



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for February 2003

News from Newington

ARRL Board Discusses Strategic Planning for WRC-03

According to ARRL bulletin No, ARLB007 the ARRL Board of Directors met January 17-18 in Connecticut to discuss a wide range of topics, including a timeline for future strategic planning, increasing League membership and raising the level of awareness in Washington, DC, of Amateur Radio issues at the upcoming World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-03).

Last summer the Board created an ad hoc committee on strategic planning, which developed a set of recommendations for a new strategic planning process and brought them to the Board meeting last week. The Board will meet in a special leadership seminar in July, and in September will convene for a special strategic planning retreat. With a closer view in mind, a new ad hoc committee was created to focus on the recruitment and retention of members.

The Board also spent a fair amount of time discussing strategy for pursuing Amateur Radio's interests at WRC-03, to be held in Geneva, Switzerland this summer. The hottest topic concerning ham radio is 7 MHz and the objective of a worldwide 300 kHz harmonized amateur allocation. The immediate need is to get the government side of the US administration to support realignment of the amateur band and the shortwave broadcasters in ITU Regions 1 and 3.

Sagadahoc ARES

& Cumberland ARES/RACES

Put heads together

MARA member and Sagadahoc Counties EC, Al Kuong WA1SCS, AEC Bruce Randall W1ZE and AEC for Red Cross Lee Thibou N1HOC hooked up with Southern Maine EC Bryce Ramsey, K1GAX for a breakfast meeting. Discussion on what is going on in Sagadahoc County along with a plea for help of getting Sagadahoc Counties ARES up and running in a



manner that can really assist the citizens in the mid-coast from the ARES Pros in Cumberland County. Here is a list of some of the topics addressed:

1. Emergency communications training for mid-coast hams.
2. Bryce to come to MARA meeting and do a "how to be ready for emergency communications" presentation.
3. Establish a mutual aid agreement between Cumberland ARES and Sagadahoc ARES. And if successful, then with Androscoggin and Lincoln County ARES.
4. How to coordinate our efforts with county and town officials.
5. Combined Simulated Emergency Test (SET) with Cumberland ARES so Sag. ARES can get up to speed.
6. Sag. EC appointed Lee, N1HOC Assistant Emergency Coordinator for Red Cross.
7. Sag and Cumberland ARES to meet quarterly to keep the ball rolling.
8. Difficulty of getting area trained hams to participate in ARES activities.

The group agreed to meet again in March to keep the ARES ball rolling.

If you are interested in participation, and we hope that MARA members will assist in ARES.

The Mid Coast ARES Net meets every Monday evening at 7:30 on the 147.21 KS1R repeater. Hope to hear you all check-in.

FEBRUARY MARA MEETING, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 28th

Location to be announced.

B.O.D. MEETING AT 6:30 PM WITH REGULAR MEETING AT 7 PM

WINTERFEST FEBRUARY 8th

The Augusta club will hold Winterfest again at the Crystal Springs dance hall in Chelsea on Saturday February 8th. From Augusta take Route-17 east to about a mile past Togus at the corner of the Windsor Road and Route 17.



Hope to see you there.

Broadband 2-Meter antenna mast J-Pole

By W1ZE

Over the years I offered up several designs of the tried and true half-wave J-pole. I have three of them in use at my QTH, two for 2-Meter and one for 6-meter.

Why another article about J-poles you may ask? Well, I was thinking about them when I sent the plans for a 6-meter version to one of our club members, and the one I built in southern California 25 years ago came to mind. It was for 2-meters but the unique thing about that antenna was I used the mast pipe that supported a 15-meter monoband yagi the main portion of the antenna.

