



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for March 2004

Minutes of January 29th

MARA Meeting

By Abe, KC1W

Call to Order:

The October Meeting of the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Association was called to order at 7:32pm by our President Donnie/WD1F at Mid Coast Hospital.

Attendees:

MARA Members:

Abe/KC1W, Donnie/WD1F, Louise/KB1IEF, Bob/N1GWE, Bruce/W1ZE, Peter/K1MJP, Bill/K1MNW, Brian/AA1WI, Lee/N1HOC, Steve/KB1JTE, & Allan/WA1SCS

Guests:

Eric/KB1HYV, Alan/KB1KRX, Tony/KB1JBP and Devin (Prez's 1st harmonic).

Treasurer's Report:

Bob/N1GWE reports our current balance is: \$501.43

Technical Committee:

Bruce/W1ZE: Don/WD1F will be studying the manual for the new NHRC 2-meter repeater controller to learn the programming and tutor our control operators. The controller currently on the 2-meter repeater will still be moved over to control the 440 machine. Don also reported there had been an audio problem with 147.21 that was found to be a loose wire, repairs are ongoing.

Progress continues on the controller for the 1200 MHz repeater, Bruce/W1ZE will be making up the plugs for the controller. Bruce/W1ZE also showed off a new 9.12 dB gain 1200MHz Yagi to members present that he was able to build for a couple of bucks. Also regarding the 1200 MHz repeater: the new antennas will go up as soon as weather moderates, and Pete/K1MJP reports the new 1200 MHz transmitter is almost completed,

Bill/K1MNW is working on a linear amp for the transmitter and work on the 100 watt 440 ATV repeater continues. He was able to pick up

a 439 MHz tube type amp and power supply that will soon be part of the repeater. Bill/K1MNW has also been transmitting NASA TV output for hams in the area.

Bill is also working on a Moon Bounce project and has also picked up an amplifier to aid with that. The possibility of local members accessing the Moon Bounce gear through the new 2-meter repeater controller is being investigated.

Question to the technical committee regarding a possible problem with the PL on the 440 repeater was raised. Bill/K1MNW will be checking this out.

Activities:

Lee/N1HOC: MS Walk for Brunswick is scheduled for April 18th this year and she will be looking for 5-6 volunteers to help out. The event usually ends around noon. More information to follow as the date approaches

Old Business:

The Christmas Party. A good time was had by all, however, MARA wanted to recognize three of its members for their contributions during 2003, but none of the three were able to attend the party. The members were recognized at the meeting:

Lee/N1HOC - for her work as Activity Coordinator for MARA,

Bill/K1MNW - for his work on the MARA Technical Committee,

And yours truly Abe/KC1W - for support to MARA, volunteering to act as secretary. Framed certificates were presented to each, along with an ARRL publication.

New Business:

1: Bruce/W1ZE passed along that Bob/N1VVF is down at Maine Medical Center and has recently undergone surgery. Bob would be happy to hear from MARA members and the whole club wishes him the best and a speedy recovery.

2: Emergency Communications for MidCoast Hospital. Bruce/W1ZE, AI/WA1SCS and Glen Austin, the facilities manager for Mid Coast

Hospital got together recently to tour the site and get a list of recommended equipment for the emergency ham shack at the hospital. Currently there is a 2 meter antenna on the roof and a G5RV was recommended for the HF bands. Additionally, Bruce/W1ZE will be reviewing frequency lists to avoid any interference problems.

3: Bruce/W1ZE presented the idea of including the ARRL Newsletter in voice format, as part of the Monday night Mid-Coast ARES net. A volunteer was needed to start it off by setting up an interface to a 2 meter transceiver and download the audio from the ARRL. Don/WD1F volunteered to get this started and he has asked Brian/AA1WI to assist. Brian did agree to help out.

