

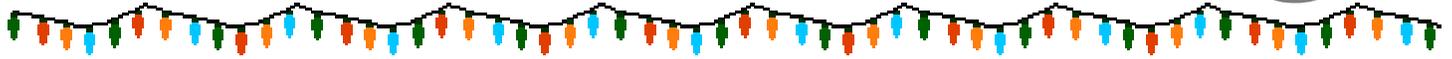


Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for December 2009

Seasons Greetings



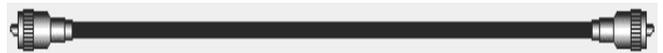
MARA Says good by to three friends

As reported in the last issue of Squelch Tales, three valued members of the Association are QSYing to W5 land as a result of the Brunswick Naval Air Station closure. At the October meeting, MARA President Harry McNelley, N1TTT presented the three with honorary lifetime memberships in the Association.



In the above photos Paul Cecil (KA5FPT) John Briggs (KC6TVF) and Michele Briggs (W7LIF) receive their honorary MARA membership certificates from Harry McNelley.

After the presentation everyone in attendance got to piece of the trios QSY cake, baked and decorated by N1OIG's XYL



A Snowbird's letter

From Pete Russell, K1MJP, 10-29-09

Seasons greetings from hot and sunny Florida. High temperature records are still being set. We had a cold front for about 3 days in October and it what a joy.

Here are some interesting web-sites I discovered that you might want to checkout

- **Thinking of putting up antenna for digital TV?**

Go to: www.antennaweb.org put in your zip code, click on "continue". You will have to jockey the map, i.e. N-E-S-W, to find your exact location. You can zoom in and out as well. Once found; click on your spot to move the red star there. Click on "continue" and a list of TV stations will pop up with their channels, compass headings and distances from your location. In some cases, you might need a rotor to move the antenna to the correct heading. I found an UHF antenna that picks up the HDTV VHF TV stations fine. Consider using a preamplifier as well. Wal-Mart has a Phillips brand flat-panel UHF antenna with a built in preamplifier for \$38, which may be pole mounted, attached to a railing, or side mounted to an exterior wall surface.

- www.fcc.gov/eb is the location of the FCC's Enforcement Bureau. Once there, look on the left column, scroll down to the word "amateur", and there find RFI complaints, violations, and call letters. Call letters you say? Yes, folks who checked the box saying I really had those call letters before when they did not or they checked the wrong box. The FCC is too polite, saying, "We checked our records and cannot find where you had that call letter before, so you have to pick another." Also, you can look at the broadcast violations, such as pirates (bootleg stations usually on the FM band), and land mobile SNAFU's. Poke around, interesting reading.

- <http://cw.dimebank.com>: 8080 lets you practice coping CW on the Internet. It consists of a CNN breaking news feed fed to twitter that is converted to Morse code. Once on the home page, click on the speed you would like to receive. Slow speeds start at 7 then works up to 10, 13, 15 and higher speeds. Windows Media Player is used and it worked well, although there were some "dropouts" over the Internet but

hey that is like QRM or fading on the real bands, so you fill in the gaps.

- www.smeter.net has a wealth of information. In the upper right column, third item down, On-line receivers. Click there and you can listen to remote receivers around the country.

- **Bruce Randall, W1ZE gave a site, www.stevemorse.org/jcal/latlon.php** to find geographical coordinates by just knowing a street address. Several processing methods are used so you get at least 3 coordinates to pick from. What I did was to look at them all and interpolate. If you need extreme accuracy, get a GPS device and stand at the location you need coordinates for.



