

# Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club

March 2011

PO Box 343 Paris MI 49338 Pres. Jim Woolen Web Page: [www.braarc.net](http://www.braarc.net) Editor: Phil – [phildolly@power-net.net](mailto:phildolly@power-net.net)

**Inside this Issue:** Pres mssg 1 Announcements 2-4 Brain Teaser 4 Tech Corner 4  
Golf Balls 5 Badge order 6 Ham Radio Endures 7 Kaprekar No. 8 Weather Words 9  
Shila 13



President's Message  
FEBRUARY MEETING  
If you missed  
February's club  
meeting, you missed a  
good chance for  
fellowship and an  
interesting program.

Shila Kiander (KD8IAL) showed us pictures of her recent mission trip with her 13-year-old daughter to Peru's mountain region. She also gave us a background on Peru's culture, history, geography, and local food. Did you know that guinea pigs are raised for food by inhabitants of the area she visited? Did you know that there are three distinct regions in Peru? Shila was adventurous in trying unusual cuisine, and she also tried a lot of exciting things while in the country. From her pictures, we could see that Peru is a beautiful country.

Daniel Astleford (WA8AEN) did a Tech Corner on using light bulbs as a dummy load and for matching impedances. He demonstrated the use of different size light bulbs and how much brighter they got when your SWR was low. Very interesting!

Your Board of Directors met before the meeting at Vivo's Italian restaurant. Everyone seemed to enjoy the food, while we conducted

club business. We will be doing this again before the March meeting.

## HAM-IN-A-DAY

We have an exciting Ham-in-a-Day

planned for March 26<sup>th</sup>. Dan Romanchik (KB6NU), who lives in the Ann Arbor area, will conduct the training. Dan is a veteran instructor, and has prepared an excellent set of study materials for the Technician license. With Dan's help and expertise, this promises to be a unique opportunity that any prospective ham will not want to miss! Check out Dan's Web site link: <http://kb6nu.com>



If you are a VE, please volunteer to help if you are available on that Saturday. We also will need people to help with logistics and other things.

## GIVING THANKS

Thanks to David Huhtala (KC8WGA) we had a summary of last year's club activities in the February newsletter. Good job, David.

Thanks to Sue & Tom Behler for bringing refreshments to the February meeting.

Thanks to Phil Marcotte (KC8QOV) who provides his talents to organizing and publishing the monthly newsletter. Phil continues to do a great job as editor of the club newsletter.

Thanks to Jens Rick (KC8OIV) for his very organized treasurer's report. You can readily determine sources and uses of funds.

Thanks to Shila Kiander (KD8IAL) for sharing her experiences in Peru as our speaker.

#### NEXT MEETING

I hope to see you at the next club meeting on Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety. We will be in the back section (enter from the side door – not the front door).

73s,  
Jim  
K4UIH

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February Meeting Minutes – Not available at the time of publish.

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#### Announcements

##### Club Breakfast

Sat, February 26, 9:00am – 10:30am

at Sharon's restaurant in Rogers Heights. Talk-in on the 146.740 Big Rapids 2-meter repeater for anyone needing directions.

##### BRAARC Monthly Meeting

Thu, March 3, 7pm – 9pm

435 N. Michigan Ave, Big Rapids, Mi 49307

Next BRAARC club meeting Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Big Rapids Department Of Public Safety Building, 435 N. Michigan in Big Rapids. Presentation: Todd Price, Executive Director, Mecosta/Osceola Red Cross

##### 4H Technology Club

Sat, March 5, 11:00am – 3:30pm

Contact Patricia, KD8GGD Christmas trees & TBD

##### Emergency Committee Meeting

Thu, March 10, 7pm – 8pm

Where: Central DispatchI, 911

##### VE Testing

Sat, March 12, 9am – 10am

<http://kc8yzp.angelfire.com> See webite for information: request pre-registration 7 days in advance for testing. Testing in Canadian lakes. See website for details, maps and contact points. Thanks N8ERV VEC

4H Technology Club  
Sat, March 19, 11:00am – 3:30pm  
Contact Patricia, KD8GGD Geocaching Fun

Ham In A Day  
Sat, March 26, 8:30am – 5:00pm  
1319 Cramer Circle, Big Rapids, Mi 49307

