

Mid-Atlantic Amateur Radio Club Time Line

1976 - 2001

MARC in the 70's 80's 90's 00's

November, 1976	Charter meeting of the Radnor Repeater Group, formed by users of the WR3ABZ/R repeater on 147.06 MHz. The repeater is privately owned by Joe Rocci WA3CMQ and Joe DeCourcelle K3OBU. Postage on the first newsletter is 13 cents.	The name on the charter meeting's minutes is Keystone Amateur Radio Group. However, there already was a Keystone ARC in the Philadelphia area. At the charter meeting, the temporary name Radnor Repeater Group was adopted. By the first membership meeting in December, 1976, the name had become Mid-Atlantic Radio Club. It was changed to Mid-Atlantic Amateur Radio Club by June, 1977.
December, 1976	First membership meeting on December 10, at Villanova University, attended by 27 hams.	Early meetings were held at Villanova University. Later, some meetings took place at the GE Space Center. By the early 1980's, meetings were held at the Metropolitan Federal Savings Bank at City Line and Haverford Avenues, in Overbrook. In 1985, meetings moved to the Memorial Library of Radnor Township in Wayne, where they remained until 2001.
1977	The club's name is changed to Mid-Atlantic ARC. MARC starts the first VHF ARES net in the Philly area. Our first Field Day uses the callsign of Bob Young W3NWA, seen at right operating at Field Day 1978. The '77 group makes 1,138 contacts. One year after founding, MARC has 97 members and \$366.67 in the bank.	
1978	Coordination granted for a repeater on 145.13 MHz. It is intended to be an experimenter's repeater, enabled for RTTY (yes, on 2 meters!), but that never comes about. The repeater is located in Bryn Mawr. The WB3JOE callsign is received from the FCC.	In the 1970's, repeaters had distinctive callsigns with WR prefixes. The privately-owned 147.06 machine signed WR3ABZ. Around the time ownership of the repeater was transferred to the club, the '06 callsign changed to WR3AKR, with Phil Reger WA3VCS as trustee. When Phil stepped down as WR3AKR trustee, WB3JOE was put on '06. In 1977, the FCC abolished repeater licenses and the WR callsigns. By the end of the decade, both MARC repeaters signed WB3JOE, with Al Maslin W3DZI as trustee. Amazingly, though the original builders / owners of the '06 repeater were both named "Joe," the club call was simply the luck of the draw!
1979	First MARC hamfest is held. The profit is about \$960.	The first 5 hamfests were held at the Route 309 Drive-In Theatre in Montgomeryville. After publicity was already out for the 1984 show, theater management sold the property for redevelopment. However, they offered their Bucks County 611 Drive-In to us, and hamfests were held there through 1995. In 1996, the event moved to the fairgrounds in Kimberton, Chester County, with indoor sales facilities for the first time.
1980	MARC VHF traffic nets begin ... the first VHF message-handling nets in Philadelphia and 'burbs this side of the Delaware.	
1982	MARC affiliates with the American Radio Relay League. About this time, the club logo (designed by Neil Halin WA3RPG) is adopted.	
1983	Novice license classes offered for the first time. Tech-General instruction also offered once. Novice classes continued through 1986, and intermittently thereafter, with a shift of emphasis to the Technician license after that becomes the most common entry-level license.	The FCC delegated all Novice license testing to hams in 1983, just in time for our class. The VEC system did not exist yet ... exams for license classes other than Novice still had to be taken at an FCC Field Office. One (later 2) hams with General or higher license could prepare, administer, and grade a Novice exam.
1984	MARC's Novice course is highlighted in <i>QST</i> article about the BASIC program written to generate theory tests from the newly-public question pool.	The test-generating program written by Kay Craigie KC3LM for our course was later used by Central Alabama VEC.
1985	The '06 repeater moves from Villanova University to Cabrini College in Radnor. Meetings move from Overbrook to Wayne. The packet radio project begins, but few members are on the new digital mode.	In 1985, you couldn't buy a packet radio Terminal Node Controller (TNC) off the shelf. MARC's original TNC was a TAPR 1, assembled by John Bartholomew WB3ELA (SK) from a kit sold by Tucson Amateur Packet Radio. It was just a board, no enclosure. The JOE packet computer was to have been a Xerox 820 Z-80 machine, but John used his own Z-80 computer instead. The WB3JOE packet BBS came on the air in 1987 from John's house. It moved to Paoli Hospital in 1988. Packet sysops after John were Bart Feroe KC3BP (1989-1996) and Steve Maslin N3ORH (1996-2000).
1986	The WB3JOE-9 packet digipeater appears on 145.09 MHz. MARC becomes an ARRL Special Service Club. First club-sponsored license tests in May '86.	
1987	WB3JOE packet BBS comes on the air, linked to other BBS's for message forwarding. A program speaker tells us digital audio will never catch on because the quality will never be good enough.	"Novice Enhancement" in 1987 granted Novices voice privileges on part of the 220-225 MHz band. Like many other clubs, MARC decided to put a repeater on the air (224.42 MHz) to serve new hams ... but the Novice license was fading, even with the added VHF and 10 meter HF voice privileges.
