



THE MARA VOICE

MAKING WAVES IN A DIGITAL WORLD

PO Box 873131, Wasilla, AK 99687

website: <http://kl7jfu.com/>

facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/don.bush.3388>

WINTER FIELD DAY—TRAINING EXERCISE

MARA Club members will be participating in the Winter Field Day and use it as a training exercise for PJMS students, faculty, parents, and/or caregivers. This will be a great opportunity for any licensed operators to dust off your portable radio equipment and make some contacts from the comfort of your home, ham shack, warm vehicle, or on site at PJMS during the hours of the training exercise.

Brandon Clark, KL7BSC, will be the onsite point of contact with setup starting at 10am and the station ready at noon-ish. Brandon has the site location registered on the website, <https://winterfieldday.org/index.php>.

If you can participate and want to discuss how to talk with him and the students over the radio during Winter Field Day, contact him at kl7bsc@protonmail.com.



“What you learn during WFD and your ability to adapt and overcome sudden obstacles will help you during unexpected emergencies. ...we want to encourage participants not to chase the contacts or the points but to test their abilities and equipment.” Quoted from WFD website

with their written permission, <https://winterfieldday.org/sop.php>

If you too want to register and also participate with WFD, here is the website to their registration packet, <https://winterfieldday.org/downloads/2024-WFDA-Rules-Packet-V.-10.04.23.pdf>

WFDA Logo included with written permission from Winter Field Day members.



ANNOUNCEMENT

MARA CLUB DUES

It is that time again to pay your club dues for the year. The cost is \$24 a person. You can pay by check, cash, or via the MARA club website at <http://kl7jfu.com> then scroll down and click on the yellow “DONATE” button. You will be redirected to the PayPal webpage.

MARA is a 501c3 non-profit club so your “donation” is all tax deductible.

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OFFICERS REPORTS

PRESIDENT– Scott McCormick, KL7SLM

!!HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

As we start into the new year, MARA has many exciting events planned for this year. I would like to tell you about a few of them here.

The first one is a new partnership with Palmer Junior Middle School (PJMS) and their new amateur radio club for the students. William Crume, KL5LD, a faculty member of PJMS and faculty advisor for the club. He stated to the MARA Board that the purpose of the club is to introduce the students to amateur radio, provide classes, and help the students obtain their technician license. Currently, the school is purchasing the necessary equipment, and once it has arrived, he will need help with the installation. He asked that MARA members help teach some of the classes like antenna building, electrical safety, RF safety, and any topic related to the amateur radio hobby. We would also like to have folks that are available to assist in providing QSO's on HF/VHF/UHF, packet, DMR, and D-Star. Scott KL7SLM and Don KL7JFT are the MARA points of contact and will be helping William with setting up the PJMS ham club and scheduling the volunteers to teach classes.

The next one is Winter Field Day on January 27-28. We chose PJMS this year so the students involved in the school's new ham club could come out and see how we operate. We need several folks to show up and help operate the equipment with the students. This event works just like other Field Day events and is a lot of fun. The point of contact will be Brandon Clark, KL7BSC.

Another activity is the yearly ARRL Field Day held on June 29-30 and MARA will participate this year since the Motley Picnic that is usually scheduled at the same time, but has been moved to August. We are looking for someone to be the point of contact for this specific event. The point of contact would be the person who would determine the location, prepare the documentation to submit to ARRL to be listed on the nationwide map, manage the Field Day site activities and trainings, maintain the equipment used, and complete as well as submit the final reports. The MARA Event Planner will assist with the greeting, information table, and bbq luncheon.

These are just some of the events that the board is planning for this year, however we need your help to make sure that these events are fun and successful. Also, if you are new to the hobby or want to learn more about the different facets of the hobby these events are the best way to get on the air and learn something new.

73,

VICE PRESIDENT/VE —

Ken Hudson, KL2HF

This year we will be providing presentations at each of our monthly meetings and trainings on Saturday on the proper way to set up and use various amateur radio equipment. Please contact me, by email with your ideas or suggestions for presentations at radiohamming@gmail.com.