The Big Rapids Area Amateur Radio Club is sponsoring a HAM IN A DAY STUDY SESSION for individuals interested in earning a Technician Class Amateur Radio License. A VE testing will be available for license upgrades as well. Preregistration for class is required by Sunday, March 21st. Please bring the following to the exam: photo ID (or two other forms of ID) and #2 pencils. For license upgrades: bring any completed CSCEs, and a photocopy of your existing license. Coffee and treats provided. 30 days advance notice required for special testing. This class is an intense 6-hour structured study session of the test material. No guarantee is made by BRAARC as to your testing success. The class fee is \$35 and includes the VE Testing Fee of \$15. 2011 club membership awarded to successful "hams in a day." A printed copy of The No-Nonsense Technician Class License Study Guide will be provided to those who pre-register for the class. You can download a PDF version of the study guide free of charge by going to: [www.braarc.net](http://www.braarc.net) NOTE: We strongly encourage you to study the material and take some online practice tests (at [qrz.com](http://qrz.com) or [hamexam.org](http://hamexam.org)) before coming to class. There is a lot of material to cover, and studying this material will increase your ability to pass the exam. Class Registration: 8:30 am Class: 9:00 am — 4:00 pm Lunch: 12:00 — 12:45 pm on your own VE Testing registration: 4:00 pm Testing begins: 4:30 pm Location: Ferris State University, West Commons Building (FSU Public Safety building) Room 109, 1319 Cramer Circle, Big Rapids, Mi 49307 Registration: Patricia - (231)527-1688 or [mjmc@iserv.net](mailto:mjmc@iserv.net) Info: [http://braarc.net/ham\\_in\\_a\\_day\\_flyer\\_2011v2.pdf](http://braarc.net/ham_in_a_day_flyer_2011v2.pdf) Web: [www.braarc.net](http://www.braarc.net)

### **Mecosta County Needs New Emergency Co-ordinator/Races Officer (EC/RO)**

Due to the recent resignation of Steve Cowan (KD8DHZ), Mecosta County is currently in need of an Emergency Co-ordinator/RACES Officer (EC/RO). In general, the position involves heading up the county's ARES/RACES program, and working with served agencies and their officials to provide amateur radio communications in time of need.

The actual duties and responsibilities associated with the position can be found on pp. 3 of the ARRL's EC manual. The most important of these duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Promote and enhance the activities of Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) for the benefit of the public as a voluntary, non-commercial communications service.
- Manage and coordinate the training, organization and emergency participation of interested amateurs working in support of the communities, agencies or functions designated by the Section Emergency Coordinator/Section Manager.
- Establish an emergency communications plan for the communities and agencies that will effectively utilize ARES members to cover the needs for tactical and formal Welfare message traffic.
- Establish a viable working relationship with all federal, state, county, city governmental and private agencies in the ARES jurisdictional area which might need the services of ARES in emergencies.

- Establish local communications networks run on a regular basis and periodic testing of those networks by realistic drills.
- Report regularly to the Section or Regional Emergency Co-ordinator, as required.
- Establish an operational liaison with local and section nets, particularly for handling Welfare traffic in an emergency situation.
- Evaluate the communications needs of the jurisdiction in times of disaster, and respond quickly to those needs.
- Work for growth in your ARES program, making it a stronger, more valuable resource and hence able to meet more local emergency communications needs.

In order to qualify for the position, a candidate must hold a Technician or higher class license, and a Full ARRL membership. The candidate also must have completed the following FEMA “on line” courses, since these are the current RACES training requirements throughout the Michigan ARRL Section: IS22, IS100, IS200, IS700, and IS800. In addition, the successful candidate must pass a Felony background check, which will be conducted by the Mecosta County Office Of Emergency Management.

If you would like to apply for or have questions about this position, please contact one of the following Mecosta County Assistant EC’s by: Thursday, March 3, 2011.

Tom Behler: KB8TYJ  
 E-mail: [tombehler@gmail.com](mailto:tombehler@gmail.com)  
 Work phone: (231) 591-3611  
 Home phone: (231) 629-8526

Mike McKay: KD8DIB  
 E-mail: [mckaym@ferris.edu](mailto:mckaym@ferris.edu)  
 Work phone: (231) 591-2147  
 Home phone: (231)527-1688

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**Brain Teaser — WA4FRJ**

During last summer’s Brain Teaser soccer competition, 5 schools were competing. Each school played each other once, with 2 points for a win, 1 point for a draw, 0 points if they lost. Here are the final points after all of the matches:

Big Rapids	6
Reed City	5
Cadillac	4
Morley	2
Rodney	?

