

MARC October 2025 NEWSLETTER



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Lee Hodges KC8ITI, Linda Hodges KC8MUD, Larry Macklin N8CGP, Dennis Klipa N8ERF, John Wolters W8QN, Will Halphen K8VFO

MARC Web Page – www.w8kea.org

Midland W8KEA Repeater — 147.000 MHz +, 103.5 Hz

NEXT CLUB MEETING — October 2nd, 2025, at 7:30 pm, Salvation Army Building, 220 S. Waldo Ave.

Fall! Cooler temperatures and shorter days bring a different kind of charm to our hobby. It's a great time for emergency preparedness drills, indoor antenna projects, and catching signals as the ionosphere changes with the season. Whether you're chasing DX, experimenting with new modes, or connecting with fellow hams, there's always something interesting happening on the airwaves!



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View From the Top of the Tower



The September MARC meeting resulted in the election of the following officers:

- **President:** Dennis Klipa, N8ERF
- **Secretary:** Linda Hodges, KC8MUD – Thank you for your service.
- **Treasurer:** John Wolters, W8QN – Thank you for your service.

I have appointed, as allowed by the MARC By-Laws, Kanushi Desai, KE8RNA, as Vice President until such time as a special election can be arranged.

The Midland High School Amateur Radio Club Advisory Board members were elected as follows: Dennis Klipa – N8ERF, Lee Hodges – KC8ITI, Will Halphen – K8VFO, Art Peters – K0ACP, and Jackie Klipa – N8NNA.

A lively and extensive discussion about the future of the Midland Repeater ensued. No decision was made, but the Repeater Committee was given a mandate to provide more data on the feasibility of improving our repeater to an acceptable operating level without the involvement of the Central Michigan Emergency Network. Art Peters, K0ACP, was appointed by the President to lead this committee forward. For clarification, John W8QN remains the repeater Trustee. Since then, there has been a lot of activity within the committee.

The school clubs are back in session, and both are going well. See the school club report later in this issue.

At the next meeting, we will have a speaker joining us remotely from Texas. Patrick Kahn, KG5OMX, President of MCARC (Medina County Amateur Radio Corporation) in Castroville, Texas, will present his talk titled “*Using a Quadplexer for Field Day.*” This is a timely and relevant topic as we consider our options for next year’s Field Day. Special thanks to Ric for arranging this presentation.

And finally, my sincere appreciation goes to Kanushi, KE8RNA, our newsletter editor.

Best Regards,
Dennis N8ERF
MARC President

School Clubs Report

I am very pleased with how both the high school and middle school clubs are proceeding. In fact, the middle school club may be doing *too* well! Attendance in the first four weeks was 53, 48, 45, and 46 students — awesome and crazy at the same time.

The high school club attendance has been a bit more modest but still a wonderful start to the year, with 9, 8, and 9 members in the first three weeks. Since the high school club activities require more advisor/student interaction, these are good numbers.

Thank You to Our Volunteers

- At the high school: Lee KC8ITI and Will K8VFO for sharing the fun of working with students.
- At the middle school: Will K8VFO, Max KE8DON, Jackie Klipa N8NNA, Brian Brown, Tim Kipfmiller, and Carman Kessler.
- Mitchell Boyce W8DOD will be rejoining us after recovering from knee replacement surgery. *Get well soon, my friend!*

Middle School Club

This year, we are trying an experiment. The middle school club (7th and 8th graders, with an occasional standout 6th grader) usually follows a two-year cycle: learning the basics of electricity and electronics, with a Fox Hunt and Balloon Launch included.

To give returning 8th graders something new, we've started an advanced group exploring amateur radio specifically. So far, they've been learning the phonetic alphabet, Morse code, and how to carry on an HF QSO. They even drafted a list of questions to help prevent "mic fright." We hope to participate in the School Club Roundup this year.

Progress so far:

- Built a 135-foot long wire antenna with a 9:1 Unun.
- Installed the long wire and a 5-band vertical on the middle school roof (teachers only on the roof — no students!).
- Pulled coax into the operating room and installed PL-259 connectors.
- Next step: installing the radio (IC-751), an LDG Z100 tuner, and a cross-needle SWR meter.

We are also purchasing Technician license manuals for students who want to pursue their licenses. I am cautiously optimistic about their progress.

High School Club

The high school students are engaged in individual activities and will begin balloon launch work once advisors (mostly me) finalize the prep.

One major task is replacing the club's computers, which are 13 years old. Upgraded from Windows XP to Windows 10, they cannot be moved to Windows 11 — and Microsoft support for Windows 10 ends soon. We are experimenting with Mini-PCs, which are cheaper, smaller, and appear to fit our needs. One has been purchased for testing, and if successful, we'll replace the other two computers as well.

Community Connection

I've been invited to present at the Kiwanis Club in November. Back in 2012, when we launched the high school club, the Kiwanis generously supported us financially. Several members have since expressed appreciation for our ongoing work with students, and I will be asking them for additional support at the meeting.

Join Us!

If you're interested in working with the students:

- **High School Club:** Tuesdays, 2:45–4:45 PM at Midland High
- **Middle School Club:** Wednesdays, 3:00–4:30 PM at Northeast Middle School

Please note: background checks and registration/approval as a school volunteer are required.

MARC is at a Crossroads...The Future of our Repeater!!

From N8ERF- Dennis Klipa MARC President

MARC is at a crossroads and we need to make a decision about what we are going to do to move forward. This is going to be an emotional issue for our club and it will likely cause hurt feelings and frustration for some no matter which choice we make, just different folks. I think that is probably unavoidable. But I hope you will remember that our repeater is a tool and only a tool. Amateur Radio, believe it or not, is about people, not equipment.

Two years ago, we had to relocate our repeater. Ever since, John, W8QN, and others have been trying to regain the repeater coverage that we had before the move. Improvements at the repeater site and the installation of a remote receiver at the high school have made improvements to the coverage. Returning the remote receiver to the Edenville site and reactivating the West Midland Family Center remote receiver should also help. However, the transmitter footprint is still lacking. It is a little complicated, but the implementation of the remote receivers may allow increased power output of the repeater. However, the current antenna is still 50 ft below the previous antenna. Will the increased power output be enough? Would we raise the height of the tower? Is it possible to do that? Would we be allowed to do that? At this point we do not know. There may be other solutions to the problem. It will take time and it will certainly cost money.