1988	The 224.42 repeater signs on. The January Junk auction becomes an annual event. MARC's first dues increase: from \$10 to \$15 a year. A display about ham radio is set up in the Cabrini College library.	
1989	The MARC ARES Net on Sunday nights becomes a club fellowship net, so as not to cause confusion with local county ARES/RACES nets.	
1990	Club by-laws revised. Logo callsign badge program begins with engraver The Sign Man of Baton Rouge.	
1991	Dues suspended for members called to active duty during Operation Desert Storm. Federal Tax exemption received. The Morse code requirement is removed from the Technician license in February, and MARC welcomes the new Technicians. Our hamfest draws about 1,500 buyers, our biggest gate ever, and the profit is over \$4,500.	
1992	CTCSS added to 147.06 repeater output, so members can squelch signals from other '06 repeaters. Art York W4VRP leads Novice-Tech training class. In another big hamfest year, the profit again exceeds \$4,500.	
1993	Bulletins are discontinued. SuperMorse code practice program given away free to members. Ned Smith WQ3Z leads Novice-Tech course offered through Main Line School Night. A problem is that MLSN doesn't allow kids in classes. Commercial ham radio convention at Valley Forge imperils local radio club hamfests ... but we're still here and it isn't. So there!	Before packet radio and eventually the Internet made information conveniently available, voice bulletin stations were the best local source of timely updates about ham radio from the ARRL and other news sources. At one time, MARC had bulletins 3 times a week. Novice examinations were integrated into the VEC system in '93 to stop exam fraud.
1994	January meeting cancelled by ice storm. New '06 repeater goes on the air in late '93 or early '94. The FCC wants to know what hams think about being allowed to choose our callsigns again, for a fee.	The policy of allowing some Extra class hams to choose their callsigns was discontinued in the 1970's, after some FCC staffers were caught taking bribes from hams for preferential treatment. For years thereafter, the FCC would hear nothing about callsign choice.
1995	145.13 repeater joins Pennsylvania Complex Link Group, which eventually fizzles out. First member e-mail directory published. Heavy rain from a passing hurricane takes hamfest profits down the drain at the drive-in theater.	
1996	Members offered 1 free license test during 20th anniversary year. Members captain a humanitarian effort to bring Nick Bortnik UX0ZZ to the USA for medical treatment. CTCSS put on 145.13 repeater output. MARC goes on the World Wide Web. The hamfest moves to Kimberton, Chester County. With club callsigns again being issued by the FCC, we apply for and receive W3NWA.	The Web page was begun by Tom Porett N3JMA, as www.voicenet.com/~wb3joe . Tom was followed as webmaster by Steve Maslin N3ORH.
1997	Our 20th annual Field Day puts W3NWA on the air for the first time since Bob Young W3NWA became a Silent Key. We donate a new American flag to the library in Wayne ... theirs had 48 stars! And we do a top to bottom cleaning of the Winsor Room.	
1998	147.06 moves from Radnor to Newtown Square, and 145.13 moves from Bryn Mawr to Radnor. Beloved entertainer Larry Ferrari WA2MKI becomes a Silent Key. Our first information bulletins go out on the Internet. ARRL license study videos are available for loan to members. We get our own domain www.marc-radio.org . We do a ham radio display in the lobby of the Radnor Township library	
1999	MARC joins the Main Line Volunteer Force to help needy neighbors. The 145.13 repeater has to leave Cabrini College. After some down-time, it comes back from Norristown. Usage of the packet BBS is way down. REMARCS is distributed via the Internet for the first time. We mark the 50th anniversary of ARRL's National Traffic System. The post office box moves from Villanova to Southeastern. The packet BBS is discontinued as of year's end.	After years of excuses, excuses, excuses, FCC Rules enforcement came back to the ham bands thanks to Riley Hollingsworth K4ZDH! He credits the ARRL with exerting relentless pressure that finally caused the FCC to do the right thing.
2000	Many MARC members serve with ARES/RACES on December 31, 1999, in case the Y2K bug bites. The new license class structure comes in on April 15. No more 13 and 20 wpm code tests! No more new Novice or Advanced tickets! MARC's April 15 test session is our biggest ever. We (and various other civic groups) learn we'll be 86'd from the Radnor Library, but the Township Commissioners offer us a new home. Members vote to approve revised By-Laws. The 145.13 repeater moves to Paoli Hospital. Soundcard digital modes grow in popularity.	 For the first time, we elected a second-generation president. Steve Maslin N3ORH (shown here at Field Day a long time ago) is the son of past Secretary and newsletter editor Marlene Patrick WA3UOC and past president Al Maslin N3EA.
2001	Meetings move to the Radnor Township administration building in St. Davids. The junque auction changes from January to March to avoid nasty weather. Web pages add information to issues of the newsletter on digital modes, contesting, Dayton, and the MARC hamfest. Delaware County ARES/RACES comes back to life. Some MARC members report for emergency comm duty following the terrorist attacks of September 11.	Click HERE for a chart of MARC's leaders from 1976 to 2001.