

The Zero Beat

Volume 30 Issue 3

November 1994

HPARC SWAP 'N SHOP - BE THERE!

President's QRM

Thanks to Tom AE8O for sharing a visit to his shack with us at the last general membership meeting. I can't remember the last time I've seen a shack with that much Heathkit equipment in it! Also, thanks to Tom N8TMQ for putting together the program. Thanks also to Frank K8DZT for taking over the jacket program and Phil N8UUS for managing the T-shirt program. If you would like to order a snappy HPARC jacket or T-shirt, see Frank or Phil at the meeting.

The Proposal that the Hazel Park Board of Directors had made concerning assuming ownership of the Dart Repeater was approved by the HPARC membership. The next step is to present the proposal to the Dart membership. The DART membership meeting will be held on November 11, 1994 at 7:30pm at the Fraternal Order of Police hall in Ferndale. The FOP is on Hilton just south of I-696.

This month's program at the general membership meeting on Wednesday, November 10, will be given by Jeff KB8CRM. He will show us what ATV (Amateur TV) is all about.

Don't forget the Sweepstakes Contests in November. CW Sweeps are the 5th and 6th of November with the Phone Contest on the 19th and 20th of the month. If you have never operated a contest before, take advantage of this. It's fun and guaranteed to improve your code speed and operating skills.

The HPARC Swap'n Shop is December 4. Set up will be on Saturday, December 3 at 12:00. I expect every member to help at the swap, either setting up tables on Saturday, selling tickets at the doors, or assisting with tear-down on Sunday afternoon. This is the Club's only money-maker for the year! The minimal dues that HPARC charges do not even cover the cost of producing the Zero Beat, so helping at the swap is a responsibility that every member should take upon themselves.

Thanks and 73 - Mike Van Buren - WD8S

NETS IN THE NEWS!

Rockers Invade Airwaves!

If you think A.M. is dead you probably laid money on the Lions making it to the Super Bowl this year. The Rocking Chair & Roadrunners VHF nets transmit and receive on 146.625 MHz, AM/FM vertical/horizontal on an almost daily basis. The Rocking Chair Net, established in March of 1984, convenes Monday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. The fleet of foot Roadrunners chew the Reeboks on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 11:00 am..

HPARC Members Reported Missing! 40M In Uproar!

Those who have been looking in vain for the HPARC CW Net on 40 Meters can rescind the missing amateur reports filed with their local gendarmes. The Net has moved to 15 Meters in an effort to escape the cacophony of noise on 40. Just tune 21.125 MHz or below at 8:00 p.m. every Monday night and join some of the friendliest fists in the Motor City for an hour of CW fun and the ever popular closing "dit-dit" ceremony.

Feeling Testy? Upgrade!

The next HPARC VE testing session is on Thursday, November 17 at Hoover Elementary. Whether you're after an upgrade or a new license there's no better VE Team in Town. Corner any club officer at the General Membership meeting to reserve a slot ahead of time.

Loquacious & Voracious?

The local 10 Meter gang, which can usually be found rag chewing at 28.45 MHz in the early evenings, have found a new home for their monthly brunch. If you're not busy on the last Saturday of the month at 10:00 am, why not stop by for a cup of java and an hour of erudite expository radio rantings. Jimi's Restaurant in Royal Oak, on Washington just south of Lincoln, is the place to meet until the management sits on a stray HT antenna.

HWS UR Radio Manners?

Opinion by KB8RSH, Marty Mendelson

Almost daily on repeaters around the state I hear operators with newer calls, as well as older calls, who do not have a clue as to proper etiquette on the 2 meter band. In some respects, the 2 meter band reminds me of CB radio of 20-30 years ago.

Fun and games on the air are fine at times, but occasionally, it is confusing to someone new. More often than not, it drives newcomers away. Still others assume these habits as normal, and this creates general mayhem in their subsequent QSOs. We all hear about the kids who have passed their exams and earned their tickets. Do you hear them on the repeaters? Ask yourself why not? Better yet, go over to high-profile repeater systems like the SMART and listen for a while. While the trustees of the SMART and other systems are doing their best to try and maintain order, they are often forced to shut down because of the rudeness of a few users who think they "own" the repeater or a particular slice of time. That's why you won't find me there very often.

This hobby, and some of us have a tendency to forget that it is exactly that, is about learning and training. A good ham should be, first and foremost, willing to Elmer others that have less experience and knowledge. The next time you run into anyone out there that needs information you possess or an unintentional bad habit you can help cure, make yourself available. A friendly explanation can go a long way to restoring some better operating practices out there. A gentle nudge is more likely to push someone in the right direction than a verbal harangue.

