



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for March 2003

T-Hunter team checks-in

Prior to returning to Connecticut to avoid the Maine winter, Paul (N1ZYB) and Linda (N1ZYC) Towne gave the MARA troops on Oak Hill an excellent presentation of T-hunting (or Fox hunting). Before heading home, Mark Rideout, N1JIM gave them an old Ramsey direction finder that had been kicking around to see what they could do with it. The following is an email received from Paul and Linda:

Hi Guys,

Linda and I just got home from a foxhunt in which we used Mark's Ramsey Kit Foxhound Direction Finder Kit. This foxhunt was a little different from other foxhunts in that the hunters all worked together cooperatively to find the tricky fox. Our local 2 meter repeater has recently had a little trouble with a jammed so we thought a group fox hunt would allow us to hone our skills at finding a jammed some day if the need arises.

The fox was transmitting with 350mw so Linda and I started with our four-element diamond quad, which gave us two good bearings at the start of the hunt. Those bearings plus bearings from our teammates put us within a third of a mile from the fox. At that point we switched to using Mark's Foxhound. A short time later, the whole group of seven converged to a point about 100 yards from the fox. Reflections from nearby buildings slowed us down for a few minutes until one hunter spotted the elusive fox.

The foxhound operated well and if not for reflections we would have been on the fox in minutes vs. hours. The fox knew a team of experienced hunters

was looking for him so he went out of his way to make things as difficult as possible for the hunters. This was our first team hunt and we think it was a lot of fun. We used a 440-repeater frequency for the hunters while the fox transmitted on the local 2-meter repeater input frequency.

73's

Paul & Linda

El Cheap-O 2 Meter & 70 cMeter groundplane antennas

By W1ZE

I few weeks ago I was asked by Woody, W1WEW for the plans for an easy to build 440 MHz antenna so that he could get his GE MVP transceiver to communicate with the KS1R 444.4 repeater on Oak Hill. The easiest one I could think of was a simple groundplane cut to that frequency. In my PC's antenna folder, where I save antenna information that I want to refer to, I found plans for a 2M and 70cM groundplane by ON1DHT.

The following drawing and instructions show how to build the two GP antennas. The dimensions are given in the metric system so I converted them to inches for you just to make it simple.

For 146 MHz: cut all 5 elements to 20-inches. After connection to the coax connector trim them all to 19¼ inch long.

For 446 MHz: cut all 5 elements to 6½ inches. After connection to coax connector trim them to 6¼ inches.

The drawing says use an N connector for 440 MHz, but they are costly and a SO-239 connector will work fine.

The support mast can be PVC pipe, aluminum tube or EMT (conduit).

Quarter Wave Antenna, by ON1DHT

Formula for all the elements

$L = (75 / \text{Frequency in MHz}) * 0.96$
To calculate the length of the elements for other bands use the above formula.
Example 6-meter band (50MHz):
 $(75 / 50) * 0.96 = 1.44$ meter

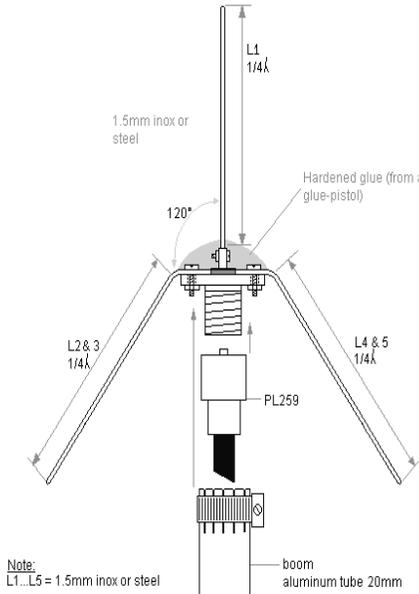
Dimensions for the 2meter band

L1 = 49 cm (cut until best SWR)
L2...L5 = 49 cm

Dimensions for the 70cm band

L1 = 16 cm (cut until best SWR)
L2...L5 = 16 cm

Note: use N-connector instead of a PL-connector on UHF



This type of antenna works well for local communications and working your area repeaters. The antenna can be built for just a few bucks. Most are built using No.12 solid copper wire. But, if you can get brazing rod at your local hardware store or welding supply house, use them for the elements because they hold up well and they will stay straight when covered with ice and snow or hit with high winds. Have fun and build one. **73, Bruce**

NEWS FROM NEWINGTON

ARLB014 New Field Day entry class

Field Day will gain another entry class for 2003. "Class F" stations will operate at emergency operations centers, or EOCs. The change renews the emphasis of Field Day's 1933 origins as an emergency preparedness exercise as opposed to a routine contest.

ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, said that last year the League received a record number of Field Day entries from groups and individuals. Given the increased emphasis on emergency communications since September 11, 2001, the ARRL Board's Membership Services Committee asked that the Contest Branch come up with

something to reflect that emphasis. The new Class F station is the result.