OFFICERS REPORTS

SECRETARY/EVENT PLANNER/NEWSLETTER EDITOR — Shelia Olson, KL3SRO

I welcome your assistance with our Club events and if you want to provide info to share with readers, please contact me at the email okfam@hotmail.com.

TREASURER— John Carrington, KL1XM

MARA Club Membership Dues can be paid in person at a meeting, mailed, or on the club website. Payments can be cash, check, or credit card on the website by clicking the “Donate” link. A new window where you type in the amount and whether it will be PayPal or credit card.

ARRL dues can also be paid through the Club and we get a percent of the funds back.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

BOARD MEETING 1/10 at 7pm
LUNCHEON 1/25 at 11:30am
GENERAL MEETING 1/26 at 7pm
WINTER FIELD DAY 1/27 at 10am
VE TESTING 1/27 at 7pm



ALWAYS CHECK THE MARA CLUB WEBSITE FOR THE UPDATED INFO ON OUR EVENTS

<http://kl7jfu.com/calendar/>

OR YOU CAN CONTACT THE MARA CLUB EVENT PLANNER, Shelia at

okfam@hotmail.com

Happy Valentine's Day

FEBRUARY

BOARD MEETING 2/14 at 7pm
LUNCHEON 2/22 at 11:30am
GENERAL MEETING 2/23 at 7pm
VE TESTING 2/24 at 7pm

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

SPOTLIGHT— DON, KL7JFT & CAROL, KL2FA

This month's spotlight is shining on this wonderful couple



Hi there, I'm Don Bush, KL7JFT. I am the Mat-Su Borough's District Emergency Coordinator (DEC), Alaska State Army MARS Director, Retired after 52 years, and the Net Manager for the South-Central VHF ARES Net. I am on the Board of MARA (Matanuska Amateur Radio Assoc). I am a VE for the club, an Elmer, and the WebMaster. The QTH is located outside Palmer Alaska about 50 miles North of Anchorage.

I was first licensed in 1976. Went from Novice to Extra and Mike/KL7ILA was my instructor and Elmer. MARA was just beginning. I worked for an Office Machine Company and was promoted to District Manager and transferred to Juneau.

Besides ham radio, I worked with the Coast Guard throughout Southeast Alaska for the next 19 years. I built a Coast Guard Auxiliary station, which had DF and all frequency capability RTTY, CW, and ASCII. I then had the opportunity to go back on active duty with the Army, attached to the National Guard in the Southeast. I was the Emergency Coordinator for the Juneau Ham Club and promoted a good relationship between the Army Guard, Army, and hams.

On Oct 4th, 1980, the cruise ship PRINSENDAM caught fire in the Gulf of Alaska, between Yakutat and Sitka. Despite an incoming typhoon, 30-foot seas, and 100-meter visibility, every one of the more than 500 passengers and crew escaped before the ship burned and sank. It's been called the greatest high seas rescue in the history of the Coast Guard. <https://archive.org/download/SosMsPrinsendamOctober41980/Fire at Sea.pdf>

In 1990, I met my wonderful wife, Carol. Now the fun really started. She worked on the Alaska State Ferry System, and we traveled all over SE Alaska enjoying fishing, ham radio and boating. We both deployed at the same time so when we both were home, we had a blast. We got married in 1993. For our wedding, we had the wedding party fly up to the top of the Mendenhall Glacier in the Ice Field by chopper and held the ceremony, now that was different. Except for me and my best man, the rest of the wedding party had never been on a chopper. There were a few exciting moments and crushed fingers. Later in 1993 we were transferred to Ft Richardson, and we took residence in Palmer.