We have been presented with an alternative path. We have been approached by the Central Michigan Emergency Network, www.w8cmn.net. They have a network of repeaters from Mt. Clemens to Mackinaw City. Instead of using the commercial internet for linking, they have built their own microwave network. More recently, they took over the Bay City repeater, now called the Gilford repeater. They have offered to take over our system, and in return provide us with the kind of coverage we would like to have and beyond through the linked system. So now we must decide which of the crossroads we are going to take. Are we going to continue down the path that we have been on or are we going to go down a new path. There are a lot of things to consider when making this decision. A few members have offered their opinions which can be found later in the newsletter.

The path to a decision.

There have been some isolated discussions between representatives of W8CMN and individual MARC members for some time. However, there was no clear and consistent understanding of what was involved. The repeater committee met with W8CMN representatives today, August 24th, to learn more about how the W8CMN option would work. It was a two-hour meeting. In this newsletter, you will find opinion pieces in favor of the current road and others in favor of a new road.

The path forward will be a decision of the membership. At the September meeting we will spend a lot of time talking about this and exploring the options, giving everyone a chance to ask questions and express opinions. I think this is a very important decision, so my intention is to not have a vote at the September meeting but rather take the time to let this all digest and then vote at the October meeting. I would like to offer the pages of this newsletter for members to offer their opinions to be published in the October newsletter, before the vote.

Origins of the Midland Repeater.

The Central Michigan Amateur Repeater Association (CMARA) was formed in 1975. Its original repeater was a very wide area coverage FM repeater on 146.72 MHz called the Pleasant Valley repeater, near the southwest corner of Midland County. A vast majority of the association membership were Midland residents and members of MARC as well. In Jan-Feb of 1977 the Midland Repeater on 146.73 MHz was activated. Due to a change of repeater coordinated frequency separations, the Midland repeater frequency was changed to the current 147.000 MHz. For 16 years CMARA operated, funded and maintained both repeaters. From its birth in 1948 the Midland Amateur Radio Club had been a general purpose club for 45 years. In 1993, MARC took over responsibility for the Midland repeater and became a repeater club as well. With its 501(c)3 non-profit status MARC conducted a significant fundraising campaign to implement and support the repeater. The repeater was relocated to the Dow tower near the soccer fields. Two years ago the repeater was moved to its current location. After 32 years MARC is now facing the possibility of returning to a general purpose club.

A Brief Review of Recent Repeater History - John, W8QN

I asked John to put together a brief recent history of the work that has been done on our repeater, almost all of which was done by John. Thank you, John, for all of your time, energy and expertise. de Dennis, N8ERF

This is an attempt at the Repeater History that I know. It is in time sequence to the best of my knowledge or at least close. Not everything is included. In the early history of the club repeater system there were 3 Kendecom repeaters, 2 Duplexers, 1 Kendecom remote link with local receiver, 2 Kendecom 100 watt amplifiers, and 1 Kendecom – 4 input voter. Two of the repeaters have failed PA's with working receivers and the final repeater still works but there is no software to program the machine, and it has the wrong callsign. Both amplifiers work (with modifications to work with existing repeater). The remote receiver never worked properly and was taken out of service. Once I got my hands on it I found out that the controller had been set up improperly, and once again there is no capability to change it. The voter was also taken out of service.

The remote receiver, when in service, was located on a Midland County Tower at the West Family Center near Oil City. Height was approximately 100 ft with a receive antenna on the west side of the tower. One of the repeaters had phone patch capability and for the longest time had a connected phone line for phone patch and remote control. With the lack of use with the advent of cell phones, the phone line (and cost) was removed. The manufacturer of the above equipment is no longer in business.

At one time the repeater site was evidently hit by lightning and the duplexer in service was damaged. Repair was attempted with no success. The second duplexer was put in service but required that the power be reduced to control desence. The antenna also was believed damaged and replaced (2015). All this hardware had no PL capability.

A new Repeater with PL capability and a multi-receiver capable controller was purchased and put in service at the original tower location next to the soccer fields. The repeater was switched to PL control. The tower site was owned by Dow Chemical, and we had a written agreement to use it. A past member was allowed a tour of the repeater site and then took it upon himself to complain to Dow about the electrical setup. Up until this time Dow had been paying for electricity. The club was contacted and told to take over the electrical service cost, which we did. It cost us more for the privilege of having the service than the actual cost of the power.

A new water tower was being built in Edenville Township on the north side of the county. A member of the club had connections, and an agreement was made to place antennas on the tower and equipment inside. Because the repeater was now under PL the existing remote receiver would not work as desired. I built a new remote receiver, interfaced the voter to the new repeater and a new local receiver, and put it in service. At the same time, I applied for a coordinated second remote receiver link frequency, which was granted. We now have 2 link frequencies.

In February 2020, Dow Chemical contacted us about the future life of the tower. We were required to have a tower inspection performed at our cost to make such a determination. The tower was at the end of its life and the inspection confirmed that. It was not necessarily in danger of falling, but no climber would agree to climb it.

I undertook 2 personal projects for the repeater. One was to allow for remote control of a system to download and make announcements when needed, and the other was a replacement for the existing voter system, at my cost. Due to a lot of reasons these projects were shelved but the hardware exists and could be restarted.

At this point Dow wanted to tear the tower down but because we had a formal agreement to use it, an attempt was made by Dow to help us find another site. We looked at multiple locations on Dow property including the tower inside the Dow Plant, but nothing worked out. A committee was formed to look for another site outside of Dow. Every commercial tower had an associated cost. There was even discussion in the club about acquiring land and having a tower site built. Midland County was not very interested in us putting equipment on any of their towers or buildings.

Michigan Family Radio had a studio on M-20 and 5 Mile Rd. with a 120 ft tower for remote microwave connection to their main tower. That building was purchased by the M-20 Animal Hospital, and the new owner happened to be a ham. By chance he contacted our then President (Lee Hodges) and asked if we were interested in the use of the tower at their site. Discussions followed and agreements were made.

In Oct 2022, with a lot of work and planning, the repeater was moved from the Dow tower to the M-20 Animal Hospital tower. The move to the new tower was not without impact. The old tower was built on the highest ridge in Midland County and did an excellent job of covering the city of Midland handheld radios. The new location is sea-level wise approximately 50 ft lower than the original tower and 10 miles further west from the city. Both towers were approximately the same height. Old tower base 209m/685 ft sea level; new tower base 193m/633 ft sea level (per en-gb.topographic-map.com).

