



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for April 2006

Positions swap at MARA

Brunswick, ME: At the February meeting of the MARA, Bob McQueenie, N1VVF announced that he and XYL Gay, N1XBN are going to up-anchor and move south. Bob said that Gay wanted to go where the winters are not longer than the summers. They will put their Brunswick QTH on the market this summer or fall. They have already purchased land south of the Mason-Dixon Line and want to build their retirement home. As a result of this announcement, MARA President, Bryan Dorval, AA1WI exercised his by-law authority and appointed a replacement to fill Bob's remaining term on the Board of Directors. That person is John, K1IJS. John has been an active member and should serve the MARA well.

Also at that meeting, Association Secretary, Abe, KC1W requested that he would appreciate it if someone would take over the position of recording secretary because he will be busy in the very new future building a new "Ham Accessible" QTH in Durham. The foundation is in and the first floor tacked down, so he is planning a lot of pilgrimages to the local home centers with the

XYL selecting all those nice materials to go into the new digs. If someone out there would volunteer to take over the minutes at the meeting it would be greatly appreciated by the membership.

MINUTES of the February 23rd MEETING

By KC1W



Call to Order:

The February 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:
Brian/AA1WI
Abe/KC1W
Michele/KC7LIF
Steve/AA4A K
Allan/WA1SCS
Marjorie/KB1MRZ
Al/N1MHC
Bob/N1VVF
Donnie/WD1F
Bruce/W1ZE

Eric/KB1HYV

John/K1IJS

Treasurer's Report:

Bob/N1GWE could not make the meeting this month but the current balance of the MARA treasury is: \$596.57.

Technical Committee:

Bruce/W1ZE reports:

MARA repeaters are operating well and a list of summer projects is coming together that will include; linking 440/6 meters and of course, antenna work.

Donnie/WD1F and Bill/K1MNW have successfully worked wireless internet between Oak Hill and Donnie's QTH in Phippsburg using a parabolic dish antenna.

Activities:

Lee/N1HOC was unable to attend the meeting, but has been contacted by representatives from the bicycling groups requesting our assistance again this summer. More information will be coming as dates are known.

Sagadahoc ARES:

Allan/WA1SCS reports:

1. Allan will be sending Bryce a Thank You letter for presenting the Maine Emergency Communications Course at the 2nd Annual MidCoast Emergency Communications Seminar.
2. There still needs to be a way of activating the members of the MidCoast ARES group. Suggestions have been made to include; phone trees, pagers,

tone squelch and CTCSS Tones transmitted by the repeater. Allan would like to trial the CTCSS tones and has asked the technical committee to move ahead with that project. (cont.)

3. A reorganization of ARES in the Mid Coast area is being considered. The new structure being considered would have a MidCoast ARES EC with two AECs, one representing Sagadahoc county and the other Lincoln County. Al/N1MHC has stepped up from Lincoln County to help put this organization together. Bruce/W1ZE would continue as the AEC in Sagadahoc County.

MidCoast Chapter ARC:

Michele/KC7LIF: reports the recent high wind storms and power outages resulted in the ARC setting up two shelters over the past weekend. The first was Friday night in Brunswick at the High School. Brian/AA1WI manned the shelter, providing communications to the ARC with Michele/KC7LIF and John/KC6TVF providing communications support at that end. The second shelter was in Madison, Maine on Saturday night and Michele and John assisted with communications along with ARES members in the Madison area.

Old Business:

The Popham Colony 400th anniversary. Steve/AA4AK has placed information on this event both in the newsletter and on the web site. This event will be taking place in the fall of 2007 and Steve is willing to chair the committee to set up a special events station. Bruce/W1ZE made a

nomination, seconded by John/K1JJS for Steve/AA4AK to chair the committee. The motion passed unanimously. **Mid-Coast American Red Cross Chapter emergency generator maintenance support:** Paul, KA5FPT had originally stepped forward to head up this topic. Since Paul was not able to attend the meeting tonight the item will be continued under Old Business at next month's meeting.