I've been in Alaska for most of my adult life, except for my Military Service starting in 1966, which included the Navy, Coast Guard and Army. Finally retired in 1997 at Fort Richardson Alaska. My military career took me to all the garden spots around the world, starting in Vietnam, Taiwan, Philippines, Japan, Iraq, Juneau, Ak and various places around the west coast ending up at Desert Storm. I've been involved with electronics,

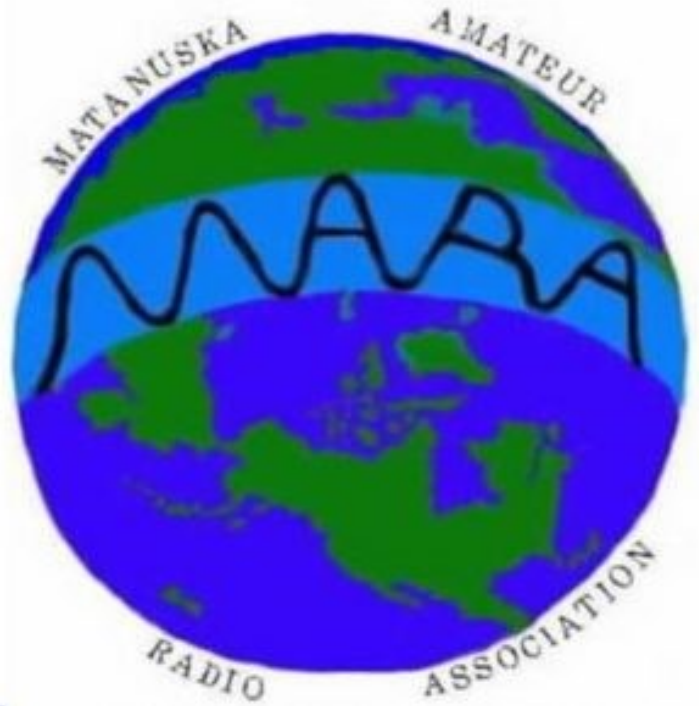
MARA INFORMATION AND HISTORY

The Matanuska Amateur Radio Association (MARA) is a 501(c)3 tax exempt charitable organization that has been around since 1977.

The club was created by Norm Dietz, KL7IPJ; Milt Souter, KL7IPA; Doug Olive, KL7IKN; John Miller, AL7AA; Mike Eppler, KL7ILA; and Rosana Eppler, KL7IRE.

The Club added 12 full members: Brian Crawford Jr, KL7JDQ; Roy Davie, KL7CUK; Wayne Groomer, KL7HHO; Logan Groomer, KL7EKI; Jasper Heath, KL7MD; Frank Knapp, KL7DOB; Lyman Klein, WA0GAC; Don Bush, KL7JFT; Roy Mesecher, KL7BZ; Walt Pierce, Nate Smith, KL7DJE; and Rick Dwight, KL7CW;

as well as 7 associate (non-licensed) members: Tom Berticevich, Gerry Dietz, Max Elliott, Sharon Groomer, Pomposa Heath, James Kinser, and Mickey Olive.



Parks on the Air (POTA) started in 2017 and stemmed from the yearly ARRL event. It has grown to be an internationally utilized program for portable operations and maintained its affiliation with ARRL.

In the coming year, the MARA Club will be set up a few locations with “activators” who set equipment at the established location and “hunters” who search from home to talk with the activators and other hunters. The events will be open to Club members as well as the community. The hope is to have regular, scheduled events and get our Club on the POTA map. If interested in participating, contact Brandon, KL7BCS at kl7bsc@protonmail.com For more information on how to join or to donate to POTA, go to website <https://parksontheair.com/> or get the book shown below The Parks on the Air through ARRL



The Parks on the Air® Book explores the process of activating a park unit and hunting those activations. Through the experiences of 14 operators, it offers advice and motivation for taking your radio out to the park and becoming active in the growing POTA community.

CONTESTING ALASKA STYLE by Brandon Clark, KL7BSC

Disappointment set in when the headlights revealed a closed gate blocking the way to the Cottonwood Creek parking area. A sign read, "Road closed due to heavy snow and ice." As I turned around I thought to myself, "Well, so much for that plan. Now what am I going to do?"

