
The Open Feed Line

Volume 7 Issue 3

October 1998

THE MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO ALLIANCE

Post office box 670 Comstock Park MICHIGAN 49321-0670

Project Care '98 Another success!

By Mark Scholten AB8MS

Our club's involvement with Operation Care 98 was a huge success. We took in donations of approx. \$1,700.00 for the 3 holiday weekends. Everything went well including the weather. A little rain on Labor Day morning, but nothing to dampen the sprites of the westward vacationers. Next year, please think about the holiday weekends. We need your help. This is a very worthwhile project for the club, not to mention the only public service event we have. Please volunteer early and help out on this excellent project. You don't need to work at the rest area to be of help. There is always the job of securing donations, set up and tear down of the trailer. Thank you, for all the support and all those that helped out. Also a big thank you to all those companies that donated coffee, donuts, pet treats and apples!

*73 till next Memorial Day.
Mark AB8MS*

New Rules, A New Service?

May 1998 was a pivotal day for Ham Radio. During a meeting of the VEC's, in Philadelphia, a FCC commissioner let leak that the commission was about to release a streamlined version of the amateur rules. The commission was also going to put this proposed rules change on what they call the fast track: there would only be a period of 30 days for comments on the new rules before they became law. The commissioner didn't say exactly what the new rules would be like. The ARRL stated that they require a 60-day lead-time to publish an article in their journal, QST (the same is true for the other publications). The ARRL took advantage of both the Internet and the on-line news service, Newline, to present their proposal. Everybody by this time is familiar with the deep changes the ARRL proposal called for. Reduction in the classes of amateur radio from 6 to 4. A major change in the Morse code requirement would eliminate the 20-wpm exam. There would

be 2 Morse code exams, 5 wpm for the general class, which would now be called Class C. the Advanced class, now refereed to as Class B, would have a Morse code requirement of 10 wpm. There wouldn't be any further code exam for the extra, which would be refereed to as class A. The entry level exam would be what is now called the Technician, which would be called class D. (i.e. Novice, Tech and general would all be in the same class-Novice and Tech's would be grandfathered into the general class.). Finally, after waiting for nearly a month, the FCC released their proposal on July 29, 1998:

"In this Notice, we propose to modify our Amateur Radio Service rules as follows:

- A. Reduce the number of license classes from 6 to 4.
- B. Provide greater opportunities to volunteer examiners (VEs) to participate in the examination process.

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Meet Our New President

By Gale Scholten N8GS

Well here I am the President of MARA and I hope I don't let you down. Now lets get down to business and see what we can do to make MARA a livelier club.

The January meeting showed that we do have a lot of things to do in the coming months. A short list of those issues follows.

1. -Review and revise our by-laws to reflect the current focus and direction of the club.

2. -Determine what MARA is and what we want it to be so that we can create a clearer path to our future.

3. -Begin preparations for Field Day. What kind of site do we want?

How big do we want the operation to be?

Should we invite some of the other clubs in the area to join us in a Consolidated effort? If we do that who is in charge and how do we split up the expenses.

-Prepare for the Operation CARE coffee stops. One thing we need to do is get a better awning on the trailer. We should also look at making up better MARA signs to put on the trailer and finding a way to wind proof the literature.

-Who has what equipment. If you have something at home that belongs to the club, please call John Visser and let him know what you have. That way if we need some thing , John can tell us where to find it and who to call. This list will be especially useful for Field Day or if a real emergency ever happens. If you also have other equipment that could be loaned to the club for these events please tell John so that he can build a separate list of that stuff. Spare portable antennas, cross band radios, laptop computers, TNC's, push up masts, rope, guy anchors, and long runs of coax are examples of things that we might need.

I have created a few new committees and positions. The intention is to make it clearer as to who is in charge of what.

Membership – Jerry W8MSK has accepted this position. He will be reviewing the FCC database looking for new hams in the area. He will then call them and offer the clubs' and his assistance in "learning the ropes" of amateur radio.

