

# The Open Feed Line

A Publication of the Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance (MARA)

Volume 16, Issue 3 - Friendship, Community Service & Advancement of the Hobby - July-Sept 2007

## The Fox Hunt



The 13<sup>th</sup> Fox Hunt was held on August 4, 2007. The Foxes were Larry KC8KVR and Peg. The hunters were Mike K8OOK and Nancy N8IPG and the team of Bruce WD8KPQ and Char WD8LGN. After a hunt of 1½ hours, Char and Bruce discovered the Foxes, hiding near White Pine Access Park, off of Packer Drive in Belmont, MI. Bruce and Char are planning on holding another, last of the season hunt, sometime in late September or early October. Stay tuned for details.

After the Hunt, all of the contestants headed over to the Picnic where one of the topics of discussion was which antenna is best suited for Fox Hunting. Give Fox Hunting a try. You don't have to have elaborate equipment, just some sort of directional antenna and a map and compass.

## GRAHamfest Swap September 8, 2007

*By Jim ki8jd*

It's almost fall, and with it, comes the Grand Rapids Area Hamfest (GRAHamfest). Look on page 8 for the details. See you there!

## MARA's Annual End of Summer Picnic 2007



(Above, from the rear, left to right, Jim KI8JD, behind the post, John NF8P, Gale N8GS, Larry KC8KVR. Front, Peg Dells and Donna)

Once a year, we celebrate the end of summer by holding a picnic. Since we first started holding them, we've had them at Larry KC8KVR and Peg Dells' house on the Grand River. I guess it must be a food thing, because we sure know how to lay out a spread of goodies. Our chefs prepared cheesy potatoes, German potato salad, "Gale's special, really hot Salsa", onion wraps, pickle wraps, Fruit and BBQ's. For desert, we had to choose between Lemon cake, apple crisps, fruit and cake. So much for dieting. Not tonight!

At this gathering, we had Wayne KB8VOZ and Marian, Bruce WD8KPQ and Char WD8LGN, Nancy N8IPG and Mike K8OOK, Jerry W8MSK and Irene, Gale N8GS and Donna, John NF8P, Jim KI8JD, Rich K8JX, Steve K8LOI and Sandy K8LOJ and of course, our gracious hosts, Peg and Larry Dell's, KC8KVR.

## ***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.

### ***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](mailto:w8usa@arrl.net)

### ***Editor***

James M Cordes KI8JD  
1235 Morgan NW  
Grand Rapids MI 49504  
616-459-1195 or 459-5415  
E-mail- [jamescordes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jamescordes@sbcglobal.net)

### ***Editor's Assistant***

Richard M. Ranta K8JX  
812 Graceland NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
E-mail- [rranta@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rranta@sbcglobal.net)

### ***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 31<sup>st</sup>, and club dues are due on January 1<sup>st</sup>. 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  
Larry Dells KC8KVR c/o  
MARA  
P.O.Box 670  
Comstock Park MI 49321-0670  
E-mail- [LLDGRD@netscape.net](mailto:LLDGRD@netscape.net)

## **MARA Club Officers**

### **President**

Richard M. Ranta K8JX  
812 Graceland NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49505  
616-361-5975  
[K8JX@MIARTS.ORG](mailto:K8JX@MIARTS.ORG)

### **Vice President**

Wayne Dowling KB8VOZ  
2442 W Collier Ave  
Kentwood MI 49546  
616-957-4641  
[waynedowl@realeasynet.com](mailto:waynedowl@realeasynet.com)

### **Secretary**

Char Reffeor WD8LGN  
718 Ridgefield Dr  
Coopersville MI 49404  
616-837-8895  
[REFBC@verizon.net](mailto:REFBC@verizon.net)

### **Treasurer**

Jerry Wittkoski W8MSK  
1025 Kendalwood St. NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49505  
616-363-6146  
[jeromeW551@aol.com](mailto:jeromeW551@aol.com)

## **Appointed Positions**

### **Awards Manager**

Larry Dells KC8KVR  
4317 Willow Dr. NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49525  
616-363-8235  
[LLDGRD@netscape.net](mailto:LLDGRD@netscape.net)