The County of Midland radio system was changed from a VHF system to the State 800 MHz trunk system because of narrow banding requirements. The county stored some of their old equipment in case of need. This now became surplus and was offered to us. It included a VHF Motorola repeater and 2 – 6 can duplexers. The repeater was placed on the shelf, one duplexer was donated to another club so they could build a repeater, and I took the second to Texas, where the manufacturer was located, to have it returned for our Amateur frequencies. That duplexer was put in service and the 4 can duplexer placed in reserve. This helped the desence issue (May 2023).

In July 2023, heliax to the main VHF antenna was replaced because we did not know the history of the heliax on the tower and wanted to remove any doubt. A 440 MHz side-mount antenna was also installed using existing tower heliax. The Dow tower was torn down.

In May of 2024, Dennis Klipa asked me to put in a remote receiver somewhere near the upcoming June swap to help handheld radios and city of Midland coverage. Because of the short timeframe there was no easy way to come up with a new remote receiver, so I made the decision to “temporarily” relocate the Edenville remote. It was decided to “temporarily” utilize the High School radio club’s VHF and UHF antennas to make the link possible. It worked well. Dennis had contacts in the School District and we asked if we could utilize their unused tower on the top of the High School. Verbal agreement was reached but time and weather ran out to make the move.

Finally, in Aug 2025, new antennas were installed and a new remote link built and installed. The owner of the M-20 Animal Hospital has also extended an Ethernet link to an isolated ethernet network for our use as of 8/10/25. More to come here.

Repeater Perspectives

Of the members of the repeater committee, there is not universal agreement on which crossroad we should take at this point. I have asked members on both sides of the discussion to submit an opinion for the newsletter. So far, I have not received an article in favor of maintaining our course. Please do not take this as meaning there is no support for staying the course. There is a passionate interest in maintaining ownership and control of our repeater. I just don't have a written opinion to share with you at this time. Perhaps we will hear more at the September and October meetings. At this point, as president of the club, I can only vote in the case of a tie vote. As such I am refraining from expressing my opinion. In fact, I can see both sides of the discussion. It is going to come down to what the membership wants. And remember, if you want to vote, you have to be a member in good standing.

*****As you read the opinions in this newsletter, please consider each perspective thoughtfully and respectfully.*****

1. The Future of Our Repeater: A Path Forward (From Paul K8PLM)

In our September 2025 Newsletter, our MARC president stated that our club is at a crossroad concerning the ownership path for our 2M repeater. Soon we may be asked to make a significant decision on the fate of our repeater’s ownership. Many of you have a deep investment and personal connection to our repeater that was built and modified over many years thanks to your hard work and dedication. At our recent September MARC meeting, concerns and risks were voiced if we turned ownership of our 2M repeater over to the Central Michigan Emergency Network (CMEN). I am submitting this article to support my view that we relinquish ownership of our repeater system over to CMEN. I believe the proposal to transfer ownership of our

repeater is about making a strategic decision to improve our capabilities and secure our repeater's legacy for the upcoming years. The best way to secure its future is by working with a group that has the resources to ensure it thrives. The following are my justification points.

Securing Our Future and Lightening the Load

Let's be honest about our current situation. Our club has limited technical resources to support our 2M repeater. We're a group of dedicated hobbyists, many of whom have put in years of service into the club, but we're not getting any younger. We no longer have the resources we once did, and the responsibility of maintaining the repeater is becoming more difficult for membership. Keeping a repeater at peak operation requires a large number of technical skills and expertise of components, including the repeater unit, remote receivers, duplexers, a voter, antenna/coax/connectors tuning, configuration adjustments as needed, and legal compliance regulations. We need more than a single person for this role, we need a whole team of experience.

By transferring ownership, CMEN would assume financial responsibility for maintenance, repairs, and relocating our equipment to a more height advantage location. They have a larger team of technical experts who can respond to issues quickly and effectively. Our club would no longer have to worry about the cost of major repairs, potential site moves, day-to-day maintenance and trying to find people to mentor for future sustainability. We can focus on what we love most: the people and the hobby of amateur radio.

Joining a Larger, More Active Network

Beyond the technical and financial benefits, CMEN ownership of our repeater would open up a world of new communication opportunities for our members. The CMEN linked system connects repeaters from Mt. Clemens to Mackinaw City, giving us a far larger geographic footprint to communicate over. This would allow us to make contacts with fellow ham operators across a much wider area, which could solve the problem of our repeater mostly being quiet. This is especially beneficial for newer members who are looking to make contacts.

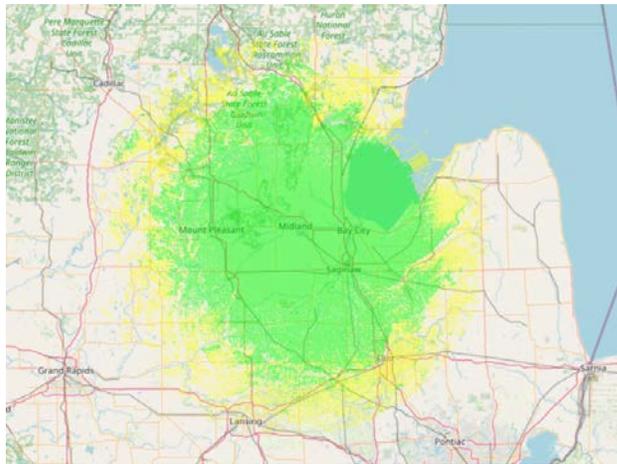
In emergency situations, being part of this linked network would be invaluable. We could gather information from multiple counties, providing a more comprehensive view of developing events like in an advancing storm. This collaboration enhances our role in public service and emergency preparedness.

Transmit Range Tremendously Enhanced

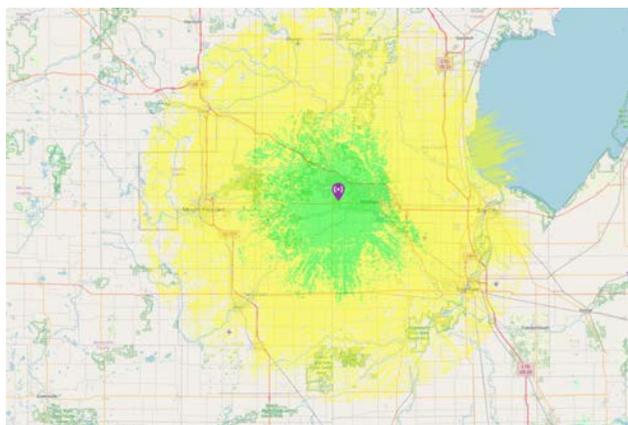
Since our last site relocation, we've struggled to regain the repeater coverage we once had. Despite the incredible efforts of members like John (W8QN), our transmitter range is still lacking. The truth is our options are limited and to substantially solve this issue will require a much taller tower or site relocation. By transferring ownership to CMEN, we solve this problem in the near short term. They have offered to move our equipment to the Bullock Creek tower, a move that will greatly improve our coverage throughout Midland County and beyond. This is a well-maintained site that offers the height advantage we need to increase our transmit range.

