



SQUELCH TALES



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for October 1999

NOVEMBER IS REPEATER UPDATE MONTH

In early November Peter Russell, K1MJP will take down the KS1R/R 147.21 MHz repeater so that he can change the PL tone from 88.5Hz to 100.0Hz, make some controller audio string modifications, adjustments and cleaning. During that period it will be replaced with a back up 147.21 MHz repeater (GE Exec-II transmitter & Receiver), so normal communications can be maintained.

During this period the 444.4 repeater will be taken off-line so that its controller can be used on the temporary 2-meter repeater and maintain basic autopatch capabilities. This controller does not have Auto-Dial capabilities so you will have to dial the whole personal or emergency number you wish to call. Stay tuned.

CHRISTMAS DINNER PLANNED

At the September MARA meeting it was decided by the members in attendance that the annual Christmas Dinner for MARA members, their family and friends would be held at the China Rose Restaurant on Old Bath Road, Brunswick (old Chuck Wagon) on Saturday, December 18th at 6:30 PM.

We hope that you mark that date and time on your calendar, so you can join your fellow hams for the all-you-can eat buffet. Bruce, W1ZE says you don't have to bring him a Christmas gift, but if you were a mind, a new Yaesu FT-90R would be nice.

W1ZE Says OOP's!

By Bruce Randall

On Friday, September 16 Bruce Randall (W1ZE) volunteered to tow the ANDY club antenna tower/trailer from Bill Woodhead's (N1KAT) QTH in Auburn to the new QTH of Lefty Clement (K1TOL), in Buckfield. Lefty planned to store the tower for the club and in the process use it to support his 6-meter yagi.

Bruce and Lefty got the tower/trailer hitched to Bruce's truck then swung by Lefty's old QTH in Lewiston to lash the 6-meter yagi to the trailer. About a half mile into the trip, Bruce attempted to make a turn by Lewiston High School when Bruce heard a "BANG" and ~~the sound of scraping metal. I view into his~~ rearview mirror showed that the tower had flipped over on its side. (The side with the yagi on it). Lefty was following behind and with the help of a City of Lewiston Public Works employee the three were able to flip the tower/trailer back on its wheels and get it back on the ball-mount. First inspections showed that the trailer tongue and "H" frame were bent but could still be towed. Lefty's 6 element Yagi had three elements that were bent and two of those were cracked. At least no one was hurt.

Since then Lefty and Bill have found a fellow who will straighten the bent sections of the trailer and make other minor repairs. Lefty has found enough aluminum tubing to make repairs to the yagi and both will be ready for the trip to FN57 next June and ANDY's Field day two weeks later. That is if I doesn't flip it over again on the trip north. If I ever offer to tow your trailer, think about it twice.

73, Bruce

MAINE SEAGULL NET NEEDS PARTICIPATION

By Bill Woodhead, N1KAT, ME Section Manager

For many years the Maine Seagull Net has served the Amateur Radio Community in northern New England. This net meets Monday through Saturday at 5:00PM on 3940 kHz LSB and provides a means of passing message traffic, get the latest ARRL Bulletins and Amateur Radio related information, plus a place to chat with other active hams in the region.

Over the past months participation has diminished to a point that some evenings there are not enough good folks available to take and deliver message traffic to the various communities around the state. If you are an HF operator, home between 5 and 6 PM and have capabilities of getting on 75 Meters, why not check out and check into the Seagull Net. The Net has two members in Robin Walls (N1NFK) and Bruce Randall (W1ZE). If you need additional information about this net, contact Robin or Bruce. *73, Bill*

HOSSTRADERS HAS SUNSHINE

For the first time in almost two years this October's Hosstraders Hamfest and Flea market in Rochester, NH was a whopping success. Attendance was up over the past few years and sellers didn't all pack up and head home at the 1:00PM drawing.

Commercial vendors like Lentini, MFJ, Alinco, Jade and others were there selling and demonstrating their products. MARA members W1LHD and W1ZE were spotted in the crowd but they didn't seem to have any boat anchors under their arms. Hope to see more of you there in May 2000.

**Be an ELMER. Help
someone get or
upgrade a Ham Ticket**

THE SCOOP FROM NEWINGTON

Snowbirds now have A New Florida Section:

The ARRL Board of Directors has voted to approve a resolution to create a new West Central Florida section. The vote was 14-0 with one abstention, said Board Secretary David Sumner, K1ZZ.

The resolution approved calls on ARRL Field Services Manager Rick Palm, K1CE, "to establish, at the earliest date consistent with a smooth transition, a West Central Florida section consisting of the counties of Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota."

After consulting with Southeastern Division Director Frank Butler, W4RH, Southern Florida Section Manager Phyllisan West, KA4FZI, and petitioner Paul Toth, K2SEC, of the West Central Florida Section Committee, Palm said that January 15 was determined to be the best date to formally bring the new section into existence. A recommendation on the appointment of a section manager for the new section is pending.

The January 15 implementation date means the new West Central Florida Section will not be a factor in any ARRL-sponsored contests until 2000.

The nine Southern Florida counties involved voted overwhelmingly in favor of creating the new ARRL section, which will be number 71. Ballots counted September 15 at ARRL Headquarters showed 920 ARRL members in the proposed new section favored the idea, while just 86 was opposed.