4: Don/WD1F has renewed the domain KS1R.net for 2 more years for \$27.90. Bob/N1GWE will reimburse Don for the cost. The question of what is happening with the other web site, gwi.net/MARA, was raised. Unfortunately, Mark/N1JIM was not present at the meeting, but Don/WD1F has been working on the new web site with Mark and they will discontinue the site on gwi and redirect to the new page. Don/WD1F encourages members to be active on the new web page, submitting articles, pictures, or notices through him or directly on the site.

5: Brian/AA1WI brought up the possibility of MARA making a donation to AMSAT to help financially with the launch coming up March 31st this year. Brian will be putting out more information on the new satellite and members will have a chance to discuss at next months meeting.

Bruce/W1ZE recommends members consider making an individual donation to the ARRL Legal Defense Fund to help with the fight to stop the Broadband over Power Line issue.

6: Pete/K1MJP reminded us that MARA will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year.

7: Information was passed on the following nets and repeaters and members are encouraged to participate.

- 902 MHz repeater is now active on Linnfest Mountain in Washington.
- The Maine Seagull Traffic net meets Monday through Saturday on 3940 kHz at 5:00pm.

- The Lincoln County ARES net is Wednesdays at 8:00pm on 146.685

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the MerryMeeting Amateur Radio Association will be at the Mid Coast Hospital, on February 26th, 2004 at 7:30pm. We will meet in the conference room next to the cafeteria.

Adjournment:

At 8:25pm Bruce/W1ZE made a motion, seconded by Steve/KB1JTE to adjourn the meeting.

73, Abe

February 7th VE Session provides three to new tickets

Saturday, February the 7th exam session at the Bath public library did not start off with a bang. The morning was filled with snow and driving conditions were challenging to say the least. When the VE team arrived at the library just before 10 AM there was a small sign on the door that said the facility would not open until noon due to the inclement weather. By that time folks were arriving to take the exam. A panic search for a place to give the exam had Bruce/W1ZE going to Midcoast Hospital and the Bath YMCA to see if there was "Space-A." Wes Clement/N1WC headed to the old Bath Hospital, now community college but none space was available. It was decided to hold the session at noon. Only one person said they would try it another day.

At noon the exam got under way with only four folks. Of the four three were successful. One passed the Element-1 Morse code exam and earned a General Class ticket with two folks from the Mid Coast Red Cross passing their Technician exam and now await their first Ham Radio license.

It has been confirmed with ARRL Maine Section Manager that your MARA/N1WS VE team will run the test session at the ARRL Maine State Convention & Andy

Hamfest. If you are a VE, we will need you help that Saturday.

If you have not upgraded your ticket yet, spend some time taking the practice exam on QRZ.COM and go give it a try. You will enjoy new privileges. **KS1R**

News From Newington

FCC POISED TO RELEASE BPL NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING

The FCC appears poised to release a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in the Broadband over Power Line (BPL) proceeding. When it meets February 12, the Commission is to consider an NPRM concerning changes to its Part 15 rules as they apply to so-called "access" BPL systems. Last April the Commission issued a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) in ET Docket 03-104 <http://harunfoss.Fcc.Gov/edocspublic/attachment/FCC-03-100A1.doc> seeking input on possibly amending Part 15 regarding new requirements and measurement guidelines for access BPL. Issuance of an NPRM would mark the next step in the BPL proceeding.

The BPL NOI has attracted more than 5100 comments. Many within the amateur community, including the ARRL and AMRAD <http://www.amrad.org/>, have expressed concerns that BPL will wreak havoc on the HF amateur bands, since the technology would apply high-frequency RF to parts of the power grid. One aspect of the NOI was to gather information on potential interference effects on authorized spectrum users.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell recently acknowledged interference concerns raised by the amateur community and by at least two federal agencies: the

Federal Emergency Management Agency--now part of the Department of Homeland Security--and the National Telecommunications and Information

Administration (NTIA), which manages spectrum allocated to government users. "We will continue to explore ways to support this technology while protecting services from interference," the FCC chairman pledged in a January 14 address to the National Press Club.