### **Club Trustee**

Richard M. Ranta K8JX  
812 Graceland NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49505  
616-361-5975  
[K8JX@MIARTS.ORG](mailto:K8JX@MIARTS.ORG)

### **Membership Director**

Mike Eilers K8OOK  
3565 4-Mile Rd. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
616-363-4998  
[K8OOK@comcast.net](mailto:K8OOK@comcast.net)

### **Education Director**

James Cordes KI8JD  
1235 Morgan NW  
Grand Rapids MI 49504  
616-459-1195 or 459-5415  
[jamescordes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jamescordes@sbcglobal.net)

### **Bereavement Director**

Jerry Wittkoski W8MSK  
1025 Kendalwood St. NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49505  
616-363-6146  
[jeromeW551@aol.com](mailto:jeromeW551@aol.com)

### **Field Day Chairperson**

Mike Eilers K8OOK  
3565 4-Mile Rd. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
616-363-4998  
[k8ook@comcast.net](mailto:k8ook@comcast.net)

### **Operation Care**

#### **Chairperson**

Richard Ranta K8JX  
812 Graceland NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49505  
616-361-5975  
[K8JX@MIARTS.ORG](mailto:K8JX@MIARTS.ORG)

### **Net Directors**

Char & Bruce Reffeor  
WD8LGN & WD8KPK  
718 Ridgefield DR  
Coopersville MI 49404  
616-837-8895  
[REFBC@verizon.net](mailto:REFBC@verizon.net)

### **Webmaster -- Richard M. Ranta K8JX**

812 Graceland NE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49505 616-361-5975  
[K8JX@MIARTS.ORG](mailto:K8JX@MIARTS.ORG)

\* 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.

## John Wittmann WK8X S.K.



John Wittmann, WK8X, formerly WA8CTC, passed away at the VA hospital in West Palm Beach Florida, Wednesday August 29th at 8:15 am.

John had been involved with ham radio in the Grand Rapids area for a long time. He had one of the first repeaters in the Grand Rapids area, located at his house on Lexington St NW. John always had a fascination with electronics and communications. He had his own paging company and also worked for several local companies as well as the Grand Rapids Police department. He also served as Volunteer Exam leader for the local VE exam sessions held at the American Red Cross building.

I'll always remember the first time I met John. He was wearing tails and a top hat. He was the doorman at the Castle Restaurant downtown, of which he was part owner. He came over to introduce himself to a fellow ham.

There will be a memorial open house at the Kopper Top in West Grand Rapids on September 12th.

(The above information was provided by Vic, K8VIC, John's good friend)

## Glendard Walker S.K.

*By Rich K8JX*



(Glen at the Coldbrook tower site just before he installed our new antenna)

Glenard F. Walker "The Tower Man" of Cadillac, passed away at his home on July 3, 2007 after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 74.

He was self-employed and owned Glen's Tower Service of East Cadillac. At the age of 74 he had climbed as high as 1,370 feet and had serviced over 200 towers.

He donated many hours to the Wexford-Missaukee Radio Club.

Glen, while not a licensed ham, has touched the lives of just about every ham in Michigan. He's the one the W8HVG Link system hired to do tower work on the link system, when they needed an expert. Other ham radio clubs also called the Tower Man, when they needed professional work done. Installing antennas, changing aircraft warning lights, and stringing coax. We at Mara got the pleasure of seeing this professional man at work when he installed our new antenna. Glen made the work look easy! He was a true professional and a great friend. He will be missed.

(The above information was reprinted with permission of the Cadillac News, Matthew Seward Managing Editor  
Cadillac News  
Trusted. Local. Connected.  
130 N. Mitchell  
Cadillac, MI 49601)

## The Prez's Two Bits

*By Rich K8JX*

It doesn't seem possible that I'm writing this during the last few hours of Operation Care Coffee Stop, Labor Day weekend. I also had the joy of participating in Operation care this weekend not only with scheduling and keeping the sign up sheet current, but in actually going out and meeting the traveling people. It was that experience that reminded me that while we may have started out to increase our treasury with the Operation care, that has taken a back seat to what this is really about. To greet tired motorists, as they take a break from trying to avoid the construction cones and construction equipment, and serve hot coffee and cookies, to help them get home safe, is what its about. It's also hard to believe that this is our 12<sup>th</sup> year participating in Operation care. I hope we have a long future together.