Field Day Chairman - Jim KC8FGQ has accepted this position and I will be assisting him in getting this years Field Day up and running. Jim did a good job of running the N/T station last year and its time for me to train someone to take over the job from me. Jim was the logical choice.

Education Committee – Its not really official but I am looking to have Wayne KB8VOZ and Jim KC8FGQ on this committee. It is really just an outgrowth of the things they are already doing. Wayne is training net control operators and Jim has been running CW nets to help some of the guys improve their CW skills. So I want everyone to pass any training or education type items through them.

At the January meeting we also decided to shut down the BBS. It was seeing very little use, the equipment could be put to better use, and we can eliminate the cost of that dedicated phone line.

This newsletter has been delayed because of a scarcity of articles to put in it. We need to find a source of generalized information that can be used as fillers, but without infringing on a copyright. If you have any suggestions or better yet real stuff to put in the newsletter send it to Rich K8JX.

I want to thank everyone that provided suggestions, comments, and "Sweat Power" while my tower was being rebuilt. Very little was salvageable from the old tower. The ground came up and hit it pretty hard last May 31. Fortunately everything was covered by insurance and they wrote me a check that included installation cost.

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(Something..Continued from page 3)

West Michigan Ham of the Year

We are looking for input from various area clubs to honor a "Ham of the Year". This would be a person who has gone beyond the call of duty and helped our hobby out. Ideally, this would be an area wide award with all clubs involved.

Send us your ideas by e-mail to

wmhotya@juno.com

You can also send your ideas to ATT: wmhotya c/o The MARA address listed on the inside cover.

West Michigan DX Association

This is a group of people who would pool their scores together during the DX contests to represent our area in the Multi-Station/ Multi-Operator classification. There are many groups like this around the country who are very active, and the competition is fierce. Look on the Internet at:

<http://www.contesting.com/Links/clubs>

This is a links page to many contesting clubs like ours. I am thinking there would be no dues, no club affiliations, no elected officials and no by-laws. The sole purpose is to give the operator who dabbles in contests a group to send logbooks to and to advance our skills. We could also perhaps, create a system where Hams who don't have HF

privileges an opportunity to experience the fun, perhaps as a logger or even an operator along with a control operator.

Please send me your ideas on this as we can do whatever we want. What I have been doing is assigning member numbers on a first come/first serve basis. Let me know if you are interested and I will give you a membership number. If you have e-mail, I will forward DX news and info to you as a member. Remember that this is all free. I have set up a special e-mail address:

Westmi-dx@juno.com

Please use this for all membership requests. If you do not have e-mail, please write to Westmi-dx c/o The MARA club address. They will forward it to me.

(Eric is the co-chairman of our Field-Day event for the past two years)

Yooper Club

By Tom KC8BZE

Greetings from the Upper Peninsula. I am writing this to you, the MARA club, to let you know a little about the Eastern Upper Peninsula Amateur Radio (YOOPER!) club's 2-meter repeater. It is located in Dafter about 10 miles south of Sault Ste. Marrie, MI. the frequency is 147.210 + with no P.L. It identifies as KC8BZE in Morse code only. The repeater is open and the

autopatch is open to any Amateur who supports either EUPAR club or any other radio club, such as MARA. The phone patch is not encoded. Simply press the PTT and hit the * key and release the PTT until you hear a dial tone. You then can proceed dialing the number you wish to call while your PTT is pressed. The repeater will call a 635/632/495-phone number, nothing else is accepted by the controller. The repeater has an average coverage area of about 20 miles. The 146.940 – and 146.880 – are the long-range repeaters up in this area. Both are located in Ontario, Canada. Every night at 9PM the Twin Soo 2 meter net takes place on the 146.940 repeater. Everyone in the area is encouraged to check-in. anyone that has questions about our area and local clubs info can feel free to e-mail me at

Kc8bze@30below.com

**73 to all
Tom KC8BZE**

(Remember Tom? He joined our club, operated Field-Day95 from the back of his pick up truck- he had a beam mounted on it. Now do you remember him? This is his way of saying hello)

We got Mail!

