

The Open Feed Line

Volume 11, Issue 4 Friendship, Community service & Advancement of the Hobby

July-Aug 2002

Operation Care Coffee Stop

The Labor Day Operation Care Coffee stop will be in operation starting on Saturday, August 31, at noon, till Monday, September 2, till about 10PM. The shifts are 4 hours long. To see what shifts are available, go to the MARA web site, www.w8usa.org and click on "CLICK HERE", or go to GRARA's web site, www.w8dc.org. "Don't have Internet access? Call Dan N8NIJ at 616-784-5973.

As a volunteer, your duties will include, making fresh coffee, keeping the apples and cookies supplied on the table and of course, the best part, greeting the traveling public. Seeing weary motorists stop and stretch their legs, while refreshing themselves with hot coffee and friendly talk, make this public service effort worth while. Can't make it? Give the Operation Care a call on W8USA and help keep the crew fresh during their shift.

Ham Fests

September 7, 2002 ARA Hanson Hills
Jon Schultz N8YSS 989-348-4966 Grayling MI

September 14, 2002 GRARA, Lowell ARC MARA
Super Swap 2002 Ed Novakanski N8UXN 616-458-9029

September 15, 2002 Adrian ARC

Eric Smith K8JVW 517-263-5407

October 13, 2002 Central MI ARC & Lansing CD Rpt assn.

John Hayes KC8RQV 517-393-2787

Kalamazoo ARC & SW MI Team 616-337-7602 (voice mail)

W8USA Repeater... Testing.....

As you probably all know by now, our Repeater, W8USA, has changed frequency. We're now, in the official words of the Michigan Area Repeater Council, "operationally, evaluating the frequency of 145.230MHz for interference and compatibility among existing systems." This means we're testing to see if we will experience or create interference with other systems in the area pictured below.



This photograph covers a greater area than we could possibly cover, but does give an indication of what area we're interested in. If you'd like to contribute to this effort, please listen, and give signal reports to either Gale Scholten N8GS, our site manager or our new Trustee, Richard Douglas, KC8NKA. What we're primary interested in, is how well do you hear the repeater and can you hear any interference with the signal. This will really help the club out in this time of testing and evaluating.

The Open Feed Line

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The Open Feed Line is published 6 times a year. It is the official journal of The Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance. You may freely reprint any material in the Open Feed Line, but please credit the Open Feed Line, the original author, and the original publication, if given.

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

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Grand Rapids MI 49504
616-791-1182
K8VOL@arrl.net

Operation Care Coffee Stop

*

Super Swap

Chairman MARA

*

Club activities

MARA holds their weekly 2 meter Net on the MARA W8USA repeater, 145.230 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.

Member News

Wayne Dowling, KB8VOZ, is recuperating after having his knee replaced. Not to be kept down, the day after his surgery, Wayne was on the phone listening to MARA's 2 meter net. Wayne hopes to be able to attend either the November or December club meeting. "Watch me climb those stairs now".

What's in a call...

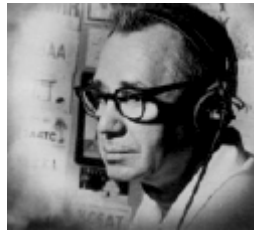
Now it can be told. Why would somebody trade a perfectly good call sign, like K8JX, for WB8HJX? Simple: one is his call sign, and one isn't. K8JX never saw airtime on HF, while WB8HJX has been on HF since September of 1970. It just never felt right. Richie now has to decide what to do with 983 QSL cards that have K8JX printed on it. "Any takers?"

W7PG SK

One of the founding members of MARA, Andrew Adam Gusack, W7PG, became a silent key on Friday, July 26, 2002. Andy, along with the other original members, created MARA back on August 31, 1991. Andy was a pioneer in Ham radio, and almost met Marconi back at the 1933's worlds fair. "I missed him by no more than 15 minutes." Andy said he had a hard time with the Morse code test of 20 wpm. But he finally made it and received the

call sign W8IV. Andy also was president of GRARA in 1941 I believe.