Cooks Corner Fire House EOC antennas: John/K1JJS reports that this has been discussed with the Brunswick Fire Chief in the past and there was a possibility of amateur antennas being placed on the new Fire House roof with terminations in the EOC. John/K1JJS and John/KC6TVF will continue working on this project.

Progress on the Morse code class. Steve/AA4AK reports the class is going well with 3 of the 14 sessions completed. Steve says the hams taking the class should be ready to take their upgrade exams by the end of May and be able to sit the code position for this year's Field Day.

New Business:

Proposal for Field Day 2006. Steve/AA4AK has proposed that this year MARA enter Field Day under the F category, a station set up at the EOC of a served agency, with the MidCoast ARC being the served agency. The rationale being, this would allow the communications capabilities of the ARC to be tested during the event along with the emergency generator. A motion was placed by Bruce/W1ZE, and seconded

by Donnie/WD1F to pursue the idea. A discussion followed and the motion passed unanimously. Michele/KC7LIF indicated that during the Field Day weekend the MidCoast ARC would probably be setting up an emergency shelter at the office for training in conjunction with Field Day.

Maine Amateur Convention in Lewiston. Steve/AA4AK will be presenting a forum on QRP radio. Day and time will be listed once the schedule is published.

MARA PIO. The Public Information Coordinator for Maine, John/K1JJS, has requested that each of the Maine Amateur Radio Clubs appoint a Public Information Officer. To date none have been appointed, although Steve/KB1JTE has expressed interest in representing MARA. John will be working with Steve, and appoint him as our PIO. John further states that he is working on a training program for PIOs, so each will have the training and support to complete the job.

Bob/N1VVF & Gay/N1XBN will be moving to North Carolina in the very near future. Since he will not be around to fulfill his position on the Board of Directors with MARA, Bob tendered his resignation effective this evening. Bob will be missed as not only an active Board Member but also a very active Club member. The entire club wishes Bob and Gay the best in NC. And in accordance with the Club Bylaws, the President is able to appoint a club member to fill the remainder of Bob's term on the Board. John/K1JJS was

asked and accepted the appointment to do just that.

Abe/KC1W: Although I did not plan to follow Bob's resignation with my own, I will be **resigning as the MARA Secretary** effective 1 April 2006, and as co-Net Control Station on 1 May, 2006. Marie and I are building a house in Durham and I have learned from Bruce/W1ZE that when you are doing that it pretty much occupies all of your non-working time for a 6 to 9 month period. So, once the house is completed and we are moved, I hope to grow some aluminum and get back on the air. Replacements for both positions will be needed and I can honestly say that I have very much enjoyed both.

Steve/AA4AK reports he has **made contacts with 43 different countries on 80 meters QRP**. Yes folks, that's 43 countries on 5 watts or less CW. Steve was asked if he even owned a microphone – the answer, as expected – “No!”

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association will be March 30th, 2006, 7:00pm, at the MidCoast Hospital, in Brunswick ME.

Adjournment:

Brian/AA1WI made a motion, seconded by Bruce/W1ZE, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25.



RED CROSS THANKS KC6TVF and MARA

The following letter was written last year but just now getting into the newsletter.

John Briggs:

John came to the Mid Coast Chapter as a member of the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association. This ham radio club is active with our Emergency Services Department specifically to provide good communications during a time of disaster when other emergency services in the area such as police, fire and EMTs. John is the one who put the finishing touches on the equipment at the Chapter House, tweaking it to make it as good as possible. The radio club is also responsible for maintaining the equipment, updating it when necessary and regularly testing what is there.

A lesson learned, from the Ice Storm of 1998 was; communications between emergency services is absolutely necessary and was not when the need arose.

Our grateful thanks to John, and the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for stepping forward and filling a very critical need. Thank you, John for your interest, support and commitment to the Red Cross Mission.

