



# Squelch Tales



**Newsletter from the Merry Meeting Amateur Radio Assoc. for June 2006**



## INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN FIELD DAY

At the April 27 MARA meeting, a task list was passed around to the club members. The commitments as of 4/27 that I am aware of are listed below. I apologize to anyone who has made a commitment that is not listed below; please let me know, and I'll add you to the roster.

I would encourage everyone to review the list, and see what tasks might interest you. If you would like to volunteer, please e-mail me at [kercell@suscom-maine.net](mailto:kercell@suscom-maine.net) Please note that the ARRL and GWI aliases of my e-mail address are not reliable. Please use the e-mail address indicated here (Note: The 6th character is the letter "I" and the 7th character is the number "1").

We will also discuss this list at the May 25 MARA meeting to get a more complete list of volunteers. (Note: Tasks are shown in red. Tasks that are NOT VOLUNTEERED FOR will be left UNDONE.)

Field Day is not limited to MARA members. If you have friends outside the club who would like to participate, please have them contact me.

**73, Steve AA4AK**

### MARA 2006 Field Day

#### Arrangements

Site: Red Cross Chapter House, Topsham ME Time: 1800Z (2 PM EDT) Saturday June 24 – 1800Z Sunday June 25

**Class:** 2F HF main station, satellite/data/alternate power station, GOTA station, VHF station Primary Callsign: **KS1R**

GOTA Callsign: **AA4AK**

#### People responsible for:

Invite Governor Baldacci to visit FD site – AA4AK

Provide means of hanging HF antennas in trees – AA4AK

Main station operators – W1ZE, KA5FPT, AA4AK (midnight – 8 am) Looking for many others (Signup is not necessary, but it is a great courtesy to the people planning Field Day if we know who is intending to operate)

Satellite/data/alternative power operators - VHF station operators

**GOTA operators** – KB1MRZ, N1HOC, KC7LIF, KC6TVF

Looking for many others. You NEED NOT be licensed or know how to operate CW in order to operate the GOTA station. GOTA operation will be coached as needed.

(Note: you do not need to choose between GOTA, exotic modes, main HF station, or VHF. You're free to operate all four if you like. GOTA is primarily intended for operators without much HF experience. However, anyone is

free to use the GOTA station to build up their confidence, and then move on to the main station.)

GOTA coaches – KA5FPT, AA4AK This is a very important role – please volunteer

Loan Main Station HF Transceiver – W1ZE Loan All-band HF Antenna/Tuner – W1ZE. Loan GOTA Transceiver – KA5FPT Provide Satellite/data station – AA1WI?

Loan 2 meter transceiver – K2LOT Loan 6 meter transceiver – W1ZE (if needed). Provide 6 meter antenna, mast and feed line – Provide HF beam mast and feed line –

**Note:** Any masts or other antenna appurtenances must be installed in such a way as to leave the building and grounds undamaged. The operation will include directional antennas if and only if someone besides the FD coordinator (AA4AK) is willing to take responsibility for them. This responsibility includes, at minimum, responsibility for the antenna, masts, rotors (if any), cables/wires, interconnecting parts, tools, test gear, labor for installation, labor for removal, and liability for damage or injury.

(200 Bonus points) Demonstrate that the generator actually operates per 4.8.4–

(100 Bonus points) Obtain Publicity in local media –

(100 Bonus Points) Operate in public Location – Already arranged

(100 Bonus Points) Provide Public Information Table per 7.3.4 – KA5FPT

(100 Bonus Points) Originate Message to SM per 7.3.5 –

(100 Bonus Points) Handle 10 Messages per 7.3.6 –

(100 Bonus Points) Make satellite QSO per 7.3.7 –

(100 Bonus Points) Make 5 or more QSOs with alternate power per 7.3.8 –

(100 Bonus Points) Copy Field Day Bulletin per 7.3.9 –

(300 Bonus Points) Demonstrate three non-traditional modes per 7.3.10 –

7.3.10. Non-Traditional Mode Demonstrations: A maximum of 300 bonus points (100 points for each demonstration up to three) for setting up a demonstration of a non-traditional mode of amateur radio communications. This includes modes such as APRS, ATV, and SSTV.

