



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for June 2004

MEETING MINUTES, April 29th, 2004

By Abe/KC1W

Call to Order:

The April Meeting of the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Association was called to order at 7:06pm by our President Donnie/WD1F at the Mid Coast Hospital, Brunswick Maine.

Attendees:

MARA Members:

Abe/KC1W, Donnie/WD1F,
Bob/N1GWE, Bruce/W1ZE,
Brian/AA1WI, Lee/W1LWT,
Gay/N1XBN, Bob/N1VFN,
Steve/KB1JTE, Steve/AA4AK,
Dick/KB1HNX

Guests: Harry/KB1KJY

Treasurer's Report:

Bob/N1GWE reports our current balance is: \$553.00

Technical Committee:

Bruce/W1ZE & Donnie/W1DF: 1.2 GHz repeater - The antenna has been moved to the 150-ft tower increasing the range of the repeater. The committee is looking for another antenna to run split antennas on the repeater and Bill/K1MNW is continuing the work on the 1.2 GHz repeater controller.

New Controller for the .21 repeater - Donnie/WD1F has had the controller operating from his home - until his IC-706 burned out due to the high duty cycle of the repeater. The controller is working well, however, and is ready to install. Once completed, the controller currently on the .21 repeater will be moved over to the 440

machine. This upgrade will eventually allow remote access to 6 meters.

Activities:

Lee/N1HOC was not able to attend the meeting, however, MARA's contribution to the MS Walk on April 18th was a success. The time volunteered by the operators was much appreciated.

Old Business:

1. Field Day 2004. There will be more discussion on field day as we get closer. MARA will participate from the same location as in past years, the Woolwich Fire Station on Route 2.
2. International Lighthouse Special Event weekend this year, August 21st - 22nd. Mark/N1JIM was unable to attend the meeting so the subject will be on the agenda for future meetings to finalize MARA's participation.

3. MARA's 25th Anniversary is coming up. Ideas from the membership on how to celebrate the event are invited for future meetings. Hard to believe that 25 years ago, a couple of local hams got together in Bruce/W1ZE's basement for a beer and MARA was born.

4. ARRL has sent an official Thank You letter and Certificate of Contribution to the BPL Defense Fund to MARA as a thank you for the clubs contribution. A second collection is taken and members wishing to donate can contact Bob/N1GWE. Bruce/W1ZE will

forward a check to the ARRL later this month.

New Business:

1. Upcoming HAM Events:

Hostraders Hamfest in New Hampshire May 1st & 2nd.

New England QSO Party, also May 1st & 2nd.

2. SKYWARN: The subject of SKYWARN has been brought up by Linda/N1ZYC and Paul/N1ZYB wondering if there was interest within MARA. Abe/KC1W gave a short description of SKYWARN and his experiences with the organization out in Wisconsin. A discussion followed and it was decided that there was enough interest to pursue. Bruce/W1ZE will contact Linda and Paul, who had volunteered to contact NWS Gray and set up some training for weather spotters, and ask them to go ahead and schedule.

Program:

Know Code: Abe/KC1W brought in several CW keys for "Show and Tell". Among them, a rather old, but still shiny and very functional, Vibroplex Semi-Automatic Bug, a Coast Guard issue straight key and a miniature hand key from Spain. A small Heathkit Code Oscillator came along with the keys and Donnie/WD1F had a good time tapping out Morse on the mini Spanish key. The mini key, by the way, is available from Morse Express on the web. They have a great selection of straight keys,

semiautomatics and paddles for automatic keyers.

Lee/W1LWT gave a quick introduction to a project he is working on in Androscoggin County. It involves small helium balloons, amateur TV and GPS to track how high the balloons go and direction of travel. Steve/KB1JTE is assisting Lee with the project and they will gladly accept help from any of MARA's members that are interested. More information can be found at androscoggin.net/w1lwt.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the MARA will be at the Mid Coast Hospital, on May 27th, 2004 at 7:00pm and, unless notified otherwise by email, we will meet in the conference room next to the cafeteria.