To help understand the potential increase range we would gain, CMEN generated a theoretical propagation map if the repeater equipment were moved to the Bullock Creek tower housing an antenna at a height of 320 feet. This coverage is beyond Midland County providing considerably transmit increases in all geographical directions. I also provided as a comparison another generated propagation map of our current Midland repeater. As you can see there is a sizeable difference between potential coverage from CMEN and current repeater performance for the areas highlighted in green. This figure is in not meant as a criticism of our team's current and past efforts. When we were told we had to relocate our equipment quickly 3 years ago, the appointed team swiftly worked within the limitations they had to find a new site (see September Newsletter for a historical perspective).

CMEN Ownership Propagation Map



Current Midland Repeater Propagation Map



Risk Mitigation

During our last MARC meeting, we discussed the potential risks of turning over ownership. The main concerns raised were:

- Losing our ability to have any input on future decisions.
- The possibility that CMEN might stop supporting the repeater if they face financial hardship and potentially decommission it.
- Giving up our frequency pairs since we cannot acquire a new pair for future use.

I fully understand that these risks could have members concerned moving forward. As I was writing this article, I began to think critically about our current vulnerabilities, and I urge all club members to do the same. What would we do if our hardware fails? Some of our equipment is difficult to replace or repair, such as the analog remote receiver voter. This is a serious concern. Another major worry is our reliance on a host for the tower and building we operate from. What if the host sells the business and we're forced to relocate? We also need to consider the age and condition of the tower holding our antenna. I'm not sure if the tower is strategically important to the animal hospital, so any tower repairs may be our responsibility. Do we have a plan in place to handle these risks where technical and financial resources are available along with potential relocation sites? In short, we are in a very precarious position. The overall point is as a club we assume risks associated with our repeater and they are a part of any major decision we make.

Regarding our frequency pairs, it was pointed out that we can no longer pursue other modes since no frequency pairs are available in Michigan if we turn over ownership to CMEN. Since becoming a member and given a couple of presentations on expanding our repeaters modes the club has shown very little interest, if any, in exploring other digital modes (Please Note AllStar mode will also be included in CMEN proposal). To help minimize this risk and as suggested at our last meeting we could include a clause in the legal agreement that allows us to re-acquire our frequency pair if hardships occur within the CMEN organization and they no longer can keep the repeater operational. We'll need to be very clear and specific when outlining these scenarios in the legal document.

Current Linked CMEN Repeater System

The CMEN organization manages a robust network of repeaters, including 9 VHF 2M linked systems, 2 220 MHz, and 11 UHF systems. With 45 people associated with the organization and 13 directors, they also oversee additionally 22 live webcams (often used by local news) and 8 APRS Digipeater/IGate stations. The directors have strong backgrounds in IT and radio, with professional work experiences at places like the FBI, Motorola, and MPSCS, and they have a wide network of external contacts to call on for assistance.

The speed and professionalism of CMEN's work are well-known. For example, their latest repeater in Mackinaw City was installed in just 4 to 6 weeks. This efficiency was also evident when they took over the 31 Gilford Repeater from the Bay City Club. I contacted a member of that club to inquire about their experiences turning over ownership to CMEN. They had 5 members within the club considered as their repeater experts. I was informed their decision to

get CMEN involved was based on a lack of funding they faced (~ \$30,000) to keep the repeater operational. They were also restricted from climbing the tower for maintenance by the owner. The decision to transfer ownership was difficult, but the club realized they couldn't overcome these roadblocks easily. CMEN was able to acquire the necessary funding and negotiate access with the tower owner. They felt that even if they could somehow raise the money and gain tower access, they'd likely face the same issues again in a few years to keep the repeater operational. They made a strategic decision not to “kick that can” down the road. I was told that the entire process by CMEN was handled professionally. I suspect very similar challenges occurred for the other clubs that transferred ownership to CMEN.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to read this lengthy article. I know this will be difficult decision for the club members to make. However, we must recognize that times have changed. We are at a moment where we can ensure our repeater not only survives but thrives by becoming part of a more robust, modern network. Yes there are risks giving up ownership, but I believe the benefits outweigh them. This proposal allows us to offload the burdens of maintenance and finances while gaining superior coverage and access to a much larger community. In the end we will still have a Midland repeater with incredible coverage plus Allstar. We will continue as MARC and we will continue the W8KEA.org web site. We will have control over linking and unlinking as needed for local events. It's time to get away from the struggles of trying to make small incremental improvements to the local repeater and let the CMEN folks handle it. By giving CMEN ownership, we are choosing to secure the legacy of our repeater and provide our members with a better, more reliable tool for the future.

An open letter to the W8KEA Midland Amateur Radio Club: - K0ACP

My name is Art Peters, K0ACP. My XYL, Kathy, KD0JHX, and I live on the southern edge of Edenville Township here in Midland County. We moved into our home in August of 2014. Prior to that, we lived in Midland not far from the Dow Diamond, where I settled when I first came to Michigan in 2011.

I was first licensed in 1983 as KA8KDL, which I obtained as I left college as a freshly minted Purdue EE—Electrical Engineer, not Elementary Educator. Though I didn't become “radioactive” at that time, I retained an innate curiosity toward the hobby and service. Fast forward 25 years: my SO239 graduated high school, and I found myself an empty nester with a hole to fill. Choosing not to work more or watch TV, I rekindled my exploration journey in amateur radio.

With a bit of dusting off of study materials, I quickly passed Technician and General, becoming KD0CBE. With a tad more dusting, a month later I became AC0JV, then vanity took over and I switched to K0ACP. As a freshly reminded ham, I purchased an HT and an HF rig. The Yaesu FT-60 remains in the cabinet as an excellent 2-band solution, and the HF rig is now one of the operating positions at the Midland High School Club. I am mostly an HF operator but rather took for granted the access and community a repeater brought to the amateur world.

In Iowa, where I picked up my “0” call, we had the W0JV repeater and enjoyed a very active Sunday evening net with frequent round tables and formal message traffic. Unfortunately, it also got frequent use for a SkyWarn net, for which I eventually became one of the Net Controls. Candidly, I took access to the local VHF repeater for granted and didn’t give it the consideration or respect that it deserved.