The above picture is of a Collins KW-1 transmitter. It is owned by N4LEM in Cocoa, FL. where I do voluntary work on ham gear and broadcast equipment. Go to: www.isquare.com, Click in the lower left column, "Are you an amateur radio operator?" Up will come WOYVA's collection of 6 of these rigs. There were only 150 of them made, WA1IE, Chuck in Waterville has one. Runs 1 KW input. **73's, Pete K1MJP**



W1AW 2009/2010 Winter Operating Schedule

Morning Schedule:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Days</u>
1400 UTC (9 AM EST)	CWs	Wed, Fri
1400 UTC (9 AM EST)	CWf	Tue, Thu

Daily Visitor Operating Hours:

1500 UTC to 1700 UTC - (10 AM to 12 PM EST)
1800 UTC to 2045 UTC - (1 PM to 3:45 PM EST)
(Station closed 1700 to 1800 UTC (12 PM to 1 PM EST))

Afternoon/Evening Schedule:

2100 UTC (4 PM EST)	CWf	Mon, Wed, Fri
2100 " "	CWs	Tue, Thu
2200 " (5 PM EST)	CWb	Daily
2300 " (6 PM EST)	RTTY	Daily
0000 " (7 PM EST)	CWs	Mon, Wed, Fri
0000 " "	CWf	Tue, Thu
0100 " (8 PM EST)	CWb	Daily
0200 " (9 PM EST)	RTTY	Daily
0245 " (9:45 PM EST)	VOICE	Daily
0300 " (10 PM EST)	CWf	Mon, Wed, Fri
0300 " "	CWs	Tue, Thu
0400 " (11 PM EST)	CWb	Daily

Frequencies (MHz)

CW: 1.8025 3.5815 7.0475 14.0475 18.0975 21.0675 28.0675 147.555

RTTY: - 3.5975 7.095 14.095 18.1025 21.095 28.095 147.555

VOICE: 1.855 3.990 7.290 14.290 18.160 21.390 28.590 147.555

Notes:

CWs = Morse Code practice (slow) = 5, 7.5, 10, 13 and 15 WPM

CWf = Morse Code practice (fast) = 35, 30, 25, 20, 15, 13 and 10 WPM

CWb = Morse Code Bulletins = 18 WPM

CW frequencies include code practices, Qualifying Runs and CW bulletins.

RTTY = Teleprinter Bulletins = BAUDOT (45.45 baud), BPSK31 and MFSK16 sent only as time allows.

Code practice texts are from QST, and the source of each practice is given at the beginning of each practice and at the beginning of alternate speeds.

On Tuesdays and Fridays at 2330 UTC (6:30 PM EST), Keplerian Elements for active amateur satellites are sent on the regular teleprinter frequencies.

A DX bulletin replaces or is added to the regular bulletins between 0100 UTC (8 PM EST) Thursdays and 0100 UTC (8 PM EST) Fridays.

In a communications emergency, monitor W1AW for special bulletins as follows: Voice on the hour, Teleprinter at 15 minutes past the hour, and CW on the half hour.



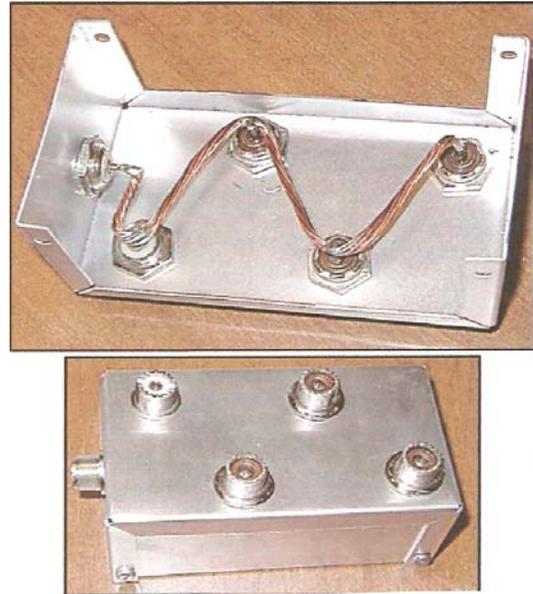
A Non-antenna Switch

By Bill Crowley, K1NIT, Farmingdale, ME

Last fall, just as the snow began to fly, the remote antenna switch at the top of my tower failed (When else do things at the top of the tower fail? Certainly not on a warm summer day!). I was then faced with the choice of climbing up in the wind and cold, or waiting until spring arrived to retrieve the switch and repair or replace it. Luckily I still had a vertical that would keep me on the air, and I chose the latter.

