

# SVARA Harmonic

A monthly publication of the Saginaw Valley  
Amateur Radio Association

June 2006

## Happy 50th Birthday SVARA!

The Saginaw Valley Amateur Radio Association has made it to its 50th anniversary! We are all very grateful to the founding members of the late 1950's for starting the group -- and all the members that have built the organization over the years. The SVARA party on June 6, 2006 will be a wonderful event celebrating the anniversary. You will notice in this special 50th Anniversary edition of the harmonic, copies of a few of the old documents and photos from the past years. There will also be SVARA history books with many more photos and documents available to look through at the party. Icom was generous and donated hats, maps, and band charts to give away at the celebration. Michigan government and ARRL officers will celebrate with us too!

There are many transition times throughout the life of an organization and this is another one. The new club projects are once again helping our newer members learn about electronics, digital modes, foxhunting, and antenna building. Our license training classes are helping people get their FCC licenses, and progress to advanced licenses. Our participation in Metro Youth Day, the Boy/Girl Scouts Jamboree on the Air, and Radio demonstrations at the Public Libraries and elementary schools are building radio interest in the community. Our membership is once again growing. The skills of members are revealing themselves, and the acts of volunteerism are growing too. We've formalized an Elmering system and this has helped our new members; it has also supplied good articles for our Harmonic newsletter as well. I am personally very proud of our old and new members and how they are inspiring each other.

Our SVARA sponsored ARES and RACES programs have blossomed once again with the advent of the Saginaw County Citizens Corps. Radio operators now work and meet regularly for events and training with the county emergency office, and other volunteer agencies. Our techno-wizardry is bringing failsafe communications and live video imagery to the major emergency simulation events. This is an exciting time to be a volunteer.

We transmitted the good news of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary through the K8DAC special event station operated from the Red Cross on June 3. We received many congratulatory salutes from fellow hams all over the world (and right here in the Saginaw Valley too!).

Thank you to all that have made this event possible, and all that are participating. I am very proud to be serving in such a respectable organization. Best Wishes to all the Radio Amateurs of the Saginaw Valley.

Keith DeLong, N8XD, SVARA President

## Tower Safety

Anyone can climb a tower. The question is will you be safe? The fact is most believe they are. So let's take a look at some aspects of safety they may be overlooking.

To start with have you checked the weather forecast for the day of the climb? Did you know that lightning may strike the tower from a storm front several miles away? Don't climb if a storm is in the forecast.

Next was the tower checked for proper grounding? Improper grounding may cause a static build up in the tower. The difference in potential between your body and the towers point of maximum charge could give you a jolt of discharging energy. At that point you may fall or be thrown from the tower.

Another point is, was all the radiating equipment connected to the tower turned off? This is important for two reasons - shock hazard and the possibility of receiving R.F. burns.

Now you are ready to climb right? Wrong! Did you remember to wear the proper footwear? Thick soled shoes or boots should be worn when climbing any tower. High top boots are best because they also give support to the ankles. Sore feet make it very hard to stay in one place very long. This can lead to constant moving causing you to lose your footing.

Did you happen to check the tower for its safety? Rust, loose bolts and nuts, footing and concrete and or proper guy wires can collapse the tower at any given time.

Do you have the proper safety gear? Well maintained safety belt, safety lines and tool carrier. Climbing gear needs to be checked regularly.

Lastly do you have the experience? Inexperience could be a fatal error costing you or someone else their life or property damage. A great rule of thumb is " If you don't know what your doing don't do it". Leave it to the professionals or get professional training. I have only touched the surface here and there is so much more involved. This is just to give you a very basic understanding of tower safety. As a note I have been servicing towers for 35 years and received my training working for a tower company starting at ground level. If you have any tower related questions feel free to drop me an email at [vw54@ncats.net](mailto:vw54@ncats.net)

73 From Verne Williams KC8FUV

## Things We Have Lost

Those that remember terms like cathode, anode, triode, plate current, pentode and filament grew up in a different era of amateur radio than some of us have their innovation and creativity paved the trail for us to follow.

The days of making your own radio from a couple tubes is gone, sure there are a few folks still doing this kind of thing but its quite rare. There are still a few aficionados that keep the old boat anchors running. They're familiar with the Gonsets, Knights, Collins and Lafayette's of the era. Lovingly going through the old friend replacing every capacitor and checking every resistor. These are the people that know the smell of a selenium rectifier letting its smoke out.

I find myself between two great ages in electronics, I remember pulling all of the tubes in the television set and taking them to Radio Shack and testing them on the tube tester that was always present at every Radio Shack, When they actually sold radios.