7.3.10.1. This bonus is not available for demonstration of a mode for which regular QSO credit is available. PSK31 is not eligible as a demonstration bonus as it is now in wide-spread use and is eligible for regular QSO credit.

7.3.10.2. A complete portable packet system may be included as one of the demonstration modes. This system must include a temporary, portable node and must be completely separate from the existing packet infrastructure of your area. Simply setting up a packet station does not qualify as a demonstration mode.

7.3.10.3. Demonstration modes may not include communications carried outside of the amateur radio spectrum (such as Internet relay).

7.3.10.4. Frequency bands, such as 10 GHz are bands, not modes of communications and do not qualify for the demonstration mode bonus.

(100 Bonus Points) Invite an elected official per 7.3.11 – KA7LIF

(100 Bonus Points) Invite an agency representative per 7.3.12 – KA7LIF, KA6TVF

(50 Bonus Points) Submit Entry via Web per 7.3.14 - AA4AK

(100 Bonus points) Arrange for five young people to make at least one QSO each per 7.3.15 -

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Arrange with Red Cross to make cots and other amenities available-  
Buy food – (Note: The club will pay for food.) Prepare Dinner Saturday – NIHOC (Part of Red Cross BBQ. Club will partially reimburse Red Cross) Prepare breakfast Sunday – (At breakfast time on Sunday morning, the site is sparsely populated. Breakfast arrangements typically consist of someone going to McDonalds for a bag of breakfast sandwiches and so on. Club will reimburse. ) Prepare Lunch Sunday –

(Note: The Red Cross kitchen has a sink, refrigerator and microwave, but no range. If someone wants to bring BBQ grills, hibachis, etc., for outdoor food preparation they are welcome to do so.)

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## Upcoming VE exam sessions

### 08-Jul-2006

#### PEN BAY ARC

Time:\* 10:00AM (Walk-ins allowed)

Contact:\* NORMAN R SMITH , 207)354-6853 Email:\* NY1BRAVO@AOL.COM

VEC:\* ARRL/VEC

Location:\* THOMPSON COMMUNITY CENTER, 51 S UNION RD, UNION, ME 04862

### 19-Jul-2006

#### AUGUSTA ARA

Time:\* 5:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed)

Contact:\* DONALD R SMITH  
207-495-3891

Email:\* AE1Q@ADELPHIA.NET VEC:\* ARRL/VEC \*Location:\* KENNEBEC COUNTY GOV'T CENTER.125 STATE ST

(USE SOUTH SIDE BLDG ENTRANCE NEAR ROTARY) AUGUSTA, ME 04330

### 29-Jul-2006

#### PORTLAND AMATEUR WIRELESS ASSOCIATION

Time:\* 9:00 AM (Walk-ins allowed)

Contact:\* BRUCE J HOWES  
(207)749-0111

Email:\* W1UJR@ARRL.NET

\*VEC:\* ARRL/VEC \*Location:\*

STEWART MORRILL AMERICAN LEGION POST #35. 413 BROADWAY MAY ALSO CALL 207-799-1116 KIGAX@JUNO.COM SOUTH PORTLAND, ME 04106

Note: There will no test sessions in the Bath-Brunswick area until October

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## LOBSTERCON

# 2006



Have you been wondering about QRP? Would like to see how it is done? Would you like to meet some of the QRP community's most respected gurus?

Remarkably, you can find the answers to all these questions and much more — right here in our own backyard. On **July 7-9**, Lobstercon will be held at Thomas Point Beach. This is not a hamfest. Rather, it is a gathering of hams from all over North America who share an interest in QRP. Participants from as far away as California have already signed up.

There is a \$35 registration fee that includes a BBQ lunch and a lobster dinner. For more information, check out the Web site at:

<http://www.wulfden.org/Lobstercon/>

As Bruce (W1ZE) pointed out in the previous issue of *Squelch Tales*, QRP is not just for CW operators. Even if you are only casually curious about QRP, you'll be astonished by what you see at Lobstercon. (e.g., Do New Englanders *really* know how to make BBQ? I will admit that when I lived in Tennessee we knew nothing about lobster.)

The organizers do ask that participants register in advance; they need to know how many lobsters to buy.

