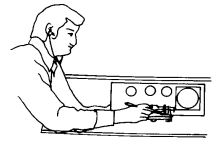




Squelch Tales



A newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for April, 2001

MS Walk to get ham support

The MARA has volunteered to assist the Muscular Sclerosis Society by providing communications for their fund raising walk on Sunday the 22nd of April. As has been done for the past several years the walk starts at the Brunswick Middle School and wind it's way through the streets of Brunswick ending back up at the school. Pam McQueenie, N1KIE and Mark Rideout, N1JIM are the lynch pins in the MARA's effort

We hope that many of you can help provide communications for the walk. The event will kick off at 8:30 AM and the communications team should gather at the school at 8:00 AM to get assignments and route maps. It is a good idea for all of us to help in these community events to help and show the community what Ham Radio can do.

If you wish to volunteer please contact Mark and Pam at n1jim@gwi.net or Bruce, W1ZE at 442-9630.

Packet is Dead, Long Live Packet!

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

A few years ago VHF/UHF Packet was humming along in Maine with A good statewide supporting backbone. Individuals and groups built and maintained nodes, gateways and BBS's (i.e., W3VNE, Scott Higgins past MARA Prez).

Since that time Packet has dried up and blown away due mostly or in part to the Internet. You could attend a Hamfest/flea market as see Tiny Two's, PK-88s, PK232s KAMs and MFJ TNCs (terminal node controller) selling for little or nothing until a few months ago. These units are now being snagged up by folks getting into APRS.



APRS uses the original packet digital protocols to relay position location data and the exchange of digital messages and weather information.

Now with license restructuring getting more folks on HF, a whole new communications world is open to them. One of the oldest endeavors of ham radio is chasing DX. The serious and occasional DXers or VHF/UHF weak signal grid square hunters are taking advantage of a VHF digital system called the DX Packet Cluster. DX clusters use the same equipment and digital protocols as the original packet technology. No new terminal programs are necessary and even some of the new high-end all-band transceivers have the TNC and software built into them for the soul purpose of getting info from 2-meter packet clusters.

There is an excellent cluster system here in southern Maine and it is linked to other cluster systems throughout the eastern US. One node is located in Cape Elizabeth with call sign K1EU on 144.91 MHz and the other is located in Augusta with the call sign on W1AO on 144.93 MHz.

The clusters provide the users DX spotting on a real time basis along with system BBS, WWV propagation reports, weather information and invisible keyboard to keyboard communications in the TALK mode. All you need to get on the cluster is a PC with a packet terminal program (available free on the Internet) or a dumb terminal, TNC and a 2-meter transceiver.

If you want more information about the local DC Packet Cluster and the user commands, feel free to contact me at brandall@gwi.net or 442-9630 for a Packet Cluster Tutorial or check out DXer's web site at:

www.dxer.com/cluster.html

73, Bruce W1ZE

Sites of interest on the World Wide Web

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

Over the past several years I have found the following ham related web sites that are of interest to me and I think would be to many of you. I have listed them with a quick description of what is on them.

<http://www.arrl.org> = American Radio Relay league home page, loaded with information. If you are a member there is additional information and services available.

<http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com> = CQ Magazine home page lots of good information and links to other sites

<http://www.hamradio-online.com> = Ham News Service with topics of interest and other current events.

<http://www.eham.net/review/> = Ham Product Review. Great place to find out what your fellow hams think of ham radio equipment, antennas, programs, etc.. Read it before you buy it.

<http://www.teleport.com/~nb6z/> = Digital HF Radio Site. Great place to get information on HF digital modes and you can download digital PC programs.

<http://ninopo.freeweb.supereva.it/iz8bly/MT63/index.htm?p> = IZ8BLY's digital & RTTY site. Obtain MT63, PSK31, MMTTY, etc. programs

<http://www.ac6v.com> = Good selection of ham radio items

If you have found sites that you think would be of interesting to hams please let me know so we can make them available to readers of this newsletter.

73, Bruce

NEW FIELD DAY RULES FOR 2001 DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE FUN

Field Day 2001 will run from 1800 UTC June 23 to 2100 UTC June 24—as always, the fourth full weekend in June. Typically a club or group event, Field Day is the most popular operating activity of the year--and one of the most enjoyable for hams of all skill levels. A few rules changes this year affect bonus points for Field Day scores.

* The non-traditional mode bonus has been expanded from 100 to 300 points for doing three separate demonstration modes.

* Packet is back and will be counted as one of the three demonstration modes, but to claim packet credit, you must set up a portable digipeater system. Existing, permanent packet networks do not qualify for this bonus.

