

The Open Feed Line

A Publication of the Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance (MARA)

Volume 12, Issue 3-- Friendship, Community Service & Advancement of the Hobby -- July-Sept, 2003

Upcoming Events

August 11th - K8JX starts Code class on MARA's repeater. If you miss a class, or have other concerns, give Richie a call. See page 3 for details.

August 24th - 8:00 AM - Lapeer County ARA Ham Swap

August 30th, 31st, and Sept. 1 - Operation Care Coffee Stop.

September 6-7, 2003, Great Lakes Division Convention, Findlay, OH in conjunction with the 61st Findlay Hamfest. See ARRL for details.

September 13th - Grand Rapids Area Hamfest. Sponsored by GRARA, LARC, and MARA. See page 1, column 2 for details.

September 19-21, the 22nd Annual ARRL and TAPR Digital Communications Conference, the big one, <http://www.tapr.org/dcc>

October 31-November 1, 2003 the Michigan State ARRL Convention will be held at Holland, Michigan. There will be dinner and an awards banquet on Friday with a Wouff Hong Friday night. The swap and forums will be held on Saturday. See ARRL for details.

Michigan Repeater Council Meetings-
Sundays at 1:00 PM- Sept. in Lansing--Dec. in Kalamazoo / Battle Creek - location and dates to be announced.

Possible Nightmare for Ham Radio!

By Jim ki8jd

According to what I have read, the proposal to expand the use of radio-frequency digital signals, transmitted over power lines, spells trouble for Amateur Radio, possibly even disaster. To find out more, visit the ARRL website, and look for BPL (Broadband over Power Lines).

Help Needed For GRAHamfest

The following committee positions are very important and have yet to be filled:

PRIZES

Determine and purchase prizes. Determine budget and acquire hourly prizes. Contact potential prize donors, it should be noted there are a lot of manufacturers and retailers that will donate small prizes if they are contacted at least a couple of months in advance. Organize the prize drawing and distribution procedure for the day of the swap.

CONCESSION STAND

Determine what items will be available, selling price, acquire items, setup stand, etc. Arrange volunteer sales work schedule.

SECURITY

To be defined, but include ticket checks, vendor permits displayed, etc.

The following would be nice to have someone in charge of, but if no one comes forth, the swap can still go on.

PROMOTION - General public.

There is a VAST market of NON-hams that are not being reached or do not understand that this is really an electronics and computer swap, not just ham gear. How can we reach these people without busting the budget?

Free web site listings such as www.grandhappenings.com. Community calendar announcements that TV, radio, and newspapers donate. Announcements in other hobby publications. Perhaps some strategically placed paid ads.

73 Jack NY8D

(Editor's note: See GRAHamfest flier on page 7)

The Open Feed Line

Publisher

Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance
Post Office Box 670
Comstock Park MI 49321-0670
Visit our website- <http://www.w8usa.org>
E-mail us at- w8usa@arrl.net

The Open Feed Line is published 4 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.

Editor

James M Cordes KI8JD
1235 Morgan NW
Grand Rapids MI 49504
616-459-1195 or 459-5415
E-mail- jcordes@iserv.net

Membership information

The Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance, an American Radio Relay League affiliated club, was created to provide opportunities for friendship, community service, increasing technical knowledge and upgrading our skills in the hobby of amateur radio.

Annual dues to MARA are \$20. Family memberships are an additional \$5. Persons aged 70 and over - \$5.00. Membership is free to students under 21. 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, 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
Larry Dells KC8KVR c/o
MARA
P.O.Box 670
Comstock Park MI 49321-0670
E-mail- LLDGRD@netscape.net

MARA Club Officers

President

Dan Markowski N8NIJ
343 Brandywyne NW
Comstock Park MI 49321
616-784-5973
danmarco@sbcglobal.net

Vice President

Wayne Dowling KB8VOZ
2442 West Collier Ave.
Kentwood MI 49546
616-957-4641
wdow126686@msn.com

Secretary

James M Cordes KI8JD
1235 Morgan NW
Grand Rapids MI 49504
616-459-1195 or 459-5415
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
LLDGRD@netscape.net

