



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for Spring 2012



MARA & QCWA to Join Forces in N1R Event

A joint effort between the Pine Tree Chapter (Maine) of the Quarter Century Wireless Association and the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association, the Maine ham community is supporting the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, May 18-19, in Brunswick ME. This column is going to members of QCWA, MARA, and other interested friends. There are four distinct ways you might help:

1. If you are a cancer survivor or caregiver, you are invited to the free survivor/caregiver reception.
2. Licensed hams in the Midcoast Maine area are invited to come and operate Special Event Station, N1R.
3. We are looking for team members for the HAM AND EGGHEADS relay team.
4. We are collecting donations to ACS on behalf of the HAM AND EGGHEADS relay team.

Sign-up is easy. For other details, see pp. 2-5.

To receive the commemorative T-shirt, please sign up for the reception and/or the team by April 9. Please feel free to e-mail this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested. Thanks for your help,

Steve Kerchel, AA4AK



The Relay Team, Easier Than It Looks

Completely separate from the Reception and the N1R operation is the relay team representing the Maine ham radio community. We thank George Szadis, K1GDI, President of QCWA Pine Tree Chapter, for undertaking the responsibility of organizing the HAM AND EGGHEADS team.

We are looking for team participants, and we need about 10 members. You do not need to be a member of MARA or QCWA, or even a licensed ham to sign up for the team. Team members take turns through the night walking around the track.

Although George is grateful for sign-ups any time, it simplifies matters for him greatly if you sign up by April 9. He has a Captain's meeting on April 10, and it is a great help if he has a notion of who he has available for the team. To sign up, click on:

<http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR?pg=entry&fr9825> and then click on the big **SIGN UP** button. On the next page, click on the **JOIN a team>>** button. On the next page use HAM AND EGGHEADS as the team name and click on the **Search for a Team** button. It is self-explanatory from there. The site will ask if you are a survivor or caregiver, and is supposed to automatically register you for the Reception.

There is a \$10 registration fee for relay team members; it does not count as a donation. It covers the organizer's costs (mostly for T-shirts) of including you on

the team. Not surprisingly, the Web site will ask if you wish to donate more money. Feel free to do so, but it is not required. The Web site will also note that team members are requested to raise \$100. That is a *goal*, not a pledge or a promise. Raise as much or as little as you can; let your conscience be your guide. Please be aware that the HAM AND EGGHEADS team has a fundraising goal of \$1000, and be sure that any money that you donate personally or collect from others get credited to the team. For further information, contact the Team Captain:

George Szadis, K1GDI,
55 Lakeshore Drive
Winthrop ME 04364
(207) 377-2182
grszadis@aol.com



Special Event Station N1R

In honor of the Relay for Life, the Ham Radio operators of Midcoast Maine will be running Special Event Station, N1R, from the Brunswick Relay site. The only other Relay Special Event Station is W7C in Cheyenne WY.

The N1R schedule is as follows:

May 18 1900Z – Site setup

2000Z – Expected QRV

May 19 1000Z – QRT

1100Z – Knockdown/Cleanup complete

N1R will operate SSB and CW, and maybe PSK/RTTY, on all HF bands. Frequency will be whatever is open.

Commemorative paper QSLs are available; for QSL information, look up N1R at QRZ.COM. All contacts will be uploaded to LoTW. Real time spots to DX spotting nets are appreciated.

We are looking for operators. If you expect to be in the Midcoast Maine area on May 18-19, you are welcome to come

and operate the station. No charge or donation required. If you would like to participate on site, or need other information, please contact the station coordinator:

Steve Kercel, AA4AK
Trustee for N1TRC/N1R
2 Brian Drive
Brunswick ME 04011
(207) 729-4504
aa4ak.1@gmail.com



I'd Appreciate Two Favors

By Steve, AA4AK

Back in 2010, when Nancy, AA4AK/XYL, was diagnosed with breast cancer, a great many friends asked, “Is there anything I can do for you?” So far, so good: her treatment saved her life, and the cancer has not recurred. Nevertheless, there is something you can do. Please note the invitation above. If you are a survivor (i.e., you were ever diagnosed with cancer but are still alive), or caregiver (even more loosely defined) please come to the reception at 4:00 p.m. 5/18 in Brunswick. The sight of so many survivors and caregivers is a profound encouragement to the other survivors and caregivers.