This extended time period also gave me a chance to explore the options. I could try to repair the unit or replace it if it was not repairable, or I could replace it right from the beginning. And then another idea began shaping up. My array consists of a multiband yagi with separate feeds for 40 meters and 20 through 10, and a 75-meter loaded vertical (that uses the tower as a counterpoise) at the very top. In other words, I only had one antenna per band. So why did I need a switch?

Feeding all of the antennas in parallel, only the resonant antenna would be active, and the rest would essentially be nonexistent as far as the RF was concerned. So for the solution to the great antenna switch caper, I built a box that would do just that. Radio Shack still carries an aluminum “project enclosure” (part number 270-238, \$2.99) that was just the right size. The silver-plated SO-239 connectors came from **Kits‘N’Pieces** (Ken Knox, 173 Somerset Ave. Pittsfield, ME 04967, 207-416-9499, N1JRO@arrl.net), part number JSO-239H, +/- \$3.00 each), although a lesser quality socket is also available from Radio Shack for about the same price.



You can see the end result in the photo. The input is on the end, and you can add as many outputs as you need, but it’s a good idea to add an extra for that unforeseen future skywire project. The sockets are wired in parallel (all the center conductors connected) with heavy gauge wire. One note on the layout: the sockets were offset from each other to facilitate weatherproofing the connectors. It’s a lot easier to apply sealing tape or compound when you don’t have another connector just an inch away.

Now the good part: The new “non-switch” works just fine, has no control box to take up desk space, no capacitors to break down and dump DC onto your rig’s antenna connector, and no other components to fail in the dead of winter. But the best part is that it cost only \$18.00 far less than any of the other options.
73, Bill



MARA Hams have Eyeball QSO with E2ØREX



Marjorie Turner, KX1I & Korn St. Pierre E2ØREX

A few months ago our Association's Treasurer, Marjorie Turner, KX1I was hold up in Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston recovering from a surgical procedure. One day a young lady medical student noted a QST magazine on Marjorie's nightstand and asked if Marjorie was an amateur radio operator. To which Marjorie replied, "yes I am." The young lady introduced herself as Korn St. Pierre, E2ØREX from Thailand. She went on to explain that she got interested in Amateur Radio while attending the University in Thailand.



Korn stated that with her studies she had not had much time to devote to the hobby and did not know if she would get back to it, but while she was doing it in college she had great enjoyment during contests and local DXpeditons. With that Marjorie invited Korn to come to a MARA meeting and visit with fellow hams so she could tell them all about Ham Radio in her county.

A month later Korn did make the trip down route-196 to the Topsham Red Cross building. She was welcomed into the group and she said she was very pleased to make so many new friends with a common interest. Korn was invited to come to all the MARA activities while she was in Maine doing her studies. Several members exchanged eyeball QSL cards with her and we hope she will join us again.



November Exam Session has 100% success rate

Bryce Rumery, K1GAX, the VEC for the combined MARA/PAWA VE team advised that there was a large turnout of folks to take exams at the November 2nd test session at the Topsham Red Cross. The bright spot was that everyone passed the exam they came to take. Several folks from the MARA sponsored Lincoln County License prep class came and went home to await their new Technician Class Tickets. Several more went home with General and Extra class privileges. The MARA's own, John Monton, N1OIG went home with new General Class privileges. **At-a-Boy John.**



eMail from Dallas Texas

From: John Briggs
Subject: **DARC Meeting**
To: "Bruce Randall" <w1zel@arrl.net>
Date: Wed., Nov. 4, 2009, 6:24 PM

Three members of the Merrymeeting Ham Club attended the Dallas Amateur Radio Club (DARC) meeting Tuesday 3 November. They had a talk on eSSB audio. It was interesting to hear what they were doing with "slightly" wider bandwidth SSB. They had door prizes and the Mainers visiting really moped up. First Michele (W7LIF) won a \$10.00 gift certificate for a local hamburger joint and then Paul (KA5FPT) won the big prize of a \$25.00 gift certificate to Tanners Electronics, a local "toy" store. All in all, it was a nice meeting and they were definitely very generous folks. I'm sure we will be attending more of their meeting in the future.

