Squelch Tales

Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for January 2003

Annual year-end dinner well attended

The MARA's December 14th year-end dinner at the China Rose was well attended with 21 members and guests. Everyone had a good meal and a good visit. The meeting portion was MC'ed by MARA president Loren Dudley, W1LHD. The only business that took place was the selection of new Board of Directors members who will take office January 1st.

N1CHN back on the air

After being off the air for the better part of two years, Brian Bubar, N1CHN and one of the MARA's founding members is back on the air. Brian lives in a Brunswick mobile home park that frowns on conspicuous antennas, so he contacted Bruce, W1ZE for a little assistance in coming up with a stealthy set of antennas.

For HF a G5RV made out of black insulated wire and 450-ohm (black) ladder-line was built. The junction from the 450-ohm and buried 50-ohm coax was done through a current balum made from ferrite cores. A 2-meters ¼-wave groundplane was assembled from a SO-239, some #12 TW wire and a 5-foot length of aluminum pipe. Brian used some flat black paint and the antenna farm blends into the wooded background behind his QTH.

Brian is pleased to be back on the air and we should hear more from him now that he has antennas and a new PL module in his Kenwood 2M FM transceiver. **Welcome back Brian**.

M.A.R.A.
Meeting
7:00PM JANUARY 30th
Oak Hill A.R.L.C.

B.O.D. meeting at 6:30PM prior to General Meeting.

Meeting schedule subject to change due to weather conditions

Mid Coast ARES Net has good participation

Over the past year participation in the Mid Coast ARES Net has been very good. A core group of regular members checks into the net. Net Control Charlie, N1ESW and net manager Bruce, W1ZE are pleased with the number of hams checking in.

If you have not checked into the net lately please do so. We are attempting to get a good core of folks that are able participate and in the near future get additional emergency communications training through the MARA and the Mid Coast ARES Net.

We art thinking of things to do during the net to stimulate interest in the net, hobby and AERS. We hope to hear you Monday evening, 7:30 on the 147.21 KS1R repeater.

ORIGINS OF HAMSPEAK, CQ, ELMER, DX, etc.

by Jeff KH2PZ / KH6

ORIGIN OF DX

DX is an early telephone term for distant exchange. "This is correct. In the 1960s I worked in many telephone exchanges around the United Kingdom. On the old-fashioned switchboards with plugs and cords, circuits coming in from distant exchanges had a label marked "DX" above the jack socket. The operator would plug into the circuit and announce the name of her exchange, as confirmation to the distant operator that she was through to the correct destination. 73 de G3NYY" It is also defined in Funk & Wagnall's as Distance. The term DX appears in many math formulas as distance of x.

ORIGIN OF ELMER

Not many reports on this but had a report that early Army rifle instructors were called Elmers". From Ken and Mary I believe that the term "Elmer" is a fairly new one. It has only been widely used for perhaps the last twenty years. I recall reading of it's origin in QST or other ham magazine sometime no earlier than the late '70s. It refers to a specific ham whose first name was Elmer, who was a mentor of novices in a ham club somewhere in the USA.

I started studying for my Amateur Radio license in 1963, and "Elmer" was in use then ... and, if I recall correctly (forgettery works quite fine here) -- seems like that was the term used when I first expressed interest, in the 50s, while in high chool physic classes. 73, Mark --AA6DX Far Northern California. Hammin' for 37 years...

From Norm K1AA " The term "Elmer" was invented in the early 1970s (1971, I think) by Rod Newkirk, W9BRD (now VA3ES). "Rod still holds W9BRD and his Canadian call is VA3ZBB.....I am fortunate to still receive his entertaining letters.....we continue our friendship from 1941 when we were both high-speed perators at WAR. 73 Norm K1AA

ORIGIN OF DE

Opinions From The Internet Does anyone know how and why the "de" is included whenever the first name is used.....as in "73 de Yab". I know "de" is Dutch for "the", but maybe that has nothing to do with it. Close...'de' is Spanish for 'from.' Ham shorthand. 73 from Yab. An artifact of CW usage. All wrong, "de" comes from the french!!!!!!! language and has the translation to "from" and "of" in the english language. -- odo

ORIGIN OF CQ

Opinions From The Internet Let's turn to page 4 of Baarslag's Famous Sea Rescues (formerly titled: SOS To The Rescue): "By 1904 a number of ships in the trans-Atlantic trade were equipped with wireless telegraphy. The British operators were nearly all landline telegraphers who had left railroad or post-office keys to go to sea in the newly opened field. They brought along with them not only their Morse code but also many of their telegraphic abbreviations and signals. One was the general call - CQ, which had been used to attract attention of all operators along a wire. It preceded the time signal in the morning at 10 o'clock and also all notices of general importance. CQ went to sea and became a general call to all ships."

