

The Open Feed Line

A Publication of the Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance (MARA)

Volume 16, Issue 2 - Friendship, Community Service & Advancement of the Hobby - April-June 2007

Operation C.A.R.E., our 12th year

By Richie K8JX



It's hard to imagine that it's been 12 years since our club first started holding Operation Care. The year was 1995 when Bill N8VWI and Connie N8WKQ helped introduced us to the C.A.R.E. program. The Combined Accident Reduction Effort was created back in 1977 to help make the highways safer during holiday traveling, by serving hot coffee and cookies to weary and tired motorists. While providing a public service, the greatest gift was meeting all of the wonderful motorists.

We hope that by also setting up an Amateur Radio station, we have in some measure helped get people interested in our great hobby. This is a great way to provide a public service and also promote Amateur Radio.

IRA Swap on June 2, 2007

By Jim ki8jd

Well, Dayton has come and went, but West Michigan's largest Hamfest will be held at the Hudsonville Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 2. Look for a flyer towards the rear of this newsletter, and look for MARA's table at the swap. There's more good stuff on page 4 & 5.

Field Day 2006

By Mike K80OK



Field Day 2007 is going to be held on June 23 and 24. Mike K80OK is returning as Field Day chairman and said that at this time we can use lots of operators and perhaps a few more rigs. This is that special time of the year when we get out of our shacks and operate for 24 hours straight. The antennas will be strung, the keys and mikes will be cleaned and the logbooks will be ready.

We'll be setting up in the afternoon and starting when the event is scheduled to begin. "Never been to one?" We start by stringing up the antenna's and getting all the gear up and running. We look forward to having a nice meal cooked outside, while talking about how the contest is going. We start working throughout the night and are greeted in the morning by a nice cooked breakfast. We end the event by tearing everything down, and starting the planning for next year's Field Day. It's a fun time for all.

Editor's note; please see page 3 for more information on Field Day 2007.

The Open Feed Line

The Open Feed Line is published quarterly. It is the official journal of the Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance, or MARA for short.

MARA, 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.

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.

Everybody is encouraged to submit original articles on topics relevant to the hobby of Amateur Radio to the editor. The deadline for submission is the end of January, April, July, and October, and the newsletter will be published within the following month.

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Membership Information

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 31st, and club dues are due on January 1st. MARA membership is open to all interested persons.

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
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P.O.Box 670
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* Some of these positions become open occasionally. If you'd like to volunteer, contact one of the board members and let them know what your interested in. *

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.

Field Day 2007

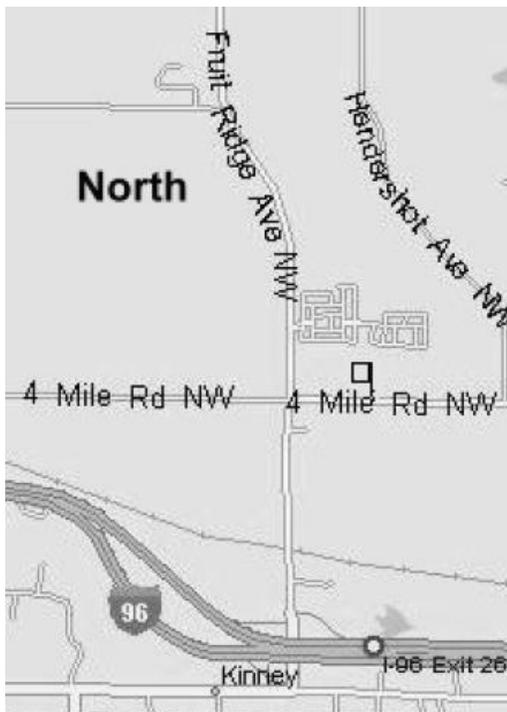
By Rich K8JX

Below is a map showing how to get to our Field Day site on the corner of 4-Mile Road and Fruitridge Ave NW.

Take I-96 west to the 2nd exit past Alpine Ave. This is the Fruitridge exit. Go north (take a right) on Fruitridge Ave. about 3/4 mile to 4-Mile Road. Take a right on 4-Mile and a left into the first drive.

If you have any problems, give the Field Day site a call on the W8USA repeater, 145.230Mhz.

We would like to thank George Hofacker Lawn and Garden Equipment for letting us use their land.



Club News

By Richie K8JX

At the last club meeting, our Membership Director, Mike K8OOK, told us how he was going to try and get new members. We just put together an informative pamphlet telling what our club is like. Mike said he's going to look for new Ham Call license plates and leave one of our pamphlets on their car. We'll also make them available at local ham swaps and during our weekend breakfasts. If you have any ideas you'd like to share with how to get new members, please contact Mike and let him know of your ideas.