It's amazing to me where our club members have taken and developed this club. From a simple 'get a license and upgrade club', to being involved with just about every facet of Amateur Radio. Thank you all for allowing me the privilege of being involved with you.

Now I think we should all go out and enjoy this beautiful weekend.

## Local Radio Store Closes

*By Jim ki8jd*

I heard that Communications Electronic Supply closed, so I stopped by to make sure. We advertised the business twice while it was open, but it's gone now. Their web site is still there, but no further information is available at this time.

## Gerald R. Ford Museum Special Event

*By Jim ki8jd*

The MDXA sponsored a Special Event down at the Gerald R. Ford Museum on the late President's birthday. There was a VHF station set up, and also a HF station. We operated for a few hours, and made quite a few contacts around the country. Band conditions weren't great, of course, but we operated on several bands, so many of the Special Event enthusiasts were able to make the contact.

The people who work at the museum were very nice, and accommodating. They let us set up on the patio, only about 100 feet from the tomb. It was raining in the morning, but by noon, it had turned into a beautiful day. So all in all, it was very enjoyable.

The station was a Yaesu FT 840, a MFJ 969 tuner, about 100 feet of ladder line, and a homebrew 33-foot vertical with counterpoise, mounted in an under-tire antenna mount.

## Veteran's Day Special Event

*By Jim ki8jd*

And speaking of Special Events--- MARA's annual Veteran's Day Special Event is coming up. I really don't have all the details, but I expect it to be on November 11<sup>th</sup>, which is a Sunday this year. This will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> year for this event, which is held at the Veteran's Home on Monroe Avenue.

Forty meters was very cooperative last year, and many contacts were made. Stay tuned for more information about this event.

## Attention Dxers

*By Mike K8OOK*

I have been noticing for quite sometime on the DX clusters, spots of Russian stations showing what looked like grid squares. But the numbers did not match grid square maps and some show RDA in front of the numbers. I researched RDA and found out that it is the Russian version of our county award. It stands for Russian Districts Award. There are 2745 districts (counties) in 89 oblasts (similar to our states, I guess). I went through 10 years of logs starting on 12June91, the start date of the award. Found out that I had sent 422 QSL cards to Russia, mainly through the bureau system and only received 184 cards back. That is a measly 43.6%. Of the cards I have checked, less than half show their RDA. So unless I can find a website to look up RDAs, it will be many hours at the library looking up their districts just to confirm 100 districts for the basic award. Have you worked all of Switzerland's cantons yet???

## Pillars of Society Award

*By Chuck W8VOM*

The Michigan DX Association is pleased to announce this year's winner of the Amateur Radio Pillars of Society Award! By unanimous decision, the award goes to Samuel T. Nabkey - K8SN. Sam has dedicated many years to advancing emergency communications in the greater West Michigan area. His work is greatly appreciated by all of us and we wish to say 'Thank You' for a job well done!

## Club News

*By Rich K8JX*

September always brings not only cooler temperatures, but also the end of our busy season. May, June, July and August always keep us on our toes. But this year, with the goofy 4<sup>th</sup> of July and members having other commitments, we only held the Operation

*(Continued next column)*

*(Continued from previous column)*

Care coffee stop on Labor Day. It's time we looked for another way to increase our treasury without taking such a toll on our members. Hey folks, we're older, if you hadn't noticed. And it's time we found some way that is easier to perform a public service and also provide an opportunity to support our treasury. We already have a committee appointed and if you have any suggestions please let them know. Contact either Wayne KB8VOZ or Rich K8JX. They're busy searching for alternative ways other than giving up our whole summer holidays. Let's pull our thinking hats down on this one.

