



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Association for December 2004

MINUTES OF MEETING, October 28th, 2004

By KC1W

Call to Order: The October Meeting of the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Association was called to order at 7:00pm by our President Donnie/WD1F at the Mid Coast Hospital, Brunswick Maine.

Attendees: MARA Members:
Abe/KC1W, Bruce/W1ZE,
Bob/N1GWE, Donnie/WD1F,
Brian/AA1WI, Eric/KB1HYV,
John/KC6TVF,
Michele/KC7LIF,
Harry/KB1KJY, Bill/K1MNW,
Paul/KA5FPT, Allan/WA1SCS.

Treasurer's Report:

Bob/N1GWE current balance is: \$635.69

Technical Committee:

Following reported by Don/WD1F and Bill/K1MNW.

1. Packet Node - has been moved to Oak Hill. The EPROM in the TNC has been programmed to allow the node to run in a stand-alone mode not needing a computer. Bill/K1MNW has tweaked the audio levels for improved operation and the antenna will be moved to a higher location. Other upgrades will continue. Steve/N1OHX is setting up a BBS that you will be able to connect to.

1. 444.4 Repeater - Pete/K1MJP has the crystals installed in the new transmitter and all tuned up and ready to go with a 100-

watt amp. If everything goes well the repeater could be back on the air as soon as this weekend.

2. 1.2 GHz - Bill/K1MNW found some 1 GHz multipliers at Hosstraders this year. He has been tinkering around with them and found that with a 0.5-watt input in the 420 MHz range you get a 2-watt output on the 1.2 GHz band. Bill is helping members from the Androscoggin club getting a 1.2 GHz repeater on the air and will offer one of the multipliers.

3. ATV - Bill/K1MNW has also located a source for an ATV transmitter and receiver on the 23-cM band from England. The transmitter puts out a whopping 50mW, however, with some clever coupling with a 16dB amp and a filter, Bill was able to receive a clear picture from Donnie/WD1F's QTH which was 14 miles away. There is a controller available for the unit that Bill is working with.

Activities: Lee/N1HOC1 was unable to attend this months meeting, however, everyone is reminded of MARA's annual Holiday party at the China Rose, on the Old Bath Road for Saturday, December 4th, at 7:00pm.

Sagadahoc ARES:

1. MidCoast ARES Training Day -Allan/WA1SCS Sag EC reports the planning continues for the ARES

Training Day, currently scheduled for Saturday, November 13th, from 9:00AM until Noon in the Executive boardrooms at MidCoast Hospital. Subjects on the agenda include: the Incident Command System, putting together Radio Go Kits and the Maine Emergency Communicator Level I course.

(Editors Note: K1GAX has been called away on business so the above training will be rescheduled after the first of the year.)

2. Maine 2004 SET - Allan also reported the Maine Simulated Emergency Test on October 23, 2004 went well. The scenario was a hurricane hitting Maine and emergency nets were established across the state. Initially, the HF net was on 3940 kHz but as propagation changed during the day it was QSY'd up to 40 meters. Locally the 147.09 repeater was used to pass traffic and some trials were done with 2-meter simplex frequencies.

Old Business: ARRL Certificates - Bruce/W1ZE, following up on the announcement that ARRL certificates were on the way for several MARA members for their participation in local and traffic nets, presented the first batch to members. A certificate identifying Brian/AA1WI as an Official Relay Station for the NTS was presented along with

certificates for Local Net participation to: Don/WD1F, Lee/N1HOC, Allan/WA1SCS, Brian/AA1WI, Charlie/N1ESW and Abe/KC1W. This was only the first shipment of certificates from ARRL. There are many MARA members who are active on local nets and will be recognized at future meetings.

New Business:

1. Bruce/W1ZE reported that Dean/N1GLV and Kitty Ridenhour lost their home in Richmond recently to an accidental fire. Dean and Kitty are all right and staying in temporary housing. A card was mailed from MARA to Dean and Kitty.

2. MARA Board of Directors election. Current member of the BOD are Bob/N1GWE, Bob/N1VVF, Lee/N1HOC, Donnie/WD1F, Louise/KB1IEF and Abe/KC1W. Louise has indicated she would not be running for another term. Bruce/W1ZE nominated Brian/AA1WI to fill the position, Abe/KC1W seconded. The slate for BODs passed unanimously by the membership present. Elections for MARA officers will take place at the annual Christmas party.

3. Donnie/WD1F and Bill/K1NMW plan on doing some repeater/antenna work this Saturday on the hill. Anyone with time available who would like to help is welcome.