Talking about weekend Breakfast, we've changed our restaurant. We're now trying The Breakfast Nook, located on the corner of Fuller NE and Plainfield Avenue. We meet at 9AM. Come and join us.

Our repeater trustee, Rich K8JX, with the help of Larry KC8KVR, increased the power of our repeater to 125 watts. This should help the folks who like to use their hand-talkies. Rich also updated the repeater's controller with the latest firmware. This corrects many little bugs but mainly allows the set time function to work through the receiver.

Report all signal reports and your experience using our repeater to our trustee, Rich, k8jx.

HEART ATTACK CITY

By Mike K800K

I was in the shack the other day monitoring one of the DX clusters. Up pops a spot for 9N7JO, Nepal on 20 SSB. Holy crap, that is my last country. It is the bottom of the sunspot cycle, will I hear him? I check out the freq and there he is, QRZing USA and Canada. Holy crap, where is my antenna pointed - OK. What band is my amp tuned up on? Holy crap, wrong band! My heart is racing, my hands shaking as I tune up the amp. I starting calling. Oh, oh, he is only calling stations with a 6 or 7 in the call. Finally, he switches to calls with 8 or 9's. I start calling again. A big strong signal comes on freq and says "K8, he is working split." Holy crap, my 2nd VFO is way up the band and tunes very slowly. Finally it is on the listening freq where 9N7JO is listening. The pile-up is huge and I call and call. Darkness is over taking Nepal and he says he can no longer hear North America, but---- I still hear him. He now QRZed's anybody, anywhere. The floodgates from Europe, which is much closer, are opened and NA doesn't have chance.

Nepal is not my last country but it is the last country that has a resident active operator. All the other countries that I need are islands or countries where operations are very restrictive if even allowed such as North Korea and Yemen. 9N7JO is Stig who is a Norwegian who works for some international organization and spends much time in Nepal. In this operation, a European was a guest operator from Stig's station.

No, I missed the contact. But when was the last time something in Ham Radio really got your heart racing??? The motto of die-hard DXers is simply "DX is"!!!!

MDXA Summer Events

By Chuck W8VOM

Once again the Michigan DX Association will be activating the Gerald "Our" Ford Museum on Saturday July 14th. This has become a tradition and we are proud to celebrate the life and achievements of President Ford. Listen for our club call W8DXI on 10-15-20 and 40 meters.

On Sunday, August 18th, the Michigan DX Association will activate the historical and beautiful White River Lighthouse near Montague, Michigan. This activation coincides with the International Lighthouse/Lightship Weekend. Listen for W8DXI on 10-15-20 and 40 meters.

Our Web site

By Richie K8JX

In keeping with our clubs program to get new members into our club, the web maintainer has decided to "update" a few areas, so it will better represent what we're doing now. A question was raised on why any web site should be changed. I can only think of two.

1. When the club has changed what it is doing and really needs to let the public know they're a different club.

2. To update the various presentational areas so they are current. How many times have you visited a web site, only to find out they haven't updated their site or information for years! That won't happen with our site.

The security issue has been addressed and we have not received any complaints. If you see anything on the web site, or believe somebody got information about you from our site, please let me know and I'll resolve the problem.

The Prez's two bits

By Richie K8JX

I can't believe it's almost 6 months since I became president. I had a lot of ideas I wanted to try out in getting new members in this club. We need to start sharing the fun we're having with new folks, so they can add their excitement and bring new life into our club. Our membership chairman Mike K8OOK is already fast at work with searching out new members and letting them know what we're about. We all can participate with this effort, by simply letting your new friends and old ones know what we at Mara are about. As Mike has pointed out, let's not forget the past members. We can invite them to our club meetings and also to participate in one of the many events we hold.

Of course, with the line up of this year's activity, who wouldn't want to join our club? This is our summer season and in it, we can look forward to the I.R.A.'s swapfest, followed in three weeks by Field Day 2007. We also have our end of summer picnic in August, where we all bring a dish to pass and celebrate the summer. We then get ready for our fall by holding the Labor Day Coffee stop and then, The Veterans special event station.

We do have a full year.

As was noted in another article in this newsletter, Mara has been involved with project C.A.R.E. for 12 years. That's a testimonial to the commitment the members of this club are willing to put forth each summer. It's not easy giving up your Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day weekend. But for 12 years, that's exactly what our members and friends of project C.A.R.E. have done. That's simply astonishing. It would be nice if we could find folks willing to pick up the ball on this and give the others a well-deserved rest.

But in order to do that, we need new members willing to get involved. (Of which this club is very Blessed!)

Bring your ideas and suggestions to the next club meeting.