There will always be those who want to learn, those that cannot learn, and those who do not know how. Take the time to be a part of the solution not a part of the problem. There will always be someone with more or less experience than you. There will also always be those that are difficult to tolerate.

Take the time to review your own operating procedures. On CW, do you slow down your sending speed to match the other party, or do you just expect them to follow the flow? Not everyone knows enough to ask "QRS PSE TO 7 WPM" or "QRZ?". Some nets I have listened to ask others to join in, but neglect to adjust their speed to the slowest member of the net. If someone answers the CQ you sent at 20 WPM, that does not mean they can comprehend everything at that speed.

It may seem hard to believe, but there are a lot of people out there who do not know where to get the information

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they need. That includes those who do not have the time to research a problem on their own. Some people are shy, some scared, and some just don't know the proper way to do things. Ignorance can be forgiven and rectified with an Elmer's patient help. It's not only the responsibility of the newer operator to ask for help, it should also be the more experienced ham's responsibility to teach by example as well as words. In the "rude 90's", the image of ham radio and your local club is more important than ever.

I got into this hobby to have fun and learn. It is not enjoyable when you are shunned for one reason or another. Most of the older hams know who the newer ones are just by their calls. Think about the words you say before you hit the PTT switch, and what they might convey. If your words are vague, someone listening on a repeater may get the wrong message.

If you notice a bad habit forming, sometimes it is not proper to admonish a fellow ham over the air. Consider offering your phone number or meeting for a cup of coffee. Explain what you think is wrong and handle it diplomatically. Give back some of what you got when you first entered this fine hobby.

A good portion of the new hams out there got into some bad habits from the Chicken Band radio. They left the crazy world of CB expecting camaraderie that, far too often, is absent from the amateur bands. My personal guess is that out of all the hams licensed every year, almost half leave the hobby because of the bad manners of some of the older and supposedly more experienced hams. Why is that? Maybe we should all review our operating habits.

Instead of giving the government more reasons to take away more of the frequencies we use, let's put an end to the bickering and name calling, and restore the fellowship that is Ham Radio.

Then we can all LISTEN, ENJOY and HAVE FUN.

73 es CUL de KB8RSH

Unclassifieds:

Antennas For Sale:

Cushcraft Ringo Ranger - 2 Meter

Cushcraft R5 Vertical - 10,12,15, 17, 20 Meters

Wilson SY-33 Beam, 3 Element Tri-Bander, 10, 15, 20 Meters. Call Frank K8ZDT at 810-758-4239

The Swap Hound

Sleazy fine print: Swap Hound listings are based on psychic readings, listings in other cheesy newsletters, and phases of the moons of Uranus. Errors are guaranteed to creep in on a regular basis. Before wasting your gas and time, check with a credible source (i.e. any HPARC member other than KE8QT).

SUN NOV 6TH SOUTHFIELD, MI Oak Park ARC SwapnShop - Southfield Civic Center Pavilion - For info call (810) 559-2442. Admission \$5.00. - Talk in 146.640 (DART)

SAT NOV 19TH HOLLAND, MI Holland ARC Westshore Hamfest & Computer Swap, Holland Christian High School, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Talk-in 147.06(+), Admission: \$4.00, Tables - \$8.00, For Info call Jeff (616)-772-1846.

SAT/SUN NOV 19-20 FORT WAYNE, IN Fort Wayne hamfest & Computer Expo, Allen County War Memorial Expo Center. Sat 9-4, Sun 9-3. All indoors - Admission: \$5.00 - Parking: \$2.00. General Info - John Rufner (219) 484-3317 - Flea Market Tables: \$15.00 - Prime Tables: \$30.00 - Electricity: \$25.00.

SUN DEC 4TH HAZEL PARK, MI - MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!! Hazel Park ARC 29th Annual SwapnShop. Hazel Park High School. 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Admission only \$4.00! Capacious tables available - \$13.00. Talk-in on 146.640 (DART).

MINUTES OF THE HPARC OCTOBER 12, 1994 MEETING
(In incredibly tiny type so that it fits in the space that the world's laziest newsletter editor had left for it this month. Besides, you were looking for an excuse to skip this.)

