



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for December 2005

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Der Zepp Antenna

By W1ZE

In one of my previous articles on a two meter J-Pole antenna I referred to it as really being an end fed **Zepp**. The **Zepp** antenna got its name from the antenna that trailed behind the German Zeppelin Blimps (dirigibles) back in the 1930s.

Years ago, 1976 to be exact, in Huntington Beach, California when I got back into HF, I wanted to get up an antenna that would fit into my 60 by 100-foot city lot. My back yard was less than half that size. I especially wanted it to work on 40-meters and maybe other bands too. The XYL was not excited about a chunk of feed-line dangling in the middle of the back yard either.

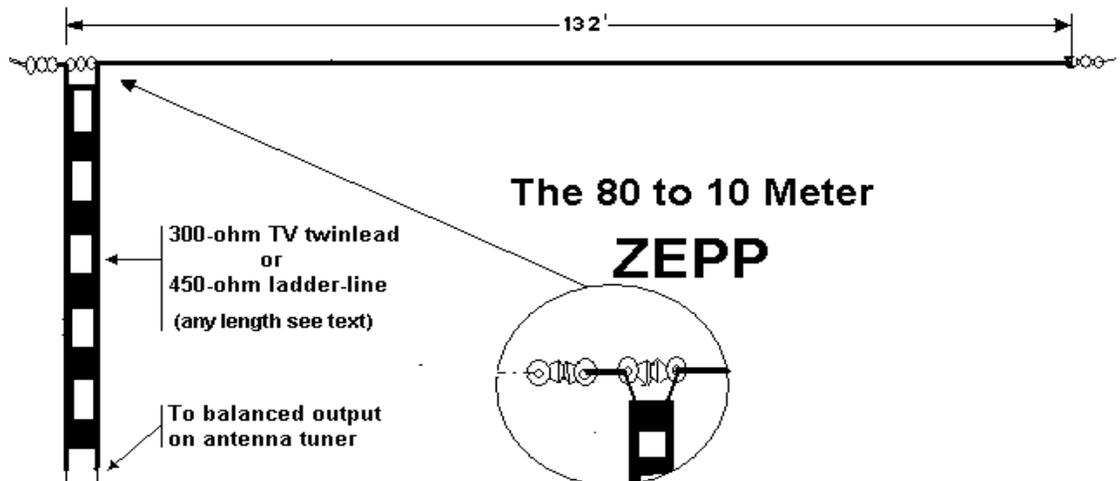
Looking in the Amateur Radio Handbook, antenna section I studied the information therein on doublets (dipoles). I learned it was possible to feed the half-wave wire antenna from one end rather than in the middle when using tuned feeders (balanced transmission 300-450 ohm twin-lead or open wire ladder-line). This antenna was referred to as the **Zepp**.

End feeding a half-wave wire antenna like this could meet my needs. I also learned that like a doublet, the antenna would work pretty well on the higher bands above the fundamental half-wavelength resonant frequency with the aid of an antenna tuner (transmatch) with a balanced output. I ran a 66-foot length (1/2-wave at 40 meters) of copper antenna wire from the peak of my roof to a pole in the back corner of the yard. From the roof end insulator I ran about 25-feet of 300-ohm TV twin-lead into my second floor ham shack and connected it to my homebrew transmatch. At the antenna end of the twin-lead I connected only one side to the antenna wire and the other lead was left unconnected.

I was advised that feed line lengths that were a quarter-wave length long at the operating frequency could make tuning tricky, so 25-feet seemed to be a good length.

The antenna worked pretty well. As good as any dipole I strung up. With my antenna tuner, I could operate on 40 to 10 meters.

Like any dipole, the higher in the air you go with it the better the performance. At 30 feet the antenna worked pretty well on 40 meters and provided good QSOs all over the US, Canada and south of the border. I did try to load it up on 75-meters without much luck, because it was far too short. But on 20 through 10 meters it worked all the DX I could hear. It isn't a bean but it did hold it's own. I am sure if I could have made the Antenna 132 foot long it would have worked pretty well on 80-meters too.



