things. That is what it's for! Needless to say that any emergency has precedence.

HAMFESTIVAL 2001 SNAPSHOTS



Jim, K8UOU and Carl, N8RYB having fun at the famous IRA "road-kill-chili" potluck dinner.



Tom, KA8YSM (standing by the solar panels) speaking on the beneficial aspects of solar power and demonstrating that it even works on cloudy days. Just what hams need!



"Happy campers" enjoying the "road-kill-chili" potluck supper at the IRA Hamfestival. Try it, you'll like it at the IRA Hamfestival on June 1st.

YOU CAN SUPPORT THE IRA LINK REPEATER SYSTEM BY SENDING A DONATION TO THE IRA ADDRESS.

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**ALL HAM CLUBS ARE INVITED TO
SHARE THEIR INFO ON THE LINK
SYSTEM AFTER NEWSLINE**

The IRA broadcasts the Amateur Newsline every Monday night at 8 P.M. as a service to Michigan hams. Immediately after newscast, the net control invites any and all ham organizations and clubs to announce pertinent information about their club activities, i.e., meetings, nets, hamfests, transmitter hunts, member passings, estate sales, VE exams, etc. Any club or organization is cordially invited to have a member announce their info after Newsline on the link system on Monday evenings. It's fun, everyone learns something, and new friends can be made. Following the announcements, a "general check-in" process occurs to assess the link system coverage and performance. Also, there is a "traders net" on the first and third Monday of the month right after Newsline (except during the summer months). Listen-in for all the bargains! Better yet, dust off that un-needed equipment and list it on the Traders Net.

During severe winter weather, you can usually find out about road conditions or weather conditions around the state by listening or calling on the link system. Furthermore, you can report an emergency or get roadside assistance by calling for help on the link from anywhere in the link coverage area. Someone is usually always listening. Download the link coverage map from the IRA web-site and keep it in your car for easy reference on how to access the link system. It lists all the frequencies and tones needed.

All hams are welcome to use and enjoy the link repeater system and the IRA encourages you to do so. It's there to use but not abuse! Thanks for your support.

IRA 2001 ANNUAL REPORT

January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2001

Balance carryover into 2001	1,673.77
INCOME	
Donations	1,560.68
Swap	4,386.40
Swap Reservations	403.00
Total income	6,350.08
EXPENSES	
Bank Charges	16.10
Electricity	510.45
Insurance	232.00
Site Rent	2,440.00
Swap	403.94
Swap Facilities	853.50
Swap Prizes	446.98
Swap Table Rent	70.10
Telephone	585.88
Web Site	43.46
Total expenses	5,602.41
Balance carryover into 2002	2,421.44

**LET US KNOW YOUR COMMENTS
AND SUGGESTIONS!**

We solicit and encourage your feedback. Let us know your comments and suggestions by writing to:

The IRA, Inc.
562 92nd Street SE
Byron Center, MI 49315

or send an email to IRA@w8hvg.org.