How many points did Rodney end the season with? (Hint: Figure out how many games were played. After that it’s easy.)

ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ

After that it’s easy!)

**Tech Corner**

WA4FRJ

The FCC has given approval to the installation of ~40,000 high power transmitters designed to provide wholesale, commercial data services for internet and other major data users. This is a definite threat to



He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous 'yes.'

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

'Now,' said the professor, as the laughter subsided, 'I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life.

The golf balls are the important things – family, children, health, friends, and favorite passions – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, house, and car.

The sand is everything else – the small stuff.

'If you put the sand into the jar first,' he continued, 'there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life.

If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play With your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner.

There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal.

Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled, and said "I'm glad you asked."

It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend.

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, and when 24 Hours in a day is not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and 2 cups of coffee.


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## CLUB BADGE ORDER



We are preparing another order of club badges. If you are interested in purchasing one, please tell Sue Behler, KC8IFP (629-8526 or suebehler (at) yahoo.com.) The cost of the badge is \$ 8.00 and we will place the order as soon as we have all requests finalized. This is the only time we will be placing an order this year, so make sure you order yours now. You must indicate how you want your name printed on the badge (first and last name, or first name only), and also what type of backing you want on the badge (magnet, pin or clip).

# Why Ham Radio Endures in a World of Tweets

- By [David Rowan, Wired UK](#) 
- February 7, 2011 |

Somehow it makes little sense that amateur “ham” radio continues to thrive in the age of [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [iPhones](#). Yet the century-old communications technology — which demands such commitment that you must generally pass an exam to receive a license — currently attracts around 350,000 practitioners in Europe, and a further 700,000 in the [United States](#), some 60 per cent more than 30 years ago.

What is it about a simple microphone, a transmitter-receiver and the seductive freedom of the open radio spectrum that’s turned a low-tech anachronism into an enduring and deeply engaging global hobby?

*What is it about a simple microphone, a transmitter-receiver and the seductive freedom of the open radio spectrum that’s turned a low-tech anachronism into an enduring and deeply engaging global hobby?*

For a start, there is that thrill in establishing a magical person-to-person long-distance radio conversation that no commodified internet communication can compete with. In a world of taken-for-granted torrents of e-mails, instant messages and [Skype](#) video-chats, there is a purity and a richness in the shared experience of exchanging “73s” during a live “QSO” with strangers on another continent.

Why, the very ham slang that defines the community — 73 translating as “best regards”, and QSOs as two-way conversations — tells practitioners that they belong to a special, mutually curious and highly courteous club. And the fact that DXers (long-distance amateur operators) take the trouble to acknowledge received transmissions and conversations by sending their new contacts custom-designed postcards through the analog postal service ... well, that is charm itself in a world where it’s considered excessive to end a communication with anything more effusive than a “bestest”.

You only need study a handful of these cards to understand, even today, the old-fashioned excitement of connecting with a stranger who might be many thousands of miles away. The postcards — known as QSL cards — can be as quirky and personality-filled as the senders themselves. At times humorous and characterful, at others terse and geographically factual, they have naturally inspired their own subculture that has spurred DXers to collect and display them much as they would colorful foreign postage stamps.

The cards invariably display as a minimum some basic factual information about the sender. This will generally include the radio operator’s individual call sign, his (there are not too many “hers”) location, and a few details about the signal detected. And just to show that the Twitter generation did not invent the linguistic contractions exemplified in text-message speak, QSL cards too rely on slang and abbreviations to pack information into a tight space.

So cards will display the “RST” — the received radio station’s readability, signal and strength; perhaps details of the sender’s “XMTR” (transmitter) and “ANT” (antenna); and occasionally a request to reciprocate, expressed as the shorthand “PSE QSL TNX” (please send an acknowledgement card, thanks) or the more chatty “hw abt a crd om?” (How about a card, old man?) Old man, by the way, is not a reference to the recipient’s age — just as, on the rare occasions when the DXer is female, she is referred to as a “YL”, a young lady, whatever her chronological age.

DXers have been exchanging QSL cards since at least 1916, when Edward Andrews of Philadelphia — call sign 3TQ — recorded the receipt of a card from 8VX of Buffalo, NY. Over the next decade, the hobby took off — so much so that, by 1928, Paul Segal (W9EEA) had formulated an “amateur’s code” setting out six key qualities

to which practitioners must adhere: “The radio amateur is considerate... loyal ... progressive ... friendly ... balanced ... [and] patriotic,” Segal specified, always ready for service to country and community.