The disadvantage of the Zepp is that feedline length affects antenna tuning. Antenna journals state that feedlines that are a quarter-wavelength for any one ham band may present difficulty in tuning. Feedline lengths near 130 and 65 feet should be avoided to minimize this interaction on the 80 meter band

The following are approximate quarter-wave feed line lengths to avoid if you decide to string up a Zepp. This also applies somewhat to center fed doublets:

80M = 65'	20M = 16'
75M = 60'	17M = 12'
60M = 48'	15M = 8'
40M = 32'	12M = 7'
30M = 28'	10M = 6'

If you experience a frequency that is very tricky to tune, or you just can't seem to get a good SWR dip, try adding or subtracting a few feet of feedline. That may do the trick. **73, Bruce**

MAINE VE TESTS SESSIONS FOR 2006

By Phil Young, W1JTH

JANUARY:

Jan 21 Sat 9:00a South Portland, Maine, Stewart Morrill American Legion Post #35, 413 Broadway W1UJR/ARRL Bruce Howes (207) 443-2140 w1ujr@arrl.net May also call Bryce Rumery K1GAX (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX. Jan 18 Wed 5:30p Augusta, 125 State St. Use south side entrance nearest rotary. AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

FEBRUARY:

Feb 18 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free Library 33 Summer St. K1GAX/ARRL Bryce Rumery (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX

MARCH:

Mar 15 Wed 5:30p Augusta, 125 State St, Use south side entrance nearest rotary. AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

Mar 18 Sat 9:00a South Portland, Maine, Stewart Morrill American Legion Post #35, 413 Broadway W1UJR/ARRL Bruce Howes (207) 443-2140 w1ujr@arrl.net May also call Bryce Rumery K1GAX (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX

Mar 25 Sat Noon Lewiston, Ramada Inn (Maine Section ARRL Convention) K1GAX/ARRL Bryce

Rumery (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX

APRIL:

Apr 8 Sat 10:00a Winslow, Winslow Junior High school on Danielson St. AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891

Apr 15 Sat 10:00a South Portland, Maine, Stewart Morrill American Legion Post #35, 413 Broadway W1UJR/ARRL Bruce Howes (207) 443-2140 w1ujr@arrl.net May also call Bryce Rumery K1GAX (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX Apr 18 Tue 6:30p Presque Isle, NMCC Augusta Christie Building Room 113 WA1YNZ/ARRL Wilburn Scott (207)455-8333

Apr 22 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free Library 33 Summer St K1GAX/ARRL Bryce Rumery (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX Apr 29 Sat 9:00a Rockland, Knox County Courthouse NY1B/ARRL Norm Smith (207)354-6853

MAY:

May 17 Wed 5:30p Augusta, 125 State St, Use south side entrance nearest rotary. AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891 May 27 Sat 9:00a South Portland, Maine, Stewart Morrill American Legion Post #35, 413 Broadway W1UJR/ARRL Bruce Howes (207) 443-2140 w1ujr@arrl.net May also call Bryce Rumery K1GAX (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX

JULY:

Jul 8 Sat 9:00a Union, Union Hamfest NY1B/ARRL Norm Smith (207)354-6853 Jul 19 Wed 5:30p Augusta, 125 State St, Use south side entrance nearest rotary. AE1Q/ARRL Don Smith 207-495-3891 Jul 22 Sat 9:00a South Portland, Maine, Stewart Morrill American Legion Post #35, 413 Broadway K1GAX/ARRL Bryce Rumery (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com - ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX

SEPTEMBER:

Sep 16 Sat 9:00a South Portland, Maine, Stewart Morrill American Legion Post #35, 413 Broadway W1UJR/ARRL Bruce Howes (207) 443-2140 w1ujr@arrl.net May also call Bryce Rumery K1GAX (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course certification exams given with advanced registration with K1GAX Sep 23 Sat 9:00a Rockland, Knox County Courthouse NY1B/ARRL Norm Smith (207)354-6853

OCTOBER:

Oct 17 Tue 6:30p Presque Isle, Red Cross, 141 State St. WA1YNZ/ARRL Wilburn Scott (207)455-8333 Oct 21 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free

