

The Open Feed Line

Volume 10, Issue 1

Friendship, Community service & Advancement of the Hobby

Jan-Feb 2001

New Ham Dinner

By Rich Ranta K8JX

Once again, LARC, GRARA and MARA are sponsoring the New Ham Dinner. This year, it's being held on February 24 at Ryan's, on Alpine Ave. This is the special event of the year, where we welcome the new hams of western MI area by letting them know of all the events that are held here, the different clubs and also how special they each are. The evening wouldn't be complete without explaining how to use repeaters and make that first call on HF. Remember the very first time you were confronted with that terrible "Beep" that told you it was your turn to talk? Tonight is the time when we ease the pain and fear out of new hams. The time is 6:00PM. When you arrive, go directly to the banquet room.

Ham of the Year

This event is also the occasion of the presentation of the Ham of the Year award. Last year, the recipients were Carl WA8AAT and his wife Evelyn KB8ILI Thompson.

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UP COMING HAMFESTS

- 2/18/01** Livonia ARC Nell coffin WA8GWL 734-261-5486
3/17/01 Marshall Jim Holloway KG8GZ 616-963-6602
5/5/01 Cadillac MI Rick Hockridge 231-862-3774

Meet Your New Board

This past December, the MARA members elected their new board for the 2001 season. Every position, except the secretary, changed this year. A first for our club.

Dan Markowski N8NIJ, was elected president, his second time in office. Wayne Dowling, KB8VOZ is our new vice president. Wayne was also our net director and was president a few years back. Jim Cordes, KI8JD is still our secretary and Education chairperson. Gale Sholten N8GS, is serving as Treasurer this year, and is also going to be our Field Day Chairman. Gale was also president in 1999. Richie Ranta K8JX volunteered and was appointed to the position of Trustee, filling out the remainder of the board.

Hard work ahead

This board has its work cut out for itself, as the two articles on page 3 and 4 attest to. But MARA always did managed to pull through. It's the kind of members we have: hard working, self-sacrificing individuals are the hallmark of the MARA members and board. This is what makes this club so special, its members.

Our 10th Anniversary

This is also our 10th anniversary. On August 31, 2001, MARA will have been in existence for 10 whole years. And what a 10 years it's been! This club did oodles of firsts, for any club in the Western MI area. And we're not through by a long shot. We're putting together plans on how to celebrate our anniversary and also have special events to celebrate it. A special QSL card, which we'll use for Field Day and other special events throughout the coming year. Our web site is also going through a whole face-lift. We learn from our successes, as well as our mistakes. I guess that's what makes MARA so special.

The Open Feed Line

Editor

Richie Ranta K8JX
812 Graceland NE
Grand Rapids MI 49505-4363
h&w 616-361-5975
Internet rranta@worldnet.att.net

Publisher

Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance
Post Office Box 670
Comstock Park MI 49321-0670
packet W8USA.#SWMI.MI.USA.NOAM
<http://www.waycom.com/mara>
W8USA@arri.net

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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, on topics relevant to the hobby of Ham Radio, to the editor on disk, fax or by mail. The deadline for submission is the end of the 2nd week of February, April, June, August, October and December. 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
Larry Dells KC8KVR c/o
MARA
P.O.Box 670
Comstock Park MI 49321-0670
internet W8USA@ARRL.NET

MARA club officers

President

Dan Markowski N8NIJ
343 Brandywyne NW
Comstock Park MI 49321
616-784-5973
N8NIJ@ARRL.NET wdow126686@aol.com

Vice President

Wayne Dowling KB8VOZ
2442 West Collier ave
Kentwood MI 49546
616-957-4641

Secretary

James M Cordes KI8JD
1235 Morgan
Grand Rapids MI 49504
616-459-1195
jcordes@iserv.net

Treasurer

Gale Scholten N8GS
8530 Peach Ridge NW
Sparta MI 49345
616-887-1820
N8GS@ARRL.NET

Appointed

Awards Manager

Larry Dells KC8KVR
4317 Willow DR NE
Grand Rapids MI 49525
616-363-8235
ldgr@gateway.net

Club Trusty

Richard Ranta K8JX
812 Graceland NE
Grand Rapids MI 49505
616-361-5975
K8JX@arri.net

Net & Membership Director

*

Education

James Cordes KI8JD
1235 Morgan
Grand Rapids MI 49504
616-459-1195
jcordes@iserv.net

Bereavement

Jerry Wittkoski W8MSK
1025 Kendalwood St NE
Grand Rapids MI 49505
616-363-6146
jeromeW551@aol.com

Field Day

Gale Scholten N8GS
8530 Peach Ridge NW
Sparta MI 49345
616-887-1820
N8GS@ARRL.net

Operation Care Coffee Stop

*

Super Swap

Chairman MARA
*

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.

*Some of these offices are still open. If you'd like to volunteer, contact one of the board members and let them know what your interested in.