BLAST FROM THE PAST



Old photo found. This is the shack of KS1R (now W1ZE) in 1981 on the Meadowbrook Road in Phippsburg. Boy, how times flies. The Kenwood TS-520 is now in the shack of N1CHN, But the Yaesu FL-2100B amplifier and Atwater-Kent Model 35 TRF AM broadcast receiver are still in Bruce's new QTH.

WAS YL

By N1ZYB

A few days ago I, N1ZYB, was tuning around the 20 meter band and I heard a station calling YL/OM Contest. No one was answering so I called back. The lady at the other end thanked me for the contact and said she wasn't

getting as many points as she might because she liked to rag chew too much. Her QTH was Ohio and I happened to mention that my wife also was a ham, call sign N1ZYC.

A few days after that QSO we received an email from a man in Ohio who is trying to earn his WAS YL award on the 3905 Century Club 75 meter net. He wanted to know if Linda could check in to their net one night to help him out. He even offered to take care of the SASE requirements. We emailed back that we would be happy to help. The next day we got another email and the Ohio ham noted that there might be a few more hams that needed a QSO with a CT-YL and the start time was 0350Z.

Wednesday night, at quarter to eleven, Linda checked into the 3905 net along with about 68 other hams from all over the country. Now keep in mind that Linda is not the most 'radio-active' ham in the world, especially on HF. The NCS started through his list and at 1 PM the next day Linda had logged 47 QSOs with hams from Puerto Rico to California! At that point the NCS was at the end of his list and Linda was at the end of her voice. We had so much fun that we had trouble getting to sleep even though it was late for us. You might wonder what I was doing while this great adventure was taking place. I was taking RST readings and helping record other information needed for the QSL cards. I also will be taking Linda out to supper soon as thanks for a job well done.

Now that she has rested up I pointed out that she is well on her way towards WAS herself and maybe she should do some more HF. The jury is still out on that issue. Maybe some more suppers out are needed.

73's, Paul Towne, N1ZYB

The following was received on March 12th



**American
Red Cross**

MID COAST CHAPTER

MID COAST CHAPTER
16 Community Way
Topsham, ME 04086
207-729-6779 (phone)
207-729-2738 (fax)
www.midcoast.redcross.org

7 March 2006

Bryce Rumery
Section Emergency Coordinator
75 Ocean House Road
Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107

Dear Mr. Rumery,

We would like to thank Amateur Radio Emergency Services for all the help they provided during our recent period of severe weather, in particular the windstorms in February. The Merrymeeting Amateur Radio club was very important to the safe running to the shelter in Brunswick.

In Madison shelter operations would have been hampered due to circumstances that made communications difficult and at time almost impossible through normal means. The ARES operators and the Kennebec ARES club were instrumental in keeping the shelter in continual communications with Red Cross leadership in Brunswick.

We appreciate all of the help and assistance.

Sincerely,


John Farnham
Board Chair

Proudly serving communities in Cumberland, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc Counties for over 90 years!

Well Done MARA/Mid Coast ARES Communications Team!



KS1R Repeaters off the grid and on 100% Wind Powered

Brunswick, Monday March 20th:

All the radio's (Repeaters & Nodes) in the repeater building on Oak Hill are running on 100% wind power!

Sunday, March 19th Donnie, WD1F and his father joined Bill, K1MNW on Oak Hill and got the Wind generator, charger, and controller all hooked up and running!

With very low wind, they observed up to 300 watts going into the large 24-Volt battery bank. After 10 minutes the charging time the controller refused to charge the batteries because they were already starting to Bubble!



24-volt battery bank with wind generator controller

Tuesday morning Bruce, W1ZE and Jim, N1IPA went up on the hill to view the installation. The breeze at ground level was light but atop the repeater tower it must have been clipping by because the props on the generator were spinning so fast it looked like a P38 wound up and ready to take off.