A couple paragraphs later, "Early in 1904 the Marconi Company, realizing the desirability of some universal distress signal, filled the need by issuing the following general order: ``It has been brought to our notice that the call `CQ' (All stations) while being satisfactory for general purposes, does not sufficiently express the urgency required in a signal of distress.

Therefore, on and after the 1st of February, 1904, the call to be given by ships in distess, or in any way requiring assistance, shall be `CQD.' " "

To me, this implies that prior to 1 Feb 1904, some ship did use CQ as a distress call, and possibly her calls for help didn't draw the needed attention. (This was before the twice-per-hour Silent Periods were created - 600m was pure bedlam, and a CQ would have gone unheeded.)

For more radio history, visit your local research library. But please don't make up "facts." (Am I the only one who believes that questions concerning radio history should be included in the amateur exams?)

73, Jeff

BOSTON TV STATION DISRUPTS POLICE SYSTEM, REVERSE TVI

By KG2RG

A Boston-area TV station's new 24-hour-a-day digital transmitter is disrupting Camden County New Jersey police communications over 100 miles away.

The South Jersey Courier-Post newspaper says that twice last summer; the new digital transmitter used by WCVB in Boston Massachusetts interfered with field communications to Camden County's communications headquarters in the town of Lindenwold. The town's leaders want the problem to go away.

By way of background, WCVB began broadcasting its federally mandated digital television signal on Channel 20 in 1998. But the problem in the currently shared 506 through 512-megahertz band did not show up in Southern New Jersey until this year. In January WCVB began full time, round-the-clock digital programming. A summertime condition hams call tropospheric ducting is being tabbed as the cause of the interference.

A duct acts kind of like an R-F tunnel from one geographic area to another. This one is putting South Jersey in Boston's back yard and vice versa during the warmer months of the year.

Engineers seem to agree that the police or the television station will have to move frequency. The big question is which one will make the change. New Jersey Congressman Rob Andrews met with county representatives and is now working to arrange a meeting between them and the FCC in Washington. They want the station to move.

But some consultants and communications lawyers feel it will be the county that's told to change frequency. They say that broadcasting is mandated the spectrum on a primary basis.

Article provided via Bill Messier, K1MNW

News from Newington

Special Event, ARISS Contact To Mark Transmission Centennial

Special event station KM1CC will be on the air January 11-19, 2003, to mark the 100th anniversary of Guglielmo Marconi's inaugural wireless transmission between the US and Great Britain January 18, 1903.

Marconi used a 35 kW rotary spark transmitter and a massive antenna system to transmit a 54-word greeting from President Theodore Roosevelt to England's King Edward VII. The monarch promptly acknowledged receipt of the message via landline and cable.

The special event will take place at the former Coast Guard station at Coast Guard Beach in Eastham, Massachusetts, which is near the original Marconi site. Operation will include several amateur modes, including SSB, CW, FM, digital and satellite. The special event station will open to the public from 9 AM until 5 PM EST (1400-2200z), but operating will take place 24 hours a day.

An Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) school contact is to be scheduled during the weeklong celebration. Selected students from three Cape Cod high schools will speak via KM1CC with a member of the new Expedition 6 ISS crew.

Marconi's daughter, Princess Elettra Marconi, is scheduled to attend the reenactment of the groundbreaking wireless transmission on January 18, when KM1CC will transmit the text of Roosevelt's original message to King Edward VII.

Additional details are on the Marconi Radio Club Web site: http://personal.tmlp.com/k1vv/w1aa .