Hope to see you there. 73,  
Steve, AA4AK

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## Special Event Station Commemorating the Popham Colony

At the April 27, 2006 meeting of MARA, the following people volunteered to serve on a committee to plan and coordinate the Special Event Station tentatively planned for August 10-13, 2007 in Phippsburg:

Steve, AA4AK, Chair (as previously approved by the MARA membership)

Brian, AA1WI

Bruce, W1ZE

Don, WN1OTV

Lee, NIHOC

Al, N1MHC

I am most grateful to those who have stepped forward on this project.

Please note that this committee's responsibility is planning and coordination. For the actual setup, operation, and dismantling of the station, we are inviting the entire membership of MARA (as well as other interested hams throughout Maine) to participate.

Although final responsibility for planning and decision making rests with the committee, we welcome and appreciate input and comment from anyone who is interested.

I anticipate that the committee will meet and start its planning activities shortly after Field Day 2006.

**73, Steve AA4AK**

## MARA members get on the air for NEQP

By W1ZE

Promptly at 4 PM on May 6<sup>th</sup> I fired up the HF station and started calling "CQ New England QSO Party." Off and on throughout the two day event I devoted several hours to working stations throughout New England and the country. During the contest I managed to work KC7LIF/1 (John KC6TVF at the mic.) in Topsham on phone and Steve AA4AK in Brunswick on CW, they were my first Maine QSOs. I did not work the event through to the end because the last two hours of it I was making and eating dinner. After it was all said and done I tallied up my log sheet. I impressed myself on how well I did for the little time I spent. I made 55 QSOs (20 phone and 35 CW); four foreign countries (Canada, Russia, Germany & Bermuda) and 25 states for a combined score of 2610.

I had fun and maybe next year I will put a bigger effort into it. Thanks to Steve and John for their contacts and one multiplier. 73, Bruce



## A REPORT

### *The Adventures of K1MNW & W1ZE*

For several days prior to the Hosstraders, Bill and Bruce kept their eyes and ears trained on the reports from the weather prognosticators forecast for the May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in mid New Hampshire to see if they would burn the gas and make the pilgrimage across the state line. In the early evening of Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> the forecast was for clear sunny weather for Friday and possible afternoon showers for Saturday. The decision was made to head over Friday and take in an afternoon of flea marketing.

Upon arrival at the fairgrounds the pair entered the grounds and went about 50 feet to a fellow with



a small table with some stereo equipment and two boat anchor pieces of test equipment. Bill took a quick peak at one and asked the seller, "Is that a microwave generator? The reply was "Yep."

Bill, "How high does it go?"

Seller, "about 15 GHz I think."

Bill, "does it work?"

Seller, "it did several years ago, the last time I used it."

Bill, "How much do you want for it?"

Seller "thirty bucks."

Bill, I'LL TAKE IT!"

With Bruce on one side and Bill on the other, back out the gate to the truck they went with the boat anchor treasure under tow. From then on, both managed to spend a few more bucks, mostly on lobster rolls and ice cream cones. They had lots of fun pawing over goodies.

Friday attendance was above average and there seemed to be a lot of folks selling their treasures. Saturday reports on attendance were about average or maybe a bit lower, most likely due to predicted rain and high gas prices, but all in all consider the event a success. Now we start looking forward to October at Hosstraders



## An antenna that will not quit!

By WIZE

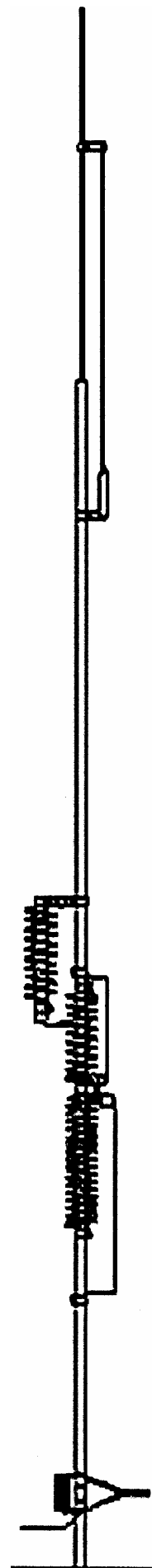
Twenty two years ago the XYL and I just moved into a hillside home in San Bruno, California. When I say hillside I mean the bottom of a cliff. My yard was vertical with almost 100-feet of vertical rise on the back of the house. Now the front of the house looked down the hill with a nice view of San Bruno below and out into San Francisco Bay. I needed an antenna with a small footprint that would get me on the HF bands. After reading all the ad and brag sheets I crossed my fingers and ordered a Butternut HF6V 6-band vertical antenna.