Last month, US Representative Greg Walden, WB7OCE, called on Powell to put off further FCC action in the BPL proceeding until the NTIA had released the results of its BPL study and the public has had a chance to comment. "I feel that it is important to give the NTIA study thorough consideration before proceeding further with BPL technology, in view of the importance of avoiding interference to federal government HF communications," Walden said January 15 in a letter to Powell. An Oregon Republican, Walden is one of two Amateur Radio licensees in the US House.

The NTIA has expressed "broad concerns" about BPL's potential to interfere with government HF users. Its BPL fieldwork was scheduled to wrap up in January, and its observations and conclusions are expected to be released the first quarter of this year. The ARRL's own BPL field engineering study is still under way. It will explore how BPL might affect

HF and low-VHF amateur operation as well as how Amateur Radio operation could affect BPL systems.

Additional information about BPL and Amateur Radio is on the ARRL Web site <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/>. To support the League's efforts in this area, visit the ARRL's secure BPL Web site <https://www.arrl.org/forms/development/donations/bpl/>.

FCC GOES AFTER ALLEGED 10-METER SCOFFLAWS

The FCC is working on at least two fronts to eliminate unlicensed operation from the 10-meter band. In January, FCC Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth sent warning notices to two shipping companies regarding reports to the Commission that some of the companies' vehicles may be the source of illegal radio transmissions on the amateur band. One of the companies, UPS, has offered its full cooperation.

"Many truckers use CB radio, which does not require a license," Hollingsworth pointed out in letters to UPS offices in Ohio and Indiana and to R&L Transfer Inc. of Ohio. "However, any person using a radio transmitter on the Amateur Radio bands must possess a station and operator license." Hollingsworth asked the over-the-road shippers to advise their drivers that such radio operation could subject them to heavy fines and seizure of their radio equipment.

UPS Attorney Daniel N. Tenfelde responded to assure Hollingsworth that his company was taking its Warning Notice seriously and has launched a full

investigation. "We discovered that some employees had obtained CB radios that contained a mechanism allowing them to switch frequencies into the 10-meter Amateur Radio band," he told Hollingsworth in a January 28 letter. "It is not UPS policy to allow equipment such as this to be used in our vehicles." He said UPS' contract with the Teamsters Union allows only for CB radios.

Tenfelde said UPS is working with its transportation and labor groups to let drivers know that such unlicensed operation violates both UPS policy and FCC regulations.

In a parallel development, the FCC issued a Citation to Jonathan Edward Stone, doing business as Omnitronics/Pacetrronics for alleged violation of §302(b) of the Communications Act and §2.803(a)(1) of the Commission's rules. An investigation by the FCC's Dallas field office led the Commission to allege that Omnitronics/Pacetrronics was offering more than two dozen uncertificated "Citizens Band" transceivers via its Web site. The FCC says Omnitronics/Pacetrronics was marketing the units as Amateur Radio equipment, which does not require FCC certification (formerly known as "type acceptance").

"The Commission has evaluated radio frequency devices similar to those listed and concluded that the devices at issue are not only amateur radios but can easily be altered for use as Citizens Band devices as well," said the FCC Citation from FCC Dallas District Director James D. Wells. The FCC said

it concluded that the devices fall within the definition of CB transmitters that "cannot legally be imported or marketed in the United States." That would include so-called "export" models, the Citation said, pointing to a 2000 revision of §2.1204(a)(5) of its rules.

Citing §95.655(a) of the FCC's rules, Wells noted that "dual-use CB and Amateur Radio of the kind at issue here may not be certificated under the Commission's rules." The clarification was added to Part 95--which governs the Citizens Band--"to explicitly foreclose the possibility of certification of dual-use CB and amateur radios and thereby deter use by CB operators of frequencies allocated for Amateur Radio use," he said.

