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# **SQUELCH TALES**

***Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for July 2001***

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## **Field Day 2001**

**By Bruce Randall, W1ZE**

Even though the MARA did not participate in Field Day 2001 as a group, The call sign of KS1R was heard on the air. Brian, AA1WI asked to us the call sign and made several Field Day contacts on behalf of the MARA during several AO-27 satellite passes during the event, from his QTH in Topsham. We can now say that the MARA did participate in the event.

Word from Andy KB1ERX had he and his grandpa operating 1D from Andy's QTH in Topsham.

The week before Field Day I received my new Yaesu FT-817 HF/VHF/UHF all-mode QRP transceiver from a guy in a boxy brown truck. After a few days of playing with it and figuring out how to program it, so I wanted to try it out during Field Day.

About 2:30 PM Field Day Saturday I stopped by the W1GR site in the woods behind Steve Hanks QTH in Brunswick. I got to show off my new Yeasu to the folks there and they were impressed. It looked like the W1GR group was giving it their maximum effort.

I then drove up to the Androscoggin club site at the Auburn Mall parking lot. They had a nice group there working all the bands from 80 to 2 meters. I chatted with ARRL Maine section manager for a bit before he had to head off to other club sites around the state. The hams there were very interested in the new little Yaesu rig too.

I returned to my QTH in the late afternoon and headed to the shack. I hooked up the FT-817 to my big station deep cycle 12-volt battery and tuned to 40 and 75 meters SSB. The bands were wall to wall signals. First I went after the loud stations. If I wasn't getting stepped on by the big signals I was making good contacts. I made a dozen or so before calling it quits for the evening because I had to head into town to do shopping for the XYL. Sunday, mid morning, I got on 40 CW and started to rock-n-roll. The big signal stations would step me, but when I timed it right I was getting replies on the first call. I think the /**QRP** on the end of my call added 3-db to my signal. I made almost 50 CW QSOs on 40 and 20 meters. Who said you can't run a big score with just 5-watts. I think I would have done pretty well if I had participated throughout the whole 24-hour event. We will give it heck next year.

**73, W1ZE/QRP**

**MARA Hams help with  
St. John's Bazaar 5K Run**

On Saturday June 23rd (Field Day Saturday) A small communications team consisting of Mark (N1JIM), Brian (AA1WI) and Bruce (W1ZE) gathered at the St. John's Bazaar to help with the 5K run through the streets of Brunswick. As in past years the event went off without a hitch and by 10:30 in the morning the three volunteers were on their way home. Thanks for your help.

## Order of the Gator

By W1ZE

For those of you that have not been a member of the MARA long or frequent user of the association's repeaters you may not be familiar with this august semi-secret order. Almost all the old-timers in the organization are members.

Before the days of having a repeater on every available channel here in Maine, the MARA had a lot of members and users. With the high usage there were times when one of us would get a little long-winded and time out the repeater. This was called, "getting caught by the alligator." When this happened, at the following club meeting the most recent person to get caught by the alligator would be presented with a rubber toy alligator. He or she had to take custody of the little rubber critter until some other long-winded ham transmitted longer than the RC time-constant of the repeater controller's time-out timer.

Over the years with less usage of the repeater I can not remember the last time the machine timed-out due to a chatty ham or some one sitting on their microphone. So the following question is being asked of all of you:

**Who is the proud custodian of the rubber Gator?**

## NEWS FROM NEWINGTON

Author: w1aw@arrl.org

### **Amateur Morse Testing Changes Effective July 1**

New Morse code exam standards go into effect July 1 for all Volunteer Examiner Coordinators. The new standards call for Farnsworth character speed in the 13-to-15 WPM range and the end of multiple-choice questions for routine Morse code exams.

In the wake of restructuring and the establishment of 5 WPM as the sole amateur Morse requirement, the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators voted last July to set up the revised standards for the administration of Morse code examinations in the US.

ARRL VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, points out the required change to the Farnsworth protocol replaces the 18-WPM character speed ARRL VEC has used since 1989. "Standard 5 WPM messages with 5 WPM characters are available as an

accommodation," he said. "Standard (non-Farnsworth) speed messages are available upon special request from the ARRL VEC for ARRL VE teams."

In addition, the Morse exam audio frequency range should be between 700 and 1000 Hz for routine exams. Consistent with the revised standards, Jahnke said, ARRL VEC has set 15-WPM characters as its Farnsworth setting and 750 Hz as its audio-frequency standard.

