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# The Open Feed Line

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## THE MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO ALLIANCE

post office box 670 Comstock Park MICHIGAN 49321-0670

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### 1996 What a Year

by *Richie Ranta K8JX*

This past year saw our club go through many changes, including getting the new callsign W8USA. We lucked out on that one. It wasn't even our first choice. We, along with several other local hams, were trying to get one by two callsigns, but our 5th choice, W8USA, came through. W8USA was first issued to the Michigan National Guard club station, but they let it expire. "Why?" It's a strange world in which we live. We also felt the thrill of an exciting Field-Day, in which many members got a treat watching our CW station pound away. "How did they do that?" This was the first time many of our members actually got to experience a CW operation. But the biggest thrill wasn't just watching and listening to the CW, but seeing the excitement of operating CW spark interest in many of our members and visitors. This interest crested when several of our members requested that the CW practice be ran once again. Depending on what yard stick one

uses to measure success, our Field-Day was a huge winner.

We also worked together in setting up our very first Operation Care coffee stop. This fund raising project was first proposed way back in September of 1995, when Bill Zaidel N8VWI and Connie N8WKQ volunteered to secure the site and set up the operation. Before the coffee stop, the only way we could raise money was to raise dues, but due to tremendous efforts by Bill and Connie, Scott Rowe WD8JMF, Kevin Nestor KC8CLA, and everybody connected with the project, we are now financially secure and can meet all of our obligations for the coming year. Now that is really coming of age. We also had our troubles. Just as large families argue and fight, and pull hairs, so did we. But that might just be part of the growing process we've just came through. Everybody can remember why they were angry at so and so, but they can also look at all the wonderful things this whole club has succeed in getting done. Just look around. We're all still together. Now that's being a real family.

What's next? MARA just elected

new officers for 1997, and they won't take over till January 1, 1997. If we all help them help us, 1997 should be a repeat of 1996.

### Ham helps distraught dad

by *John Lamontagne*

Vista, Calif- It was Christmas eve. The Stack family decided to break tradition and open gifts a little early.

Amateur radio operator Paul Stack, 72, opened his gift and found something he had long wished for--a new microphone for his radio. A ham for 60 years, Paul, WA6IPF, has long taken part in daring sea rescues and in earthquake relief--from the comfort of his den. Retired several years, he spends three hours a day on the radio, chatting with friends--and occasionally finding himself assisting in an emergency.

Normally he wouldn't be on the radio Christmas eve.

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# Prez's Two bits

by Dan Markowski N8NIJ

During my tenure as president of the Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance, we have established ourselves in the local community. I reported to the membership at the first meeting that I had two goals. One of them being that we have 50 club members by the end of 1996. We have either exceeded or are very close to this goal. The other goal was to be financially solid by the end of the year. Due to the efforts of some very dedicated members, we have accomplished these goals. I would like to express my thanks to those who spent the time needed to help make this club successful. As you learned from the treasurers report, we are financially sound and will be able to meet our financial responsibilities. There have been three primary club events during the year. They have been the club Field-Day and the two coffee stops. These events demonstrated our involvement in this community. The MARA Net was another way that we opened up the lines of communications within the Amateur community. I would like to recognize Bob Wild N8JXB for his contribution as the Net Director. I would also like to thank all those who

participated in the Net as control operators. This club has come a long way in a short period of time and with continued participation by the membership will continue to be successful in the future.

Sincerely  
Dan Markowski N8NIJ  
President MARA 1996  
*(Thank you Dan for the outstanding job you did this past year.)*

## Quotations

Never explain. Your friends don't need it and your enemies won't believe it.  
-anonymous

Science is the orderly arrangement of what, at the moment, seem to be the facts.  
-anonymous

The theory I like best is that Saturn's rings are composed entirely of lost airline luggage.  
-Mark Russell

I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I ended up where I intended to be.  
-Douglas Adams

Meetings: the practical alternative to work.  
-seen on a coffee mug

A: "People think it must be fun to be a super genius, but they don't realize how hard it is for us to put up with the lesser lights of the world."  
B: "Isn't the zipper on your

pants supposed to be in the front?"