In addition, all licensed hams are invited to come and take a turn operating Special Event Station, N1R, from 3 p.m., 5/18 to 6 am, 5/19 at the Relay site.

Other favor: The letter in the adjoining column was copied from a recent issue of the Brunswick *Times-Record*. It pretty much speaks for itself. Let's introduce Dalton to ham radio. I encourage all Maine hams to send Dalton their blank QSL card (as I have already done). Remember that the postcard rate is currently 32 cents.

Be my friend

To the editor:

My name is Dalton Spencer, and I am a fifth-grader at Adna Elementary School in Washington state. I have chosen the state of Maine as my topic for a large report.

In doing my research, I discovered several neat coincidences between Maine and the Adna area.

Our Adna Elementary School mascot is the Sea Dog, and I was surprised to learn about the Maine-based baseball team and brewing company with the same name.

Cool, huh?!

Along with my report, I would like to try a little experiment. I hear Maine is full of super friendly people, and I'd like to put that to a test. I'm asking anyone who reads this to mail me something ... anything. It could be a postcard, this newspaper letter, a list of your own Maine favorites or your most recent fingernail clippings.

The sky is the limit!

Please mail your correspondence to:

Dalton Spencer
c/o Adna School District
P.O. Box 118
Adna, WA 98522

I thank you all in advance for the generous responses.

Dalton Spencer
Adna, Wash.



Rookie Roundup, Ideas for Clubs

By Sean Kutzko, KX9X

One of the most common concerns expressed by clubs is they want to help their new hams get on the air and learn HF operating skills. Field Day is a great opportunity – and many hams made their first HF QSOs on that last full weekend of June – but it only comes once a year. That's where the ARRL Rookie Roundup [hyperlink to:

www.arrl.org/rookie-roundup] comes in.

The Rookie Roundup is a contest especially for new hams – those first licensed in the current and preceding two

years – and it occurs three times a year on the third Sunday of April, August, and December. Each contest uses a different mode. April is the SSB contest, RTTY is featured in August, and December is a Morse code contest.

April QST includes a feature on the Rookie Roundup – this is a great opportunity to open up the club station or arrange for a member to host a multioperator effort as described below. Now there are a total of six ARRL HF contests for newcomers every year: Field Day, three Rookie Roundups, and two School Club Roundups. (Eight, if you count Kid's Days in January and June.) Take advantage of these opportunities to get your new hams on HF!

Multioperator Category

Many clubs asked about adding a category for multiple rookies sharing a single station – such as a club station. Beginning with the April 2012 contest, a multioperator category has been added! Any number of rookies can participate – assisted by any number of non-rookie helpers and Elmers – as long as a single transmitter is used. This is a bit different than the usual Multioperator, Single Transmitter category which allows a second radio to make contacts. Certainly, the rookies not making contacts can tune around and find other stations to work – the contacts have to be made from one operating position, though.

There are no restrictions on what type of station may be used, the number of rookies, the number of helpers and mentors – it's very much like Field Day or a regular contest multioperator effort. You can go fast or slow, call CQ or search and pounce. This is not only a great, low-pressure way for newcomers to try HF operating and get comfortable with a microphone, key, or keyboard but it's

great training for Field Day, too! These new operators will be able to contribute at a much higher level having had experience in the Rookie Roundup.

Team Competition

Another requested feature for Rookie Roundup was to support team competition. In response, we added a competition for five single-operator Rookie category entrants to add their scores together to create a single team score. A Rookie's individual score will still be listed separately so now they can compete in two ways at once! Note that multioperator entries can not be included in team scores.