I did have a lot of ideas I wanted to present to you earlier this year. But life had a different path for me to walk. I want to take this time to once again thank all of you for your prayers, well wishes and just everything you did after my brother died very suddenly last February 15th. YOU made all the difference in the world in helping me get through this painful time. Thank you all+++

See you all this coming summer!

Fund Generation Committee

By Richie K8JX

Wayne KB8VOZ and Rich K8JX are searching for alternative sources of funding for our club's operation. If any of you have an idea, please share it with either Wayne or Rich. So far, we've looked at everything from selling Christmas trees to selling Mara merchandise. (Coffee mugs, shirts, jackets).

The Repeater

By Richie K8JX

The Repeater site seems to be in pretty good condition after the winter. Larry KC8KVR said he is going to spray the site for weed control when the weather cooperates with him. He needs a couple of good non-rainy days. Our trustee Rich K8JX is going to check and see what is the status of our request for a UHF repeater pair. We will have to determine if we still wish to construct this machine. If anybody has listened lately to all of the GR repeaters, they will notice the decreased usage. There will be more at the next meeting.

Regulation by Bandwidth?

By Jim ki8jd

Recently, there has been controversy about some petitions to regulate our bands by bandwidth instead of by mode.

I would like to offer you a definitive answer on whether or not this should be done, and if done, how it should be done. Unfortunately, the issue is so complex that I do not feel qualified to make such statements. Instead, I will offer you a few observations and opinions.

First, there is a language problem. If I say, "incentive licensing", it will mean different things to different people. Some people will think back to a change that occurred years ago that was called "Incentive Licensing." With this change, some people lost operating privileges, and as a result, they will have a negative view of incentive licensing until the day they die. But what it really means is that you receive a higher license class as a reward for upgrading your skills and knowledge. The higher license class, with increased privileges, is your "incentive" to upgrade your skills and knowledge.

The term "digital", as understood by amateurs, also has many different meanings. Some people will think of the very efficient PSK31, while others will think of Pactor3 or digital voice, which require much larger amounts of spectrum.

The same can be said for "Regulation by Bandwidth." In effect, our radio emissions are already regulated by bandwidth. Narrow modes such as CW and PSK31 get exclusive use of small areas of the spectrum, and the wider modes get large areas of spectrum. The term "Regulation by Bandwidth" could mean many different things depending upon how the plan was written.

"Regulation by Bandwidth" could encourage efficient use of the available spectrum by setting aside large amounts of

spectrum for narrow bandwidth modes (many of which could be developed in the future), or it could worsen the crowding and chaos by allowing bandwidth-hogging modes and e-mail robots to run rampant across our bands.

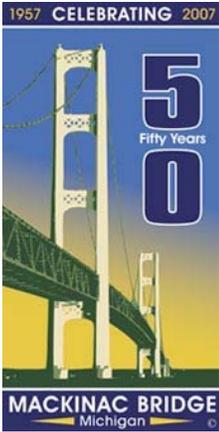
Part of the recent petition for rulemaking (RM-11306) would have allowed wide digital signals (100,000 Hz) on 2-meters. When you consider that PSK31 occupies about 50 Hz, CW about 100 Hz, SSB about 3000 Hz, AM about 6000 Hz, and FM about 15,000 Hz, I think you will agree that 100,000 Hz signals on 2-meters would be just plain ridiculous. The only way it would have made sense would be if they were talking about spread-spectrum, but if they were, they should have said so. Instead of encouraging future technology to develop more efficient use of spectrum, this plan would have encouraged spectrum-wasting technology.

Let's take a quick look at some new technology, namely digital voice. One type of digital voice is the D-Star technology. As I understand it, D-Star delivers FM quality, but requires less bandwidth than FM. Now, that's the direction we want to be heading!

Unfortunately, there seems to be a powerful and vocal minority of hams who want to encourage high data rate modes, which use huge amounts of spectrum in already crowded bands. They seem to want a broadband internet connection over amateur HF frequencies, so that they can e-mail huge file attachments. People, we cannot afford this luxury! Our HF bands are too crowded now. We need narrower modes, not wider ones.

Some people even think that there should be no frequency restrictions on any mode or bandwidth. They want to rely on "gentlemen's agreements."

Continued on page 7



50th Anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge - Special Event Alert!

St. Ignace, Michigan. May 3 – for immediate release. Contact Diane Scalzi, WI8K, 586-337-5226, wi8k@arrl.net.

Amateur radio clubs and individual hams across Michigan are invited to get involved in this once-in-a-lifetime celebration of the single symbol of Michigan best-known around the world.

This very exciting special event will be on the air from 2:00 to 9:00 on Friday July 27 and 10:00 am to 9:00 pm on Saturday July 28. We are looking for operators (of any class), loggers and people to work the public contact stations. Volunteers are needed beforehand to create signage and visitor-oriented exhibits, help locate or provide site equipment (tents, tables, chairs, desk lamps, etc.) and tend to the hundreds of details needed to make this event successful.