Up until now the repeaters ran off the big battery bank charged by CMP power through a big charger. We tapping across 12 volts of the 24-volt system for our needs plus we fed the power needs of the repeaters through two big diode rectifiers. One from the battery bank and one from the 12-Volt power supply, so in the event we lost CMP power we had uninterrupted 12-Volt power. Bill would go over every now and then and switch the load so to balance out the battery bank. With the wind generator charging the whole 24-volt battery bank and the batteries feed a 24-volt to 120-volt AC inverter, the need for CMP has left the building. That inverter is on loan from Bill.



Wind generator atop tower turning at moch-1

We need to obtain our own 24-volt to 12-volt DC inverter so that Bill's unit can go back to his power needs. The 24 to 12 Volt inverters are available for under \$200. Sagadahoc County EMA Director, Rusty Robinson advised that they would assist the MARA in purchase of the inverter. We much appreciate the support of Sag. EMA. *KS1R/R is off the grid saving a barrel or two of fuel oil!*

Bob & Gay will be missed

As announced in the lead article, "Position swap at MARA" Bob and Gay McQueenie are going to up-anchor and QSY to the hart of Dixie. We are going to miss two

of the MARA's active members. Together that have brought stability in the organization when it was needed and were always their to lend a helping hand. Bob was one of the longest serving members of the Board of Directors and had a great influence on the Associations direction. Gay was always there to keep Bob on target.



Bob retired from Uncle Sam's Canoe club (Navy) so he will understand when we wish both of them, "Fair Winds and Following Seas." You will be missed by all your friends in the MARA!



NEWS FROM NEWINGTON

BPL CHIP MAKER SHOWS INTERFERENCE ABATEMENT IMPROVEMENTS TO LEAGUE

A demonstration at ARRL HQ of DS2 BPL equipment suggests the chipset developer and manufacturer is working to

minimize--if not altogether eliminate--interference from its products on amateur bands, ARRL Laboratory Manager Ed Hare, W1RFI, says. Hare met with two DS2 officials at ARRL to discuss the company's improved approach to Amateur Radio band notching techniques. Based upon his observations during a demonstration of DS2's latest generation G2 technology, Hare says he's cautiously optimistic. A spectrum analyzer check of the modem's output showed the G2 modem could attain a notch depth of up to 40 dB.

"While there's no certainty that all BPL products using this technology could achieve 40 dB of protection within notched spectrum, our tests show the capability to do so is there," Hare commented. "This may not prevent all interference problems, but a 10 to 15 dB improvement over the notching used by many BPL systems in place today would be a significant improvement."

Hare points out that DS2 chipsets are used by BPL equipment makers Ambient, Amperion, Corinex and Mitsubishi, among others. "Our work with DS2 could help manufacturers as they address interference problems in earlier-generation equipment," he said.

In its October 2005 Petition for Further Rule Making in the BPL proceeding <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/HTML/plc/filings/BPL-FNPRM.pdf>, ARRL cited BPL systems using Main.net and DS2 chipsets as among those that lack fixed, permanent notches in the ham bands and "have caused numerous cases of harmful interference to stations in the Amateur Service."

Hare says he was intrigued by an earlier demonstration showing that DS2 had improved the notching capability of its latest chipset. Preliminary tests

showed that although close-in notching wasn't much better than other systems', BPL noise dropped below the ambient noise level deep into the notches. Hare and DS2 agreed to work with ARRL to further investigate the notching improvements.

On March 9 DS2 Vice President of Technology and Strategic Partnerships Chano Gómez and Product Manager Eduardo Lluna, EA5ETP, brought a pair of modems using DS2's latest-generation G2 technology to ARRL Headquarters. Gómez directs DS2's US office in California. Lluna is based in Valencia, Spain.

The modems were set up in the ARRL Laboratory's screen room, and checked on a spectrum analyzer in the 20-meter band. Hare said the 40 dB notch depth across the entire band was typical of all bands measured.

The DS2 modems also were tested at Maxim Memorial Station W1AW, where they were plugged into outlets in separate parts of the building and set to transmit data. Hare listened on a number of ham bands and on adjacent spectrum. Inside the ham bands, the signal was inaudible, he said.