Since then, the hobby has captivated royalty and celebrities alike. Among the most celebrated DXers have been the late King Hussein of Jordan (call sign JY1), Queen Noor (JY1H) and Juan Carlos, King of Spain (EA0JC). Had you picked the right moment, you could have chatted to Morocco’s King Hassan II (CN8MH), the former Sultan of Oman (A41AA) or Bhumiphol Adulayadej, King of Thailand (HS1A).

If monarchs have never appealed, you could instead have shot the breeze with Marlon Brando (FO5GJ), prime minister Rajiv Ghandi of India (VU2RG) or the CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite (KB2GSD) — not forgetting the singer Cliff Richard (W2JOF), Joe Walsh of The Eagles (WB6ACU) and genuinely beyond-this-world DXers such as Yuri Gagarin and Helen Sharman.

It’s little wonder that collectors describe the buzz of receiving a new exotic foreign card as akin to that of philatelists discovering a rare commemorative stamp. That explains why the late Jerry Powell, a New Jersey ham between 1928 to 2000 (W2OJW), proudly displayed the 369 cards he had gathered from Okinawa to Papua.

Another obsessive collector, Thomas Roscoe of Brookfield, Ohio (K8CX), has created an awe-inspiring QSL museum where he displays his trophies from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. (You can see his individual cards at [hamgallery.com](http://hamgallery.com)). Take a journey with Roscoe to Wallis & Futuna Island and Western Kiribati, to Kyrgyzstan and Kerguelen Island; visit “states” whose international status is somewhat contentious, such as the Republic of Ichkeria and the Principality of Sealand; celebrate one-off events such as Operation Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia, or the *Queen Mary*’s last voyage.

But it’s not simply the romance of card-collecting that continues to inspire DXers, nor the blunt urge to communicate. Instead, hams talk proudly about belonging to a global “brotherhood,” with few rules and little bureaucracy and the ability to transcend language, religion and race — while never quite knowing who they might come in contact with.

Plus, of course, the chance to be a genuine real-life hero. Days after a magnitude 7.3 earthquake devastated [Haiti](http://Haiti) in January, amateur radio operators were busy at work connecting rescuers within the country and contacting survivors’ families. When a magnitude 8.8 earthquake hit Chile the next month, and the phone network collapsed, a radio operator named Alejandro Jara broadcast the first information from the ground.

Hams stepped in on September 11, 2001, and during Hurricane Katrina. Then there was Tony Pole-Evans, a bird lover with a short-wave radio on Saunders Island, who famously risked his life during Argentina’s 1982 invasion of the Falkland Islands to radio the first news back to Britain that 1,000 soldiers had landed on Goose Green.

How exciting it must have been to intercept that particular radio call. And boy, what a QSL card to top one’s collection. You can tweet all you like, but this is the way to communicate.

## **Kaprekar’s Constant and Transformation** **David KC8WGA**

Here’s some interesting math trivia for all you math geeks out there. Ever heard of Kaprekar’s Constant or Kaprekar’s Transformation? Dattaraya Ramchandra Kaprekar (1905-1986), was an Indian mathematician who discovered several unique properties in number theory. He is most famous for his constant known as “Kaprekar’s Constant,” and his transformation known as “Kaprekar’s Transformation.” First, I’ll show you how Kaprekar’s Constant works. To work out Kaprekar’s Constant, you must choose any four digit number (digits must not be all identical).



