

The Open Feed Line

Volume 9, Issue 2

Friendship, Community service & Advancement of the Hobby

Oct-Nov 2000

NEW HAM ISSUE

"Welcome". We're putting out the welcome mat for all the newly licensed Hams as well as those just interested in Amateur Radio. This special issue of the OFL contains several articles that should help new folks feel more at ease from getting on the local repeater to going to a club meeting. Remember when you first got on, and how overwhelmed you felt upon hearing all these "experienced" hams chatting away without a care in the world? Well, we've got just the stuff to help make you feel just like that, a seasoned pro. (Maybe, even better than that!) But there is just too much stuff to fit into one newsletter without having it delivered by truck, so we've divided up the material into 2 separate issues. This first one will cover what to expect at a club meeting and that which is closest to all new hams, Repeater etiquette. The remaining articles will be on "What is this crazy thing called "Morse Code" and how do I go about learning it, to what to make of all this theory I have to learn to get a license.

We hope all this information helps you to enjoy our wonderful world of Ham Radio.

Repeater Operating Practices and Etiquette

by
David McKim, KB9JLF

Repeaters and Common Courtesy

Amateur radio repeaters are very important to the service of amateur radio. Repeaters make it possible to communicate good distances while operating mobile, and communication of hundreds of miles in some cases is possible between two or more amateur radio base stations. Repeaters can be used to contact a fellow Ham operator, to get assistance, get driving directions, make an emergency telephone call (by autopatch), communicate emergency traffic, relay important information to another amateur station, report and relay severe weather events, for training purposes, conduct nets, just to have fun carrying on a two-way radio conversation, or other purposes.

Repeaters may have open telephone autopatches. Most do not. Some repeaters have open autopatches for access to 911. In some cases this would require keying up the microphone and at the same time pushing the DTMF buttons 911, releasing the microphone and then being connected to a 911 dispatcher. To end the call key up the microphone and at the same time pushing the # button. Be sure to always identify your amateur callsign before and after making the call. Check with your repeater directory, club, or repeater trustee or owner.

(Continued on page 5)

UP COMING HAMFESTS

- 10/22/00 Utica Shelby Clinton Twnshp.KC8IAQ
11/5/00 Blossomland ARA Duane Drflinger KX8D
12/3/00 L'Anse Creuse Arc Donna Luh KA8QBD

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Membership information

The Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance, an American Radio Relay League affiliated club, was created to provide opportunities for friendship, community service, increase technical knowledge and upgrading our skills in the hobby of amateur radio. Annual dues to MARA are \$20. Family memberships are also available. Persons aged 70 and over have the rate of \$5.00. Memberships expire on December 31 and club dues are due on January 1st. MARA membership is open to all interested persons.

Everybody is encouraged to submit original articles to the editor on disk, fax or by mail. The deadline for submission is the end of the 2nd week of February, May, August and November. Please send change of address information and membership applications to the club secretary.

Great Lakes Award

Send inquiries regarding the Great Lakes Award to the Awards Manager Brian Scholten KC8DOC c/o MARA
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Club activities

MARA holds their weekly 2 meter Net on the MARA W8USA repeater, 145.410 MHz -600Khz PL. 94.8., every Thursday, at 8 PM, except the 2nd Thursday of the month. MARA holds their monthly meetings on the 2nd Thursday of the month at Saint Adalberts Benevolent Society Aid Hall, located at 5th Street and Davis NW. We meet at 7:30PM upstairs. All are welcome. (* Indicates temporary filled)

Kent County Repeater Listing

The following list of frequency coordinated repeaters comes from the Michigan Area Repeater Councils' database, which is managed by Dave Johnson WD8DJB, printed by permission. This list was last updated on September 9,2000. There are many repeaters that can be accessed from within the Grand Rapids area that are not listed here. This reflects what you should be able to reach with a handie-talkie. All of these repeaters are open repeaters.

FREQ.OUTPUT	CALL-SIGN	P.L.	SPONSOR
52.600 Mhz	K8KWD	114.8	K8KWD
52.720 Mhz	NW8J	136.5	NW8J
52.760 Mhz	W8DC		GRARA
145.110Mhz	K8SG		Kent Races
145.270Mhz	W8LRC	94.8	LARC
145.410Mhz	W8USA	94.8	MARA
145.490Mhz	W8CSO	94.8	NORC
146.760Mhz	W8DC		GRARA
146.880Mhz	NW8J	141.3	NW8J
147.060Mhz	K8DAA	94.8	HARC
147.160Mhz	W8HVG		IRA
147.260Mhz	W8DC	94.8	GRARA
234.140Mhz	NW8J	167.9	NW8J
224.440Mhz	WB8VOJ		IRA
224.640Mhz	W8DC		GRARA
224.760Mhz	WD8KXA		WD8KXA
224.880Mhz	K8SG		K8SG
421.250Mhz	K8DMR		K8DMR
442.000Mhz	K8EFK	141.3	K8EFK
442.075Mhz	K8KWD	114.8	K8KWD
443.075Mhz	NW8J	94.8	NW8J
443.775Mhz	W8GVK	94.8	W8GVK
443.800Mhz	KA8YSM		IRA
443.825Mhz	K8DAA	94.8	HARC
444.100Mhz	N8NET		N8NET
444.400Mhz	K8EX		GRARA
444.625Mhz	KD8CP	94.8	KD8CP
444.775Mhz	AB8MS	94.8	AB8MS
444.900Mhz	K8IHY	94.8	K8IHY

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

When Would It Be Appropriate To Break Into A Conversation?

