



Squelch Tales



Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association Newsletter for April 2008

Maine State ARRL Convention & Andy Hamfest

The Androscoggin Amateur Radio Club (AARC) presents the 2008 ARRL Maine State Convention and Hamfest at the Ramada Convention Center, 490 Pleasant Street, Lewiston, Maine on Friday April 4th, from 1900 (7pm) to 2100 (9pm), and Saturday April 5th from 0800 (8am) until noon.

Friday Night: April, 4th the AARC has scheduled many interesting talks and forums starting at 7pm through 8pm. The ARRL will have League officials there to talk about the latest news on Amateur Radio, and have a Q&A session. Other talks will relate to Packet, Digital Modes, etc. All talks and forums are free.

Saturday Morning: April 5th 8am until 10am and from 11am until noon talks and forums will continue. The Hamfest will start at 8am and end at noon with the awarding of the door prize.

Admission: is \$6 for 18 years old and older. Attendees under 18 are free.

VE Exams will start at 12:15pm Saturday.

Accommodations: Again the Ramada Inn is offering double and single occupancy for \$64.90 (+ tax) per day.

The Ramada offers a heated pool, sauna and Jacuzzi. For reservations call (207) 784-2331. Mention "Androscoggin Hamfest or ARRL Convention.

For more info on this event, contact Ivan Lazure, N1OXA at (207) 784-0350 or at **N1OXA@arrl.net**.



NEAR-Fest just a month away

The New England Amateur Radio Festival ("NEAR-Fest") will take place Friday and Saturday, **May 4 and 5**, at the Deerfield, New Hampshire, Fairgrounds, on Route-43 approximately 15 miles northeast of Manchester.



NEAR-Fest will continue the tradition begun years ago by the now-discontinued "Hosstraders Tailgate swap-fest" -- a New England tradition for more than 30 years. NEAR-Fest will take place spring and fall at the original Hosstraders location. Gates open Friday at 9 AM.

Tickets are \$10 per person (\$5 after 3 PM Friday) and \$10 per vehicle into the flea market. Commercial vendors will also be

on site. There are no sellers' fees or space limitations, and there's ample free parking outside the flea market. There's no charge for camping, but RV hookups (power and water) are \$30. Tickets and vehicle passes are available in advance. Check the NEAR-Fest Web site for additional information and updates.

The fall NEAR-Fest will take place on Friday and Saturday, October 12-13.



WA1WOK to speak at MARA Meeting.

The March 27th MARA meeting guest speaker will be Herbert "CAL" Calvitto. You may know Cal if you have ever stopped into the candy store (HRO) in Salem, NH to twist the knobs on a new radio or two.

Cal is not just a sales rep. at the store, he is also the Maine Air Force MARS director. He has consented to give a dual topic talk at the meeting. One on Air Force Mars here in Maine and the second topic will be on D-Star. Cal is involved with the D-Star repeater going up on Mount Hope in Sanford and able to let us all know the features of D-Star VHF/UHF digital voice and data communications.



Two MARA members to hold forums at Maine Convention

As of this writing it looks like two MARA members will be giving talks and forums at the ARRL Maine State Convention in Lewiston on April 4th and 5th.

Bruce Randall, W1ZE has been asked to do a forum on the old days of Ham Radio. He is enlisting the help of some Maine hams that are knowledgeable of the golden days of Ham Radio in Maine. This forum is slated for Friday evening.

DR. Steve Kerchel, AA4AK will do a talk on "The Amazing Half-Square" antenna on Saturday morning. Steve always does an outstanding job of show and tell.



Brunswick MS Walk, Communicators wanted

The annual MS walk will take place on Saturday, April 12th starting at the Brunswick Middle School. We need communicators to man the route that winds its way through the streets of Brunswick and ends back at the middle school. We need to gather at the school at 7:30am. The event is usually finished by or before noon.

If you plan to help and use a HT, make sure your battery is fully charged and/or you have a backup battery.

To volunteer and/or get additional information about the event, Contact Lee Tribou, N1HOC at 443-4194 or email at: **sionaann@gwi.net**



Lefty to hold Six-Meter Forum

The MARA is fortunate to have Maine's six meter big gun, Paul "Lefty" Clement from Turner, Maine address the attendees of this month's (April 24th) meeting. His knowledge of the low end of the VHF spectrum (50MHz) is extensive and



he is always happy to transfer some knowledge our way. He has inspired many a Maine ham to get their feet wet trying out the Magic Band. Come early and get a good seat.