"Although this was encouraging as a reasonable quick-look test of DS2 > modems on premise," Hare cautioned, "testing on a BPL installation using overhead power lines would present a more realistic situation from which to draw firm conclusions." Gómez offered to look into ways such tests might be arranged.

Gómez said he's happy to be working with ARRL to demonstrate that DS2's chipsets are Amateur Radio-friendly. "We have made a huge effort to ensure that the 40 dB programmable notches in our OFDM chipset provide adequate protection," he said. Lluna said several vendors already have deployed

DS2-based equipment in the US, "and this gives them the mechanism to avoid interference problems completely." Feedback from the ARRL "has been invaluable" in achieving that goal, he added.

Afterwards, Hare, Gómez and Lluna discussed BPL and electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) issues and potential solutions to head off most cases of exchange of ideas about the technical aspects of interference problems and how improved notch depth could be combined with other techniques to prevent and correct interference," Hare said. "The DS2 staff has a good grasp of the technical issues involved and believes many of them ultimately can be implemented in deployed systems."

ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, concurred with Hare's cautious optimism. "We very much appreciate this dialogue with DS2, and we are looking forward to turning talk into action and solutions," he said.



Good day for W1JTH at Maine State Convention

By W1ZE

The weekend on March 25 had in excess of 300 ham radio operators from all over Maine gather at the Ramada Inn in Lewiston for the Andy Hamfest and Maine State ARRL Convention. The weather was good and the parking lot was full of cars and trucks with various antennas stuck out all over them.

Friday evening started off with seminars ranging from Lefty, K1TOL promoting the six meter band to Tom, K1KI, ARRL New England Director giving folks the "What's Up ay HQ" forum.

The Kennebec ARC gave a talk on Contesting. Between the three the meeting rooms were filled.

By 8:00 AM Saturday morning the parking lot was full again and the flea market was in high gear. During my brief stroll through the goodie tables several MARA members were spotted twisting knobs, such as K1MNW, AA1WI, WA1SCS, N1HOC, K2LOT, W1LWT, N1RFS, N1MHC and N1IPA just to name a few.

At 11:00 AM the QCWA open meeting took place. The QCWA is an organization for hams that have been addicted to the hobby for over 25 years. As you may know I am the President of the Maine Pine-Tree Chapter of QCWA. This meeting was large and service awards were passed out to various Maine hams that have been addicted to the hobby for a LONG TIME.

To start things off with a bang, ARRL New England Director, Tom Freneye, K1KI and Maine Section Manager Bill Woodhead, N1KAT presented to Phil Young, W1JTH of Augusta, with the ARRL's Outstanding Service Award for his many years of service to the ARRL's Field Service Organization and his service to the Amateur radio community here in Maine.



Phil Young, W1JTH, Tom Freneye, K1KI & Bill Woodhead, N1KAT



ARRL Outstanding Service Award to W1JTH

Well done "Ol Phil!

The QCWA meeting continued with length of service awards for the following Maine Hams:



Left to right:

- Richard Small, K1DMP 50 Years in Ham Radio**
- Philip Young, W1JTH "70" Years in Ham Radio**
- Benjamin Doe, W1GQU 50 Years in Ham Radio**
- Benjamin Blodget, W1VEH, 55Years in Ham Radio**

Following the QCWA meeting the flea market started winding up. At noon the VE team started giving exams. VE Guru Bryce, K1GAX reported that there are now several new Technician class holders' two folks have achieved Extra class and one received Technician +HF license. Well done to all the successful candidates and many thanks to all the VEs that helped out. See you all next year at the Maine State Convention. **73, Bruce**



There is still time to dust off those old code practice code tapes and CDs, put them in the player and work your way to passing that 5-WPM Element-1 exam at the next VE session.

Be the happy owner of a Tech + HF, General or Extra Class ticket that you can be proud to hang on your shack wall that says, "I DID IT!"