The summer I spent picking up golf balls at the driving range, Just to blow my hard-earned cash on a scanner crystal or a Heathkit, Another name you don't hear too much anymore. Or building a crystal radio from your granddads old junk box and spending hours listening to it.

I remember gaining great knowledge those summers riding my bike to the electronics parts store to put together my new adventure; its foundation paved my way into a future career.

People will argue, "Oh that old equipment drifted." or "Do you know how much power those tubes consumed." But you know what! They had to understand how it worked and that's important.

Putting a kit together is a great way to learn. 3 or 4 hours putting it together with your children are priceless. Once dad can solder everyone learns some electronics and you have a new toy. The kits you build really don't matter learning the basics about resistors, capacitors, inductors, semiconductors and soldering is what's important.

Today is great, Just pull that new radio out of the box hook up the power and antenna and you're on the air. Pretty darn simple once you program it right?

Surface mount technology has done wonderful things, A 5-watt HT that can fit in the palm of your hand; it just sips power off the NiCad batteries.

Until it has a fault and you're in they're with a magnifying glass looking at a resistor half or less the size of a grain of rice.

Sometimes I really miss the older more complicated days.

By: Tracy Albert KC8YVE

## May Project Night

On Tuesday, May 10, several people gathered at the Red Cross for project night. We conducted further testing and experimentation on the radio sound card interfaces we built a few weeks before. Everyone that participated received a CD with various software that decoded protocols such as BPSK31, PSK31, Hellschreiber, SSTV, as well as many others.

Keith (N8XD) led the workshop providing explanation on how each mode worked, before using it to send messages back and forth to each other. Using an oscilloscope, he was able to show the different wave patterns of each mode, differentiating how the 1's and 0's (data) were being modulated. About five people brought their laptops, RASCAL kits, and HT's. Once everything was connected one person was able to transmit text or a picture while others received it from across the room. As text was entered into the laptop, the software modulated it into a digital signal, and the sound card interface provided a means of letting the computer transmit through the HT. We experimented on both the 2m and 1.25m frequencies using low power.

One idea would be to try some of the modes we experimented with through a repeater at greater distances, possibly host a NET one night during the week. Overall the project night was both educational and fun. I hope to experiment with PSK more, and try some of the other different modes.

Larry Wascher, KD8CAA

## QRM from Dave, N8ERL

Don't forget that Saturday, June 3 from 1200 to 1800 local, is the SVARA Fiftieth anniversary special event station at the Red Cross. Everyone is welcome to stop by and take a turn at operating or to just have a cup of coffee and a snack and watch what's going on. We will have two stations; the club FT-857D running HF and another station running VHF on 146.58. The HF station will be switching between 40 and 20 meters. Aaron, KD8AVA, is designing a 50th anniversary certificate to be sent out to those who send a SASE after working the special event station. Look for details in the June *QST* and *World Radio*. Hope to see you there or work you on the radio.

I was able to make it to Dayton again this year and enjoyed it as much as always. The weather was a little chilly on Friday but Saturday was beautiful; sunshine, moderate temperatures, and very little wind. I think that the vendors were down slightly as well as the flea market participation. Blame it on eBay? Hard to say but there is a lot of ham radio stuff for sale on eBay. I just for fun put a search on "ham radio" and got 1703 hits. Attendance might have been down slightly from last year there were still a lot of folks there.

I ran into Ron, KC8YVF, at Dayton and also Jeff, KB8SWR, who had a couple of portable repeaters set up. Duane, K8CCE, and Howard, KD8DX, rode down with me.

For those of you who have not been able to make it to a Hamvention really ought to put it on your list of things to do. It's the kind of thing you have to experience to really know what folks are talking about.

Field day is almost here again. Every fourth weekend in June, tens of thousands of amateurs representing thousands of clubs and non-club groups set up portable stations in temporary locations and see how many different stations they can contact. It is an emergency preparedness drill/contest that the amateur radio community uses to not only to improve our own preparedness, but to have fun and showcase amateur radio.

SVARA will set up June 24 and 25 in Hemlock at the Richland Township Park; the same place we have been for the last few years. Field day rules can be found at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/06-fd-Rules.pdf>. Please try and make even if to just look around and visit the operating stations.

