MARA Squelch Tales

Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for December 2003

Years End dinner set for December 13th

That is correct, it is that time of the year again. The annual years end dinner will take place as in past years at the China Rose Restraint on the Bath Road in Brunswick, Saturday, December 13th at 6:00 in the evening.

Bring the better half or significant other the kids and/or a friend that interested in ham radio and join your fellow MARA members for an evening of good ethnic food and conversation. Hope to see all of you there.

Last VE test for 2003 to take place December 13th

The last MARA sponsored ARRL/N1WC ham exam session for 2003 will take place Saturday December 13th at 10 AM at the Patten Free Library in Bath. Attendance is expected to be high with Am. Red Cross folks and a seniors group taking exams.

Are you ready to upgrade your ticket?

Minutes of the October 30th Meeting

By KC1W

Call to Order:

The October Meeting of the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Association was called to order at 7:33pm by our President Donnie/WD1F at Mid Coast Hospital.

Attendees:

MARA Members:

Abe/KC1W, Donnie/WD1F, Louise/KB1IEF, Mark/N1JIM, Bob/N1GWE, Bruce/W1ZE, Peter/K1MJP, Bill/K1MNW, Brian/AA1WI, Joyce/WA1YZV, Lee/N1HOC, Lee/K5LWT, Al/WA1SCS.

Guests:

Shane Dorval, Harry/KB1KJY, Eric/KB1HYV, Bill Sartwell.

Treasurer's Report:

Bob/N1GWE reports our current balance is:

$1097.00
-$44.00
- $25.00
-$618.00
+ $50.00
$460.00

Technical Committee:

Bruce/W1ZE: reports the new controller for the 21 repeater is here and the technical committee will be reading the manual and proceeding with installation and programming.

The two 2 meter transceivers for the 21 repeater have been re-crystaled and cables are being assembled for installation.

Pete/K1MJP: A 440 receiver has been obtained to allow remote control of the new 21 controller by one of the association's control operators.

A 6 meter radio (52.525 MHz) along with a 6 meter Ringo Ranger are available and will be connected with one of the association repeaters, most likely the 21 machine, to allow members to operate on 6 meters.

An additional 1.2 GHz Station Master antenna was obtained for that repeater. The 35 watt transmitter for the 1.2 GHz repeater is also being worked on.

Bill/K1MNW: Work on the 100 watt 440 ATV repeater continues and should be completed and on the air I the very near future. Again output is on Cable channel 60 and Bill reports having really good

results using a 3 element 450 Yagi.

Donnie/WD1F:The project to move the Packet Node to Oak Hill continues slowly.

Activities:

Lee/N1HOC reports she continues to take sign-ups for the ARRL Emergency (cont.) Communications Course, Level I and will notify all interested of dates/times when that will start and cost.

Old Business:

A MARA sponsored Ham Fest. Annette/KB1HNU was not able to attend the meeting so this item was tabled for now.

New Business:

1: November meeting and openings for Board of Directors. Terms for Bob/N1GWE, Bob/N1VVF, and Lauren/W1LHD are up. Bob/N1GWE has indicated he would continue to serve, Bob/N1VVF will be contacted, however, he has expressed interest in continuing on the board. Lauren/W1LHD has resigned as board member and that position will need to be filled. A nomination was made by Bruce/W1ZE and seconded by Lee/N1HOC that Abe/KC1W be appointed to the open position. The motion passed unanimously by members present. With the holidays approaching, Bruce/W1ZE made a motion to cancel the November meeting, Louise/KB1IEF seconded and the motion passed unanimously. There will be no MARA meeting for the month of November.

2: December meeting/party. The China Rose will be the location for the annual MARA Holiday Party and Lee/N1HOC has volunteered to contact the restaurant for availability of a room for either Saturday, December 6th or December 13th. More information will be emailed to members when a date is confirmed.