The Presidents 2 bits

by Dan Markowski N8NIJ

The first month of my term as president of the Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance has come and gone. What a month it's been. We have accomplished much in a short period of time. I wish I were able to tell you that the repeater controversy is resolved but unfortunately I can't. We have purchased a new Yaesu Vertex 5000 repeater and it has been on line since January 19, 2001 and its PL is 94.8. It was necessary to consult with a technician concerning the programming due to the fact that there is an interpretation problem in the instruction manual. Finally we were able to perform the functions necessary for now. As you all know there is another repeater on the same set of frequencies operating illegally. The frequencies are coordinated to MARA as per the Michigan Area Repeater Council. They have a website, which can be accessed through the MARA webpage. The repeater manual portion will show perfectly clear that MARA is the sponsor and in accordance with their procedures the sponsor is the holder of the coordination. We have followed their procedures regarding

the moving and installing the new repeater at the new site. We have also petitioned the Michigan Area Repeater Council to resolve the dispute. We are awaiting an answer and as soon as it's available we will act accordingly. I know that this has caused an inconvenience to those who want to use the repeater and I apologize for that inconvenience. As I stated previously we need to remain focussed on the matter at hand. We also need to remain united in the accomplishment of our goal. I am confident that we have enough documentation available to support our case. Please remain patient until this matter is resolved.

***Dan Markowski
President MARA***

Jim's Corner

By Jim Cordes K18JD

I have heard people say, "It is silly that MARA is interfering with itself." In reality, they are making a silly statement, due to the fact that they are uninformed or misinformed. Most of these people have not been attending the MARA meetings, and have not watched this thing unfold over the last 18 months or more. Space is limited here, so we will only mention the highlights.

At the December 14, 2000 MARA meeting, the membership elected new officers, and a new Trustee was appointed. About 24 hours later, W8USA was no longer on the air. In its place was an uncoordinated repeater identifying as WD8EMD. This was done without the permission or knowledge of the club. Obviously, MARA had no control over "its" repeater. Is it just me, or is there something wrong with this picture?

There was no compromise available to the club. It was either, yes or no, up or down. Because the issue was not adequately addressed in 1999 or 2000, these were very unpleasant years for the active members. The contention, dissatisfaction, squabbling, etc., just dragged on and on. Something had to be done. Those in the know knew that the new officers would take action for the good of the club, according to the will of the voting membership. That is why, 24 hours after the new officers were elected, the first shot was fired, and the club did not have to fire the first shot.

At this point in the game, should MARA have just given up the frequencies?

(Continued on page 4)

(Ham of the Year continued from page 1)

Our goal is to include as many clubs in the western MI area as possible, so the award will represent the whole participating ham community. The criteria for deciding who you should nominate is based on who you think has done something to better the Western MI ham community or provided a service that benefited the whole community. To find out who is this year's recipient, either go to MARA's web site, or wait till the next issue of this newsletter is out, early next month. To cast a nomination for Ham of the Year, simply go to your club's meeting in either December or January, and nominate whom you think is worthy of the award. Then come to the February meeting and vote for the candidate of your choice. If your club is not participating in this worthy cause, bring it up at a meeting and let them know how important this is, for both the community and Amateur Radio. If you still want to nominate someone, just let our secretary know. Be sure to sign and date your nomination. See you all at the New Hams Dinner.

(Jim's corner continued from page 3)

While we are at it, why don't we just dissolve the club, and all join one of the other clubs? No, the membership decided to fight for what belonged to

the club. Yes, this whole deal is ugly, and not in the spirit of Amateur Radio. But the club had only two options. So the club purchased a repeater, and put it on the club's frequencies, according to the wishes of the voting membership. This new repeater has been up and running since January 19, 2001. The 'resident agent' of the uncoordinated repeater was informed that his repeater is interfering, but he refuses to cease and desist.

We are currently waiting for feedback from the repeater council. After that, the FCC will be informed of the situation. (They probably already know.)

If you want to see who is coordinated for the frequency pair, go to <http://www.qsl.net/miarc/index.html>, and find out for yourself. MARA is coordinated for this pair in this area, and no one else. Or just look it up in your repeater handbook, and see who the sponsor is. According to the rules, the sponsor is the holder of the coordination. The sponsor is also responsible for the operation, therefore they must have control.

The wheels of justice turn slowly, but someday, this issue will be resolved. I wish it were over now.

The bright side of this is that we can now say that the club owns its own repeater, and can do as it pleases within the law, without anyone's permission. All members have equal access and control over the new

machine, if they wish it. More importantly, an issue of contention has been removed.

Any and all members have equal say in how the club is run. All you have to do is to show up at the meetings, and vote. If you can't make the meetings, let your officers know how you feel.

Hopefully, when this is over, the club can start to grow, become stronger, and more viable.