The FCC Citation also warned Unitronics/Pacetrronics regarding the requirement of FCC certification of external RF amplifiers or amplifier kits capable of operating below 144 MHz as well as the prohibition against marketing RF amplifiers or amplifier kits capable of operating between 24 and 35 MHz.

KS1R Tech Talk

By W1ZE

.21 glitch: Folks listening to the 147.21 repeater may have noticed that there was a periodic interruption (or attenuation) of short duration in the transmit audio, especially when the incoming signal to the repeater was not excessively strong. Bruce/W1ZE and Abe/KC1W first noted the condition on

Saturday, February 7th and others noted it during the following week.

On Friday, February 13th Oak Hill site manager Bill Messier/K1MNW while in the repeater building noted that every time the 144.390 MHz APRS transceiver keyed-up and transmitted a packet burst the S-meter on the 147.81 repeater receiver would bounce up to a S-9+ signal. The following day Bill and I attempted to lower the deviation level on the Maxon transceiver but that did not seem to help the situation. I went out to my truck and keyed my IC-706 on 144.39 and the signal strength meter on the .21 repeater's receiver did the same thing as the APRS Maxon. We made the decision to take the APRS node off-line until we could make further checks on a warmer day.

New controller: Donnie/WD1F has the new NHRC controller at his QTH and is getting familiar with its command and control functions. Mark/N1JIM and Donnie are trying to figure out a way to transfer the autodial numbers from the old controller to the new controller without having to do everyone's number one at a time.

Donnie has lashed up a low level 440 repeater using the new controller so to make programming the new controller easier and have a way to instruct the other control operators in it's function. In early spring the tech committee hopes to install the new controller into the 2-meter repeater and reinstall the old controller into the 444.4 repeater.

As of this writing I am putting the final touches to the NHRC controller kit that will be connected to the KS1R

1284 MHz repeater. This controller does not have the bells and whistles our 2-meter and 70cm have but it does allow remote basing or linking along with some other basic features that will keep our complement of repeaters up to date with technology. Stay tuned!

Gov. Baldacci a Ham?

If you have not looked at your March issue of QST yet, turn to page 20 and see your Governor with Maine Section Manager Bill Woodhead/N1KAT, Rob Scribner/KA1RDF and AARA President Bill Crowley/K1NIT. The **Governor on the Air** column says that our Gov is cramming for his ham ticket with Rob acting as his Elmer and exam coach. Maine could have the first licensed Ham Governor.

Maine Ham Clubs uniting to fight BPL

At the February 4th Winterfest, Bill Crowley, K1NIT approached Bruce Randall, W1ZE, MARA Trustee to enlist the support of the MARA in providing funds to the ARRL to help fight the FCC decision to go forward with their BPL plan. Bill indicated that that the Androscoggin, Bangor and Portland clubs have committed to providing funds of a hundred dollars or more per club. Bill indicated that the funds would be pooled and sent as one donation from all the Maine Amateur Radio clubs to the ARRL specifically slated for the fight against BPL. Bruce agreed that this is a very important and worthwhile effort and would relay the request back to the MARA BOD

and members. Bruce advised Bill that the our Association had just spent a big portion of the treasury to fund the purchase of a new repeater controller but maybe there was a way for the MARA to come up with a meaningful contribution.

MAINE HAM EVENTS FOR 2004

**March 26-27 ARRL Maine
Convention/Andy Hamfest,
Ramada Lewiston (exams)
N1WFO @ adelphia.net**

**April 17 Greater Portland
Electronics Fleamarket
Stewart Morrill American
Legion Post #35 413
Broadway, South Portland ME
(exams) Bryce Rumery,
K1GAX (k1gax@juno.com
207-799-1116)**

**June 5 Bangor Hamfest,
Hermon High School (exams)**

**July 10 Union Hamfest, at
the Thompson Center corner
of routes 131 and 17 in Union.
(exams)**

**Aug 14 St. Albans Hamfest,
Snow Devil's Field (exam on
site)**

**Sep 11 Windsor Hamfest,
Windsor Fairgrounds (exams)**