



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for December 2016



MARA 2016 Years End dinner set for December Tenth

As in previous years the MARA's 2016 Years End dinner will take place at the Kennebec Tavern on the waterfront in Bath at 119 Commercial Street across from Library Park.



The gathering will start at 6:00 pm on Saturday, December 10th. Attendees will order what they want from the restaurant menu and be responsible for their own order. For more info on the tavern's menu, go to:

www.kennebectavern.com/nenu/

Come, have a good time with your MARA friends and see who is the recipient of the MARA Ham of the Year award. Hope to see you there and bring the better half or a friend.



Executive Board members selected

At the October 27th MARA meeting four members were elected to serve a two year term on the Associations Executive Board. What made it easy was the four selectees were the four outgoing members who volunteered to serve again, and they were:

Harry McNelley, N1TTT (Brunswick)
Jim McIrvin, N1IPA (Topsham)
Don Wakeman, KA1WAL (Durham)
Rex Thornton, K1PN (Auburn)

They will join the remaining board members:

Dan Lindsley, N5AGG (Brunswick)
Marjorie Turner, KX1I (Brunswick)
Normand Bosse, W1MKD (E. Boothbay)

We are sure the above good folks will continue to do a great job for our organization.



The controversies over ARRL farming out Repeater Guide addressed by NESMC

By Bob DeMattia, K1IW

At our New England Specreum Management Council board meeting on Thursday evening, the NESMC board voted to participate in the ARRL repeater directory for 2017.

Although we know that many coordinators are objecting to the new system, NESMC felt it would be fair to at least give it a try for the first year. We will review our decision again prior to the 2018 directory.

A couple of factors lead to this decision:

After discussions with multiple people at the league, it became clear that the league's decision is final, at least for this year. Although we still believe

the repeater directory quality will suffer, NESMC will do its part to make at least our four-state region as accurate as possible.

Our primary concern was the limitations we have as to use of data from our privacy policy. RFFinder is acting as the league's agent. The owner of RFFinder.com has assured us that the data we provide for the league's repeater directory will be used only for the directory and not for RFFinder's electronic database.

As a courtesy to our members, those who wish to have their listings included on the RFFinder site may choose to Opt-In to the RFFinder database. To do this, log in to your account and select the new "OPT-IN" box near the top of the page.

Those who do not check the box, or those who do nothing will not have their repeater data included on the RFFinder website.

As always, repeaters marked as "Private" will not appear in any public listing.

Finally, I might as well remind everyone that the publication deadline for the ARRL repeater directory in 2017. Please take this opportunity to review the data in our system for accuracy.

73,
Bob - K1IW



Report from W6-land

by Bruce, W1ZE/6

For those of you that tracked Donna and yours truly across country on APRS you know by now that we arrived safely on Sunday, November the 13th after 13 days on the road .

Towing the 5th wheel trailer across country did not lend itself to safe ham radio while mobile but I did make a couple HF QSO while parked. Our first day of travel I was able to check back into The Maine Seagull net from southern Connecticut. On November 11th, when we were in Monument Valley, UT/AZ and uncoupled from the trailer I made a ten meter FM QSO with PY3DX in Brazil while checking out the great views in the Navajo park. I did make a couple 2-meter (146.52) short QSO with fellow interstate travelers but that was the extent of my ham radio activities.

After firing up the W1ZE/6 station in Poway I have made a total of two QSO as of this writing.

My first QSO was by accident with a chap in northern California on 40 meter USB. I was testing my audio level (ALC) when a chap came back gave a 59 report and said my audio sounded pretty good. In the late morning of November 18th I heard John, K1ESE in Maine calling CQ on 20 CW. I gave him a quick call and he came right back. I was using my FT-450D and the 60-foot long end fed wire antenna. We had a nice short QSO and he said he would pass my regards to the gang on the Seagull net that evening.

I started on this month's newsletter before we headed west. I will continue to put out a newsletter and hope to have enough content to make it interesting to read. Readers help in providing content for this newsletter would be greatly appreciated. Send me your input even if it is just to sell an old rig. - 73, Bruce.



