
Smoke Test

Vol. 2, Issue 3

<http://www.qsl.net/mara>

May 2000

Editor: Daniel F. Coates, N9XJF, n9xjf@arrl.net

The Official Newsletter of the Madison Area Repeater Association, Inc
P.O. Box 8890, Madison, WI 53708-8890

SWAPFEST 2000: Success!!



A view of the grand event

WELCOME TO STOUGHTON!!

By Daniel Coates, N9XJF

The big day finally arrived. The M.A.R.A. Swapfest opened on a crisp Sunday morning at the Mandt Community Center in Stoughton. Overall, it was a smash success. It seems that we have found a new home.

At 7:55 A.M. the line in front of the Mandt Center streamed into the parking lot around the corner. Hundreds of Swapfest attendees waited for the doors to open, in hopes of getting that great buy or getting there early to grab a cup of coffee and a table to share for visiting with friends

Visitors and vendors alike commented on how much they enjoyed the new venue. The building itself seemed perfect for a swapfest. The Mandt

Center was spacious, well lighted, accessible, and perfect for mini seminars like the one given by David Sumner, K1ZZ. (more on that later)

For a new location, there were few complaints. One of the complaints we did receive was about the parking situation. The parking itself is there, it's just not immediately visible. With better planning for next year, we can overcome this problem. Others commented that the map wasn't as clear as it could be and that the signs around the fest were sparse. This also is a first year glitch that we will be able to work out.

Swapfest goes also had the treat of a seminar given by ARRL Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ (pictured right). His short lecture, under the title "Amateur Radio, 2010 and Beyond" gave



insight into the future of Amateur Radio, who's going to be involved, and who's not. Mr. Sumner showed that Amateur Radio will definitely live in the 21st century, though possibly not in forms that it previously has taken.

Plans are already in the works for next year's swapfest, tentatively scheduled for April 8, 2001.

If you would like to comment or write about your M.A.R.A. swapfest experience, send it to M.A.R.A. P.O.B. 8890, Madison, WI 53708-8890, or electronically to n9xjf@arrl.net.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Swapfest 2000: Success.....	1
Announcements	2
HELP WANTED: Skywarn NCS.....	2
Z-104 and What Kids Don't Know About It	2
Editorial: Joining Clubs Reply	3
All Ham Picnic	3
Web Wise Ham Radio.....	4
Treasurer's Report	4
Upcoming Events	4

Announcements

Meeting Notice

The next meeting of the Madison Area Repeater Association will be on Monday, May 8, 2000. The meeting will start at 7:30 PM at the Badger Chapter of the American Red Cross located at 4860 Sheboygan Ave. To get to the Red Cross take Whitney Way north to Sheboygan Ave. left on Sheboygan to the Red Cross.



Meeting Agenda:

1. Swapfest recap / future events
2. Meeting Location Move
3. Summer Events
4. Tower Contract Discussion
5. The Free Ride Conundrum

Meeting Program

This month, MARA technical officer Ralph Pellegrini, N9BDR, will show us the tools of his trade. Ralph works for Evans Industrial Communications and knows a lot about what makes a radio tick. After the program Ralph will be testing radios, so be sure to bring your HT to see how it measures up to the specs, and possibly improve it. We look forward to seeing you there.

HELP WANTED: Skywarn NCS

Requirements: Must be available during daytime hours: 12 P.M. – 6 P.M. and in a position to conduct a Skywarn Net with little or no notice.

Qualifications: Previous NCS experience a must, contest experience a definite plus

Benefits: Excellent communications experience, great service to South Central Wisconsin.

If Interested: Contact Tom Fleming, N9SZF Ph. 246-0282 or e-mail: tfleming@madison.tec.wi.us

Z-104 and What Kids Don't Know About It

By Gary Muskat, N9DRA

How many of you can remember when you could tune to 104.1 on your FM dial and *not* hear Top 40 music? Believe it or not, as recent as 1974 you could tune in and hear easy listening, classical, and polka. It was located at 2047 Winnebago St. on Madison's east side.