When I moved to Midland, I found the W8KEA repeater, stumbled across the Thursday evening net, and found the club at a subsequent meeting. The W8KEA repeater provided a great gateway for meeting local hams. I have vivid memories standing on the western bank of Sanford Lake and talking with Jack, W8GTG, during the 2020 dam failure, again using my trusty FT-60 with a rubber duck.

Then we lost our site, and the repeater had to move. Through the dedication and efforts of the folks behind the scenes, the repeater “magically” moved into its new home on M-20. When I say magically, I really mean that I did not pay much attention to the significant effort required to find a new home, disassemble, pack, move, and reinstall the equipment, and then do the necessary engineering and adjustments to tune it up. Today the face of the repeater is our own John Wolters, W8QN, and he deserves praise and credit for his valiant efforts.

All that said, I and several other local W8KEA members are disappointed and disenfranchised, as we no longer enjoy reliable access to the repeater from our QTH. As a result, my HT has fallen into disuse, and I no longer attempt Thursday evening net check-ins. Several other hams have expressed similar situations to me and, in some cases, we have maintained contact via cellphones. Sadly, in other situations, we have lost contact altogether.

All this long-winded introduction was a way of introducing myself, my amateur background, and the situation we find ourselves in: the current state of the W8KEA repeater is perhaps the worst possible state a system can be—inconsistent, unreliable, and unpredictable. In some ways, it would be better powered off until it can be fully restored; at least then it would be in a known and predictable state. This statement is not to point fingers or cast blame, but rather a candid assessment of the repeater’s condition.

This past Sunday, I had the privilege to sit in a meeting with the Central Michigan Emergency Network (W8CMN), who tendered an offer to assume our VHF repeater, equipment, and—perhaps more valuable—coordinated frequency pair. In return, they committed to rehome the repeater and install it on a ~300’ tower and link it with other VHF repeaters and some microwave-linked remote sites.

Dennis Klipa, N8ERF, has posed a question to me to see if I could provide some thoughtful dialogue on the topic. Well, this is my attempt at dialogue—I’ll leave it up to the reader to determine if you find it thoughtful. The W8KEA club is at a crossroads, and we have a decision to make: do we keep the W8KEA repeater for ourselves, or turn it over to the W8CMN syndicate? On the surface this is a simple question with only two possible choices, yet the analysis shows a highly nuanced situation that bears examination.

I believe that there is a third alternative worth exploring, and I would ask for your indulgence in exploring that with me. I would propose that we:

1. Create a Technical Committee, chaired by John, W8QN, and composed of an even number of individuals.
2. This committee would initially be appointed by the club President for staggered 2- or 3-year terms and would report to the President, but provide monthly reports to the club.
3. The club President would sit on the committee with a voting responsibility to cast the tie-breaking vote.
4. This committee is charged with developing and reviewing a plan for restoring W8KEA operation to a capability similar to what was experienced prior to the repeater move in 2020. This plan, and associated budget, will be voted upon by the whole club at the November meeting.
5. The club agrees to fund the approved plan.
6. The committee agrees to execute the approved plan by 3/31/26, with regular checkpoints at the monthly W8KEA meetings.

If the committee fails to provide an acceptable plan, per the membership, or the committee or club fail to hold up their end of the agreement, then the W8KEA repeater should be transferred to the Central Michigan Emergency Network. As we consider this proposal, I would ask folks to remember the following: coordinated VHF frequency pairs are limited and valuable commodities. In fact, the VHF spectrum in Mid-Michigan is fully allocated, and we would be unable to obtain a new pair if we ever wanted to get another repeater within the club.

1. W8KEA is a volunteer amateur club; we all need to take ownership for the repeater, and those who expect to use it need to provide the time and funds required to establish and maintain a club-owned resource.
2. Similarly, the club leadership needs to be willing to accept assistance and work with members to train, build, maintain, and operate the repeater.
3. If we as a club are willing to support #2 and #3, then we should ask: do we have the technical expertise to design, implement, maintain, and operate an analog VHF FM repeater?
4. If we as a club are willing to support #2 and #3, are we also capable and willing to financially support the effort needed to run an analog VHF FM repeater, easily costing thousands of dollars?

Each of us will have to make our own assessments of our ability to answer in the affirmative to #2, #3, #4, and #5. If we can answer “yes” to these questions, then I believe we can succeed. I suggest we give the club a six-month opportunity to fully implement the W8KEA repeater.

I have many other thoughts on the matter and reasons for my beliefs, and I am willing to share them if folks want to engage. I can be reached at K0ACP@K0ACP.COM or via cell: 989-600-3920—but unfortunately, not on the W8KEA repeater.

73 es God Bless,
Art K0ACP

Repeater Going Forward (From Ric Sauer - KD0RMK)

We asked ourselves if we would consider turning over the care, maintenance, and ownership of our repeater to the Central Michigan Emergency Network (CMEN). The decision at the time was to not relinquish the ownership of the W8KEA repeater. This is a difficult decision on a good day, and even more difficult due to the uncertainty of guaranteed performance on either path we take. I happen to be in favor of this transition for multiple reasons. Jack Robinson and I have talked about this several times based on the needs of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®). Our relationship with the Midland Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is mostly based on the relationship that Jack has built over the past few years. In an attempt to increase our city and county visibility from an emergency response perspective, one of the key components is a good communications infrastructure. I appreciate that this isn't our only challenge; however, for the sake of this message, we'll focus on our repeater for now.

The few points of interest that may help you make an informed decision include the following items:

Linkage to other repeaters outside Midland

- This is good for us to have the ability to communicate with groups outside our current communication footprint.
- During selected events, this allows us to connect, or not, to other repeaters. Obviously, during localized events, it will be optimal for us not to be connected to other repeater locations.
- This will increase the amount of traffic in the local repeater.

Linkage to CMEN (more information)

- The CMEN team (with our assistance) will augment the infrastructure by first moving the primary repeater functionality to a 320' tower. This will take care of our reach across the county.
- CMEN will help with remote receivers at multiple locations to aid in allowing the repeater infrastructure in Midland County to better receive signals from remote parts of the county, and provide better reception for operators transmitting from an HT.

AllStarLink (more information)

- This will allow us to optionally connect to our repeater when traveling outside the reach of the CMEN network.
- It will also allow for connection to the local repeater when operating in a stand-alone configuration. This will often occur during our weekly nets as one example.