Library 33 Summer St K1GAX/ARRL Bryce Rumery
(207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com
ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course
certification exams given with advanced registration
with K1GAX Oct 21 Sat 10:00a Winslow, Winslow
Junior High school on Danielson St. AE1Q/ARRL
Don Smith 207-495-3891

NOVEMBER:

Nov 15 Wed 5:30p Augusta, 125 State St, Use
south side entrance nearest rotary. AE1Q/ARRL
Don Smith 207-495-3891 Nov 18 Sat 9:00a South
Portland, Maine, Stewart Morrill American Legion
Post #35, 413 Broadway W1UJR/ARRL Bruce Howes
(207) 443-2140 w1ujr@arrl.net May also call Bryce
Rumery K1GAX (207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com
ARRL CCE Emergency Communications Course
certification exams given with advanced registration
with K1GAX

DECEMBER:

Dec 16 Sat 10:00a Bath, Maine, Patten Free
Library 33 Summer St K1GAX/ARRL Bryce Rumery
(207) 799-1116 k1gax@juno.com ARRL CCE
Emergency Communications Course certification exams
given with advanced registration with K1GAX

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE
TENTATIVE DATES ONLY.** Send updates and
cancellations to: Phil Young, W1JTH, ARRL Bulletin
Manager, Maine Section 47 Longwood Ave., August
ME 04330-4130 or by phone 207-622-1385, by radio on
the Sea Gull Net or by e-mail to: younpm@aol.com

MINUTES OF the October 27th MEETING

by KC1W

Call to Order:

The October Meeting of the Merry Meeting
Amateur Radio Association was called to
order at 7:00 pm by our president
Brian/AA1WI at Mid Coast Hospital,
Brunswick, Maine.

Attendees:

MARA Members:

Abe/KC1W	Bruce/W1ZE
Bob/N1GWE	Brian/AA1WI
Michele/KC7LIF	John/KC6TVF
Paul/KA5FPT	Steve/AA4A
Lee/N1HOC	Allan/WA1SCS
James/N1IPA	Bill/N1KAT
John/K1JJS	Donnie/WD1F+Devin

Guests:

Marjorie/KB1MRZ Bob/KB5SUD

Treasurer's Report:

Bob/N1GWE reports a current balance of:
\$467.57.

Technical Committee:

Bruce/W1ZE and Donnie/WD1F report:

Projects pending are: replacing antennas for
APRS/Packet Node and final
settings for the 147.21 repeater, including
attaching the phone line.

Bill/K1MNW will be installing a wind
generator on the hill to provide power for
the repeaters. The generator is a Whisper
200 and is capable of generating 125 KWH a
month.

Repeater control operators: John/K1JJS,
John/KC6TVF, Jim/N1IPA and
Donnie/WD1F will be getting together to
work out orientation to the position of
control operator.

Brian/AA1WI provided an update of
Amateur Satellite operations.

Activities:

Lee/N1HOC: The annual MARA holiday party
will be at the China Rose on December 3rd, at
7:00 pm.

Potential upcoming events:

Bath Heritage Days - summer 2006
Brunswick/Topsham Memorial Day Parade -
2006 Mid Coast Hospital Road Race -
November 19th, 2005 Information on these
activities will be published as more is known.

Sagadahoc ARES:

Allan/WA1SCS reports:

1. The Maine Simulated Emergency Test
(SET) was held October 22nd. MARA
participants were John/KC6TVF,
Michele/KC7LIF, Lee/N1HOC and
Paul/KA5FPT at the MidCoast Chapter,
American Red Cross and Bruce/W1ZE
mobile. Local preparations for the SET will
begin earlier to get more local Hams
involved.

2. The Second Annual Emergency
Communications Seminar will be held
tentatively on Saturday, February 4th 2006.
Bryce will present the Maine Emergency
Communications Course, Level I and II

during the seminar. **(Make a note of this one and try and attend)**

3. The technical committee will be working on setting up the .21 repeater to transmit a CTCSS tone for notification of MidCoast ARES members. For testing the tone will be used to notify listeners of the Monday night MidCoast ARES net. The technical committee will let everyone know when we are ready to start testing this.

