

The Open Feed Line

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THE MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO ALLIANCE

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Elections 98!

The voting MARA membership elected a new board at this past December's meeting. Gale Scholten N8GS was elected president. Gale is trying many new idea's on what direction the club could go in. He would really like to see MARA become a regional club, perhaps covering all of the Lower State of MI. Mark Scholten AB8MS is our new Vice President. Mark has been very active with re-building the MARA coffee wagon (a.k.a. mobile tool shed) so we can use it at all of the club's activities. Mark also has been bringing his "The Ridge" 440MHz repeater on line. Mark already has volunteered to head the committee to review our club's

By-laws. They really need a lot of updating. Rich Ranta K8JX is our secretary and look for many changes, especially in this newsletter. Dan Markowski N8NIJ was re-elected Treasurer. He has volunteered to help Mark out on the by-laws revision. Bill Wisneski N8OAR is still our Club Trusty and look to see him at many of our club's events. Our newest member is Brian Scholten KC8DOC. Brian volunteered and was appointed Great Lakes Award Chairman. Look to hear more from Brian as he eagerly takes on this new role. Let's all help these folks out with their difficult Tasks. Support your board members!

"Caught operating illegally? Fork it over"

If you think your last traffic ticket was painful, wait 'til you see what your friends at the FCC have cooked up. The commission's new fine schedule includes a \$625.00 penalty for "assorted minor violations," and a \$1250.00 fine for failure to identify your station. "Unauthorized use of equipment" can cost you \$5000.00. Running excessive power, failing to respond to a FCC communication, or operating on an unauthorized frequency will set you back \$10,000 under the new schedule, and transmitting indecent material or

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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 something, 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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**(Meet the President
continued from page 3)**

I turned that installation money onto more tower, which goes to show that dark clouds can have a "silver lining". As a thank you gesture (and maybe just a little bragging) I recently held a "Tower Warming Party" so that you could all come out and see and use the final product of all that labor. I tried to let everyone know about the party but I'm sure some hams didn't get the word. With that and the success of this party in mind I plan to hold another in April. That one will probably be on April 9th, the night after the club meeting.

If anyone still doesn't know the details the new tower is 132 feet from base to top of mast. The tower is torque guyed and the ground elevation at the base if the tower is 869.5 feet above sea level. The HF beam is at 124 feet and is a Mosley Pro 67-B, I have dual band vertical (2m/440) at 115 feet and a horizontally polarized Cushcraft 13B2 at 131.5 feet. If you have an idea you want to share, give me a call. I've gone on longer than I wanted to, but we have so much to do this coming year. See you all at the meetings.

Gale, N8GS

On the Net
By Wayne Dowling
KB8VOZ

Happy Holidays and greetings on a brand new year. I've talked with Gale and we've decided to try something different during this years net. All of the net controls will be asked to come up with a topic at least 4 days before the net. It will then be put on the repeaters DVR. We're doing this to see if we can't raise folks involvement and interest. When it's your turn at being net control, just give Wayne, Gale or Rich a call and we'll be glad to put your net topic on the DVR. The following folks are starting the year out on a positive note.

NET SCHEDULE

2/18/99	Eric	K8CCA
2/25/99	Bob	N8JXB
3/4/99	Wayne	KB8VOZ
3/18/99	Mark	KI8DO
3/25/99	Rich	K8JX
4/1/99	Brian	KC8DOC
4/15/99	Tom	N8DGD
4/22/99	Chuck	W8VOM
4/29/99	Brian	KC8FUW

Let's make this a banner year for our net and help the 20th century go out with a bang!

Wayne Dowling KB8VOZ

MCW ON 2 METERS

By Jim Cordes KC8FGQ

The MCW net has been going fairly well so far. It is held on Thursday night, after the regular MARA 2 meter net. It is being held on 146.460MHz FM Simplex at 9:00PM. If you want to check in, just hold your microphone next to the speaker on your code practice oscillator or HF rig. Please run your rig on low power, as you do not want to overheat it. If you want to check in and out, that is fine, no problem.

The purpose of this net is to provide an opportunity for Technicians to prepare for their 5 word per minute code test. It differs from tapes and other practice in that it is interactive. All amateurs with 2-meter privileges are welcome to participate. We try to keep the speed below 5 wpm. We plan on advertising on some of the other local repeaters to increase the amount of check ins. Because of this, the net will be held on every Thursday of the month, even meeting night. The first two nets had the same three people sending. We do know that there were quite a few listeners, thought. I would like to thank Tom N8DGD and Ron KC8EQT for checking in, and also thank all those who listened. It is starting to look like this idea may become a big success.