The Brown truck delivered a 4-inch x 4-inch by 5-foot cardboard box to my QTH and within a few days I had assembled this antenna that looked like it had been a collaborative designed effort by Pablo Picasso and Rube Goldberg, but the technical description in the assembly manual made sense to

me. The antenna could be mounted on the ground over a ground radial counterpoise system, or roof or mast mounted with tuned radials. Since I had no yard for an effective ground radial system I opted to mount it on a small TV tripod and use tuned radials. After several trips up and down the ladder I got the puppy tuned on 80, 40, 30, 20, 15 and 10 meters. On 80 meters the 2:1 bandwidth was only about 60 kHz, so I set it to the low end of the phone band +/- 3.8 MHz. On 40 meters it was a bit broader, about 150 kHz so I set it to the 7.175 so I could cover the CW and phone portion and I use the tuner for band edges. On 30 meters the band is so small that it was less than 1.2:1 across the band. Now on 20 I thought I had a problem with the antenna. The SWR was 1:1 across the entire band. I heard lots of activity on the band and could make QSOs, so it was working. 15 meters was almost the same except the SWR at 21.0 MHz was 2:1 and quickly dropped to 1:1 at 21.1 and stayed that way through 21.450 MHz. 10 meters looked just the reverse, 1:1 at 28.0 MHz and didn't start to climb until 29.0 MHz and reached 2:1 at 29.7. Put it this way, on the bands above 10.1 MHz a tuner is not needed.

A year later we moved to the wine country in Petaluma where I mounted the HF6V over a ground screen made of chicken wire. The antenna tuned the same way and performance was excellent for a vertical. In 1992 we QSYed back to West Bath where the antenna again got ground mounted with about 32 buried radials ranging from 17 to 30 feet in length. The SWR plots were still the same 9 years later.

In the second week of April this year, I gut the trusty old HF6V installed at the new Fiddlers Reach QTH. It is a



temporary ground mounted installation with 10 radials all about 30 to 40 feet in lying on the top of the ground. Low and behold the performance continues to be very good even with a reduced radial ground system. I have been using it on 20M QRP PSK and packet plus it worked very well during the New England QSO Party.



W1ZE's HF6V vertical

The Butternut antenna is still being sold with current models adding the WARC bands + 6M. It continues to be one of the best short (30 foot long or less) vertical antennas on the market. Not bad for a box full of aluminum pipe and wire coils. You can download the manual for the HF6Vx from:

[www.bencher.com/hf6vx.html](http://www.bencher.com/hf6vx.html). Checkout: [www.bencher.com/ant\\_select.html](http://www.bencher.com/ant_select.html) and read the two articles titled: *Vertical Antennas, Ad Hype & Technobabble* and *Wither Vertical Antenna Design*, some good information there.

If you are looking for a quality vertical antenna that will get you WAC and DXCC, I recommend you take a second look at the Butternut HF6V and HF6VX vertical, new or used. **73, W1ZE**



## FIND THE WORDS RELATED TO ANTENNAS A PUZZLE

Words can appear forward, backward, up down and diagonally. Good luck and happy hunting.

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G R O U N D B V C W X P
Q U A D U R E W O T I Q
H I Y S T O A F A G H O
G J K W F T M R X E B S
P Y A G I O E S C O S Y
A C L J K R D W O O A Z
R B L A D D E R L I N E
T A M L M N E L O P I D
  
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The hidden words are :

TRAP - GUYWIRE - QUAD - YAGI -  
COAX - LADDERLINE - SWR - LOSS  
ROTOR - DIPOLE - BEAM - GROUND

## IT'S SUMMER AND WE DESERVE IT!

We hope that you and your family enjoy the warmth, sunshine and activities of the season. There are three Ham events this summer for the MARA, The first is Field Day the last full weekend in June. Then we have two bike rides in August. We hope you will come out and support them. Don't forget the sun screen!