Hopefully we will have a GOTA (Get On The Air) station this year. The idea behind a GOTA station is to give generally inactive amateurs, in addition to Novices, Technicians, and unlicensed people under the supervision of a control operator, an opportunity to experience Field Day. If we have one it will be a great time to invite those folks that you know who have a budding interest in Ham Radio or new licensees who have not had much experience, out to operate. If you have an interest in heading up a GOTA station, please mention it at the club meeting or email Keith, N8XD.

Field Day will run from 1400 local time on Saturday (with setup in the morning) to 1400 On Sunday (with tear down in the afternoon). Don't be shy about asking to help operate one of the stations and especially don't be shy to come out and help set and tear down.

Speaking of people interested in become a ham or those who are newly licensed, there are some things we can do at our club meetings to welcome these folks and make them more comfortable. If you see someone you don't know at a meeting, try and make an effort to introduce yourself and at least one other member to him or her. It may be a club member who has been inactive or someone who has just shown up to find out about amateur radio. People like to feel welcomed and if we take the time to show the person around the club station, answer questions they might have, and introduce them to other members it could make the difference between a solid club member or a walk away. If the person is a new member, try to get them involved in a club project right away and to hook them up with a club Elmer who might share their interests.

### **Shorts**

Keep on ear on the SVARA repeater in the evening to see if anyone is stopping for coffee. This is a time for good conversation about radio and other topics...Summer weather is here. Since I mentioned about keeping batteries fresh and emergency power up to date last month, my family already has experienced an 8-hour power outage...the experts are saying that the next sunspot cycle will be a good one. It will be late starting but will take off pretty good once it starts...at Dayton this year there was a lot on interest in those vendors and booths who were connected with APRS...on the other hand, the interest in classic radio seemed to be down...Midland Swap is coming up Saturday, June 17.

## Summer Birthdays and Anniversaries

June 5	John, KC8WZM, Kraemer
June 11	Jamie and Aaron, KD8AVA, Stella
June 22	Judy and Howard, KD8DX, Hannon
June 28	Marguerite Schuetter
July 7	Leanna and Verlyn, KC8ZML, Haahr
July 8	June, KA8CRW, Kosanovich
July 8	Patricia Steffes
July 9	Diane Morris
July 10	Dorothy and Robert, KA8UWH, Jahn
July 11	Aaron, KD8AVA, Stella
July 12	Dave, N8REB, Buerkel
July 19	Jennie, KC0RBV, and Robert, N8YXR, Tuttle
July 20	Jim, WA8GRI, Stutesman
July 24	Lawrence, WD8RIL, Nuechterlein
July 28	Susan Schram
July 31	Jennie and Roger, KB8QO, Candiff
Aug 1	Keith, N8XD, Delong
Aug 2	Margie Graff
Aug 13	Deborah and Brian, N8AVR, Bucksteigel
Aug 18	Sarah and Michael, KD8AUZ, Jury
Aug 19	Verlyn, KC8ZML, Haahr
Aug 22	Elizabeth and Carl, KC8YVI, DeMeritt
Aug 24	Robert, KA8UWH, Jahn

### E-mail Message from K8BDC Received June 5, 2006 for SVARA's 50<sup>th</sup>

First before I begin my memories of the SVARA, I must confess this is a shock to my identity to realize that I am one of the early members of an organization that is celebrating a 50 year anniversary. When I realize that I became a member of the Saginaw Valley Amateur Radio Association, Inc. forty- five years ago, then I guess my buddy who asked for these memories addressed me correctly as an "oldtimer".

I remember going to the SVARA meetings in a building near the city water works. Most of the time I got to the meetings via Mr. Dick Miller, who was a teacher at Webber Junior High School and the founder of the Webber Junior High School Radio Club---W8WCE. Mr. Miller was responsible for many of the younger members of the SVARA in those days.



He gave up every lunch hour to be with all of us energetic middle school age students. I didn't realize what a sacrifice that was for him until years later when I became a teacher of middle age students. (There was no way I was going to give up my lunch period---lunch and time away from the kids was my key to keeping sane.) During our lunch hours, Mr. Miller taught us everything we needed to learn to become a Novice class licensed amateur radio operator. He helped us fill out the application and

do all the other paper work. He even helped us buy used equipment and set up our home stations.

I am an oldtimer as my buddy reminded me, but I do believe I remember correctly when one night at the meeting, many of the members of the SVARA went into smaller room behind the meeting room to take the international morse code test so that we could get our Novice licenses. I believe the club had the authority to give us the test at the meeting. I was the only girl amongst many young boys--and men. I liked it that way and I still do!!! Anyway, I passed my test and was so excited to get my license. KN8BDC. The members of the Webber Junior High School Club quickly made up my handle, Brave Daring Chick---I like it. In fact, this handle has led me through my life and still does. When things get scary in life, as they often do, I just remember---I AM a brave daring chick.