Thanks to those who have stood by the club during it's rough times. Better times are coming.
73 Jim ki8jd

A Bright New Year

Along with a new board, MARA also has a new Great Lakes Award Manager. Brian Scholten, KC8DOC, who has served as our awards manager for the last 3 years, did an excellent job of promoting our club's award, through out the world, by placing advertisements in several Ham journals, and also by word of mouth. Brian carried this on after being in a near fatal car accident several years ago. Brian's immediate plans are to finish his schooling and go on to a place of higher learning. "Thank you Brian".

Taking over the helm of the Great Lakes Award, is Larry Dells, KC8KVR. Larry is eager to start his new role both as GLA manager and to start Dx-ing. *(Continued on page 5)*

*(A bright New Year,
continued from page 4)*

Larry comes from a ham family. Brother Bill, KG8PI, sister-in-law Sue Dells, KB8WJW. All who were MARA members at one time. Larry is excited about his new involvement and may post new Great Lakes Award winners on the club" web site. Welcome Larry at the next breakfast or at the next club meeting.

Another new face we'll see or should I say, hear more about, is Richie Ranta K8JX. Richie is MARA's new club Trustee. This is the second time he's held that role, and not a lot has changed since the first time. Richie will answer questions put to him either on the Thursday night net, by e-mail or by giving him a call. He is currently learning all he can about the care and feeding of repeaters. More on that in our next issue.

Have you introduced amateur radio to at least one other person this month?

In order to make our hobby grow, we need to work on sharing our enthusiasm with new people.

Clubs CAN Die

An amateur radio club CAN die.

The mail carrier often returns mail to me marked "insufficient postage", "addressee unknown," or "moved".

But imagine my surprise when a newsletter I had addressed to an amateur radio club came back stamped "deceased."

I don't know whether the club had actually "died," or if the postmaster or that community merely perceived the club as defunct, but it stared me wondering how a club might make the obituaries.

Suppose we start by dropping a few club activities. We might decide that recruiting newcomers to Amateur Radio is too much bother. Or that asking people to check into the net is a bit much. And suppose we question the need for attending our monthly meeting.

Is it possible we might soon develop an organizationally illiterate generation of hams? Of course, some in the club would never ever notice we had dropped those activities, unless we announced it in our newsletter. But interest would fade, little by little. And eventually, without member enthusiasm, no one would do the club's work. Without workers, a club must die.

Is that what you want?

You must decide; your presence or absence can make a difference.

Come to meetings. Get (or stay) involved in club activities. Or don't act, and watch it die.

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with permission)*

**MARA,
Celebrating its 10th
anniversary**

While we're celebrating our anniversary during the next months, its important to remember we're looking at all we've accomplished during those first 10 years. After August 31 comes and goes, we'll be looking ahead at the next 10 years. What exactly do we want to be able to say about those coming years? More members? All members upgraded, if they choose to? More get together, where we can all sit around and do what hams do best, bragging and talking!

Looking back, MARA started out at a diner, where 5 to 10 curious folks sat around and while drinking coffee, talked about the study material for the Novice exam. They were mostly CB'ers, but only because they never thought they could pass the terrible Ham exam. That is the how and why MARA first came into existence, to fulfill the needs of curious folks, like you and me.

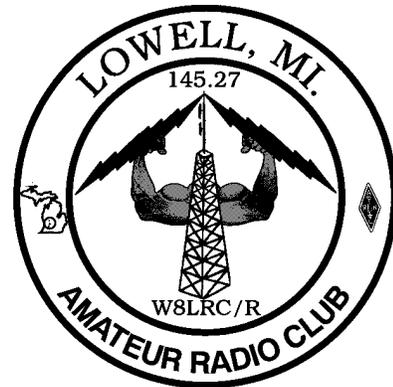
A lot has happened and changed during the last 10 years. The one thing that hasn't changed is our friendships, our sense of community and our willingness to help others. No matter what the next 10 years bring, we'll be able to handle anything. We're that kind of club.

GRAND RAPIDS AREA AMATEUR RADIO BANQUET



Announcing the **SIXTH ANNUAL**
WELCOME NEW HAMS,
NEW TO THE AREA HAMS, AND THE REST OF US
GET OUTTA THE CABIN DINNER
6PM SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2001

JOINTLY SPONSORED BY:



At RYANS FAMILY STEAK HOUSE,

3725 Alpine NW, Grand Rapids / Alpine Twp. From the I-96 expressway, exit Alpine Ave Hwy M-37 north (exit 30), go past 4 Mile Rd, on the left / west side of Alpine. When arriving, **go directly to the banquet room.**

BRING YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER, FRIENDS, and the KIDS can come too! Dress casual. LET THE NEW ONES KNOW WE WELCOME THEM, and enjoy each other's company without the need to split so not to miss that hamfest deal!

And you don't want to miss out on the door prizes, nothing spectacular like a new rig, but a prize is a prize. We'll have a good time!

Order from the regular menu. Cost is under \$10. Gratuity included.

Reservations are not needed, but you are encouraged to e-mail <w8lrc@k8sn.org> with the number in your party ahead of time so we have an idea how many to expect.

Don't be snooty, show up! ☺