*from the March '96 Gwinnett ARS (Libun, Georgia) "The Garzette" --Ike Chapman, KE4GYM, editor.*

(reprinted from the Amateur Radio News Service. p.6.December 1996)

## VE test fee goes up

Effective January 1,1997, the fee for taking a ARRL/VEC coordinated test session will be \$6.25. This fee is also for the code exemption applicants.

A new Novice/Technician question pool will go into effect on July 1,1997.

*from the ARRL/VEC Newsbrief 12-9-96*

Locally, both GRARA and MARA are offering free 6 month memberships to anyone passing their exam at the American Red Cross. Another fine example of local Hams helping new hams discover their Amateur community.

## Code Practice

The Morse code practice sessions have been postponed, due to technical difficulties experienced at Richie, K8JX 's station ( His computer burned out!). But as we go to press, he is presently rebuilding it, and it should be a go shortly. Listen to the MARA Net for the start up date.

Tentative 1997 ARRL Contest  
Calendar

JANUARY	1	Straight Key Night
	4-5	ARRL RTTY Roundup
	18-20	ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes
FEBRUARY	10-14	School Club Roundup
	15-16	ARRL International DX Contest, CW
MARCH	1-2	ARRL International DX Contest, phone
APRIL	14 (Mon)	144-MHz Spring Sprint
	22 (Tues)	222-MHz Spring Sprint
	30 (Wed)	432-MHz Spring Sprint
MAY	10 (Sat)	902-MHz Spring Sprint
	10 (Sat)	1296-MHz Spring Sprint
	10 (Sat)	2304-MHz Spring Sprint
	17-18 (Sat-Sun)	50-MHz Spring Sprint
JUNE	14-16	ARRL June VHF QSO Party
	28-29	Field Day
JULY	12-13	IARU HF World Championship
AUGUST	2-3	ARRL UHF Contest
	16-17	ARRL 10-GHz Cumulative Contest
SEPTEMBER	13-15	ARRL September VHF QSO Party
	20-21	ARRL 10-GHz Cumulative Contest
NOVEMBER	1-3	ARRL November Sweepstakes, CW
	15-17	ARRL November Sweepstakes, phone
DECEMBER	5-7	ARRL 160-Meter Contest
	13-14	ARRL 10-Meter Contest

*( ham helps distraught dad.  
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But this time, like a youngster with a new Nintendo cartridge, Stack plugged in his new microphone, and flicked on his radio--" Just to try it out for a few minutes."

"And immediately I got this frantic call from a missionary in Guatemala," Stack explained. " A snake had bitten a baby girl in her crib, and the missionary desperately wanted to talk to a doctor."

Working in the Guatemala rain forest, the missionary relied on Amateur Radio for his routine communication. But in this instance it was anything but routine.

Stack phoned the missionary's family doctor in Philadelphia, and set up a phone patch. The doctor quizzed the missionary at length about the condition of the little girl- as well as the size and color of the snake. Then he summoned a colleague, who also spoke with the missionary. Eventually they determined that the snake was not poisonous, and that the child would be fine. "It's amazing," Paul said. "Just as we finished, the band faded out. It was almost a miracle."

Stack still points to that incident as proof that not everything in the world today is off-kilter.

*from the 1st-Quarter 1993  
International Handicapped Net  
"IHN News"- Jack Olsen, K7EGL,  
Editor-who credits Blade-Citizen.  
taken from the ARNS December  
1996. P 6.*

## MARA Stuff

When MARA first formed back in August 1991, the club offered hats, badges, coffee mugs, watches and plaques. Since that time, the club has received its' very own call sign and we're just about out of everything that was left over from that time. On November 5th, Lee W8MLB and Richie K8JX took one of the club jackets over to a local design store to have them copy the club's logo. We have a deal with them for hats, Field-Day shirts, a new jacket. But the neat thing is, they all have the club's new call sign on them. We also are ordering the original MARA jacket, like most of us can be seen wearing. Bud Owen, KG8BK, is taking orders for the old design jacket. Give him a call at 457-1304. Lee W8MLB is handling the orders for the other stuff. Give him a call at 458-9297.