Microwave Connection

- Optionally we can have a microwave connection between the MARC trailer and the repeater network for additional capabilities during special events or emergency operations.

Our repeater is a tool that helps identify who we are and is used to communicate to our local community using amateur radio. This part of the equation won't change other than providing additional coverage in our local communication footprint and beyond. The continued cost of maintaining the infrastructure will also be moved to the CMEN team if we move forward with this potential offer. If we were to just add additional receive sites, this would help HTs talk to the repeater; however, they may not necessarily be able to hear the repeater with the current location and configuration. This is just another reason to increase the altitude of the primary repeater location.

73,
Ric – KD0RMK

Justification for W8KEA to keep the repeater: Lee KC8ITI

I am not in favor of turning over the Midland Amateur Radio Club, Inc. repeater and all of the associated equipment over to Central Michigan Amateur Network, Inc. DBA as Central Michigan Emergency Network. A meeting was held on August 24, 2025, with a representative of Central Michigan Emergency Network (CMEN) and the repeater committee of the Midland Amateur Radio Club. The Central Michigan Emergency Network wants to take over, move, and manage the Midland Amateur Radio Club 2-meter repeater system. The new location would allow for an elevated repeater antenna position, which would provide a larger coverage area. In addition, the repeater would be connected to CMEN's network. The transfer of the repeater would eliminate any direct maintenance of the repeater by the Midland Amateur Radio Club.

For this type of proposal, one would expect the representative of CMEN to have a written document with details of the proposal. This was not the case, and most of the verbal responses were vague. My takeaways from this meeting were: Central Michigan Emergency Network wants control of as many of the 2-meter repeater pairs as possible. They also want us to donate all of our 2-meter equipment to them for use or sale at their discretion. Central Michigan Amateur Network, Inc. is controlled by a board of directors who have total approval on any changes to the repeaters and the network. Local repeater groups have no representation on the board of directors. If a local repeater group requests any changes or upgrades to the repeater, the local group is expected to help fund those changes. If there is a catastrophic failure to the repeater, the local repeater group is expected to help fund the recovery.

Other than the ability to disconnect the repeater from the network for local nets and local emergency use, the local club has no command or control of the repeater. Adding voice announcements to the local repeater is limited and not encouraged. The local repeater group is expected to supply technical personnel to help support the Central Michigan Emergency Network, which is very complex. The local repeater group is also expected to assist Central Michigan Emergency Network in acquiring access to any remote receiver or auxiliary equipment sites.

In researching Central Michigan Amateur Network, Inc. since the meeting, I found that State of Michigan paperwork was filed on March 18, 2008, to incorporate with the stated purpose: *“To build and maintain a network of voice and data services to support amateur radio communications in Michigan. These networks are used in times of crisis and to support public*

service.” A search of the Central Michigan Emergency Network website and public records provided no additional information on the incorporation or bylaws for how Central Michigan Amateur Network, Inc. is organized or how things are run. Central Michigan Amateur Network, Inc. has no formal agreements with any governmental agencies such as the state EOC or FEMA.

Since being asked to move our repeater from the Dow site, relocating the repeater to another site has been problematic. We’ve spent a lot of money and resources over the years trying to supply a usable repeater system for the Midland County area. It may be necessary to expend more resources to eventually get the repeater system to where everyone wants it. Currently, we only have one or two people working on the remaining problems, and they can only do so much. Of course, the comments keep coming in: *How come I’m having this or that problem? It used to work this way. When are you going to implement this or that feature?*

If there is a problem, what is needed is empirical documentation on what the problem is and possible fixes that might be used. We need more people to get involved—not just list their frustrations about how things are going. Without knowing the goals and governance of the Central Michigan Amateur Network, Inc. and the Central Michigan Emergency Network, it is hard to know if their goals align with the goals of the Midland Amateur Radio Club. Without having any proposals in writing, it is hard to know what we are agreeing to.

Remember, if in the future we decide this was a mistake and we wish to reestablish a 2-meter repeater system, there are no 2-meter pairs available in Michigan. If there were any coordinated 2-meter pairs available, Central Michigan Emergency Network wouldn’t be after our pair. Equipment we can get; frequencies are scarce. I would like to give our repeater committee the time they need to work on the outstanding problems with our repeater system to see if they can all be resolved. I urge our club members to be patient and help out when they can. The cost and commitment of turning things over to Central Michigan Amateur Network, Inc. and the Central Michigan Emergency Network is just too high.

★ From the Michigan Section Manager, Larry Camp, WB8R- September 2025 Section News...

Greetings, everyone!

Some of this may be familiar to readers of other Division communications, but occasionally information needs to be repeated for different audiences. Michigan will have a new Section Manager starting January 1, 2026. Ralph Katz, AA8RK, has been appointed to lead the Michigan ARRL Section for the next two years, being the only candidate to submit a signed petition.

Thanks to Ralph for taking on this role! I look forward to helping him get up to speed, and I encourage everyone to give him your support. Hamfests are back in season now that summer heat and early pests are fading, making for enjoyable browsing. If you attend any of these events, please stop by the table to say hello. I’m hopeful our new Section Manager will also join some of these swaps. Travel safely, and be Radioactive!





From the Midland County EC...

Ric Sauer KD0RMK

2025 ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET)

October sets the stage for the next ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET). This nationwide exercise takes place **October 4–5, 2025**, providing an opportunity to test personal emergency-operating skills and the readiness of communications equipment in a simulated emergency-like deployment.

Participation:

If you take part, please provide a short description of your contribution, including details about your station, location, and entities contacted. You can use the forms available on the ARRL website. Learn more here: [ARRL Simulated Emergency Test](#)

Sample participating organizations:

- American Red Cross
- APCO International
- Boy Scouts of America
- Citizen Corps (DHS)
- FEMA
- NVOAD
- REACT International
- Salvation Army & SATERN
- SKYWARN (NWS)
- United States Power Squadrons
- Quarter Century Wireless Association
- SAFECOM

Contact: Ric Sauer – KD0RMK@gmail.com

City of Midland Tabletop Exercise

The City of Midland will conduct an exercise later this month based on a **Derecho-type storm**. The scenario simulates the loss of all traditional communications, including Internet, cellular, and the LEC/EOC.

Purpose:

- Provide team collaboration for supporting the public during major events
- Fact-finding to guide future planning

Notes for Amateur Radio:

- Amateur radio is not officially part of the exercise

- The event provides a valuable fact-finding opportunity for the ARES team to develop community support capabilities

Weekly Net

A weekly net has been ongoing since January 2024, operating as a combined **Traffic and Rag Chew** until the end of the year. Starting January, these may become two independent events, with the Rag Chew following the Traffic net.