A team registration form will be available on the ARRL Rookie Roundup website before the contest – watch the website for information on how to submit and deadlines for submitting team information.

Contest Ideas

In no particular order, here are some ideas to jump-start your club's thinking about operating in Rookie Roundup – use one of these ideas or make up your own! As the note at the end of this article suggests, be sure to let us know about your ideas, too.

- ü Break out the club's emergency communications gear and set up an HF station
- ü Create two teams of rookies and have a competition within your club
- ü Challenge another local club to a multioperator competition
- ü Combine Rookie Roundup with a post-contest pizza feed to share stories
- ü Pair up individual mentors and rookies and form teams to combine scores
- ü Set up a “mini-Field Day” station in a public place for some ham radio publicity
- ü Invite non-hams to participate as spectators

ü Have young rookies challenge the older rookies

ü Award prizes for most contacts made, most states contacted, most rookies worked, etc

You'll find plenty of other ideas to try – have fun with the contest!

Other Notes

Since 6 meters did not turn out to attract much attention, we dropped 6 meters from the Rookie Roundup effective with the April 2012 contest. We will continue to publish the results of Rookie Roundup during the same week of the contest. Score submissions will still be required 72 hours after the contest.

N1MM Logger (hyperlink to n1mm.com) remains the only standalone package supporting Rookie Roundup along with the online logging website, In The Log (hyperlink to inthelog.com). You may also log on paper log sheets – a downloadable log sheet is available on the contest's website.

Tell Us About It!

If you do host or enable a Rookie Roundup operation, be sure to let everyone know by taking photos and posting them to the ARRL Soapbox web page (hyperlink to www.arrl.org/soapbox). Send a copy of your story to contests@arrl.org, as well. Success breeds success – by publishing your account, other clubs will be encouraged to help their own rookies “break into the big leagues”, too!

73, Sean Kutzko, KX9X
Contest Branch Manager

ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio™
225 Main St.
Newington, CT 06111
860-594-0232
skutzko@arrl.org





YOU MIGHT BE A REDNECK DXER!

by AB0X, The Kansas City DX Bulletin

Remember to say the following phrase before each statement.

"You might be a Redneck DXer" if.

- ..You call your ex-spouses "deletions."
- ..You have used a piece of rope through your belt loops as a climbing belt.
- ..You pack for the Dayton trip in Wal-Mart sacks.
- ..Your DX Club holds meetings down at the Waffle House.
- ..You have ever operated 20 Meters from your Bass boat.
- ..You kill a Copperhead every time you cut grass/weeds around the tower.
- ..You have taken down a broken antenna with a shotgun.
- ..You didn't operate Field Day because you were building a fireworks stand.
- ..You have ever shot at a deer out of the window in your radio shack.
- ..Your DX club has Carp fishing, noodling or coon hunting on the agenda for Field Day activities.
- ..You can tune your 80-Meter vertical by spraying RoundUp around its base!
- ..Your radio club has "club overalls" instead of club shirts.
- ..You have 3 HF transceivers duct-taped on top of each other, and only the top one works.
- ..Your DX club's constitution has the term "Ifyaontto" in the By-laws.
(Ex.-President can form committees Ifyaontto.)

..Your radio club had an article in its newsletter on "Grounding Double Wides."

..You have ever sent your XYL out in the dark to check an antenna for you.

..Your Radio club had a fist fight in the parking lot after the last club election.

..You can chew tobacco and work Phone Sweepstakes at the same time.

..Your DX club motto is "Git'R Done!"

..You tell people that the empty 807 cans in the back of your pick up help the groundplane on your 2 Meter antenna.

..You shot at a Bugcatcher of a W1 mobile who passed you on I-95!

..You have never been too drunk to climb a tower.

..You solicited donations from Budweiser and Skoal for a club DXpedition.

..Your DX club Treasurer has accepted bullets instead of money for dues.

..Your DX/Contest club has 3 contest teams: The Fords, Chevys and Dodges.