With the popularity of FT8, hams could be forgiven for thinking other modes have disappeared from the bands. Far from it! Other digital modes are alive and well, and this month was the ARRL RTTY Roundup contest. **My goal was to combine contest activity with a POTA activation . . . if I could get to the flats.**

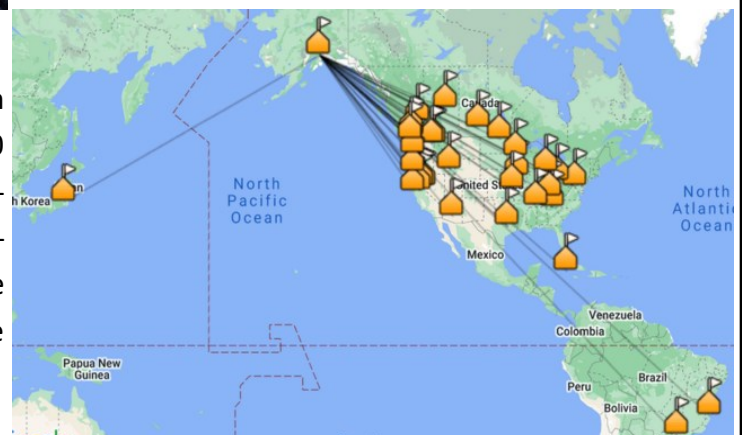
After a mad dash to the Rabbit Slough side and a slight roadside misadventure (always bring a shovel!) I finally parked and set up antennas: a beat up ¼-wave ground plane for HF and a homebrew J-pole for VHF.

Some salvaged batteries powered the radios, while a Portable Buddy heater powered the operator.



The bands didn't fully open until around brunch, but by the end of the day I had worked a bunch of lower-48 states, some Canadian provinces, Japan, and even a few South American and Caribbean contesters. Not bad for 40 watts, from the back of a truck, in the middle of winter, using a supposedly-dead digital mode!

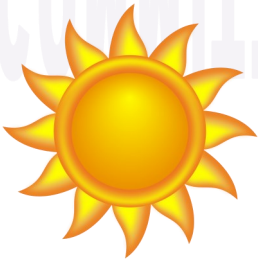
It's true that contesting from Alaska can be tough because we're so far away from everywhere. My 50 contacts for the day can't hold a candle to what lower-48 contest stations will rack up. But I'm not interested in winning the contest. I'm there to enjoy the beautiful scenery, test my equipment, rack up some bragging rights, and *HAVE FUN*.



It's surprising how much fun you can have with basic antennas and some propane.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SUNSHINE



If you know of anyone in the MARA club who is under the weather or recovering from illness or injury, please contact the club Secretary, Shelia Olson, KL3SRO by email at okfam@hotmail.com to request a card and/or flowers be sent to the person to help cheer them up. We also provide cards and/or flowers to the families of Silent Keys.

ARES

Don Bush, KL7JFT, Alaska DEC, and facilitator for the ARES efforts in the Mat-Su Valley.



Weekly communication nets are held every Thursday promptly at 8pm on 147.300 or 147.330 or 146.670 depending on the cooperation of the airwaves.

More information on all NETS is on page 9.

There are monthly trainings and quarterly communication exercises.

To be a member of ARES or obtain any of the training or exercise information, contact Don at kl7jft@gmail.com.

TRAILER

MARA Club has two trailers, one with the equipment for communications and the other for power support and the antenna tower as shown below.



The trailers are kept ready to use for the radio-related communication needs of the club or by request from ARES, Mat-Su Borough, or Statewide for any emergency.

VOLUNTEER EXAMINER (VE)

Amateur radio licensing exams are held each month, usually on the last Saturday at the Wasilla Area Senior Center, Inc. (WASI).

Ken Hudson, our lead VE, and other VEs attend the test sessions, review, and score the exams. Once exam is passed, Ken submits the necessary documentation to the FCC.



communications, search and rescue, and light infantry. After the Army and retiring from the military, I worked for GCI Telecommunications Company for 19 years.

Carol got her license in 1995. She was tired of not getting in touch with me on the highway due to poor cell coverage and bandwidth. The following year she passed her General. We worked together in ARES and did contesting. She was great working with the kids and the public in promoting ham radio. Her other hobbies include cross stitching, quilts, reading, camping, canning and her dogs. We added a nice 30' camp trailer with a complete station, including the TM 480, Pactor III & Tigertronics Modem, MFJ 993B Tuner, Tarheel 300, rotatable Dipole, D710G and laptop. The pop tent was not too much fun.