Trns Jim KC8FGQ

Terrible Terry's Corner

By Terry Francis WB8ZNO

What to write about this time. The weather, my sudden illness or my new 6-meter radio. Well I know your sick of hearing about the weather and who want's to hear about someone else's illness. So I'll brag about my new radio. The 6-meter radio is an ADR Alinco transceiver and have not even had the chance to use it as of this writing. Seems like it needs an antenna. You know about those things don't you? That sits on top of either your house or car? Seems like that is the only way these things will work. Darn. The way I got it was to do some trading with Abe W8HVG. I swapped him my 220 MHz hand Helds for the 6-meter rig. He wanted the 220 rigs for when they do repair work on the link system. I was not using them, so it was a good deal for me and for Abe. Like the rest of you, we had our share of snow and had to do a lot of "moving" snow around just to get out. We plowed our road and also the road to the state forest for the hunters. It just seems like the right thing to do. We have one couple that lives out there all year long and another guy that keeps his dogs in his cabin. Well, anyway, it helps them out and I don't mind doing it.

I have a weird hobby. I save every printed and drawn joke that I receive and have been putting them into plastic covers. I have started mounting them in a 3 ring binder. So any of you that would like to send me a joke, feel free.

My compu8ter, telephone answering machine, 2 truck batteries, 1 fuel pump and to top it off, "me", all went bad in the same week.

My computer has been fixed. My answering machine and fuel pump was replaced and I had to go to Saint Mary's Hospital in Saginaw MI to get me repaired. So you can see there is a silver lining in every cloud. I feel great and everything around here is working now. I won't talk about deer hunting this time other than to say that I understand that they did well this year. Not me, I was having surgery at the time.

We must be getting through to our neighbors. We all got together and sanded our road. Since I have moved up here, they have started taking care of themselves and each other. Maybe we have changed their way of doing things.

We finally got down to Grand Rapids to exchange gifts with my sister. Seems like when every pat K8ROS takes time off, the roads up here or down there are in terrible shape. My brother Jim bought me

a treadmill to help in my recovery. I have really enjoyed it to the fullest. Now if only I could lose some of this spare tire I have around my waist, We stopped off on the way home to Len's, N8NEK. He is still having troubles with his back. It would be nice if some of you could call him up either on 2 meters or the phone and chat away with him. I'm sure Len is going to get mad at me for suggesting this. But it sure feels good to know others care, especially when you're sick. I must tell you about his new puppy dog. She cuddles up to his neck and gives him doggie kisses. You will have to find out more about her from Len. "When you call" Well, it's time to go. See you in the spring.

Terry WB8ZNO

(Terry had a heart attack on November 17. He's fine now and would love to hear from you all.)

NEW CLUB MOTTO

At the first club's business meeting, Gale N8GS asked if maybe we shouldn't come up with a better club motto than the one we have. On page one of this newsletter, right above the masthead, you'll find the old club motto. Once before we tried to generate interest in creating a club motto, but it was left to the editor to create one that best fit the club, at that time.

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caught operating...)*
words could cost \$12,500. Causing malicious interference to another ham is \$17,500, and failing to permit a FCC station inspection carries a hefty \$18,000 price tag.

But if you really want to help reduce the national debt, try sending a false SOS. Illegal distress communications now cost \$20,000 per transmission!

And the FCC has the authority to adjust its fines; these are just the base amounts recommended for first-time offenders.

(from Newsline & Weslink Report number 661, November 12, 1993, via the May-June '94 Ole Virginia Hams ARC (Manassas, VA)" The Ole Virginia Times"-J.Edgar McDermott, NS5N, Editor)

New Club Motto

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Since that time, MARA has grown and changed what was it's first focus, getting members licensed as Hams. "What motto best describes what MARA is doing now?"

Give Gale N8GS a call or better yet, share your ideas on the MARA net. Let's hear your ideas.

Club News

Our member's have been very busy since our last issue. Several have upgraded and twice as many are studying for the General and higher-class licenses. Jim Cordes KC8FGQ upgraded to General and is so excited about doing it, he's sharing his thrill by hosting a modulated CW practice on our repeater right after our Thursday night net. He and several other hams have been talking about whether they should upgrade or not. They have begun to think that the FCC may drop the Extra class and advance class licenses, so why bother to put all that effort into studying and practicing. Perhaps the best reason is to think back when you got your first license. Remember how you felt? Well, that feeling

just gets better as the license class gets tougher. Remember, as you upgrade, your also increasing your ability to learn new things. Now days, that's an important skill any day. Learn for all your worth.

Congratulations to Ron KC8QET, who upgraded to AB8DT! Good going Ron. Talking about holding CW practice, would you folks be interested in having a scheduled CW practice like we used to do, 3 times a week at two or three different speeds? If so, speak up during the next MARA net.

Our web page is about to have a major upgrade itself. At the January club meeting, the club voted to purchase Abode's Acrobat program. It will allow us to load all of the newsletters, and club documents into a common form, which anybody can download without buying another program. This is the same program the FCC uses.