Club Trustee

Richard Douglas KC8NKA
3903 Oriole Ave. SE
Wyoming MI 49509
616-531-6218
kc8nka@arrl.net

Membership Director

Wayne Dowling KB8VOZ
2442 West Collier Ave.
Kentwood MI 49546
616-957-4641
Wdow126686@aol.com

Education Director

James Cordes KI8JD
1235 Morgan NW
Grand Rapids MI 49504
616-459-1195 or 459-5415
jcordes@iserv.net

Bereavement Director

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

Field Day Chairperson

* Open *

Operation Care Chairperson

* Open *

Super Swap Chairperson - MARA

* Open *

Webmaster -- Richard R. Ranta K8JX

812 Graceland NE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49505 616-361-5975
rranta@sbcglobal.net

Club activities

MARA holds their weekly 2-meter Net, every Thursday, at 8 PM on the MARA W8USA repeater, 145.230 MHz -600Khz PL. 94.8. MARA holds their monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:30PM, at the Steepletown Building, located on the SW corner of 5th street and Davis NW, in Grand Rapids. This site is handicap accessible, with additional parking on the West side of the building. All are welcome to attend our meetings.

*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.

A letter from MARA's President

By Dan N8NIJ

Well, Field Day 2003 has come and gone. I'm sure that everyone who attended had a good time.

We had three stations going and manned by several operators. It rained several times during set up but overall the weather cooperated and it wasn't extremely hot. We also had a very good turn-out at the potluck. Thanks to everyone who participated. I would also like to add my thanks to Steve for securing the site. I am already looking forward to next year's Field Day and am hoping for bigger and better things. For those that enjoy operating, in my opinion this is the event that will allow for as much operating as you want.

To change the subject just a bit, we also had a successful Memorial Day coffee stop. Thanks to all that participated. Prior to the publishing of this article we will have had our July 4th coffee stop, and from the looks of things this will also be successful. Club events just don't happen, they are successful due to the involvement of club members. My thanks to all who continue to be involved. Have an enjoyable summer. 73, Dan N8NIJ

Code Class Begins on MARA Repeater

By Jim ki8jd

Richie K8JX is starting Morse code classes on August 11th, at 8:00 PM, and again at 11:00 PM. He had originally planned to start sooner, and had originally planned on having 2 classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. However, there are scheduling conflicts to work around, such as the Wednesday night MARA meeting, and the KCEST net, both of which occur once per month. So it appears that this code course is going to be a free-wheeling, evolving type of affair, at least as far as scheduling goes.

If you have any special concerns or needs, let Richie know, and he will probably accommodate you. After all, the 11:00 PM class is the result of only one person's request. Ask, and you shall receive.



MARA's Saturday Morning Breakfast

By Jim ki8jd

A few months ago, the Saturday morning gang decided to switch restaurants from Cheers to Bono's. When we first started going to Bono's, they offered an all-you-can-eat buffet-style breakfast. In addition to the offerings on the buffet tables, you could order an omelet at no extra charge.

Recently, they have added a menu that you may order from, as an alternative to the buffet. Just for an experiment, I ordered an omelet from the menu for \$3.00. I am a pretty good eater, but I found that this omelet kept me from being hungry until late in the day. Where else can you get a Western omelet for only \$3.00?

Of course, there are still advantages to getting the buffet. For one thing, you don't have to wait, the food is waiting for you. Plus, you get a pretty good choice of entrees, and the option of ordering an omelet made to order as part of the buffet.

MARA 2-Meter Net

By Richie K8JX

The 2-Meter Net schedule is going smoothly, and is filling up nicely. We want to thank all of you who have checked into the net and especially those folks who have volunteered to be Net Control. Thanks to you folks, we haven't had one Net cancelled during the whole year!

If you would like to be Net Control of the Mara Net, either give Larry a call at 363-8235 or visit the MARA web site and click on 2-meter net schedule. We hope to hear from you. You do not need to be a MARA member to be Net Control of the MARA net.

The Vanishing Code

By Richie K8JX

When the World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) concluded July 4th, the Morse code requirement for access to the HF bands disappeared as a treaty obligation for the International Telecommunication Union. It was left to the individual countries to decide if they would keep the Morse code proficiency requirement or not.