The mast above the rotor was an 8-foot length of 2-inch conduit, with the 15-meter yagi boom clamp about 6-inches above the top of the rotor. Leaving seven and a half feet of pipe mast with a 2-

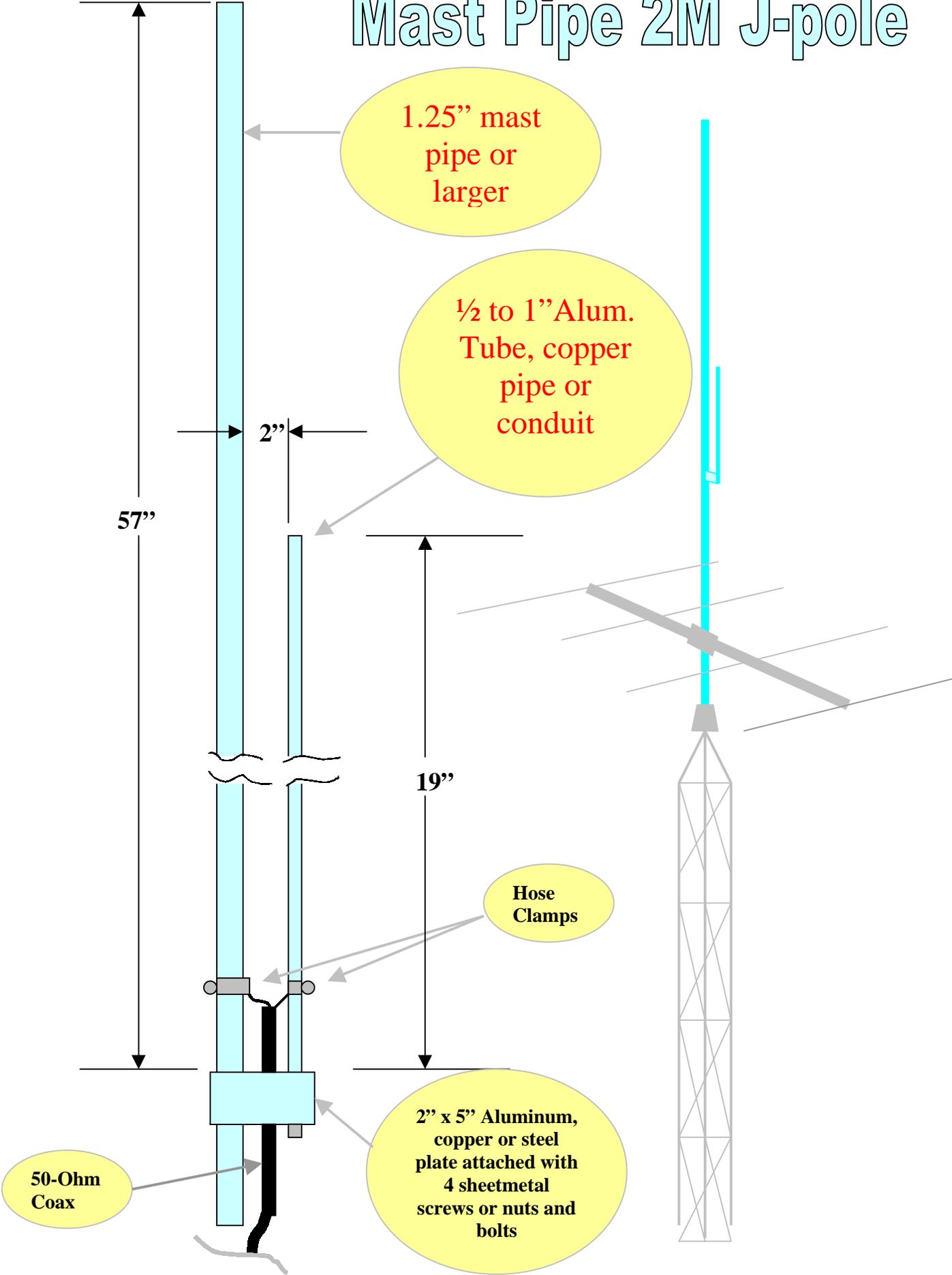
meter $\frac{1}{4}$ -wave ground plain at the top. That antenna worked OK for mountaintop repeaters but at the time I still worked a lot of 2M simplex on 147.525 MHz, local remote base common chit-chat frequency and mobiles.

