



SQUELCH TALES



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for May 2001

Association Logo updated

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

A little over a months ago I was cleaning up my ham shack when I came across an April 92 issue of the Associations newsletter. The club logo on the top of it caught my eye and noted that the part of the logo that noted the two club repeater frequencies was incorrect. It was correct in 92 but the output of the UHF repeater is now 444.4 MHz not 449.4.



Old Logo

I had copies of the logo artwork and they too said 444.9. I do not have a graphics program that could make that minor correction, so I started playing with my MS Office program and it's limited graphics to see what I could do in making a new logo that looked like the old one but had the correct information on it. After a few tries I had one that was close. With my scanner I converted the logo from Office WORD to a JPG picture and sent it off to Mark, N1JIM to see what he thought of it. He looked it over and made a few suggestions that I was able

to incorporate. The logo now appears on the top of this issue of the newsletter. I hope you like it. 73, **Bruce**

MARA supports local APRS Node

In late April and early March the Maine APRS group began talking with MARA member Scott Higgins, W3VNE, to see if he wanted to get involved in statewide APRS system. Scott's first love is digital communications, and a chance to get his packet equipment back into service started his juices flowing.

Scott approached the MARA technical committee (K1MJP & W1ZE) to see if they wanted to help him resurrect his old packet equipment in support of APRS packet, by putting up a node. Pete and Bruce agreed to help, after discussing the technical issues involved in such a project. The Cole's Tower site was offered because it would put the node high and provide good coverage of the mid coast area. The numbers were crunched and it was determined that a transceiver operating on a simplex frequency 2.8 MHz below our 2-meter repeater should have little to no affect on the 2-meter repeaters performance.

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The word went out to the MARA membership for some equipment supports and in no time at all an antenna, transmission line, repair services were donated to the project. Scott took his Maxon VHF transceiver to a local commercial radio shop and for a nominal fee it was re-programmed to 144.390 MHz (national APRS freq.).

On March 29th the system went up on Cole's Tower and is doing a very good job of relaying APRS digital packet information. Scott's, W3VNE-10, callsign is the node ID.

Many thanks to Scott Higgins, Pete Russell, Bruce Randall, Robin & Robin Walls, and Bob McQueeney for their support and help in making this project a success.

Field Day is just around the corner

The last weekend in June is approaching fast and Hams and ham groups around the country are making plans to test their communications skills in the 24-hour sprint spanning that Saturday and Sunday.

Like those folks, we in the MARA need to start planning and see if we can make our effort a success again this year. Like in past several years our Association set up and camp-out in the Community Park in Woolwich behind the town

museum and fire station on Route-1. We need a few dedicated people to get the event rolling and make arrangements to get the equipment staged, determine what classification we will operate in and see if there is any interest in special modes like satellite, etc..

Come join the fun!



What is it?

The Quarter Century Wireless Association is an organization for Amateur Radio operators that have been licensed for more than 25 years. The QCWA has been around for over a half century promoting the Amateur radio art and establish fellowship between its members. There are members all over the world, but the bulk living in the US and Canada.

A quarterly magazine with history notes, ham editorials and current events articles related to the hobby are mailed to all members.

Within the organization are sub chapters. The Chapter here in Maine is the Pine Tree chapter and it holds a net every Sunday afternoon at 2:30 PM local time on 3942 kHz September through June. This net is open to all hams whether or not you are a member. The chapter has a dinner meeting three to four times a year.

If you were first licensed before 1976 you should consider joining the QCWA. MARA member Bruce Randall, W1ZE and would love to sponsor in and many of you old timers as possible. He can be reached at w1ze@arrl.net or call him at 207-442-9630 in West Bath.

Storm hampered state convention still A success

By W1ZE

The Maine State ARRL convention and Andy Hamfest planners thought that moving the convention to the last weekend in March would hopefully bring better weather. Snow had fallen on the event in previous years. This was a smart move on their part, but unfortunately the weather gods had other plans in store. On Friday the 30th a winter weather front moved up from the Confederate states and started dumping loads of wet sloppy and slippery snow on our fair state.

Unless you were one of the fortunate few that arrived early Friday afternoon and stayed overnight at the Remada Inn, many interesting seminars were sparsely attended or canceled because of the storms treacherous driving conditions.

The following morning the storm had passed but the streets and highways were still slick and sloppy but passable. When I arrived at the convention center the parking lot was full of

vehicles with antennas stuck on them. It took me several minutes to find a snow covered parking spot. I then slogged my way through the lot to the convention center.

When I arrived inside the first thing I thought was that the ham community in Maine came down with collective cabin fever because the place was packed.

I wasted no time taking a tour through the flea market before heading up to the ARRL Forum and K1GUP's talk on Radio DFing and T-hunting.