Adjournment:

At 7:49pm Donnie/W1DF made a motion, seconded by just about everyone present, to adjourn the meeting.

MINUTES OF MEETING, May 27th, 2004

Call to Order:

The May Meeting of the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Association was called to order at 7:03pm by our President Donnie/WD1F at the Mid Coast Hospital, Brunswick Maine.

Attendees:

MARA Members:

Abe/KC1W, Donnie/WD1F,
Bob/N1GWE, Bruce/W1ZE,
Lee/N1HOC, Eric/KB1HYV,
Lee/W1LWT, Steve/KB1JTE,
Linda/N1ZYC, Paul/N1ZYB,

and MARA's newest member, John/KC6TVF.

Treasurer's Report:

Bob/N1GWE reports our current balance is: \$573.00

Technical Committee:

Bruce/W1ZE & Donnie/WD1F: 1.2 GHz repeater - Up and working well, now operating with split antennas, one at 150 ft and the second at 250 feet. Frequencies for the repeater are 1.272 GHz input and 1.284 GHz output. Donnie/WD1F has accessed the repeater on a regular basis from Portland and on one occasion from as far away as the Portsmouth NH bridge.

New Controller for the .21 repeater - Has been programmed and will be installed in the near future, weather permitting.

ATV - Was up and running until an RFI problem surfaced with Sagadahoc County emergency services. The transmitter is off while the Technical Committee works this out.

Packet - The node is up and running at Donnie/WD1F's house and working well. Frequency for the KS1R node is 145.01. Donnie questioned the possibility of getting a new combination TNC/Node controller in the future, since the packet node is currently being controlled by a separate PC. There will be a new node going on the air from a group in the Waterville area.

APRS - That node is currently off the air due to an interference problem with the 2 meter machine. Bruce/W1ZE believes the problem may be some bad connectors.

Activities:

Lee/N1HOC: Upcoming events
Tour de Farms will be August 22nd. This year the route planned will be a 50 mile loop that the 100 mile riders will do twice.

Dan Michaud is scheduled for August 28th.

Tour of Merry Meeting Bay has not provided information on a date as of the meeting.

Old Business:

1. Weather spotter training. NWS Gray is holding several classes in the area. A few of MARA's members have already attended the training. Lee/N1HOC is working on scheduling a class for MARA members in the near future. The Sagadahoc county LEPC and other interested members of emergency services will be invited.

2. Field Day 2004. MARA will participate and Bruce/W1ZE will contact our kind sponsor to arrange for access to the site. The location will be as in past years, the Woolwich Fire Station on Route 1.

3. International Lighthouse Special Event weekend this year, August 21st - 22nd. Member's present expressed interest in the possibility of participating in this special event. This will be back on the agenda for future meetings.

4. MARA's 25th Anniversary is coming up. Suggestion was made to combine Field Day with the Anniversary and have a barbeque to celebrate. Bruce/W1ZE made the motion to draw funds not to exceed \$100.00 for food and beverages for the event. Bob/N1GWE

seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5. BPL. ARRL staff has finally gotten the attention of the administration regarding the harmful interference potential of BPL and there will probably be more research on this before it will be considered.

New Business:

1. Upcoming HAM Events:

The Bangor Hamfest, June 5th, 2004. Bruce/W1ZE will be filling his truck up with goodies to sell and heading north.

2. Request for assistance was made by Paul/N1ZYB. Apparently the feed line for his G5RV was knocked down by a branch over the winter and he would like help to reattach. Donnie/WD1F is available tomorrow morning and volunteered to go over and help out.

3. Direction for MARA. Steve/KB1JTE would like to send out a questionnaire to MARA members to find out interests in amateur radio and help establish a direction for the club for the future. Discussion followed and determined that this could be done via a future Newsletter. Steve will also be working with Donnie/WD1F on updates to the MARA website and getting Newsletters, meeting minutes and articles posted on the site.