* You may earn a 100-point bonus if an invited local government official or representative of one of the agencies that ARES serves in an emergency visits your Field Day site. To earn this bonus, the invited official must actually visit the site, not just be invited.

* The message-handling bonus has been changed. You may now earn 10 points per message, up to 100 points total, for origination, relay, and delivery of formal NTS messages. In the past, only messages received and relayed were counted. The Field Day participation message to the Section Manager or Section Emergency Coordinator under rule 7.3.5 does not also qualify for bonus points under these rules.

This marks the last year that the extra Novice/Tech Plus station will exist in its current form. The Novice/Tech station is a non-counting transmitter, and its QSOs count for QSO point credit. The ARRL Membership Services Committee is considering several options to encourage participation by newly licensed hams.

The ARRL Contest Branch has compiled a 24-page Field Day 2001 Information packet, <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/01fdpack.pdf>.

This document is available in hard-copy format by sending a SASE with four units of postage to Field Day Package, ARRL, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111.

In addition to the dated Field Day pins that have proven so popular the past few years, the League now offers 2001 Field Day T-shirts. Pins are just \$5, and the T-shirts are \$9.95. For ordering information, visit the ARRL Products Catalog, <http://www.arrl.org/catalog>, or call toll-free 888-277-5289. The Contest Branch no longer handles orders for these items.

It is time for the MARA to start thinking of Field Day 2001, which will take place on June 23 and 24th. Do we want to participate and will there be enough people willing to pitch in and help?

The Portland Amateur Wireless Assoc.

Presents The

Greater Portland Electronics Fleamarket

At the Stewart Morrill American Legion Post #35,
417 Broadway South Portland

April 7 - 8 am to Noon (seller admission & setup
6:30 am to 8 am)

Featuring:

- Commercial Vendors
- All manner of electronics treasures & trash
- "Country Store" (consignment table - for those that have only a few items for sale and not wanting to purchase a whole table)
"Last Chance" auction at Noon (for sellers who don't want to take items home)

• Multiple Grand Prizes(must be present to win):

Grand Prize - Alinco DJ-V5TH dual band HT
2nd Prize - ADI AR-147 Plus 60 watt two meter mobile
3rd Prize - ADI AR-2201HP 5 watt two meter HT

- Club Raffle (must be present to win): Alinco DJ-S11T two meter HT
- 50/50 Raffle (must be present to win)
- Hourly Door Prizes (must be present to win)
- Refreshments

Admission: \$ 5.00 (children under 12 free if accompanied by an adult) Tables \$ 8.00 in advance - \$ 10.00 at door(includes on admission with (each table)
Additional Grand Prize tickets: \$ 5.00 each, 3 for \$ 12.00, 5 for \$20.00

Club Raffle tickets: \$ 1.00 each

50/50 Raffle tickets: \$ 1.00 each, 3 for \$ 2.00

Consignment fees: 5 percent up to \$ 50.00 (PAWA members) 10 percent up to \$ 100.00 (non PAWA members)

Talk In: 146.73 (-) (100.0 Hz) and 147.09 (+)

For advance tables or further information contact:
Bryce Rumery, K1GAX, 75 Ocean House Rd Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107 Tel799-1116 k1gax@arrl.net

APRIL HAM RADIO EVENTS

Saturday 14th, 9:00 am, W1JTH/ARRL Exam, Bangor Community Center, Davis Rd.. POC = Jerry Haslett 207-947-8920

Saturday 7th, 8:00 am **Portland Electronics**

Fleamarket, Am. Legion Hall 417 Broadway

Sunday 22nd, (8:00 am) **MS Walk (MARA support event)**

KS1R/R 2-Meter Repeater Reverse Autopatch

For those of you that were at the February breakfast and wanted to know how to run the reverse autopatch on the 147.21 KS1R/R repeater to talk to a ham on our repeater, the following applies.

To place a call to the repeater from a landline (anywhere), first dial 725-1005. After about 3 rings, the repeater will answer, "Welcome to KS1R control." At this time, on your handset touch-tone pad press 2 keys, the "7" then "#". This will force the repeater to ring several times and a control-op will answer if available. When YOU do, identify yourself and the call sign of the person you need to speak to. Remember that you are on the air and all amateur radio rules are in effect, i.e., no music, no swearing, and no business.

Enjoy, Mark & Bruce

Don't forget!
MARA Breakfast
Saturday, April 27th
(Arbor Day)
at 9:00 AM
Cook's Corner
Denny's Restraint.
Come join us,
before you plant that tree.



Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc.

KS1R

177 Sabino Rd., West Bath, ME 04530-9503
