



Zero Beat

February 2023

General Meeting
Wednesday February 8th
At 7:30 pm at the
Hazel Park Library
and on Zoom
With Socializing
At 7:00 pm

President's QRM

We are now a bit further into the new year, and so far, it's brought us improved HF propagation. In the past month, we saw the solar flux index reach a peak of 234, which is the highest that it has been so far in Solar Cycle 25. Sunspot activity has picked up considerably as well. This means that the higher HF bands are opening more often to distant places. For example, on 10 meters, I have worked Lithuania (SSB) and Japan (CW) this past month.

As for 6 meters: There was a sporadic E opening into Texas and thereabouts on New Year's Eve, and during the ARRL January VHF Contest, the band opened again to Kansas, which enabled me to work W1AW/0 among others. You never know when or to where those VHF bands will be open. I often tell people about the time I worked several Florida stations on a Tram 1480 vertical antenna during a sporadic E opening on 2 meters in July 2021!

It was great to see people at January's meeting, and Jay WB8SBI's presentation about the first (and as far as I can tell, only) Australian Amateur Radio satellite, Australis OSCAR 5, seemed to resonate with those in attendance – probably in light of our often-mentioned ISS contact in October 2022. We've got some good presentations lined up for the remainder of this term's membership meetings, too.

It's unfortunate that we had to cancel our swap meet for 2023. However, our club leadership and volunteers are not so easily discouraged by setbacks like this, so we are already in discussions about potential events that we can do in place of the annual swap meet, and partnerships with other like-minded organizations are also on the table. Watch this space for more details!

Club Officers

President	Mike K8WU qrz@k8wu.me
1st. VP	Marvin W5DT marvstasak@gmail.com
2nd. VP	Jim W8DPM tenaciousjd@gmail.com
Secretary	Reuven KB3EHW rgevaryahu@gmail.com
Treasurer	Bob N8REL rlau6@aol.com
Parliamentarian	Bill N8QVS n8qvs@arrl.net
Director	Len AD8FK len1perkins@yahoo.com

On a positive note, we are seeing a lot of participation in our license courses, and we are getting many new and aspiring Amateur Radio operators in the membership. I attribute this to our mentorship program (headed up by Len AD8FK), as well as our abilities to live up to our "Service Through Education" motto.

In closing: Let's make 2023 a good one for the Hazel Park Amateur Radio Club, and Amateur Radio in general!

Thanks and 73,

Mike Phipps, K8WU

President, Hazel Park Amateur Radio Club

January 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order 7:30pm

Pledge of allegiance

Thanks to the library

Introductions

New members: W8vnr K8sea KE8wdd 2 in training

Presentation by WB8SBI Jay on AMSAT-

AO-7 Is world's oldest operational satellite. People thought it was dead, Polish resistance used it, later hams used it again. AO-5 builders were guests of honor at the 2018 AMSAT symposium in Virginia. Video presentation on AO-5.

Bylaws cleanup. Aaron — W8VIP : was an attorney consulted? Mike - yes, Jim W8DPM is an attorney.

Vote, all are in favor.

Upcoming activities: Swap 1/22; WFD 1/29. banquet 6/14. Field day 6/24-25.

Discussion about the swap. 40 tables sold; need 60 or so to have a worthwhile event.

Club elections starting in March, think about it.

Siren testing starting in March, contact Marsha N8FE.

Treasurer's report. Ahead since repeater rebuild not done. Membership dues ahead of expected. Just under \$7300 bank+paypal balance.

Len AD8FK on mentorship- look for new folks with the white lanyard, say hello. 2 folks in the room.

Reminder of net. Cozy Cabin breakfast on Saturdays.

Meeting adjourned shortly before 9pm

Respectfully submitted,

Reuven Gevanyahu KB3EHW

HPARC secretary

QRP Alternatives: After The Funeral, What Comes Next?

Chris Warren January 27, 2022

Let the dead rest.

Now several weeks out from being the #1 ham radio news story, the Yaesu FT-818/817 product sunset has faded from attention. Anyone not already on the Yaesu platform will have to seek QRP alternatives. Most hams were surprised, some were disappointed, and some were strangely...glad? One well known blogger and YouTuber went on at length cheering its demise. This person, who legitimately has a high level of skill and knowledge, somehow got the idea that trash-talking the dead was a classy way to advance amateur radio. His approach was peculiar and very off-putting.

My takeaway is that funerals bring out the best and the worst in people, even when it involves the "death" of an inanimate object.

Moving on.

With a legendary radio now off the market, at least as a new unit, what other options are out there? What QRP alternatives can we dig up? As it goes, there are many choices. Whether or not they can fill the 818/817's shoes is a matter of opinion.

It's worth pointing out that the prices vary considerably. To make fair comparisons, keep this in mind when making your own choices.

Xiegu.

Xiegu offers several QRP transceivers ranging from the \$319.00 G106 to \$639.00 X6100. These radios are not high end, but they are well respected and generally get good reviews. They offer a .

lot of features for the money. For example, the X6100 has a ten watt output and a 3.6 inch (9.1 cm) "waterfall" displayed

Red flags: They claim to be a "worldwide" company but their [website](#) only lists an address and phone number in what I assume is China (the exact country is not given). No service centers or regional facilities are listed anywhere else. I sent them an email asking about out of warranty service. As of the posting of this article (six days later) they have not responded.

I also contacted Ham Radio Outlet (likely the biggest and most well known ham radio retailer in the USA) via email and asked if they handle Xiegu service themselves or if a user would have to deal with Xiegu directly. HRO responded within minutes and stated that they handle warranty claims for Xiegu radios purchased from them.

