



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for April 2003

MARA Members Now On 1.2 GHz

There is life above 2-meters. MARA members Bill Messier, K1MNW, Donnie Dauphin WD1F and previous member Nelson Frost, K1NF are now making QSOs on the 1.2 GHz (1,280 MHz) ham band.

Several other members such as Bruce Randall W1ZE and Peter Russell K1MJP have plans of getting a Kenwood 1.2 GHz FM so they can join the fun on the first of the ham radio microwave bands.

Bill, with the advantage of having a QTH on Oak Hill, Brunswick enjoys line-of-sight communications for miles. Bill and Donnie report full-quieting signals between Oak Hill and Stoneybrook Road in Phippsburg with Don running only 2 watts and a rubber ducky antenna.

With five folks on or soon to be on the band Bill Messier is planning a FM repeater for 1.2 GHz and there is talk of cross-linking it with the 444.4 repeater.

Use it or lose it!

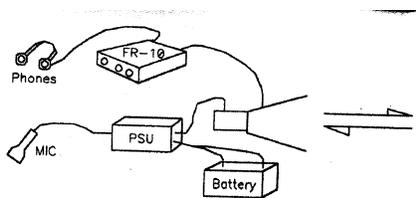
10 GHz project underway

The members of the MARA are exploring the microwave bands. Bill Messier, K1MNW has always had a yen for the ham bands above 1 GHz, also known as microwaves. Other than the 1.2 GHz band

they tend to be point to point or real line-of-sight.

Bill has collected lots of electronics hardware that works on the microwave bands and had a box of gunplexers that came from old burglar alarm systems. While surfing the web, Bill found a article by VHF/UHF experimenter Kent Britain, WA5VJB titled, "Just about as cheap as you can get 10GHz." This 10 GHz transceiver uses a surplus 10/11GHz gunplexer, a simple FM modulator and a Ramsey FR-10, 10-Meter FM receiver kit (with minor mods) tuned to 30MHz.

After Bill told Bruce, W1ZE about Kent's article and both ordered the Ramsey kits. Bill got his transceiver built first and was bouncing signals around his QTH.



WA5VJB illustration

Both Bill and Bruce's gunplexers are fitted to surplus RCA/DirectTV disk reflectors for the added gain a parabolic dish provides.

Bruce has a Yaesu FT-817 QRP radio that tunes most of the frequencies between 300 kHz to 460 MHz and told Bill that his rig would receive wide-band FM on frequencies from 76 to 108 MHz. Bill looked over the 817's spec sheet and it was off to

Salem, NH to get a FT-817 for himself.

With just a little retuning of the gunplexer the FT-817 became the 77 MHz IF receiver and future platform for SHF transverters.

As of this writing Bruce is about 95% complete with his 10 GHz Gunplexer-transceiver and by the time you read this article K1MNW and W1ZE may have made their first 10 GHz QSO.

Other hams in the area such as Maine Section Manager Bill Woodhead, N1KAT and Don Dauphin, WD1F are starting to collect the parts to build their 10 GHz gunplexer transceivers.

If you want to find out about this simple rig, contact Bruce at W1ZE@arrl.net and he will email you a PDF copy of Kent's article and an article on how to fit the gunplexer to a digital disk.

Use it or lose it

Quality 6 Meters FM on the cheap

By Pete Russell, K1MJP

I found six GE Ranger drawer units available from Panik Electronics in Melbourne, Fla. I called New London Technology in Virginia, a place that has all kinds of GE stuff - a repository, and talked with Randy the technician because I did not know the exact models. What I found is that these are 110 watt, 30-50 MHz units and Randy says (without me asking) those go on 6-meters FM (52-53 MHz) without any mods, just program

them and go. So I asked him how much for a control head and cable. He said \$40 and the drawer units are \$75 for a total of \$115 plus shipping.

For about \$125 you can have a quality multi-channel 6-meter FM rig. I think you can program at least 16 channels if not more. I have the programmer at my shop.

If you want more information and how to get one, contact me at prussell@bowdoin.edu or Monday to Friday 9AM to 4:30 PM at 725-3066.

73, Pete



Mid Coast ARES team meet to plan future

Sagadahoc County EC, Allen Kuong, WA1SCS, Assistant ECs, Lee Thibou, N1HOC and Bruce Randall, W1ZE met with Cumberland County and Southern Maine EC Bryce Rumery, K1GAX at the Cook's Corner Dennies' for breakfast and to continue a the close working relationship between Sagadahoc and Cumberland County ARES groups. At the meeting Allen and Bryce signed the Sagadahoc and Cumberland County ARES Mutual-Aid Agreement.

Lee and Allen invited Bryce to speak at the April 24th MARA meeting and provide guidance on what we all need to have as a minimum to be able to provide emergency and disaster communications.

Soon there will be ARRL Emergency Communication certification classes offered to members of the MARA and

hams in the mid coast communities facilitated by your MARA.