Larry KC8KVR, our Special Events Chairman, has suggested a new certificate to honor the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. We talked about perhaps even trying to get it printed in color. The Veterans special event will take place on November 11, 2007. Watch for more information, as it becomes available.

Once again, we're talking about having special coffee mugs made with the club's logo and each individual's callsign put on them. There are several companies that do this kind of work, but they're just a tad too expensive. We'll present more information at the September club meeting.

It wasn't that long ago that we used to put on Morse code lessons on our repeater. Now, since the code has been dropped, not much has been said about holding a class. We have heard from several members about holding an extra class theory class. If you're interested in participating in a class, please tell any of the board members, or our Education chairman, Jim K18JD. Nothing has gotten beyond the talking stage now, but if there is sufficient interest, we'll try to do it.

If you have any ideas that might help to get other hams interested in joining our club, please let Mike K8OOK, our membership director know. Our aim is to have fun and meet new friends.

# GRAHamfest 2007

Saturday, September 8

(an ARRL Approved Hamfest)

Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Amateur Radio Association

Electronic, Ham Radio, CB equipment, scanner, satellite, & Computer swap  
Inside and outside sales. Open to the public, buy and sell, everyone welcome.

Setup Friday evening 6-10PM, Saturday 6AM

Friday evening potluck, 7PM, King Memorial Building

VE Exams, Saturday, 10AM

General Admission at 8:00 AM "until it ends" usually about 1PM.

Tickets \$6 sold at the door, FREE for K-12 students.

Ticket not required for those only taking VE exams.

Where: Kent County Fairgrounds, 225 S. Hudson St., Lowell, Michigan 49331  
Talk-in 147.26+(94.8Hz) and 146.52 simplex.

Contact Person: Jack Amelar NY8D for additional information or advance table sales/reservations. Phone evenings (616)897-6885 or see <http://www.w8dc.org> for more details.

Indoor 8-foot tables \$10 each. Electric available no extra charge. The deadline for guaranteed reservations with payment is September 4, of course, earlier is better!

Mail paid reservations to: GRARA, P.O. Box 3282, Grand Rapids. MI 49501-3282

Outside "trunk" non-reserve spaces no extra charge (ticket required).

VE Amateur radio license exams, ARRL/VEC Exams begin at 10AM, register on site. Check for \$14.00 should be made payable to ARRL/VEC. A hamfest ticket purchase is not required for taking exams. More information at: <http://www.w8dc.org/ve.htm>

CAMPING. Plenty of Overnight camping with showers available for \$10 rustic, \$15 with electric/water. Come on out Friday, if you have a camper or tent, stay the night.

FRIDAY NIGHT POTLUCK, 7PM. Bring a dish to pass. Beverages, cups, plates, and plasticware supplied

Commercial Exhibitors from recent swaps; ComDac (succeeded by ELMER'S HAM SHACK), DC ACE ELECTRONICS, INC, PROSOFT PLUS, K1CRA RADIO STORE, CQ ANTENNA, B&D SALES, GREG ALLINGER-HATS, J&B CB Shop, COMMUNICATION ELECTRONICS SUPPLY

Commercial Exhibitors! No premium charged for wall tables or electric. Wall tables will be assigned only to commercial exhibitors until August 15, after which remaining will be available to the general public.

Clubs and non-profit organizations related to the theme of this show: as in the past, we offer one free table in "club row". (Write "Club Table" in the amount column on the reservation form, add \$10 for each additional table).

ACCOMMODATIONS: Motels are located in the Cascade/Kentwood, SE Grand Rapids area near I-96 exit #46, about 13 miles from the fairgrounds, and Ionia, in city, and near I-96 exit #67, about 19 miles from the fairgrounds. For the Cascade/Kentwood motels, visit "Visit Grand Rapids.org" Airport 28th Street Area Hotels. The Ionia motels: In city; Amerihost Inn, and near I-96; Super 8 Motel. There is a Bed and Breakfast in the Lowell area, McGee Homestead Bed & Breakfast about 6 miles north of the fairgrounds.