..Your DX club President was late for the last meeting, because he had to stop and pull some guy out of the ditch on the way.

..Your DX Club petitioned the ARRL DX Advisory Committee for separate country status for the Ozarks.

..You can fish, drink beer and talk on the club repeater all at the same time.

..You have bird dogs named Tromelin and Glorioso.

Provided by Larry, W1DYJ



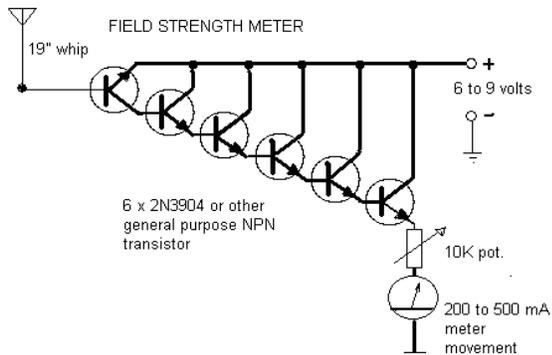
Simple but sensitive Field Strength Meter

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

A hand device to have around the shack or workbench is a field strength meter, especially one that can detect something less than a ten-watt transmitter ten feet away. The following simple circuit uses simple parts available at flea markets and

yes, old Radio Shack. The heart of the circuit is six cascading NPN general purpose transistors such as a 2N3904, KC509 or other common NPN transistors. The other parts are a 10K pot (variable resistor) and a 200 to 500mA meter movement.

The FS circuit can be powered by any



battery level from 6 to 9 volts. How you package it is up to you, but a small PC board and a small plastic project box from the RS store makes for a good start. A 19-inch spike makes a good sense antenna and should allow for acceptable pick-up of local RF signals.

Break out the old soldering iron and build something. It's a lot of fun.

73, Bruce W1ZE



NEQP

is just around the corner

The weekend of May 5th and 6th is always a busy weekend. Starting Friday the 4th, the NEAR-Fest Hamfest/flea market will run through mid day on the 5th. You will have enough time to get back to your QTH and fire up the rig and represent Maine (or your New England State/County) in The New England QSO Party.

The MARA's own Steve Kerchel, AA4AK took Maine/Cumberland County in the QRP category in 2011. In past

years Bruce has been top-dog in Sagadahoc County and in 2006 took 2nd place for the State of Maine.

The following are the rules for the 2012 NEQP

Object: To contact as many New England stations (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont) in as many New England counties as possible on 80-40-20-15-10m. (New England stations work anyone)

Date: First full weekend of May.

Contest Period: 2000Z Saturday until 0500Z Sunday (4pm EDT Saturday until 1am EDT Sunday) and 1300Z Sunday until 2400Z Sunday (9am EDT Sunday until 8pm EDT Sunday).

Categories: Single-operator high power, low power(150w or less) and QRP(5w or less) categories, plus multi-operator, single transmitter. Same four categories for mobiles. Single-operator stations using assistance during the contest (packet or Internet spotting nets, etc.) will compete in the multi-single category.

Contest Exchange: Send signal report and state/province (DX stations send signal report and "DX"). New England stations send signal report, county and state.

Valid Contact: Work New England stations once per band/mode. New England stations work anyone(and must copy the county for New England stations worked. CW contacts must not be made in the phone band segments. Mobiles that change counties are considered to be new stations, and can be worked for both multiplier and QSO Point credit. County line QSOs should be logged as two separate QSOs. Crossmode, crossband and repeater QSOs are not permitted.

QSO Points: Count one point per phone QSO, two points per CW (includes digital modes)QSO.

Multiplier: Stations outside of New England use [counties](#) as multipliers for a total of 67 (CT/8 MA/14 ME/16 NH/10 RI/5 VT/14). New England stations use states(50)(Count DC as MD), Canadian provinces(14) and DXCC countries as multipliers.

Scoring: Total score is QSO points times the multiplier. Mobiles count QSO points per county and multipliers from all counties (counted once).