How to succeed at DX QSLing

By Jan O'Brian K6HHD (Editor of The W6GO/K6HHD QSL Manager List)

Reprinted from amateur Radio News Service February 1995 Vol. XLIV no.2 page 6

Computers are supposed to create a paperless society. Don't hold your breath. Meanwhile, you need QSL cards. Here's some essential information on how to get cards back from DX stations.

One side QSL card

All the necessary information, including your callsign, should be on one side. Otherwise, managers handling expedition cards must turn the card over, a waste of time. A two-sided card is fine; just make sure your callsign is also printed on the side with the QSO information.

Use Universal Time

Converting times is a major headache for QSL managers. It causes errors that can cost you QSL cards. Yet it's easy to avoid. Always log in Universal Time (UT), so the time you write on your card agrees with that in the DX station's log. Put a 24-hour clock in your hamshack and set it for UT (Formerly GMT- also called "Zulu" by the military and Mars).

Get the date right

Date errors are another QSL manager's headache that can cost you QSL cards. Remember, the date changes at 0000 UT- 4PM PST and 7 PM EST. much of the world abbreviates dates differently than we Americans do. If you work a station on April 1, 1992, put 4/1/92 on the card,

then send it to someone overseas, that person may see your date as January 4. Avoid confusion by writing out (or abbreviating) the name of the month. (or use a Roman numeral for the month, as in I-IV-92 for April 1-AF6S)

Make it legible

Be sure all entries on your card are readable. If your handwriting is poor, print or type. Never correct mistakes: make a new card instead. A corrected card that is later used to apply for an award may be disqualified as "altered".

Send an SASE

Always send at least one self-addressed, stamped envelope (SAE if offshore). If you request several cards from a manager, especially for more than one station, send an envelope for each. Most managers prefer standard letter-size envelopes. If you fold your SASE, put the fold in the bottom of the outbound envelope. Otherwise the manager may cut your SASE in half with a letter opener!

Send postage

If you don't send some means for returning your card, it may come back via the QSL bureau system or not at all. (Some managers refuse to answer bureau cards). Whenever you send a request to an overseas manager or directly to the

station you worked, include international reply coupons (IRCs) for return postage, along with your SAE.

Some folks send dollar bills ("green stamps"). They are good almost everywhere, but beware. In a few places they can get the person you worked in trouble. Or, he may never receive it. Mail theft is common in some parts of the world.

Be patient

Managers receive DX stations log information various ways, but the most common is via the mail. From remote parts of the world, that can take months. Dxpedition cards typically aren't printed until after the operation so that pictures from the expedition can be on them, so printing time can add more delay. Almost all QSL managers are honest, conscientious, and hard working. They do the best they can to help you obtain QSL cards and receive no compensation other than an occasional word of thanks. So patience should be your byword. Be sure to allow enough time for the manager to obtain logs and do the work before you take him or her to task for being slow-or before you send another set of cards.

(from the September '94 Southern Patuxent ARC"Newsletter"

West Michigan Area Nets

DAY	TIME	FREQ	CLUB
SUN	7:30PM	443.900	BRAARC
	9:00PM	145.270	LARC
MON	8:00PM	147.160	W8HVG
TUE	8:00PM	145.490	NOARC
Thur	8:00PM	145.410	MARA
Thur	9:00PM	145.410	MCW/MARA

NEWS

The West Michigan DX association will be having their very first informal coffee/meeting shortly. Eric said there is talk about holding a DX-pedition on one of Michigan's islands, so it might qualify for IOTA. For more information on when they will hold their first meeting, contact Eric K8CCA.

John Visser NF8P needs your help. Just as Connie Zaidel N8WKQ did before him, John is collecting club property information. It is important that we get a whole list of all of our property, so we know how much insurance to get and what gets covered. Please, if you think you have something that belongs to the club, jot down any serial numbers or other information. Give John a call and let's get this done once and for all. Remember that we started doing this 3 years ago!

Our Diversity is our greatest strength

By Tony Everhardt N8WAC

(. taken from Amateur Radio News Service Feb 1995 page 8)

A striking feature of Radio Amateurs is the diversity of their interests. There is no typical ham. Our amateur radio interests include fast and slow scan TV, RTTY, packet, CW SSB, AM, FM, EME, QRP, weak signal VHF and UHF, traffic handling, public service, contesting Dxing and much more.

But when diversity breeds divisiveness, it becomes a weakness instead of strength, especially if we think what we do is more important, useful, or intelligent than what the other fellow does.

Lately, with rumors of no-code HF, the codeless Techs have been blamed for trashing two meters.

Yet interference was a problem long before the no code license. Let's not forget that each of us entered this hobby to communicate-whether with amateurs overseas, or with a spouse across town. And no matter what our license class or interests, we must cooperate. Otherwise, we'll have chaos like that on eleven meters.

So let's remember to treat other hams as we would have them treat us, whether or not we share their classification or interest.

(From the Oct '94 Toledo Mobile RA. Chuck KB8FXJ editor)