



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for May 2005

Nine Maine Hams have been on the air for 50+



At the March 26th meeting of the Maine Chapter of the QCWA, held at the Andy Hamfest, ham radio anniversary awards were presented to the following Maine Hams:

50 Years:

- *Bob Curtis*, W1GRG of South Paris
- *Phil Whitehouse*, W1GEE of Hampden
- *Ray Knight*, W1BCA of Augusta
- *Blaine Kimball*, W1VLU of Jefferson.

55 Years:

- *Dot Young*, W1TGY of Augusta
- *Walt Parker*, W1SQV of Windham

65 Years:

- *Bob Ward*, W1NDC of Brunswick
- *Charles Stenger*, W1HTG of Jay
- *Ed Watts*, W1HS of Deer Isle

Many kudos to those nice folks for their many years promoting our great hobby.

Anyone who has been a licensed ham for 25 or

more years and would like to become a member of the QCWA and its local Maine Pine Tree Chapter should Contact chapter Vice President Bruce Randall, W1ZE at 389-2458 or email at W1ZE@arrrl.net.

QRP and Digital, a good marriage

By W1ZE

As many of you know, in addition to VHF, UHF and Microwaves I still like HF and especially QRP (5-watts and less) communications. I have been checking into the Maine 75-meter nets using 5-watts from my little Yeasu FT-817 all-mode QRP rig. My reports have been acceptable, even with a very compromise random wire antenna and not so great ground system.

In December Mrs. Santa was nice enough to give me a small RIGblaster, Nomic PC to radio interface box, so I could do some RTTY and digital modes again. With all that has been going on at this QTH I didn't get the chance to lash it up until early April. The interface unit connects to the PC's sound card and serial port and the microphone input, PTT and

receiver audio output connections on my transceiver.

After making the connections I installed a freeware program called DigiPan for the PSK-31 FSK mode and programs for CW, RTTY, AMTOR, PACTOR, MT-63 and other digital modes along with a program for Slow Scan TV (SSTV).

In the past years I have done my share of RTTY and PACKET and AMTOR (FAQ) but not any real work in the PSK-31 mode.

QRP can be a lot of fun but PSK-31 makes it a blast. PSK-31 signals that are so weak it is difficult to hear them in the speaker are solid copy with the DigiPan PSK-31 program. The program has DSP filtering built into it. If you can see a faint signal in the waterfall signal presentation on your PC screen, you can copy it.