K7IJ REPEATER SYSTEM ATTRACTS RENEWED FCC ATTENTION

The FCC has sent a Warning Notice to the owner of the K7IJ Grizzly Peak repeater system in California's San Francisco Bay area citing "numerous rule violations" on the machine since last April. In a November 26 letter, FCC Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth reminded repeater owner Bruce Wachtell, K7IJ, of his responsibility to ensure proper control of his repeater. Almost four years ago, the FCC shut down the Grizzly Peak repeater after it determined the system was out of control of the licensee and his designated control operator.

"Since the repeater bears your call sign, it is important for you to understand that you are responsible for its proper operation," Hollingsworth told Wachtell, whose residence is in Carson City, Nevada.

"The decision to operate a repeater is a totally voluntary one. Repeaters are a convenience in the Amateur Radio Service, not a necessity." Hollingsworth said repeater control operators "must ensure immediate proper operation" of the system, regardless of the type of station control. If Wachtell cannot regain control of his repeater, then he must shut it down, Hollingsworth concluded.

Violations cited included failure of users to identify--or to identify correctly, intentional interference from "certain users," use of the repeater by unlicensed operators and "lengthy carriers and key-ups."

Hollingsworth told Wachtell that it's his responsibility to prevent recurring and deliberate violations. "If you are unwilling or unable to prevent violations on your K7IJ repeater, then your operator and station licenses will be subject to enforcement action by the Commission," warned Hollingsworth, who raised the specter of fines, suspension and license revocation.

In an unrelated repeater case, Hollingsworth sent a Warning Notice December 4 to Wayne Curley, WA6NRB, who operates a repeater in the Los Angeles area. Hollingsworth cited monitoring information that the repeater has been used by an unlicensed individual, Richard Burton, ex-WB6JAC. Burton spent three months in a federal jail last year after being convicted of unlicensed operation. Hollingsworth also reminded Curley that a repeater licensee is responsible for recurring violations and that enforcement action--fines, suspension or revocation--could result if he is unable to prevent violations on his repeater.

KID'S DAY IS JANUARY 4!

The next Kid's Day is Saturday, January 4, 2003, from 1800-2400 UTC. The twice-annual event, held in January and June, is a chance for amateurs to invest in the future of Amateur Radio by participating in a simple, but rewarding, Amateur Radio event. Now entering its ninth year, Kid's Day typically attracts more than 1000 participants for each running.

Kid's Day is intended to encourage young people--licensed or not--to enjoy Amateur Radio. It gives youngsters on-the-air experience so they might develop an interest in pursuing a license in the future. It's also intended to give hams a chance to share their station with their children.

Activity for Kid's Day http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/kd-rules.html takes place on 20, 15 and 10 meters--and perhaps on local 2-meter repeaters. It's an opportunity to introduce youngsters to the magic of ham radio and perhaps spark a lifelong love for the hobby.

The suggested exchange for Kid's Day is first name, age, location and favorite color. You are encouraged to work the same station again if an operator has changed. Call "CQ Kid's Day." Suggested frequencies are 14,270 to 14,300, 21,380 to 21,400 and 28,350 to 28,400 kHz, and 2-meter repeater frequencies with permission from your area repeater sponsor.

All participants are eligible to receive a colorful certificate. Visit the ARRL Kid's Day Survey page <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/ead/kids-day-survey.html> to complete a short survey and post your comments. You will then have access to download the certificate page or send a 9x12 SASE to Boring Amateur Radio Club, PO Box 1357, Boring, OR 97009.

Originated by the Boring Amateur Radio Club, Kid's Day now is sponsored and administered by the ARRL with the cooperation and assistance of the BARC.

Association officials for 03

For all you folks keeping score at home and were wondering who is running thing at the MARA here is the august group:

Board of Directors:
W1LHD, Loren Dudley (acting Treasurer & President)
N1GWE, Bob Watson
N1VVF, Bob McGueeney
AI1B, Jeff, Herbster
WD1F, Donald Dauphin
KB1IEF, Louise Dauphin
N1HOC, Lee Tribou

KS1R/MARA Trustee:
W1ZE, Bruce Randall (Newsletter editor)

Technical Committee:
K1MJP, Pete Russell
K1MNW, Bill Messier
W1ZE, Bruce Randall

Repeater & Systems Control Operators:
N1JIM, Mark Rideout
W1ZE, Bruce Randall
AA1WI, Brian Doval