The West Central Florida Section Committee filed the petition with the ARRL last April. The Committee's Web site is at <http://www.qsl.net/wcfla>.

HF"INTRUDER" APPARENTLY BUZZES OFF

The loud 125-Hz buzz that plagued 80 and 75-meter operators for several weeks reportedly has moved outside the amateur bands. The ARRL Monitoring System had requested FCC assistance in tracking down the harmful interference, which has been audible primarily in the US Northeast.

According to a reliable source who did not wish to be identified, the transmissions heard on 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 MHz emanated from high-power HF radar transmitters being operated by the Canadian military from Newfoundland. The operation reportedly had the blessing of Industry Canada--the Canadian equivalent of the FCC--and hams in Newfoundland also were said to have been informed.

The "buzz" is said to have come from two HF over-the-surface radar test stations in Newfoundland that have been conducting tests with the Canadian military. Those tests reportedly continue, but on other frequencies. The radars with a bandwidth of approximately 20 kHz--are said to be used to detect vessels and icebergs. The tests reportedly are being

done to determine the optimum frequency for coverage.

Amateur Radio concerns about the signal were relayed to those in charge of the military HF radar operation. IARU Region 2 Monitoring System Coordinator Martin Potter, VE3OAT, has been unable so far to officially confirm the accounts but said it does appear that the signal is gone from 80 meters. Potter said that "while there are many buzzes and burps on our bands," the buzz on 80 has not been spotted in recent days. Potter says that since October 7, the distinctive signal has been on the air mostly on 3.3 MHz, twice on 3.2 MHz, and once on 4.1 MHz--simultaneous with 3.3 MHz "indicating more than one transmitter," he said.

Potter credited amateur complaints with prompting the move. "It seems likely that the volume of complaints and the high technical quality of many of the reports had a positive impact on the government and corporate officers who received them," he speculated.

Recent news reports concerning the 80-meter buzz generated a flurry of informal reports from hams in various parts of the US and at least one in Europe to ARRL Intruder Watch Coordinator Tom Hogerty, KC1J. Some said they'd heard the "buzz saw" on bands other than 80 meters, although the Newfoundland transmitters reportedly are not licensed to operate on frequencies higher than the vicinity of 80 meters.

The individual familiar with the Newfoundland experiments reported being told that there are a "significant" number of HF radars under development round the world and conceded that it's possible that hams are hearing similar signals from more than one of these other sources.

Additional reports and observations are welcome to ARRL Monitoring System Administrator Tom Hogerty, KC1J, thogerty@arrl.org.

DCC TRENDS THE CUTTING EDGE

The 18th ARRL-TAPR Digital Communications Conference recently in Phoenix offered a vision of Amateur Radio where individual ham bands are irrelevant and analog is an anachronism. Some 150 digital enthusiasts attended the sessions September 24-26.

The wave of the future could be ultra wide band, according to conference speaker (and an ARRL Pacific Division Assistant Director) Dewayne Hendricks, WA8DZP. Ultra wideband--or UWB--is related to new methods of spectrum sharing among large numbers of users. During a forum Hendricks described UWB as akin to a group of people sharing a large house rather than each owning smaller, separate houses. The FCC initiated a Notice of Inquiry last year seeking comment on UWB issues.

ARRL Southwest Division Vice Director Art Goddard, W6XD, says Hendricks' DCC presentation suggested that the notion of individual Amateur Radio bands could become irrelevant in a UWB era, where

software-driven equipment and spectrum sharing protocols would determine what frequency or frequencies best suit the desired communication at that particular moment.

"Just think of the possibilities! No more need for 5-Band DXCC," Goddard extrapolated, somewhat tongue-in-cheek. "Every DX contact will be conducted on any or all available bands as selected by a protocol in your equipment. No need for the operator to fuss with the details."

On the hardware side, QST Digital Dimensions columnist Stan Horzepa, WA1LOU, reports that Kenwood stole the show by displaying a prototype of a VHF-UHF mobile transceiver with built-in APRS. The radio is similar in functionality to the TH-D7 handheld Kenwood introduced at last year's DCC.

As in the past, this year's DCC saw the introduction of new and improved versions of APRS. Horzepa said that Rob Wittner, KZ5RW, demonstrated a work-in-progress version of APRS/CE for handheld computers running the Windows CE operating system.

For additional details about this year's DCC, see Horzepa's "Digital Dimensions" column in the December issue of QST. Audio from all the conference presentations may be heard at <http://www.tapr.org>. The Conference Proceedings are available from the ARRL for \$15. Order Item No 7679 at <http://www.arrl.org/catalog> or call toll-free 888-277-5289.) Next year's DCC will be in Orlando, Florida. The date will be announced by year's end.

MARA BALL CAPS AVAILABLE



If you one, or want a second a ball cap with the MARA logo on it, along with your name and call sign embroidered on it, let Ms Robin Walls (N1NFK) know. Price is \$12 (\$10 to make the cap and \$2 for the MARA kitty). To order yours drop Robin an e-mail at: rdrjw@gwi.net or call 725-5135.

MERRYMEETING AMATUR RADIO ASSOC.

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Come to the MARA Meeting

Thursday October 28th at the Salvation

Army Build

25 Congress Street, Bath, Maine