



# SQUELCH TALES

Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for January 2002

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## MARA Members have good time at year-end Dinner

A good group of MARA members and the spouses and guests got together at the China Rose Restraint, on the evening of December 8<sup>th</sup> for some Cathy cuisine, good conversation and to wish each other seasons best wishes.



Pam N1KIE, Mark N1JIM, Bruce W1ZE -----John N1QFH with XYL----- MARA Pres. Loren W1LHD

It was announced that long time Association Treasurer Robin Walls, N1NFK requested a break from that duty. Loren Dudley, W1LHD volunteered to take over as treasurer in addition to being Association President.

Many at the dinner took that opportunity to renew their membership in the MARA for another year. Charlie Cole, N1ESW invited his son and daughter in-law to the dinner and gave his son John Cole, N1QFH from Scarborough a year membership in the MARA for Christmas, what a nice Papa.

## NEW AMATEUR EXTRA CLASS QUESTION POOL RELEASED

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators' Question Pool Committee has released a revised and expanded Amateur Extra class (Element 4) question pool into the public domain. The new question pool becomes effective July 1, 2002, and must be used to generate all Extra class written examinations administered on or after that date. It replaces the Extra class question pool released April 15, 2000 - the day Amateur Radio "restructuring" became effective.

The new Element 4 pool expands the number of questions by more than 20 percent--806 questions--as opposed to 665 in the current Extra class pool, and it contains more technical material. More than half of the questions cover electrical principles circuits signals and emissions.

The 50 questions in an Extra class examination are drawn from the question pool consistent with FCC

rules and according to a formula that specifies the number of questions to be asked from each of nine topic areas. Applicants must correctly answer at least 37 questions to pass.

The new Element 4 question pool is available on the ARRL Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/pools.html>>. The just-released Extra class question pool remains valid through June 30, 2005.

The Question Pool Committee now will turn its attention to developing an outline for the Technician class (Element 2) question pool. A draft Element 2 syllabus is scheduled for public release and comment next spring. The QPC invites suggestions for the Element 2 syllabus and question pool revision.

## **ARRL ISSUES QRP DXCC PROGRAM RULES**

The ARRL Board of Directors approved the new QRP DXCC Award at its July 2001 meeting. The QRP DXCC Award is given for working 100 different "entities"(formerly "countries") on The DXCC List while operating with an output power of 5 Watts or less. Standard DXCC rules <<http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/>> also apply to this new award. Contacts made since November 15, 1945, are acceptable.

The award is available to Amateur Radio operators worldwide. Applicants must submit an alphanumeric list of 100 contacts - sorted by call sign prefixes.

Application forms and additional info are available on the ARRL Web site [ww.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/qrp/index.html](http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/qrp/index.html), via e-mail to [dxcc@arrl.org](mailto:dxcc@arrl.org), or mail to: ARRL DXCC, 225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111.

## **N1WC is new MARA V.E. Coordinator**

Wes Clement, N1CW of South Harpswell has taken over as VE coordinator for the MARA sponsored ARRL amateur examination program. Long time VE coordinator Robin Walls, N1NFK was having scheduling conflicts with other commitments and wanted someone else to take over. Wes has been a member of our VE team since the beginning and a ham dedicated to the VE process. Many thanks go to Robin for getting the program going and three years of commitment, and many thanks go to Wes for taking on the responsibility.

MARA members and friends with General Class or higher tickets are encouraged to get a VE certification form the ARRL organization and help us keep the program going.

## **VE TEST SESSIONS IN MAINE FOR 2002**

### **January**

12 Sat 10:00a Winslow Elementary School, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

16 Wed 6:00p Togus VA Center Bldg. 210, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

19 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post 417 Broadway, WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

### **February**

2 Sat 10:00a Bath Healthcare Facility, N. Washington St. N1WC/ARRL Wes Clement 207-729-8563

16 Sat 9:00a Bangor Community Center Davis Road, W1COP/ARRL Dave Melochick 207-942-4586

### **March**

9 Sat 9:00a Rockland, Knox County Courthouse, W1RU/ARRL Dick Baldwin 207-529-5781

16 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post 417 Broadway, WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

20 Wed 6:00p Togus VA Center Bldg. 210, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

### **April**

20 Sat 9:00a Bangor Community Center - Davis Road, K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

16 Tue 6:30p Presque Isle, NMTC Christie Bldg Rm 113, WA1YNZ Wilburn Scott 207-455-8333

### **May**

15 Wed 6:00p Togus VA Center Bldg. 210, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

18 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post 417 Broadway, WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

### **June**

1 Sat 10:00a Bath Healthcare Facility, N. Washington, St N1WC/ARRL Wes Clement 207-729-8563

6 Thur 6:00p Winslow, Winslow Elementary School, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

8 Sat 9:00a Bangor Hamfest, Hermon High School - Rte 2, K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

### **July**

13 Sat 12:30p Union, Union Hamfest, W1RU/ARRL Dick Baldwin 207-529-5781

17 Wed 6:00p Togus VA Center Bldg. 210, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

27 Sat 10:00a Lincoln, Lincoln Hamfest, Ella Burr School N1GOI/ARRL Dave Baker 794-3398

### **September**

7 Sat 12:30a Windsor Hamfest K1NIT/ARRL, Bill Crowley 207-623-9075

14 Sat 9:00a Bangor Community Center - Davis Road, K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

21 Sat 10:00a Bath Healthcare Facility, N. Washington St., N1WC/ARRL Wes Clement 207-729-8563

21 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post 417 Broadway, WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