News from Newington

STATION LOCATOR SERVICE NEW FOR FIELD DAY 2008

This year, for the first time, the ARRL has put together a Station Locator to help amateurs or those interested in Amateur Radio find a Field Day site near them. According to ARRL Field Day Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, many amateurs have been asking for something like this for many years.

If your group would like to be a part of the Station Locator Service, it's easy to get started. Just go to the Field Day Station Locator Web site <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/announcements/fd/locator.php>> and follow the instructions.

To help you out, Henderson has prepared a FAQ for the Field Day Station Locator.

Q) How does our Field Day site get listed on the map?

A) A club official or Field Day Chairman needs to go to the Web site. Once there, click on the link for "Add a Station" and follow the instructions.

Q) I put in the name of the park where we will be holding Field Day but got the message that the program can't find it. What do I do?

A) You should use a street address for the location. Unfortunately, the mapping program doesn't have a 100 percent complete database of park names and public site names. You may use a latitude/longitude – enter the values separated by a comma (e.g. 42.345N, 85.445W) and set the city to NONE).

Q) I put in a street address but the map locator put me in a wrong location on the street. What do I do?

A) While in the data input or edit screen, use your cursor to move the red "pin" to the correct location on the map.

Q) What if I put in the wrong information or something about our Field Day operation changes?

A) The person who input the data will be able to edit the entry. Simply follow the "Add a Station" link and then select

"Edit this entry" next to the one to correct.

Q) I tried to enter my club's information, but I was denied access. What do I do?

A) To help ensure that only one person is managing a club's entry, you must be logged onto the site with your ARRL member ID and password. If you are not an ARRL member, ask a member of the club who is to be responsible for adding the club's information to the site.

Q) I am looking for a Field Day operation to attend. How do I use the site?

A) Begin by typing in the city and state where you would like to search, something like "Brooklyn, New York" or "Anaheim, California."

Depending on the geographic location, the map will take you to the area you list. If a Field Day operation has been registered for that general area, a red "pin" will show on the map. If you click on the red pin, the details for that site will appear in the box on the right hand side of the screen. If you don't see a red pin, scroll out a level to find one near the location you listed. It is also possible to drag the map to other areas by holding down the left button on your mouse and then moving the map around. You can also scroll in and out using the +/- buttons on the left side of the map. You may also zoom in and center by double-clicking with the mouse near the red pin.

Q) I found a red pin near where I will be. Where do I find the information on that site?

A) Each entry has a contact person with either an e-mail address or phone number who should be able to help you. It

will appear on the right side of the box when you click on the red pin for an entry.

Q) I found an entry with wrong information. What should I do?

A) Please contact the person whose name appears as the contact person for that site. ARRL HQ does not have detailed information on the site.

Q) I want to check on our club's information. What should I do?

A) Type in the call sign that will be used and you will be taken to the location and club information. ARRL Field Day will be held June 28-29. For more information, please visit the Field Day Web page <<http://www.arrl.org/fieldday>>.



TECKY TALK

Tech Committee Report

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

Winter hopefully is coming to a close and thoughts of to-do projects on the hill are being put into a list so the tech committee can tackle them one at a time. Some of the projects are long overdue but needed good weather to get started.

The top priority item is to get a whole house MOV installed on the repeater building power panel to protect our repeaters from lightning spikes coming up the power lines.

Some of the other items that need to be addressed are:

- Install the tower outrigger arm to support the new Diamond two-meter antenna for the BRUNS packet node.
- Inspect the 2-meter and 70-cMeter repeater antennas to make sure everything is tight and dry.

- Continue on the repeater building clean up and clean out to make room for a club radio station.
- Look into replacing the old GE MVP 444.4 repeater transmitter and receiver with Airatron radios so as to ease-up maintenance and increase reliability.
- Clean up the wiring rats-nest in the repeater cabinet and standardize connectors.
- Net (put on frequency) the two repeater transmitters and receivers frequencies.
- See what is needed to make the KS1R-10 APRS node function properly. There is an RFI issue there.

That should be enough to keep the members of the technical committee out of the bars and pool halls for a few days. **THINK SPRING!**



Assoc. Exec. Board & Officers
President = Harry McNelley N1TTT
V. President = Michelle Briggs KC7LIF
Treasurer = Marjorie Turner KX1I
Secretary = Steve Kercel AA4AK
Exec. Board = Lee Tribou N1HOC
Exec. Board = Jim McIrvin N1IPA
Exec. Board = John Briggs KC6TVF

KS1R Trustee = Bruce Randall W1ZE



Its Mud Season.
Time to get those
antenna radials and
ground rods in the
ground.