One seminar I wanted to attend Friday evening was the talk on APRS. Reports from folks that attended one of the two seminars said the Maine APRS group did an outstanding job and got a lot of folks interested in the digital mode.

Reports from the VE session had lots of folks upgrading and getting new tickets. That is good news for the hobby.

I for one want to thank the folks at the Andy club for doing a great job and overcoming another Maine weather event. 73, Bruce W1ZE

PAWA Hamfest back by popular demand

After a long hiatus, the Portland Amateur Wireless Association held a hamfest and flea market in the American Legion hall in South Portland on Saturday, April 7th. Considering it was held the weekend following the Maine Convention, there

was a pretty good turnout. Hopefully the PAWA made enough to cover expenses and add a few shekels to their club kitty, and it will become a yearly event in southern Maine again.

Three New Web Sites for Hams

6-Meter big gun, Lefty Clement, K1TOL, of Turner, Maine reports that the three following web sites are great for the folks that want an on-line computer aid for DXing and weak signal spotting plus information about DX, satellite and propagation. If you do not have access to the local 2-meter DX packet Clusters but still want that spotting services check out:

<http://www.kb3cws.com> and <http://oh2aq.kolumbus.com/dxs/> If you want to find out the latest up to date information on solar activity, check out: <http://www.spaceweather.com>.

If you have a favorite ham radio related web site you think Squelch Tales readers may be interested in, pass them along to Bruce Randall at W1ZE@arrl.net.

Upcoming Maine Ham Radio Exams & Hamfests

May

Sat.5th 9:00AM N1JTH/W5YI Exam, Auburn Red Cross. POC Doug Rugg 207-784-2374 before 8PM

Fri-Sat.4th & 5th Hosstraders Hamfest, Hopington, NH

Wed. 16th 6:00PM AE1Q/ARRL Exam, Togus VA Bldg 210. POC Don Smith 207-293-2935

Fri.18th 6:30PM AA1CZ/ARRL Exam, Saco Middle School, Rt 112. POC Al Noble 207-642-8830

Sat.19th 9:00AM WZ1N/ARRL Exam, Am. Legion Post 35 S. Portland. POC John Bergeron 207-799-3687

Sat.19th 10:00AM N1NFK, MARA, ARRL Exam, Bath Healthcare Facility. POC Robin Walls 207-725-5135

June

Thu.7th 6:00PM, AE1Q/ARRL Exam. Winslow Elementary School. POC Don Smith 207-293-2935

Sat.9th 9:00AM Bangor Hamfest, Herman HS, RT.2 Herman, AE1Q, ARRL Exam. POC Don Smith 207-293-2935

July

Sat.14th Union Hamfest, Union Fairgrounds. W1RU/ARRL Exam. POC Dick Baldwin 207-529-5781

Wed.18th 6:00PM AE1Q/ARRL Exam, Togus VA Bldg 210. POC Don Smith 207-293-2935

August

Sat.11 8:00AM St. Albans Hamfest. Snow Devils Field + K1AG/ARRL Exam, 10:00AM at St. Albans Elem. School. POC Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

Sun.12th, Morris Tour des Farms III, MARA community suppoer event

Sat.25th 9:00AM N1JTH/ARRL Exam, Auburn Red Cross. POC Doug Rugg 207-784-2374

September

Sat.8th Windsor Hamfest, Windsor Fairgrounds, Rt.32, S. Windsor. K1NIT/ARRL Exam, 12:30PM POC 207-947-4051

Fri.14th 6:30PM AA1CZ/ARRL Exam Saco Middle School, RT 112. POC Al Noble 207-642-8830

Sat.15th 9:00AM WZ1N/ARRL Exam. Stew. Morrill A.L. Post-35, 417 Broadway S. Portland. POC John Bergeron 207-799-3687

Sat.15th K1AG/ARRL Exam, Bangor Community Ctr. Davis Rd. Bangor. POC Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

Sat.22nd 9:00AM Lincoln Hamfest, Ella Burr School, and Rt.2 Lincoln

Sat.22nd 10:00AM N1NFK/ MARA/ARRL Exam. Bath Healthcare Facility. POC Robin Walls 207-794-389October

October

Thu. 4th 6:00PM AE1Q/ARRL Exam, Winslow Elem. School. POC Don Smith 207-293-2935

Tue. 16th 6:30PM WA1YNZ/ARRL Exam. NMTC, Augusta Christy Bldg Rm. 113, Presque Isl. POC Wilburn Scott 207-455-8333

November

Fri.9th 6:30PM AA1CZ/ARRL Exam, Saco Middle School, Rt. 112. POC Al Noble 207-642-8830

Sat.17th 9AM WZ1N/ARRL Exam, Stew. Morrill Am. Legion Post- 35,

417 Broadway S. Portland. POC John Bergeron 207-799-3687

Sat.17th K1AG/ARRL Exam, Bangor Community Ctr. Davis Rd. Bangor. POC Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

Wed. 21st 6:00PM AE1Q/ARRL Exam. Togus VA Bldg 210. POC Don Smith 207-293-2935

December

Sat.1st 10:00AM 1NFK/MARA/ARRL Exam, Bath Healthcare Facility. POC Robin Walls 207-725-5135

Sat.15th 9:00AM N1JTH/W5YI Exam. Auburn Red Cross. POC Doug Rugg 207-784-2374

MARK YOU CALANDER.