### **October**

15 Tue 6:30p Presque Isle, NMTC Christie Bldg Rm 113, WA1YNZ Wilburn Scott 207-455-8333

19 Sat 10:00a Winslow, Winslow Elementary School, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

19 Sat 9:00a Rockland, Knox County Courthouse, W1RU/ARRL Dick Baldwin 207-529-5781

### **November**

16 Sat 9:00a Bangor Community Center - Davis Road, K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

16 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post 417 Broadway, WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

20 Wed 6:00p Togus VA Center Bldg. 210, AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

### **December**

7 Sat 10:00a Bath Healthcare Facility - N. Washington St., N1WC/ARRL Wes Clement 207-729-8563

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE TENTATIVE DATES ONLY** Contact the listed VE team leader before traveling to verify location, time, current fee and exams. being offered. Send updates and cancellations to: Phil Young, W1JTH, ARRL Bulletin Manager, Maine Section 47 Longwood Ave., August ME 04330-4130

or by phone 207-622-1385, by radio on the Sea Gull Net or by E-Mail to: w1jth@arrl.net

## **The Classic Doublet**

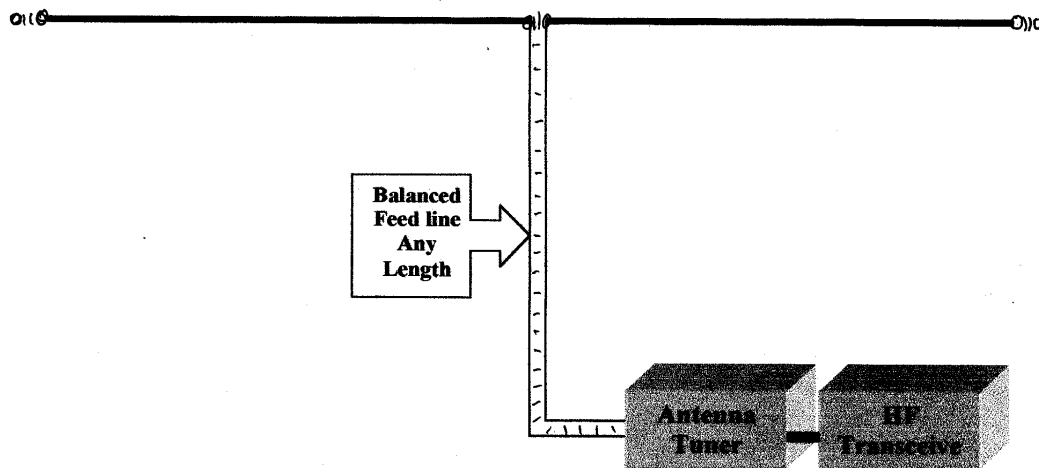
**By Bruce Randall, W1ZE**

In last months newsletter I gave you my thoughts and opinions on the G5RV antenna, a so-called multi-band dipole. The G5RV is a good inexpensive antenna for folks that live on town lots. For those of you that have just a bit more real estate, you should consider an even more inexpensive dipole that in some instances may out perform a G5RV.

The antenna is called the Doublet and it has been around since the early days of radio. After all this time, it has proven to be a simple but effective performer.

The doublet is also a dipole that employs tuned balanced feeders (open line, 600-ohm ladder-line, 450-ohm balanced line or 300-ohm TV type twin-lead). Unlike the G5RV, the doublet runs its transmission line from the dipole all the way to the balanced output on your antenna tuner (or transmatch). No coax cable is used. If coax were used the SWR on some bands would create high power loss inside the coax. Ladder-line balanced transmission line at the HF frequencies is almost loss free. For this reason multi-band operation can be accomplished on a single dipole element.

The Doublet can be almost any convenient length fed in the exact middle of the wire span, but if you want easy 80 to 10 meter performances a length close to 132 works best.



If you do not have enough room to fit in a 132-foot doublet you can cheat. The antenna can be bent into various uniform balanced shapes to fit your lot.