After almost 10 months, MARA's Packet system is finally receiving mail. Our very own Vic, KC8CKZ is forwarding mail to our system!

A very large Thank you
VIC KC8CKZ

CW: The FISTS CODE BUDDY PROGRAM

(The following is an open invitation to anybody interested in either getting a Code Buddy, or becoming one)

We all know that there is no better way to improve your CW skills than to have “on the air” contacts. But, they can be frustrating and embarrassing when you meet operators that send too fast or are beyond your capabilities and not willing to slow down and help you. We have all been there. It can be a tough, frustrating, and even a scary experience.

SRI OM QRM QRM 73
BCNU SK. BANG!
Shut off the rig. WHEW!
I’m glad that’s over with. I may NEVER try that again.
THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FUN!!!!
Does this bring back a memory?
I remember back to my days as a novice (WD9AKE). It was 1977. There was a big push to add members into the HAM fraternity and there were a lot of operators that were at the same level that I was (new, slow and inexperienced). In addition, I had an Elmer, WB9LJW, that spent countless hours with his students turning them into CW operators and helping them reach that illusive General Class License. Thanks Bob. I’ll never forget your dedication, patience and understanding. It was still stressful from time to time,

and I think it may be even more difficult today. Well, there is good news. We have a better way. The FISTS Code Buddy Program is a great way to work one on one with an experienced, friendly operator that understands your needs. Your personal Code Buddy will become a friend that will send slowly enough for you to copy and will provide you with the ability to learn proper operating techniques. If you are new to CW, or just need a “brush up”, your Code Buddy will work with you at a comfortable rate as you gain speed and experience and most importantly, confidence. We have a number of our members that have volunteered to assist. These are the Code Buddies, and they are the foundation of this program. They are typically “seasoned” CW operators that will establish a schedule with you to give you actual “on the air” practice sessions.

It’s a great way to improve your CW operating ability, meet other members and establish new friendships that may last for years. It doesn’t make any difference whether your primary interest is contesting, traffic handling, or rag chewing, etc. we have the perfect Code Buddy for you. It’s a very worthwhile program and one that I’m sure you will enjoy.

How it works

The program matches an experienced CW op with someone that wants to

improve. They work “one on one” to develop operating skills and improve proficiency, develop the proper protocol, increase speed, etc.

At FISTS we have three major aims:

1. Further the use of CW.
2. Encourage newcomers.
3. Engender friendships.

We have over 180 participants in our database. You don’t have to be a member of FISTS to be part of the Code Buddy program.

There are not many students waiting to be assigned. I try to get them assigned as quickly as I can when they come in. We normally have a group of instructors waiting, sometimes I’m a little light on teacher in some area, but that changes daily. I try to find the best match possible, not only by date received, but also by using the additional info the applicant provides about interests, rigs, etc.

Not everyone has E-mail; unfortunately, so most assignments are made by postal mail. I get back to you as soon as I find someone.

If this sounds like a program MARA members may be interest in, I can collect their info and put them in our database for a future assignment. We’d love to have anyone in MARA join the team, either as a student or teacher, now or in the future.

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You can contact me either by e-mail at, W9em@aol.com

Or
FISTS Code Buddy
Coordinator
John Cmiel W9EM
34020 N Hickory Ave
Grayslake IL 60030-1014

73 and thanks for your interest.

John Cmiel W9EM
(John is the new coordinator of FISTS Code Buddy program.
Next issue, more info on FISTS the club

MARA 2-Meter NET

By Wayne KB8VOZ

Hello and hope this finds you in good spirits. A lot of nasty bugs have been going around lately, so stay healthy.