4. Parkview hospital has again requested assistance in setting up an amateur radio station for emergency use. Bruce/W1ZE will follow up with the hospital rep.

MidCoast Chapter ARC:

Michele/KC7LIF presented certificates to Lee/N1HOC and John/KC6TVF for their efforts with the ARC. Lee/N1HOC was also recognized as the MidCoast ARC Volunteer of the Month for October. Congratulations to both and Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the ARC.

Michele also provided an update on the Red Cross's efforts along the Gulf coast following hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma. And, finally Michele reminded everyone about the upcoming ARC courses on Mass Care, Shelter Operations and Disaster Assessment. Individuals interested can contact the MidCoast Chapter of ARC for dates and times.

Old Business:

Lee/W1LWT's balloon project - unfortunately the October 15th launch did not take place due to weather. Lee did provide lectures to the scouts attending. The next launch will tentatively take place sometime in February 2006.

Steve/AA4AK has done some follow up regarding the special events station for the Popham Colony's 400th anniversary. Steve has sent inquiries to the Virginia Section Manager to find out if there will be a special event station for the Jamestown celebration. Steve has also found out that locally, Bath will be celebrating Maine's First

Ship in the fall of 2007 to honor the start of the Maine shipbuilding trade. There is the possibility that a special event station could operate in conjunction with the ship's launch then. More to follow.

Field day - the stats are in and KS1R placed 968 overall in the country as a 2A station. We were 4th in Maine for the category.

New Business:

Steve/AA4AK is developing a new teaching method for Morse code and will be looking for anyone interested in learning. He will keep us advised.

John/K1JJS brought up the question regarding MARA becoming an ARRL Special Service Club. Bill Woodhead/N1KAT, the Maine Section Manager was present at the meeting and advised that the club would need to become involved in several additional activities/committees to qualify.

John/K1JJS introduced a proposal from the Yankee Club, to get the presidents of Maine Amateur Radio Clubs together to investigate the possibility of putting together a Memorandum of Understanding type document for mutual support among the Maine Clubs. Brian/AA1WI the MARA club president stated he was open to the suggestion and would be happy to attend and work out details with other club representatives.

Program:

Bill Woodhead/N1KAT was attending tonight's meeting to begin preplanning for the 2006 Annual Maine Amateur Convention to be held the last weekend in March in Lewiston. Bill is looking for volunteer speakers, especially for the Friday night session. Steve/AA4AK has tentatively stepped up to present on QRP. Any other members interested in speaking at the convention should contact Bill.

Next Meeting:

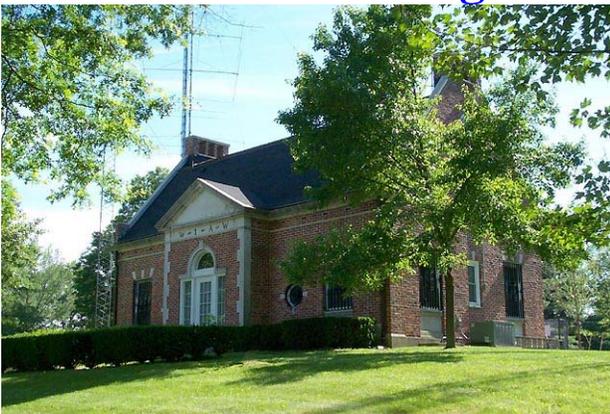
The next meeting of the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association will be Saturday, December 3rd, 7:00pm, at the China Rose Restaurant on Bath Road in Brunswick, ME.

Adjournment:

Lee/NIHOC made a motion, seconded by Bob/NIGWE, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

73, Abe/KC1W (MARA Sec.)

News from Newington



MEANINGFUL ENTRY-LEVEL LICENSE PRIVILEGES ARE TOP PRIORITY, ARRL SAYS

The ARRL again has urged the FCC to provide meaningful operating privileges to entry-level Amateur Radio licensees, including access to HF, even if the Commission doesn't want to create a new license class. Commenting in response to the FCC's July 9 Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) in WT Docket 05-235, the League also stood by its stance that the Commission retain the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for Amateur Extra Applicants, but do away with it for General applicants.