It would depend somewhat. Some amateurs would consider it impolite to break into a conversation without being asked, others would gladly welcome it, especially if they know you. If the conversation in progress is leaning itself towards asking for information, and you can supply the answer or give relevant information pertaining to such questions, then it would be appropriate to break into a conversation. You might get by with breaking into a conversation to ask for an equipment check or signal report if it is really important. By all means break into a QSO if you need assistance or have an emergency. To break into a conversation on HF say break, contact, or your callsign during the pause between transmissions. On repeaters usually say your callsign during the pauses between transmissions or during the squelch tail after the courtesy tone. Be sure to leave pauses between transmissions so other stations can break in if necessary. This is in good taste with amateur radio. Saying break, break is only for emergencies. Q signals are generally used on SSB. They prove beneficial when they may be the only way to understand a weak station. You generally don't hear Q signals used on FM or repeaters. But, if that is

the only way to communicate between two stations, then Q signals should be used.

Remember to always be polite, obey the rules, and always give amateur radio a good name by the way we operate.

How To Get Assistance?

If you have an emergency or see one, or need assistance, how do you get assistance on the repeaters? First you need to know where you are and which repeaters to use in your area. Always have this information handy. If you need directions; identify and then ask if there is anyone on frequency that could help you with directions or assistance (it helps if you were to give specifics). For example I could say this is kb9jlf, can anyone give me directions for finding a state park located in anytown, Indiana?

If it really is an emergency, (life or property threatening), identify, then you can say break, break I have an emergency (ex. car accident) can anyone report it? Don't wait long. If no one answers go ahead and give all the information (ex. car accident with injury, location, number of subjects, injuries, and people are trapped in vehicle). Someone may be listening that is out of range, but, could call in to Police your report. Or, it can speed up the

process of reporting. But, it is possible a control operator may be able to bring up the auto patch and you can give the information directly to a Police dispatcher. If you can't reach someone on a repeater, try simplex. 146.520 is usually or should be monitored. You might be able to reach someone here first.

What is the best way to get someone to talk to you?

For example I could say "This is KB9JLF monitoring", "listening", or "Is anyone on frequency?". Say once then wait a couple of minutes and repeat again. If nothing is heard, it wouldn't be polite to keep saying this. But, you could wait a while and try again. The reason being is, someone may have had a conversation in progress and may have taken a pause waiting for the other station to return for some reason or another. Or a station may have just a minute and may need to make a quick call. It wouldn't be proper to tie up a repeater if no one answers you.

Other Things To Know

Don't run more power than you need. Especially this would be true when operating a base station. Should I use a repeater or use simplex? There is nothing wrong with using repeaters. Using a repeater might be the only way for a round table

discussion or net to communicate, where you have several stations spread out over a large distance. Or a couple of stations might be in QSO waiting for another one to join. For mobile operations, it is usually best to operate through a repeater, however, it is not always necessary. It might be possible to talk simplex without a repeater. I can remember a few years back operating mobile stationary at about 3500 feet, with a 5/8 wave antenna and 25 watts FM, and communicating 165 miles simplex. I'm sure others have far exceeded this distance. However, if it is not necessary to use a repeater, why would it be better to use simplex instead? Using simplex when possible will free up a repeater for other stations to use. Another station might want to make a call, use the auto patch, or the repeater could be left open for relaying of severe weather events. The station wanting to make a call might choose not to break into a large round table discussion to make a call that is not of high priority, if it would mean having all the other stations wait on the side. And of course there is wear and tear on the equipment. Consideration is always a good idea. Especially, stations might not want to tie up a repeater for extended periods of time without the owners permission or if it is a highly use repeater. Of course, it might be more convenient to monitor a

single repeater frequency, make a quick call on a repeater, or move to simplex shortly thereafter. And simplex operating can bring excitement and a sense of accomplishment. This article does not cover all aspects of repeaters. This article may in part represent my own opinions and understandings.

(This is David McKim ,KB9JLF's first article. David lives near Corydon, Indiana. Reprinted with permission. Edited for length. Thanks to Ron Karger AB8DT for bringing the article to our attention)

What to expect at a Ham club meeting

You've heard chatter on the local repeaters, and now you want to see what the operator of the repeater is like: it's time to go to a club meeting. Club's form for many different reasons, to accommodate fellow hams needs, as in Code classes, theory lessons, learning how to build different things, all the way to maintaining a huge network of linked repeaters/packet systems. Whatever the original reason was, after a time, all clubs seem to form a system of operating, which to the non-club member may seem strange indeed. Robert's Rules of order is used my many clubs. It provides an outline of how to conduct, in an ordinary fashion, club business. Wait just a minute, where did all this business come from? If you have formed

a club, you probably have also scheduled public service events, Field Day, appreciation dinners, and other events, which does require some sort of responsibility and organization on somebody's part. You'll see this in action when the meeting starts and you hear reports being read and then old business, which is followed by new business. It is this part of any club's meeting that turns most folks away from wanting to join a club. Yet, while this seems boring, it is actually the focusing point of getting things done in a club. If you attend Field Day, and see all the antennas up, the radios squawking, the food being prepared, this didn't just happen, it took planing and cooperation between many different folks. This is where club's shine. Getting the impossible accomplished. But it isn't all work either. Most clubs hold monthly or weekly informal get togethers, such as Saturday breakfasts, where the talk is more around being a ham than eating one. Some club's also end their meetings by getting together afterwards for coffee, where they talk about everything under the sun. We, the west Michigan Hams, invite all of you to attend the club meeting of your choice. We're inviting you to get involved. Welcome to the Western Michigan Amateur Radio Community.