3: Mid Coast Hospital has approached Bruce/W1ZE/MARA requesting assistance to help design, install and test a fully capable HF, VHF, 440 communications suite. Lee/N1HOC moved and Bob/N1GWE seconded that MARA provide this support to the hospital. Similar support may also be needed by Parkview Hospital.

4: The possibility of using the conference rooms at Mid Coast Hospital as the regular monthly meeting location for MARA has been suggested. Through the efforts of the Sagadahoc County EC, Dr Allen Kuong, DO, EMT-P and WA1SCS this has been confirmed and beginning with the January 2004 meeting, MARA will be welcome to meet at Mid Coast Hospital on the last Thursday of each month. Exact starting time and conference room for the meeting will be announced via email.

Program:

DR Allen Kuong, DO, EMT-P and WA1SCS conducted a power point presentation on the basics of first aid. Dr Kuong is not only the ARRL EC for Sagadahoc EC but also an emergency physician and presented our members with an informative overview of Initial Responder First Aid. Attached is a list provided by DR. Kuong of recommendations for a basic first aid kit you can keep with you or in your car.

Next Meeting:

The MARA Years End Party will be at the China Rose Restaurant, date and time will be published when confirmed.

The next meeting of the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association will be at our new location, the Mid Coast Hospital, on January 29th, 2004. Watch your email for the conference room number and time.

Adjournment:

At 9:00pm Abe/KC1W made a motion, seconded by Lee/N1HOC to adjourn the meeting.

Basic First Aid Kit

Non-latex gloves
Sterile dressings/bandages
Cleansing soap or toweletts
Antibacterial ointment
Bandage scissors and tweezers
Aspirin/acetaminophen
Tape
Burn gel
Pocket mask for CPR
Watertight container to keep the first aid kit

Simple and easy antenna Match for HF Mobile

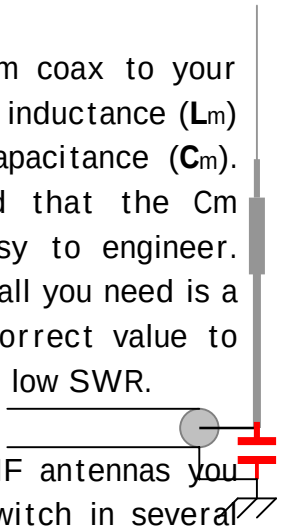
By W1ZE

As most of you know I an active mobile HFer and have been since the mid 70s. If you are not familiar with this part of the hobby, the antenna and its efficiency is the most important part of a good installation. Mobile HF antennas are basically inefficient and the lower you go in frequency the worse it gets.

A quarter-wave whip for 10 meters is a moderately efficient vertical radiator but a loaded whip for 75 meters is about as effective as a stubby rubber ducky on 2 meters. Another problem with short loaded whip antennas is the lower you go in frequency the lower the base impedance of the antenna goes. For example an 8-foot long loaded whip for 75 meters may have feedpoint impedance of just a few ohms. Feed 50-ohm coax to a 10-ohm load, you do the math, a good match without help will not be expected.

There are a lot of mobile HF antennas out there to choose from but as a rule, the bigger the coil and the longer the length the better. The Screwdriver, Bug Catcher, Outbacker, Hustler, Comet Hamstick HF antennas will all do the job but almost all will require some kind of help matching the coax to the antenna so a low SWR can be obtained.

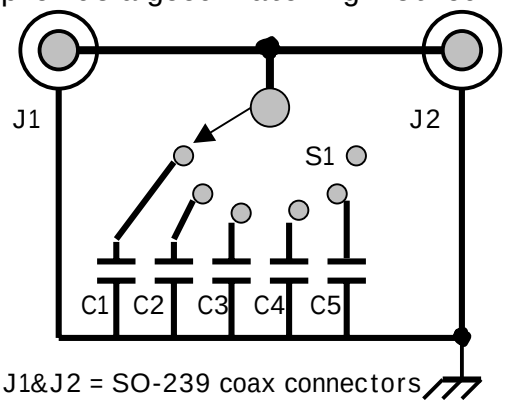
You can invest in a fancy auto-tuner or manual transmatch and they will do the job, but they can be costly and bulky in today's small cars and trucks. If you look up HF mobile antenna matching in the ARRL Handbook you will see two simple methods to match 50-ohm coax to your loaded whip. One is base inductance (**L**m) and the other is base capacitance (**C**m). Over the years I found that the Cm method is cheap and easy to engineer. For a single band antenna all you need is a single capacitor of the correct value to facilitate a nice match and low SWR.