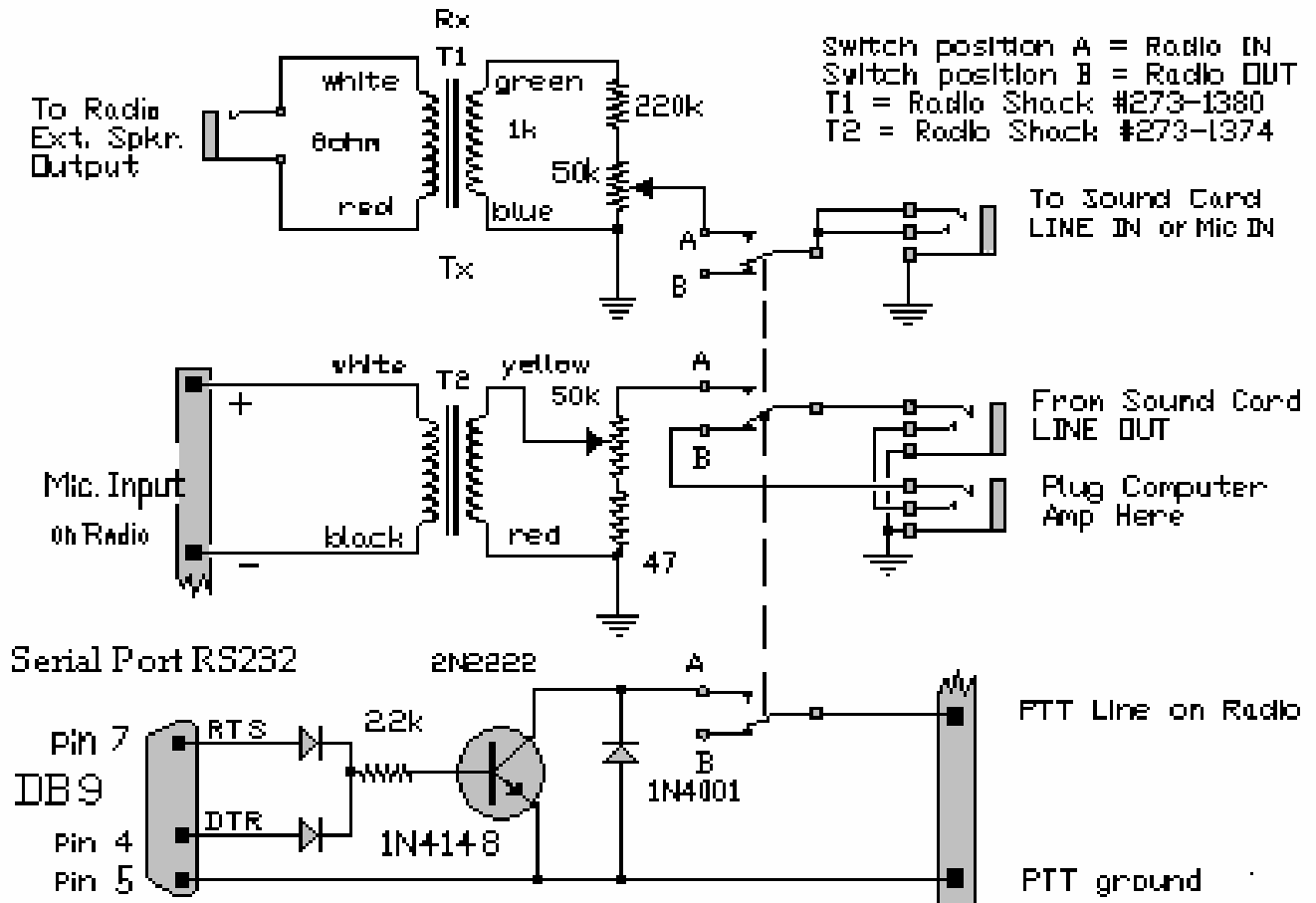
The day I installed the interface I answered a PSK-31 CQ by a chap in Oklahoma on 20-meters (14.070) with a weak signal presentation on my waterfall and got a 579, "good print" report. The following day I got back on 14.070 and heard a half-

dozen stations in Europe in PSK mode. I noted a good print from DD3SF in Alfred (Saxony) Germany. For grins, I answered his CQ with my 5-watt rig and

BANG, back he comes and gives me a 599 report with solid print. We had a nice keyboard QSO for about ten minutes. Not bad for QRP power and an end fed

90-foot long wire about 15-foot off the ground and a less than effective ground system.

The following diagram is a simple sound card to radio unit you can build with parts available at your corner Radio Shack store and mounted in a small aluminum box.



For all you folks that are awaiting the code-free HF licenses, you may want to consider digital modes SWLing. Until you have the HF privileges. You can receive all the digital modes with just a HF receiver capable of receiving SSB and CW signals. There are shareware programs out there that let your computer copy the digital modes plus SSTV and CW using audio

from your radio and print it on your PC's screen. One of the CW programs is called **CwGet** and can be downloaded from the web. This program works well with machine sent CW (like W1AW code practice and bulletins) but sometimes the decoder has difficulty with the swing in some ham fists. This program also needs a sound card interface box, but just the receiver

coupling transformer (T1) circuit shown in the above diagram will work for receiving all digital modes.