Throughout his life, Andy loved Collins Radio gear, and had one of the most complete collections around. The hallmark of Andy was his cheerful, positive and be kind to everybody attitude. I remember the last time we talked, he asked me to help make peace among some of our members.



One of Andy's loves was walking his collie. The next time you visit MARA's web site, when you go to the Member's area, the Heath Kit radio is Andy's last HF rig. He was never afraid to try new things.

Andy was 96 and is survived by his 5 children and many grandchildren. "Saloon Andy, Saloon".

JOTA

This year, the Boy Scouts Jamboree On The Air will be held on one day instead of 2. It will coincide with the scouts Camporee. The event will be held at the Grand Rapids Cap-N-Ball club, South West of Dorr MI. The date and place may change, for further information, contact Carl Thompson, WA8AAT at 677-1174.

Where's the web page?

A funny thing happened while our web maintainer was updating our web site. Most of the pages and photos got crumpled! What has happened is that he can no longer upload pages to our site using a FTP program, he must use Microsoft's FrontPage. This is a good thing in that we can use many of the nifty extensions FrontPage has, such as creating our very own Guest book, page counter, and even surveys, if we choose to. The bad thing is, he has to re-create 32 pages of our site. Nothing could be saved. So please be patient while he re-learns FP.

MARA's New LOGO

The response from members submitting designs for MARA's new logo was amazing. Louie White' N8ZVB wife, Gaye submitted 3 designs. Bill Dell, KG8PI's wife, Sue, KB8WJW, submitted one and a professional artist, who has absolutely no idea of what "A Ham Radio" is about, submitted. One also. Seeing how there are so many to display, we're going to scan them and put them up on the web page and have you make further suggestions, or simply pick the one you think best represents our club, MARA. Now, start designing.

Trip to St. Joseph Island

By Jim ki8jd

(Jim writes about this past Summers DX-pedition)

The MDXA island team met on St. Joseph Island, Ontario, Canada on July 6th at about 4:00 PM. There were 3 hams from Grand Rapids, Brian W8BRI, Chuck W8VOM, and myself; 2 from Canada, Don VA3DJL, and Brian VA3BRR; and one from Kalamazoo, Dave W8DO. On Sunday, Tim KC8BZE and Dale KC8JLH drove over from Sault Saint Marie, Michigan. Chuck's son, Dustin, also accompanied us.

Upon arrival, we met with the landlord, and moved our things into the 4-bedroom house. The house is right on the water, at the narrowest point of the Great Lakes shipping routes. There is one-way freighter traffic going towards the Soo locks. When the freighters go by, the water level rises and falls, sometimes several times. It was a strange thing to see the water going down the beach as if someone had pulled the plug.

Soon after arrival, the sound of the code could be heard from one of the cars. Dave was making contacts from his car! Soon, I talked him into putting up his 210-foot G5RV. He had one of those slingshot/fishing reel devices, and it worked excellent for getting ropes over the tops of the trees.

Once his station was up, it was hard to pry him away from it. It's a good thing we brought him food! He was on the 20-meter FISTS frequency, primarily. Dave kept very busy handing out our club's FISTS number. FISTS clubs are somewhat rare, and sought after.

'The Canadians', as we affectionately called them, were busy assembling an army-surplus antenna mast, with a large rotatable dipole at the top. After a repeat of my 66-foot vertical attempt, we decided to shorten the mast, and we got the thing into the air.

Next, we set up a 20-foot ground-mounted vertical for PSK.

It was hot when we got there, and after getting the antennas up, I walked over to the beach. This water flows from Lake Superior, headed for Lake Huron. I waded in up to my knees, and jumped in. It sure was refreshing! I told the other guys how nice it was. They waded in up to their knees, and jumped out!

The house was nice, and had nice furnishings. I couldn't believe how many TV channels you could get with just rabbit ears. Canadian TV seemed strange to me. Their whole culture is different than ours, which led to some good-natured joking between 'the Canadians' and the US hams.