Richie K8JX sent in the last MARA coffee mug to Note Pads. They took the logo off the old mug, and enlarged it, and then put the call sign above and frequencies of the repeater and packet systems below the MARA logo. These special mugs also have the individuals call sign and name and office held, if any, on the other side. Richie K8JX presented Dan N8NIJ with the first mug, and it looks real sharp.

The first order for mugs is on it's way here and will be here before the January meeting.

Richie is putting together another order. If you want one ( some have been ordering 2 or more!), give Richie a call at 361-5975. Please, he has to have the money before he sends in the order.

## Club news

"How do you get new members?" Looking at the member information sheet, it seems that having the MARA Breakfast club is the best way. Over 75% of our new members signed up at the Saturday morning breakfast. Meet us there at 10:30 AM at the Country Buffet. Bring your appetite.

Talking about new members, as of this printing, we have 53 members, and expect at least 5 more before the next issue comes out. We can no longer print the membership roster in each issue. We will print the list at least twice a year.

Harold Allen KB8MNI is recovering from two surgical procedures. He's not quite fit as a fiddle, but "I'm working on it."

Mark Scholten KC8CUU took off from home to visit Richie K8JX. He never made it. He became sick and after 2 weeks of tender bed care, provided mainly by Brian KC8DOC, he's back on his feet.

Ralph N8PWR, Bob KC8DHK, among many others, are about to be joined by Dan N8NIJ. They are

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( club news, continued from page 4)

a ever growing number of members who are retired. 17 of our members now belong to this select group. Your sure to be hearing more from them, since all retired folks are more industrious than when they were working.

The Club Trusty Bill N8OAR has been very busy changing the repeater and packet systems call sign. This is no simple feat. He had to let all the packet systems know that N8OAR is now W8USA, and considering how many stations are set up to send N8OAR mail, he's had his hands full. As of December 31,1996, everything should be in place and we shouldn't have any problems. Bill reports that both systems are working fine, and we're in the process of putting together a pamphlet with all the DVR commands as well as the basic packet system commands. Bill also has changed the power on the repeater. "How is it now?" Give a listen.

# If (computer) operating systems were airlines...

by Bob Lafon WA2MNO

## DOSAir

The passengers push the plane until it's airborne, then

hop on. Every time it lands, they jump off, and when it's ready to go they push it again, hop on, ect.

## MacAirways

The cashiers, flight attendants, and pilots all look the same. When asked about the flight, they say you don't want to know, don't need to know, and would you please return to your seat and watch the movie.

## Windows Airlines

The terminal is neat and clean, the attendants attractive, and the pilots capable. The fleet of Lear jets the carrier operates is immense.

Your jet takes off without a hitch, and climbs about the clouds. Then at 20,000 feet and without warning, it explodes.

## OS/2 Skyways

Only a few prospective passengers mill about the terminal. The announcer wishes them a good flight and says their departure is imminent. But there are no planes at the OS/2 gate. Airline personnel walk around apologizing profusely to customers in hushed voices. From time to time they point to sleek, powerful jets on a field in the distance. They tell each passenger how good the flight will be on these new jets, how much safer they are than those Windows Airlines flies, but that they will have to wait a little longer for the technicians to finish the subsystems.

## Windows NT travel network

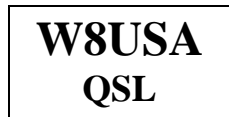
The passengers carry their seats out onto the tarmac, place them in the outline of a plane, and sit down. Then they flap their arms and make swooshing sounds, as if they were flying.

## Unix Express

Each passenger brings a piece of an airplane and a box of tools to the airport. They gather on the tarmac, argue about what kind of plane to build, and how to put it together. Finally they split into groups, and build several different aircraft, but give them all the same name.

Some passengers actually reach their destinations. All of them believe they have gotten there.

(from the October ;95 Southwestern Virginia Wireless Assn. "The GroundWave"-Bill Svec, WA4BKW,Editor. ARNS December 1996 p.8)



On November 5,1996, Lee W8MLB gave Richie K8JX a call, and informed him that MARA was now W8USA: KB8YTM was history. Now we have a swell call sign, but still do not have any QSL cards. Lee had this idea, "Why don't we have a design the MARA QSL contest." We really need Qsl cards, what with all the special events members have been talking about, as well as Field-Day: we still have several Qsl cards we need to answer from the last 2 F-D events.

