



Zero Beat

September 2023

General Meeting
Wednesday September 13th
At 7:30 pm at the
Hazel Park Library
and on Zoom
With Socializing
At 7:00 pm

President's QRM

I hope that everyone had a good summer! I did my usual operations, and even made it out to a few state parks to do Parks on the Air activations. Of course, the propagation continues to improve, so I have been doing a lot on HF. You can usually find me on 40 meters doing phone these days, especially later in the evening when we usually get a nighttime path open to Europe.

A big THANK YOU goes out to everyone who helped make our Field Day event this year what it was. We had some challenges in the new space up at Camp Agawam, but we made it work, and next year, we will be even more ready to operate from there.

This year's annual picnic in August was a fun time, too. As always, Bill N8QVS handled the majority of making it happen, and even brought his new custom-built grill with him. The result was that the food was really good, and everyone had a great time there.

We will continue to meet at the Hazel Park Memorial Library for our monthly general membership meetings. The next one is on September 13, 2023 at 7:30 PM EDT. ARRL Division Director hopeful Michael Kalter, W8CI, will be in attendance, and he will talk about the ARRL and what he intends to do if he wins the position. It should be an informative discussion.

I look forward to serving the club for another year, and remember, no matter what part(s) of the hobby interest you, above all else: Have fun with Amateur Radio!

Mike Phipps, K8WU
 President, Hazel Park Amateur Radio Club

Club Officers

President	Mike K8WU qrz@k8wu.me
1st. VP	Joe WB8ADX joeraznik@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

Turn Thinking Into Doing (But Do Some Actual Thinking First).

Chris Warren August 26, 2023 [3 Comments](#) on Turn Thinking Into Doing (But Do Some Actual Thinking First).

It's better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it.

It's been quite a summer! Flooding, extreme heat, wild fires, and (at this writing) a hurricane just tore up the Western USA and another storm is churning in the Gulf of Mexico. Every time a string of disasters happen, there is increased chatter of how amateur radio can be useful for emergency communications. More anecdotally, *Off Grid Ham* site traffic bumps up around these incidents. Many hams who consider themselves just hobbyists start realizing their hobby also has a very practical aspect. It therefore seems disasters get people thinking. When applying amateur radio to disaster & emergency communications, it's important to turn thinking into doing.

Step one: Define your goals.

Before you collect or set up any communications apparatus, create a concise, specific list of goals your off grid radio system should achieve. This part of planning is often skipped over because it's not much fun! Yes I get it: Everybody loves the excitement of ordering gear on line and assembling what they believe will be a kick ass station. But if you don't know what you intend to accomplish with the equipment, the entire plan will fail (because you never really had a plan in the first place).

Examples of goals:

Comms for a loosely organized local group, such as a few neighbors who live within a small area.

Communicate with a relative in a distant city.

Civilians coordinating with government officials & disaster response agencies.

Coordinating with non-government organizations: Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.

Monitoring event-related radio traffic: Fire, police, etc.

Provide communications within private property: Family farm, retreat location, hunters/fishermen, etc.

Many operators will have overlapping goals. This is fine, but do try to keep your goals as fo-

approach means your plan and equipment needs will be excessively complex. If your list of goals is long, take a moment to be very discriminating and see if something can be edited out. It's not realistic to be "ready for anything" so be ready for what it most likely. Your budget & skills will be a factor in your goal setting as well.

Step two: Define your scenario.

Defining a preparedness scenario is an extension of what we reviewed in step one. It's a simple mental exercise: What exactly are you preparing for? The person who just wants to participate in a neighborhood watch group is going to have much different needs than the person who is preparing for a doomsday societal collapse.

Secondly, how will you use your setup? Is it going to be a fixed, home-based station? A mobile rig in a car? Some sort of "go bag/box"? Like in the previous step, your format and defined scenario will drive what kind of equipment you will need.

Step three: Take inventory.

Once you have a clear vision of your goals and know what scenarios you're preparing for, it's time for the fun part: Buying stuff! Before you whip out the credit card, take inventory of what you already have and see how much of it can be used for your application. If you're a newer ham, this may be easy because you likely don't have a lot of stuff laying around. For those of us who have been hamming for decades, well, we probably have gear that we forgot about. I personally own enough ham equipment to fill a decent sized truck. I speak from experience when I say it really sucks to buy something only to find out a short while later that you already had one!

Step four: Putting it all together.

This is where we go from conception to actual product. Assemble your station in the chosen format (permanent, go bag, etc.). At this point do not obsess over getting every last detail perfected. The main purpose of this step is to get a working prototype. The details can be sorted out later.

My first effort at an EMCOMM go box years ago seemed like a good idea at the time, but I should have seen the disaster coming. I had no plan or purpose. I made a box out of cheap press wood and filled it with whatever old gear I had laying around. The empty box itself was already way too heavy, and with all the stuff I filled it with it became an unwieldy cumbersome mess. I never deployed it even once. In the end, I pulled all the gear out, then cut the press wood box up and tossed it in the trash. I'd

never been so disappointed in a project and to this day it is my greatest failure

Step five: The “shakedown cruise”.

I hope you did not plan on assembling an off grid radio station and then just stash it in a closet somewhere, to be taken out only in an emergency. It's a huge mistake, It's really important to take your new setup out and use it under conditions you would anticipate according to your plan.

This is where you identify and correct deficiencies and perfect the details. The reason I suggest you wait until this step to do your fine tuning is because things always look good “on paper” and on your bench at home. When you take your station out into the “real world” you will almost certainly find out that changes need to be made. Once you deploy your system in a live event you may not have the time or the means to correct shortcomings.

Ongoing practice & training will be necessary to keep your skills sharp. If the first time you use your off grid setup is when [SHTF](#), you're already in huge trouble. Don't be the guy or girl who takes their radios out for a spin once a year for Field Day and calls it good.

Volunteering for emergency communications groups.

Volunteering for an emergency communications group seems like a great idea, right? You can glean insight for your own EMCOMM planning, get some practice, and meet like minded folks. For the most part volunteering is a great idea. But volunteering comes with some important considerations. So important, in fact, that there is [an entire Off Grid Ham article discussing the ramifications](#). I strongly suggest you read the article before jumping into the volunteer pool. Also, [here is a great article about operational security \(OPSEC\)](#).

Pulling it all together.

If your current off grid radio setup is not meeting your needs, it may be because you didn't plan it right in the first place. It's never too late to reverse course! Those who enjoy ham radio only as a fun hobby don't need to plan so much; just go with whatever moves you. But hams who want their radios for emergency communications will need to be more thoughtful.

Planning may not feel like you're not “doing anything” but it is an essential precursor to having effective off grid radio communications¹



"A ham - pod?"

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.arpdc.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 October 3rd

