

The Open Feed Line

A Publication of the Michigan Amateur Radio Alliance (MARA)

Volume 16, Issue 4 - Friendship, Community Service & Advancement of the Hobby - Oct-Dec - 2007

Grand Rapids Home for Veterans Special Event

By Richie K8JX



On November 11th, with the cooperation of the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans, Mara held its' third Veteran's Day Special Event. The antennas were erected the day before, and once again, we were allowed to operate between 9:00AM to 3:00PM. The facility has many different events planned for Veteran's Day. Our operation is only one. The above photo shows a resident veteran making contact. The operator is a licensed ham and can be found on 2 meters! While the club's participation was down from years past, the excitement and joy was still present when a contact was made. The contacts that seemed to appreciate our effort the most was other Veteran facilities! There was something so very special about hearing W8USA call sign calling CQ on Veteran's Day. Some of the participants pictured above, (circular from lower left) Bruce WD8KPQ (eating pizza!), a veteran who is wearing red with the mike in his hand, Mike K8OOK, Jerry W8MSK, and a lady related to the veteran. Hidden by Bruce is the events coordinator, Larry KC8KVR.

Operation Care 2007



Our Operation C.A.R.E. coffee stop public service event was abbreviated this past season due to conflicts with member drivers and holidays landing in the middle of the week. This was the second season operating at the newly rebuilt rest area. In the above picture, you can see the operation from the rest area site. Right in front of our operation was a picnic table, which was put to good use during our operation by traveling motorists. We still have some concerns about ground erosion and the slope of the terrain. These will be addressed before the next season's operation begins. A very heartfelt thanks for all involved in making this event the success it was. This was the 12th year of our participation in the Combined Accident Reduction Effort. While it is a lot of work, it has provided the opportunity for all of us to meet and make friends with many people we've met over the years. Thank you all again. Till next Memorial Day!

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
Larry Dells KC8KVR c/o
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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.

Club News

By Richie K8JX

Even though we've gotten to the end of 2007, we still have events planned for the next 3 months. Our Mara After-Christmas-Dinner is scheduled for January 19, 2008 at 6:00 PM. Please let one of the event planners know if you're coming and how many will be with you. If you are not a club member and wish to attend, please let the planners know. Marian Dowling, Nancy Eilers and Peg Dells are planning the event as they have been for the past 3 years.

We also have the Welcome New Hams Dinner coming up in February. This is a great occasion to get out of the house and meet the new Hams in our community. There will be a change in where we have it this year. The Old Country Buffet has closed its doors. One of the possible locations under consideration is Fire Mountain. We've had it there before many years ago. Al WW8WW is going to present it to the Lowell ARC at their December club meeting and get back to us.

It's also that time of year when we open up nominations for West Michigan Ham of the Year. This year, we've kept all of the past nominations and have added them to the current list of nominations. This will make the nomination process a lot easier on you; the people who nominate the person you believe should be recognized for their achievements. You won't have to do it year after year. Once will be enough. If however, you wish to nominate somebody who already has been nominated, you can certainly add your recommendation to the already submitted ones.

We also have another Fox Hunt to plan for, probably this coming spring. Stay tuned for further information.

At this past December's club meeting, we elected officers for 2008. Next year will be the same as this year. President Rich K8JX, Vice President Wayne KB8VOZ, Secretary

Char WD8LGN and Treasurer, Jerry W8MSK. Let's help them out any way we can.

If you have some extra time on your hands during this Holiday season, the Steepletown building is looking for a few good painters. If you're interested, please let Rich K8JX know.

This past October, the club honored two members who have become fixtures at the Field Day events.

Coordinating, and setting up the event year after year, Mike K8OOK has freely given both time and effort in handling whatever pops up during Field Day. When not operating, Mike is encouraging us all to beat last year's record.

When dinnertime arrives, we all look forward to Jerry's special touch with the grill. There's nothing like eating a hearty breakfast or dinner when prepared right. To show our appreciation, we presented both Jerry and Mike with plaques. What made this extra special; this was all done by private donations.

IRA Swap In Planning

By Jim ki8jd

Plans are being made to make this year's IRA Hamfest bigger and better than ever before. Many forums and exhibits are planned. A big change might be free tables and trunk spaces with the purchase of an admission ticket. Final details will be forthcoming, but mark your calendar for Saturday June 7th, and start thinking about what you would like to buy or sell. A large turnout is expected due to these changes. We will have a flyer in the next issue.

Also, MARA plans on having a table at the swap, so see if you have any small items you'd like to donate that the club can sell. With the decline of Operation Care proceeds, the treasury can use a little help.

Another Veterans' Special Event

By Larry KC8KVR



On Thursday December 13, 2007, I sort of celebrated another special event when I visited the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans to present W8PCZ, Mr. Robert Perrin, a thank-you certificate for not only visiting the November 11, 2007 W8USA Special Event Station, but for operating also.