The current station, that Carol/KL2FA and I share, consists of an ICOM 7610, ACOM 1010 700 Watt Linear, Yaesu 897, Kenwood D710A, MFJ & LDG Auto Tuners, AEA MX 232 TNCs, SCS Pactor 3, Tigertronics, Navigator TNCs, and Phone Patch. We have also added the Bridgecom 220 and Kenwood TM-V71 Anytone DMR System and D-Star, with the D878 portable, D578 Pro III and DMMEGA hotspot. My SSID is KL7JFT-12.



As you can see the box on the top left of the station is my go box. We also run Yaesu 857 & Kenwood D700 in the Truck with Packet, Winlink, Digital, APRS with a HI-Q 5 for the HF antenna. The base station antennas consist of 2 Cobra Senior Folded Dipoles, Hygain TH-7 at 50 feet, 5 Element 6-meter beam at 60', and various VHF/UHF Beam and Collinear antennas. We host the Palmer/Wasilla Area VHF Winlink Station KL7JFT-10 and APRS I-Gate KL7JFT-5. We are adding a hex beam this spring. We run the station on a battery bank, with a generator backup for the entire house and with UPSs for the computer systems. With a 24" all in one Dell Computer to run all the systems, with a laptop backup, we're in pretty good shape.

Our mobile station in the F350 is a Kenwood 700, APRS AG5, Bridgecom D-578PRO III DMR, Yaesu 857, AEA 232MBX TNC and Tigertronics TNC, Scorpion Screwdriver, and 3 CA-2 mobile VHF/UHF antenna, Anytone 878 HT/w Hotspot, and Laptop. Carol keeps the rigs tuned and runs the digital ops while we're moving. And when the propagation gets bad, her voice helps to cut through the noise, an Excellent Co-Pilot. Our dogs are always with us and are a great help to both of us when in the field and camping.

My web site is <http://www.kl7jft.org> and is the home of MARA ARES and the MARA Club web site is <http://www.kl7jfu.com>. You can follow our club activities also on Face Book under Mara Club.

Anyone you want to be in the Spotlight, contact Shelia Olson, KL3SRO at okfam@hotmail.com. I ask for a good picture or pictures and the answers to the main questions of 1) what got you interested in becoming a ham 2) what is your favorite part of the hobby, 3) what would you like the club to do or provide. But you can write it out however you choose and the article can be however long it takes to tell your story. I do make edits to fix typos, grammar, and spacing.

OTHER WAYS WE MAKE WAVES

BE PREPARED—ESPECIALLY IN ALASKA

Being in Alaska, we all need to be a prepper that meets the needs of our families and our budgets. But where to go, what to get, where to store what we get.....so much to consider.

Ready.gov, an official US Government website, <https://www.ready.gov> provides a plethora of information to include: making a written plan for any type or size of emergency, preparing a kit for each member of the household, with lists of items to consider no matter the season, and buying/gathering supplies and storage options. But where to buy supplies and storage options.

One place you could start is our local Sportsman's Warehouse (I am not an employee there, just passing on the information). You can shop online, on the app, have things shipped to wherever needed and where they deliver, or go in the store to see and feel the items, their weight, their dimensions to better gauge what will work in your situation. Their website is <https://www.sportsmans.com>.

Another source is researching through the Buyers Guide (also not an employee of this company) that has a list of reviewed emergency food suppliers. Their website is <https://buyersguide.org/emergency-food-supply-reviews>.

BECOME A SKYWARN WEATHER SPOTTER

Given the constant changes in Alaska weather, MARA Club members are invited to become trained to become a Skywarn Weather Spotter.

Once trained, you can submit your reports of what you see, as well as road/river conditions in your area via winlink to Harry Lind, Jr, AL6F, the Skywarn Manager located in Fairbanks and a copy to Don Bush, KL7JFT, DEC for Mat-Su Emergency Services.

Skywarn provides the training. The links to specific trainings as well as maps and other great tidbits of information and additional trainings concerning weather and the Skywarn program can be found on the MARA Club website at <http://kl7jfu.com/weather-spotter-training-skywarn-maps/>

When you have completed trainings, provide a copy of the certificate to Don at kl7jft@gmail.com.