John Briggs KC6TVF



KS1R Top Dog in Maine for Field Day 2009

On November 4th the results for Field Day 2009 were published on league web site (www.arrl.org). This years effort by those that participated in the event for the MARA and KS1R paid off.

In the 2F category:

KS1R No.1 in Maine,

No. 2 in New England

No. 7 nationally.

All categories:

KS1R No. 1 in Maine

No. 21 in New England

No. 281 nationally

Well-Done KS1R Team!



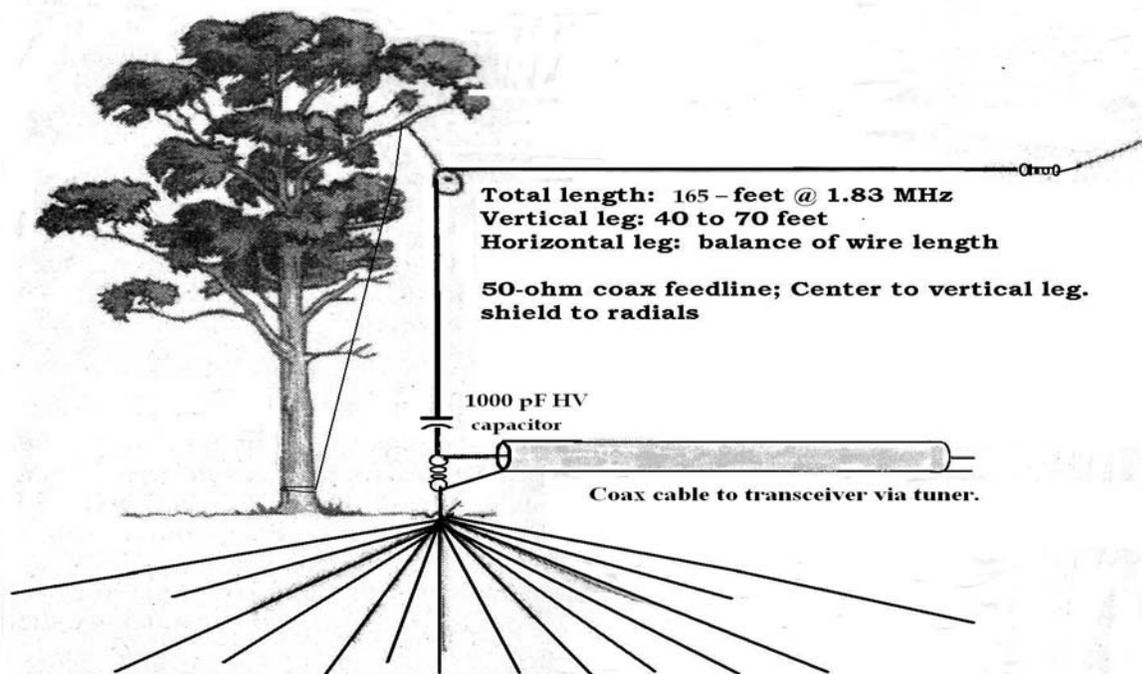
W1ZE's 160-meter Inverted-L, The Story

By Bruce Randall, W1ZE

Some time ago I described the use of inverted "L" wire monopoles for use on the 80 and 160-meter bands to Squelch Tale readers. This fall I decided to fabricate and install such an antenna again so I could enjoy some DX on the 1.8 MHz band during those long cold winter nights when QRN (band noise) is low.

What got me planning was that in the spring of the year at NEAR-Fest a found a chap that had some surplus high-voltage ceramic capacitors. He had two 1000 pF and one 750 pF cap all rated at 6000 volts. They were about an inch and a quarter square and a quarter inch thick with wire leads. After some serious negotiations I walked off with all three for a few buck. My idea was to use one of them to feed an extended 160-meter inverted-L monopole that would be supported by my 55-foot tower near the top.