Following is the next schedule for the MARA 2-meter Net. First though,

I'd like to remind folks that when you run a net, you will, sooner or later, miss somebody who has checked in. This can happen when the topic is really interesting, and you find your following exactly what everybody is saying. You mess up on the next turn on the list, and there you have it. If you discover you have missed somebody, simply let him or her know it was an accident. If they have been Net control, they will know where you're coming from. If not, explain to them what was going on. But please don't forget them. Look them up after the Net and

explain to them how this can happen.

NET SCHEDULE

10/15/98
BRIAN SCHOLTEN

10/22/98
ERIC KC8CCA

10/29/98
DONNA WILD

11/5/98
GALE N8GS

11/19/98
RICH K8JX

11/26/98
THANKSGIVING THE BIRD

12/3/98
Scott R WD8JMF

12/17/98
BRIAN KC8FUW

12/24/98
CHRISTMASS EVE

*73 till next time
Wayne KB8VOZ*

Northern Exposure

By Terry Francis WB8ZNO

I guess I should straighten up some misconceptions that I created in my dreams of leaving this area. I said we were going to move back down south. Well it turns out that we cannot afford it. After we moved in here, we put in around \$10,000.00 in improvements and now find out that we cannot recoup it in the sale of our place. We had two realtors give us their estimates.

Seems like it would sell for the same price we paid for it. I guess you would call it the law of diminishing returns. So as you can tell we will not throw that away. Now, here are the new plans. Pat, KA8ROS will retire in February. But wants to keep working. She will work to the point that it will not hurt her SSI and the rest of the time we would like to travel.

As you know, I lost my horse this past winter. We had to put her down and this year we sold pat's horse and brought the horse trailer down to G.R. to be sold. Looks like we are out of horses after some 30 plus years. Really seems strange to look out the window and not see any in our pasture. I have been to several flea markets to try and sell our rack bit. We have not had much success up here. Too poor of an area I guess. Since then we have sold most of it at a friend's garage sale. Seems like luck was with us after all.

This year sure has been a crazy one for weather. We could use more rain for the ground water. Most of the lakes and streams are down. My heart goes out to you folks that had problems from the last storm. We had one the other day that took out our lights but from what I heard it only took a couple hours till it was back on. Seeing that we are older people there was nothing to do with the lights out, so we went to bed and slept.

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(Northern exposure continued from page 6)

We had a generator for sale and after the storm we must have had a hundred calls on it. I had to tell everyone that I was sorry but it was gone. We even got a couple of calls from G.R. from people that knew we had it! Wished I could have had a couple of hundred of them, then I could have really enjoyed my retirement.

My wife is really proud of me. I collect junk and Pat calls me Pack Rat. I have been taking it to the flea markets and have had pretty good luck in selling it. I also took our horse stuff and my horse shoe ornaments with no luck in selling them. I finally learned that if you take junk, it will sell. I find that they just don't have enough money to spend on ornaments or anything of value. I really got sick of all the people trying to get stuff cheap and finally gave in and sold the stuff for about a nickel on a dollar. But my wife is happy the junk is gone. We finally took the horse shoe ornaments down south and did pretty well in the sale of it. I have another store that is going to stock my goods after it moves to it's new store. Now some advice from an old man. When you retire, make sure you have something to do or you will go nuts. I must admit I had a bad time of it for at least a year after moving up her. I had my shop and that kept me busy but after so many years working with the public and then moving into the backcountry, it

was terrible. There is nothing to do and most of the people I met I really did not want to yet too close to. I guess I am just a snob. One fellow told me I was a conceited so n so. I was also told I am rich? HA. I told them all they had to do was get a job and have payments like we did for years. I'm afraid that did not go over too good.

It is so hard to explain to anyone about the different in people that live in large cities and those that live almost off the land. The couple that we have became close to, live that life. They live in the woods, without electricity or running water. They come here to get their water. They do have propane to cook on and a wood burner to heat with. They have lived off the land for years. They have a freezer that we let them put in our barn. I never ask them what is in it because I still have some venison left in it.