Some think that Morse code, or CW as we call it, is on it's way out. The reason for this stance hasn't been made clear. It would seem that when microchip companies make advances that leap and surpass older technologies, the newer stuff takes front stage and the older technologies and skills are thrown away. One only has to look at the current crop of Amateur Exams to see that the teeth seem to have been removed and replaced, not with dentures (my age is showing here), but with those wax dentures we used to get from the Five and Dime store. I've heard a lot of people state that "Change is good!" I'd like to modify that, not all change is good or beneficial. A healthy body cell that becomes cancerous, is change. A 4-door car that gets hit by a train and becomes a 2-door compact, is also change. But nobody would agree that it is good. I think instead of change, I would champion the word 'adaptation'. We need to adapt to our new world, with its insecurities at every turn. Ham requirements simply do not seem to be that important, until the hams' skills are actually needed.

"No way!", states Richie K8JX. The code has more validity today than it ever has had. What with the complex radios we all have nowadays, if they should fail, they must be returned to the factory. But the need to communicate will still be here. We shouldn't limit our communications methods just because of technological advances. Remember that one can communicate with the code by just about any means. (Smoke signals, flashing lights, tones, car horns, mirrors, etc) It really is only limited by one's imagination.

We have heard many new and old amateurs express a desire to learn the code, so they can not only pass the exam, but actually use it on the air. (See - "Code Class Begins on MARA Repeater", on page 3.)

(Editor's note: One only has to attend Field Day, or chase DX, to realize the timelessness of the code. More Field Day contacts are made using CW than any other mode. More, rarer, countries are available on CW than any other mode. From my experience, it is much easier to strike up an HF conversation on CW than on voice. CW, the original digital mode, is very spectrum efficient. The only other modes that rival the narrow-banded efficiency of CW require a computer to replace the operator's skill.)

Results of Jim Weaver's Survey

By Jim Weaver K8JE

(Jim K8JE is the Great Lakes Division Director for the ARRL - this was cut from one of his letters.)

Work to keep the code requirement = 60%.
Do not work to keep the code requirement = 40%.
Seems straight forward? Well look at this:
Pull out all stops or work moderately hard to keep a code requirement =40%.
Do very little or nothing to keep a code requirement = 60%.
My take on this is that the majority wants to keep a code requirement, but that an equal majority says we should do no more than submit a petition to FCC to keep the code or do nothing at all. The expanded answers generally followed this same thinking. Some suggested keeping the requirement, but demanding only that the candidate for a license should be required merely to recognize very slow code -- essentially at no "speed." Many suggested code for Extra Class, only. Again, thanks to you for this perspective. It will be useful when the subject comes up for discussion at a coming Board meeting.

Member News

By Richie K8JX

It's been a busy summer for most of our members.

Gale, N8GS and his wife are still finishing up a "little" interior remodeling they started way back in early spring.

Pam, KC8VUB and Chris KC8MIL finally started feeling at home, in their new home. They moved out of their apartment to their new country home. Chris and Pam are now eagerly waiting for nasty weather, so they can both start erecting antennas.

Dan Markowski, N8NIJ, spent most of his vacation doing what he does best, helping others. The old hall where we used to meet at, The Benevolent Aid Society Hall, was in bad need of some serious upgrading, so Dan lent a hand at bringing it up to new standards. He may even find time to rest up till his next vacation.

Carl Thompson WA8AAT finally got the cast off his arm. Carl had surgery to correct nerve damage, and has been having troubles adjusting to his being "one winged". But now he is getting plenty of healthy exercise, mowing the lawn.

Larry Dells, KC8KVR is simply having a great time being retired. He's "tired" of all the work he is trying to get done while summer is here. He also is tired of fighting one stubborn cold that won't go away. But he is still keeping busy with the Great Lakes Award. More now since CQ Magazine published an article on MARA's Great Lakes Award in their June issue. Larry has issued 23 awards since the article came out.

Wayne Dowling KB8VOZ and his wife are just taking it easy this summer after dealing with some health issues this past winter and spring.

Jim Cordes KI8JD is just plain busy, what with camping with his family and editing this newsletter, among other things he keeps busy with.