Suggested frequencies: CW - 3540 7035 14040 21040 28040, SSB - 3850 7280 14280 21380 28380. ** Now that the broadcast stations are mostly out of 7125-7200, try 7180 on 40m SSB.**

Reporting: Logs should indicate times in UTC, bands, modes, calls and required contest exchange. All stations include your club's name in the log header or summary. Entries must be submitted within 30 days



and sent to NEQP, P.O.Box J, West Suffield CT 06093 or via e-mail to logs@neqp.org (Cabrillo format preferred).

Awards: Certificates will be awarded to the top scorers (25 QSO minimum) in each New England county, U.S. state, Canadian province and DXCC country. A number of special plaques will also be awarded to top scorers (check the Web site for a current list).

More information: The New England QSO Party Web site is at:

<http://www.neqp.org>.

Check there for information on planned fixed-station and mobile activity from New England counties, contest software information, county abbreviations, plaques to be awarded and information on New England state county awards. NEQP results will be posted on the web

site when they are complete. Questions



can be addressed to info@neqp.org.

NEAR-Fest XI

The New England Amateur Radio Festival

Truly a North American Radio Event Friday May 4th and Saturday May 5th, 2012 from 0900 Friday through 1500 Saturday, Deerfield Fairgrounds - Deerfield NH, USA. For a schedule of events and advanced tickets:

<http://www.near-fest.com/>

PLEASE NOTE: If you plan to be camping/tenting, look for "Camping and Overnight Information" or "Overnight Camping Fees" on the Forum. There have been changes in the rates.

POC = John M. Goran, NCE

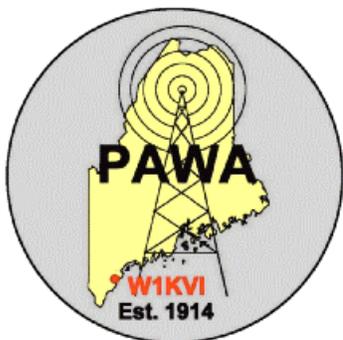
74 Webster Rd.

Freeport ME 04032-6228

207.865.0554 or 207.232.4892 cell

ARS K1JJS, ARRL Maine Section
Emergency Coordinator (SEC)





**PORTLAND
AMATEUR WIRELESS
ASSOCIATION
(PAWA)
HAMFEST & FLEAMARKET
April 21st**



Start Date: 04/21/2012
End Date: 04/21/2012
Location: Stewart Morrill America Legion
Post #35
413 Broadway
South Portland, ME 04106
Website: <http://www.pawa-maine.org>
Sponsor: Portland Amateur Wireless
Association
Type: ARRL Hamfest
Talk-In: 147.36
Public Contact: John Bogner , W1JLB
90 Wayside Road Portland, ME 04102
Phone: 207-776-2288
Email: jbogner1@maine.rr.com

**MARA/Midcoast CERT-ARES
provide communications for
Run the Runway**



On the chilly and windy morning of April 7th a skilled and competent communications team organized by Sagadahoc County EC Harry McNelley-(N1TTT) and assisted by Maine EC John Goran-(K1JJS) gathered a good group of volunteers at Hanger-5 at the old BNAS facility to support a charity run event around the old Naval Station's airfield. The communications team consisted of Marjorie-(KX1I), John-(N1OIG), Bruce-(W1ZE), Rex (K1PN) and his two sons Chris-(KB1JBG)) and No.2 son soon to be a ham. K1JJS and N1TTT manned Net Control at Hanger-5.



A note from the editor

As all of you know we have gone several months without a newsletter. And you all know the reason why. I was soaking up the sun and warmer weather in southern California (San Diego/Poway area). Now that I have returned to WI-land I hope to be on time with the newsletters starting with the June issue.

As I have indicated before I need articles and input for future issues. So, if you have something you would like to share please forward it to me at W1ZE@ARRL.NET.

Hope all of you have a great spring season.

73, Bruce Randall, W1ZE