Their money is different. Their smallest bill is \$5, and if I remember correctly, it is red. They have a \$1 coin, which they

call a 'looney', and a \$2 coin that they call a 'tooney'. The exchange rate is about 50%, so we got about \$15 for our \$10. This made shopping a joy. Of course, everything is metric. Between the difference in money, and the difference in measurement, it was a little hard to know how much you were getting for your buck. Generally speaking, goods were fairly cheap.

Band conditions weren't that great, with a SFI of 134, and an A of 22. But we made contacts, foreign and domestic. It seems that the bigger the antenna the better.

On Sunday, we rented a 3-man fishing boat (aluminum v-bottom...no steering wheel). I was chosen to accompany 'the Canadians' on a journey out into the water. We launched from Richard's Landing. Dave had brought some nice boating charts, and as we headed across the water, we decided exactly which island to activate. The water is littered with islands, and the scenery is fantastic. Many of these islands have one house on them, and you can rent the whole island.

We decided on Horse Island. As we approached the island, we saw a house, so we headed to the other side. As we came around, we discovered that the other side of the island was a huge boulder. A picture of this boulder is on the MDXA website.

(Saint Joe-continued from page 4)

It was at least an eighth-mile in diameter, and protruded above the water somewhere between 50 and 100 feet. Like an iceberg, we have no idea how large it really is. We were able to climb this rock, and the view was spectacular. The rock had evergreen trees growing in its cracks, and we strung a 20-meter dipole between the trees. We had 75 feet of coax, just enough to reach the boat. I suspect that there was iron ore in the rock. At any rate, we struggled for hours trying to make contacts. We did make some, but not nearly as many as we would have liked to.

While I tried to get out on CW, 'the Canadians' buried a treasure chest. They recorded the coordinates with a GPS unit, and these coordinates were posted on the Internet. This is part of a new hobby called 'GeoCache Treasure Hunting'. By the time I got back to GR, our treasure had been dug up twice! The guys who dig it up take a few of the items, and leave a few of their own. They then re-bury the chest in the same spot for someone else to find. They thanked us for giving them a reason to visit such a beautiful island.

After baking in the hot sun for several hours, we decided we had enough, and headed back to base camp. Chuck, Dustin, and 'US Brian' took the boat over to Neebish Island.

There is not enough space here to mention all our activities. St. Joe is the second largest freshwater island in the world, and it is loaded with wildlife. Driving after sunset is very interesting, you don't go far before you see a deer. I also saw deer and pheasants right out in the yard. The bugs weren't too bad.

'The Canadians' had to work Monday morning, so they started packing as soon as we got back from Horse. They had a 6-hour drive back home.

Thunderstorms were approaching, and the bands weren't good, so the other 3 from GR left in the wee hours of the morning. By the time I woke up Monday morning, the thunderstorms had passed, and Dave was mostly packed. We drove to Richard's Landing, and had breakfast. After breakfast, I was alone. On the way back from town, I discovered that I could get into the W8HVG system with my 2-meter mobile rig. I talked with Bud KG8BK, and told him I would be on 40 SSB in an hour.

The small vertical was the only equipment still set up after everyone else left, and I decided I needed something more for 40, so I set to putting up an end-fed 15/40 wire in the steady rain. That didn't go well, but I got it done. The only source of 12-volt power was a 78-amp/hr battery pack, a 12-amp power supply, and a tiny trickle charger. I was going to float charge the

batteries with the power supply, as I have done for years. Only this time, I hooked the leads up backwards, and let the smoke out of the power supply. I attempted a field repair, but it was fried. By the time I finally got on the air, I had missed my sked with Bud.

I called CQ on 40 SSB until I felt stupid doing it. I made one contact on SSB, and traded 5-9 signals. I went down to the FISTS frequency, and had a QSO on the first call. I stayed around 7.057 MHz until the batteries went dead. When I got to the island, I was almost CW illiterate. By the time I left, I was doing much better.

As the sky cleared on Monday, the temperature dropped, and the weather was perfect the rest of the week. It didn't matter what I wore, I was still comfortable. And the bugs were gone.