"This is a major change," Henderson said. "Class F has been established to encourage groups to test and further their working relationships with established emergency operations centers." The updated rules and a list of frequently asked questions in the new 2003 Field Day packet spell out the details.

A Class F entry station must set up at an "established EOC" center activated by a club or non-club group. Class F EOC operation must take place in cooperation with the EOC staff. Class F stations are eligible for the same bonus points as Class A stations.

The MARA plans to participate in Field Day 2003 from Woolwich, in the "A" classification, but in the years to come we could operate from Sagadahoc County EMA emergency comm-center if HF antennas are installed at the Courthouse and the membership wants to participate in the new "F" class.

73, WIZE

Monthly Maine Section News Summary

By ARRL Maine Section Manager:

William A. Woodhead, N1KAT

n1kat@arrl.org

Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Please excuse my absence on maintaining this column. Back in early October, I came down with a case of the shingles, that manifested itself in my eye. Fortunately, my eyesight has been spared, and I am now up and running again, albeit the after effects will continue to linger for many months.

Amateur Radio in this state is in excellent shape, thanks to all the hard-working clubs, such as the Portland Wireless Association, which is working with 27 Sea Cadets to get their Amateur ticket, and learning Morse code as well. The Ellsworth Hams are having a radio symposium at which Gov. John Baldacci will be in attendance.

Other clubs like the Augusta ARC help support the Children's Science

Center, and the Androscoggin ARC will be working with Poland Regional HS electronic program. I know there are many other clubs doing similar activities, so please keep me informed, so I can help spread the word.

The Maine State Convention will be on March 28 & 29 at the same location, the Ramada Inn and Conference Center, 490 Pleasant St., Lewiston. Special room rates are available for the event; be sure to mention the radio convention, in order to receive the special rate. For reservations, call 207-784-2331.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone who can make it.

73, **Bill**, N1KAT

PREZ SEZ

By Don Doupin, WD1F

...It's into February all ready and I have been wondering what is happening in the world of amateur radio? What is happening in the world of MARA?

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a one-stop shop where I could read about the latest issues in my area? Look at a schedule of events. Etc...

Well this is something Mark (N1JIM) and I have been talking about. In fact we have been working on a web site that can be maintained by members by just filling out forms. Try to envision for a moment, a web site where

* Members can be added, edited and searched from anywhere

* To update the main article on the site you simply fill in the blanks. The heading, article, and picture are updated when you finish.

* Meeting minutes can be entered via a form and can be reviewed by all members.

* Work done to the repeater sites and repeaters can be logged in an online journal.

* Secondary articles for EchoLink news, ARES news

* Treasurers reports available for members.

* A system status page. Where you can get the latest news of the health of the MARA's repeaters, links, etc.

The amount of work for one person to maintain all this information is staggering. Mark (N1JIM) has been doing a lot of this work himself in HTML for a long time but there aren't enough days in a week. For this to happen the information needs to be updatable by anyone, with a user name and password, from anywhere using nothing more than a web browser. This way Lee (N1HIOC) wants to enter an event in the on line schedule of events, she just fills out a form on the Internet. If I want to write an article about some work on the hill, I do.

This brings up concerns like, who manages when changes are made? Who controls access to making updates? Mark and I don't claim to have all the answers, just some ideas. Thoughts and comments are appreciated.

Also the TELPAC project is moving forward. We now have a PC for the project. I plan to set it up and make it available to KB6YNO via the Internet, so he can install and configure the software. I could write more about that. Perhaps Eric (KB6YNO) would like to do a piece on its capabilities.

I am also concerned about getting more members. I would like to brainstorm at a meeting about strategies. I keep thinking about a mailer

to the participants of some of our events. How about the people that manage the rest stops. Can we get some of them interested?

Just some thoughts again..

Have a great month & 73,

Don, WD1F

MARA has new Membership Chairman

Mark Rideout, N1JIM has graciously accepted the position of Association Membership Chairman. Mark will keep the membership records and make sure all new and renewal memberships are recorded properly and route dues to the Association Treasurer, Bob, N1GWE.

For membership information, visit the MARA's web site at www.gwi.net/mara. Send new and renewal memberships to:

MARA MEMBERSHIP
C/O Mark Rideout, N1JIM
P.O. Box 213
Bowdoinham, ME 04008
Contact Mark at: n1jim@gwi.net.

KS1R Packet TELPAC On the Air

On the evening of February 20th Eric, KB6YNO and Don, WD1F got the KS1R Packet TELPAC connection node up and running from Don's QTH in Phippsburg on 145.010 MHz. The system running the Winlink-2000 system, which allows hams to log-on and send e-mail messages to anyone anywhere and other nifty stuff via ham radio. Bruce, W1ZE got on from his packet station and sent a test message to himself at his GWI email account, it works.