Meeting commenced 7:45 P.M. with welcome and introductions. Minutes of previous meeting read by KE8QT. Motion to accept by WD8R, seconded by K8VDA. Motion passed. Treasurer's report by K8TRF. Motion to accept by K8DZT, seconded by WD8R. Passed. Video presentation by AE80 and N8TMQ on old radio equipment. Broke for refreshments at 8:20; resumed at 8:40. November meeting will have a presentation on ATV. Recognition of Robert, KB8UUQ, for passing 13 WPM CW test. Robert is 11 years old. Club board has decided not to acquire a gin pole and safety harness for liability reasons. K8DZT will be club jacket coordinator. The Mohan clan will handle club T-shirt orders. Christmas party on track; December meeting will also be QSL night. Club will assist in operation of Catalpa ARC station at Cranbrook if Catalpa asks us to. Boy Scout Jamboree on the Air weekend of 10/15. WD8R will host a group at his station. Motion by N8RLM to donate \$350 to Hazel Park Schools for the Hazel Woods property. Seconded by AA8EG. Passed. Club will buy Sweepstakes pins and mugs for those who qualify. Logs to go to AA8EG. Motion by KB8THN to pursue incorporation of the club. Seconded by N8WIQ. Passed. Motion by KA8QKM to pursue consolidation of the DART repeater into the HPARC. Seconded by KB8TVE. Passed. DART membership meeting is 11/11. New members recognized and welcomed. Club drawing won by N8SML, Murph. Meeting adjourned 9:20 P.M.

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Equipment Review: Kenwood TH-79 HT

By Mike Musick - N0QBF

Lulled by the sexy small size, I succumbed (or, rather, the credit card succumbed) and bought a Kenwood TH-79 dual-band HT recently. Already owning a TH-78, the comparison comes easy.

SPECS: The TH-79A is a U.S.-spec dual-band transceiver, featuring coverage from 144-148 and 438-450 MHz. Receive coverage is extended on the 2M side from 118 to 174 MHz with AM in the aircraft band; there is no extended UHF coverage without modification. Max power is rated 5W on VHF and 3.5W on UHF with a 12V source; max power with stock 600 mA/nicad pack is 2.5/2.0. There are three power levels for each band - high, low, and extra-low (30mW). There are 80 memory channels, with no evident expansion capability. U.S./Canada version comes with the CTCSS encode/decode option. Going price at a 7/17/94 hamfest was \$480.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS. Tiny, tiny, tiny. Imagine putting a small duckie on the ARRL Repeater Directory - except that the 79 is narrower by about an inch. With the standard battery and not counting the belt clip, the dimensions are roughly 2" wide, 5" tall, and 1" thick. The belt clip adds 3/8" to the thickness; I left it off so it would be pocketable, and, frankly, it fits moderately comfortably in my work slacks' front pockets, which was surprising. It's tiny! (Oh, I said that already.)

The 79's keyboard has larger buttons than it's predecessor (lacks the cover, too) which are much easier to use. Control layout in general is better and even in just a couple of days I appreciated the change. No more ambiguous power switch - it's a normal FF/ON/VOL setup. Secondary band volume control is on the "ring" of the freq/channel encoder knob in a coaxial arrangement.

There are no squelch knobs; it a key+knob function for both bands. Squelch control was, well, interesting. There are only six "settings", with usually only the lowest setting opening the squelch under no signal. Reading between the lines in the manual, apparently the squelch circuit is semi-automatic. I expected some limitations, but had no complaints under actual use - it worked well.

With my expected habit of putting it in my pocket, I like the control lock switch - it's *not* an F-key function, but, rather is a slide switch next to the PTT. No more fumbling around to unlock it. Unfortunately, the lock function does not lock PTT - that has to be disabled with the "Tx Stop" menu setting. I found

this out the hard way by putting it in my pocket and inadvertently keying-up a repeater.

The 79 has an alphanumeric display capability of two lines of 10 characters, which is used in several ways. First, there is a "guide" facility, which provides on-line instruction for most operation features with a scrolling display. Then there is a "menu" function, which provides access to the settings which were normally done with obscure F-key commands in the 78. Setting the various functions is very clear this way. There is also a status review mode, where the more important settings are displayed.

Finally, the alphanumeric display can be set for each programmed channel. Seven characters positions are available and almost the entire extended ANSI character set - that's right: lower case, symbols, and accented characters - can be used. However, alpha display is mutually exclusive with frequency display. Frequency display mode can be selected in case you forgot what was "underneath" your programmed channel ID.

PERFORMANCE. I was impressed, without a doubt. The '79's sensitivity is markedly better than the 78, in both bands and especially in the extended portions of VHF. And, spurious signal (intermod) rejection seemed to be much better as well in the side-by-side tests. The stock antenna, however, was awful. I bought an ANLI 5" dual-band flexi and it made a huge difference - signals just breaking squelch with the stock duck were full-scale with the ANLI.