FIELD DAY 2016, another success story for the KS1R team

You may already know this but as in these past years the MARA's KS1R Field Day team made us proud. Under the guidance and efforts of DR Steve Kercel, AA4AK the KS1R team placed number ONE in Maine, number ONE in New England and number TEN nationally in the 1F category. In addition KS1R was No. 14 in all categories" in Maine.

This year's setup deviated from past years because KS1R was almost 100% digital, data and RTTY modes. The HF bands to be charitable were darn near dead. So the late night effort was replaced with sleep at home and restarted again at breakfast time. Well done!



THE USE AND MISUSE OF LINGO IN HAM RADIO

By Geoffery Haines, N1GY

A point was raised by another operator last night about the proper terms to use on the amateur bands. The amateur bands are an inclusive area and a certain amount of freedom to use individual examples of terminology has always been a hallmark of the hobby. Having said that, however, there are good reasons to use a certain amount of standardized terms. Particularly when we are participating in disaster communications, this concept becomes vital. Even in non-emergency communications, however, the use of standard phrases makes the information we are attempting to convey easier to understand.

First, and foremost in my mind, is CLARITY. We want our message, be it a call sign, a name, or a location to be clearly heard and understood by the other operator. If we use terms or phonetics of our own design, we risk having the person listening to us get confused or get the message incorrect. For this reason alone we as operators should learn, use and stick to the accepted phonetic alphabet as published by the ARRL and other radio organizations.

Second, the use of terms peculiar to another service, such as "Personal" when we mean "Name", mark us to other operators, sometimes unfairly. Here again, the ARRL has stated in many publications, that the use of misunderstood "lingo" is poor operating practice. Even the ubiquitous "Q" signs of CW are not appropriate to phone operations. Their original purpose, as a kind of shorthand that shortened the time necessary to send a message in Morse Code, still exists, but ONLY in Morse Code. The use of QRM or QTH may be very frequent on the voice ham bands since most operators know the meaning of these terms, but a few

operators insist on using arcane Q signs. All this does is confuse the other operator. If these individuals are doing this to make it appear that they are super hams, they should stop. All it does is irritate the rest of us, and slow the passage of information down due to having to repeat the term in plain English. Why not do it in plain English to begin with.

Third, as the operator who brought the subject up noted, we are under observation very often. Government agencies, relief organizations, law enforcement, fire and EMS entities are the very clients we serve when disaster strikes. We, as radio operators, must be cognizant of how we present ourselves to these agencies. That means being as professional as we can while we do our "thing", Radio Communications.

As a reminder to all amateur radio operators, here is the phonetic alphabet in its proper form, courtesy of the ARRL. ALFA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, DELTA, ECHO, FOXTROT, GOLF, HOTEL, INDIA, JULIET, KILO, LIMA, MIKE, NOVEMBER, OSCAR, PAPA, QUEBEC, ROMEO, SIERRA, TANGO, UNIFORM, VICTOR, WHISKEY, X-RAY, YANKEE, ZULU.

If you are telling someone your name, it is your NAME, not your "personal". If you are telling someone where you live, it is your address, not your QTH, unless of course, you are using Morse Code. Same thing for QRU. You are asking if the other operator has anything for you so just say that. Don't make the other operator puzzle around the shack trying to figure out what the heck QRU means. Same thing for QRL, QRO, QTB etc. These terms are appropriate for Morse Code, not voice communications on FM. Please do NOT use the "10-code" on amateur radio. Not even 10-4! Q-signs or codes have their place in the CW mode, but they are not really appropriate for voice communications. By the way, a frequently heard term on amateur radio is the term "73". Note please that I said "73", not 73's. The term which is shorthand for "best regards" per the latest definition from the ARRL originated with telegraphers in the 19th

century. It should not be pluralized. It is "73".

OK, I have made a pest out of myself for long enough. Just remember, the purpose is to get the message across clearly, not to confound us by trying too hard to sound like an old hand. When in doubt, just say it in plain English, that usually works best.

73, Geoff, N1GY



The MARA's Officers, Exec. Board & KS1R Trustee want to wish all you Squelch Tales readers a wonderful Holiday season and hope all of you have a very happy and healthy 2017.