"Retaining Morse telegraphy as a requirement for only the Amateur Extra class license, in ARRL's view, places Morse telegraphy in a proper, balanced perspective," the League told the Commission October 31, the deadline to

comment in the proceeding. Reply comments are due November 14.

The FCC's NPRM&O proposed eliminating the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for all Amateur Radio license classes but denied requests to create a new entry-level license class with limited HF privileges. The League said the FCC needs to finish the job of license restructuring it began in 1998 by reviewing operating privileges for all classes--especially at the first rung of the licensing ladder.

"The elimination of Morse telegraphy, absent a more thorough review of operating privileges in the Amateur Service, will not address the ascertained flaws in the only entry-level license class," the ARRL asserted, referring to the Technician license. "That license class is not attracting or keeping newcomers in its present configuration, and it needs fixing right now."

The ARRL argued that if the FCC will not create a new Novice class license as the League had suggested in its earlier Petition for Rule Making (RM-10867) in the proceeding, it should modify Technician operating privileges instead. The present licensing regime limits Technicians to VHF bands and above, "leaving newcomers to the Amateur Service isolated from their peers holding higher class licenses," the ARRL said. "The Technician class is, for too many, a 'dead end' to what might otherwise be an active, progressive interest in Amateur Radio, technical self-training and incentive-based educational progress in the many facets of the avocation."

The ARRL reminded the FCC that its restructuring plan enjoyed the support of the two Amateur Radio licensees in Congress--Rep Greg Walden, W7EQI (R-OR) and Rep Mike Ross, WD5DVR (D-AR). Eliminating the Morse requirement for General class applicants "creates an anomaly with respect to the Technician class

license," the ARRL noted. "If the telegraphy requirement for the General class license is eliminated, the distinction between the Technician class licensee and the Technician Plus class licensee will have disappeared completely." Therefore, the League contends, there is a logical basis for affording Technician licensees entry-level HF privileges.

Under the ARRL plan, Technicians would have telegraphy and data privileges on 3.55-3.7 MHz, 7.05-7.125 MHz and 21.05-21.20 MHz at 100 W output and on 28.05-28.3 MHz at 50 W output. The League wants the FCC to provide HF phone and image

privileges to Technicians on 3.9-4.0 MHz, 7.2-7.3 MHz and 21.35-21.45 MHz at 100 W output, and on 28.3-28.5 MHz at 50 W.

These recommended privileges take into account the FCC's proposal to adopt the ARRL's so-called "Novice reframing" plan in WT Docket 04-140. The ARRL had earlier proposed the same privileges for a reconstituted Novice license.

The time is right to take a look at the operating privileges of Amateur Radio license classes, the ARRL said in its filing, "because the entry-level license class is demonstrably neither attractive to newcomers nor encouraging in terms of retaining the interest of license holders."

To back up its assertions, the League pointed to surveys it conducted in 1992 and 2003. Nearly half of the licensees responding in the latter poll indicated that they were not currently active in Amateur Radio--up 30 percent from the earlier survey. "The number of inactive Technician class licensees is 46 percent," the ARRL noted, adding that more than a quarter of Technicians responding in 2003 said they'd never even been on the air.

The League pointed out that the FCC's proposed across-the-board elimination of the Morse requirement eliminates a simple

mechanism for current Technician licensees to obtain HF operating privileges--passing the 5 WPM code exam.

If the FCC does nothing other than eliminate the Morse requirement for the General license, the ARRL commented, it would make no sense to continue to deprive Technician licensees the HF operating privileges that Tech Plus licensees now enjoy.

"To do otherwise is to draw a distinction that is entirely arbitrary," the League concluded.

Are your dues due?

It appears that there are a few of you that need to catch up on your membership dues. Check out the membership list on the Association web site (www.ks1r.net) and it will tell you if you need to renew. Please send dues to the Guru of the Currency, Bob Watson (N1GWE) at 11 High Street, Brunswick, ME 04011, or Membership Czar, Annette Dorval (KB1HNU) at 28 Lamb Farm Rd. Brunswick, ME 04011

Antarctica on 5-watts

By W1ZE

As you may know, we just moved into the new QTH we built in Phippsburg and the ham shack consists of a card table with my PC and a Yeasu FT-817 QRP rig on it. On Friday, November 4th I strung up a temporary 132-foot long doublet fed with 300 ohm TV twin lead. Not much of a station but it gets me on the air until I can put my complete station together.