Details:

- **Day:** Thursday (weekly)
- **Time:** 7:30 PM
- **Frequency:** 147.0 MHz + PL 103.5

If you wish to serve as net control, contact **Ric Sauer – KD0RMK@gmail.com**.

Our Sun and the Impact on Amateur Radio

Solar flares and geomagnetic storms can significantly affect communication on the **medium and high frequency (300 kHz – 30 MHz) bands**.

Impacts:

- Solar flares can cause radio blackouts due to enhanced D-region ionization
- Geomagnetic storms can reduce maximum usable frequency (MUF) globally

Observation:

These effects can be tracked using large-scale amateur radio networks such as Reverse Beacon Network, WSPRnet, and PSKReporter.

Tools for Solar Weather Forecasting:

Several smartphone apps provide real-time solar weather and alerts. A popular choice is **Solar Ham**, which can help identify patterns between solar activity and HF propagation.

UPCOMING MI RADIO EVENTS 🗓️🗺️

- Oct 4, 2025, Kalamazoo ARC/SMART Vintage Electronics Expo (WB8R)
- Oct 4, 2025, Copper Country Hamfest, Baraga, MI (TBD)
- Oct 11, 2025, Muskegon Color Tour Hamfest, Muskegon, MI (WB8R)
- Oct 19, 2025, USECA Hamfest, St. Clair Shores, MI (TBD)
- Dec 7, 2025, LCARC ARC Hamfest, Troy, MI (WB8R)



(Michigan / ARRL)

SOS Dirty Dog Trail Run 2025

This was meant to be included in the September newsletter... please read!

The SOS Dirty Dog Trail Run for 2025 is in the books! We would like to thank the following operators for participating in this year's event:

Mitchell – W8DOD
Michael – KD8MMH
John – W8QN
Ric – KD0RMK (Net Control)
John – KB8PGW
Dennis – N8ERF
Linda – KC8MUD
Paul – N8GEM
Stan – K6VWE

We had a great day weather-wise with no rain or wind to contend with. Setup went smoothly, with only minor issues getting all the radios on the correct frequency and communicating with net control. The net ran on a simplex frequency with no problems communicating with any of the handhelds on the course.

Due to the size of the area covered in City Forest, some operators couldn't hear other operators on the course. This was expected, and Ric KD0RMK did an excellent job of repeating each message coming into net control so everyone could keep track of the action.

We had no major incidents, which is always good. We did monitor a couple of runners who appeared to be struggling slightly, but we were able to track their tag numbers to ensure they were okay as they ran the course.

One issue arose when an event worker removed marker ribbons before all runners had finished. One participant on the 10K loop became confused, and our operators assisted them in returning to the finish line.

The organizers were very appreciative of our efforts, as they have been in the past. They said it eases their minds knowing that we have eyes on the entire trail and can report events immediately, including when runners clear checkpoints.

Thanks again to everyone who helped make this event safe and successful!

— Lee KC8ITI

September 4th MARC Meeting Minutes

Dennis N8ERF brought the meeting to order at 7:30 pm with 20 members and guests in attendance, both in person and via Zoom. Introductions were made and a sign-in sheet was passed around. A motion was made by Dennis N8ERF to approve the minutes and seconded by Lee KC8ITI. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report – John W8QN

Thank you to all the members who have renewed their club dues.

Dirty Dog Run – Lee KC8ITI

Very well attended with only one incident when a lady lost her way. Thank you very much to all those operators who came out to help with this worthwhile cause. Ric KD0RMK did a great job as Net Control.

E/C Report – Ric KD0RMK

A sheet was passed around to sign up for Net Control. Please remember that on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day there is traffic only during the NET.

School Club – Dennis N8ERF

Over fifty students in the Middle School signed up to participate in the Electronics Club. 8th Grade students will have the option to study for an Amateur Radio license.

Elections – Dennis N8ERF

Dennis N8ERF nominated himself for President. Nobody is nominated to run for Vice-President. Linda KC8MUD has offered to stay as Secretary. John W8QN has offered to stay as Treasurer.

Dennis N8ERF made a motion to elect these officials by Acclamation. The motion was seconded by several members. Motion passed.

The School Advisory Board – Dennis N8ERF

The advisory board slate is as follows: Dennis N8ERF, Lee KC8ITI, Will K8VFO, Paul N8GEM, and Jackie N8NNA. Paul N8GEM made a motion to elect these people to the School Advisory Board. Seconded by Lee KC8ITI. Motion passed.

New Contact – Lee KC8ITI

Brian and Heidi Reed have been given a new assignment, and so there is a new contact at the Salvation Army.

Upcoming Exercise – Kevin KB8QWQ

On September 13th, there will be an exercise using canines around the jailhouse. They are looking for loggers, net controls, and search victims. See Kevin if you would like to participate.

Saginaw Club – Mike KD8HMM

Ron KC8YVF is giving a talk on antenna testing at their next meeting. The Auction Sale is on September 20th. Please bring auction items for the highest bidder. Contact Mike KD8HMM for more details.

Repeater Discussion – Dennis N8ERF

Many different ideas and opinions from several people. Discussion was about whether or not our club should be involved with the Central Michigan Emergency Network. John W8QN let members know what is needed for this club to repair, keep, and maintain our repeater.

A motion was made by Max KE8DON to adjourn the meeting. Lee KC8ITI seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda KC8MUD
MARC Secretary

Items of Interest

!! DISCORD !!

Did you know we have a Midland Emergency Communication DISCORD site? This is open for all central Michigan amateur radio operators, however it has highly targeted channels that are specific to Midland and Saginaw County as well as ARES members. Please join the members that have already become part of the server to collaborate with others that have Amateur Radio as part of their passion. <https://discord.gg/CEX7kn6ev6>

MARC Merchandise

Did you know that McCreadie Sales has the artwork for MARC? They can put our logo on shirts, jackets, hats, and more. Don't just represent our club, represent it in style. You can go to mccreadiesales.com to place an order with the MARC logo. Contact McCreadie Sales Printwear & Promotion at (989) 631-7650 or visit the store at 601 S Saginaw Rd, Midland, MI 48640!

MARC Help Wanted!

Club Quartermaster - We have been looking for someone to take over for Lee (KC8ITI). This is a great opportunity!