Eric Babcock, KC8WGI has moved to Denver with its promise of better employment. We just knew you a very short time, but a Big Thank

You Eric, for all that you've done. We'll be looking for Eric's return over the Holidays.

To see what the rest of our members have been up to, visit the MARA web site, WWW.W8USA.ORG and click on Field Day 2003.

Vanity Fees to Increase

The FCC has announced that the new Amateur Radio vanity call sign regulatory fee of \$16.30 for the 10-year license term will go into effect September 9. Until then, applicants for amateur vanity call signs will continue to pay the current \$14.50 fee per vanity call sign application.

Jim Spicer KB8OGT - SK

By Jim ki8jd

I was not a close friend of Jim's. He had never been to my house, and I had never been to his, not that I wasn't invited. In fact, Jim had an open invitation to anyone who wanted to come over and use his station. And quite a station it was. The Grand Rapids Press ran almost a whole-page article, complete with a station photo, about Jim and Amateur Radio. I cut out the article, and saved it, somewhere.

Jim was the kind of a guy who had a radio to cover almost every frequency, with most of them turned on. He would monitor several conversations at once. Even though he was plagued with health troubles in the later years, he spent as much time in the shack as his health would allow.

I first met Jim at GRARA's coffee-stop near Marne. I would also see him at the swaps. The last time I saw Jim was shortly after he had open-heart surgery, and shortly before he died. In spite of his condition, he had stopped by our Memorial Day coffee-stop to visit and lend his support. He always seemed like a generous fellow, offering to help in any way he could. These are the reasons why most of the hams in the Grand Rapids area knew Jim.

I know that he had served in many branches of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, etc.). I wish I had known him better, then I would be able to do him more justice in this article. God bless.

MARA's Field Day-2003

By Jim ki8jd

Most of the regulars met for the usual Saturday morning breakfast at Bono's restaurant. After a quick breakfast, many headed for the Field Day site, at the corner of 4-Mile and Fruitridge.

Occasional thunderstorms were blowing across the sky as we set up the trailers, radios, antennas, computers, and power system. Several times, we took shelter from the brief heavy rains. About ten minutes before the contest began, at about 1:50 PM, a heavy rainstorm suddenly became a heavy hailstorm, with hailstones around one half inch. The site had a panoramic view of the sky, but we weren't about to stick our heads out to study the cloud formations! Thankfully, there was no damage.

We soon began radio operation, and everything went smoothly, in spite of the lightning crashes, and other less-than-optimum band conditions. As the storms blew away, band conditions gradually improved, and operating became much more fun.

I started out running 40 meter CW from the club trailer with Gale's big Yaesu Mark 5, which was hooked to his 10 through 40 Carolina Windom. Being quite rusty, I soon relinquished the position to Jack, and he ran some 40 meter SSB. We scanned through 15 meters, but it was completely quiet. Before it was over, I ran much more CW on 40, and managed to raise my skill level considerably.

Louie ran 20 meter SSB throughout most of the 24-hour contest from Gale's blue utility trailer. He was using his Yaesu FT-920, a thrown-together 20 meter dipole, and at night, a broad-banded 80 meter dipole on SSB.

Over at Larry's camper, Dan was running 20 meter CW, with Larry's FT-920, and a coax-fed, random length dipole, which worked surprisingly well. I believe he also ran a little 80 meter CW at night, which wasn't really necessary, since 20 meters stayed open throughout the contest. Meanwhile, Larry was making some contacts on 2 meter SSB, using a small Yagi.

Jerry was busy preparing for dinner much of the afternoon, but still managed to make a boat-load of contacts at each of the stations. The annual Field Day potluck was well attended. The food was wonderful, and plentiful. By dinnertime, the weather couldn't have been better.

After dinner, I went home to grab a coax tee to replace the broken one in the middle of the broad-banded dipole. While home, I threw some cushions in the capped bed of my new pickup truck, for the inevitable nap.

Soon, the sun had set, and some mosquitoes came out. Everyone retreated to the trailers, and I decided to take that nap. As I waited for sleep, I was amazed at how loud the Berlin races were. Fireworks marked the end of the races, and I was soon asleep.