It was the following Wednesday evening, November 9th, about 0100z I was reading the local newspaper in bed when the XYL kicked me out of the

bedroom to change the bedding. She said, "go play with your radio or computer while I make the bed. Being the obedient husband, I booked it out of there and went into the hams shack to checked my email (nothing there) then turned on the FT-817 QRP rig.

I tuned to 20 meters and it was dead. I went to 30-meters and there were a few CW signals coming in. At 10.105 MHz there was a weak signal in the mud going about 35 WPM. My 817 does not have a narrow CW filter to help out, so after hearing the station call several blistering speed CQs, I caught his call sign. R1ANN it was. I couldn't remember where in Russia R1A was, but just for grins I would call him with my whopping 5-watts and doublet. I tried several times and he was going back to others, I am sure much stronger than me. I went to QRZ.COM and punched R1ANN and nothing listed. I then went to Buckmaster database and tried again. I got a hit. R1ANN was not in Franz Josef Land like I thought, but the opposite end of the planet at a Russian research station in Antarctica. Now, the challenge was on. I waited until he had just about worked everyone that could copy his fist at 35 WPM. Then I gave him a call. He replied with QRZ ZE? I sent my call several times, R1ANN DE W1ZE W1ZE W1ZE/QRP. And "BANG" he sent back "W1ZE DE R1ANN UR 599 599 BK" I replied, "QSL UR 599 599 ME ME - 73 R1ANN DE W1ZE SK."

DAMN, I made a QSO to the South Pole with 5-watts and a wire dipole. Now you know neither of us was really 599, but that is a DX exchange world for'ya, If you can make out the other operators

calls after he only has to repeat it three or four times his RST is 599.

Now even for a guy that has been in the hobby for a short 45 years like me, that was a lot of fun. You too can have the challenge of working the world with under 5-watts of power "QRP!"

As a final note, I know many of you are not fond of the CW mode, but if you decide to master it, it is possible to work the world with a simple HF CW only transceiver that fits into a box the size of a pack of cigarettes.

73, Bruce W1ZE/QRP

PETE's GOOD DEALS

Ham Gear for Sale

Pete Russell, K1MJP is offering up the following ham equipment:



VS-M AND VRM-M SERIES



MODEL VS-35M

YAESU FT-857D HF/VHF/UHF all-band/all-mode transceiver with **Astron VS-35M** power supply- mint condition & only a few months old, \$675.

CUSHCRAFT R-6000 vertical antenna, 20 thru 6 meters with 50 ft of 9913 1/2" coax cable, \$125



Yeasu FT-209RH, 5-watt, 2M handheld, tone encode/decode with NC-15 drop in charger, new battery pack, extra battery case. \$35.

Pete is in Florida but can be reached at his email address of: prussell@bowdoin.edu

Loren's Good Deals

More Ham Gear for sale

ICOM IC-02AT, 2M Handheld (HT).



Includes leather case and manual & BC-30 battery charger. *No PL board but you can add one.*

\$30.00, Call Loren at 442-8419. Good for APRS & packet too.

ICOM IC-ML, 2-Meter 10-watt amplifier with manual. Turn your 1.5 to 2-watt HT into a 1/100 kilowatt powerhouse. \$10. Contact Loren Dudley, W1LHD at w1lhd@zwi.net

MARA

YEAR END DINNER

At the China Rose Restraint

Old Bath Road, Brunswick. Saturday, December 3rd 7:00PM.

Order from the menu of take advantage of the buffet.

Bring the better half, significant other, friend and/or the kids and enjoy the evening with your friends at the MARA.

Note: There will be no November or December general meeting. The above dinner will take place of those meetings.

Seasons Greetings

The Members of the MARA Board of Directors, and Trustee want to wish all of you and your families all the best this Holiday Season has to offer. Also, we hope that 2006 will be a happy and healthy year for all of you.