There is a lot of freeware and shareware downloads available on the web for hams that want to try digital modes. Following are few good sites:

Mixw2 Multimode program
<http://www.nvbb.net/~jaffejim/download.htm>
 TrueTTY (multimode), CwGet, CwType,
 SeaTTY (NAVTEX & WEFAX)
<http://www.dxsoft.com>
 MFSK18 & MFSK8 from IZ8BLY:
<http://www.geocities.com/iz8bly/stream>
 MMTTY (very good RTTY program)
<http://mmhamsoft.ham-radio.ch/mmtty/>
 MMSSTV (good SSTV program):
<http://mmhamsoft.ham-radio.ch/mmsstv/>
 WB8NUT has a very good web site to
 download almost all the digital modes, such
 as: AMTOR, Pactor, G-TOR, Pactor II, Clover,
 RTTY, PSK31, Thrub, Packet, Hellschreiber,
 MT63, etc.

Go to:

<http://www.wb8nut.com/digital.html>

DIGITAL OPERATING FREQUENCIES

Band	Digital	PSK31	SSTV	WSJT
160m	1.800-1.810	1.83815	1.840	
80m	3.580-3.640	3.58015	3.845	
40m	7.060-7.099	7.08015	7.171	
30m	10.120-10.150	10.14215		
20m	14.060-14.099	14.07015	14.230	
17m	18.100-18.110	18.10015		
15m	21.060-21.099	21.08015	21.340	
12m	24.920-24.930	24.92015		
10m	28.070-28.130	28.12015	28.680	
6m		50.29000	50.680	50.280
2m		144.14400	145.500	144.140

Try it, you may like it!

73, Bruce/W1ZE

NEQP

Don't Forget!

May 7th & 8th is the New
 England QSO Party. For
 more information about this
 on-air fun event, go to:

<http://www.neqp.org>



Together, we can save a life

MARA

volunteers get Red Cross Disaster training

On the morning of Saturday April 16 seven MARA members arrived at the Mid Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross building in Topsham to receive the "Introduction to Disaster Services" course. The reason they attended was as ARES members they wanted to become familiar with the Red Cross needs so they could provide their skills as radio communications operators in the event of a disaster affecting the Mid Coast Maine area.

The class was given by chapter officials, one a MARA member Michelle Briggs. KC7LIF, and it was very well presented and very informative. Some of the topics addressed were:

- Impact of a disaster.
- Types of disasters
- Where does ARC fit in?
- What a RC volunteer would do.
- Where do we hams fit in?

Comments by the attendees at the end of the class were all very positive and it looks like Mid Coast Red Cross has seven new volunteers communicators.

They are:

Allen Kwong, WA1SCS

Eric Moore, KB1HYV

Bob Watson, N1GWE

Bob McQueeney, N1VVF

Gay McQueeney, N1XBN

John Goran, K1JJS

Bruce Randall, W1ZE

MARA folks that have previously received the preliminary training are:

Brian Doval, AA1WI and Lee Tribou, N1HOC



BE THERE OR BE SQUARE

Friday May 6th through Saturday May 7th. Gates open at noon Friday.

From Concord, NH, take I-89 to exit-7 in Hopkinton. At the exit 7 off-ramp turn right travel 150 feet turn right at first street then travel about a mile south to the fairgrounds. **See you there!**



Bob McQueeney, N1VVF all set to head out



Gay McQueeney, N1XBM making sure OM Bob didn't leave without her



MARA

Communications Shock Troops attack the streets of Brunswick

Bright and early on the morning of Saturday April 9th a dedicated group of MARA members arrived at the Brunswick Middle School to help get things kicked off for the 2005 MS Walk.



Abe, KC1W and Bruce, W1ZE at the ready

MARA Activities Director Lee Tribou, N1HOC as in past years was net control and used the Association's call of KS1R. Lee was instrumental in making our Associations communications effort for this worthwhile event come together.

The MS walk was very successful this year with high turnout and funds received exceeded last year's effort. The MS folks thanked all the MARA volunteers for their great service and support then provided them with a great lunch to say just to say Thank you.....

Invite a fellow ham to come to a MARA meeting and consider joining Mid Coast Maine's ACTIVE Ham Radio club!