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*(w8usa qsl continued from page 5)*

So get out your pencils, your designs and ruler, and show us all what you can come up with. Send your ideas to Denny Purtee N8OAT, our club secretary. We will vote on them at the May club meeting so we can have them printed in time for Field-Day 97.

## MARA Net

*by Bob Wild N8JXB*

Happy Holidays to one and all. I have included a short list of net controls which will fill the net schedule till the next issue comes out, around February 15,1997. I also may be moving, so listen to the net for any change in my phone number.

I hope you all have a much better 1997 than 1996 was.

Jan 2,1997 WB8GIC Bill  
Jan 9,1997 Club meeting  
Jan 16,1997 KG8QQ Mike  
Jan 23,1997 K8JX Richie  
Jan 30,1997 N8ZVB Louie  
Feb 6,1997 N8HUB Andy  
Feb 13,1997 Club Meeting  
Feb 20,1997 KB8VOZ  
Wayne  
Feb 27,1997 KG8QQ Mike

## Ni-Cads a fire hazard

*by Skip Douglas KA8DDN*

Beware, anyone who uses Alinco HT's, especially the DJ-180 and DJ-580, and all users of rechargeable-battery equipment.

The charging terminals on the Alinco HT batteries are not diode-protected against external short circuits. The manual points this out but fails to emphasize the possible consequences.

Aaron Douglas, N9UBF ( my son), had his Alinco on his bed along with items from his school bag including a spiral-bound notebook. Somehow the charging terminals of the battery contacted the metal binding of the notebook, and , within seconds either the battery case or the spiral wire heated enough to set the blanket afire.

Fortunately Aaron was there. He noticed the smoke and fire in time to extinguish it, preventing more serious consequences. Had it happened when no one was home, we would no longer have a house.

The same could happen to you, if you carry a battery in your pocket, along with change, keys, nail files,etc.

As a result of our experience, I strongly recommend the use of a soft case for the Alinco HT's. And never place the uncased radio, or its spare batteries, on any surface other than something like a table that is clear of conductive items.

Perhaps you are asking yourself, " How can a small, low-voltage battery pack be so dangerous?" Well, the nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cad) batteries in most portable equipment have extremely low internal resistance. So they can deliver a very large current into a short circuit.

Most Ni-Cad battery packs don't have exposed charging terminals connected directly

to the batteries. The Yaesu Ft-23/73 family of HT's, for example, uses an internal diode to block current flow out of the charging terminals. To test whether a battery-pack's charging terminals for safety, measure the voltage across its charging terminals with a multimeter. If you read a voltage, your battery pack is unsafe.

The terminals on almost all Ni-Cad battery packs are exposed when the batteries are detached from the radio or other device they are intended to power.

Thus the precautions I've outlined apply to most Ni-Cad batteries when they are separated from their loads.

*(from the Jan.'94 Chicago FM Club  
"Squelch Tale"-Tim Garrity,  
WD9DZV, Editor. ARNS April 1995  
P.1)*

## 1997 Goals

*by Richie Ranta K8JX Editor OFL*

Starting with this last issue of the Open Feed Line for 1996, we're going to try and make this newsletter just as wide in scope as the club has become. You'll notice how we have more articles from other clubs and even the ARRL. We're even including, courtesy of Jack Amelar of the Lowell Amateur Radio club, a listing of all of the autodial emergency numbers. We were going to try to include the latest band plan, for all of the bands, but it would cost too much.

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## Emergency Autodials for Grand Rapids area 2 meter repeaters