4. Radio direction finding. Donnie/WD1F brought up the idea of an exercise involving a search and rescue type scenario using the foxhunting skills of MARA members Linda/N1ZYC and Paul/N1ZYB as a way to introduce that part of amateur radio to more of the

membership. More on this will follow in the coming months.

Program:

Although not announced as our program for the evening Lee/W1LWT gave an update on the balloon project he is working on in Androscoggin County. Phase I has been completed and 203 balloons were launched. So far he has gotten calls on the landing locations of 21 of those balloons. Lee and Steve/KB1JTE are working towards Phase II, which will involve the launching of a balloon and 6 pound package consisting of a 2 meter APRS/GPS, ATV transmitter on cable channel 59, a still camera, and radar reflector. This package will be in a diamond shape in the hopes that it would not get snagged in a tree on the way down. Lee estimates that it will take about 2 hours to rise to greater than 100,000 feet and about 35 min to come down. The launch will hopefully take place in August and the launch site will depend on the wind direction. More information can be found at androscoggin.net/w1lwt.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the MerryMeeting Amateur Radio Association was incorrectly listed on the agenda as Thursday, June 24th 2004 at the MidCoast Hospital. The June meeting will instead take place during the combination Field Day/MARA's 25th Anniversary party. Time for the meeting will be published by a separate email.

Adjournment:

At 8:14pm Bruce/W1ZE made a motion, seconded by Steve/KB1JTE, to adjourn the meeting.

News For Clubs

By "Fusaro, Norm W3IZ"

<w3iz@arrl.org>

To: MARA ARRL Affiliated Club
From: Rosalie White, K1STO,
Field & Educational Services
Manager Date: May 24, 2004

Some of you have seen the ARRL Web story at:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/05/23/1/?nc=1>

As the story explains, Norm, W3IZ, is the newest Field & Educational Services staffer. He'll be responsible for enhancing our support to ARRL Volunteer Instructors, volunteer mentors and ARRL Affiliated Clubs. In past years, he got involved in all three of these things in the Philadelphia area.

Please communicate your successes and ideas with Norm (nfusaro@arrl.org). He hopes to network with many of you, and may ask for action photos, or interview you about your activities. He and Linda Mullally, KB1HSV, will support you however possible. Linda will continue to help you with the many things you've communicated with her about, previously.

**Have you helped fight off
BPL yet?
Tell your elected
representatives that the
FCC is about to make a
big mistake!**

MARA to conduct member survey

As reported in the May minutes, Steve/KB1JTE that maybe a questionnaire could be sent to the MARA members to determine their interests, ham activities and goals in an effort to help your MARA determine the direction of the MARA and set up programs and maybe interest/project sub-groups.

Bruce/W1ZE and Don/WD1F will put their heads together and try and come up with a comprehensive questionnaire.

It will be emailed to all the members (with email) and snail mailed to those that are not connected to the web.

You are requested to take the time to fill it out and email it back to the MARA so the data can be compiled.

The data results will be published in the Associations Squelch Tales newsletter and presented at the following general meeting.

NO JUNE MARA MEETING!

There will be no evening meeting at Mid Coast Hospital on June 24th. The because the MARA will be participating in FIELD DAY and MARA 25th Anniversary on the following Saturday and Sunday (26th & 27th).

As in past years we will set up our communications site at the Woolwich town park behind the historical museum on route one, two miles north of the Bath-Sagadahoc bridge.

You will receive additional information via email in the near future. Keep that weekend open for

some Ham Radio fun. Oh yes, don't forget the mosquito repellent!

FREE BEER

Or Soda Pop

For those of you that are a little timid behind a telegraph key, here is a challenge for you. Get a free or Soda from Bruce/W1ZE for making at least one CW QSO during Field Day. All you have to do is copy the report from the other station and send back a report from KS1R (a completed QSO) and a cold frosty one will be awaiting you upon completion. One 2-point CW QSO = a cold one

B=Q+2