Audio is fairly good for something so small. The quality was marginally better than the 78 and tended to distort less at max volume settings. Audio power would be stretched to use it, say, with the car window open going freeway speeds. Having loaned my wattmeter to a friend, I wasn't able to get transmitter measurements to confirm power ratings. Reports from those on the receiving end have been favorable so far, though.

ADVANTAGES. As mentioned previously, the 79's receiver quality is significantly better than the 78, in both sensitivity and intermod rejection. Battery life - even with the smaller batteries - is supposed to be drastically improved due to a number of design changes, particularly in the transmitter finals.

DISADVANTAGES. There are, unfortunately, a few. One thing that jumped-out very early was that there is no facility to "lock out" a channel from the memory scan. If you select memory scan (hold [MR] for 1 second), you get every channel programmed in the band active for that "side", whether you want it or not. IMO, this was a grave oversight on Kenwood's

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part. If someone knows how to do this or there is a "hidden" lockout function, please post it, because nothing in the manual even hints at being able to do this.

Another disadvantage, albeit minor, is that there are no clocks or timers. I normally eschew these gimmicks, but "on the road" I've made use of the timer feature in the 78 as an alarm clock. I'll miss it a little. It has no 800 MHz receive, which the first two generations of TH-78 has. This isn't a big problem, because the current TH-78 has 800 MHz missing, too. I only mention this for current 78 owners who have pre-4/94 units.

And, so far it seems that there are fewer "hidden" features available, like cross-band repeat. I said "so far". There appears to be no extended F-key function activated by holding down the F key for 1 second; most of those feature selections are covered by the menu display. But there's more exploring to do and we might just bump into something interesting in the next few days - "power on" has significance in one important command (memory channel clear), so it may be important in switching other modes.

MODS. I studied the schematics (supplied) for the usual strap selections for extended range and different markets. Yes, they are there. When the opportunity permits I will cross-reference the mod codes against other Kenwood schematics and determine where the range extensions are. HOWEVER, there is very clear allusion to an 800 MHz receive feature, and checking the component list for the U.S. version codes, it appears that *all* of the 800 MHz components are missing. Kenwood is meeting the "no cellular" requirement purely by eliminating the 800 MHz receive section altogether. So, technically, you would probably be able to mod it for 800 MHz receive, but getting all of the right parts (about 40 or 50 surface mount components) and getting them to work without destroying something borders on improbable.

Overall, I like it, though I'm really hacked by the lack of scan memory lockout - they *REALLY* messed-up by not including it. Another feature lost from the TH-78: special scans. With the TH-78, it was possible to have a variety of special scan conditions. One of my favorites was to load a freq into the "call" channel, and by holding [CALL] for one second it would flip back and forth between two freqs. I used this a lot, and it just isn't there on the 79.

I spent some time trying various power-on key combinations and found absolutely nothing. One thing for sure - if it isn't in the manual, it isn't likely to be discovered accidentally. The more I "explore" this rig, the more I get the impression that feature selection may be "back to basics". Kenwood might be a little sore after the TS-50 experience with the FCC and may feel the need to make access to "tweaks" a little less obvious.

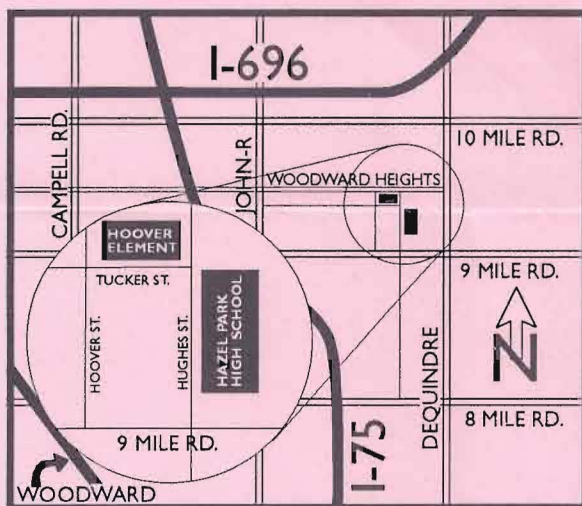
THE HAZEL PARK AMATEUR RADIO CLUB'S 29th ANNUAL SWAP & SHOP

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Hazel Park Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 368
Hazel Park, MI 48030

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Ed Ellis
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