About 2:00 AM, I woke up feeling good. The sky was clear, and the view of the stars was great. Dan, Rich, and Louie were still operating on 20 meters. Larry was napping, and Jerry had left about an hour ago. By 2:30, we lost Louie and Rich to Morpheus.

I usually waste paper with my large printing and spacing. I was amused to find that while I was sleeping, the other guys had filled in around and between my pen scratching, on both sides of the sheet. There was plenty of paper, but they had over 200 contacts on that one sheet! Of course, we were entering all contacts into the computer as we went along.

The 40 meter station was idle, so I set to making contacts with the Pacific Coast. After traveling thousands of miles through the atmosphere, the signals had a surreal sound.

About 5:00 AM, I went to the comforts of home, and left Dan to operate by himself. By the time I returned to the site, I had missed Jerry's breakfast. Too bad, I'm sure it was tasty. Radio operation continued right up until 2:00 PM, when the contest ended.

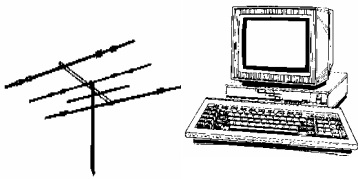
We are thankful to Steve for setting us up with his boss, George Hofacker, and to George for generously allowing us to use his land. They even mowed it for us!

Carl, and others, documented the event with their cameras. It was a relaxed, enjoyable event, and I'm sure a good time was had by all who were able to attend. 73 Jim ki8jd

GRAHamfest 2003

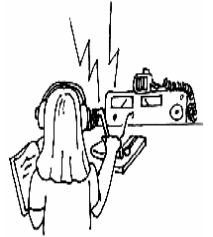
(Grand Rapids Area Hamfest)

Annual Electronics, Ham Radio, CB, Shortwave equipment,
and Computer, Swap Meet / Fleamarket—since 1947!



Grand Rapids, MI

Saturday, September 13, 2003



FOREST HILLS NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL

ARRL approved Amateur radio license exams, ARRL VEC, 10AM. Details at www.w8dc.org/ve.htm



Tickets \$5 at the door

not required of High School and younger students with valid student ID, or those only taking VE exams.

Indoor 8 foot length reserved tables \$10 ea*

Outside “trunk” spaces no extra charge.

Plenty of non-reserve indoor 5 ft round tables available, \$5 ea, on a first come / first claim basis.

Inquiries: hamfest@w8dc.org

OR : Ed Novakowski N8UXN (616) 458-9029

*Table reservation and payment **required by Sept 3**, with check payable to GRARA, PO Box 3282 Grand Rapids, MI 49501-3282

**LOCATION: 3801 LEONARD NE
FOREST HILLS NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL
CLOSE TO EXPRESSWAY AND CITY**
Approximately 1 mile from FREDERIK MEIJER GARDENS

8:00AM until it's over

usually about noon

Seller setup Friday 6PM or “when the facility becomes available” to 10, Saturday 6AM.

Self contained, Friday night parking permitted, no hook ups. Please observe this facility typically sponsors Friday evening activities that may cause some inconvenience for those camped overnight.

Talk-in 147.26+(94.8Hz) or 146.52 simplex

For updates, maps, written directions, and other information, please visit <http://www.w8dc.org/swap.htm>

Sponsored by



Locate that new or used equipment and elusive items you've been hunting for. Sell or trade your excess equipment.

EXHIBITORS from recent swaps:



