

Squelch Tales

Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for June 1999

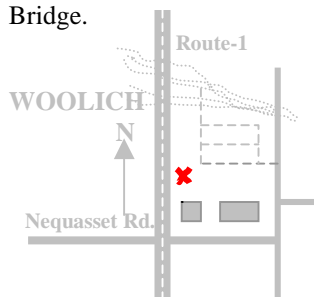
JUNE IS FOR



FIELD DAY

That is correct, June is when we break out the ball caps, 15 plus sunscreen, bug repellent and limber up the old vocal cords for the big event on June 26th and 27th, Field Day.

This year the MARA will set up in a new location. The town fathers of Woolich offered the grass field between the Woolich Fire Department/Museum, and town boat landing/picnic located at the intersection of Route-1 and Nequasset Road, about one mile and a half north of the Kennebec River Bridge.



We hope that all of you will come out and participate in this year's event. Come help set-up on Saturday, operate and help take down on Sunday. The site is park-like with ample parking.

We will decide at set-up time if we will operate with one or two transmitters. It all depends on how

Many of you show up and want to participate.

There will be a pre set-up breakfast about 8 AM at the South Gate Café on Washington Street in Bath, across from BIWs south gate.

If any of you are of Native American ancestry, please refrain from any rain dances until after the Field Day event. Your cooperation in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Come and join in, invite or bring a friend and have some fun.

MARA to Participate in WOOLICH DAYS

As who we are and what we do gets out into the mid coast community we are again being asked to participate in community events. The town of Woolich will celebrate their Woolich Day events on **Saturday, July 31** at the town fire station and adjacent Town Park. Bob Mead representing the town (and a MARA member) asked if the MARA would like to set-up a ham station at the event and demonstrate our communications ability to the public in attendance.

At the May MARA meeting it was agreed that our association would do just that. Robin Walls, N1NFK will obtain Ham Radio information handouts from the League. Bruce, W1ZE will collect the needed equipment and Mr. Robin, N1NUO, will make his R-5 vertical available.

We hope to demonstrate HF, VHF, UHF, Voice, CW and digital mode communications and hopefully send some routine message traffic for the visitors via the National Traffic System.

We encourage MARA members to attend, if just for an hour or two and help promote Ham Radio and the MARA.

ARRL VHF/UHF CONTEST IN JUNE

Not only does this month accommodate Field Day, but also on June 11 through the 13th the avid VHF/UHFers have their own contest. This event provides them the opportunity to see how many, how far and how many different grid square QSOs they can make on the bands above 50 MHz. The majority of the stations work weak signal SSB and CW, but there are some that work in the FM mode too. Participating stations exchange signal reports, and geographical Grid Square. (For those of you living in the coastal communities of Bath, Brunswick, Topsham, Woolich, Arrowsic, Phippsburg, Georgetown and West Bath, your grid square number is FN53.)

There are different categories of participation such as single-op, multi-op, rover, QRP, QRO etc.

This year like last, Bruce Randall, W1ZE of the MARA will join forces with Lefty Clement, K1TOL and ARRL Maine Section Manager Bill Woodhead, N1KAT, both from the Andy ham club. The three will travel 300+ miles north to a high hill in Matawaska, overlooking the Maine and New Brunswick border in rare grid square FN57. Bill works the bands above 144 MHz with Lefty and Bruce burning up the 6-Meter band with Lefty's KW amplifier and 32 foot long boom yagi. If any of you have VHF or UHF multi-mode equipment, turn your beams due north and listen for them and make a contact.

We are sure Bruce will give us all a detailed report upon his return.

**BECOME AN ELMER.
HELP SOMEONE GET
A HAM LICENSE OR
UPGRADE TO A
HIGHER CLASS.**

**There will be no
MARA general
meeting on June 24th.
Our Field Day event
will take the place of
the meeting**

TWO MARA MEMBERS UPGRADE

In mid May, the husband and wife team, of Paul and Linda Towne, N1ZYB and N1ZYC respectfully, took their 13-WPM Morse code exam near their home in Uncasville, Connecticut and passed. Both are now GENERAL Class licenses holders. Nice going you two. We hope to hear you on the HF bands chasing DX, pounding brass, and thoroughly enjoying your increased Amateur Radio privileges.

We are also glad we have two more operators to say, "CQ Field Day, this is KS1R!"

Highlights from Herman, Maine

On June 5th a smaller than in past years, but a goodly crowd of Maine Hams gathered at Herman High School for the annual Bangor Hamfest and flea market. The weather was wonderful and the attendance should have been higher. There seems to be a trend this year in smaller attendance of ham events. Maine Section Manager Bill Woodhead (N1KAT) reported that even the Dayton Hamvention had fewer folks than previous years. We hope this is not a continuing trend. MARA members Bob Ackley (KQ1A), Loren Dudley (W1LHD) and Bruce Randall (W1ZE) made the ride up I-95 to Herman.

Bruce took a box of junk he had collected and managed to make a few bucks for the club. Every little bit helps.

Our Hats off the Pine State Amateur Radio Club for another well organized and run Hamfest

WORD FROM ARRL HEADQUARTERS

MORSE DEBATE MAKES PAGE 1 OF WALL STREET JOURNAL

Hams checking the prestigious Wall Street Journal for the latest business news and stock quotes June 2 also found some Amateur Radio news--smack in the middle of page 1 and above the fold. A story by Staff Reporter Lee Gomes headlined "TO HAM OPERATORS, MORSE CODE TEST IS LIKE LATIN EXAM; Does It Keep the Barbarians At Bay, or Is It Fueling The Decline of a Culture?" discusses the current code versus no-code debate in Amateur Radio.