Saturday

9:00 AM, May 26th

MARA

BREAKFAST-MEETING

Denny's Restraint

Cooks Corner,

Brunswick

MARA Hams support MS Walk in Brunswick

On Sunday morning, April 22nd a communications team from the MARA gathered at the Brunswick Jr. High gym to help provide needed two-way communications for the annual MS walk. Communities all over the state had MS walks with the mid coast communities use the town of Brunswick to conduct their walk. As in past years, the event went off without a hitch and a lot of need funds were raised to help fight MS here in Maine.

Many kudos to Mark Rideout, N1JIM; Pam McQueeney, N1KIE; Bruce Randall, W1ZE; Woody Wood, W1WEW; Bob McQueeney, N1VVF; Andy Cote, AC1R; Brian Dorval, AA1WI, and Gay McQueeney, N1XBN for their help. This year Gay manned KS1R net control and did an outstanding job, no one else has done it any better. An additional Thanks goes to Pam and Mark for providing a carload of Pizzas for the event.

Sagadahoc County LEPC need help

Loren, W1LHD and Bruce, W1ZE, represent the MARA on the Sagadahoc. County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the EMA appreciates their support and input. However, the committee needs additional participation from county residents, not just hams and Police/fire/rescue personnel. The LEPC hopes that other good folks that are interested in emergency preparedness and want to help their community would consider joining the planning committee.

Are there members of your family, neighbors, members of your business or church group that would like to help? EMA officials plan for and provide the county an effective organization that can local communities get ready for disasters, Haz-Mat and other emergency events. If you or someone you know may be interested please have them contact EMA director Ms. Nutt at 443-8210 or sagema@zwi.net.

HOSSTRADERS HAS MOVED

Affectionately known as Deerchester, Rain-chester or just Hosstraders the big fleamarket and hamfest is moving from Rochester, NH across the state to Hopkington. The event will take place on Friday and Saturday, May 4th and 5th.

To get to the new fairgrounds from the south take I-93 to Bow, NH, just south of Concord, then travel west 17-miles on I-89 to Exit-7 in Hopkington and fairgrounds. For more on-line information check out:

<http://www.qsl.net/k1rqg> .

Why haven't you upgraded your ticket?

By W1ZE

For all of you out there with an Extra class ticket, you can skip this column and go on to the next one. But its OK to read it and feel good about yourself.

Never in the history of Amateur Radio has it been easier to get and upgrade your license. **SO WHAT'S KEEPING YOU BUNKY?**

If you are satisfied just being a Technician Class holder, more power to you. But do you really know what communications fun you are missing out on. Is it the Morse code you still fear? Let me be a little preachy for a second. Do you know that by the time you recognize all the letters numbers and common punctuation characters you are at 5 Words Per Minute. If you hear DIT DAH and think of the letter "A", you did it at 5 words per minute. It is that easy. You are not decoding sand script, it is only the international Morse Code, and it is in English.

Now that I have picked on the technician class folks, How about you General Class holders. Why are you not an Extra? I know what all of you say. I have all the frequencies I need with a General ticket. Boy, what a cop out. My reply to you is "NO YOU DON'T!" It not just that first 25 kHz of CW at the bottom of the 80, 40, 20 and 15 meter bands it's all those nice phone frequencies you are missing on the same bands. Without an Extra Class license you loose 350 kHz of phone privileges. That is as more bandwidth that is in the whole 40-meter band, or the entire 20-meter band and more than the whole 15-meter and

12-meter phone band together. That is a lot of Amateur Radio HF phone spectrum. You do not think the bands are big enough. Get an Extra license and get bigger bands.

Now for all you Extra Class holders that decided to read this far. What have you done to Elmer (help) a fellow ham or ham wanna-be get or upgrade their license? We all have busy lives but we need to keep the hobby we all love full of folks that can take advantage of all the hobby has to offer.

73, Bruce Randall, W1ZE

SQUELCH TALES NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOUR HELP.

I enjoy putting this newsletter together, but it takes time and a lot of hours. Some months I have difficulty finding things to put into the mailing that I think you all would like to read.

How about a little help from the readers. Do you have a topic of interest you want to share. Have you built something that works and think our readers would be interested. Did you take a trip that ham radio played a part. Do you have something to sell and want to list it in the paper. Let me know or e-mail it to me at w1ze@arrl.net.



Are you prepared
and ready to help.

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