We have 2 new cats that people just dropped off. I think that people, who do that, should be taken out in the woods and dumped them. Domesticated animals do not have the same instincts to live in the wild.

I will say this about this area, it has been a joy just watching all the new babies that are born in the wild

Mother Nature is beginning to show her colors and starting to drop some of it in our yard. This years fawn drop has grown a lot and the turkey hatch has grown a lot too.

They are strutting their stuff at our feeders. In a few weeks, we'll be feeding the deer on our feeders. We're giving them some snacks now, but will be fed sugar beets soon. We're going to take a vacation from our retirement (?) if the 4 wheeler doesn't drain us, we'll be down in Kentucky in October. My goofy wife wants to visit the Horse Park down there. She has talked about doing this for years. Ok, we'll visit our Godson down there too. Once my other half retires and works only part time, we'll be free to pick up and go where we want. Then we'll really live the "Golden Years". Well, that is enough for now. Much to do before winter. But it will all be done. See ya.

73 Terry & Pat

(Terry WB8ZNO, writes about how living the golden years really works)

Club Activities

By Dan N8NIJ

First I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members who participated in the Operation Care coffee stops. This also includes those who gave of their time getting the trailer ready. The club realized close to \$1700.00 for all three events. For those members who have voiced concerns regarding club activities let me refresh your memory regarding club activities.

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*(Club activities continued
from page 7)*

MARA has four major activities during the year. They are our three coffee stops and Field Day. Our three coffee stops generate enough donations so that the club may meet its financial obligations for the year. Field Day is a time when our members get together to operate in the field, sometimes under less than desirable conditions, to test our emergency capability. All these events require participation from our members to make them successful. If you do not participate please don't sit back and criticize the club for lack of events. Look around, there are things happening. Get involved. It won't hurt to give up a small portion of your time for the good of the community and the club. Without your participation, this club doesn't exit.

73 Dan N8NIJ

Field Day's Novice "Big, really big, stick!"

By Jim KC8FGQ

Wondering how antennas worked was the main reason I got involved in this hobby. I have learned a whole bunch about antennas, and also have learned that no one will ever know everything about antennas.

Sometime around January, I started to build a Field Day antenna. I read all the books I could get my hands on, but found that I did not understand the theory. So

I picked up another ARRL publication, "Understanding Basic Electronics." This book really helped.

I considered Yagis, loops, slopers, dipoles, phased vertical arrays, etc. etc. I realized that antenna performance determines station performance, especially when there is a power limitation. For a number of reasons, a simple vertical was chosen. To eliminate ground losses, it would be elevated with a 33-foot mast. I found materials at Central Iron and Metal at a low price.

I had a messed-up old CLR2 CB base antenna, but I wanted more length. So I modified and lengthened it out to 33 feet. This would be about an eighth-wave on 80 mtrs, a quarter-wave on 40 mtrs, 5/8 wave on 15 mtrs, and a full wave on 10 mtrs. I hoped that it would load up on all four Novice bands. Coax would have caused line loss between the tuner and antenna, so ladderline was used instead.

For convenience, three ground radials were used. These radials were at a 45-degree angle and doubled as guy wires.

Months went by, and I am sure that there were those who became bored with my questions and conversation that focused around this antenna. Many friends helped with their input and suggestions.

There is much more to this story, but I found myself still at home scrambling to get ready on the morning of Field Day.

Finally, I got to Fisk's Knob. Thankfully, I had lots of help in erecting the antenna. We looked like a bunch of ants as we tried unsuccessfully to raise this 66-foot long structure into the vertical position. After shortening the mast, we did get it into the air, about 4 hours into Field Day.