The meeting concluded with a quiz question from Bruce/W1ZE - What is a Faraday Shield? Eric/KB1HYV correctly answered it is a grounded conductive shield and

went home with a brand new Repeater Directory.

Next Meeting: Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the next meeting of the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Association will be the Christmas Party on December 4th at 7:00 PM at the China Rose.

Adjournment: At 7:41pm John/KC6TVG made a motion, seconded by Bruce/W1ZE, to adjourn the meeting.

NEWS FROM NEWINGTON



ARRL DISAPPOINTED WITH ADMINISTRATION OVER BPL REPORT AND ORDER

The ARRL has expressed its disappointment with the Bush administration's failure "to prevent radio spectrum pollution by BPL systems." In a November 1 letter to Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans copied to President George W. Bush, ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, recalled Evans' assurances on the administration's behalf earlier this year "that we are responsible and sensitive to valuable incumbent [radiocommunication] systems." Haynie told Evans the FCC's BPL Report and Order (R&O) in ET Docket 04-37--adopted October 14 and released two weeks later--suggests otherwise.

"Despite excellent work conducted by the technical staff of your National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to document the extensive harmful interference that will occur if BPL systems are deployed at the radiated emission limits presently permitted by the FCC rules," Haynie said, "it appears that the NTIA concurred in the FCC's decision not to tighten those limits."

The FCC maintains that BPL emissions are localized and at low enough levels to preclude harmful interference in the first place, and it has left the door open to possibly upping the limit in the future.

Haynie pointed out that both international treaty and US law entitles licensed radiocommunication services to protection from harmful interference that unlicensed systems like BPL might generate. "Despite this," he continued, "the FCC has shifted the burden for initiating interference mitigation from the BPL system operator to the radio

licensee." The NTIA's September 13 submission to the FCC shows that at FCC Part 15 limits, the probability of harmful interference is essentially 100 percent within 200 to 400 meters (approximately 660 to 1300 feet) of a power line carrying BPL signals--depending on the operating frequency.

"Amateur Radio stations are typically located in residential areas, nearly always well within such distances," Haynie noted. "The FCC's Report and Order provides no assurance that when interference occurs--as it unquestionably will--it will be promptly eliminated."

As part of the Commerce Department, the NTIA not only administers radio spectrum allocated to federal government users but advises the White House on telecommunications policy. On June 24, President Bush extolled BPL during a speech on technological innovation even while acknowledging interference concerns.

Haynie said the League will continue efforts to improve the R&O. Calling the HF spectrum "a unique and priceless resource," the ARRL president expressed regret that the administration "is willing to squander such a

unique natural resource in order to provide a short-range broadband connection that can easily be provided by several other non-polluting means."

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, echoed Haynie's concerns. The FCC R&O, he said, "shifts the burden to licensed operators to react to interference rather than adopting rules to prevent interference from occurring." The R&O advises locating "sensitive receiver antennas" as far as practically possible from power lines. Additionally, the FCC admonished ARRL that in cases where its members experience RF noise, "such noise can often be avoided by carefully locating their antennas."

Reacted Sumner: "If a BPL system operator wants to meet its obligation by picking up all of the costs of relocating a licensee's antenna, it's free to make the offer."

If interference occurs, the new Part 15 rules will require BPL system operators to employ "interference avoidance techniques" such as "frequency band selection, notching, or judicious device placement." Notches would have to be at least 20 dB--slightly more than 3 S units--below applicable Part 15 limits on HF and at least 10 dB below Part 15 limits on VHF--not much protection for weaker signals common in HF work.

"We might be more optimistic if there had, to date, been a single instance when the FCC had ordered a BPL system to terminate operation for causing harmful interference," Sumner said. "The Commission continues to be in denial, despite hundreds of pages of documentation of ongoing interference."

Sumner said the ARRL was gratified that the FCC R&O recognized that BPL devices have significantly greater interference

potential than other Part 15 devices and that the Commission will require certification of BPL systems rather than the less-stringent verification. Additionally, Sumner said, the League was pleased that the FCC-mandated public BPL system database will require systems to be listed several weeks ahead of actual implementation so that amateurs and others have advance notice.

ARRL officials continue to mull possible formal responses to the R&O. The ARRL Executive Committee already has Okayed the filing of a Petition for Reconsideration. It further authorized ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, W3KD, to "prepare to pursue other available remedies as to procedural and substantive defects" in the BPL proceeding.