Field Day Committee - We are looking for someone to fill this open position! Contact Dennis Klipa N8ERF at n8erf@arrl.net for more information :)

Newsletter Deadline

Contact KE8RNA at ke8rna@arrl.net if you would like to submit anything— articles, images, events, ideas, etc. – to the newsletter. The deadline for items for inclusion in the newsletter is the last Thursday of the month!

MARC Meetings

Kanushi Desai is in charge of presentation topics for our monthly meetings. If you have a topic on which you would like to present or would like to lead a discussion, please contact her at (989) 948-5889 or ke8rna@arrl.net. To volunteer for **net control**, contact Ric Sauer KD0RMK at kd0rmk@arrl.net

VE Examination Sessions

If you need to find an examination session, please check the ARRL website for scheduled exam sessions in Michigan at: [Http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/examsearch.phtml?State=MI](http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/examsearch.phtml?State=MI)
Or contact Dennis Klipa by email at N8ERF@arrl.net or call at (989) 948-5427.

MARC VITAL STATISTICS

Memberships Expiring in October 2025

N4DBR

Memberships Expiring in December 2025

KB8HIK

Current Active Club Membership

KC8ITI* N8CGP* N8ERF* W8QN* K8VFO* KC8MUD* KB8SOE K0ACP KE8DON
K8GTG N8GEM K6VWE KE8ZKS KF8BYT W8PMR KB8PGW K8PLM
KF8DSP AB8PS W8DOD K8VB KF8DSK N8NTN KE8MND KC8YVF
KD0RMK AC8QF KB8HIK N4DBR WB8WNF KD8MMH KE8RNA N8NNA

*Life Member

Memberships Recently Expired

KE8AZN

New Memberships

N8NNA

Renewed Memberships

WB8WNF KE8RNA KD8MMH N8LBF KB8QWQ

Birthdays Celebrated in October 2025 🎂

KB8PGW AC8QF KC8YVF

Birthdays Celebrated in November 2025 🎂

K6VWE

Information based on data received September 25, 2025

Crossword Puzzle of the Month :)

(email ke8rna@arrl.net for hints/ key)

CQ Contest

Across

1. Radiation pattern part
5. Contest off-time ender, possibly
10. The "Olympics" of contests
14. IOTA item
15. Unusual object
16. "Long ____" (DX)
17. VE8 mobile?
18. Hammerin' Hank
19. 1091 using 44-across
20. An advantage of being weak?
23. In early radio, some rotated and some didn't
24. Foot part
25. Wayward circuit paths
28. Knight neighbor
30. 3W holiday
33. QTH on the range
34. 160 meter Stew
35. The one with QTC
36. Sheltered, when /MM
37. They don't count, and may count against you
38. CW parts
39. Plating material
40. Typewriters (in ham speak)
41. Military cap
42. The only CW many people know
43. One way to stand by
44. Abbreviated figs. (abbr.)
45. AMSAT launch partner
46. Currency used by 45-across, mostly
47. Predatory contesting?
55. EI-land, in EI-speak
56. VQ9 first name
57. They make the 45, sometimes for big guns
58. Western competing org.
59. 3:1 dash to dot ratio, say
60. "Yikes!"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17				18					19			
20				21					22			
			23					24				
25	26	27				28	29			30	31	32
33					34					35		
36				37					38			
39				40					41			
42				43				44				
			45				46					
47	48	49				50	51			52	53	54
55					56					57		
58					59					60		
61					62					63		

61. Biblical verb
62. Prefix with -cotta
63. Xtal filter replacements

Down

1. Daffy Duck's programming language?
2. LA city
3. A fuse maybe did this
4. Many hams also have one
5. Bidirectional flow
6. KH6-fests
7. June VHF QSO Party sponsor
8. Funny one
9. Non-op hams at 10-across stations
10. Large cetacean
11. Suffix with glitte- or lite-
12. Twiddle the big knob

13. Yaesu front panel marking
21. Contesters try to maximize it
22. 21-down, for a first-time contestant?
25. Test results figs.
26. Prefix with centric or sphere
27. A band sometimes does it at dawn
28. CQ answer
29. Valuable minerals
30. Region net for NNJ and others
31. Gourmand
32. NAQP, CQWW and others, briefly
34. Push-____
37. Response to a contest exchange, say

38. Took an alternate route
40. Catchall abbr.
41. QSL handler, slangily
44. Vaulted roof
45. Construct, as a tower
46. "Nevermore" quote quoter, informally
47. Transmit
48. Kit maker, once
49. Ominous noises from the amp, maybe
50. Assistant
51. At no time, poetically
52. Holiday drinks
53. OM in G-land
54. High V points on a dipole

About the Midland Amateur Radio Club

W8KEA is the Amateur Radio call sign assigned to the Midland Amateur Radio Club (MARC) by the Federal Communications Commission. MARC, established in 1948, holds monthly meetings of its members at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of every month at the Salvation Army Building located at 330 Waldo Ave, Midland, Michigan. MARC is dedicated to the support of the Amateur Radio community in the Midland area, to providing public service and emergency communications to the community and to educating the public in all aspects of Amateur Radio. MARC provides communications support for community events such as the annual Dow Run and the MS Walk on a completely voluntary basis. MARC also works closely with the Midland County Department of Emergency Services, the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army to provide voluntary emergency communications support in times of emergency, disaster or severe weather event. MARC offers classes to anyone interested in earning an Amateur Radio License. The club repeater, W8KEA, operates on a frequency of 147.0000 MHz with a positive offset. The PL tone is 103.5. MARC also offers examination sessions so you can take your FCC examination here in Midland. MARC advisors lead the Electronics and Wireless Communications Clubs at Northeast Middle School and Midland High School.

Interested in knowing more about Amateur Radio? Come on down to our next meeting. Everyone is welcome, and we would be happy to get to know you.

MARC is a 501(c)(3) organization. The club's articles of incorporation and bylaws are available for review.

You can learn about amateur radio by visiting the American Radio Relay League website.



If you desire to join the **Midland Amateur Radio Club**, the dues are \$20 per year and \$5 for additional family members. Membership includes a *Monthly Newsletter*. Please supply the following information:

Name _____ Call: _____ N T G A E _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Birthdate (mmddy) _____ Anniversary _____

Telephone-Home _____ Work _____

Are you an ARRL Member? Yes _____ No _____

If not an ARES member, do you want an application? Yes _____ No _____

Please send to MARC, P.O, Box 1049, Midland MI 48641

⬛ **!!STOP RIGHT THERE!!** ⬛

This is the end... for now. I hope you enjoyed this edition!

Be Radio Active! 73!