Please check your schedules and mark these dates. If you think you'd like to work at the event, **please tell us now** so we can plan for antennas and rigs and operating shifts.

We encourage clubs to send up "squads" of two people to take a shift as an operator/logger team. Individuals are welcome to book in for open shifts.

The event station will be located at Bridge View Park at the St. Ignace end of the bridge, right behind (and west of) the State Police post.

Event sign-up, pointers to the overall celebration and more technical details about the event operations design are here:

<http://www.macbridge50.info>

Time to get on board! This event says "Michigan" and is one of the most natural themes imaginable for celebrating our state. This is a great time to bring the grandkids and younger hams in for a great shared experience. Check your calendars, check the website and just do it.

Celebration logo used by permission of the Mackinac Bridge Authority

Regulation by Bandwidth?

Continued from page 6

They point to 160 meters as an example. Even though there is no law preventing SSB below 1.840 MHz, you never hear SSB down there. The "gentlemen's agreements" work just fine on 160 meters. However, 160 meter is not crowded due to the fact that many hams either cannot get an antenna up for 160, or they believe that they can't. So 160 meters is really not a good example. These people are twisting the facts to further their agenda. There's not much worse than intelligent people who use true facts to mislead the masses. Luckily, the ham radio masses are also an intelligent group, and not so easily misled.

They have withdrawn this petition for now, due to overwhelming opposition, but you can be sure that it will be back like a bad penny.

They seem to think that we don't understand what they are trying to do. They seem to think that we need an explanation, and then we will agree with them. I don't like food with botulism in it, and no amount of explanation or education is going to change my mind. And giving it a nice name isn't going to do it either.

Just my opinion,
Jim ki8jd

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

I.R.A. ANNUAL HAMFESTIVAL

West Michigan's Largest
Hamfest & Computer Fair

Saturday, June 2, 2007.....8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Convenient location with great facilities at the spacious
Hudsonville Fairgrounds. It's bigger and better every year!
14 miles west of Grand Rapids, two miles north of I-196 exit 62.

HUGE INDOOR FACILITIES with CONVENIENT ACCESS and FREE PARKING.
OVER 22,000 SQUARE-FEET INDOORS, 8' tables for sellers and dealers, \$8 ea.
Friday night set-up available after 7 P.M. or 6:00 A.M. start on Saturday.
Trunk sales spaces, 10' @ \$6 ea. CAMPING available, \$10 fee. Showers and electricity available for
camping. Plenty of electrical outlets available inside and outdoors. Camping, table and space rental
not an admission to Hamfest; tickets are required.
All reservations with SASE please. Reservations held until 8 A.M. Saturday.
Food and drinks available in comfortable indoor sit-down eating facilities.
Children under 12 years admitted free accompanying an adult.
Handicapped parking and access provided.

- FAMOUS "ROADKILL-CHILI" POTLUCK FRIDAY EVENING

Bring a dish to pass and join-in the fun @ 7:00 P.M. after helping with setup.
Have fun camping. Hamfest tickets will be available for purchase. Prizes.

- FOUR MAJOR PRIZES PLUS DOZENS MORE!

**- VINTAGE EQUIPMENT AND
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY EXHIBITS**

- MICHIGAN - FLORIDA HAMS - 9 A.M.

- W. MICH. TRAFFIC NET FORUM - 9:30 A.M.

- VE AMATEUR EXAMS - 10:30 A.M. START
All walk-ins. Technician, General and Extra Class. Please bring
original and a copy of your license, any C.S.C.E.'s with some
form of photo ID and a check made out to "ARRL / VEC".

- MICH. REPEATER COUNCIL QUARTERLY MTG. - 1 P.M.

**DEALERS: BRING YOUR
HAM EQUIPMENT, COAX,
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SOFTWARE, ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
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JEWELRY, SWEAT-SHIRTS, CAPS, ETC,
TO SELL.....BE THERE!**

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**COMPUTER HOBBYISTS:
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OR SELL.....BE THERE!**

Write for table reservations to:
Independent Rptr. Assoc., Inc.
562 92nd Street S.E.
Byron Center, MI 49315

TICKETS: \$6.00 ea.
Tables: \$8.00 ea.
10' Trunk spaces: \$6.00 ea.
Camping fee: \$10.00

INFO: Call Kathy at (616) 698-6627 after
4 P.M. (E.D.S.T.) for info / reservations.
Check out the IRA Web-site at:
www.w8hvg.org for more info.

TALK-IN ON 147.16 LINK-SYSTEM