WMFM signed on the air September 1, 1948 with the call letters WFOV at 104.9 on the dial running 480 a mere watts and 85 feet of tower. They broadcasted six hours a day with an easy listening format.

On December 10, 1948, owner Earl Fessler along with Art Campbell and Elmer Weisensel combined their efforts to hand build a 170 ft. tower and the broadcast day was extended to fifteen hours. In the winter of 1960, the power was boosted to 7500 watts, the frequency moved to the now present 104.1 Mhz and the call letters changed to WMFM.

From 1961-1964, WMFM was the local outlet for the Mutual Broadcasting System (now owned by Westwood One) and the easy listening format continued. In the fall of 1965, WMFM became the first station in Madison to broadcast in stereo and in the winter the power was boosted twice, first to 38,000 watts, then to 50,000 watts. In 1968, WMFM joined the ABC FM Radio Network and in the fall of '71 WMFM began broadcasting 24 hours a day.

Some of the announcers that worked at WMFM over the years include Ben Benedetti who can now be heard Sundays on WIBU, Papa Hambone who did North Country Notebook for WIBA and WERN, and Carl Ames who can be heard doing commercials for Kayser auto dealerships.

In the fall of 1974, the WMFM era came to an end. The station was sold to Mid-Continent Broadcasting Co. who, at the time, owned WTSO. The station itself was moved to Tokay Blvd. on the west side of Madison, the call letters changed to WZEE, and the format moved to its now familiar Top 40. Within the last four years, Mid-Continent's stations were bought by Madison Radio Group, who also owns WIBA (AM and FM), WMLI-FM, WTSO-AM, and WMAD-FM.

Editorial: Joining Clubs *Reply*

By Mary Jones, KF9ZB

The matter of combining the various individual amateur radio clubs in Madison has been a hot topic for a while now. While I understand that the individuals who want to see the clubs come together are trying to find ways to better the groups, increasing membership as well as reducing expenditures, I am not convinced a merger is the answer. We all want to see our organizations grow, and the budget is always a concern, but let's be sure we are getting both sides of the story before we go jumping to conclusions.

MARA and FLARC are two very different organizations. We have different functions, and both does its' function very well. MARA is a repeater group. It owns and operates two very fine repeaters here in town. FLARC is a general-purpose club, covering HF, packet, DX, contests, etc. Many of FLARC's members are members of MARA, myself included. We make a conscious choice to be part of both, and perhaps, of more groups. Yes, combining clubs would save money for those people. But what of the people who do not chose do be part of both groups? I do not believe we could keep our dues at the same rate and

support the activities of both organizations. Dues would increase. I do not believe we compete for each other's membership. We do what we do, and those interested come to us. The key is letting people know we are there and what we do, and giving them a reason to want to join us. There are numerous little details that would have to be worked out. Each club would gain, but each would also loose. Who chooses?

I would like to address an issue in Dan's editorial that needs some clarification. FLARC's radio room is for Red Cross communications only. Our members do not have access to the equipment, except to help the Red Cross and participate in their training sessions. Becoming a member of FLARC does not give free access to equipment.

As for field day, if you would like to participate, give me a call. We are always in need of additional operators, and I bet we could find a place for you.

The myth flying around is that MARA members are no-code techs and FLARC consists of the Hfers. Well, MARA has plenty of higher-class hams, and FLARC has a fair share of techs. FLARC has reports at its meeting each month on the area repeaters (MARA, CWRA, and now, BARS), and on VHF/UHF. We can certainly try to participate in some combined activities. We are, after all, participants in the same great hobby.

I would like to invite everyone to the FLARC meetings. Guests are welcome and encouraged to attend. I think you will see some familiar faces. Please do not take our hesitation to jump into one big area ham radio organization as us being snobbish and unfriendly. FLARC has been around since 1933. We simply want to maintain our identity, as well as be certain of what we are getting into. I'm sure there are members of MARA who feel the same way.