So although Xiegu is perfectly decent radio, getting it serviced may be a problem, especially if it is out of warranty or you bought it used. Luckily, peer-to-peer internet support is available from the many Xiegu user groups and social media pages. Because these radios are so popular, there is a large base of experience to tap for help.

Elecraft KX2 & KX3

The Elecraft KX3, and its little brother KX2, are among the finest QRP radios available and have a commensurate price tag. It's an absolutely stellar radio by any measure. Unlike Xiegu, US-based Elecraft has a very well laid out website. Getting support is as simple as filling out an online form. They also go the extra mile by offering downloadable schematics, technical bulletins, software updates, and more. They really do cover all the bases and do not make you wander all over the internet to find help.

Red Flags: The Elecraft KX-series, as outstanding as it may be, does have a few points of concern. First off, a microphone is a \$79.00 USD option. That's right. After dropping big bucks on a top-tier radio, they will squeeze you for another \$79.00 if you actually want to talk to anyone. I realize many hams run data or CW exclusively, but come on, Elecraft! Really? It's an unbecoming money grab.

Speaking of things you don't get, the Elecraft KX-series also does not include an internal battery. They were thoughtful enough to design the KX3

simple. The KX2 uses a proprietary internal battery. The web description is unclear if it is included, so I sent Elecraft an email asking for a clarification. They responded in less than a day, stating that the KX2 does not include a battery. The battery cost \$59.95 USD.

Lastly, accessories such as an antenna tuner (\$259.00 USD) and pan adapter (\$759.00 USD), while not required, are costly. Adding them to a KX3 will drive the price well past \$2000.00 and will more than double the price of a KX2.

None of these issues are necessarily deal breakers, but it's disappointing that an expensive, high end radio does not include something as basic as a microphone and a battery. It's like spending \$100,000 for a luxury car and being told the windshield wipers will cost extra.

Icom IC-705.

The IC-705 made a huge splash when it was first released in 2020. Since then, it's been one of the most talked-about radios on the market. The buzz is justified. It includes pretty much every feature on a ham's wish list, including advanced functions such as wireless connectivity, GPS, and DSTAR. The \$1349.00 price tag means, like Elecraft, this radio is only for serious QRP-ers. And unlike Elecraft, for that price they leave nothing out. You do get a microphone and a battery.

Icom provides a detailed 200 page manual. In addition, there are many on line social media pages and user groups.

Red flags: There isn't much about the IC-705 to pick apart. Some reviewers state that the microphone is cheaply made and they don't like the Y-connection on the mic cord. Also of note: the 705 has a somewhat outdated micro-USB port and not a more modern USB-C. The battery is proprietary, but it's the same battery used for Icom handheld radios. If you are already on the Icom platform, you have battery compatibility between your gear.



Everything Else

This is hardly a comprehensive list. There are many, many other choices. For those who truly take a minimalist approach, there are **CW-only radio kits** available for as little as \$15.00 USD. You're going to be limited to one band (or even one frequency), but these kits offer a lot of fun-per-dollar. I also found **off brand radios** in the \$150.00-\$200.00 range. You will need some courage to buy one because little is known about them and the reviews are not encouraging.

The **Discovery TX-500** is an under-the-radar player in the QRP market and gained a lot of respect for its sturdy tank-like construction and solid performance. The manufacturer is based in Russia, although it's unclear if the radios are actually made there. With everything going on regarding Russia, I was surprised to find new TX-500's readily available for sale here in the USA.



And of course, there are many old radios on the used market. Most of these vintage rigs will not run data, at least not easily, but their durability and value is well established. I always admired the Heathkit HW-8. If I ever come across a clean one at a good price, I'll bite. I don't "need" another radio, the HW-8 is just cool.

Thinking more practically, my next QRP radio is going to be the IC-705. The value, features, and performance for the money is off the scale. I'm even thinking of selling my FT-817ND and all its accessories to subsidize the 705.



Chairmen

Repeater	Joe WB8ADX
W8JXU Trustee	Bill N8QVS
Swap	John KD8NYF
Field Day	John AA8UU
Education	Jerry W9NPI
Sunday Net	Bob N8REL
Zero Beat Editor	Rick KB500
Public Information Officer (PIO)	Rick KB500
Webmaster	Reuven KB3EHW
Banquet	John W8TOY
Club Picnic	Jim W8DPM

Volunteers

LoTW Manager	Murray KE8UM
Club Cook	Bill N8QVS
Lark in the Park	John AA8UU
Net Control Operators	Len AD8FK John W8TOY Mike K8WU Bob N8REL
HPARC Media Dream Team	Hugh KE8BED Rick KB500 John AA8UU Mike K8WU John W8TOY

HPARC Nets

HPARC Official Sunday Night 2-meter Phone Net

Every Sunday a 9:00 Pm local time on the DART repeater, 146.64 (PL 1 00), catch up on club news and information, and just to keep in touch. All amateurs are welcome to check in.

ARPSC Thursday Night 2-meter phone net

Every Thursday at 8:00 PM on the W8OAK repeater, 146.90 (PL 100). The Hospital radio check net takes place on the last Thursday each month at 7:30 PM on the W8OAK repeater. <http://www.arpesc.com>

Around Town

HPARC Buddy Breakfast every Saturday at 9:00 AM (or so)

Cozy Cabin Diner, 2129 E. 12 Mile Rd, Warren, MI Come in early for the socializing. Park in the restaurant parking lot.

Oakland County ARPSC Siren Testing, 1st Saturday at 1:00 PM.

March through November. Contact Marsha, N8FE, at n8fe@arrl.net, to volunteer and be assigned a siren to test.

Amateur Radio Licensing Testing

Jerry has announced that license testing will be on the first Tuesday of every even month at 7:00 PM at the Oak Park Community Center.

Next Session February 7th