If you need winlink training, please contact Don Bush.



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NETS

From website <http://kl7jfu.com/nets/>

Repeater Nets, VHF-FM

Sunday 2000 hrs 146.43 Mhz Simplex MATSU Old Timers Net Open Check ins and discussions
Monday 1930 hrs DMR Net, AK Statewide TG 3102 Statewide Net General DMR Discussion
Monday 2000hrs 146.58 Mhz Simplex Valley North Net Contact: Hal/KLOWX
Wednesday 1900hrs 146.52 Mhz Simplex South Central Simplex Net Contact: Various Freqs. KL7AA/KL7TS
Thursday 2000hrs 147.330 Mhz Plus Shift, 103.5hz Tone ARES Net

This is the main emergency VHF net. You do not have to belong to the ARES group to check in, There are different Themes each week, such as Hand Held/Cross Band, Mobile, Red Cross and Emergency Power. Listen for theme at the beginning of each NET. Alternate/backup NET Freq. is 147.30 + shift/141.3hz Tone

WINSystem

Daily 2200hrs 146.790 Mhz Minus Shift, 100.0 Tone Insomniac Net
It's a Trivia Net. Usually 3 questions & 3 Answers to choose from each question. There's a different Net Controller for every night. Check in 2 weeks in a row with each individual Controller to get on the list. You can also sign up for the questions to be emailed to you each night
Tuesday 1600hrs 146.790 Mhz Minus Shift, 100.0 Tone East Coast Reflector Tech/Check-in Net
Friday 1730-1930hrs 146.790 Mhz Minus Shift, 100.0 Tone WINSystem Tech Net
w/Gordon West, usually for the first hour, Ron WB6IAG "Antenna Specialist" & hosted by Steve N5ZUA
Friday 1930hrs 146.790 Mhz Minus Shift, 100.0 Tone Swap Net following the WINSystem Tech Net

Packet Nets

Anytime 147.960 Mhz / simplex 1200 baud Packet Peanut Gallery (PPG)
Anytime another 2 meter net is in progress. Connect to "valley" and type "talk".
Anytime 145.01 Mhz / Simplex 1200 Baud
Anytime another 2 meter net is in progress. Connect to "eagle" and type "talk".
Anytime 145.01 Mhz / Simplex 1200 Baud
Open Packet Network for South Central AK. Homer-Anchorage-Matsu Links thru KL7ION-2, KL7AIR-7, KL7JFT-7, KL7XZ (Some Nodes have BBS on -1)

Simplex Chat

National 146.520 Mhz Mat-Su Valley 146.430 Mhz Trapper Creek/Talkeetna 146.58 Mhz
Anchorage 146.490 Mhz Kenai Peninsula 146.420 Mhz

HF Nets

Monday – Friday 0830 hrs 14.292 Mhz USB Alaska Pacific Net Directed Net
Monday 2000 hrs 3.920 Mhz LSB Willow CERTs Net Open check in
Daily 1800 hrs 3.920 Mhz LSB Alaska Sniper's Net Directed Net
Daily 2000 hrs 7.093 Mhz LSB Alaska Bush Net Open check in
Daily 2100 hrs 3.933 Mhz LSB Alaska Motley Net Open check in
Saturday 1000 hrs 3.920 Mhz LSB Alaska Swap Net Open check in. Contact: Dean/WL7PM
Monday – Friday 1200 hrs 3.920 Mhz LSB Alaska Old Timers Net Open check in
4th Saturday of month 1000 hrs 5167.5 Mhz USB Alaska Emergency Frequency

Open check in § 97.401 Operation during a disaster. A station in, or within 92.6 km (50 nautical miles) of, Alaska may transmit emissions J3E and R3E on the channel at 5.1675 MHz (assigned frequency 5.1689 MHz) for emergency communications. The channel must be shared with stations licensed in the Alaska-Private Fixed Service. The transmitter power must not exceed 150 W PEP. A station in, or within 92.6 km of, Alaska may transmit communications for tests and training drills necessary to ensure the establishment, operation, and maintenance of emergency communication systems.