For more information on BPL, visit the Broadband Over Power Line (BPL) and Amateur Radio Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/bpl>>.

FCC FINES CB OP.-AMATEUR LICENSEE, CB SHOP

The FCC has imposed large fines on a Washington CB operator who now holds a Technician class amateur license and on an Ohio CB shop that's run by an apparent amateur licensee. In an October 18 Forfeiture Order (NOF), the Commission levied a \$10,000 fine on Robert A. Spiry, now KD7TRB, of Tacoma, for unauthorized operation on 11 meters that also involved the use of uncertificated equipment and the use of an illegal external RF power amplifier. The alleged violations occurred in 2002.

Following up on "numerous complaints of interference to home electronics equipment" from CB transmissions, agents from the FCC's Seattle Field Office tracked the interfering transmissions to Spiry's home and vehicle.

"The agent observed signal levels that appeared to be significantly higher than those expected from a legal CB transmitter," the FCC said in a subsequent Notice of Apparent Liability (NAL).

The FCC says its agents conducted inspections of Spiry's station in April and November 2002 and determined that Spiry was operating uncertificated transmitters and using a linear amplifier attached to his CB transmitter in violation of Part 95 rules. The FCC said it advised Spiry that his use of unauthorized and non-certified equipment voided his blanket authority to operate his CB station, but he continued to operate anyway.

The Commission said that when Spiry responded to the December 2002 NAL, he did not dispute the facts as the FCC had presented them. But, Spiry told the FCC that he had given up CB, removed his CB antenna and obtained an Amateur Radio license. Spiry's ham ticket was granted December 2, 2002.

Spiry also said he didn't realize that the fine for such violations could be so high and that he is unable to pay it. The Commission says Spiry presented no evidence to back up that claim, however, and it's not persuaded that Spiry's "remedial efforts" warrant any reduction in the fine.

In an unrelated case, the Commission issued an NOF October 21, fining Paladen Communications Inc., of North Jackson, Ohio, \$7000 for "willfully and repeatedly" selling illegal CB external RF power amplifiers.

During a July 2003 visit to Paladen, agents from the FCC's Detroit office reported observing a Palomar CB linear on sale for \$250. The agents informed Arthur L. Dundorf, now apparently KC8ZQI, and Preston L. Dundorf, now apparently KC8ZKE, of Paladen, that CB linears could not

be legally sold and, in October 2003, issued a Citation informing Paladen of the violations and penalties that could result. Both men obtained Technician tickets in April 2004.

In a response, Paladen proprietor Preston Dundorf told the FCC that Paladen was unaware it was violating marketing rules and would not violate them in the future. But last January, the Detroit Office received a complaint that Paladen was continuing to sell CB linears. An agent who followed up on the report was offered a Palomar 100 W linear amplifier for \$124.

The FCC says Paladen did not respond to a May 2004 NAL alleging willful and repeated violation of the Communications Act and §2.815 of its rules.

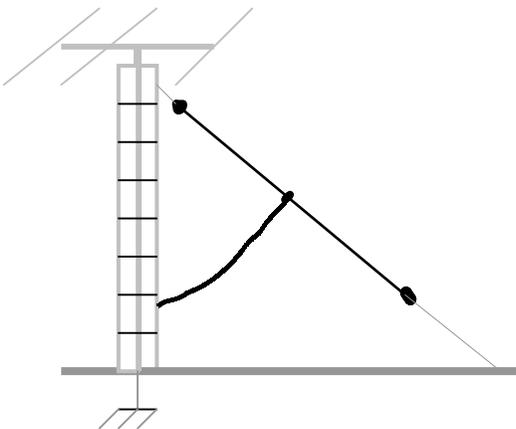
As a result, the Commission affirmed the forfeiture based on the information before it.

The FCC gave Spiry and Paladen Communications 30 days to pay the fines.