Code practice transmissions from Maxim Memorial Station W1AW will reflect the new Farnsworth standard. W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q, says transmissions using the new protocol will begin Monday, July 2. Code transmissions at speeds below 18 WPM will drop from 18 WPM to 15 WPM character speed. W1AW Web code practice files, at <http://www.arrl.org/w1aw/morse.html>, will mirror the new standards too.

The new Morse examination standards also affect test administration. After July 1, Morse examinees will have to supply fill-in-the-blank answers for the 10-question Element 1 quiz. Multiple-choice type examinations no longer will be acceptable. Under the new testing regime, Morse code examinees must either correctly answer seven of the ten fill-in-the-blanks questions or correctly copy 25

consecutive characters.

Changes are on the horizon for the written examinations as well. Revised Amateur Extra question pool will go into effect July 1, 2002. Reworked Technician and General question pools will become effective on July 1, 2003 and 2004 respectively.

## UPCOMING HAMFESTS

### August :

- ✦ 11<sup>th</sup>, Sat, St. Albans Hamfest, Snow Deval Field, St. Albans (exams)
- ✦ 23-24th, Sat-Sun, ARRL Northeast Convention, Boxboro, MA

### September:

- ✦ 9<sup>th</sup>, Sat 8:00 AM Windsor Hamfest, Windsor Fairgrounds (exams)
- ✦ 23<sup>rd</sup> Sat 8:00 AM Lincoln Hamfest, Ella Barr School, Lincoln, ME (exams)

### October:

- ✦ 6-7<sup>th</sup>, Fri-Sat, Hosstraders, Hopington, NH (exams)

## HAM EXAMS FOR 2001

This page will help you find a Maine amateur license exam session near you.

**14-Jul-2001**, Sponsor: MAINE HAMFEST ASSOCIATION, Time: 12:30PM (Walk-ins allowed) Contact: RICHARD L BALDWIN, (207)529-5781 VEC: ARRL/VEC, Location: UNION FAIRGROUNDS, UNION, ME 04862

**18-Jul-2001**, Sponsor: AUGUSTA ARA, Time: 6:00 PM (Walk-ins allowed), Contact: DONALD R SMITH, (207) 495-3891, Email: WS3891@EARTHLINK.NET

VEC: ARRL/VEC, Location: TOGUS VA AUDITORIUM, BLDG 210,AUGUSTA, ME 04330

**11-Aug-2001**, Sponsor: PINE STATE ARC, Time: 10:00AM (Walk-ins allowed), Contact: WILLIAM J SULLIVAN, (207) 947-4051, VEC: ARRL/VEC, Location: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAINT ALBANS, ME 04971

**25-Aug-2001**, Sponsor: W5YI-VEC, Time: 09:00AM (Walk-ins allowed), Contact: DOUGLAS E RUGG, (207) 784-2374, VEC: W5YI VEC, Location: AUBURN RED CROSS BUILDING, AUBURN, ME 04210

**14-Sep-2001**, Sponsor: UNSPONSORED, Time: 6:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed), Contact: ALBERT W NOBLE, (207) 642-8830, VEC: ARRL/VEC, Location: SACO MIDDLE SCHOOL, NORTH ON ROUTE 112, SACO, ME 04072

**22-Sep-2001**, Sponsor: MERRYMEETING ARA, Time: 10:00AM (Walk-ins allowed), Contact: ROBIN J WALLS, (207) 725-5135, VEC: ARRL/VEC, Location: BATH HEALTHCARE CENTER, 1356 WASHINGTON ST, WINCHENBACK CONFERENCE ROOM, BATH, ME 04530 [rdrij@gwi.net](mailto:rdrij@gwi.net),

## New York Mobile Handheld Celphone ban will not affect Hams

To paraphrase the June 27<sup>th</sup> issue of Ham Radio On Line ([www.hamradio-online.com](http://www.hamradio-online.com)), The New York State ban on the use of handheld celphone has very little to do with safety – and a lot to do with the collection of state taxes.

It is still okay to fumble over the phone keypad and dial a celphone call, and it is still okay to use a handheld microphone or a two-way radio. This ban has nothing to do with keeping two hands on the wheel and everything to do with forcing celphone users to pay the "Hands Free" tax. The celcos sell more devices, and the State of New York picks up more sales tax revenue (collective perhaps \$140 million). "Everyone benefits...except cellular phone customers.

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**MARA**  
**July**

**Breakfast-Meeting**  
**Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 9**  
**AM**

**Cook's Corner**

**Denny's Restraint**

***Merrymeeting Wheelers Rep. To address upcoming  
Dan Michoud Memorial Ride***

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