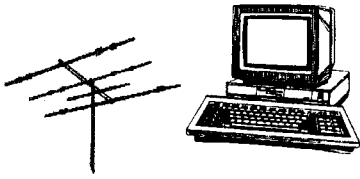
My wife and the 3 youngest came up on Tuesday. We drove around the island, caught fish, went swimming, and just generally had a great time. We had a wedding to attend on Saturday, so we left Friday morning. There was no trouble crossing the border. We made numerous stops on the way home, and played tourist. We finally got home about (hi-hi) 6:00 PM Friday.

All in all, it was a great trip.

73 Jim ki8jd

(if this sounds like fun, visit the MDXA web site at www.MDXA1.COM)

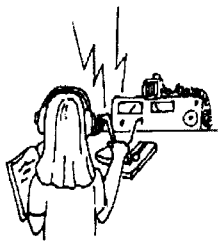
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OR ☎: Ed Novakowski N8UXN (616) 458-9029

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Grand Rapids, MI 49501-3282

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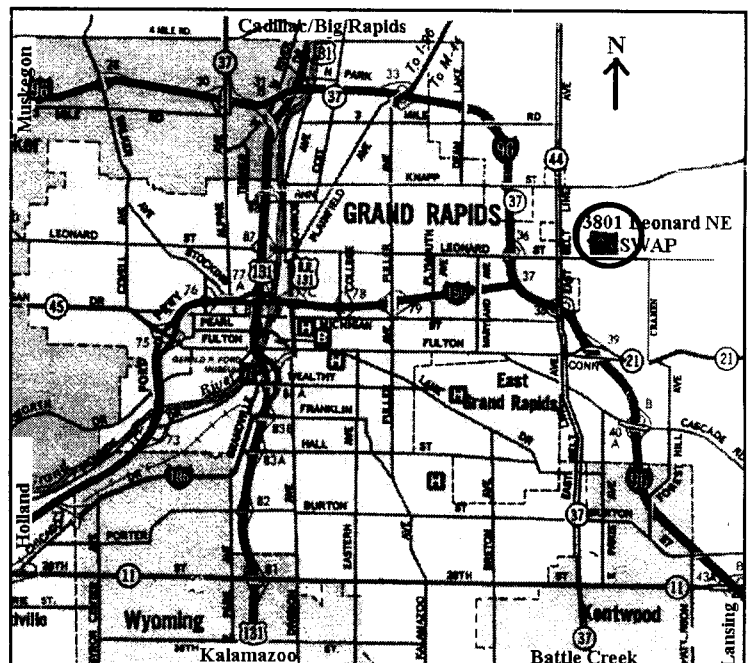
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Official Observers

We've all heard about the Official Observers, but what do they actually do? Does the term, "Repeater Police" really describe what they do?

According to Don Sefcik, The Official Observer Coordinator for Michigan, the general objectives are

1. Foster a wider knowledge of and better compliance with the FCC rules.
2. Extend the concepts of self-regulation and self-administration in the Amateur Service.
3. Enhance the opportunity for individual amateurs to contribute to the public welfare and
4. Enable the compliance and information Bureau of FCC to efficiently and effectively utilize its limited manpower and resources.

Their task is not to find fault or lay blame, but to identify cause and effect and to find ways to achieve solutions to promote good amateur operating and engineering practice on our bands.

But doesn't that mean enforcement? No! Enforcement is a function reserved exclusively by the FCC. For the OO's to be viable and effective, they must avoid the appearance of enforcement. OO's also do not deal with RFI problems. They are designed to deal ONLY

with amateur to amateur interference and improper on the air operations by amateurs.

The OO's also do not deal with non-amateur intruders or bootleggers. If it is a foreign broadcaster, the ARRL has a monitoring system that covers that and bootleggers are turned over to the FCC system.

OO's can issue an Advisory Notice card. But don't worry if you get one. They are not citations and do not have to be answered. They are simply a friendly note to alert you to possible equipment factors or operating practices that might have contributed to an apparent departure from a rule or the good amateur practice standard.