At this point, I was mentally exhausted, so others operated for a few hours. Many contacts were made on 10 mtr SSB. Fifteen mtr CW was tried, without too much luck. Finally we settled in on 40 mtr CW, and it seemed as though everyone in the continent was trying to get back to us. It was a great feeling to call CQ, and have a multitude trying to get back to us. What a thrill it was! The antenna worked, and it worked well.

I would like to do it again next year, but unfortunately I went and upgraded to General. So someone else will have the opportunity to volunteer for the Novice/TechPlus station. With the impending restructuring, next year may be the last, who knows what the future will be?

Special thanks to the co-chair, Brian KC8FUW, and to those who helped, Andy KC8FQE, John KC8EKJ, Tom N8DGD, and all the others. Many of us will never forget Field Day 1998.

*Thank-you, Jim KC8FGQ
(Jim is currently thinking
about what antenna he'll
use for FD99)*

HAM SWAPS N SHOPS

*The following list is taken from
QRV Bulletin up-date Sept 27th, 1998 Compiled by Mike Pearsall, N8MP*

SUN OCT 11TH MASON Central MI ARC & Lansing CD Rptr Assn 28th Hamfair '98 TI 145.39- Ingham Co Frgrnds I96 exit 106 So to Kipp Rd east-follow signs OPEN 8am SETUP 6am ADM \$5 TABLES \$10 TRUNK SPCE \$6 TI 145.39- INFO: Erv, 517 676-2710 emailto kb8tnq@voyager.net (ARRL Hamfest)

SUN OCT 11TH LIMA, OH Northwest Ohio ARC Hamfest (ARRL Hamfest) INFO: Greg, N8WBD 419 647-6321

SUN OCT 18TH Kalamazoo Kalamazoo ARC/SMART Hamfest (ARRL Hamfest) TI 147.04+ K'zoo Co Frgrnd OPEN 8am SETUP 6am ADM \$4/\$3adv TRUNK SALES \$5 TABLES \$1.50/ft-min 4 ft CAMPING INFO: emailto ka8blo@net-link.net or web site at <http://www.qsl.net/ka8blo/hamfest.html>

SUN OCT 25TH WARREN Utica-Shelby ECA 13th Annual USECA SWAP TI 147.18+ 100pl Italian-Amer Cultural Soc I-96-Hoover-exit north to 12 Mile East past hospital to Imperial Dr--rt to end Ve exams 9-12am Pre-register Bill, N8SA 810-468-8345 or emailto chesney@rust.net INFO: Chris, W8ZNT or emailto w8znt@yahoo.com (ARRL Hamfest)

SUN OCT 25TH MARION, OH Marion ARC Hamfest (ARRL Hamfest) INFO: Karen, N8KE 614 499-3565 SAT/SUN NOV 14-15TH FORT WAYNE, IND Indiana State Conv/Hamfest (ARRL Hamfest) INFO: Doug Jones, N9NNT emailto djones2233@aol.com www.pipeline.com/~dagagnon

SAT JAN 16 FLINT Amateur Radio and Youth Hamfest TI 147.100+ 100hz pl UAW Local 599 I-69 exit 136 North on Saginaw to Leith Rt 1 block, UAW Hall on rt Major Dealers OPEN 8am-1pm ADM \$4 undr 12 free INFO: Clay, KF8UI 810 233-7889 or emailto clay@iavbbs.com

SUN JAN 17TH HAZEL PARK Hazel Park ARC Hamfest TI146.64- Hazel Park HS I-75 exit 9mi E to Hughes, turn left to Hs INFO: Mike, WD8S (248) 399-7970 or emailto wd8s-wd8s@webtv.net

Weekly Nets in Western Michigan

Monday	8:00PM 147.160 W8HVG /rpt Newsline
Tuesday	8:00PM 145.490 NOARC club net
Thursday	8:00PM 145.410 MARA club net (except 2 nd Thursday)

There are also several other nets going on, but have changed their day/time. Please check with them for current day/time.