The Sloper and tower, a good marriage

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

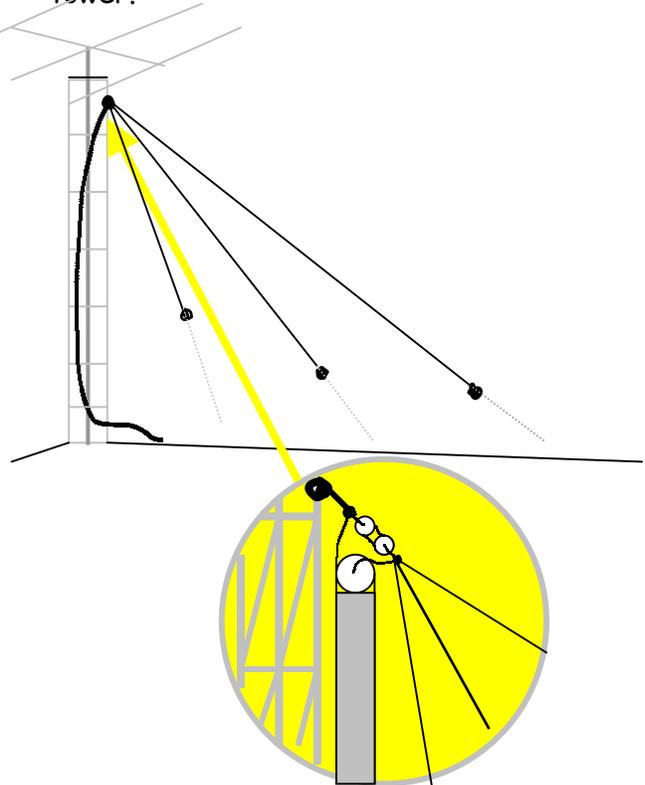
For the past 10 years I have employed a wire antenna called a Sloper or Half-Sloper. A true Sloper is a half-wave dipole that is high on one end and low on the other. Most hams with 35 or higher towers have used the Sloper type antenna for years. They attach one end of the dipole near the top of the tower and it slopes down to a point about 5 to 10 feet above ground.



This type of dipole for the 80, 60, 40 and 30 meter bands makes an effective radiator. The antenna can be fed with coax cable, but

will end up being a mono-bander at the calculated frequency [$L=468/F$ (MHz)]. If the antenna is fed with 450-ohm twinlead, and with the use of a transmatch (antenna tuner) with balanced output it becomes a multi-band doublet.

The Sloper I employ is actually a half-sloper, because the sloped antenna is only a quarter-wave long on the intended band. The other half of the antenna is my grounded tower.



Rather than a single band Sloper I made a multi-band Sloper array using a quarter-wave element for 80, 40 and 30 meters. Each band element is fanned out like bicycle spokes. On 40 and 30 meters I experienced low SWR but on 80/75 my antenna tuner came in handy to lower the SWR from 3:1 to 1.1:1. There is no reason that a 60-meter element could be added to the mix also.

Since a 40-meter element is also a $\frac{3}{4}$ -wave on 15 meters, a match close to 50-ohms was obtained and performed on that band was good too. The 80-meter element cut to 66-feet (3.5 MHz) will be $1\frac{3}{4}$ -wavelength at

28.5 MHz and will work on the 10-meter band with the aid of an antenna tuner.

Depending on the height of your tower you may need to use an antenna tuner on various bands. The reason my Sloper worked well on 40-meters is because my tower is 32 feet high and almost a quarter-wave on that band.....

73, Bruce

EDITORS NOTE

By Bruce Randall/W1ZE

There is a chance that the February issue of Squelch Tales may not be published. Yours truly has to go in for some elected surgery in early January and I may not up to playing on the keyboard for a few weeks. We hope to have a March issue out for you all. I promise not to show you the scar.

**Don't Forget
Saturday,
December 4th at
7:00 PM is the
MARA's yearend
dinner at the China
Rose on the Bath
Road in Brunswick.
Hope to see
you there.**

Upcoming ARRL Exam Session Search

VEC Test Fee \$12.00. This fee is charged once, no matter whether taking any one, two, three or all four test elements, one time. Re-tests of an element failed at the same test session will require payment of an additional test fee.

11-Dec-2004 *Sponsor: MARA, Time: **10:00AM** (Walk-ins allowed) Contact: BRYCE P RUMERY (207)799-1116, Email:* K1GAX@JUNO.COM *VEC:* ARRL/VEC *Location:* PATTON FREE LIBRARY 33 SUMMER ST BATH, ME 04530

25-Jan-2005 *Sponsor: PORTLAND AMATEUR WIRELESS ASSO., Time: **9:00 AM** (Walk-ins allowed) Contact: BRYCE P RUMERY (207)799-1116, Email:* K1GAX@JUNO.COM . VEC: ARRL/VEC Location: STEWART MORRILL AMERICAN LEGION POST #35 413 BROADWAY SOUTH PORTLAND, ME 04106

*The MARA Officers
and Board of
Directors want to
wish you and yours
all the happiness
and joy this Holiday
Season has to offer.
We hope Santa
leaves a new rig
under tree and that
you have a very
happy 2005 full of
Ham Radio fun!*