DENTRONICS

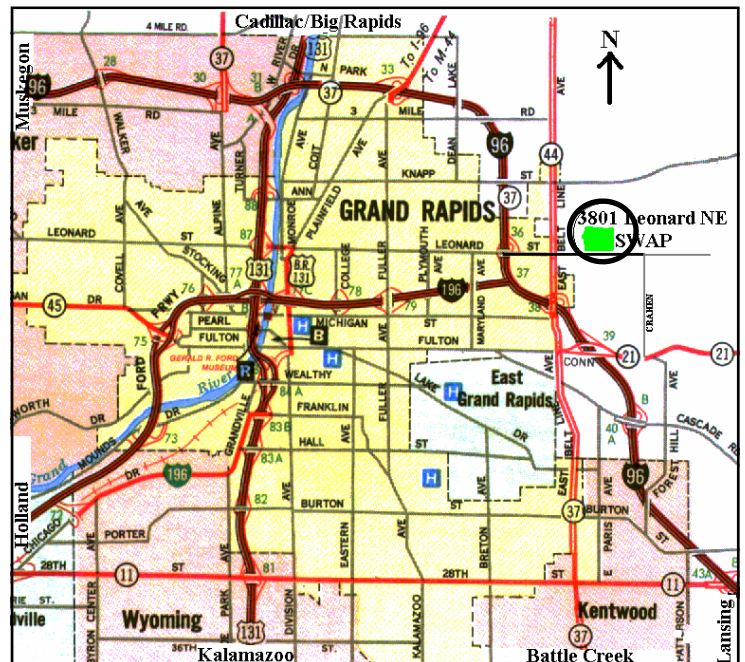


J&M
NOVELTIES

Q-STICK antenna ARRL RadioShack

PROSOFT PLUS

EAST COAST RADIO J&B CB SHOP
THE COAX CONNECTION QUEEN INK
TOWER ELECTRONICS



Kent and Ottawa County Repeater List As of August 2003

Reprinted by permission of MIARC

County	City	Output	Call	PL	Sponsor
Kent	Cedar Springs	52.720	NW8J	136.5	NW8J
Kent	Cedar Springs	146.880	NW8J	141.3	NW8J
Kent	Cedar Springs	224.140	NW8J	167.9	NW8J
Kent	Cedar Springs	443.075	NW8J	94.8	NW8J
Kent	Grand Rapids	52.760	W8DC		GRARA
Kent	Grand Rapids	145.110	NW8J	94.8	KCE Mngt
Kent	Grand Rapids	145.230	W8USA	94.8	MARA
Kent	Grand Rapids	146.760	W8DC		GRARA
Kent	Grand Rapids	147.160	W8HVG		IRA
Kent	Grand Rapids	147.260	W8DC	94.8	GRARA
Kent	Grand Rapids	224.440	WB8VOJ		IRA
Kent	Grand Rapids	224.640	W8DC		GRARA
Kent	Grand Rapids	224.760	WD8KXA		WD8KXA
Kent	Grand Rapids	224.880	K8SG		K8SG
Kent	Grand Rapids	421.250	K8DMR		K8DMR
Kent	Grand Rapids	442.000	K8EFK	141.3	K8EFK
Kent	Grand Rapids	443.800	KA8YSM	94.8	IRA
Kent	Grand Rapids	444.100	N8NET		N8NET
Kent	Grand Rapids	444.400	K8EX		GRARA
Kent	Grand Rapids	444.625	KD8CP	94.8	KD8CP
Kent	Grand Rapids	444.900	K8IHY	94.8	K8IHY
Kent	Lowell	145.270	W8LRC	94.8	LARC
Kent	Rockford	52.600	K8KWD	114.8	K8KWD
Kent	Rockford	442.075	K8KWD	114.8	K8KWD
Kent	Sparta	444.775	AB8MS	94.8	AB8MS
Ottawa	Grand Haven	145.490	W8CSO	94.8	NOARC
Ottawa	Grand Haven	443.775	W8GVK	94.8	W8GVK
Ottawa	Holland	146.500	K8DAA	94.8	HARC
Ottawa	Holland	147.060	K8DAA	94.8	HARC
Ottawa	Holland	443.825	K8DAA	94.8	HARC

Please note: this list contains only those repeaters which were listed as being "OPEN" for general access. While this list is current as of August 2003, some of the repeaters may be operating in a downgraded capacity due to either upgrading their systems or performing maintenance on the system itself.

The Considerate Repeater's use guide

1. Always listen before making a call-you could be right in the middle of a conversation and not know it.
2. Listen to the conversation that is in progress before joining. Can you add anything meaningful to the conversation?
3. Remember to always give your call sign:
 - A. when making a call
 - B. every 10 minutes & at the end of the QSO
 - C. whenever you access any repeater's functions

Repeaters can be a great place to meet other Hams and enjoy our hobby.