Newington News



FCC Proposes to Hike Amateur Radio Vanity Call Sign Fee

The FCC proposed March 26 increasing the regulatory fee to apply for, renew or reinstate an Amateur Radio vanity call sign from \$14.50 to \$16.30 this fall. The Commission included the new fee in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) "Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2003" (MD 03-83), released today. The closing date for comments on the new fee schedule is April 25. Reply comments are due by May 5. "We estimate that 9800 applicants will apply for vanity call signs in FY2003," the FCC said in its NPRM. That's up by 800 from FY2002. It expects to collect revenues of nearly \$160,000, an increase of almost \$30,000 from FY2002.

The FCC NPRM also seeks comments on its efforts to review, streamline and modernize its fee assessment and collection processes and procedures. "We welcome comments on a broad range of options in this regard," the FCC said. Areas of particular interest include suggestions for

improvement in the agency's electronic payment system.

Interested parties may comment via the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) on the web at, <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>. Enter "MD 03-83" in the "Proceeding" field. Electronic comments by e-mail also are welcome.

FCC OFFICIAL REQUESTS WEEKLY REPORTS FROM MAINE HAM

The FCC's Boston office has requested a Maine amateur to submit weekly reports detailing some of his on-the-air activities. FCC Boston District Director Vincent F. Kajunski wrote Glenn Baxter, K1MAN, on March 4. Kajunski said the FCC needed the information to determine if Baxter was operating his station in compliance with Part 97 and with rules regarding recording and broadcasting of telephone calls.

"Your Amateur Radio station is apparently being used for broadcasting various 'programs,' 'talk shows,' children's shows and programs having nothing to do with Amateur Radio," Kajunski said in his letter.

"Transmissions from your station are being used for deliberate Interference and for communications in which you apparently have a pecuniary interest."

Kajunski also alleged that transmissions from Baxter's station "start and end erratically, are sometimes repetitive and abruptly end with no identification as required by Commission rules." Such operation, he said, indicates the transmissions "are not under the control of a licensed

operator." Kajunski's three-page letter also outlines other complaints and allegations involving transmissions from or operation of K1MAN.

Starting March 17, Kajunski said he wants weekly reports from Baxter that, among other specifics, provide the name, address, telephone number and exact location of the control operator and the method of station control used when K1MAN transmits. He also requested dates, times and frequencies of broadcasts of telephone conversations; transmissions referencing the offer of a degree in electronics or an IARN (International Amateur Radio Network) credit card; transmissions referencing the IARN Web site; and transmissions soliciting donations of radio equipment or other items, including donations to "the Radio Peace Corps Foundation."

Kajunski further asked for a record of CQs transmitted, including recorded or automated CQs and a description of any responses, including the call sign of responding stations. He also requested that Baxter provide within 30 days information on the alleged transmission of an "apparently continuous 'CQ' loop that the FCC says aired at approximately 10-second intervals for more than two hours on February 3, 2003, on 20-meter SSB.

Within the same time frame, the FCC also wants a list of dates, length of time and frequencies "during which your amateur station has operated since February 15, 2002, without you at the transmitter location." If any, Kajunski asked for the

name and address of the control operator, the location of the control operator and control point and the method of control used.

West Bath Firehouse makes good meeting place

The first MARA meeting at the new remodeled West Bath Firehouse proved to be a very good spot to have a meeting. And the first MARA meeting there was a success. Turnout was high and several topics were discussed.

Keeper of the shekels, Bob Watson, N1GWE reported that the Association coffer has a bit over \$800.

■ The Technical committee proposed and the Board of Directors agreed to see what would be necessary to move EchoLink off the 147.21 KS1R repeater to its own two-meter simplex frequency and site on Oak Hill for dedicated operation.

■ Lee, N1HOC and Bruce, W1ZE provided information about meeting between Cumberland County ARES ECs and AECs. It was recommend that net control functions for the Mid Coast ARES Net be passed around between the various ARES net members, so everyone has the chance to do it and provide a group of capable net controllers.

■ Mark, N1JIM has obtained a domain name of www.KS1R.com for the Associations web site(s). Good move Mark!

■ Bruce, W1ZE showed his entry into the 10 GHz gunnplexer and antenna project.

■ The meeting was closed at 8:00 PM.

All the comments about the new meeting facility were positive and hope to have many more meetings there.

Andy Hamfest & State Convention, a success

As anticipated, the Andy Hamfest & Maine state convention got into full swing Friday evening, March 28th with a series of seminars of interest to hams. MARA's own, Mark Rideout, N1JIM had a well attended dog and pony show on EchoLink.

The following morning the doors opened at 8:00 to allow the awaiting crowd into the flea market. Throughout the morning additional seminars and interest group gatherings took place.

The ARRL Forum was well attended with Maine Section Manager Bill Woodhead, N1KAT introducing ARRL New England Director Tom Frenaye, K1KI, the keynote speaker, backed up by Vice Director Mike Raisbeck, K1TWF. Many topic of interest to the ham radio community were discussed. Time was devoted to such topics as the 40-meter band realignment, new VLF bands, PRB-1 (Maine lead the nation as the first state to have its lawmakers pass it), assaults on the 70cm band and others.

The MARA VE team lead by Wes Clement, N1WC spent the better part of the early afternoon giving exams to a large group of folks with a high percentage passing.

Hope to see you there next year