Service	Lowell	MARA	GRARA	IRA	Cedar Springs
	145.270	145.410	147.260	147.160	146.880
PL		94.8	94.8		141.3
911 Emergency	911	***9	911	***9	***9
Sheriff Deptments					
Kent County	919	***1	***1	***1	***1
Ionia Conty	920		***17		
Barry County	921				
Ottawa County		***0	***0	***0	***0
Montcalm Co.	922				***4
Allegan Co.				***14	
Muskegon Co.			***16		***5
Kalamazoo Co.			***18		
Newaygo Co.					***6
Michigan State Police					
Rockford post	912	***2	***2	***2	***2
Wayland post				***15	
City Police Dept.					
Grand Rapids	918	***8	***8	***8	
Kentwood		***4	***4	***4	
Wyoming		***5	***5	***5	
East GR		***6	***6	***6	
Lowell	910		***13		
Walker			***10		
Grandville			***11		
Greenville	913				
Belding	914				
Hastings	915				
Ionia police	916				
Rockford			***12		***7
Cedar Springs					***8
Other services					
Fire, Kent co.		***3	***3	***3	***3
Poison cntrl.	917	***7	***7	***7	
Coast guard GH.			***20		
AAA road Asst.			AAA		

Also: When traveling the area expressways, the GRARA 147.260+ offers an emergency autodial service by entering ## (hwy no) ( mile marker) to dial the appropriate agency. This works for highways US 131, I-96,I-196 & I-94. Example: to report an incident along I-96 at mile 28, enter ##9628 and the controller will dial the Walker city police.

The Lowell, GRARA, IRA and Cedar Springs repeaters dial Kent County emergency dispatch 911. The MARA repeater dials Grand Rapids dispatch. If you need another area 911, such as Walker, the dispatcher will transfer you. Always identify yourself as an amateur radio operator. USE 911

(1997 Goals continued from page 6)

But, even increasing the scope of this newsletter isn't enough. What we really need is YOU. You can write up your experiences you've had just getting your ticket, making your first contact, tell an interesting story; anything goes as long as it is somehow related to Ham radio. Don't be surprised if you get a call from me, asking you if you have anything for the newsletter.

1997 will be a great year for all of us. Just watch us now.

## BBS Commands

There is nothing like starting out the New Year on a sound footing. So once again, we are including the most used BBS commands. There are more, just type in a ? plus the letter you want help with, and it will be given to you. If you can't find help for a specific command, drop Bill N8OAR a note, he'll do his best to make your life easier.

### SPECIAL COMMANDS

#### P CALLSIGN

will tell you when Callsign last logged on.

#### PC CALLSIGN

will invoke the QRZ CD Call sign system: will provide some DX calls also.

#### J

will cause the system to display a list of all the stations that have logged on.

#### U

will cause the system to respond with the number of messages on the system.

Remember, YOU voted to create this system. It's yours. Enjoy.

L - List messages since you last used the B command  
LB - List bulletins (all of them, use with care!)  
LC - Lists bulletin categories (to fields)  
LM - List messages to or from you (List Mine)  
LN - List messages with type of N (List Not read or forwarded)  
LO - Lists msgs older then date given as YYMMDD  
Example: LO 910204  
LT - List NTS Traffic messages  
LL # - List the last # messages Example: LL 10  
LU - Lists unread messages to you  
L category - Lists msgs to given category Example: L ALL  
L< callsign - List messages from callsign Example: L<  
W8USA  
L> callsign - List messages to callsign Example: L>  
W8USA  
L@ callsign - List messages being sent to BBS callsign Example:  
L@ W8USA  
L # - List messages >= given number Example: L 827  
L # # - List messages from # to # Example: L 50 75  
L"string" - Lists messages with given string in title (case insensitive)  
L'string' - Lists messages with given string in title (case insensitive)  
Examples: L'Pfb' L'ID's" l'Modem users"

SP call @ bbscall.haddr Send a private msg Ex: SP K8EIW @  
WB8BII.OH.U.S.A.NA

ST zipcode @ NTSst Send traffic msg Ex: ST 44070 @  
NTSOH

SB category @ route Send a bulletin Ex: SB NEED @  
ALLOH

SR msg# Send reply Ex: SR 12723 or SR 12723.

In SB if call is a user of this system you can omit the @  
bbscall.haddr

In ST, NTSst means to replace st with the state its going to: OH for Ohio, etc.

In SR, if you put a period after the msg #, a title will automatically be made

by preceding the original title with RE:

IMPORTANT: SR tries its best to determine where the reply should go, but

it is not always perfect! The same applies to the REP command.

Never uses SSID's in callsigns (ex: don't use WA8BXN-2, just use WA8BXN)

73, hope you have a terrific 1997. "Happy New Year"