OO's are basically, helper-advisors, not the "Radio Police". They concentrate on the Right and Wrong areas. To this end, they avoid the grey areas of between black and white rule violations. They will not notify you if you fail to identify your station at 10 minutes and 12 seconds. If you receive a card and feel the notice violates the principles of the program, send a copy to your section manager.

OO's also emphasize the positive nature of operating by issuing "Good Operator Reports". These are sent to operators whose radio signals and operating practices are consistent with highest standards and are a model for others to follow.

Currently, in Michigan, Don said he has 22 OO's , and could use more. They listen from anywhere between HF to UHF.

Remember that a lot of time is spent just listening and not doing anything else.

So are you interested in joining? All OO's must pass a comprehensive examination based on a set of study materials, before they can be certified as members of the Amateur Auxiliary (OO's). These materials include an extensive training manual, The FCC RuleBook and the ARRL Handbook. Many folks do not make it.

This is not a job for everybody. But if you have the time and are willing to invest yourself, please contact,

N8NJE
Donald G Sefcik
4486 American Heritage
Road.
Grand Blanc MI 48439
Or call, 810-694-3823

(Part of this information was taken from an interview with Don over the phone on July 16th and from OO Pamphlets. Reprinted by permission. Don would like to have many more willing people become involved. Give him a call today.)

This is the first in a series of articles describing the different ARRL appointments within the Great Lakes Section. Next issue, "Where to find Technical help in resolving a problem."

W8DCL SK

Walter Baron, W8DCL became a silent key on July 17, 2002. Walt may not be known to many of you, but his contribution and engineering touches our amateur lives to this day. If you used the MARA repeater within the last 2 years, the signal was radiated off of a W8DCL engineered and erected tower. So were K8EX, W8AKI and many others. Walt was one of those folks who lived by the creed, "Do it right and then some better!" We used to call it overkill. Walt, who was a technician for the railroad, also built antennas that others only dreamed about. His last project was a 375-foot, unterminated Rhombic. Can you imagine what it's like to use a radio from 550 kHz to well over 144 MHz, without using a tuner? I had the experience of doing just that. When one of the owners of Stotts Freeman came to visit, he saw Walt's antenna and asked Walt why he needed a ski lift in his back yard!

Walt served in World War II and received 4 overseas bars, a Purple Heart and 2 Bronze Stars.

Walt was 84 years old.
"FineDinken, OM, 73"

Estate Equipment sale

Edmund Lomasiewicz W8NZW, has some antennas and other gear

form the estate of the Late Jim Norton, KA8SHZ. If you're interested, please give him a call at 453-0451.

Our New Trustee

When the repeater moved, so did some of the people responsible for it's operation. Richard Douglas, KC8NKA, was appointed MARA Trustee. Richard, who has many interests, specially digital photography and "I still use film!", just upgraded to Amateur Extra Class. He's having fun right now setting up the repeater's control link and learning how to sit back and let others take over some of the work. Richard volunteered from day 1, when we first got the repeater, to be a control operator, so you can sleep well at night. It is in good hands.

We can expect to hear more from Richard as the bugs get worked out and other functions become operational.

"Thanks Richard for taking on this thankless position".

Meet our New Site Manager

While before, the Trustee and site manager were rolled into one person, with the move up to 10 Mile Rd and Peach Ridge, it became necessary to have a "On the spot man" perform the daily operations and scheduled maintenance. Gale Scholten, N8GS, who along with Jerry Wittoski W8MSK, did the original

work in finding us 1. A better location and 2. A usable frequency volunteered his time and effort into bringing the W8USA repeater back on line as quickly as possible. It is Gale who you hear trying new DVR messages, making adjustments and doing other necessary tune ups to our system. Gale, who is a supervisor engineer, spends his time operating DX Contests and like Jim Cordes K18JD, also has been on a MDXA DX-Pedition.

Lets' all help both Richard and Gale perform their duties and get the W8USA repeater to be the best sounding, best coverage repeater we've ever had!