# Weather Words

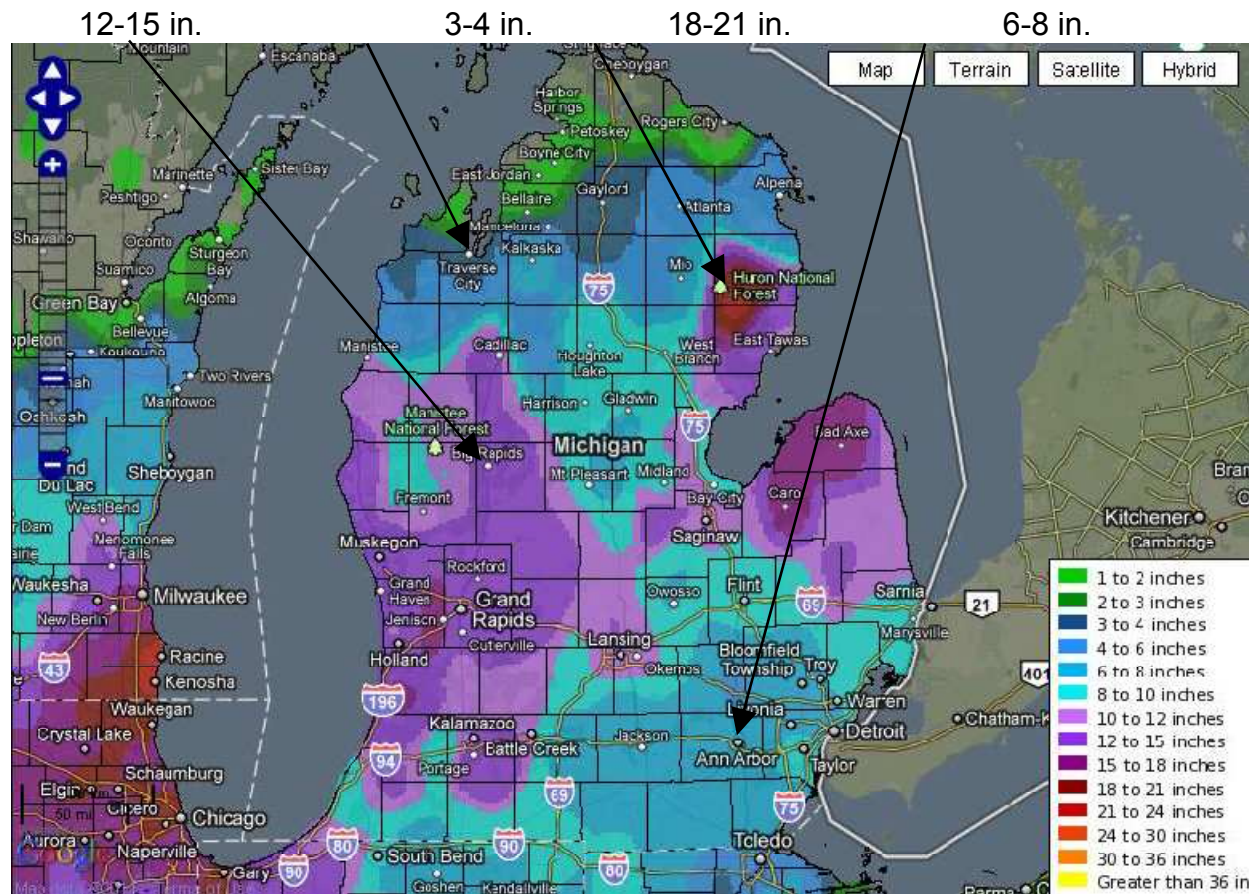
David KC8WGA

## February Blizzard

On the evening of February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, a powerful winter storm hit West Michigan including the Big Rapids area. 11 inches of snow blanketed the east side of Big Rapids (courtesy: David Huhtala), while over 18 inches of snow fell across the river on the west side of town (courtesy: Big Rapids Water Works). Paris had a storm snowfall total around the 10 inch mark, while Stanwood had 12 inches. Gusty winds also accompanied this storm. Positioned on the east side of Big Rapids, my personal weather station recorded a maximum wind speed of 27.6 MPH during the event. Meanwhile, Robin-Hood airport was reporting wind gusts up to 33 MPH. As always with snow storms of this magnitude, blowing and drifting snow wreaked havoc throughout the region. Snow drifts ranged from the 18 inch mark up to around two feet in some areas.

## Michigan Storm Total Map

This map shows how much snow fell across Michigan during the blizzard. The National Weather Service receives numerous snowfall reports from various sources. From these, a map like the one shown below can be drawn.