"Morse code is a dying language in the Digital Age, but it's still required reading for amateur radio buffs," Gomes' story begins. His report outlines the broad strokes of the controversy and the impending FCC streamlining that is expected to address future Morse code requirements for amateurs. It also quotes the FCC's Bill Cross, W3TN, as "the FCC's lead staff person on the question," and reports that the FCC "is contemplating relaxing the Morse Code requirement."

Gomes cites Bruce Perens, K6BP, of No Code International, who--in Gomes Words--considers Morse code "an antiquated technology" and "a turnoff for young people." "Perens is in the minority," Gomes asserts. "Most licensees don't want any change in the requirement--especially since they have

already passed the test themselves."

Taking the opposite viewpoint in Gomes' article is Nancy Kott, WZ8C, of FISTS, which Gomes describes as a "militant pro-Morse group." Gomes says Kott "all but accuses the no-coders of taking bribes from ham radio makers" and claims they want the code requirements dropped to attract more hams and sell more equipment.

Gomes reports that FISTS members fear a lot of bad, on-air behavior "without the screening provided by the Morse Code requirement." Perens, Gomes says, is not concerned about a "post-Morse ham world inhabited by barbarians." Perens points out for the article that applicants still will have to pass "rigorous tests" to get a ticket. Besides, Gomes quotes Perens as saying, "The riffraff have no reason to leave the Internet."

The article is silent on the issue of ITU regulations requiring a demonstration of Morse proficiency for HF operation and on the fact that a codeless class of Amateur Radio license already exists. And, at one point it refers to Morse code as "dits and duhs."

In the course of researching his article, Gomes contacted the ARRL for background information. The complete article is available via the Web for a fee to registered users of the Wall Street Journal's interactive page, <http://www.wsj.com>.

MAINE PRB-1 BILL SIGNED BY GOVERNOR KING

Maine Gov. Angus King has signed the latest legislation to incorporate the essence of the limited federal preemption known as PRB-1 into state law, but with a twist. Because of an amendment added in the

Maine House, the final version was reworded slightly to automatically include not just PRB-1 but any future FCC regulation or policy affecting local regulation of antennas. King signed the bill, LD-1800, May 27.

Under the measure, local regulations in Maine involving placement, screening, or height of antennas based on health, safety or aesthetic considerations "must be crafted to reasonably accommodate amateur radio communications and to represent the minimum practicable regulation to accomplish the municipalities legitimate purpose."

The prime mover behind the legislation, Bruce Marton, K1XR, got the bill introduced after getting involved in a legal tangle with the town of Ogunquit. Marton is attempting to install four 100-foot towers on 50 acres of property that he owns. He says the town has been trying to revoke his building permit and force him to take down the structures. That dispute continues, but Marton now hopes the fact that King signed the bill last week will help his case. "It couldn't have come at a better time," he said.

Marton worked with State Sen. Mark Lawrence to draft the legislation, and Lawrence, who's also Senate President, spoke on the bill's behalf when it was heard at the committee level. The Maine Municipal Association opposed the bill, but, by and large, Marton says, the measure sailed through the Maine Legislature, where he says, it had bipartisan support.

Similar PRB-1 legislation is under way or under consideration in several other states.

W1AW Code Practice on the Web:

Now you can access W1AW Morse code practice via ARRL Web using RealAudio files.

Visit

<http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/morse.html>. A single click on a file name starts the practice. You'll need RealAudio (available free at <http://www.real.com>) to listen to these files. The practice files include the same text used for W1AW's regular code practice transmissions. The files are updated after W1AW broadcasts them. The Standard method is used for code speeds above 18 WPM, or code speeds below 18 WPM, Farnsworth method is used. The Web Morse practice follows the same format used by W1AW code practice transmissions. The practice text comes from QST.
- *Joe Carcia, NJ1Q*

MERRYMEETING WHEELERS CENTURY BIKE RIDE SET FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 28th

As in years past the MARA will assist the Merrymeeting Wheelers Bike Club by providing amateur radio communications for their Dan Meshoud Century Bike Ride. This event named for a member of the Wheelers and a founding member of the MARA, who lost his battle with cancer several years ago, will raise funds to fight cancer here in Maine.

This is one of the few public service events our association is involved in, so it is important that we show the community what we can do. Plan ahead by marking August 28th on your calendar so you can join the MARA team.

Piscataquis ARC, K1PQ

presents the 14th Annual

St. Albans Hamfest

Saturday, Aug. 14th

SnoDeviils Snowmobile Club

St. Albans, ME

Gate opens @ 8AM

Talk-in on 147.39 repeater and 146.52

Admittance \$4

(Children under 12 FREE)

No tailgating fee

Camping \$2/night

Grand Prize = HTX-242 xcvr

Drawing at noon. You don't have to be present to win

ARRL VE testing @ 10AM

St. Albans Elementary School

MARA TO PROVIDE COMM FOR ST. JOHNS BAZAAR 5K RACE

June is a busy month for our organization with two events scheduled. In addition to Field Day in Woolich the MARA will provide communications for the St. Johns Bazaar 5K race through the streets of Brunswick on Saturday, June 19th. Since El Presidente Chris McGraw, KB2SKP will be busy that Saturday at BNAS keeping America safe for democracy, Bruce Randall, W1ZE will help Andy Cote, KB1CGJ coordinate the race.

If your house boss will let you break away from the yard work for an hour or so, we need volunteers. Please give Bruce a call at 442-9630 or contact him on the KS1R



Two Good Organizations

to belong to

Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc.

KS1R

HC63 Box 81, Bath, ME 04530-9503

*No MARA meeeting in June
SEE YOU AT FIELD DAY !*