Eric will do a show and tell on how the system works in the near future. Tentative plans are to install the TELPAC node at the Oak Hill site. Break out that old TNC and reinstall that terminal program onto your PC so you can access the KS1R TELPAC node. For more information on the Winlink-2000 system, log-on to www.winlink.org/TelPac.htm. For general information about TELPAC and how the KS1R node works go to www.winlink.org.

VE Sessions & Ham events for 2003

March

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

April

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

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

May

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

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

June

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

July

August

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

September

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

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

October

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

November

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

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

December

1 Sat 10:00a Bath, Patten Free
Library N1WC/ARRL Wes Clement
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.

SOME HAM EVENTS FOR 2003

March 28-29 Lewiston, Andy Hamfest & ARRL State Convention at Ramada Inn Conference Center, (walk-in exams)

April 19 Greater Portland Electronics Fleamarket
Stewart Morrill American Legion
Post #35 413 Broadway, South Portland ME

June 7 Bangor Hamfest at Hermon High School



**ARE YOU
PREPARED
TO HELP?**

**MARA Has New Packet
Node on 145.01 MHz**

A new experimental network node has been established on 145.010MHz. It's callsign is KS1R-1 and its running DigiFlex software created by LU7DID in Argentina. It does not have TCP/IP enabled. It is strictly AX.25. I still have more reading/research to do in order to better run this node. However, for all practical purposes it is functioning properly. I have the station full quieting here in South Portland. I suspect that the signal is getting out pretty well elsewhere. You will also find that it will successfully link to the Mt. Washington Valley node W1HJF-1 (MWV) on top of Mt. Washington, NH. As with the KS1R TelPac station, which is co-located with KS1R-1 node (and run on the same computer/radio/antenna), it is currently at WD1F's (Donnie) QTH in Phippsburg. In the next several weeks, it will be moved the KS1R club station

at Oak Hill in Brunswick, which will be it's permanent home.

I have been testing links down to Quincy, MA with W1DXQ. So far, the KS1R-1 node has been hearing his station, but he still cannot establish a link on his end. Perhaps, a slight tweak with his 2M beam may help. But, this does show that the haul can be made.

The station is beaconing every 5 minutes. Please see if you can link into it. The help command is? and it has a slightly different command set than traditional TheNet, NETROM and BPQ systems, but it's fairly simple once you get the hang on it. Let me know how it works for you. 73 de Eric, KB6YNO/1

**Mid coast Hams
establish 70 cM
experimental net**

MARA President Don Douphin, WD1F and Joe Douphin, KB1HSO started a 70cM experimental net, Monday evening at 8:30 PM on 446.100 MHz simplex. The purpose of the net is to promote activity on the 70cM band by area hams.

The first session had Don (WD1F), Joe (KB1HSO) and Bruce (W1ZE) in a simplex roundtable on 446.1 with Bill (K1MNW) listening on his scanner from Oak hill. Donny and Joe were at their Phippsburg QTHs and Bruce was mobile (parked) in Freeport. All reported full quieting signals between each other.

The group is in hopes that other hams in the area will dust off their 440 radios and join in, so that signal reports can be exchanged and recorded, technical topics can be discussed and hopefully perk interest in the most popular Amateur UHF band.

Use it or lose it!

GOODIES FOR SALE!

Loren Dudley, W1LHD has donated the following items to the Association for sale to raise funds.

1. Ten Tec Century 21
70-Watt 80, 40, 20, 15 & 10 meters CW only Transceiver with internal 120vac power supply + Ten Tec Keyer paddles.



Used 21s sell on eBay for \$125 to \$150 but we are pricing this to move.
\$75 including key

2. Yaesu CPU-2500R
two-Meter 25-watt/3-watt FM Transceiver



Works fine but needs PL encoder board installed for repeater use. As-is it would make a nice packet radio.
\$35.00

Manual for this radio is available as a free download from
www.aaldo.com/hammanuals.htm

For info or purchase of the above contact Bruce Randall at 442-9630 or W1ZE@arrl.net

24th Annual Andy Hamfest and Maine State ARRL Convention



March 28th & 29th
At the Lewiston Ramada Inn

Editor Needs HELP! By W1ZE

For the past several years I have been the editor of this Association's newsletter. For the most part I enjoy putting it together, but it does take time and getting noteworthy information into it requires keeping my ear close to what is going on in Hamdom. I try to spice up the newsletter with technical articles and other topics of interest, but it is a rare occasion when I get input from the readers. This month's issue has a lot of news and information, but this is a rare occasion.

How about helping out by providing a ham radio article, technical and non-technical. Did you take a trip where ham radio played a part? Did you bust a DX pile up and work Gus out on a rock in the Pacific? If so, why not write it up and forward it to me at W1ZE@arrl.net. I am sure our readers would love to see more interesting data in Squelch Tales.

73, Bruce