With the multi-band HF antennas you need to have a way to switch in several different capacitor values depending on the frequency range. Ceramic disc or mica capacitors of the following values should work:

1.8 to 2 MHz = 1500 pF
3.5 to 4 MHz = 1000 pF
5 MHz = 680 pF
7 to 10 MHz = 470 pF
14 to 18 MHz = 220 pF
18 to 21 MHz = 0 to 150 pF
21 to 30 MHz = 0 to 82 pF

I have used a rotary switch to switch in the appropriate capacitor on multi-band antennas or antennas with replaceable resonators like Hustler or Hamstick. The following switch box if placed at or within two feet of the antenna base should provide a good matching method.



J1&J2 = SO-239 coax connectors
S1 = RS rotary 2Pole 6P switch #275-1386
C1 = 1000 pF from RS #272-809 assortment
C2 = 660 pF (470 + 220) from RS assortment
C3 = 470 pF from RS #272-809 assortment
C4 = 220 pF from RS #272-809 assortment
C5 = 82 pF from RS #272-809 assortment

73, Bruce

More Connects on KS1R-1

By Bruce Randall W1ZE

The KS1R TELPAC and KS1R-1 Packet nodes have been up and running for several months now and more callsigns are appearing on the nodes MH (stations heard) list.

When the system went on the air from Donnies QTH near Fuller Mountain in Phippsburg only a few callsigns were appearing on the MH list. Fortunately some of the callsigns were from packet nodes some distance away, like:

K1KKM, W. Newbury, CT
VE1EFP, Yarmouth, NS
WB1GON, Braintree, MA

Over the past week or so I have used the packet node to leave messages with some of the new users of the system and have heard and seen the following callsigns on the MH list:

KB1IJD in Poland Springs
N1WJO in Casco
WA1LTD in Gorham
N1SNP in Otisfield
N1NYW in Waterford
N1SNR in Hiram
WA1CT in Worcester, MA
N1PAY in Braintree, MA

The TELPAC (Ham Radio to Internet email gateway) has become a handy tool for me. My PC and ham shack are not in the same part of the house and when I am in the shack and want to send a quick text only email message to family or friends I use KS1R TELPAC node. It is only a couple keystrokes more than Outlook Express from my PC.

In addition to the KS1R system on 145.01 there is the K1EU DX Packet Cluster system on 144.91 MHz.

I am in hopes that there will be someone or group farther north in Maine that will put up a packet node to increase the system here in Maine.

An expanded packet system here in Maine would also enhance statewide ARES efforts.

If you still have not dusted off your old TNC and found an old 2-meter transceiver to dedicate to packet, give it a try.

Bruce/W1ZE

Bud's Good Deal

A complete HF station

This Kenwood TS-430S comes with Kenwood PS-430, 12 VDC Power supply and Kenwood Automatic antenna tuner.

This all mode 100-watt transceiver covers 160 to 10 Meters plus general coverage receive from 150 kHz to 30 MHz. Has MARS mod, so new 60-meter (5 MHz) band is ready to go. Has narrow CW filter and AM filter + FM module.

Asking $475.00

Contact "Bud" Rowland KA1IQA at:

rrowland@gwi.net

or 207-666-3959

The Officers and Newsletter Editor of the MARA want to wish you and yours all the joy and happiness this Holiday Season has to offer

Happy 2004