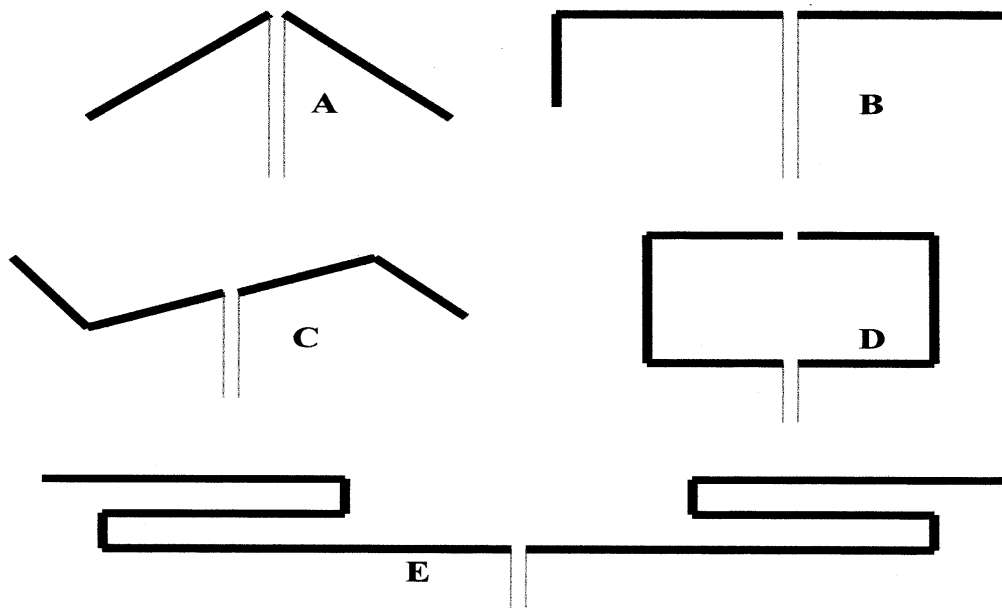


Figure A. shows the classic inverted V. In figure B the ends can be bent up or down in equal lengths. In C the ends can be bent one up and one down (or forward and back) in equal lengths in the Z shape. Figure D shows what one could call an open quad or square/rectangle shape in the horizontal plane. Figure E shows a linear loaded dipole. This arrangement could be used to fit a 160 -10 meter linear loaded doublet into your lot if the wire length on each side is 130 feet long. **73, W1ZE**

## November-December good months for Six Meters

By **W1ZE**

If you are a VHF 6-meter enthusiasts like me, the past two months has been an exciting time. The peak of the sunspot cycle is upon us with F-layer propagation during the daylight hours facilitating excellent DX QSOs on the higher HF bands and extending up to the lower VHF frequencies including six meters. Since early November most days during the pre Holiday period had those of us who keep an ear open on the Magic Band excited about increasing our grid-square totals and adding new countries to our band totals.

Most mornings about 9:30 to 10:00 AM you could start hearing signals coming out of western Europe on the 50 MHz VHF band. Their signal strengths starting at S-0 and increasing to S-9 and even 10, 20 and 30 db over an hour or two later. Yours truly has managed to work most all the grid squares on the British Isles with several QSOs into Denmark, Netherlands, Italy and Germany. I have even worked some of the stations several times on both CW and SSB. Some of the big-gun stations here in Maine, like K1TOL in Turner and K1GUN in Woolwich have managed to hear and work even more station into central Europe and Russia.

I do not have my PC in the ham shack. At the moment it sits on a little desk in the master bedroom. This fall I wanted to be able to listen to the bands while I was on-line or working on this newsletter. As most of you know I have a Yaesu FT-817 QRP (5-watt) rig. I placed it on the desk next to the monitor and have a key paddle behind the mouse. I needed some kind of antenna so I went to Radio Shack and purchased a 70-foot roll of No.20 stranded wire with black insulation. I hooked it to my little MFJ-901 antenna tuner (same size as the 817), ran it out the bedroom window to a tree limb about 20-foot off the ground. I connected the tuner ground over to the copper baseboard radiator pipe to use as a counterpoise. This lash-up worked pretty well on the 80 to 10 meters and I have made many HF QRP QSOs with it. In early November I was making up a quick-tune chart for the tuner so I didn't have to hunt and find low SWR all the time. In the process I noted I found a sweet spot on the tuner for six meters. I could match that 70-foot chunk of wire to the 817 with a moderately low SWR. I could at least listen to 6-meters for band openings.

On Monday December 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:09 EST I was listening on six when I heard and heard GW3MFY CQing on 50.095 (CW) without any replies. He was about 559 on my 817 with wire antenna, which means he would have been an S8 or S9 on my Yagi in the shack. Rather than run down to the basement shack to fire up, I reached for the key paddles and sent **DE W1ZE/QRP W1ZE/QRP K**. Darn if he didn't come right back and give me a 5-3-9 in IO-81 (Wales). DX with five watts and a string!

The next day I received the following e-mail message from GW3MFY:

From: "William Lee" <Gw3mfy@btinternet.com>

To: "Joe Bruce Randall" <brandall@awi.net>

Subject: Re: QSO

Date: Monday, December 17, 2001 19:18

Bruce it was a pleasure to work your flea power this morning. I should have switched off my amp to make it a two way, 5el M2 and 400w this end.

Have a Happy Christmas yourself, sincere greetings from South Wales

If this story hasn't got you ham glands yearning for a six-meter rig; I guess the Magic Band is not for you.

**73, Bruce**

**INVITE A FELLOW HAM TO JOIN YOU  
IN THE MARA. THE HEALTH OF THIS  
ORGANIZATION IS UP TO ALL OF YOU.**

**HAPPY 2002**

**Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association**

**177 Sabino Rd.**

**West Bath, ME 04530-9503**