73,
Mary M. Jones, KF9ZB
President: Four Lakes Amateur Radio Club

The 2000 Madison All Ham Picnic

Thanks to the organizing efforts of MARA and FLARC, the 2000 All Ham Picnic will be held Tuesday, August 25. It will be held at Garner Park, 333 South Rosa Rd., across from Cuna Mutual. Everyone, club member or not, and their families are more than welcome to attend. There is no charge. Talk in will be on the 147.150 repeater.

The festivities are set to kick off at 5 P.M. when Tom, N9SZF lights the grill. This event, complete with matches and a liberal amount of lighter fluid, is guaranteed to be seen for miles, but you can have the best spot in the house, at ground zero.

As an added bonus, FLARC will be holding its annual foxhunt at 7 P.M. Everyone is invited to join the hunt for the elusive on-the-air fox.

What's being provided: FLARC is providing the meat (hamburgers, brats; tentative) and MARA is paying for the shelter, soda, and some supplies.

What you should bring: It is NOT REQUIRED that you bring a dish to pass, however, it is *highly encouraged*. If you do wish to bring an item, please coordinate it with Tom, N9SZF (see info in HELP WANTED article above).

We are also interested in anyone with radio gear (i.e. QRP stuff) and an antenna we can put up temporarily at the park to put on the air. If you can help with this, again, call Tom.

See you at the picnic, and *tell your friends...*

Web Wise Ham Radio Free Stuff for High Tech Hams

One of the greatest rewards we reap from the Internet is the proliferation of things that are free. Corollary to that is that hams cannot resist things that are free. So, what better a marriage than an article that tells hams about free things on the Internet? None for the next few paragraphs at least...

<http://www.qrz.com> - I've mentioned this site before, but it's worth mentioning again. QRZ has long been an outlet for everything ham on computers. On their site, they have a call book lookup, free practice exams, programs, radio mods, an online swap meet and a good deal of amateur radio news content. You can also add content to your callsign listing (such as a pic or current bio) Check them out.

<http://www.arrrl.net> - Yes, I've talked about this site as well, but the ARRL is *the* source of all information amateur. Online they have plenty of resources, charts, graphs and other useful stuff.

That's about all the room I have for this month. NEXT ISSUE: ??? YOU DECIDE!!! Send e-mail to me at n9xjf@arrrl.net or talk to me at the May meeting and tell me where you'd like my browser to go in September. Until then, 73 de N9XJF.

Treasurer's Report

	As of 5/2/00
Bank Balance	\$9,186.66
Treasurer owed	-\$0.71
Petty cash-on-hand	\$99.82
Balance Total	\$9,285.77

Swapfest Net Income at a glance:

SWAPFEST 2000	\$3,351.70
SWAPFEST '99	\$1,716.37
DIFFERENCE OF	\$1,635.33
PERCENT INCREASE	95%

Respectfully Submitted,
John W. Hicks, KA9KYB, Treasurer

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- (PSE = Public Service Event)
- PSE: March of Dimes WalkAmerica Sat. May 6
 - MARA Meeting**..... **Monday, May 8**
 - First VE Session after restructuring, Sat. May 13
 - PSE: Tour de Cure..... Saturday, May 20
 - PSE: Blue Mounds Classic (??)... Saturday, May 27
 - PSE: Gear Up Madison..... Saturday, May 27
 - PSE: Madison Marathon.....Sunday, May 28
 - PSE: Hometown Classic Saturday, June 10
 - PSE: Badger State Games Friday June 23
 - Ham Picnic/Foxhunt**.....**Tuesday, August 15**
 - MARA Meeting**..... **Monday, September 11**

Dates listed may change without notice. Be sure to check-in to MARA Net for the latest details.