There is a lot written about Inverted-L antennas and most serious 160-meter buffs recommend making the Inverted-L wire antenna longer than the 130-foot long quarter wavelength and capacity feed it. Most recommend a length of 165 to 170 feet and a feed capacitor of about 1000 pF (.001 uF). With the extended length and the series capacitor the feed-point impedance will be closer to 50-ohms rather than just a few ohms exhibited by a quarter-wave vertical ground plane antenna. Plus, the ground radial counterpoise field does not need to be as extensive because of reduced ground losses.



For those of you that have been over to Radio Free Phippsburg, my QTH, you would have noted my ground mounted HF6V multi-band vertical about 25 feet from the base of my tower. Over the past several years I have add a dozen or more radial wires to it, all 30-50 foot long. Two seasons of fallen leaves and pine needles have covered them over. The radials makes the HF6V perform pretty well on 80 and 40 meters. The vertical is attached to a wood post buried in the ground along with an 8-foot ground rod driven into the always-damp soil. That mounting post also makes a good place to attach the input end of the Inverted-L. I built a coax relay that remotely switches the coax feeding the HF6V to the "L".

After a few trips up and down my tower I had the bend in the L at about 45-feet and from there it went off at a 90-degree angle to the back of the property. When I first fired it up the SWR sweet spot was at the top of the band so I added

a few more feet of wire and brought the SWR sweet spot to the bottom (CW & DX phone) end of the band. The SWR showed 1.1:1 from 1.805 to 1.855 and less than 1.5:1 from 1.8 to 1.885 MHz. I got curious and started checking the HF spectrum for other spots where the SWR was acceptable and I found that the SWR in the 30-meter band was about 1.6:1. While I was checking it out on 30 meters at about 2:30 in the afternoon I heard TX3A out in the western pacific on New Caledonia calling CQ so I gave him a few calls and he came back with a 599 report. Well, my 160M L works on thirty meters OK. That evening I tried the L on 160 meters and managed to have QSOs with HB0/DL2SBY in Lichtenstine, RU3DX in Moscow and 6W/EI6DX in Somone, Senegal. I'm pleased. Guess what I'll be doing on those cold winter nights.

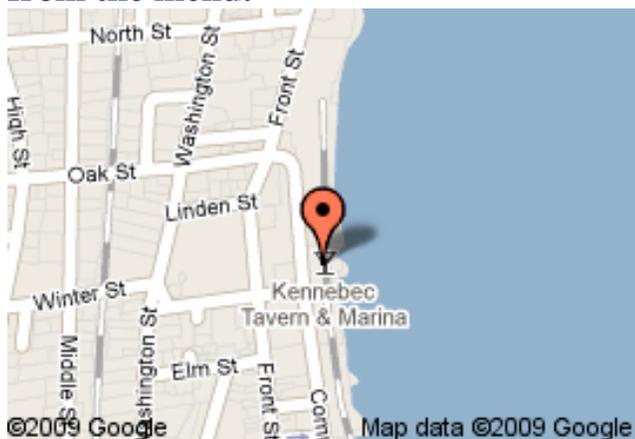
Happy Holidays & 73, Bruce, WIZE



***2009 MARA Year
End Dinner set for
December 5th***



Come join your fellow MARA members and friends, their spouses and guests at the Kennebec Tavern on Commercial Street on the waterfront in Bath on Saturday evening, December 5th at 6:30PM for the 2009 Year End Dinner. The KT management is setting up tables to accommodate us in the dining room. Individuals can order from the menu.



We would love to have you join us so we can start the Holiday Season off with a good time gathering.



**The Officers,
Executive board
members and
Association
Trustee want to
wish you and yours
all the best this
joyous Holiday
Season has to offer.
Merry Christmas
&
a Happy New Year
full of health,
happiness and
increasing
Sun-Spots!**