Member News

Chris Anderson, KC8MIL is wondering if anybody has ever gotten a signal out of an apartment! Chris, who just relocated, is having oodles of trouble radiating RF. The good kind that is. Maybe if Wayne KB8VOZ shares his secretes (put a full size 6 meter beam in the guest room, mounted on a tripod!) Chris also can start enjoying HF.

Anybody for CW?

After many of you have asked, Jim K18JD and Richie WB8HJX have decided to provide Morse code lessons once more on our repeater. Listen for the DVR message telling starting date and time.

MICHIGAN AMATEUR RADIO ALLIANCE

Club ROSTER as September 13, 2002

CALL	NAME	ADDRESS	E-MAIL	PHONE
KB8MNI	HAROLD ALLEN	56 Washington Sparta MI 49345		887-8131
KC8MIL	CHRIS ANDERSON	4575 Aldun Ridge Comstock Park MI 49321	kc8mil@hotmail.com	
N8YZM	DOUG APPEGATE	4792 Hunsberger NE Grand Rapids MI 49525	dlan8yzm@grnet.com	
K8VOJ	SANDY BIZIOREK	940 Carpenter NW Grand Rapids 49504	K8VOL@arrl.net	791-1182
K8VOL	STEVE BIZIOREK	940 Carpenter NW Grand Rapids 49504	K8VOL@arrl.net	791-1182
W8ZP	LEE BURGESS	46 Indiana SW Grand Rapids MI 49504	lburgess@pathwaynet.com	458-9297
KI8JD	JAMES M CORDES	1235 Morgan Grand Rapids MI 49504	jcordes@iserv.net	459-1195
KC8OTW	CINDY CORDES	1235 Morgan Grand Rapids MI 49504		459-1195
KC8KVR	LARRY DELLS	4317 Willow DR NE Grand Rapids MI 49525	Lldgrd@Netscape.net	363-8235
KG8PI	BILL DELLS	3531 Briggs BLV NE Grand Rapids MI 49505		361-2498
KC8NKA	RICH DOUGLAS	3903 Oriole Ave SW Wyoming MI 49509	KC8NKA@ARRL.NET	531-6218
KB8VOZ	WAYNE DOWLING	2442 West Collier Ave Kentwood MI.49546-6115	wdow126686@msn.com	957-4641
KC8FQK	KEITH EADIE jr	10506 Morning Star Way NE Rockford MI 49341		866-2459
K8OOK	MIKE EILERS	3565 4 Mile RD NE Grand Rapids MI.49525-9714	K8OOK@ISERV.NET	363-4998
W7PG	ANDY GUSACK	Shore Haven Living cnt RM 59-1 Grand Haven MI 49417		
KC8RSE	GENE HOLIDAY	10461 Kalamazoo ave Caledonia 49316		
N8SJH	STEVE HOLIDAY	812 Royal Oak Wyoming 49509		257-7214
N8NFZ	SERGE LISK	307 Aurora SE Grand Rapids MI 49507	SLISKONE@HOTMAIL.COM	241-2488
W8NZW	EDMUND LOMASIEWICZ	271 Lenora NW Grand Rapids MI 49504		453-0451
N8NIJ	DAN MARKOWSKI	343 Brandywyne NW Comstock Park MI.49321	danmarco@pathwaynet.com	784-5973
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KC8LOI	RUSS POVENZ	3047 HOMEWOOD Grandville MI 49418		538-8043
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WA8AAT	CARL THOMPSON	0-12657 8 th NW Grand Rapids MI 49504	WA8AAT@AOL.COM	677-1174
KA8ZAZ	PETER VANDUIVENDYK	1501 Woodworth NE APT 201 Grand Rapids MI		361-0853
N8ZVB	LOUIE WHITE	1713 Vinecroft NW Grand Rapids MI.49504		785-1189
	GAYE WHITE	1713 Vinecroft NW Grand Rapids MI 49504		785-1189
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*Note: E-Mail addresses change. If they are no longer valid, please let the club secretary know.
If you spot any errors, please contact the Editor and Secretary, Jim Cordes.*