I took down the mast and removed the ground plane. I measured along the mast to a point 57-inches from the top. I went through my junk box and found a 2-foot length of half-inch aluminum tube and a 2-inch by 5-inch by $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick chunk of aluminum plate. I cut the aluminum tube to 22 inches in length. I then drilled four small holes in the plate to facilitate four stainless steel sheet metal screws so that the distance between the mast and the aluminum tube was 2-inches. The top edge of the plate was attached to the mast at the 57-inch mark. Then the aluminum tube was attached to the plate so that 19-inches extended above the top edge of the plate.

I used RG-8/U to keep down losses. At the antenna end of the coax I separated the center conductor from the braided shield leaving two 2-inch pig-tails. I placed one compression hose clamp around the mast and one around the 19-inch tube at a point about three inches above the top edge of the plate. I then slid the center conductor under the mast clamp and the shield under the tube clamp.

Tuning was easy. A 2-meter transceiver, SWR bridge (meter) and a screwdriver was all I needed. In an open area in my back yard I placed the mast in a vertical position and started adjustments. With the hose clamps snug I moved the junction point up and down the pipe and mast until a low SWR was obtained. I weather sealed the coax antenna junctions and after reinstallation on the roof I was able to have a low SWR 2:1 or less across the whole 2-meter band. 1.1:1 at resonance (146.5).

Mast Pipe 2M J-pole



MARA Board selects new Association Officers

At the January 30th Board of Directors meeting with all board members in attendance, in accordance with the Association bylaws, a new group of club officers were selected from the board members. They are:

President - Don Doupin WD1F

Vice President - Jeff Herbster, AIIB

Treasurer - Bob Watson, NIGWE

Activities Chairman - Lee Thibou, NIHOC

These good folks who volunteered to take the offices need all our help in running our Association.

What happened at the January Meeting?

Following the MARA B.O.D. meeting on January 30th the general meeting took place. Several issues were discussed and here is the run-down:

- Possible acquisitions of a newer Comm-Link controller with enhanced features for the 147.21 repeater and move the existing RS-85 controller to 444.4 repeater. Members in attendance voted to proceed with the project and new control negotiations.
- Several club members indicated that have expressed interest in a 1.2Gh repeater and maybe a 906 MHz and 222MHz repeater all running in parallel with the 444.4 repeater.
- The putting up a 2-meter packet node with the new Internet e-mail and web access. Project committee consisting of Don, WD1F and Eric, KB6YNO. Stay tuned for a progress report.
- When the MARA has a good turnout for a meeting the Oak Hill ARLC gets small quick. The Board will start looking for a good meeting place with restroom facilities that will accommodate a larger crowd.
- Springtime to-do projects were addressed, such as: Add 2-meter Station Master to the tower for the 147.21 repeater. HF antennas, etc.
- MARA's support of local ARES activities. And upcoming training for club members.

With no further business or exchange of information, President Don, WD1F call the meeting over at about 8:00 PM.

Maine Examination Schedule

The following shows Revised Maine Ham Exams list for 2003

February

1 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free Library N1WC/ARRL Wes Clements 207-729-8563

March

15 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post #35,413 Broadway WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

April

5 Sat 9:00a Bangor, PSARC clubhouse 14 Bomarc Road K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

19 Sat 10:00a At Greater Portland Electronics Flea mkt. WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

May

17 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post #35,413 Broadway WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

3 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free Library N1WC/ARRL Wes Clements 207-729-8563

June

7 Sat 9:00 Bangor Hamfest, Hermon High School K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

July none scheduled

August

? Sat 9:00a St Albans ME, St Albans Hamfest, on site K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

September

20 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post #35,413 Broadway WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

20 Sat 9:00a Bangor, PSARC clubhouse 14 Bomarc Road K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

October

11 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free Library N1WC/ARRL Wes Clements 207-729-8563

November

15 Sat 9:00a So. Portland, AL Post #35,413 Broadway WZ1N/ARRL John Bergeron 207-799-3687

15 Sat 9:00a Bangor, PSARC clubhouse 14 Bomarc Road K1AG/ARRL Bill Sullivan 207-947-4051

December

1 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free Library N1WC/ARRL Wes Clements 207-729-8563