



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for September 2005

MARA Special Event Communications Teams support three bike rides

Saturday, August 13th had a six MARA members show up at the starting line of the Tour De Merrymeeting Bay 50-mile bike ride around Merrymeeting Bay. John, K1IJS served as the talented Net Control with KC7LIF, KC6TVF, KC1W, W1ZE and KA5FPT out in the field keeping track of bike riders, another successful event.

Sunday, August 21st had the MARA communications team of W1VYA K1IJS, W1ZE, KA5FPT, WD1F, KB1IEF plus Devin heading to Wiscasset to do the thing they do best for the Morris Farm, Tour Des Farms, 100-mile bike ride through Lincoln County. Things got started promptly at 7:30 AM with K1IJS again acting as net control for the event.

The well covered ride went off without a hitch and a lot of pretty countryside was covered by the bikers and the MARA communications team. As usual the Morris Farm put on a great after event BBQ. They were very appreciative of the MARA's effort and expertise in making a safe well covered bike ride.

Saturday, August 27th has not arrived as of this writing, but if the previous two bike events are any indication, your MARA communications team will have performed as usual with another outstanding effort!

Lightning attacks KS1R 147.21 repeater



Oak Hill, Brunswick: During the lightning and thunder show of August 4th a bolt of lightning hit the telephone line somewhere on Oak Hill or the surrounding neighborhood. Several kilovolts of electromotive force went racing down the line into the repeater building and into the repeater controller for the 147.21/81 repeater. The only KS1R repeater connected to the phone line. In turn this very high EMF arched past the phone-line coupler on the controller board and things started popping. The coupler module burned and several 16-pin IC had their tops blown off. That afternoon WD1F, KC7LIF and KA5FPT received some trouble shooting training from Bill Messier, K1MNV in his basement work shop and test bench.

Bruce put out an emailing to the Maine ham community that KS1R took a lightning hit and the tech committee was working to get it back on the air ASAP. Marty, K1PIG, Guru of the Togas and Belfast repeaters, receiving this email offered to loan the MARA one of his spare controllers to get the repeater back on the air in time for the following Monday's ARES net and the next weekends bike ride. Somehow lines got crossed and the controller

exchange didn't happen. However the light went on in Bill's (K1MNW) head and told Donnie, "You know, I think I have an old Hamtronics COR board around here somewhere that I used to make a commercial repeater many years ago. After digging through several cardboard boxes, out came a small box with the COR board and instruction sheet. That afternoon Donnie, Bill and Bruce lashed it up to the receiver and transmitter and Yippee, the repeater was back on the air.

A few days later Bruce contacted the folks at NHRC to get a suite of ICs, transistors and phone-line coupler module. The company owner, head engineer and bench tech told Bruce that he had fixed a lot of his controllers that had taken lightning hits and for the MARA to ship the controller to him via UPS and within an hour of getting it, he would have it repaired and shipped back to Brunswick. After receiving the controller at NHRC we received a phone call from NHRC saying that almost every silicone device went up in smoke. The repair tech said he replaced all the IC chips and some transistors and the controller was running again. He advised he would put our controller into his repeater and burn it in for a week to make sure it was repaired correctly. He advised that he warrants the repair for 90 days. He further added that at any time after during or after the 90 days that we are not happy with it, he would take the controller back as trade-in on a new replacement controller and the original repair costs of \$280.95 would go against the new controller. The NHRC-10 will be returned to Oak Hill and we will have the repeater back in normal operation ASAP.

The Technical Committee wants to thank all those that rallied to the cause. We also want to thank Marty,

K1PIG for offering his hardware and support. We had the repeater available for the ARES Net and the weekend Bile rides.

News from Newington



FCC MORSE CODE DECISION WOULD NOT AFFECT CW SUBBANDS, PRIVILEGES

Any FCC decision to eliminate the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for HF access would have no impact on either the current HF CW sub-bands or on the CW privileges of Amateur Radio licensees.

"There seems to be a lot of confusion on these points, judging by the questions I've been getting," said John Hennessee, N1KB, of the ARRL Regulatory Information Branch. He emphasizes that the proceeding does not put forward or recommend any changes in CW allocations or privileges.

The FCC is currently accepting comments on its Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) in proposes to do away with the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for all license classes.

Hennessee further notes that the FCC also has not proposed to extend HF privileges to current Technician licensees who have not passed a Morse code examination. The Commission's NPRM&O suggests that in a no-Morse-requirement regime, such Technician licensees would be able to gain HF access by taking the Element 3 General class written examination.

To file on-line comments on the FCC NPRM&O in WT Docket 05-235 or to view others' comments in the proceeding, visit the ECFS site <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> and click on "Submit a Filing" or "Search for Filed Comments."

In either case, type "05-235" in the "Proceeding" field, being careful to include the hyphen but not the quotation marks. Directions for filing comments, which can be in the form of an attached document, are on the ECFS site. Click on "Getting Started" to learn more.

As of week's end, more than 1700 comments had already been filed. The FCC has not yet established a closing date for comments in this proceeding, and it's not likely to release a Report and Order in WT Docket 05-235 until early next year.

In a separate--and unrelated--Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in WT Docket 04-140, the FCC agreed with an ARRL proposal to reallocate the current Novice/Tech Plus CW sub-bands to create additional room on certain 'phone sub-bands. If the FCC goes ahead with that proposal, Novice and Tech Plus licensees would have CW privileges in the current General class CW bands.

RADIO AMATEURS OF CANADA TO REPLY TO BPL CONSULTATION PAPER

Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) is planning to respond to an Industry Canada (IC) public consultation process that will determine how BPL will be introduced in Canada. The proceeding, spelled out in Canada Gazette Notice SMSE-005-05, dated July 19, will include the development of a new certification standard for medium-voltage power line carrier systems.

"The intent of this consultation paper is to seek comment on the deployment and regulation of BPL systems, including the specific equipment standards and operational requirements which address potential interference to radio services," IC explained. A consultation paper is roughly the equivalent of an FCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

RAC will reply to the consultation directly to IC and through the Radio

Advisory Board of Canada (RABC), an association of Canadian radio spectrum user associations to which RAC belongs. RAC Vice President of Regulatory Affairs Jim Dean, VE3IQ, a member of the RABC Executive, will chair a working group preparing RABC's response. Joe Parkinson, VE3JG, will serve as the working group's RAC delegate.

"RAC is not against BPL," the organization said in a statement. "It is against the interference to radio services created by BPL, and looks forward to this consultation process as an opportunity to have an input into the certification standard."

FCC REALIGNS AMATEUR PRIVILEGES FOR REGION 1 AND 3 LICENSEES

The FCC has realigned Amateur Radio allocations for Commission licensees living or operating within Regions 1 and 3. The changes to Part 97, which reflect decisions made at World Radio communication Conference 2003, make the band 7100-7200 kHz available to amateur operators in Regions 1 and 3 effective September 9.

Under the revised regime, Novice and Technician Plus licensees may operate 7.100-7.150 MHz, CW only, 200 W output; General licensees may operate 7.100-7.150 MHz, CW/RTTY/data, 200 W output; Advanced and Amateur Extra may operate 7.100-7.150 MHz, CW/RTTY/data, 200 W and 7.150-7.200 MHz, CW/phone/image, 1500 W output. The special segments below 7.100 MHz are also retained.

The changes to Part 97 affect approximately 1250 FCC licensees as well as Commission-licensed stations operating portable or mobile within Regions 1 and 3.

After March 29, 2009, the 7.1-7.2 MHz segment will be allocated to the Amateur Service on a primary and exclusive basis throughout the world, with some exceptions.