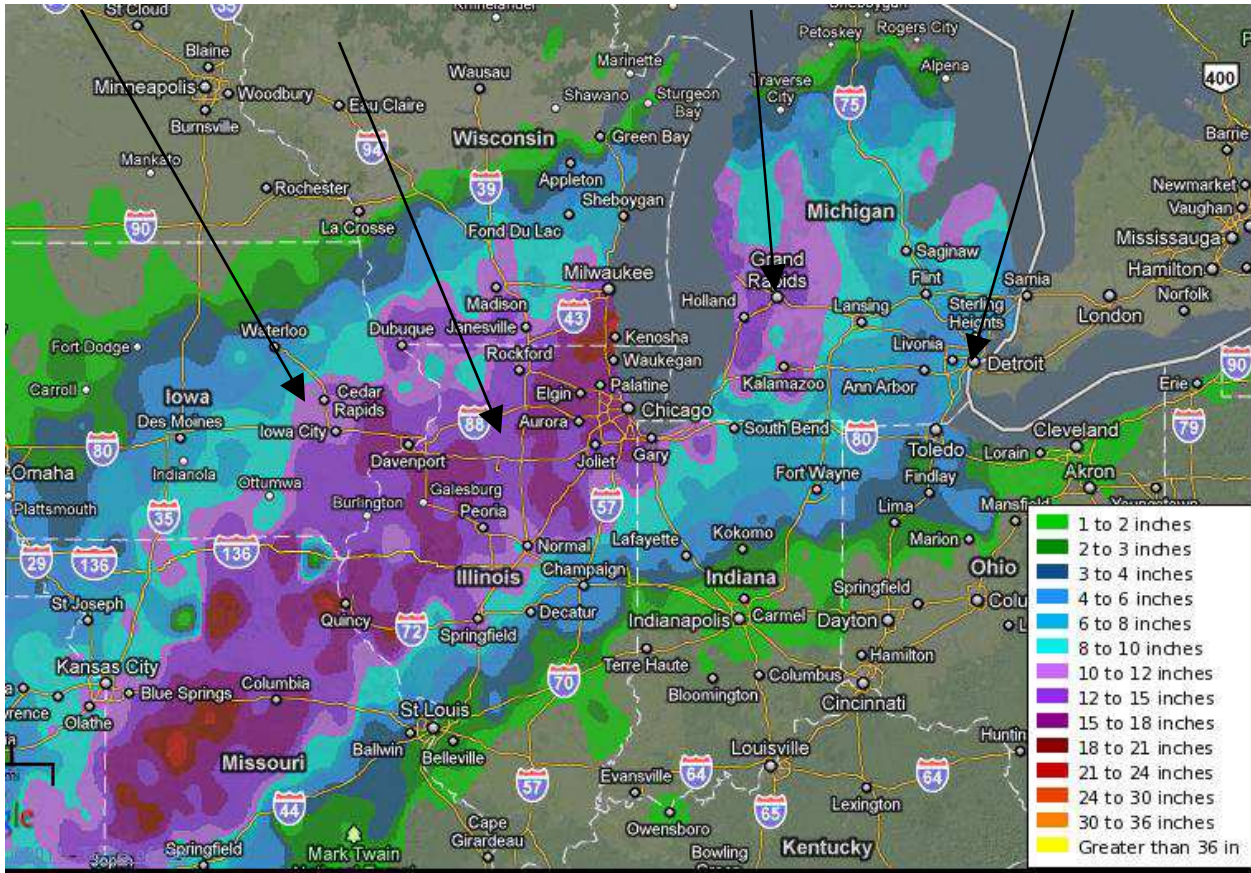


(Courtesy: National Weather Service)

## Regional Storm Total Map

This next map shows snowfall across much of the region affected by this storm. It also goes through the same process as the map above. A very heavy trail of snow extends from Missouri to Michigan, following the track of the storm.

10-12 in.                      15-18 in.                      12-15 in.                      8-10 in.



(Courtesy: National Weather Service)

## Hoar Frost



(Courtesy: David Huhtala)

Heavy hoar frost on my rain gauge the morning of February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Temperatures in Big Rapids that morning dipped below zero (-7F), for the first time since January 24<sup>th</sup>.

My sister captured this unique photo the morning after the heavy snow fell in Big Rapids. No explanation needed for this one!



Here is another really cool image taken during the blizzard around the Grand Rapids area.



(Courtesy: Charlesimages – Stormedia)

**Check out more winter storm photos at: [www.wunderground.com/wximage/DGI/](http://www.wunderground.com/wximage/DGI/)**



Don't forget the breakfast, Saturday, February 26 at Sharon's in Rogers Heights. The next club meeting will be March 3 at pm at Big Rapids Public Safety. Ham in a Day class will be March 26 and more information is available on the club website, [WWW.BRAARC.NET](http://WWW.BRAARC.NET).