I had my first contact as a licensed operator at the school radio club. All the kids in the club were gathered around me cheering me on. It was a great day!! We had worked so hard to be able to have the right to send code out into the airwaves and meet fellow radio operators from all over the states---and the world. Now, everyone can do something very similar without any preparation at all by buying a computer and going on Google talk or MSN Messenger or a host of other sites. But back in the "olden days" we had to prepare for the privilege. It was challenging, fun, and rewarding.

I had my own station in my home, thanks to the help of many friends including Dick Miller and my buddy. I remember the day vividly when Joe, my father, and Mr. Miller erected the dipole antenna from the roof of the corner of my house across the vacant field. Then for the next year, when I should have been doing homework, I was up late in the night sending out and receiving signals---using morse code to communicate with guys every where. In fact, I probably invented computer dating via the radio waves. I actually met on the air and went out on a date with a guy from Wheeler, Michigan.

I remember everyone at the SVARA was very kind to all of the young members that Dick Miller brought to the meetings. During the meetings we would have mentoring sessions when the guys would help us learn the technical information that was required to get a general or conditional class license. Since I lived in Saginaw, a distance from Detroit long enough that was considered a hardship, we were allowed to take our written test by mail if we wanted a conditional class licensed. Of course, that was after we passed the 25 words per minute test at the SVARA radio club meeting. There was a very nice member of the SVARA that came over to my house on Owen street and administered the written test to me. I remember I was so nervous. Question after question about the rules and regulations---those I had memorized--no problem. Then the dreaded questions about current and ohms and watts and oil filled capacitors and ohm resistors. Looking at circuit diagrams and answering specific questions etc. etc. Now why do you think I had to learn all of that when my goal was only to talk and chat with people on the radio? Anyway, I want to tell you all that I passed the first time. It must have been because I had memorized the QSL magazine that had a lot of sample questions and answers in it. It was also due to the help of my teacher Mr. Miller and the boys in the radio club. They were always very nice to me. I think being the only girl member was a great help to get endless tutoring. I think building an AR 3 receiver with Joe also helped me learn the terms and concepts on the test.

Unlike my friend who has probably been a life time member of SVARA, I drifted away once I went to high school and college. Although I do remember attending several meetings while attending high school, because my dates often picked me up after the meetings. The meetings must have been held on Friday nights

I do want to congratulate all the current members of the SVARA on their 50th Anniversary of the Club. You have a long and interesting history. I remember one night in Saginaw that the SVARA worked with the Civil Defense on a mock national emergency. I was also inspired to join the Civil Air Patrol when I was in high school as a result of my membership in SVARA. I know that your organization is still very involved in our national defense in a civilian capacity. I live in Germany now working for the Department of Defense Dependent Schools. When my family and I first moved here in 1986, telephone calls were costly. It was over \$15.00 for three minutes of conversation. So you can believe that I was right in line behind the military members to get a call in home through a patch with a MARS radio operator.

I don't have a station now, but I would certainly enjoy talking with any of you oldtimers. If you have any questions about my time in the club and the radio clubs--don't hesitate to ask. You will just have to do it by the internet--because this oldtimer doesn't have a radio license anymore----but let me assure all of you..... I am still a BRAVE DARING CHICK and I owe that life guiding motto to my time and experience in the SVARA!!

Lots and lots of 88's to all of you. K8BDC Dianne Henrichs Yoesting

dianne.yoesting@eu.dodea.edu or [dyoesting@gmail.com](mailto:dyoesting@gmail.com)





**SVARA HARMONIC**  
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**The Saginaw Valley Amateur Radio Association**  
**PO Box 1783 Saginaw, MI 48605-1783**



**Visit our web site at: [www.k8dac.com](http://www.k8dac.com)**

SVARA Members sponsor the 147.240+ PL 103.5 & 224.28 Open Repeaters K8DAC/R  
 -and- Emergency HF stations at the American Red Cross and auxiliary field operations.

General Membership meeting - monthly on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday, 8:00 p.m.  
 at the American Red Cross, 1232 N. Michigan.

Board of Directors meeting - monthly on the second Tuesday following the general membership meeting,  
 8:00 p.m. at the American Red Cross (members always welcome).

Club Breakfast – monthly on Saturday morning after the meeting,  
 9:00 a.m. at the Texan Restaurant, 5656 State St.

**2006 SVARA Officers**

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