I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Donald Kramer who was the major force behind the Purple Heart Monument that was installed in the Grand Rapids Veterans Memorial Park, just east of the corner of Fulton and Division Streets, with the dedication held on September 15, 2007. Don told me it took 11 months to have the monument made and another 3 months working with the Grand Rapids Arts Advisory Council to get permission to have it installed in the Memorial park. There are smaller replicas of the monument being made, with one to be on display at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. In addition to being smaller, the replicas will not have inscriptions on the backside. Mr. Donald Kramer is a regular face at the home, since having retired 2 ½ year ago he has visited and has volunteered his time and services 6 days a week, with no time off. One in a million!

I plan on talking to Don before next year's Veterans Day Special Event station to see if there is any way we could get more veterans to join us at the station. It was a pleasure to meet a real hero that day.

Prez's two bits

By Richie K8JX

I had fun being your president this past year. It's always exciting to be part of a fun loving club and you folks sure know how to have fun. It doesn't seem to matter if it's at Field Day, or Operation C.A.R.E. or just sharing a meal with you members. It is always a pleasure to be part of this club!

Everything we set out to do this past year, we accomplished. I did have a few deals I wanted to try out, but what with all the stuff we already do, there simply wasn't any time to try them out. One of these was to start teaching Morse code again. We started doing this way back in 1993 or so. Even though the Morse code requirement has been removed, it is still a valuable and useful mode. This suggestion was presented many times over the past year and a half, on our 2-meter net, and each time, was met with a positive response. We'll see what happens this coming year.

This coming year we can look forward to doing what this club and its membership does so well: enjoying each others company while operating Ham radio.

Wishing you all the very best in 2008.

Important Filler Material

By Jim ki8jd

Don't forget the Dinner this coming Saturday. See the top of page 3.

Also, I built one of those poles from the "Hints and Kinks" column of QST. I like it!

It is used to install ropes in trees. I easily got my random wire over 30' high. On the downside, it is a little heavy to use. Ingredients; 1 pc. ½" ID X 10' long EMT conduit, 1 pc. ¾"X10' EMT, 1 pc. 1"X10' EMT, 4 or 6 hose clamps, a piece of ¾"X1.5"X16" hardwood, 2 small screw-in eyehooks, strong string and weight. The EMT fits loosely, so make 6 wide-kerf slits at one end of 2 big tubes, 6" long. Wear gloves...sharp edges!! Drill 11/16" hole 3" from end of wood. Tap wood onto ½" tube. Install eyebolts into bottom of wood, one near tube, one near end. Run string along tube, thru eyebolts, tie on weight, clamp tubes, and drop weight over limb. 73

Want to Get Your Community Involved in Amateur Radio? Get Involved in Your Community!

*By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU
MI Affiliated Club Coordinator*

I often hear hams lament that their communities show little interest in amateur radio. While this may be true, hams have to realize that community involvement is a two-way street. To get communities involved in amateur radio, amateur radio needs to be involved with the community.

Let me give you an example.

In early 2006, I decided to become more involved in community service. On a road trip to the Marshall Hamfest, one of the guys in our club--Jack, WT8N--mentioned that he was a member of the Ann Arbor Rotary Club. I told him that I would be interested in joining, and he agreed to sponsor me.

I joined the club in March 2006. Shortly after I joined, the executive director of the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum (www.aahom.org) spoke to our Rotary Club. The Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum is a science museum that gives kids (and adults, too) real, hands-on experience with science and technology. There are, for example, exhibits that help kids learn about electricity, springs, weather, and other topics in science and technology.

As the director was speaking, the thought occurred to me that the museum would be a great place for an amateur radio station. I discussed my idea with Jack, and he agreed to work with me on the project. We then approached the museum director, who is also a Rotary Club member, and met to discuss our idea.

As we discussed the idea, he became very enthusiastic about the possibilities. Our original idea was to set up a permanent station there, but as they were in the process of remodeling, this wasn't immediately possible. Instead, we operated a series of special events throughout the fall of 2007. These events have been very successful, and now we are discussing how and where to set up a permanent station at the museum. We expect this to happen some time in 2008.

We even have a vanity call sign for the station already--WA2HOM. A2 stands for Ann Arbor; HOM stands for Hands-On Museum. Look us up on QRZ.Com.

I'm sure that my involvement with the Rotary Club was a big part of the enthusiastic response to our proposal. Membership in the Rotary Club, and other community service clubs, such as Kiwanis or the Optimists, give one, if not instant credibility, at least some measure of it. There's no doubt in my mind that my involvement with the Rotary Club was a factor in the museum deciding to become involved with amateur radio.

Are you working on a community-service project or have questions about setting one up? Let Dan know! You can e-mail him at kb6nu@w8pgw.org or phone 734-930-6564.

2008 Severe Weather Spotter Training!



Do you like thunderstorms? Do you like serving your community during times of need? If you have answered yes to the above questions, then you are invited to the Annual Kent County Severe Weather Spotter Training for the 2008 storm season. Public invited!

<p>Date: February 21st, 2008 Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM Location: Grandville Middle School Auditorium, 3535 Wilson Avenue SW, Grandville, MI 49418 Cost: FREE! Bring yourself and a friend. RSVP required: http://www.kcraces.net/signup/skywarn.php Or spotterinfo@kcraces.net</p>	
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For more information about Kent County RACES please go to our web

www.kcraces.net

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